- FINAL EVALUATION -

LIBERIA DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FUND COMPONENT

- LIBERIA -

- FINAL REPORT -

September 2013

EVALUATION TEAM	
Team Leader	**Roger Shotton**

FINAL EVALUATION: LIBERIA DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FUND COMPONENT
LIBERIA

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Design: UNCDF Partnerships Unit.

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PROGRAMME DATA SHEET

Country:	*LIBERIA*
Programme Title (long)	*LIBERIA DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FUND COMPONENT*
Programme Title (short)	*LDLD/LDF*
Programme Atlas Code (by donor)	UNCDF Award ID 48307; Project ID 58379 UNDP Award ID 47673; Project ID 57476

Financial Breakdown (by donor)

Commitments	As per Project Document (amount USD)	Actual project budget (amount USD)
UNCDF	2.50 million	1.59 million
UNDP	2.50 million	N.A.
Government	-	NA
Funding gap	0.67 million	NA

UNCDF Delivery to date - USD (per donor)

Donor	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year
UNCDF	92,956	597,197	204,435	452,689	240,276
UNDP	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
EC	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Government	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Total UNCDF budget	115,000	535,000	740,000	995,000	1,250,000

Executing Agency	Ministry of Internal Affairs
Implementing Agencies	Ministry of Internal Affairs, County Administrations, DDMCs, PMTs
Key Project Partners	UNDP, EC, SIDA
Approval Date of Project	June 2007
Project Duration as per Project Document	2007-11 (amended to 2008-12)
Project Amendment	N.A.
Evaluation Date	June 2013

Other current UNCDF projects in-country	Launch of Inclusive Finance Sector (LIFS) Programme (phase I: 2005-2009, phase II: 2010-2013)
Previous UNCDF projects (if relevant)	none
Previous evaluations (if relevant)	Combined Evaluation of LDLD - 2012
Dates of audits	N.A.

Evaluation Date: May-June 2013

Evaluation Team Leader – International: Roger Shotton

ACRONYMS AND ABREVIATIONS

ACRONYM	FULL TITLE
ASL	ANNUAL SPENDING LIMIT
AWP	ANNUAL WORKPLAN
CDD	COMMUNITY-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT
CDF	COUNTY DEVELOPMENT FUND
CEP	COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROJECT
CTA	CHIEF TECHNICAL ADVISER
DDC	DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
DDMC	DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
EC	EUROPEAN COMMISSION
GC	GOVERNANCE COMMISSION
GOL	GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA
IGFT	INTER-GOVERNMENTAL FISCAL TRANSFERS
LACE	LIBERIAN AGENCY FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT
LDF	LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FUND
LDLD	LIBERIAN DECENTRALISATION & LOCAL DEVELOPMENT (PROGRAMME)
LDLD/LDF	LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FUND COMPONENT OF THE LIBERIAN DECENTRALISATION & LOCAL DEVELOPMENT (PROGRAMME)
LED	LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
MIA	MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS
MOF	MINISTRY OF FINANCE
MOGD	MINISTRY OF GENDER & DEVELOPMENT
MOU	MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
PEM	PUBLIC EXPENDITURE MANAGEMENT
PFM	PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
PMT	PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM
PMU	PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT UNIT
PPCC	PUBLIC PROCUREMENT & CONCESSION COMMISSION
PRS	POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY
SDF	SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FUND
SIDA	SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
UNCDF	UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND
UNDAF	UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FRAMEWORK
UNDP	UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
UNMIL	UNITED NATIONS MISSION TO LIBERIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Background

Liberia, at the time of the programme formulation and design in 2006-07, had only recently emerged from a long period of strife – the economy had collapsed, poverty levels had dramatically increased, and the institutions of governance had been undermined. The incoming government, elected in 2005, proceeded to prepare a national strategy to address these multiple problems, a key plank of which was to begin to create and empower representative local governments, and to reduce the centralized grip on decision-making that Monrovia had long held.

There is no history of elected local government in Monrovia and local administrations are all staffed by central appointees, at County and District level. Similarly, public expenditure management for basic service delivery has long been centralized and under the control of the sector ministries. However in recent years government had moved to create two funding mechanisms for basic public infrastructure, the County, and later the Social, Development Funds (CDF and SDF), which for the first time allowed some local discretion in their management, but which also exhibited some serious management problems and badly needed reform.

2. Programme profile & strategy

The Liberia Decentralisation & Local Development (LDLD) Programme was designed to support the move to decentralise and establish local government, with support from UNDP, UNCDF and, later EC, and marked a departure from the prevailing community-driven approaches adopted hitherto by most partners. Within the programme, the Local Development Fund component aimed to pilot a District Development Fund mechanism in a number of pilot Counties and Districts, and to twin this with piloting of improved District and local planning and public expenditure management procedures. The aim was both to complement and to inform badly-needed reforms in existing CDF/SDF procedures (and lack of any such procedures), and to influence the emerging financing and PEM policy and procedures for future local government. However, this initial LDLD strategy was substantially changed at the start of implementation. This has seriously compromised achievement of the intended results.

3. Scope, objectives and intended audience of the evaluation

There has been a final evaluation of LDLD – the “combined evaluation” led by UNDP in 2012. The purpose of the present evaluation is to focus on the LDF component, supported by UNCDF, which the earlier evaluation was not able to examine in great depth. This is required both for UNCDF corporate accountability purposes, but also to promote broader learning both to inform future UNCDF programming in Liberia and elsewhere, and for the benefit of GoL and other partners.

4. Methodological approach of the evaluation

The evaluation is guided by UNCDF’s standard evaluation framework, itself based on UNEG principles and standards, and organized around the evaluation criteria of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the programme. Although the consultant had prepared an initial inception report with proposed methodology based on this, the initially envisaged lines of enquiry had to be somewhat changed in light of findings at the mission outset regarding the significant deviation of the LDF strategy as implemented from that foreseen in the programme design.

The sources of information available to the consultant were a large set of programme-related and other documents made available to the consultant, and a range of informants in Monrovia, in the Counties and in the field (some were interviewed on a 1:1 basis, others – especially in the field - were met in groups). The 10 day mission in-country included field visits to 3 counties: 2 of the 9 LDLD pilot Counties and 1 non-pilot County. A final presentation of preliminary findings was made to MIA, UNDP and other stakeholders in Monrovia to validate preliminary findings and include key analysis in the present report.

5. Overview of current implementation status of the project

The main Output 1 (policy development) target indicators of LDLD have been largely achieved. Substantial progress has also been made toward achieving the Output 2 (local capacity development) target indicators – although the focus has been mainly on the training and logistical support dimensions of capacity development, with little or none of the expected innovations in local PEM systems and procedures that were envisaged. However, the intended Output 3 (LDF component) targets – supported primarily by UNCDF - have not been achieved as intended; the activities actually implemented (namely, the LDF funding mechanism and related PEM procedures to be piloted) were taken in a very different direction. This deviation from original design was explained to the mission by the CTA as being necessary in light of two key aspects of context having changed since the original design (see 6. a. below).

Of the original US$ 2.5 m commitment, UNCDF has delivered US$ 1.59 m, of which US$ 0.95 m for capital grants. The pattern of actual UNCDF spending has diverged substantially from the original RRF plan: 1/3 of the original LDF grant budget allocation was released, and an even smaller faction of planned TA spending for Outputs 1, 2 and 3 was actually spent. Over 1/3 of UNCDF funds was spent on the PMU, for which UNCDF funding was not originally planned.

6. Key findings of the evaluation mission

a. Relevance. The programme strategy as designed was – and remains – highly relevant to the Liberian context. However the design was compromised by a number of flaws: inadequate analysis of local institutions (esp. the DDC) and of the existing centre-local funding mechanisms, somewhat muddled strategy for the proposed LDF mechanism, and some unclarity in the configuration of outputs and activities and in the budget.

   But strategy was then subject to major changes early in implementation. These changes were reportedly made because of two changes in context: (i) the DDCs had become moribund, for lack of continued UNDP support, supposedly precluding the scope for District-wide planning and management originally envisaged; (ii) the volume of funds for basic socio-economic infrastructure through the CDF and SDF had greatly increased, supposedly arguing for the LDF to occupy a distinct niche, financing productive investments instead. The mission is ill-placed to second-guess in hindsight the rationale for these changes, but does question them; they undoubtedly undermined the expected broader impacts of the LDF on institutions and policy (see below).

b. Efficiency. Programme implementation proceeded in a fairly timely manner. But the main output (the LDF guidelines) proved inconsistent with the goals in several ways (see c. below). UNCDF funding was generally timely although actual expenditures were at often at significant variance with both prodoc and AWP budgets. UNCDF corporate technical support was quite inadequate and no real technical input was provided where it was most needed – to help design, backstop & monitor the LDF.

c. Institutional & Policy Reform Effectiveness. Local institutional and capacity development effectiveness was severely compromised by the nature of the LDF strategy as implemented (via the LDF guidelines), which simply did not match the sorts of procedural and institutional innovation needed to promote reform of the CDF & SDF or as a basis for future local government PEM. The extent of the basic “mismatch” is illustrated in the Box overpage. Policy reform effectiveness was also severely compromised for exactly the same reasons. (One relatively minor innovation which seems to have caught on is the adoption of the PMT for CDF/SDF projects, to monitor implementation.)

d. Direct Impact. The direct impact of the LDF-funded investments reviewed (a fairly representative sample of the various agricultural production & processing projects funded) is a mixed story.

BOX 1. The Core Problem: “Mismatch” in the LDF as piloted

The original intent of the LDF was to pilot a mechanism for financing District and local investments, which would complement and also guide the reform of the existing CDF/SDF, and in tandem to pilot a set of bottom-up planning and PEM procedures which could serve as model for future local government fiscal transfers and PEM procedures. On one hand, introduction of some relatively clear procedures under the LDF has been a major innovation, by contrast to the lack of any clear procedures to guide management of the CDF & SDF. But the LDF procedures are for the most part not at all matched to what was required for this purpose:

LDF Funding Mechanism Procedures:

a. Funding was not allocated to the District per se but to only one or two pre-selected communities (selected on an unclear basis) within the District.
b. Funding was not allocated as an annual grant, to mimic an annual fiscal transfer tied in with the annual budget cycle, but has been allocated on a one-time basis with releases made over 2 or more years, unconnected to the annual budget cycle.
c. Funding was not allocated on a needs-based, formula basis, to mimic an equitable formula-based transfer, but was a standard equal amount to all Counties/Districts, despite greatly varying populations.
d. Funding was not allocated for local discretionary use over a range of possible District or community investments, thereby to mimic an unconditional block grant and to test an appropriate expenditure menu for the District level, but was confined to a very limited menu of allowable agricultural investments.
e. Funding was not allocated contingent on Districts/communities meeting ex ante minimum conditions; instead procedures to be followed in managing the funds after release were stipulated.

LDF Planning & PEM Procedures:

a. Investment proposals were not solicited from communities or Towns across the District, to allow District-level screening, appraisal and selection/rejection as part of a District-wide investment planning process, but were solicited from one or two communities only.
b. Investment proposals eligible for funding were not the broader menu of “District and community”-type investments, to pilot the future role of Districts in the range of public infrastructure and service delivery, but were confined to a list of a half-dozen or so pre-selected agriculture-related investment packages.
c. The investment project technical and financial appraisal process was not managed by a District-wide body or local officials or resource persons, to build capacities in this key area, but seems largely to have been undertaken on behalf of community groups by local consultants hired by MIA.
d. The investment proposals so generated were not subject to a comparative appraisal and ranking process by a District-wide body to select the “best”, such as will be required for any future resource-constrained investment planning at District level, but were pre-approved, reviewed, adjusted by the PMU/MIA team, and subject to final approval by the County and then by MIA.
e. Procurement was not for civil works-based infrastructure (usually the bulk of any local public investment expenditures, especially in a context of recovery and reconstruction), and so there were no procedures introduced to ensure the sort of technical support for design, supervision & monitoring of such investments. Instead, procurement was predominantly the simpler business of purchases of goods and services (farm inputs, equipment, construction materials).
f. Although the initial Town Hall meeting participants in target communities were certainly made aware of the LDF packages being offered, there is no information posted publically on approved plans, budgets and actual expenditures, to promote transparency and accountability, even within the target Districts (so far as the mission could observe) and this information is indeed hard to obtain even from MIA.

Institutional Arrangements:

a. The DDMCs do not represent the District-wide population but – other than the DC as Chair – are comprised mainly of PMT members from only one or two target community/ies within the District. It was therefore quite implausible that the DDMC could take the lead on District planning or monitoring of other development activities in the District.
b. The PMTs were designed to manage collective production ventures, many of which appear to be problematic. However, they may prove a much more useful innovation to monitor and oversee the implementation of basic infrastructure investments (indeed this may be the one innovation which has a chance of being mainstreamed now through the CDF/SDF).

For all these reasons, it is hardly conceivable that the LDF procedures introduced could have constituted a model for the sort of demand-driven, pro-poor, efficient and equitable, and transparent local government financing, planning and PEM procedures so badly needed at District or County level and for management of CDF/SDF resources.

The group-based model for managing these investments faces a number of the expected collective-action problems, especially in regard to group farming; in addition there is widespread expectation of continued support from LDF by these groups. That aside, several of the technologies introduced have faced problems and/or are of very doubtful commercial viability. That aside, there must also be concerns about the inequity inherent in allocating US$ 100,000 to such a small segment (<5%) of the District population.

e. Replication & Upscaling. The scope for upscaling or replication of the LDF is very doubtful, for the same reasons outlined above under c. (and as illustrated in Box 1).

f. Sustainability. By the same token, the sustainability of the LDF model piloted is not clear – if it is not mainstreamed into policy and procedure, which seems highly unlikely.

7. Key conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation

Conclusions

Beyond the more detailed findings outlined above under 6., a few more general conclusions can be highlighted:

a. LDLD/LDF strategy evolved in a manner quite divergent from the original programme design, which – even if this divergence were justified (which this mission questions) – should have been seen at the time by UNCDF to be in conflict with the expected policy and institutional impact of the programme. But there is no evidence of any such recognition – indeed at least two UNCDF missions appeared to endorse the implementation as if all were on-track. If there had been early recognition of the serious issues at stake, this should have called for an in-depth programme review with other partners and with MIA.

b. In part, the fact that strategy was allowed to evolve as it did seems to be due to an inexplicably low level of technical guidance, backstopping and monitoring of the LDF mechanism by UNCDF - especially in the first year or two when LDF systems and procedures were being designed and tested, and where lessons from similar UNCDF programme experiences from elsewhere could have been introduced, with suitable adaptation (this despite the substantial budget allocated for such technical support, which went largely unspent). There is indeed no record of any UNCDF comment at all on the LDF procedures – yet this should have been the core area for UNCDF quality control and technical innovation.

c. The outcome is that a major opportunity has been missed in Liberia to test the sorts of innovations in local financing and public expenditure management which were – and still are - needed to support implementation of the national decentralization policy. Instead, the explicit or tacit acceptance of the LDF strategy as implemented then resulted in the whole operation being confined to a set of activities with little or no wider relevance in regard to the decentralization policy agenda, nor any hope of being mainstreamed or upscaled It was the kind of operation much better suited to an NGO or perhaps a UN agency specialized in agriculture such as FAO; further, even as a "community-development" approach, it reflected quite poor practice (due to the untransparent allocation of funds to a few favoured communities, the very marginal scope for local participatory input, the ad hoc changing of investment packages, the lack of transparency on allocation decisions and expenditures, etc.).

Recommendations

The LDLD/LDF is ended and accordingly there are no recommendations to be made in regard to management actions for the programme itself. But two main more forward-looking recommendations are made:

a. New programming in Liberia: back to basics. As UNCDF & GoL discuss new programming it will be critical to go back to the sort of agenda originally intended in the LDF: i.e. to pilot a funding mechanism aligned with the CDF/SDF, but earmarked for District and community-type investments, together with procedures for the entire planning & PEM cycle (all the way to construction supervision and payment certification) perhaps using the CDC structures regulated by the Budget Law, which can be later adopted for all these funds. In doing this, UNCDF needs to ensure introduction of innovations based on its experience from similar countries (absent to date), and to ensure more close technical support and monitoring.

b. Local economic development. There is understandable concern to revive agriculture, as the basis for LED in rural Liberia. Here, the most obvious and cost-effective avenue is to focus on improved delivery of basic public enabling goods (roads, water, markets, extension) and which also happen to be services falling largely under future local government remit. But any direct public funding of private enterprise or private farms should be undertaken with great care, and with the right technical partners – and does not seem the first priority for a new programme. Indeed, it is not clear whether a future decentralization & local government support programme is the right vehicle at all for targeting direct funding support to entrepreneurs, or whether UNCDF has a comparative advantage in this area as compared to other more specialised agencies.

MAIN EVALUATION REPORT

1. Scope and Objectives of the Evaluation

The final evaluation of the LDF component of the LDLD Programme (LDLD/LDF) has been conducted in complement to the recent UNDP-led combined evaluation and the earlier EU Monitoring Report of 2010, and in accordance with UNCDF Evaluation Policy[1] and its Evaluation Plan 2012-2013.

The objectives of this final evaluation are focused on the functioning and likely results/impacts of the Local Development Fund (LDF) piloted in Liberia by UNCDF through the LDLD Programme. This means that the evaluation will mainly deal with results related to strategic focus areas II + III/Outputs 2 and 3 of the PRODOC (Systems and Institutional Development; and Sector Investments and Local Development), although relevant aspects related to the necessary policies and regulatory framework (output 1) will be also covered, complementary to or in validation of UNDP-led evaluation findings.

The specific objectives of the current evaluation are the following:

1. Examining to what extent the Liberian experience provides an opportunity to provide some flexibility in the formulation and implementation of LDF in the context of post-conflict countries with no representative institutions structures at local level;
2. Assessing the quality of the LDF manual/operational guidelines and the manner and extent of its implementation in the 9 Liberian pilot counties;
3. Assessing the efficiency of the LDF mechanism and its implementation;
4. Assessing government capacity to manage (and extent to which the LDF conceptual approach is understood) at the local and national level;
5. Assessing the effectiveness of the LDF mechanism;
6. Assessing likely impacts of investments in local development financing;
7. Assessing whether UNCDF has influenced the national mechanism (Country Development Fund, Social Development Fund) to ensure broader replication and up-scaling of the LDF;
8. To generate knowledge and identify best practices, if any, lessons learnt, challenges faced and weakness in order to inform the formulation of the Phase II of the programme.

The primary audience for this evaluation is the Liberian government, UNCDF, UNDP, the European Commission and SIDA. This evaluation aims to help UNCDF meet its learning objectives at the programmatic level as well as allow the organization to fulfill its accountability for results mandate. It also aims to benefit broader LDLD partners and stakeholders understand better the challenges and lessons being learned around the design and delivery of Local Development Funds.

[1] The revised policy of UNDP for evaluation was approved in 2011. The purpose of the policy is to establish a common institutional basis for the UNDP evaluation function. The policy seeks to increase transparency, coherence and efficiency in generating and using evaluative knowledge for organizational learning and effective management for results, and to support accountability. The policy also applies to the associated funds and programmes of UNDP – the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme. .*http://web.undp.org/evaluation/policy.htm#vi*

2. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

Methodology, Issues & Constraints

The methodology used for the LDLD evaluation is based on UNCDF's core evaluation approach which involves testing the intervention logic/development hypothesis underlying a programme against evidence on its implementation performance.

The Evaluation Unit has developed a Local Development Evaluation Matrix based on UNCDF's standard intervention logic and the specific programme hypotheses for its local development finance practice area. The Matrix is made up of seven general evaluation questions corresponding broadly to the OECD/UN evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, likely impact and sustainability of results, and a series of further sub-questions. It also provides a framework for data collection, and includes a series of proposed indicators, data collection methods and sources of information for each question and sub-questions.

The Inception Report of the mission outlined the methodology proposed for evaluating LDLD/LDF, adapted from this more general framework – see Annex 6. It included the lines of questioning to be followed for the 7 main categories of evaluation question, along with the sorts of information sources and informants that the mission intended to meet. It also suggested possible comparators to be examined as counterfactuals.

However, the Inception Report was based on the documentation made available prior to the mission. It became very clear from the first day or two of the mission in-country that LDLD/LDF had been implemented quite differently from the way intended in the programme document and as portrayed in other documents. Consequently, while the information sources and informants were mainly those outlined in the inception report, as was the selection of Counties for fieldwork (one non-pilot County, one older pilot County and one more recent pilot County), some re-framing of the original methodology was required:

a. It was necessary to focus especially on the reasons for the major change in strategy (which had not been documented clearly), and to examine the nature of the actual strategy adopted and how it matched – or did not match – the original intended strategy and results.
b. Given the findings of the mission in regard to the strategy actually adopted there proved to be relatively little scope for examining supposed impact of the LDF on either local government PEM capacities, or on wider policy (hence a number of lines of enquiry originally envisaged in the evaluation matrix proved unfruitful or irrelevant).
c. The original focus on the counterfactual analysis of investments delivered under CDF or CEP proved to be of much less relevance than anticipated, given the very different nature of investments delivered under LDF (agricultural inputs and equipment) from those under CDF/SDF (civil works structures).

To be clear – throughout the evaluation exercise the focus was on trying to understand how and why implementation of the LDLD/LDF had departed from the original intent as articulated in the approved programme document, and on analyzing the effects of this departure on the originally intended results.

One constraint on the evaluation exercise therefore proved to be the uneasy fit between the logic of the original results structure and that of the strategy actually implemented.

That aside, the major constraints on the mission was the fragmentary nature of LDF investment reports and documentation, and the relatively short time in-country.

Mission Information-Gathering Approach

The sources of information used by the consultant were:

- A broad array of documents provided by UNCDF, by the CTA, by other MIA and MoF officials, by LACE/CEP, and as available on GoL and other websites.
- A range of informants in Monrovia: the CTA and the PMU team; senior and mid-level officials in central government (principally MIA, but also MoF); UNDP, EC and SIDA officials;
- A range of informants in the 3 Counties visited: County Supervisors, Asst County Supervisors for Development, and other County officials; District Commissioners; Town Chiefs; investment group members and PMT members; and other local community members.

In some cases (mainly in Monrovia) meetings were one-on-one interviews, but in others (especially with investment group members) they were group meetings with anything from 3 to 35 persons present. These latter meetings took place variously in County administration offices, a school room, at a cassava field, at a mixed cropping field, in rice/cassava processing sheds, on a pineapple plantation, on a fishing canoe, in a fish smoking shed and in various other village meeting areas. Given pressures of time, and the dynamics and inherent "noisiness" of such field meetings, there was little scope to follow a standard questionnaire approach – instead the consultant followed pragmatic lines of enquiry tailored to each set of informants, attempting to cross-check and triangulate where possible, but also following up on unexpected issues as they arose (as they always do in such exercises).

Of the 10 days allotted in country, time was spent as follows:

- The first 2 days in Monrovia, for briefings with the LDLD CTA and team, senior MIA officials, and officials from the Governance Commission (GC), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Liberian Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE), Ministry of Gender & Development (MoGD), UNDP, European Commission (EC).
- Then 5 days were spent in the field (with a Sunday falling between County visits, during which the consultant read documentation and began drafting notes): a 1 day visit to a non-LDF-pilot County (Cape Mount), then 2 days in Bong (a 3rd phase LDF pilot county), and 2 days in River Cess County (a 1st phase LDF pilot county). In each County meetings were held with the County Supervisor (CS), the Assistant CS for Development (ACSD), and other County officials; and then meetings with investment group members and their Project Management Teams, with Chiefs and other community members, and with District Commissioners, usually held at the project sites.
- A last 2 days were spent in Monrovia to prepare a debriefing presentation, clarify outstanding issues with the CTA and his team, and then to make presentations at a first debriefing at MIA, chaired by the Minister, and a second debriefing at UNDP, chaired by the Country Director, and with UNCDF staff from New York and Dakar on video/phone link.

Annex 2 provides more complete details of the mission itinerary and meetings.

Annex 8 provides details of LDF-funded investments in the 9 pilot Counties and indicates which of these were visited by the mission.

3. Country Context:

3.1 Social, political, economic, demographic and institutional factors

At the time that LDLD was designed (in 2006-07) Liberia was only just emerging from a long period of civil war and of massive disruption, which had shattered the economy, led to a massive exodus, and severely undermined the institutions of governance. GDP had fallen by 90% between 1987 and 1995 – and at the time of the 2005 elections average income was just one quarter of its 1987 level, and one sixth of its 1979 level. Basic roads, education, health and water & sanitation infrastructure had also largely fallen into disuse, whether through many years of neglect or through outright destruction and looting.

The civil war ended with the peace agreement of 2003 and with the establishment of the UNMIL presence to oversee the implementation of this agreement, which led to the successful elections of 2005, the first in many years. Following this, a national Poverty Reduction Strategy[2] was developed through a wide-ranging consultative process. The analytic work of the PRS clearly revealed the extent of the poverty and development challenges and the inequities to be addressed:

- A great preponderance of the poor residing in the rural areas, where headcount poverty was assessed at 70%, as against 31% in the urban areas. This is also a heritage of the very capital-centric policies of governments in Liberia over many decades (and which also fuelled the resentment underlying the insurgency).
- Regional variations in poverty, with the North-Central region accounting for some 38% of the total poor.
- A notably higher level of deprivation affecting younger age groups.
- Deficits in basic public infrastructure which affect particularly the rural areas, and which derive from neglect far preceding the recent conflict.

The consultation process in the Counties and rural areas around the PRS also revealed deep-seated frustrations with:

- The poor state of roads, schools, drinking water supplies
- The shortage of teachers and medical personnel
- Inadequate access to farm inputs – seeds, fertilisers & pesticides, and markets
- And, generally, with the performance of County and local officials and the manner of their selection and supervision, with the centralization of budget decisions, and of procurement and payments

The new government embarked on a programme of recovery based on four key pillars:

- Expanding peace and security
- Revitalizing the economy
- Strengthening governance and the rule of law
- Rehabilitating infrastructure and delivering basic services

[2] See Liberia Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2008.

One strategic theme running through many of the activities proposed within this programme was the need to empower the local administration and local communities in planning and managing their own affairs, and to reverse the longstanding dominance of central government. This strategic theme was reflected throughout the 5 Outcome areas of the UNDAF (2008-11) and was indeed the rationale for the LDLD programme itself, which aimed to help government develop the policy and institutional framework for elected local government and decentralized public service delivery.

3.2 Sector pertaining to the object of the project: sub-national government in Liberia

Sub-national government in Liberia is organized around the following units, with numbers (as of 2012) as follows:

- 15 Counties (with populations varying from 75,000 to more than 1 million), with an administration headed by a County Supervisor, appointed by the President
- 134 Administrative Districts (between 4 and 18 per County, with populations averaging some 25,000 but in a range from 3,000 to 250,000), headed by a District Commissioner appointed by the President, through the County Supervisor. (NB These not to be confused with Statutory Districts, which are constituencies for the national House of Representatives.)
- some 148 Cities, 241 Towns & 1,506 General Towns – covering larger and smaller settlements – which are headed by an appointed Mayor or Town Chief, respectively.
- Some 243 Chiefdoms and 476 Clans – covering the more rural areas – headed by appointed Paramount and Clan Chiefs.

The numbers of these units have grown greatly in recent years and the boundaries are often a matter of dispute. It is generally agreed that the entire configuration of these units needs to be simplified and rationalized.

There are no elected councils or assemblies at sub-national level, and indeed there is no history of "local government", in the usual sense of the term (elected local bodies, with corporate legal status, and with some mandated functions, powers and resources), in Liberia. To avoid confusion, in this report we therefore refer more generically to sub-national government (SNG). The SNG comprises sub-national officials who are all central appointees and are accountable to the centre – to the MIA (in the case of County Supervisors and their staff, of District Commissioners, Town Chiefs etc.) or to sector Ministries (in the case of County & District sector officials).

The County caucus comprising the group of locally elected Senators (2 per County) and members of the House of Representatives (1 per District) play a key role in local affairs and (according to senior MIA and County officials) have been actively involved – for better but also sometimes for worse - in local resource allocation decisions. .

In such a context it is not surprising that the management of public service delivery and corresponding investment decisions is highly centralized. In recent years two investment funding instruments have been developed which allow some degree of local discretion – but which are highly problematic. See Box 2 overpage.

Box 2: The Two Problematic Centre-Local Investment Fund Mechanisms
Local Discretion without Local Accountability

The two funds
- The County Development Fund (**CDF**), initiated in 2005/06 – an annual fund pool from general revenues (currently $ 3 million) allotted equally to all Counties (currently $ 200,000 per County) for local capital expenditures. Given greatly varying County populations this is inequitable, favouring small Counties.
- The Social Development Fund (**SDF**), initiated in 2009 following an initiative by Arcelor Mittal in two Counties, is an annual fund pool financed from 30% of the concession revenues paid to GoL by various private extractive (mining, rubber, timber, etc) concessions operating in most Counties. This pool has been growing steadily and for the current FY stands at US$ 15.5m. The SDF is allocated back to counties where the companies are operating hence County allocations are very different and very inequitable: to cite two extremes, in the current FY Grand Kru received US$ 50,000 while Bong received US$ 3.36 m – corresponding to US$ 0.82 per capita in the former case, and US$ 10.2 in the latter.

Institutional framework for Planning & PEM
- Planning and management of these funds had been undertaken separately but is merged and now regulated by the annual Budget Law. This provides for a County Development Council (**CDC**) comprising "officials and opinion leaders" from the Districts and Municipalities, and the County Superintendent and Asst for Development. Initially the CDC also included members of the County Legislative Caucus, the Chairperson of which was also Chair of the CDC. The mission was informed by County officials that this has now changed and that – formally at least – the caucus members merely "convene" the CDC each year but do not take part in its deliberations – but this appears to be a matter of debate and the reality may vary between Counties. It appears that there are District Development Councils (elders, women, youth, etc., though composition varies by County) which meet periodically at District level to formulate proposals to the CDCs.
- The CDC is the forum where investment proposals – from the District delegates, the County administration as well as from the caucus members – are reviewed and selected for approval and implementation. The CDC is supported by a CDC Project Management Committee which is supposed to technically vet proposals submitted to the CDC and then support procurement and implementation of those approved.

Issues
Both CDF and SDF have been the subject of very critical audit reports and other reviews. Analysis of these reports and discussions with local officials revealed a lack of any clear procedures or guidelines for planning and budgeting, for project appraisal & selection, for support to and monitoring of implementation for these investments. Further, the funds appear to arrive in the County accounts up to 2 years late. The structures delivered are thus often unfinished, of poor quality, overpriced, aside from often being of questionable local developmental priority.

Clearly there was and is still a need to reform the planning and management procedures for these two funds. Based on the audit reports and on the mission's own findings there are problems throughout the PEM cycle for these funds:

- Lack of a geographically broad-based transparent and fair participatory needs identification process for basic public infrastructure investments and a simple procedure for feeding this from Town, to District and to County level.
- Lack of adequate vetting, screening, preliminary costing, etc., for investments prior to their prioritization.
- No clear procedures for appraisal, ranking & selection of different sorts of investments within a limited budget.
- No clear arrangements for determining O&M budget implications and securing commitments to fund these.
- No simplified procurement procedures for small local investments.
- Inadequate technical support & supervision during implementation.
- Inadequate procedures for ensuring payments are certified only when work is completed satisfactorily.
- No role for local community or user group involvement in supervision, monitoring & payment certification.
- Inadequate treasury and fund flow mechanisms to ensure funds arrive on time.
- No arrangements for transparency and accountability in each of the steps above.

A main theme of the original LDLD/LDF strategy was indeed to pilot improved mechanisms and procedures that would serve to reform the CDF/SDF.

A last word on "context" for decentralization and local government. County Supervisors along with the entire upper stratum of senior Ministerial officials are all political appointments rather than civil service cadre officials. Consequently, after an election, or simply with a change in Minister, many of these officials may often be replaced. This constitutes a major challenge for continuity in policy and policy implementation, and for any capacity development programme in Liberia.

4. Programme Profile:

4.1 Programme description

Programme as Designed

The strategy, logic and design of LDLD Programme is modeled on UNCDF experience with local development programmes elsewhere in Africa and Asia. Generally, the broad results structure and logic of these Local Development Programmes is as follows:

- A set of activities leading to a hierarchy of results impacting on the **national policy, legal and regulatory framework** and – relatedly – on national government and development partner funding of local development (aiming to sustain and replicate LDP innovations).
- A set of activities leading to a hierarchy of results impacting on **sub-national government institutional "capacities" and "accountabilities"** (institn. arrangements, systems, procedures, etc.) for better local public expenditure/financial management and accountability. (These aim to be innovative and "piloted" such that they can inform & influence results under A.)
- A set of activities – and financial resources, often with performance access conditions - leading to a hierarchy of results associated with **delivery of local investments**. (These also aim to be innovative and "piloted" such that they can inform & influence results under A.)

Results Structure of the LDLD Programme. The rationale, the results and the proposed activities of the LDLP were laid down in the first instance in the LDLD Concept Paper (2006) and then – somewhat adapted – in the subsequent LDLD Programme document (2007). The result logic of the prodoc is aligned with the broad LDP logic outlined above and is structured according to the following 3 Outputs.

1. *Decentralisation Policy & Legal Framework established*
2. *Establishment & Elaboration of procedures, processes & systems for sub-national government institutions.*
3. *Local Investment projects implemented at county and district levels.*

A 4th Output relates to *Proper utilization of resources and effective management of LDLD,* to be achieved by establishing a PMU within MIA.

Implicit Project Hypothesis & Logic. Despite some problems with the original project design (see Section 5. below), it does appear that at the core of the project logic is the implicit "UNCDF hypothesis" that the sort of "piloting" of innovations in LD financing and PEM procedures under Output 3, will – if proven successful, and with suitable dissemination of results, and advocacy and advisory inputs – be potentially adopted nation-wide under Outputs 1 and 2.

Table 1: LDLD Results Hierarchy

Objective	Description
UNDAF outcome	Strengthening Governance & Poverty Reduction
Overall Goal	Supporting national efforts to speed the transition from reconstruction to long term development by establishing innovative solutions to local governance and to reverse the historic patterns of centralised development
Expected Outcome	Strengthening of Local Governance with the immediate objective of establishing Liberia's decentralization strategy
Output 1	Establishment of Liberia's local government legal framework and adoption of a national decentralization policy
Output 2	Elaboration & establishment of procedures, processes and systems for sub-national government institutions for public expenditure management and infrastructure delivery
Output 3	Local Investments implemented at County & District Levels
Output 4	Proper utilisation of resources and effective management of the LDLD

Changes in Strategy During Implementation

A major change in strategy seems to have occurred during the first year or so of implementation. This will be examined in more detail under Section 5. Qn. 1 below, but briefly:

Under **Output 3**:

- The strategy of (i) establishing a District Development Fund, to be somehow paired with or to complement the CDF, and of (ii) piloting District-wide planning and PEM procedures, through the institution of the DDC, was abandoned. This was reportedly because the DDCs had fallen into disuse and were no longer functioning, after support through UNDP's Community Based Rehabilitation Project had ended, and hence there was no longer a District-wide institution to work through (this is discussed further under Section 5, Qn 1 below).
- Instead, the Local Development Fund was established to finance one or more pre-selected communities in one District in each pilot County – and to do so by allocating a one-time $ 100,000 to these target communities, to be drawn down over a period of 2 or more years. Planning and management of these funds in each District was to be entrusted to Project Management Teams (PMTs) – elected from investment group members – and a District Development Management Committee (DDMC) – comprised of PMT representatives, youth and women representatives, and chaired by the District Commissioner. The DDMC and PMTs were to receive 4% of the allocation ($ 4,000) to cover their meeting and travel costs.
- The strategy of focussing on a broad array of local public infrastructure – with a "20% window for LED" – was also changed. It was argued by the CTA and other MIA officials that since the CDF and SDF already funded basic public socio-economic infrastructure, with much higher funding levels than the LDF, it was better for LDF funds to focus entirely on agricultural-productive investments and to do so, specifically, by funding "group-managed" investments.

Under **Outputs 1 and 2**:

- Related to the changes noted above, the strategy for feeding innovations from pilot Counties into the "PEM/PFM system building" of Output 2 or the policy development of Output 1 was abandoned.
- Output 2 activities have thus focused on training and support to County officials in the existing national PFM and procurement procedures.
- Output 1 activities have focused on consultative and analytic work on decentralization and other policy issues, but have not been informed by activities under Output 3.

That these changes were made to strategy is not fully apparent in a reading of LDLD documentation. The LDF operational guidelines and other LDLD progress reports still refer to the DDC and its role, to "District grants" and "District workplans", and so on. Similarly, the mission was unable to find any recognition, let alone any endorsement, of these changes in the LDLD Board meeting minutes. UNCDF mission reports contain no real recognition or discussion of the changes, although in some cases do contain an endorsement of the strategy as implemented.

Somewhat as corollary to these changes, but no doubt also due to UNCDF's own funding shortages, UNCDF's own funding – initially intended to be allocated across all Outputs 1, 2 and 3 – became focused almost solely on Output 3.

These strategy changes were seemingly endorsed by at least two UNCDF technical review missions – though, based on a reading of the mission BTORs, it is not clear to this evaluation mission if the full implications of the changes being endorsed were recognized. In 2011 a mid-term evaluation was recommended by one such mission – presumably to review and approve the changes, albeit very late in the day - but was never undertaken.

4.2 Current programme implementation status:

The Table below provides a quick summary of the mission's assessment of the state of achievement of LDLD Output Targets. Further below in this section we examine each set of Output Targets.

Table 2: Implementation Status of Outputs & Targets

Outputs and Output Targets	Implementation status to date
1. Establishment of Liberia's local government legal framework and adoption of a national decentralization policy	
1.1. Process for national policy is launched	Policy completed; draft local government act pending
1.2. Preparation of background papers and fiscal decentralization studies completed	Partly completed though FD policy development still in progress
1.3. Elaboration of sector decentralisation	Policy development in progress
1.4. In-depth review of local capacity building undertaken and strategy designed	Initial work begun
2. Elaboration & establishment of procedures, processes and systems for sub-national government institutions for public expenditure management and	

infrastructure delivery	
2.1. Local government management procedures & processes for sound PEM are designed and implemented	No (indeed, without an approved LG Act, etc., this result would not be possible anyway). Training extended to local officials in current PFM regulations, with other capacity support.
2.2. PEM procedures are institutionalised through the county/district planning process in pilot Counties; the LFDLD operations manual is ….. (sic)	No. LDF Operations Manual has been introduced in pilot Counties but this only marginally linked to future local PEM.
2.3. Local and national development planning are made consistent, public expenditure management is in place	No (indeed, without an approved LG Act, etc., this result would not be possible anyway). LDF Operations Manual has been introduced in pilot Counties but this only marginally linked to future local planning.
3. Local Investments Implemented at County & District Levels	
3.1. LDF (DDF/CDF) is established as the basis for the IGFT system, institutionalised by the LDLD operational manual	No. LDF has been introduced in pilot Counties but is not a model for a DDF, or an improved CDF or for a future IGFT system.
3.2. The CDF/DDF accountability system and links to the national budgetary cycle are established	No. LDF procedures and institutions unconnected to CDF (or to any possible DDF) or to national budgetary cycle.
3.3. Access to, quality and extent of infrastructure and service delivery improved according to the … (sic)	No. LDF did inject $ 950,000 into extra infrastructure (whose utility very mixed), but procedures unconnected to and had no impact on wider infrastructure or service delivery procedures.

Output 1 Targets

The combined evaluation of LDLD found that "the programme has not only lent considerable support to the drafting and dissemination of the National Decentralisation Policy, [and] it supported the forging of consensus … It has culminated into the formulation of essential legal frameworks and triggered deliberate effort on the part of Ministries and Agencies to start deconcentrating key aspects of their functions to the counties."

The present mission largely endorses this finding, insofar as there was time to examine policy results. As already noted, and although not the main focus of the present evaluation exercise, the mission assesses the achievement of targets for **Output 1** to have been substantially achieved:

a. A consultative national policy process was launched and a fairly comprehensive national policy document on decentralization has been approved and widely disseminated;
b. An Inter-Ministerial Committee to coordinate policy development has been established.
c. While a local government act has not yet been approved by the National Assembly, draft legislation has already been prepared and is currently pending review. To have expected both policy and legislation to have been approved in five years may have been overly ambitious. If approved in its current form, this legislation is quite far reaching in regard to the degree of democratization of the local administration, providing not only for local elected assemblies but also for election of all key local officials (which may, however, generate some conflict between these two arms of future local government). One missing element in the policy is clarity regarding the expected service delivery roles and functions of local government.
d. Preparatory work has begun, led by MoF, to develop policy on the decentralization of different sectors. If experience elsewhere is any guide, this will be a long process and can

only be finalized once local governments are in place and able to play their own role at the negotiating table in regard to their assuming certain service delivery functions, and being allocated the corresponding staff and budget resources. Again, it was probably not realistic to have expected a policy in this area to have been concluded within the 5 year LDLD timeframe.

e. MoF has also assumed a lead role in developing a fiscal decentralization policy, although this appears also to be at quite an early stage. It should be noted here that this is mainly supported by the IMF rather than through LDLD.
f. Policy groundwork has been undertaken, but policy issues not yet resolved, in important related areas: reviewing issues around boundaries and numbers of Districts (a very contentious area), reviewing the roles of Chiefs in local governance, and so on.
g. Lastly, groundwork has begun to build MIA's own capacities to lead and coordinate policy development and to train and monitor the sub-national administration.
h. It should be noted that all Output 1 activities were undertaken with UNDP and/or EC funding.

While not all Output 1 targets have been achieved (nor, realistically, could many have been fully achieved in 5 years), considerable progress has been made – and in large measure this must be attributable to support from LDLD.

What is striking is that most of this has been achieved on a "homegrown" basis, using mainly national expertise and consultants, and the LDLD PMU team in MIA. There has been very little resort to international experts in these policy support activities. How far this was a matter of deliberate choice, or how far due to the extremely low LDLD budget allocations for such inputs, is not clear. It is noted that, in the prodoc, UNCDF had planned to provide some, albeit very modest, support to Output 1 activities (esp. in the areas of fiscal and sector decentralization policy) but did not then actually provide for any budgets for such policy support in its AWPs.

In many ways this national self-reliance is admirable – although, especially in the areas of sector and fiscal decentralization, there can be great value in a judicious introduction of lessons from elsewhere.

Output 2 Targets

The combined evaluation noted the "strengthening of local administration capacities on PFM", that "the software and hardware for county administration have been supported with visible national ownership of the processes and systems", and that "county administrations are applying the skills training .. and are working in dedicated buildings, and in critical PRS and CDA related planning".

This mission would make a rather more nuanced assessment. Indeed, an assessment of achievement of **Output 2** targets is a little harder, partly because of the way strategy seems to have changed and hence the fact that some of the Output targets as originally framed are no longer relevant:

a. There are no local government public expenditure management procedures in place as of yet. Since the local government legislation – which defines the shape, roles, accountabilities, etc. of local government – is not in place, it would indeed not be possible to have finalized PEM procedures yet. However, the sort of piloting envisaged in the prodoc which aimed to generate a possible model or models for such future local planning and PEM procedures has not taken place. Draft District Planning Guidelines have been prepared but these are far from what is needed as a basis for future District planning, let alone the wider District PEM cycle (and remain premature given the lack of any funding to Districts); they are simply a guide to analysis of local problems and priorities (apparently inspired by Zambian experience), which is just the first step of a planning process.

b. Similarly, and for the same reasons, such planning and PEM procedures have not – and could not have - been rolled out yet at either County or District levels. The LDF Operations manual has been developed and rolled out in the target Districts of the pilot Counties but – as will be discussed further below – these LDF procedures are not at all precursors or a model for a future District planning or PEM system.
c. Again, since there is no effective local planning there is as yet no issue of aligning this with national development planning. But here too, there has been no piloting of any District or County planning procedures which might inform such a later alignment.
d. Instead, the main focus of activities supported under Output 2 has been on the human resource dimension of capacity development, rather than on the institutional development side. In other words, it has focused primarily on: preparation of a set of manuals for training of County officials in (current, pre-Local Government Act) national procedures for PFM, procurement, internal control and audit, human resource management, and so on, and in a ToT to roll-out this training; and in providing logistical and IT facilities for this staff. This is certainly very important groundwork, and it appears to have been achieved with considerable collaboration between MIA, MoF and the PPCC. It should be noted that virtually all Output 2 activities were undertaken with UNDP and/or EC funding, but with hardly any of the originally planned, albeit very modest, UNCDF support.

Output 3 Targets

An overall assessment of Output 3 Targets is harder still given that the Target framework bears little relation to the strategy adopted during implementation, and that the results framework was never amended to reflect this change:

a. The LDF as it has been established can not be the basis for a future IGFT system: it does not provide an annual budget allocation to the target Districts and is not synchronized with the annual government budget cycle.
b. Similarly, apart from procurement, the planning, management and accountability procedures for the LDF are unrelated to present or likely future local public expenditure management and accountability procedures in Liberia.
c. Lastly, it seems unlikely that there has been improvement in the quality and extent of local access to infrastructure & services due to the LDF component: as will be discussed under Section 5., LDF investments (which were all investments in support of group-based farming or agro-processing) themselves seem to have been of rather doubtful utility, and the LDF procedures were unconnected to the planning and delivery of other public infrastructure and services (such as are funded by CDF and SDF) so can have had no influence over them, for better or worse.

The reasons for these perhaps surprisingly pessimistic assertions are further developed in Section 5. below.

<u>4.3. Overall assessment of programme results (outcome level analysis)</u>

Overall, since 2008, the mission would confirm the combined evaluation finding that a great deal of progress has been made toward achieving the expected Outcome of “Strengthening of Local Governance with the immediate objective of establishing Liberia’s decentralization strategy”.

Since a Local Government Act has not yet been approved (defining the shape, roles, powers and resources of future local government) a number of results originally envisaged could not have been achieved yet, such as policies and officially approved systems for local government financing, PEM, accountability, and so on.

Much of this achievement is of course simply attributable to GoL's own political commitment to decentralise and establish democratically elected local government – but undoubtedly LDLD can claim substantial credit for having supported this commitment.

That said, LDLD support for this Outcome has been almost entirely achieved through results from Output 1, and to a lesser extent Output 2., but Output 3 (where UNCDF support has been mainly devoted) has played very little role.

In the development of the national decentralization strategy LDLD has not been able to contribute the sort of policy-relevant innovations in sub-national financing and PEM – originally intended to emerge from both Outputs 2 and 3 (though in fact confined to Output 3) – and which are still needed to inform the future development of these policies, systems and procedures.

4.4 Current programme financial status:

The **Table 3** overpage details:

- the annual budget by Output as in the LDLD project document;
- the final approved versions of the Annual Workplan budgets by Output; and
- the actual annual expenditures by Output.

The right hand column of the Table indicates the rate of spending for the 5 year period against both (i) the budget of the prodoc, and also (ii) the sum of the five AWP budgets – as two different measures of budget execution (i.e. one showing execution against original programme expenditure plan of the programme designers, and the other against the subsequent annual plans of the CTA and RPS).

Given the specific focus of this evaluation, budgets and expenditures are only recorded in regard to UNCDF funding.

The **Chart** on the page following depicts this graphically and illustrates budgets and expenditures by Year and by Output, with Outputs colour-coded to more easily track the patterns.

It should be noted that the evaluation mission faced some difficulties in compiling this picture:

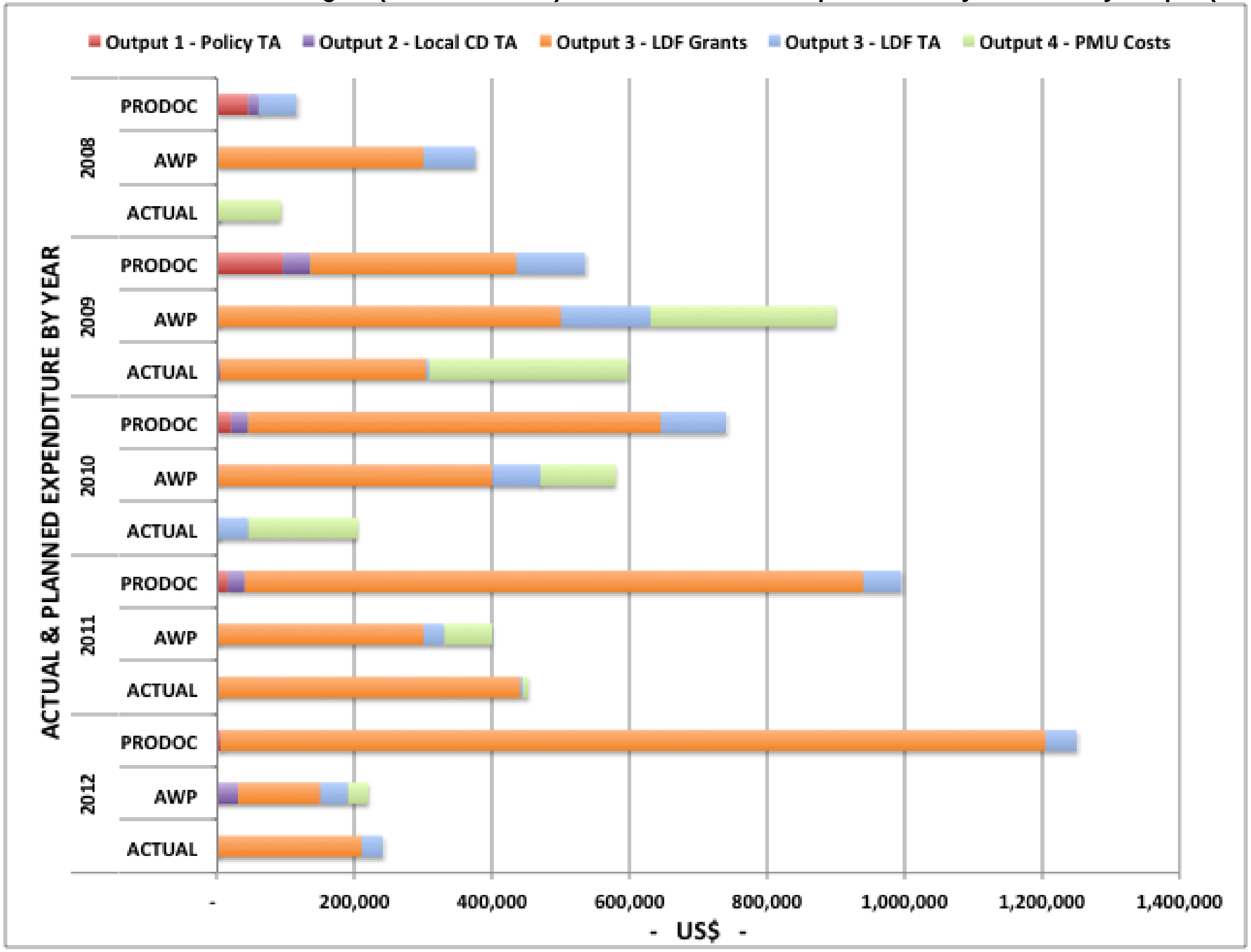
a. The detailed budget in the prodoc (R&R Annex) lists a series of activities for each Output, and the budget for each by funding agency – but in several cases the funding agency is denoted as "UNCDF/EC". In Table 3 here, such planned budget allocations have been assumed to be ones that UNCDF intended to control, through either core or non-core funding.
   The arithmetic sum of all such prodoc budget provisions (core plus hoped-for non-core) for UNCDF was US$ 3.635 million, but the actual approved UNCDF core funding was only US$2.5 million. What was left unclear is how the UNCDF core funding was to be allocated **if** non-core funding was not forthcoming – as proved to be the case. This lack of upfront clarity on the strategic priorities for use of core funds is a problem both in the present ex-

Table 1: Annual project document allocations, (final) AWP budgets and actual expenditures by Year and by Output (UNCDF only) – US$

OUTPUT	2008			2009			2010			2011			2012			TOTAL 2008-12			ACTUAL AS %	
	PRODOC	AWP	ACTUAL	PRODOC	AWP	ACTUAL	PRODOC	AWP	ACTUAL	PRODOC	AWP	ACTUAL	PRODOC	AWP	ACTUAL	PRODOC	AWP	ACTUAL	PRODOC	AWP
Output 1 - Policy TA	45,000		-	95,000	-	-	20,000		-	15,000	-	-	5,000	-	-	180,000	-	-	0%	∞
Output 2 - Local CD TA	15,000		-	40,000	-	3,859	25,000	?	-	25,000	-	-	-	30,000	-	105,000	30,000	3,859	4%	13%
Output 3 - LDF Grants	-	300,000	-	300,000	500,000	300,000	600,000	400,000	-	900,000	300,000	440,973	1,200,000	120,000	210,000	3,000,000	1,620,000	950,973	32%	59%
Output 3 - LDF TA	55,000	75,000	-	100,000	130,000	3,874	95,000	70,000	45,356	55,000	30,000	3,515	45,000	40,000	30,276	350,000	345,000	83,021	24%	24%
Output 4 - PMU Costs	-	-	92,956	-	270,000	289,464	-	? 110,000	159,079	-	70,000	8,201	-	30,000	-	-	480,000	549,700	∞	115%
ARITHMETIC TOTALS	115,000	475,000	92,956	535,000	900,000	597,197	740,000	580,000	204,435	995,000	400,000	452,689	1,250,000	220,000	240,276	3,635,000	2,575,000	1,587,553	44%	62%
APPROVED TOTALS		*475,000*			*900,000*			*700,000*			*400,000*			*220,000*		*2,500,000*	*2,695,000*			

Source: LDLDP document, approved AWPs and expenditure reports from UNCDF Dakar

Chart 1: Planned UNCDF Budgets (Prodoc & AWP) and Actual UNCDF Expenditures by Year and by Output (US$)



post charting of budgets vs expenditures, but must also have been a problem in the AWP exercise and in project management during implementation.

b. Similarly, the AWP budgets were in some cases unclear. In 2010 (flagged in yellow in the Table) the R&R budget allocations for individual activities were a mix of some which were unambiguously assigned for UNCDF funding (which totaled US$ 470,000 for Output 3, and US$ 110,000 for Output 4 – a total US$ 580,000) and some which were "shared" in the R&R table (UNCDF figures as "sharing" together with UNDP and EU in a US$ 760,000 budget forOutput 2 and in an additional US$ 180,000 budget for Output 3 TA). The total approved AWP budget for 2010 was US$ 700,000 – suggesting that some US$ 120,000 (US$ 700,000 – 580,000) of these shared budgets were to be covered by UNCDF, but leaving it unclear as to exactly which.
c. Finally, the AWP output framework in one year (2008) bears no relation to the prodoc result framework and hence it is in principle hard to interpret the corresponding budget allocations – happily, the UNCDF budget for that year was negligible and this is not a major problem.

Putting aside these difficulties, a number of things stand out from the Table and Chart above:

a. Overall, a relatively low rate of budget execution (of both LDF investment funding and TA funding) when measured against AWP allocations (62%), and a very low rate of execution when measured against the original prodoc budget (44%);
b. A refocusing of UNCDF budget allocations and expenditures on Output 3 and also on Output 4 (for which no UNCDF funding provision at all had been made in the prodoc) and withdrawal from the earlier – albeit quite modest – allocations to Outputs 1 and 2.
c. Budget execution on the LDF investment budget line is rather harder to interpret. Overall, it would appear that US$ 950,000 (59% of AWP allocations) has been "spent" (although US$ 50,000 of this is "on hold" in the systems, such that only US$ 900,000 has actually been transferred) – but this in fact only denotes the volume of funds released by UNCDF to the LDLD/LDF account. The mission was unable to gain a complete picture of actual LDF expenditures for all pilot Counties, but reports obtained for 4 pilot Counties as of May 2013 are as follows:

Table 4: Investment Expenditures & Balances in 4 pilot Counties

Pilot Counties (allocated US$ 100,000 each)	Expenditures on Investments & Monitoring etc – US$	Unspent Balance in LDF Bank Account – US$
Grand Bassa	66,790	33,210
Bong	83,088	16,912
Bomi	74,095	25,045
River Cess	99,655	345
Total 4 Counties	**323,628 = 81% of 400,000**	**76,372 = 19% of 400,000**

Over the 4 pilot Counties then some 81% of allocated funds appears to have been spent by May 2013 – which if extrapolated to all 9 Counties would suggest that some US$ 770,000 of the US$ 950,000 allocated has been actually spent to date.

The lack of LDF "expenditures" in 2010 denotes the fact that there was no LDF release by UNCDF to the LDLD account – since local expenditures from the LDF account were proceeding more slowly than expected in that period.

5. Evaluation Findings:

Note: this Section outlines the mission's answers to the seven evaluation questions posed in the ToRs and in the mission's own inception report. These questions span the range of evaluation criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, direct impact and sustainability.

Qn. 1. To what extent was the programme strategy & design coherent and relevant?

The original strategy was – and remains – highly relevant. However, firstly, there were flaws and ambiguities in the design and, secondly, the redirection of strategy which took place during implementation has seriously compromised relevance and impact. The mission has struggled to understand how this redirection could have taken place without a more serious review at the time by UNCDF of the major implications of the changes introduced, which changes could be seen back then to have very likely compromised the success of the original strategy and achievement of intended results.

a. The Original LDLD Strategy & Design

Relevance

The LDLD, as it was designed and approved in 2007, appears to be highly relevant to the Liberian context – both then, and now.

Then. As already noted, in 2007 Liberia was emerging from a long period of strife: basic infrastructure and service delivery was abysmal, especially outside of Monrovia, public financial management was dysfunctional, and governance structures eroded. The government elected in 2005 came to power with an agenda to address these issues – and, as major plank of its strategy to address the roots of previous problems, to move towards decentralization of power and resources to elected local governments, in order to promote the accountability of the state and the effectiveness of public service delivery, and to defuse widespread resentments against distant Monrovia.

LDLD was positioned squarely to support this agenda. Moreover, it marked the first move by development partners away from the then dominant paradigm of community development and recovery (supported by myriad donors and NGOs in Liberia), and towards support for promoting the accountability and performance of sub-national state institutions. In approving the programme, UNCDF and UNDP therefore played a pioneering role in helping set the stage for decentralization and future local government in Liberia – when the World Bank, for example, continued its support of a CDD approach, through the Community Empowerment Programme, quite detached from government structures and procedures[3].

[3] The LACE/CEP operational manual outlines the procedures for planning and implementing investments, which are approved and managed by LACE and by NGOs on contract to LACE, and in which the County administration is not involved (indeed irritation with this sidelining was expressed by several County officials). For its part, LACE senior management was quite candid that the prime aim of CEP was not to build sub-national government capacities but to provide an expeditious mechanism to respond to community demand for local infrastructure.

More specifically, the UNCDF focus within LDLD/LDF on piloting local funding and PEM procedures seems to have been well justified at the time. Any improvement in local infrastructure and service delivery clearly required reforms in these areas – and GoL, in establishing the CDF & SDF as very embryonic centre-local funding mechanisms, had already created both an opportunity to be seized and also a set of challenges to be usefully addressed.

Whether the focus on the District level was justified in the then context (hence "relevant") might be more debatable. On one hand, the District as a sub-national unit (with mean popn. of around 25,000 – hence reasonably good potential "access" by ordinary local residents to decision-making) lends itself to local consultative planning and monitoring of basic local public goods and services; indeed in many countries the lowest tier of local government is established for units of about the same population size as Liberian Districts. But on the other hand, the District was known to be a problematic entity even in 2007 with the boundaries and even the numbers being a matter of contention (this quite apart from the questions around the DDC).

Now. Government has stayed the course and – with LDLD's support – pressed ahead in developing policy and draft legislation consistent with the earlier commitments. LDLD therefore remains highly relevant today. This is the more so insofar as GoL has expanded centre-local funding through both the CDF and the SDF, whose procedures and modus operandi are more than ever in need of reform.

One issue that has emerged, however, is that according to the draft local government legislation the District will **not** be a tier of local government (i.e. will not be an elected, corporate body), but rather an administrative entity within the County – hence grant transfers to the District level, which it was aimed to pilot, may not in fact be possible (although other forms of earmarking of District funds may still be possible through the County budgets). But it was probably not reasonable to have predicted this.

This last point aside, that such programme relevance continues throughout implementation is not to be taken for granted: not all countries stay the course on decentralization, and reversals – or simply stagnation - of earlier commitments to decentralise are not uncommon (see Eritrea's U-turn, or the protracted wavering of policy commitments in Mozambique, Nepal, Timor-Leste ..).

Coherence and Quality of Design

The broad results framework and logic of LDLD appeared coherent, and reflected the structure of similar UNCDF programmes elsewhere: a set of activities supporting national "upstream" policy and legal development, complemented by one set of activities extending support for local capacity building and roll-out of systems and procedures, and another set of activities aimed at promoting financing and PEM innovations which could inform both other sets of activities. A results logic seems to have broadly shaped the overall LDLD design and the three Outputs appear well calibrated in regard to attaining the intended Outcome (although, as we note below, there were some discrepancies in the Output-Activity result chain – see d. and e.).

However, the quality of the LDLD design is compromised by a number of weaknesses in the project document. The major problems were:

a. **Inadequate local institutional analysis**. A key implicit assumption in the proposed District strategy was the existence of District Development Committees as surrogate representative bodies which could serve as a platform for District-wide planning. However, contrary to the impression given in the prodoc, it appears that these DDCs were created under a UNDP project (CBRP) and only in selected Counties, and were reliant on project funding for their meeting activities. By the time the LDLD had started up in 2008 these DDCs were reportedly no longer functioning. The inadequate analytic groundwork on the local institutional framework for the programme, and lack of any reference to this as an issue in the Risk Analysis – especially in a post-conflict context, with no formal local government structures in place – was a serious flaw and had serious repercussions.

b. **Unclear strategy for the LDF (or CDF/DDF)**. As described in the prodoc, in places it appears that the fund mechanism should be "merged" with the existing CDF and should also aim to reform the CDF modus operandi – but the then problems with the CDF were not made clear (other than the equal – hence inequitable - allocations to Counties). In other places it is described as a District Development Fund, for formula-based allocation to Districts. The Annex 3 to the prodoc – which purportedly sets out the technical design – describes a joint "CDF/DDF" mechanism through which the pilot Counties will allocate funds to Districts on a formula basis, via the County Treasury, and as incentive for District-based participatory planning. An indicative Investment Menu is provided, distinguishing between (i) larger County-level investments, and (ii) District-level projects which may be community-specific or may serve several communities. The same menu then specifies that "typical LDF investments" must have developmental value and gives priority to basic office premises, technical support to project definition, socio-economic project investments, and LED investments (for which some examples are given). The prodoc budget allots US$ 3 million for County/District Funds ("as mechanism for allocating externally supported fiscal transfers to Districts") and also US$ 60,000 to design a "specific investment window to support local economic development". These inconsistent accounts of the intended strategy leave the reader unclear as to exactly how LDLD/LDF funds are to be used in relation to the existing CDF mechanism, if a separate DDF window is to be established and how that would be funded, and so on. This is rather confusing as a guide to implementation.

c. **Inadequate attention in the institutional framework to the role of and partnership with MoF** for the fiscal decentralization policy support to be provided under Output 1 (although which was never provided). Although MIA was the obvious choice as lead agency, it is not clear how MoF, as separate Ministry but the one with the lead mandate for fiscal decentralization, would have been engaged in the planning and management of the sort of support proposed.

d. **Inconsistencies & Overlaps Between Outputs**. There was inconsistency and overlap between activities under Outputs 2 and 3. Under Output 2 a series of targets was laid down as follows: "establishment of local government PEM processes, etc.; institutionalisation of PEM and planning processes in the pilot Counties and adoption of an LDLD operations manual; local and national planning made consistent and PEM in place;" etc.. While under Output 3 it was proposed to undertake "preparation of planning, financing & implementation manuals for counties and districts". It is not obvious what the difference was. This may be a minor point but would still seem to encourage confusion for whoever is managing the project.

e. **Inappropriate characterization of the Output 3 Result**. Output 3 was defined as "Local investment projects implemented". If the principle is that Outputs correspond to the level of results that the project managers can be held accountable for, then this characterisation of Output 3 is inappropriate. Investments are implemented by a combination of actors (community groups, local government officials, contractors, etc.) but in which - in this type of programme, unlike old-style DEX projects or NGO operations – the project management itself does not figure in the actual delivery. It would have been more appropriate to define this Output as something like "appropriate procedures for local investment projects are in place", or similar. (The mission is aware that at times UNCDF does refer to there being "3 sets of programme outputs: policy, institutional and sector investment outputs" – but, if this makes sense at all, it really only applies to genuine national programmes where "government-at-large" is managing, not to support programmes such as LDLD/LDF.)

f. UNCDF budget allocations were unclear. As already noted above, under Section 4.4., the strategic priority for allocation of the US$ 2.5 m UNCDF core funds was not made clear when set within the total of up to US$ 3.6 m (core plus hoped-for non-core) which was budgeted for under UNCDF controled budget lines. It is therefore unclear, at least to this mission, what exactly was UNCDF strategy in regard to allocating the US$ 2.5 m in core across the various possible activities if no non-core was secured.

<u>b. Subsequent Evolution of Strategy & Design</u>

Formal documentation might seem to suggest that in the year or two following prodoc approval the LDF was being implemented as intended. An MoU was signed between RR/UNCDF and MIA on 2 March 2009 and the terms of this MoU appear quite consistent with the intent of the prodoc. It was stipulated that:

a. The purpose of the LDF was to provide an annual allocation to Districts for investments, based on District's meeting basic access conditions, and this was to be a model for future fiscal transfers
b. The Minimum Access conditions required frequent DDC meetings, an annual District Investment Plan prepared on the basis of District-wide participation and approved by the DDC, and with investments properly appraised, and so on
c. Initial Fund releases to the Districts based on approved workplans, budgets, etc., and subsequent allocations based on reporting.
d. Counties would report to MIA on use of funds, and any balances, and MIA would report every FY Quarter to UNCDF.

However, as we will see, the de facto strategy for the LDF evolved in a manner quite divergent from what was originally intended - hence the results actually delivered were also not at all what were originally expected, as we will see further below.

The reasons given by the CTA for the change in strategy for the LDF seem to boil down to two arguments about changed context:

- First, a recognition that the DDCs were no longer functioning from around 2008, after withdrawal of UNDP CBRP support, which had begun in 2005. The fact of their demise was confirmed by the mission in the course of the field visits, when it was also stated by all local officials that they had played a very useful role. Given their demise, it was apparently concluded by the CTA and/or MIA that the sort of District-wide planning and oversight originally intended was no longer possible, and that it was necessary to focus on community-level planning and management.

- Second, a recognition that the volume of funding for local public infrastructure through both CDF and SDF was greatly increasing – and also that there proved often to be problems with the operations budgets for such investments. It was apparently concluded that the LDF therefore needed to distinguish itself, rather than funding similar investments but on a small scale – and hence the argument for focusing the LDF on agricultural/productive investments. Additional reasons for this specific focus were that agriculture is the mainstay of the rural economy and that there was a pressing need to invest in agricultural technology to promote local development.

It is awkward for a mission to come in several years later to second-guess these sorts of decisions with the "wisdom of hindsight". Nonetheless, a few different points need to be underscored:

This change in strategy should, at the least, have immediately triggered a warning light for UNCDF as to the risks of incoherence and inconsistency:

- Formally, the MoU signed off as late as March 2009 carried **no hint at all** of these changes in strategy but appeared to be implementing the original strategy: District planning through the DDC, annual grant allocations, etc..

- More substantially, in strategic terms, the decision to focus on community-level planning for and funding of agricultural sector investments in selected communities meant that the very nature of the planning and PEM procedure cycle to be developed for the LDF could not have been expected to have had much or any relevance for the PEM cycle for the District level, or for the CDF/SDF, which it had been the aim to influence as the core of the LDLD/LDF policy & institutional impact agenda – as indeed proved to be the case.

What is very hard to re-assess in retrospect is whether there were or not real options back then to use or improvise a District-level institution through which to manage planning and basic PEM. It is not the role of the present evaluation mission to historically re-strategise but some questions are at least worth posing:

a. **Would it not have been possible to have maintained the sort of funding support through LDLD/LDF for DDC meeting and other activity costs that had earlier been provided through UNDP's CBRP** ? It may be objected that this was "unsustainable" but this objection misses the point – any interim arrangement set up pending establishment of local government is necessarily – and deliberately - unsustainable, and this is no problem per se. This is certainly the sort of expeditious solution which has been adopted in a number of other UNCDF/UNDP programmes.

Filling local institutional vacuums pending formal local government: illustrations of 2nd best solutions from elsewhere

- Mali: pre-Communes of village chiefs, civil servants, plus women, & other reps. chosen in village meetings
- Mozambique: District consultative councils of chiefs, village leaders, officials
- Nepal: sub-District councils: delegates selected from ward citizen's elected forums (heavy facilitation), and local officials
- Afghanistan: village councils (heavy CDD facilitation) which send delegates to DDCs
- Laos: DDCs comprised of District officials, village headmen & selected women

NB None can be fully democratic, none are problem-free, all require facilitation & support, but perhaps still much better than nothing at all

b. **Alternatively, would it have been possible to build on the arrangements in use for annual planning for the CDF (established through the annual Budget Law)?** For the CDF (and now also SDF) there is a County Development Council comprised of a number of District delegates (from 4 – 10 per District, depending on the County) which supposedly determines CDF priorities (in ways that are admittedly problematic). These District delegates themselves come from District Development Councils (Chiefs, elders, women, other leaders, nominated by Town Hall meetings) which meet Quarterly (at least this was claimed in Cape Mount County). It was claimed that the District delegates on the CDC (supposedly a mixture of Chiefs and others, led by the District Commissioner) engaged in District consultations prior to the CDC meeting to canvas local needs and priorities. With support, clearer guidelines and monitoring (and ring-fencing of the LDF), might not this District institutional arrangement have been built upon for planning and management of the LDF?

c. **Why did the fact that CDF and SDF funded basic public socio-economic infrastructure at greater scale, and that this often faced O&M problems, constitute a reason for LDF to avoid funding the same sorts of investments ?** If the strategic objective was to pilot planning and PEM procedures which might be later adopted to help reform operation of the much larger CDF/SDF mechanisms then this surely required a focus on delivering the **same** sorts of investments (or maybe the small-scale end of these) but in a **different way** - by piloting a set of "improved procedures" to address the problems faced by the CDF/SDF (and alluded to further above under Section 3.2.), which, based on both GAC audit reports and on the mission's own discussions with local officials, were **and still are**:

   i. Lack of a geographically broad-based transparent and fair participatory needs identification process for basic public infrastructure investments and a simple procedure for feeding this from Town, to District and to County level.
   ii. Lack of adequate vetting, screening, preliminary costing, etc., for investments prior to their prioritization.
   iii. No clear procedures for appraisal, ranking & selection of different sorts of investments within a limited budget.
   iv. No clear arrangements for determining O&M budget implications and securing commitments to fund these.
   v. No simplified procurement procedures for small local investments.
   vi. Inadequate technical support & supervision during implementation.
   vii. Inadequate procedures for ensuring payments are certified only when work is completed satisfactorily.
   viii. No role for local community or user group involvement in supervision, monitoring & payment certification.
   ix. Inadequate treasury and fund flow mechanisms to ensure funds arrive on time.
   x. No arrangements for transparency and accountability in each of the steps above.

Put differently, impacting policy of course requires well-packaged information and messaging – but this is secondary. But the **necessary** condition for influencing policy and institutions, and achieving mainstreaming and replication, is that the lessons from piloting improved practice are **relevant** to the sorts of reform needed. Hence if the aim was to reform CDF then the LDF experience and lessons needed to be relevant to the problems posed by CDF, and not occupy a different niche altogether.

Qn. 2. How well has the programme management delivered LDLD/LDF expected results?
Most activities were delivered in a fairly timely manner, but the quality of one key output (LDF Guidelines) was highly flawed and this has had a knock-on effect throughout the result structure. The mission believes that this poor quality is at least in part due to UNCDF failure to provide adequate and timely technical support to an over-stretched programme management.

a. Recap of Key Activities & Milestones

a. **Set up of PMU.** The CTA took up his post in January 2008. National consultants were recruited over the next couple of years, and the PMU was fully set up by 2010. These PMU members were deputed to the M&E, ICT, Training & Capacity Development, County Development Support, & Decentralisation Implementation Divisions of MIA, to support MIA officials.

b. MoU. An MoU governing the intended operations of the LDF was developed in late 2008/early 2009 (by a UNCDF mission late 2008) and signed between RR/UNCDF and MIA on 2 March 2009.

c. **LDF Operational Manual**. An initial version of the manual was developed by the MIA County Support Secretariat, after local consultations, starting in May 2008, with minor changes were made in subsequent versions. Sensitisation and training in the provisions of the OM was undertaken in months and years following in the pilot Counties and Districts.

d. **The Pilot Counties & Districts.** The prodoc envisaged piloting the LDF in 3 Counties. The first 3 had already been selected by early 2008 but then in the course of 2009 it was decided to expand this to a further 6 Counties – and this was endorsed by a UNCDF mission (the CTA reports that there was MIA pressure to expand to all Counties but that this was resisted). In each pilot County a pilot District and pilot community/ies were selected. Sensitisation and training in LDF OM procedures was then undertaken and the first (50%, or US$ 50,000 per County) fund releases were extended to 9 Counties in batches, as follows:

- River Cess, River Gee, Gparpolu (mid-2009)
- Bomi, Grand Bassa, Sinoe (end-2009)
- Bong, Nimba, Maryland (early 2010)

e. **LDF implementation in the Pilot Counties & Districts**. Implementation of the LDF in these pilot Counties entailed a series of activities (as set out in the LDF OM), as follows:

- Pre-selection (by County officials together with MIA) of a target District and within the target District of one or sometimes two or more Towns or communities
- A number of Sensitization Town Hall meetings in the target Towns and communities, usually led by PMU staff and County officials
- In the course of these meetings participants would be presented with a “guided menu” of investment packages, with indicative costs for each, typically related to: swamp rice cultivation & rice milling, cassava production and cassava/gari processing, mixed/vegetable cropping, and – in coastal areas – mechanized fishing canoes. (See Table in Annex 7) The budget for the set of such packages in each target District/communities was to be US$ 100,000 (of which US$ 10,000 was taken off to finance management & monitoring)

- Participants would decide on their preferences and would also identify the group members (the OM suggests 30-60 members with equal M/W membership) for each investment package (since the strategy adopted was to promote group enterprise in these activities).
- MIA/PMU would field consultants to develop investment feasibility profiles, costings & budgets, and procurement plans, in consultation with the group members.
- LDF-specific institutional innovations were put into place: (i) Each set of group members would elect its own Project Management Team (Chair, Treasurer, etc); (ii) a District Development Management Committee would be formed, comprising PMT chairpersons, Town Chiefs, women and youth leaders from the one or two target communities, and chaired by the District Commissioner.
- With support from the PMU, and County officials, the DDMC prepared an annual workplan and a procurement plan for the investment packages of the different groups (misleadingly referred to as a District workplan).
- Procurement was undertaken via a County procurement committee, as prescribed in PPCC regulations, but with PMT participation as an important innovation.
- The PMTs, with support from the DDMC, oversaw the "acceptance" of inputs and materials provided by the suppliers and, where relevant, managed the construction of structures (rice mill sheds, meeting houses, etc.).
- The PMTs, through the DDMCs, would request payments to the suppliers from the County LDF account, which payments were made after approval from the Minister of Internal Administration.
- In many cases changes were made to the original investment package "design" and budgets in the course of this process: e.g. for the fisheries project in River Cess the original plan for 3 mechanised canoes was scaled down to 1 (and the budget reduced from US$ 42,000 to around US$ 11,000), while for the swamp rice project it was decided to add a rice mill and thresher to the package.

This LDF investment cycle process, from initial consultations (which began in 1st batch pilot Counties in mid-2009, and in 3rd batch Counties in mid/late 2010) to finalization of investments, seems to have taken some 3 years or so to complete in most cases – most of the projects visited by the mission (May 2013), from both 1st and 3rd batch Counties, were still not completed.

Several informants affirmed that delays were partly due to the 2011 elections which (as noted earlier) led to a turnover of key officials in MIA and of the County Supervisors – and that induction of new officials in the LDF strategy took time. Another informant also reported that there have been particular delays in Maryland due to lack of local consensus on priorities, but this could not be corroborated.

It was also reported that the investment implementation process has suffered delays due to the need to submit all project proposals, all purchase orders, and all payment requests back to the Minister of MIA in Monrovia for approval.

f. **(Draft) District Planning Guidelines**. In 2011 a set of draft guidelines was developed by a national consultant (inspired apparently by Zambian planning documents) but these have not yet been adopted or rolled out.

b. Quality of Outputs

LDF Operational Guidelines. The principal "technical-procedural" output for the LDF was the LDF Operational Guidelines referred to above, issued very promptly soon after project start-up in mid-2008, with subsequent minor amendments. Box 3 here below provides an overview of the structure and content of these guidelines.

Box 3: LDF Operational Guidelines: an Overview of Key Sections -

1. **Background**. This spells out the strategy of the LDLD very much as articulated in the prodoc.
2. **Objectives of the LDF**. This states that "the goal of the LDF is to empower local communities to take part in the decision-making processes through improved local governance and development management in order to reduce poverty, improve service delivery and accelerate progress to achieve MDGs at local level". It then cites more specific objectives which conform very much to the strategy as articulated in the prodoc and in the MoU.
3. **Structure of the Fund**. This states that:
   a. All LDF projects are to be identified, formulated and approved by the local community.
   b. All LDF projects are to be managed through the Project Management Team (PMT). PMT to be elected in a meeting presided over by the DC. PMT should comprise 5 persons, incl. at least 2 Women.
   c. The PMT works under the supervision of the District Development Management Committee (DDMC). DDMC will be comprised of all PMT Chairpersons in the District, plus the Town Chief(s) and elected woman and youth leaders. The DDMC is chaired by the DV.
   d. The PMT submits proposals – through the DDMC – to the County Administration
   e. The County Administration – after review and comment – submits proposals to the MIA for final approval/revision
   f. Alternatively, the projects may be approved in a joint meeting with PMT, DDMC, County Admin., MIA and LDLD once they are identified and selected by the community as part of the Annual Investment Plan.
4. **Identification of Pilot Counties & Districts**. This states that MIA will select pilot Counties & Districts together with the local administrations.
5. **LDF Allocations**. This states that each pilot District/County will receive US$ 100,000, in two tranches.
6. **Ownership of the Project**. This states that:
   a. All projects to be operated by community self-help groups, which groups to be selected via Town Hall meetings
   b. Net revenues from the project will be distributed between group members (80%) and the DDMC (20%) , the latter to allow broadening and replication.
   c. LDF Minimum Conditions. This details procedures to be followed in planning and managing the projects.
7. **Project Identification, Formulation & Approval**. Residents of the target District/community to meet and decide which projects they want, consistent with the CDA and the PRA. These proposals are to be submitted to the County, and then to the CDSS of the MIA for analysis and feedback.
8. **Cross-Cutting Issues**. LDF will be implemented with due regard for issues of Gender, HIV/AIDS, the environment, etc.
9. **Roles & Responsibilities of key Actors**.
   a. **Target communities** to identify local priorities, to prioritise economically viable and sustainable projects, to approve group members, to allocate land and other resources, and organize periodic meetings to monitor progress
   b. **PMT** to manage the group, implement the group workplan, record accounts and labour and other inputs, hold monthly group meetings, prepare Qtly reports to DDMC, safeguard project assets, resolve group problems
   c. **DDMC** to monitor all development projects in the District, to review LDF project proposals and verify PMT requests for payment requests and reports, to monitor PMT implementation of projects and facilitate problem-solving, and lead the preparation of a district development plan with gender responsive budgeting.
   d. **DDC** will support LDF implementation, monitor project progress, prepare weekly & monthly monitoring reports, and identify problems to be resolved.
   e. **County Administration** will administer the LDF following GoL guidelines for local government PEM, ensure Districts/communities comply with LDF procedures, guide the formulation of project proposals, review procurement & payment requests and submit to MIA for approval, provide guidance to DDMC to formulate a District Development Plan, assist Districts to open LDF bank account to manage their share of project profits, etc.
   f. **MIA** to review LDF allocations in light of access conditions, ensure County & District compliance, coordinate/provide training, approve only requests which comply with procedures, review and consolidate reports.

g. **MoF** will provide training on PFM-related matters, and undertake periodic auditing of LDF projects.
h. **MPEA** will, through the CDO, support workplanning and monitoring

10. Fund Management. A County LDF account to be established for all LDF transactions, with the later possibility of a District LDF account. Payment requests to be made by PMT Treasurer and approved by PMT Chair and DC but must then be approved by County and by MIA. Signatories are the CS (or Asst CS for Development) and the PMC Chairman (or PMC Treasurer).

11. Procurement. Procedures to follow those of the PPCC and require competitive tendering, managed by a Procurement Committee comprising Asst CS for Development (Chair), 4 other County officials but also with participation from the PMT(s) concerned.

The document itself is well written and clear (although the sequence of sections is confusing and the text is for a quite sophisticated English reader) – and its attempt to provide procedural clarity is obviously of great value in a context where there has been little clarity (witness the management problems of CDF and SDF). But the Guidelines do present some "quality problems" (quite aside from the more fundamental "relevance" problems discussed under Qn. 3 below), of different sorts:

- **Internal Inconsistency.** The provisions in the initial sections 1 & 2, which are aligned with the prodoc, are not consistent with Sections 3 and onwards which embody a quite different institutional and procedural strategy, whose many problems (which go well beyond "problems of quality") will be examined in the next **Section 3.** on **Effectiveness**, further below.

- **Lack of practical guidance**. There is no practical guidance (e.g. simple tools, formats, tables) to the user on such issues as how to review and appraise LDF project proposals (no simple task), how to monitor and report on implementation progress, how to estimate ongoing group project revenue and profits, how to keep group accounts, how exactly PMTs and DDMs should report, and so on.

- **Lack of training materials**. Relatedly, no didactic training materials were prepared to support the ToT mechanism in rolling-out these guidelines – eg trainer manuals, simple process flow charts, practice simple worksheets (eg for project appraisal, or for calculation of group income and profits, etc.), standard simple report format tables, or simple reference tools or other aids that the PMTs or the DDMs could keep to hand, guide them in implementation.

Project feasibility and planning documents. These were prepared by local consultants, engaged by MIA/PMU, after the initial Town Hall meetings, for each set of County projects. They aimed to provide a technical and financial feasibility appraisal, and to project future financial returns to the group members. However, review of a number of these suggests they were not very carefully undertaken or checked. In several cases the feasibility assessments for the same investment package were verbatim copies of each other – e.g. in regard to current cropping problems and yields in the area, or to the expected future yields and market price. Given the widely varying agro-ecological and market conditions of the Counties it was highly implausible that identical analyses and projections could have been accurate. There is no record of any questioning of these studies, either by the PMU/CTA or by UNCDF missions.

The draft District Planning Guidelines. These were issued in 2011, very late in the day – although, given the actual strategy adopted for the LDF, and the lack of any District-wide funding mechanism, this was not really a problem. They have not been nor could they have been used. That aside, they are very incomplete as guidelines and only provide guidance for assessing District development problems and identifying problems and priorities – but they are far from what is needed to guide the entire planning and budgeting cycle.

Internal Monitoring & Reporting. The overall LDLD Annual and Quarterly reports are clear, well written and informative, as are the occasional Newsletters.

But the mission found very little by way of regular reporting on the implementation and status of the LDF component. There is apparently a reporting stream coming up from PMCs, to DDMCs, to Counties and to MIA on implementation, expenditures, etc. but the mission was unable to ascertain how complete or regular are these reports. There has been however a lack of regular consolidation, aggregation and analysis of these reports at County and especially at MIA levels, perhaps because the M&E Division has only become operational in 2012:

- To illustrate, by the end of the mission it had not proved possible to ascertain the current status of approved investment budgets in each County (which are occasionally modified, and substantially, as seen above) and of actual expenditures for all LDF investment projects.

- Similarly it is not clear how regular is reporting on the status of physical implementation of LDF investment projects. The mission was provided with one M&E Division report, compiled in early 2013, on the implementation status of investments funded by CDF, SDF and also LDF in all Counties. This contains a short one or two sentence anecdotal account of implementation issues and problems for each investment, as well as outdated information in the investment budgets. A cursory review suggests that a substantial number of LDF investments are facing problems – of group membership and involvement, of non-completion, etc. (as are also CDF and SDF investments).

Clearly, regular compilation and analysis of these sorts of reports are key to efficient management, monitoring, troubleshooting and, more generally, to learning lessons from the pilot Counties.

Lastly here it must be said that the CTA seemed well aware of the existence of the sorts of problems with investment implementation revealed in such reports and by the evaluation mission's field visits (examined further below). The problem from his perspective was the lack of adequate budgetary resources in the UNCDF AWP budget for monitoring, field visits and remedial action.

c. UNCDF resource deployment in support of programme management

Lastly, the efficiency of UNCDF corporate support requires some review: the funding dimension and the corporate technical backstopping.

Funding

By and large UNCDF funding appears to have been provided in a fairly timely manner, albeit not at a level or in the composition budgeted for. As the Chart 1 further above well illustrates, this discrepancy is, of course, much greater in reference to the prodoc than in reference to the AWPs, although there are notable deviations on the latter account as well. That said, this deviation may not always denote an efficiency problem and might simply reflect changing realities in the course of the year which compel reallocations of the original AWP.

However, one major discrepancy at least must be raised: while both prodoc and also the AWP budgeted for significant Output 3 TA to design the LDF mechanism in 2008-09, there was no actual expenditure for such TA. The mission believes that this may be a major factor underlying the direction taken by the LDF (see below). It is not clear where such a decision originates – i.e. whether the non-delivery of such TA stemmed from a lack of a more specific request or proposal from the CTA or from MIA, or from a UNCDF decision to forego this, or simply from inertia.

One other funding efficiency problem worth noting lies in the AWP process itself and the planning and negotiations between the CTA and UNCDF regarding the budget allocation for the coming year. To illustrate in regard to annual AWP budgeting for the LDF grants:

Capital grants: AWPs and Actual Releases (US$)

2008		2009		2010		2011		2012	
AWP	ACTUAL	AWP	ACTUAL	AWP	ACTUAL	AWP	ACTUAL	AWP	ACTUAL
300,000	-	500,000	300,000	400,000	-	300,000	440,973	120,000	210,000

- For 2008 it had been planned to release US$ 300,000 for LDF grants, which was surely very unrealistic in the first year when procedures and systems need time to be set up, but in effect no funds were released at all.
- For 2009 the CTA had planned for US$ 500,000 in the agreed AWP. However, by mid-year this was clearly more than could be absorbed so by agreement this was reduced to a release of US$ 300,000.
- For 2010 it was initially planned to allocate US$ 400,000 in the agreed AWP. But at mid-year it was agreed that no LDF funds were needed that year, given the unspent funds in the account in-country.
- For 2011, the CTA had requested US$ 500,000, but only US$ 300,000 were approved in the AWP; but then US$ 441,000 were actually released.
- For 2012 the CTA had requested US$ 700,000, but only US$ 110,000 were approved in the AWP – while US$ 210,000 were actually released.

In other words, the outcome of these estimates and negotiations is a rather erratic pattern of sometimes greatly overestimated planned capital allocations and then serious underspending, or of excessively low planned capital allocations and then substantial overspending.

This mission is very well aware of UNCDF's corporate funding constraints and uncertainties, and the need for its portfolio managers to strike difficult balances between the needs of several country programmes all competing for funds and the need to allocate these where they are most likely to be spent (to meet corporate delivery targets). Similarly, CTAs are doubtless tempted to over-budget (even perhaps pressured to do so by their government department) because, with enough lead time, there may always be ways to absorb an increase in grants by expanding the number of units (e.g. Counties) covered.

The mission has no answer to this difficult problem but it does seem to have been a likely source of uncertainty and of inefficiency at country/project management level for the LDLD/LDF. It is also a little surprising that the variations between plan and actual spending should have been so marked, given the standard nature of the US$ 100,000 County allocations, the known numbers of Counties, and – by the 2nd year at least – a fair basis for estimating the yearly rate of expenditure or drawdown.

Technical support to & monitoring of the LDLD CTA and team. LDLD/LDF has received technical support from UNCDF through a series of short missions by technical advisors and portfolio managers, and by a short mission from the CTA of the UNCDF programme in Sierra

Leone, which provided general guidance for and reporting on the implementation of the LDF. There appear to have been no international consultants fielded to support the LDF. According to reports available to the mission, UNCDF fielded missions by HQ or Regional TAs and/or by Portfolio Specialists as follows (apparently other RTA missions were also fielded, but for which reports are not available):

- 20 – 22 October 2008
- 9 – 14 November 2008
- November 2009 (no BToR available)
- 25 – 30 Oct 2010 (NB this by an IF – not an LDF – adviser, the head of the Dakar RO)
- 1st week March 2011 (by Sierra Leone CTA)
- 31 March – 7 April 2011
- 20 - 25 May 2012

Useful as these missions may have been, they were infrequent, were very brief, and the varying staff members may have represented some lack of consistency in the visions and degree of encouragement that each imparted to the CTA and the LDLD/LDF team.

More importantly, while each of these missions recorded various findings and made various recommendations, there is no record of any specific input of any sort to the LDF Operational Guidelines – whether a commentary or a critique, or proposed changes or amendments. Yet these guidelines constitute the key output for the LDF: they were to govern the implementation of the LDF and to establish the proto-local government PEM and financing procedures and the institutional arrangements whose piloting was intended to inform the policy and local institutional/capacity-development results of LDLD Output 1 and 2 respectively. They should therefore have been the prime object of technical input and quality assurance by UNCDF.

In practice, the work in this area seems to have been undertaken entirely by the MIA/PMU team and local consultants with no international experts brought in to provide sustained input and support (other than a short visit from the CTA in Sierra Leone). The CTA of LDLD claims to have requested a consultant in preparation of the LDF guidelines but that this was not forthcoming but this is contested by UNCDF

In this mission's view, this seems to have been a major missed opportunity for UNCDF. On one hand, it was quite unrealistic and inappropriate to expect a fully home-grown solution to address the technical and institutional challenges of devising and overseeing the testing of the LDF procedures envisaged. On the other hand, the provision of this sort of technical support and of the sort of international cross-fertilisation required is surely at the core of UNCDF's own raison d'etre as a Local Development Finance agency.

This mission certainly does not believe that international expertise is the sole answer, nor that there are "standard packages" which can be transplanted from country to country – quite the contrary. But UNCDF is operating similar programmes across Africa and Asia – many in post-conflict countries or where the local institutional framework is otherwise problematic – and a great deal of expertise has been accumulated in-house and within UNCDF's stable of consultants, which may have lessons for Liberia, of course with appropriate adaptation to context.[4]

[4] For example, this consultant is aware of earlier UNCDF programmes in Mozambique and Mali, and more recent programmes in Laos, Timor-Leste or Nepal which all provide lessons on how institutional

The mission also recognizes that, even in the best of circumstances, UNCDF's own technical advisory staff are too stretched across a wide range of countries to provide the sort of substantial and frequent international technical advisory inputs required. But this is precisely where UNCDF international consultants – for which there were substantial budgeted allocations - need to be deployed. The kind of technical input required for this was a series of more sustained and – at least for the initial couple of years – more frequent international consulting missions, to work with the CTA and his team and do the groundwork in developing the sort of LDF guidelines which were needed. In this regard, the sharing of technical material from other countries, and the inviting of the CTA to workshops, is all a useful supplement – but is no substitute for what was required. It should be noted that substantial funds had been actually approved for technical support for LDF (Output 3) TA for the first two years: the LDLD prodoc budgeted $ 155,000, and the two AWPs actually budgeted $ 205,000 – yet only some $ 3,850 is recorded as being spent.

A further key point worth underlining here is that several of the missions listed above appeared to actually endorse the "de facto" LDF strategy being adopted by the CTA and his PMU team.

Extracts from UNCDF BTORs

- 2011 BTOR: "Following the field visit, the mission endorses that the formulation and implementation of LDF is in conformity with the LDLD PRODOC and the UNCDF's Local Development Practice Area (LDPA) tailored to the local conditions and post-conflict settings of Liberia."
- 2012 BTOR: "The consensus is that the LDLD programme has responded to the key development issue of developing national and local level systems that support infrastructure development, service delivery as part of a national agenda for sustainable development, poverty reduction and addressing the MDGs"

These quite ringing endorsements do not seem to be backed by any review or analysis of the LDF Guidelines and their implementation (at least based on the BTORs).

The endorsements of the CTA and the LDF also seem to be somewhat at odds with concerns expressed by the UNCDF RO about the LDF by email exchange with UNDP Liberia in 2011 – about a "communitarian" bias in the LDF, about the poor disbursement and about the CTA's overall unresponsiveness to UNCDF.

Insofar as the implementation of the LDF entailed a very substantial redirection of signed prodoc strategy it would have been appropriate that this had been approved through a more formal mid-term programme review and adjustment mechanism, and indeed that it be submitted for discussion and approval by the Programme Board. But there is no evidence of such a discussion, let alone approval, in the Board minutes made available to the mission.

To be fair, the March 2011 mission did also recommend a mid-term evaluation mission but this never took place (for reasons unclear) – and, in the 4th year, this would have been rather late in the day anyway!

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platforms may be devised to address a vacuum in local elected government, and how simple PEM procedures can be devised and rolled out using this platform. There may be more recent examples which are equally or more relevant.

The CTA and the PMU. At the local end of the "chain of support" to drive LDLD/LDF implementation are the CTA and the PMU, who constitute the main interface with GoL and who were tasked to implement the programme as designed, or as changes in the design were approved.

Clearly, given this mandate, the CTA was then necessarily and directly responsible for the key problems documented in this report: i.e. for having steered – or allowed – implementation of the LDF in a manner in marked deviation from the original strategy and design (as documented throughout this Section 5.), such as to seriously compromise achievement of the expected results, without explicitly consulting UNCDF on this. Not only that, but much of the reporting on LDF implementation (e.g. through the annual progress reports) is misleading – though probably unintentionally. The reports make no reference to the deviations in LDF strategy outlined further above and under Qn 1, and contain suggestions that "District planning procedures" had been set up, and so on, as if all were proceeding as originally intended.

However, without wishing to unduly dilute this responsibility, it must also be remembered that the CTA faced his own constraints of time and of expertise:

- On one hand, he was probably very stretched in managing, as lone international, the ambitious and wide ranging LDLD programme (much of which was quite successful) – and in providing a range of other daily ad hoc support to senior MIA officials (subject to frequent turnover and hence often lacking longstanding experience of the issues) and to the UNDP CO – and so likely unable to dedicate the amount of time and energy needed for developing LDF procedures and backstopping their implementation.
- On the other hand, time aside, it seems quite unreasonable to expect that even a senior CTA would have had the range of expertise and experience needed to develop, singlehanded, the sort of technical and institutional guidelines required for the LDF.

To conclude this section, there appear to have been serious efficiency problems in the management and support of the LDF which compromised the quality of key outputs – most importantly, both inadequate and inconsistent technical support, monitoring, and quality control, and inadequate provision of the supplementary technical inputs that were needed for implementation.

The next sections will further detail the extent of the problems with the LDF output which derive from these efficiency problems and which feed into institutional and policy effectiveness and problems.

Qn. 3. To what extent has LDLD/LDF contributed to improved systems and capacities at sub-national government level?
The LDF strategy as implemented was not geared to providing support to sub-national government systems and capacities and has scarcely done so, due to the basic "mismatch" between the procedures introduced and what was needed. This is primarily a knock-on effect from the problems in the LDF guidelines noted under Qn. 2.

Note: the mission was reminded by several interlocutors (and most notably at both the Briefing and the Debriefing meetings at MIA – see Annex 6) that the LDF should not be judged on the quality of the investments delivered ***alone*** *– and that the primary value of the LDF is through its impact on systems and procedures.*

Local capacities, systems and procedures – the premise

The premise of the LDLD/LDF logic under Outputs 2 and 3 was that sub-national government capacities to promote local development could be enhanced by reforms to the systems and procedures governing financing, planning and management. These reforms to systems and procedures were to be effected by testing innovations and improvements in the financing, planning and basic PEM cycle in Districts in the pilot Counties, and using lessons from this to prompt the reform in the way CDF and SDF are managed and, more broadly, to inform development and adoption of PEM systems and procedures within the implementation of the new decentralisation policy.

The intent of the LDF was thus to pilot a mechanism for financing District and local investments, which would complement the existing CDF, and in tandem to pilot a set of bottom-up District-level planning and PEM procedures which could serve as model for future local government fiscal transfers and PEM procedures.

The mismatch

On one hand, introduction of some relatively clear procedures under the LDF has constituted significant progress, by contrast to the lack of any clear procedures to guide management of the CDF & SDF.

But, on the other hand, the LDF procedures are for the most part are simply not tailored to the intended goal. In order to document this mismatch we need to look back at the individual elements of the LDF Guidelines introduced (and which were summarized in the Box further above under Qn. 2.):

LDF Funding Mechanism Procedures:

a. Funding was not allocated to the District per se, to allow funding of proposals from communities across the District, but to one or two communities pre-selected (on criteria which were not very clear) within the District, accounting for perhaps 5% of the population of the District. The levels of funding so allocated equate to about US$ 100 per capita for these fortunate communities.

b. Funding was not allocated as an annual grant, to mimic an annual fiscal transfer tied in with the annual budget cycle, but has been allocated on a one-time basis with releases made over 2 or more years, unconnected to the annual budget cycle.

c. Funding was not allocated on a needs-based, formula basis, to mimic an equitable formula-based transfer, but was a standard equal amount to all Counties/Districts, despite greatly varying populations – hence mimicking the same inequities characterizing the allocations of the CDF and SDF whose aim it was to help reform.

d. Funding was not allocated for local discretionary use over a range of possible District or community investments, thereby to mimic an unconditional block grant and to test an appropriate expenditure menu for the District level, but was confined to a very limited menu of 4-5 allowable agricultural investments.

e. Funding was not allocated contingent on Districts/communities meeting ex ante minimum conditions but instead procedures were stipulated that should be followed in managing the funds (a very different form of conditionality, with none of the same incentives, and not the one apparently intended). On the other hand, since funds were not in fact allocated to any sub-national institutional body such as a DDC or even a DDMC it is not easy to see what conditions could have been put in place.

Given all this, it is hardly conceivable that the LDF funding mechanism put into place could have served as any sort of model for an annual, formula-based grant transfer, with ex ante performance-based conditionalities, to future District local government bodies.

LDF Planning & PEM Procedures:

a. Investment proposals were not solicited from communities or Towns across the District, to allow District-level screening, appraisal and selection/rejection as part of a District-wide investment planning process, but were solicited from one or two communities only.

b. However, these one or two local communities were only able to select the group composition and the location for the 4-5 pre-defined agricultural packages which they were offered. There was no scope for communities to submit investment proposals from a broader menu of "District and community"-type public investments, to allow piloting the future role of Districts in the range of public infrastructure and service delivery.

c. The investment project technical and financial appraisal process was not managed by a District-wide body or local officials or resource persons, to build capacities in this key area, but seems largely to have been undertaken on behalf of community groups by local consultants hired by MIA and with project profile documentation being often copied verbatim from County to County despite very different local conditions.

d. The investment proposals so generated were not subject to a comparative appraisal and ranking by a District-wide body to select the "best", such as will be required for any future resource-constrained investment planning at District level, but were pre-approved, reviewed, adjusted and finally approved by the County and then required approval by MIA. A planning process which virtually guarantees (very substantial) funding to communities in this way can hardly be a model for planning in a very resource-constrained environment, where difficult decisions need to be made about which few of many proposals can be afforded. Subsequent ad hoc changes were made in some cases to the investment projects and their budgets, in informal discussions between County officials, the DDMC and the PMT – these changes may have been well justified but the process was not transparent or always clearly recorded.

e. Given the nature of the investment menu, procurement was not for civil works-based infrastructure (usually the bulk of any local public investment expenditures, especially in a context of recovery and reconstruction), and so there were no procedures introduced to ensure the sort of technical support for design and supervision of such investments, nor to ensure certification of payment of contractors only after work completed, nor to ensure community involvement in monitoring. Instead procurement was predominantly the simpler business of purchases of goods and services (farm inputs, equipment, construction materials).

f. Although the initial Town Hall meeting participants in target communities were certainly made aware of the LDF packages being offered, there is no information posted publically on approved plans, budgets and actual expenditures, to promote transparency and accountability, even within the target Districts (so far as the mission could observe) and this information is indeed hard to obtain even from MIA. However, had there been greater transparency about the extent to which one or two communities had been so well funded, it is quite possible that District and County authorities would have been faced by a great deal of local public criticism from the great majority of communities excluded from the benefits of the LDF!

For all these reasons, it is again hardly conceivable that the LDF procedures introduced could have constituted a model for the sort of demand-driven, pro-poor, efficient and equitable, and transparent local government planning and PEM procedures so badly needed at District or County level and for management of CDF/SDF resources, especially in view of the problems in the latter highlighted earlier under 3.3..

Institutional framework:

a. The PMTs are a useful innovation in principle. However, there are questions as to the viability of organizing some sorts of productive activity (esp. farming, as opposed to processing or marketing) around investments on a group basis – see Qn. 5. further below. Instead, the PMT may prove a more useful innovation if established to manage and oversee the implementation of basic infrastructure investments – even if only a temporary one, during the construction phase. Indeed, it is reported that the new Budget Law will require all construction projects funded by the CDF/SDF to be implemented under monitoring of a local PMT.

b. The DDMCs do not represent the District-wide population but – other than the DC as Chair – are comprised mainly of PMT members from the one or two target community/ies. It was therefore quite implausible that the DDMC could take the lead on District planning or monitoring of other development activities in the District. That aside, DDMC funding derived from the 4% "levy" on District funding (so totaling US$ 4,000) but which, once depleted (as it has in several cases), meant that the DDMC found it difficult to continue its activities and is thus in the same situation which supposedly caused the demise of the DDCs which they were intended to replace.

Here it must be acknowledged that there was apparently a broader vision for the DDMC, at least in the mind of the CTA, revealed at the very end of the mission ! This vision entailed the gradual expansion of LDF-type investment activities over the District territory, and hence the gradual expansion of investment groups and their PMTs. Once a broad coverage of PMTs was achieved, the DDMC – which is mainly composed of PMT members – could become a broadly representative body for the District as a whole, which could perform the functions of District-wide planning and monitoring that were intended.

This is indeed an interesting approach, and somewhat similar to arrangements set up by large CDD programmes in countries such as Afghanistan to fill the District vacuum. But – quite apart from the problems inherent in the investment groups and their PMTs, discussed under 5. below - without a massive and rapid scale-up of LDF funding in Liberia this scale-up of the PMT/DDMC model cannot happen.

Given the basic mismatch between the sorts of systems and procedures needed, and those actually introduced, there has been little if any LDF impact on sub-national government capacities – with the adoption of the PMT for implementation of CDF/SDF projects the sole example of such impact that the mission has been able to find.

In this LDF has not been alone. The World Bank-supported programme (CEP) is similarly implemented outside of government procedures or institutions and has had no impact on procedures, systems or capacities – but it also has not pretended to have such influence.

Qn. 4. To what extent has LDLD contributed to policy change for local development financing or local public expenditure management ?
The LDLD/LDF strategy as implemented was not geared to serve as a model to influence local government financing or PEM, has not done so yet and is very unlikely to do so.

Dissemination of Information & Lessons relevant to Policy
LDLD has issued annual and quarterly reports which have been well drafted and produced. It has also circulated the LDF OM and its various updates, and workshops have been held to discuss and disseminate these in the pilot Counties.

However, details of the LDF operational guidelines appear not to have been shared outside the pilot Counties and Districts or at national level, or indeed with UNCDF (indeed the present consultant, despite frequent requests, only got a hardcopy on arrival). Even the County Supervisor in the one non-pilot County visited claimed he knew nothing of the LDF and had received no information about LDF operations or experience in the pilot Counties. Governance Commission officials similarly said that there had not been much debate at national level on the merits and demerits of the various funding mechanisms: CDF, SDF, CEP and LDF.

The Basic Problem of Relevance
But all that said, as has been suggested further above, the much more basic issue is that the LDF as it has been piloted is of little obvious relevance to the policy debate for local development financing. As outlined under Qn 3. above, the various features of the LDF funding mechanism as actually implemented show little or no congruence with the features required.

Under Qn. 3 above we examined the problems inherent in the LDF Guidelines and noted the “mismatch” problem: i.e. LDF financing and PEM procedures were simply not aligned at all to the sort of financing or PEM model which needed to be piloted if it was to inform policy change. Consequently they did not, nor could they have, contributed to policy change in these areas.

Qn. 5. To what extent have LDLD/LDF-funded investments contributed to enhanced opportunities for local development?
A number of the LDLD-funded investments seem to be characterized by problems of institutional, technological and/or commercial feasibility which appear likely to undermine their impact on opportunities for local development; but some investments may yield benefits.

*Note: the mission was reminded by several interlocutors (and most notably at both the Briefing and the Debriefing meetings at MIA – see Annex ..) that the LDF should not be judged on the quality of the investments delivered **alone** – and that the primary value of the LDF is through its impact on systems and procedures.*

The patterns of investments

The mission was unable to obtain a complete, up-to-date picture of the investment packages as they were actually delivered. The Table in Annex 7 provides an illustration of the packages as they were originally planned, although in some cases the project sizes and costs have been modified from the original plan. The typical packages were as follows:

COUNTY	"GROUP" INVESTMENT PACKAGES
BOMI	CASSAVA, SWAMP RICE, PINEAPPLE, AGRO-PROCESSING
BONG	CASSAVA, SWAMP RICE, MIXED CROPS, AGRO-PROCESSING
GBARPOLU	CASSAVA, SWAMP RICE, PINEAPPLE, AGRO-PROCESSING
GRAND BASSA	CASSAVA, SWAMP RICE, PINEAPPLE, AGRO-PROCESSING
MARYLAND	CASSAVA, SWAMP RICE, MIXED CROPS, AGRO-PROCESSING
NIMBA	CASSAVA, SWAMP RICE, MIXED CROPS, PLANTAIN, AGRO-PROCESSING
RIVERCESS	CASSAVA, SWAMP RICE, PINEAPPLE, FISHERIES, AGRO-PROCESSING
RIVER GEE	CASSAVA, SWAMP RICE, PINEAPPLE, AGRO-PROCESSING
SINOE	CASSAVA, SWAMP RICE, PINEAPPLE, FISHERIES

Agricultural production groups:
- Rice farming: seeds, other inputs and other tools and equipment; a power tiller for swamp rice cultivation; funds for food during the first preparation season
- Pineapple farming: suckers, boots, cutlasses and other tools and equipment; funds for food during the first preparation season
- Cassava farming: cuttings, cutlasses, boots, shovels and other tools and equipment; funds for food during the first preparation season
- Fishing: improved canoes, nets, etc,; outboard engines

Agro-processing groups:
- Rice processing: rice thresher & motor; rice huller & motor; building to house the equipment, and with office, storage, toilet
- Cassava/gari processing: cassava processing machine & motor; building to house the equipment (in some cases, same building as for rice processing)

Training:
In all target Districts there was a flat allocation of US$ 5,000 for group training, by agricultural experts.

In addition, in one or two target communities it was decided to finance construction of additional investments such as a meeting hall, and in one case a well & handpump.

Impact of the Investments

The mission was able to visit 2 pilot Counties (of the 9), and make site visits to inspect the investments and talk to a range of investment groups and PMT and DDMC members. The following are the key findings (which also appear to be corroborated by the comments in the MIA Monitoring Report on the status of and problems faced by LDF investments, in Annex 8):

Group membership & institutional problems. The original membership number of most groups had declined in many cases (although the question itself is one which lends itself to ambiguity in response):

County/Investment Group	Original group membership	Reported membership at time of visit
Bong		
Swamp rice	30	26
Cassava	30	11
Mixed crops	30	24
River Cess		
Pineapple	30	10-25 (differing claims)
Rice Mill	?	6
Swamp Rice	30	Group dissolved – new site sought
Fisheries	16	16

This attrition in membership is backed up by MIA's own monitoring reports from the M&E Division, which also suggest that in all Counties a significant number of the investment groups are facing problems. Reasons advanced for this attrition were several but the main two seemed to be that:

- Group members were either too busy on their own farm plots to work on the group plot (several members pointed out just how much hard work was involved in land preparation and that working on the group plot was a severe extra burden on the household, especially since they were often located at some distance from the main settlement); and/or

- There was an expectation expressed by several groups that the LDF support for group meals which was provided during the first land preparation season would also be provided during following seasons. Two other groups seemed to be expecting that new inputs (cutlasses, boots, etc) would also be provided as the original ones had worn out. This issue of expectations denied turned out to be one raised at several meetings (this is not at all to say that false expectations were deliberately raised at the outset, but the perception of continued support seemed widespread).

Discussions with two groups also revealed problems in distributing net returns equitably or appropriately. In one case a PMT Chair had jumped the gun and distributed proceeds prematurely and without heed to the requirement that 20% revert to the DDMC. In another group members were concerned as to how to share proceeds between members when some had worked much more than others on the group farm.

Group membership was also disturbed in several cases by the need to switch the group land plot originally designated. In some cases the original plot proved to be too far, or in others the original owner reclaimed the land and/or demanded rent in later seasons.

The upshot of all this is that the numbers of direct beneficiaries have fallen below those originally planned.

The underlying problem here relates to the strategy to use producer **groups** to manage investments. The mission understands that there was a concern to use LDF investments as a vehicle to promote community collaboration, restore trust, etc., deemed important in the years after the conflict. That aside, it would also be problematic in policy and philosophical terms to provide subsidized investments directly to individual private farmers – doing so via a group, even a small one, appears to make such an investment more acceptable.

But the problem is that group-managed farming is inherently very problematic. The experience in Africa of agricultural production cooperatives (in Guinea, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and many other countries) has been quite disastrous – and because of fairly simple reasons of incentive, problems in sharing, and so on. This is not to say that farmers do not cooperate – but they usually do so on the basis of reciprocal exchange of labour on each others farms, not by working together on common farms.

By contrast, cooperative marketing, credit or input supply has been generally more successful, although still not problem-free. It remains to be seen how successful will be the groups managing the processing facilities – but these may face other problems (see below).

Technology & Market problems. In a number of cases the technical and/or the financial viability of the "technology upgrade" that the investments purported to introduce was clearly problematic – some examples:

- The power tillers for swamp rice cultivation. Of the 2 seen, one had fallen into disrepair after the first day of use and the group seemed unable to solve the problem; the other was being rented out but between November 2012 & April 2013 it had only been rented for 1 day at L$ 250/day without fuel (farmers said that unless they de-stumped their rice fields – a very laborious task – the tiller would break on the tree stumps).
- The wheeled rice thresher provided at one site was also not in use because there was no vehicle to transport it to farm plots or homesteads (rice threshing is usually done in situ) and it is not clear that there will be demand to hire it even if such transport were available.
- The rice huller was being used, but the throughput was very modest: only 10 x 50kg bags of rough rice had been hulled during the past season, generating a gross revenue of only L$ 1,500 (some US$ 20) – far from what is probably needed to cover even operating and maintenance costs (let alone capital depreciation costs). The PMT for the facility plan to use local radio to broadcast information about the facility and so promote demand, so it may be possible to expand the volume of business – but a major, quantum increase in throughput is certainly required if the mill is to become a viable business (even discounting capital costs as subsidy).

An Illustration of Some Problems Faced by the Investments

Rice hulling machine:
In working order but so far only very low level of throughput: 20 x 50 kg sacks in 6 months, bringing only US $ 20 in gross revenue

Hand-Power Tractors:
One had broken on first day of use. The other was being rented out but in 6 months only rented for 1 day, bringing $ 4 in gross revenue.

Rice thresher:
No means of transporting this to point of use, and no apparent demand by farmers to rent services.

Communal Cassava and Pineapple group land plots:
Initial and annual clearing of bush is very labour-demanding, and plots often distant, and only about one third of initial group members still active in these two cases. Pineapple group also demanding renewed round of LDF funding for food and tools. In other cases groups seem to have dissolved and/or unable to gain access to land plot after owner had reclaimed.

Downstream Marketing Issues. In several cases – notably the mixed (vegetable) cropping, the pineapple and the fisheries projects – there were concerns from group members about marketing once they had begun to expand scale of production, given the limited local market and their fears of depressing local sale prices. Using these concerns, some groups appear to be lobbying County administrations and MISA for additional investments (e.g. cold storage for the fisheries project; storage sheds for the swamp rice project in Bong; etc.). Aside from the inequity that continued subsidy to the same groups represents (see below), it is not clear whether there is economic or commercial justification for additional investments.

It is early yet to say how this will evolve, and the extent to which there are market constraints will partly depend on the perishability of the produce (hence marketing of smoked fish may be less problematic than marketing pineapples or the vegetables from the mixed crop groups).

Equity of Impact
The LDF funds were allocated to a very tiny segment of the population in the Districts targeted. Thus in Bong County the US$ 100,000 invested was to the direct benefit of groups, whose membership totaled some 61 persons, resident in Gbondoi Town of the target District (pop. 1,882). Assuming each group member represented a separate household, then 61 households of a total 128 households reportedly resident in the Town represent approximately half the Town's population of 1,882 persons.

But if we step back, we see that the group members who were direct beneficiaries of the investments - who might be some 900 persons in the 61 households in Gbondoi Town - represent only some **3% of the total population of the "target District"** of Yelekoryee (27,918 popn.). The same selectivity applies to LDF beneficiaries in all pilot Counties.

This selective targeting clearly poses issues of the equity of the LDF impact. No future District planning process could afford to be anywhere near so selective in allocation of scarce investment grant funds – the selection process would be naturally questioned by the great majority not benefitting, and the legitimacy of the planning process quickly undermined.

Of course, in theory, such inequity might very possibly be defensible if it were the case that the catalytic impact of these investments were such as to promote wider local economic development in the District and so to benefit indirectly those who were not direct beneficiaries. But all the evidence from this mission points to this being quite implausible.

It should also be said that **– even if** the investments were sound and likely to promote local development - there is always a great local resistance to this degree of selectivity and a natural and understandable, if often excessive, bias towards geographic equity in the politics of local planning processes.

Evidence on Investment Impact

One crude way to assess investment impact is of course to compare livelihoods of local District residents before and after the LDF investments. That is however difficult due to lack of any baseline survey on farm production, household income and consumption, etc., in the target communities

It was originally intended to identify similar investments, delivered under other funding mechanisms, as a basis for a comparative analysis of the likely LDF investment impact. However, none of the other mechanisms (CDF, SDF or CEP) delivers the same sort of agricultural-productive investments - but instead they deliver the more basic public socio-economic infrastructure (of the sort that the LDF was indeed originally intended to mainly deliver).

Although, these other investments are not comparable to LDF investments there is ample evidence that at least CDF/SDF procedures are highly problematic and that the structures delivered are often left incomplete, or of poor quality, or built at inflated prices, and hence that their direct impact may often be very questionable. This is well documented in recent Auditor General Reports on the CDF, and was anecdotally confirmed by a few site visits undertaken by the mission.

The irony here is that it is partly the choice made to differentiate the LDF from the CDF/SDF (which prevents meaningful comparison of investment impact) which has also prevented the original goal, whereby LDF procedures would have helped influence and reform these CDF systems and procedures and hence, indirectly, improve the impact of CDF/SDF investments.

In other words, as argued elsewhere, LDF procedures have had scarcely any of the expected influence over CDF/SDF procedures and hence there is no simply **no possible indirect impact** on investment quality or access funded by these other, larger funding mechanisms.

Post-script on Investment Impact & LED

The findings and conclusions outlined above should not at all be construed as challenging the merits of public funding in support of agriculture or related productive activities. Agriculture is the mainstay of livelihoods of most Liberians and promoting agricultural productivities is absolutely critical as the basis for equitable and inclusive economic development[5]. The question is then **not if but how** such support is best provided. In regard to LDLD/LDF, the strategic questions here appear to be:

- What is the role of public expenditure generally, and of SNG expenditure in particular, in promoting agricultural development? There is ample evidence[6] that the most cost-effective role for public expenditure is to focus on genuine public enabling goods which for agriculture are primarily the rural road and track network, rural markets, the rural water supply (and, where appropriate, irrigation & drainage), crop protection, adaptive research & extension. Some of these, such as rural roads, markets, water supplies, irrigation, etc., happen indeed to be classic "local public goods" of the sort that SNGs can and do deliver.
- What is the role of different UN and other agencies in this, in light of their respective comparative advantages? On this, it is not clear that UNCDF has any special comparative advantage in provision of technical support to agricultural production, or to overseeing and adapting the introduction of new technologies, all of which requires close interactive technical support. UNCDF's area of expertise is instead claimed to be in the field of local public financing and expenditure management and if it has corporate "sector" expertise this is surely much more in the general area of socio-economic infrastructure delivery.

Later in this report there are more general conclusions and recommendations about the scope for supporting LED through a mechanism such as the LDF.

Qn. 6. To what extent is the LDF piloted approach likely to lead to up-scaling, replication or sustainability (considering the new formulation)?
There is no evidence for any such impact to date, and very little likelihood of upscaling, replicating or sustaining the LDF approach which has been piloted.

Effect on flow of resources for local development
There is no evidence that the LDF piloting has had any effect on the flow of funds for local development, whether from GoL or from development partners. It is true that over the past 5 years the resources from the SDF have increased considerably – but this has simply been due to increased revenues from the private concessions operating in several Counties and has not been the result of LDF activities.

The 20% "levy" to be paid to the DDMCs by the investment groups, even if forthcoming, will be marginal. To illustrate, even on the rather rosy cash flow analyses of the original project

[5] Apart from the city-states of Singapore and Hong Kong, almost no country has achieved sustained economic growth without a preceding phase of development of its agricultural sector – the histories of England, Germany, the USA, Japan and China all fully demonstrate the importance of this axiom.
[6] See, e.g., Scaling Up in Agriculture, Rural Development & Nutrition, ed. Fan and Pandya-Lorch, IFPRI, 2012.; Leaping & Learning: Linking Smallholders to Markets, Wiggins & Keats, ODI, 2013.

proposal profiles, in River Cess net income per group and supposed payments to the DDMC annually was:

> Pineapple group: US$ 8,400, of which 20% = US$ 1,680
> Cassava group: US$ 3,574 of which 20% = US$ 715
> Swamp rice group: US$ 4,134 of which 20% = US$ 797

In other words, for all projects in the 2 target Districts of River Cess County the funding for replication through the two DDMCs would have been well under US$ 5,000 annually.

Replication & mainstreaming of approaches piloted
Similarly, there is no evidence to date that any significant element of LDF systems and procedures have been adopted officially by GoL or replicated by other partners.

The one innovation which appears to have been mainstreamed is the PMT which reportedly the new Budget Law now requires to be set up for all CDF and SDF investments (although for such investments, the PMT will be a temporary team for the construction phase only).

That aside, some elements of the Town Hall and community planning procedures may prove useful in the future in informing the sort of participatory planning procedures which need to be developed.

Qn. 7. To what extent does the LDLD/LDF have a credible and well-planned exit strategy ?
The corollary of the answer to Qn. 6 above is that there is no obvious exit strategy for the LDF institutional and procedural model as piloted. Some individual investments may be sustained, but many face problems of either technical, commercial or group management feasibility and so may not sustain benefits to group members.

An exit strategy for a programme such as LDLD/LDF must comprise two different elements:

- Arrangements to ensure that the individual investment assets created directly by the programme will continue to generate benefits after the end of the programme.
- Arrangements to ensure that the funding mechanism and the innovations in planning and PEM systems and procedures will continue after the end of the programme.

Individual investments
In regard to exit strategy for investments, the project appraisal process was intended to ensure that the assets generated revenues to ensure the income flow needed, but these were not always very rigorously done.

In some cases (e.g. the tractors), there are questions about appropriateness of the technology,and in others (e.g. the mechanical equipment for processing facilities, or tractors) there are serious questions about the market demand and hence commercial viability of several types of investment (even only in regard to covering operating costs).

In the case of group farming, in some cases there must be questions about the incentives of members to continue after the first season’s food subsidy has ended and given their workloads on family plots; in other cases about the coherence of the groups in the longer term as they face the problems of dividing proceeds between members, some of whom have worked more than others. Not for nothing, the history of cooperative farming (as opposed to cooperative marketing or input supply) in Africa has been a very troubled one (see the failures in Guinea, Tanzania, Ethiopia, etc.). Of course, farmers do cooperate in farming – helping each other out for land clearing, or for harvesting – but this is generally based on reciprocity between family farmers, each with their own plots, and not joint production on the same plot.

LDF systems and procedures

In regard to exit strategy for the LDF model as implemented, for the reasons outlined at some length under 3. above, it is very hard to see how the LDF model can be mainstreamed into government policy on future local government financing or PEM – which is really the only possible "exit strategy".

6. Conclusions and Recommendations:

6.1. Conclusions:

The Overall Assessment

The following is a summary of conclusions for each of the evaluation questions outlined above under Section 5.

a) The programme strategy was – and remains – highly relevant. However design integrity was compromised by a number of flaws: inadequate analysis of local institutions and of the existing centre-local funding mechanisms, unclear strategy for the proposed LDF mechanism, and some unclarity in the configuration of outputs and activities and in the budget. But strategy was then subject to major changes early in implementation, which changes severely undermined achievement of the intended results.
b) Programme implementation proceeded in a fairly timely manner. But the main output (the LDF guidelines) proved inconsistent with the goals in several ways. UNCDF funding was generally timely although actual expenditures were at often at significant variance with both prodoc and AWP budgets. UNCDF corporate technical support was inadequate and no technical input at all was provided where it was most needed – to design and backstop the LDF mechanism and its guidelines.
c) Local capacity development effectiveness was severely compromised by the nature of the LDF strategy as implemented (via the LDF guidelines), which simply did not match the sorts of procedural and institutional innovation needed to promote reform of the CDF/SDF or as a basis for future District or local government PEM. This essential mismatch is crystallised in the Table overpage. Policy reform effectiveness was also severely compromised for exactly the same reasons. (One minor innovation which seems to have caught on is the PMT, now adopted also for the CDF/SDF to monitor implementation.)
d) The direct impact of LDF-funded investments is doubtful. On one hand, the group-based model for managing these investments faces a number of the expected collective-action problems, especially in regard to group farming; in addition there is widespread expectation of continued support by these groups. On the other hand, several of the technologies introduced present serious problems and/or are of doubtful commercial viability. That aside, there must simply be concerns about the inequity and legitimacy represented by a "District planning mechanism" allocating US$ 100,000 to such a small segment (<5%) of the District population.
e) The scope for upscaling or replication of the LDF is very doubtful, for the same reasons outlined above under c.).
f) By the same token, the <u>sustainability</u> of the LDF model as piloted is not clear – since there is no obvious way it can be mainstreamed into future local government financing policy and PEM procedures.

This is not to say that there is nothing positive to emerge from the LDSF as implemented. The practice of organizing Town hall meetings to allow some local input into project planning – however limited were the communities involved or the scope for expressing any sort of local priorities – might be considered as being a very very modest precedent for a future participatory planning mechanism. Similarly, the practice of involving PMT members in the local procurement committee is also a useful precedent.

But, overall, this has all been a huge missed opportunity. Instead of a mechanism through which UNCDF could have helped lay some foundations for future local government policy and procedure, and for more effective and accountable decentralized basic infrastructure and service delivery in Liberia, what was implemented was a peculiar “community development” operation – of which there have been many in Liberia - which was not particularly innovative, allowed for litlle local choice, was characterised by little transparency in the way resources were allocated, scarcely addressed any of the outstanding challenges set out in the prodoc, and will leave little trace after closure.

THE MISMATCH	
As needed	**As implemented**
Institutions	**Institutions**
Plausible District-wide body	DDMC with reps. from only 1 or 2 of 20 or more Towns & Clans
Financing	**Financing**
Grant to District as a whole	Grant to only 1 or 2 communities
Annual Grant	One-off
Tied in with budget calendar and processes	Unrelated to budget calendar and processes
Grant formula-driven for equity	Flat sum for all Districts/communities
Planning & Budgeting	**Planning & Budgeting**
Routine District-wide consultation on needs	Only 1 or 2 (of 20-30) Towns & communities in the District involved (no clear basis for this targeting)
Scope for communities to propose a range of local priorities based on varying needs	Communities can only select group members & plots for 4-5 pre-selected packages
Community proposals screened, appraised & ranked by District	Community schemes pre-approved by MIA consultants for sign-off by County and MIA
Consultation mechanism to ensure District & sector plans consistent	Nothing
District investment plan prepared, where projects approved in view of budget constraint	No District investment plan (only “District workplan” for the 1 or 2 communities)
Any project changes need endorsement by District	Investment packages changed on unclear, ad hoc basis by County & PMU
Procurement & Implementation	**Procurement & Implementation**
Procurement according to PPCC rules	**Procurement according to PPCC rules**
Procurement & technical support procedures esp. for small civil works	Procurement only for goods & services
Community input to monitoring	**Community input to monitoring (PMT**)
Transparency	**Transparency**
Local public availability of information on budgets, actual costs, etc.	Budget & cost information very hard to find, even in MIA

Possible Explanatory Factors

The mission has struggled to understand how all this could have been possible and how and why the LDF was implemented as it was. It is worth reviewing possible explanatory factors:

Difficulties inherent in the programme design. Overall, as noted in the report, the LDLD/LDF design was very relevant to the original context – and remains even more relevant to the context as it has evolved. It is certainly not the case that government has backtracked on its commitment to decentralise or to create local government in a way which might have negated the relevance or feasibility of the programme – quite the contrary.

There were certainly some flaws and unclarities in the programme document, perhaps most notably an inadequate appraisal of the District Development Committee, which was to be the pre-local government "platform" for financing, planning and basic PEM at District level. But the problems which emerged with the DDC could probably have been addressed during implementation if monitoring and backstopping had been at adequate and if this issue had been identified and addressed at the outset by one of the early UNCDF missions.

Difficulties inherent in the joint programme framework with UNDP. UNCDF operates a great many joint programmes with UNDP in Africa and Asia. The management frameworks for these programmes can certainly be problematic – and tensions between the two agencies do certainly arise, especially when the issue of mobilizing and managing non-core funding arises. This problem indeed arose in the case of the LDLD - EU funding was channeled entirely to UNDP such that UNCDF was unable to implement the full range of activities laid down in the UNCDF budget of the prodoc.

This funding shortfall for UNCDF seems to have translated into a UNCDF withdrawal from the TA activities originally planned in support of Outputs 1 (policy) and 2 (capacity development). But there is no evidence that the funding shortfall, nor any associated tension with UNDP, could have played any role at all in how the LDF was implemented. Indeed substantial UNCDF core funds had been approved in the AWPs of the first two years to provide TA support to Output 3, the LDF, but were simply not spent.

There is also no evidence to believe that UNDP was pressing for the LDF to be implemented in the way it was.

Difficulties in the "post-conflict" and "pre-local government" context. UNCDF has operated similar initiatives in a number of other countries emerging from (or, in cases, still beset by) conflict and/or where local government has otherwise not yet been established: e.g. Uganda, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Mozambique, Northern Mali, Nepal, Laos, Timor-Leste. Implementation in every case was faced with problems, and required adjustments to strategy, but in no case was there ever any question of completely abandoning the original goal - to build up the institutional groundwork for local governance and more effective and accountable local public expenditure management – for something so radically different.

The key contextual challenge which seems to have arisen was the early demise of the District Development Committees which is reported to have been the main reason for the shift to a community approach. But, as has been pointed out, this key issue – for which institutional solutions should have been available (as suggested above in this report) – simply never received any mention at all in either LDLD/LDF reports, or in UNCDF mission BTORs, and the options for remedying the problem seem never to have been discussed.

If indeed it were the case that there was really no viable District-level institutional arrangement possible (which this mission strongly doubts) then – at the very least - this should have been explicitly recorded and the consequences addressed by UNCDF and partners in some form of formal programme document and results-structure revision.

Difficulties inherent in the implementing team. Clearly, the CTA and the PMU, housed within the MIA, bear front-line responsibility for the manner in which LDLD/LDF was implemented. But, as noted in this report, this team was quite stretched in managing an ambitious, wide-ranging programme; and, more importantly, it could not anyway have been expected to have the expertise needed to design and oversee implementation of the LDF without technical support – the more so since the provision of such corporate technical expertise is at the heart of UNCDF's own proclaimed raison d'etre as an agency specialised in local development finance.

All that aside, the team could be forgiven for believing there were no problems with the LDF which needed addressing, in view of the very positive endorsements given by at least two UNCDF missions.

Weak Monitoring & Technical Support by UNCDF. It is very hard to avoid the conclusion that the major underlying "explanatory factor" for the failure of the LDF has been the very weak and inconsistent backstopping and monitoring by UNCDF:

- There appears to have been no UNCDF technical input for – nor, quite surprisingly, any commentary at all on – the design of the LDF Operational Guidelines. Yet these guidelines (as all such financing, planning and implementation guidelines and manuals for similar LD programmes) were the technical core of the LDF – and represented the key area where UNCDF is able to introduce innovation, and – by the same token – were surely the one area where quality control was essential.

- LDF strategy was allowed to evolve in a manner which should have raised serious questions very early on by UNCDF. There should have been an early in-depth programme review with other partners and with MIA to examine options and trade-offs. There were reasons to examine much more carefully the implications of both of the "context change" issues which reportedly lay behind the strategy actually adopted, namely:

    - The demise of the DDC as District institutional platform, and whether this really meant abandoning a District-wide approach to planning and PEM and focusing on a few selected communities, or whether instead either (i) continued support might have been provided to the DDCs through LDLD – replacing previous UNDP support - or (ii) alternative District-wide arrangements might have been devised (e.g. developed from the CDF/SDF District/County planning arrangements regulated under the Budget Law);
    - The rapid expansion in SDF funding of basic public infrastructure at local level, and whether this really meant that the LDF should remove itself from funding similar investments altogether (as was decided), or whether instead it should have kept a broad local public investment menu but focused on piloting different and improved procedures for such investments thereby to provide a model for reform, as originally intended.

- If, after such review, it proved that the original LDLD/LDF strategy was no longer feasible or relevant, and that there were indeed no options other than the LDF strategy actually adopted then, it should have been recognized that this would severely undermine the extent to which the LDF could contribute to the broader expected policy and institutional impact of the programme. At the least, this should have led to a formal adjustment in the results structure of the programme.

- As it was, the tacit acceptance – even, in cases, the positive endorsement - by UNCDF of the strategy as implemented then resulted in the whole operation being confined to a set of activities which bore little or no congruence to the sorts of funding, planning, public expenditure management or accountability arrangements for which CDF/SDF so badly needed, and still needs, a model for reform. The LDF has therefore been of little or no wider relevance in regard to the decentralization policy agenda, and has little hope of being mainstreamed or upscaled. It was the kind of operation much better suited to an NGO or perhaps a UN agency specialized in agriculture such as FAO.

6.2 Recommendations:

It should be said that the LDF component has ended, and the mission has no recommendations to adjust or rectify any features of this component even if there were such opportunities. The recommendations here below are thus more general and forward-looking.

UNCDF, UNDP, MIA: Future Programming in Liberia
This evaluation argues that most of the intended agenda of the LDLD/LDF was never actually embarked upon. However, this failure of the LDF component of the LDLD should not be seen as a reason to abandon future UNCDF support for this agenda in Liberia – for good or ill, the costs have been incurred. Rather, as UNCDF now engages with GoL and other partners on the strategy and shape of a successor programme it is important to ensure that it includes the very elements that were **originally** proposed in the 2007 LDLD programme document and subsequent MoU:

- A funding mechanism aligned with (but not for now merged with) the existing CDF/SDF, which is open for a broad spectrum of District and community-type public investments (but taking great care with investments in private activities- see below);
- Support for trialing systems and procedures for improved, demand-driven PEM, and which could use the institutional platforms at County and District levels already created for the CDF/SDF, although taking care to address the problems currently associated with these arrangements.

It is also urged that more attention is paid to bringing in expertise and experience from elsewhere (to work in tandem with Liberian experts and officials) in the design, monitoring and backstopping of such an initiative. This must go well beyond the simple sharing of documents, study tours and invitations to workshops but include hands-on technical support to MIA in devising, testing, and adjusting procedures and institutional arrangements as basis for furure local government financing and PEM systems.

UNCDF & MIA: Local Economic Development
The mission fully understands the desire of policymakers and of UNCDF to not solely focus on basic public socio-economic infrastructure and services, but also to promote productive activity in the rural areas, both to catalyze local economic development, to raise household incomes and welfare and also to develop the local tax base to finance public goods and services. However, based on LDLD/LDF experience, the mission underlines a number of cautions in regard to attempts to promote LED through sub-national administration or through future local government:

- Where a programme works through local governments, and aims to build capacity to deliver the sort of goods and services in their remit, it surely makes sense to be focusing on the obvious things first: i.e. to be improving the efficiency and equity of delivery of the range of enabling public goods (rural roads & tracks, simple markets, water, agricultural extension ..) which (all evidence and history show) are critical for agricultural and local economic development, which are in huge under-supply now in Liberia, and whose delivery is much less problematic than is direct subsidized investment support to producers. For some odd reason such investments are often defined out of the LED debate – LED being seen as something distinct.

- If a window for LED is to be opened: (i) this may be phased-in at a later date when more basic PEM capacities are in place; (ii) much more care is needed in defining the role of public investment expenditure to “catalyse” the sort of local economic enterprise which is viable, and which can be replicated by other entrepreneurs, and for this serious trialing is needed in partnership with more specialized agencies. But in the current context of Liberia it would seem to be overloading a future programme by trying to add such a component right from the start.
- That aside, there are many agencies already operating in the field of “LED” (in its narrower sense of activities specifically aimed at promoting enterprise) – ILO, GIZ, USAID, and probably many other agencies and NGOs. It is not obvious what comparative advantage UNCDF does now or could in the future possess in this area.

UNCDF: Programme Design
It may be gratuitous to list once more the desirable features of a programme design document but LDLD/LDF experience does again illustrate the need for:

- Proper upfront analysis of the institutions with which it is proposed to work, especially where they are supposed to be interim bodies, and of the funding and PEM mechanisms which it is intended to help reform.
- A clear strategic model for the sort of fund mechanism and PEM innovations to be introduced, to guide implementation.
- Allowance for adequate technical support funding to complement the capital funding.
- Less wishful thinking in the budget preparation and more realism about the scope for attracting non-core, coupled with a clearer strategy as to how core is to be deployed.

UNCDF: Technical Support, Monitoring & Quality Control
This again will appear gratuitous but in light of the way the LDLD/LDF was allowed to develop it is worth highlighting the importance of:

- Regular technical missions, especially in the start-up phase of a programme when difficult decisions and adjustments always have to be made in the details of implementation strategy, and which are often freighted with great policy consequence.
- Critical in-house technical review of key programme outputs – such as the LDF guidelines, or planning/PEM procedures, etc. – to ensure that they are relevant, of the right quality and embody the lessons that UNCDF has learnt more widely. These lie at the heart of the value-added that UNCDF claims to be able to provide; and they are the technical guts of any programme and are where innovations can be introduced, but also where serious mistakes can be made. For any such programme there should be adequate budgetary resources assigned to support these outputs, and a mandatory in-house quality control review.

7. Gender & Human Rights:

The LDLD/LDF as designed provided considerable opportunity to promote gender equality and human rights through policy work and capacity building regarding, for example:

- Policy and procedure on the membership and modus operandi of target representative institutions such as the future elected local government bodies.
- Policy and procedures for allowing citizen voice in both feeding their priorities into the planning and budgeting process and in monitoring service delivery, and in holding local officials accountable.

Much of this work falls under Outputs 1 and 2 which were largely outside the focus of this mission. Under Output 3 and the LDF, attention was paid to ensuring gender-equitable membership of the institutions being promoted – the producer groups and their PMTs, and the DDMC. In the case of the groups, PMTs and DDMCs that the mission met with, this gender balance seems to have been broadly respected in practice: most project groups (other than the fisheries group in River Cess) included a significant number of women members – and indeed one cassava group was primarily made up of women.

However, the very “exclusive” nature of the LDF planning process, with its focus on a very few selected communities, and its very restricted menu of pre-defined investments, might arguably constitute an infringement of human rights in the areas concerned. In at least two cases the mission queried local community members about the appropriateness of the investment menu and in both cases it was made clear that people would have preferred a much less restricted choice than they were given, and the opportunity to propose other investments (e.g. women informants cited wells, latrines, and school repairs and fences).

Annexes:

Annex 1: Terms of reference

Annex 2: List of people interviewed/project sites visited

Annex 3: List of documents consulted

Annex 4: Mission schedule

Annex 5: Project Results and Resources Framework

Annex 6: Inception Report

Annex 7: Incorporation of comments matrix

Annex 8: LDF Investment Packages

- ANNEX 1 -

Liberia Decentralization and Local Development Programme – LDLD (2008-2012) Final Evaluation - Terms of Reference (May 2013 version)

PROGRAMME DATA SHEET

Country:	Liberia
Programme Title (long)	Liberia Decentralization and Local Development Programme
Programme Title (short)	LDLD
Programme Atlas Code (by donor)	UNCDF Award Id. 48307; Project Id: 58379 UNDP Award Id. 47673; Project Id. 57476

Financial Breakdown (by donor)

Commitments:	**Currency**	**Amount**
European Commission	USD	3,666,000
UNDP	USD	2,500,000
UNCDF	USD	2,500,000
Total programme Budget	USD	8,666,000

Delivery to date (by donor, USD)

	2008	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012 ***	**Total delivery**
European Commission	0.00	573,282.60	661,500.09	1,097,563.71	1,530,395.00	3,862,741.40
UNDP	621,928.01	116,930.71	389,991.57	512,752.39	250,000.00	1,891,602.68
UNCDF	92,955.19	595,954.72	201,970.38	412,419.52	220,000.00	1,523,299.81
Total project delivery as of 31 December 2012 7,277,643.89 **(*To be revised)**						

Delivery to date (by activity) **changed from the previous version of ToR**

OUTPUTS	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	TOTAL
Activity 2		3 859				3 859
Activity 3		303 874	45 356	404 308	240 276	993 814
Activity 4	154 313	289 463	159 080	8 201	23 944	635 000
TOTAL	154 313	597 196	204 436	412 509	264 220	1 632 673

Activity 2 (Establish System for Management & Delivery)
Activity 3 (LDF investment)
Activity 4 (Management & Implementation Support)

Source: Regional Portfolio specialist, May 2013

Executing Agency	UNDP
Implementing Agency	UNDP
Approval Date of Project	1st June 2007
Project Duration	5 years: June 2007-May 2012 (Extended to Dec 2012)
Project Amendment	Extension of the duration of the Programme to 31st December 2012

Previous UNCDF projects	IFS Programme
Previous evaluations	UNDP-led combined evaluation (2012): Country Support Team Joint Programme, Liberia Decentralization and Local Development Programme and National Information Management Center Project European Commission Monitoring Report (Results Oriented Monitoring mission, October 2011)
Dates of audits	No audits currently proposed

Evaluation Date: May – June 2013
Composition of Evaluation Team: International Team Leader

1. Purpose of the Final Evaluation:

1.1 Objectives and audience:

The final evaluation of the LDLD programme is being conducted in complement of the recent UNDP-led combined evaluation and in accordance with UNCDF Evaluation Policy[7] and its Evaluation Plan 2012-2013.

The objectives of the final evaluation are focused in the functioning and likely results/impacts of the Local Development Fund (LDF) piloted in Liberia by UNCDF through the LDLD Programme. This means that the evaluation will mainly deal with results related to strategic focus areas II + III/Outputs 2 and 3 of the PRODOC (Systems and Institutional Development; and Sector Investments and Local Development), although relevant aspects related to the necessary policies and regulatory framework (output 1) will be also covered, complementary to or in validation of UNDP-led evaluation findings (see figure 1 about the scope of evaluation).

[7] The revised policy of UNDP for evaluation was approved in 2011. The purpose of the policy is to establish a common institutional basis for the UNDP evaluation function. The policy seeks to increase transparency, coherence and efficiency in generating and using evaluative knowledge for organizational learning and effective management for results, and to support accountability. The policy also applies to the associated funds and programmes of UNDP – the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme. .http://web.undp.org/evaluation/policy.htm#vi

The specific objectives of the current evaluation are the following:

9. Examining to what extent the Liberian experience provides an opportunity to provide some flexibility in the formulation and implementation of LDF in the context of post-conflict countries with no representative institutions structures at local level;
10. Assessing the quality of the LDF manual/operational guidelines and the manner and extent of its implementation in the 9 Liberian pilot counties;
11. Assessing the efficiency of the LDF mechanism and its implementation[8],
12. Assessing government capacity to manage (and extent to which the LDF conceptual approach is understood) at the local and national level;
13. Assessing the effectiveness of the LDF mechanism[9];
14. Assessing likely impacts effects of investments in local development financing[10];
15. Assessing whether UNCDF has influenced the national mechanism (Country Development Fund, Social Development Fund) to ensure broader replication and up-scaling of the LDF;
16. To generate knowledge and identify best practices, if any, lessons learnt, challenges faced and weakness in order to inform the formulation of the Phase II of the programme.

The primary audience for this evaluation is the Liberian government (national and local), UNCDF, UNDP the European Commission and SIDA. This evaluation - to be carried out by an independent consultant under the direct supervision of the UNCDF Evaluation Unit - will help UNCDF meet its learning objectives at the programmatic level as well as allow the organization to fulfill its accountability for results mandate. It will also benefit broader LDLD partners and stakeholders understand better the challenges and lessons being learned around the design and delivery of Local Development Funds.

1.2 Timing:

The LDLD final evaluation is scheduled to start in May 2013 with the proposed timing:

- Pre-mission phase: 2nd week of May 2013
- Mission phase: 3rd week of May 2013
- Post-mission phase: 4th week of May 2013

1.3 Management roles and responsibilities:

To ensure independence and fulfilment of UN evaluation standards, the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer of the UNCDF Regional Office in Dakar (as the focal point for the Evaluation Unit in New York) will be responsible for managing the evaluation in close collaboration with the UNCDF Evaluation Unit at Headquarters, the UNCDF/UNDP technical team.

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[8] delays of the inter-government fiscal transfer system, analysis of procurement processes and annual disbursement rates, functioning of accountability system, difficulties encountered…

[9] analysis of LDF-funded projects funded and their effects on strengthening the PFM systems at LGs and in improving access to quality infrastructure and service delivery; analysis of management and maintenance options of investments, including participation of local communities and local authorities.

[10] e.g. employment, productive activities established, skills upgraded, private funds mobilized, according to the PRODOC Results and Resources Framework.

An Advisory Panel for the evaluation will be set up later, including UNCDF, UNDP, government and donors representatives, which will have the usual responsibilities of: (a) providing comments to the inception report; (b) being available for interviews with the evaluation team; (c) reviewing and commenting upon the draft report(s); (d) participate in debriefing session.

A separate Selection Panel will be set up to conduct the interviews and select the evaluator incorporating members from the Advisory Panel and UNCDF Evaluation Unit.

2. Programme summary[11]:

LDLD is a national programme of innovations for supporting local government and its management, established with support from the UNCDF and UNDP. It features the setting up of a capital investment and Local Development Fund (LDF), to support Liberia's efforts in reversing historical tendencies within its centralized system of administration. This national programme, based on four strategic focus areas, aims to strengthen policy and strategy development, system and institutional development, while promoting local sector-specific investments, and in the process, shall ensure the effective management of Liberia's innovations in restoring local government.

Specifically the programme outputs are:

1. Establishing Liberia's decentralization policy and its legal framework,
2. Elaborating and strengthening procedures, processes and systems for effective public expenditure management at the County, District and Sub-district level,
3. Launching of a District/county Fund, designed to establish a generic fiscal framework for programming inter-governmental transfers, being part of the national system of public expenditure management;
4. The resultant effective management of the LDLD program, whose processes shall promote Liberia's quest for decentralization.

UNDP led an evaluation in 2012 covering three projects: Country Support Team (CST) Joint Programme, Liberia Decentralization and Local Development (LDLD) Programme and National Information Management Center (NIMAC) Project. The evaluation team covered all four LDLD outputs in its assessment of the concept and design of the project, efficiency issues related to program management, progress to results achievement and overall impact, and partnerships developed. Nevertheless, the

[11] More detailed information about the programme current status can be found in Annex 2 of this Terms of Reference "*Programme expected results, actual implementation status*".

broad scope of this evaluation did not allow the evaluation team to analyze in-depth the LDF mechanism, which is the main objective of the current UNCDF-led evaluation.

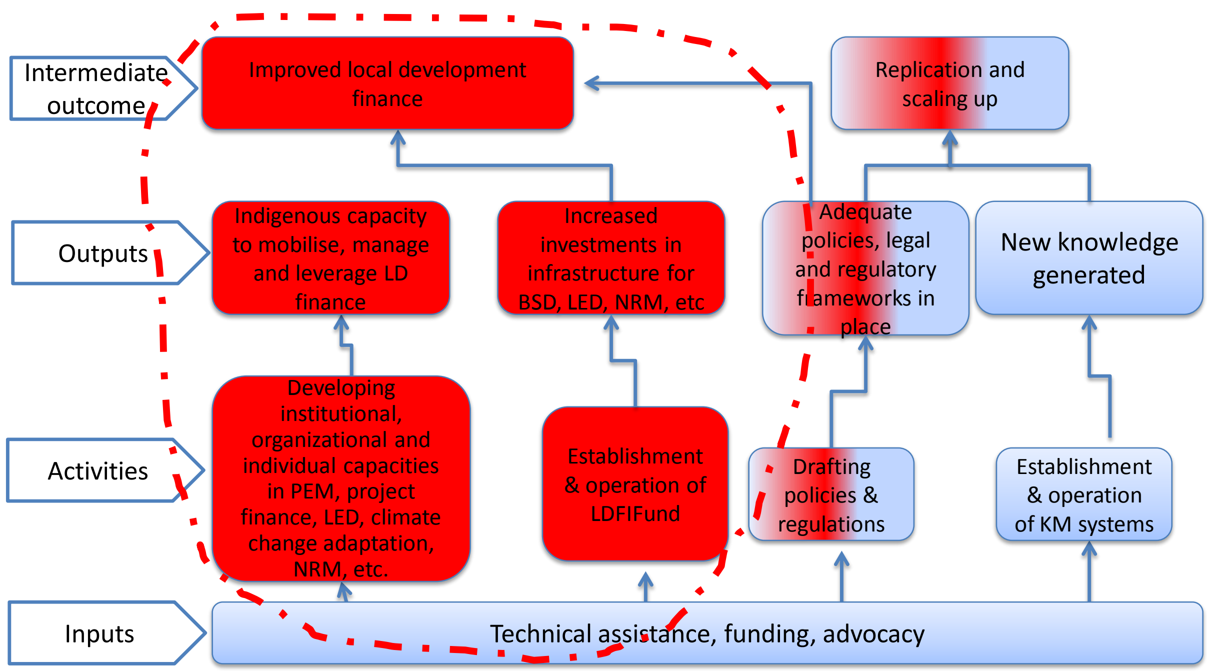
3. Evaluation Framework and methodology:

3.1 Evaluation Approach:

The methodology used for the LDLD evaluation is based on UNCDF's core evaluation approach which involves testing the intervention logic/development hypothesis underlying a programme against evidence on its implementation performance. In this case, the evaluation will assess the progress toward expected outcomes and lessons learnt to date on the LDF mechanism and its implementation (red line in the LDF intervention logic below, including the effects over the intermediate outcomes).

Fig. 1. Scope of the LDLD evaluation in relation to UNCDF Local Development Finance intervention logic

ADAPTED LDF INTERVENTION LOGIC FOR THE LDLD EVALUATION



In red: main focus of the UNCDF-led evaluation (2013),
in blue: aspects already covered by the UNDP-led evaluation (2012) 1

3.2 Evaluation methodology:

The Evaluation Unit has developed a standard Local Development Evaluation Matrix based on UNCDF's standard intervention logic and the specific programme hypotheses for its local development finance practice area. The Matrix is made up of seven general evaluation questions corresponding broadly to the well-known OECD/UN evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, likely impact and sustainability of results, and a series of further sub-questions. In addition to the questions, the evaluation matrix provides a clear framework for data collection, and includes a series of proposed indicators, data collection methods and sources of information for each question and sub-questions[12].

Central to the evaluation approach should be an attempt by the evaluator to compare (likely) development results achieved by the programme in targeted counties to (likely) development results in similar counties where there was no programme intervention. **It will be the responsibility of the evaluator to present and explain the data collection tools (both quantitative and qualitative) that they propose to be used in this evaluation in the Inception Report that concludes the Inception Phase of the evaluation.**

The primary data will complement the secondary data that programme management will provide to the evaluation team on the basis of monitoring and reporting carried out to date (see **Annex 4** for more details as well as the Evaluation Matrix).

As explained in the objectives sections of this ToR, this evaluation will complement a previous evaluation conducted by UNDP in 2012. Therefore, the evaluation matrix will be adapted (and simplified) in this case. The proposed evaluation matrix is in Annex 1.

The results of the preliminary work undertaken can be found in the draft Evaluation Matrix below. In order to maintain the independence of the evaluation, the consultant is requested during the Inception Phase to confirm the appropriateness of the Matrix to meet the objectives of the evaluation. In doing so, the consultant is free to suggest alternative sub-questions, indicators and data collection methods on the basis of their understanding of the programme's development hypothesis. These changes should be presented as part of the Inception Report and agreed to by UNCDF's Evaluation Unit before the start of the in-country phase.

The seven questions in the standard UNCDF Evaluation Matrix concern the programme design (question 1), programme management (question 2), systems and capacities of local governments (question 3), policy change (question 4), likely impact of investments (question 5), prospects of future scaling up and replication of piloted approaches (question 6), and sustainability of program results (question 7). As stated above, these seven questions correspond to the UN evaluation criteria (relevance, design, efficiency, effectiveness, likely impact and sustainability). For the evaluation of the LDLD programme, the evaluation matrix will be centered in questions 5, 6 and 7, while considering some key sub-questions of the other questions of the standard UNCDF evaluation matrix when they are relevant for assessing local development finance.

LDLD Evaluation Questions (in draft form)	Corresponding UN Evaluation Criteria
Question 1: To what extent is the programme design coherent and relevant?	Relevance and Design

[12] The proposed data collection methods include: i) desk review techniques such as key document analysis; ii) structured interviews with key stakeholders, focus group discussions, community meetings, site visits, etc; iii) quantitative analysis of the range and performance of the investments implemented.

Question 2: How well has the programme management delivered LDLD expected results?	Programme efficiency
Question 3: To what extent has the programme contributed to improved gender-sensitive systems and capacities at local government level?	Effectiveness (organizational change)
Question 4: To what extent has LDLD contributed to policy change for gender equitable local development?	Effectiveness (policy and strategy)
Question 5: To what extent have LDLD-funded investments contributed to enhanced opportunities for gender equitable local development?	Likely Impact
Question 6: To what extent are LDLD piloted approaches likely to lead to up-scaling and replication?	Effectiveness (future scaling up and replication)
Question 7: To what extent are the programme results likely to be sustainable in the longer-term?	Sustainability

3.3 Gender and Human Rights:

As with all evaluations conducted by the UN, the evaluation must include an assessment of the extent to which the design, implementation and results of the project have incorporated a gender equality perspective and rights-based approach (section 7 of the evaluation report). For more guidance on this the consultants are requested to review *UNEG's Guidance in Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation* during the inception phase[13].

The methodology used, data collection and analysis methods should be human rights and gender sensitive to the greatest extent possible, with evaluation data and findings disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, age, and other criteria found to be relevant.

4. Evaluation work plan:

The proposed work plan includes a proposal for a structured sample of investments and counties to be visited, with the evaluation team applying a combination of desk review, phone interviews and questionnaires/survey.

The preliminary distribution of number of days per team member and evaluation phase is as follows:

[13] http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=980

	International Team Member	Dates
Inception Phase	1 week	May 10th-May 18th
In-country Phase	1 week	May 20th-May 29th
Post-mission Phase	1 week	May 29th-June 5th
Total number of days	20 days	

A proposed work plan for in country phase will be developed by the LDLD Programme Manager/CTA, and attached to the Inception Report following the template presented in Annex 5.

5. Evaluation Phases:

5.1 Inception Phase: will include the following steps.

- Methodological briefing: to ensure clear understanding of the evaluation methodology, approach and main deliverables as per TOR. *Participants*: RO M&E Officer, UNCDF Evaluation Unit HQ and the Evaluation Team.

- Individual briefings between the Evaluation Team and key programme stakeholders: The objectives of these meetings will be to familiarize the Evaluation Team with the programme and results to date in relation to the evaluation objectives. *Participants*: Evaluation Team, Advisory Panel and key programme stakeholders, including the LDLD Programme Manager.

- Inception Report: the Team should produce a brief Inception Report (20 pages maximum) to reflect their understanding of the ToR of the evaluation in relation to its scope and present the range of data collection tools (quantitative and qualitative) to be used in the evaluation. The evaluation team will use a simplified version of the UNCDF's template for Inception Reports which will be provided to consultants during the methodological debriefing. In line with this, the Inception Report should also validate the proposed Evaluation Matrix or propose changes on the basis of the consultant's understanding of the programme expected results and evaluation objectives. The Inception Report will be reviewed by the RO M&E Officer, UNCDF Evaluation Unit and the Advisory Panel. The final report will be approved by UNCDF Evaluation Unit prior to the start of the in-country phase.

5.2 In-country phase:

This phase will start directly after the approval of the Inception Report. A list of key programme stakeholders per county will be prepared by the LDLD Programme Manager and validated by the Advisory Panel at the start of the Inception Phase. It will be the responsibility of the LDLD Programme Manager/CTA to arrange the meetings and the necessary logistics for the in-country phase.

The Work Plan will involve the following stages:

b) Briefing and meetings with key informants at the National Level:

- ✓ Finalization of work plan: The team will review the draft work plan proposed in the Inception Phase with the LDLD Programme Manager and make any necessary adjustments, taking into account practical and logistical considerations.
- ✓ Mission briefing: If appropriate, the Team will brief UNCDF/UNDP in-country staff on evaluation objectives and scope on the first day of the mission, and the complementarity with UNDP-led evaluation.
- ✓ Security brief: The LDLD Programme Manager/CTA is responsible of ensuring that the Evaluation Team receives a security brief with DSS upon arrival in country.
- ✓ Key informant interviews (capital city): The team will gather information and evidence from members of national government bodies, donors and other relevant national stakeholders.
- ✓ Debriefing to the Advisory Panel : The evaluation team may be asked to debrief the Advisory Panel and Evaluation Unit at the end of the field mission. This with a view to provide a sense of the evaluation team's preliminary findings ahead of the draft reporting phase.

c) Meetings with Local stakeholders:

- ✓ Kick-off local workshop: provides the team the opportunity to explain the purpose of the evaluation and meet key stakeholders at the Country, District and Sub-district level.
- ✓ Site visits and key informant interviews (focus groups, surveys, participatory methods, etc.).
- ✓ Debriefing local level: to provide an overview of the findings prior to preparing the draft evaluation report. It should take place right after the completion of the field work and will serve as the first validation of the evaluation findings.

5.3 Post-Mission Phase:

- Draft report, Executive Summary and completed Evaluation Matrix: Upon returning to their home bases, the Evaluation Team should proceed with writing a draft evaluation report according to the template provided in **Annex 6** to be submitted by the team leader on the agreed date. Upon initial approval of UNCDF HQ Evaluation Unit and the Advisory Panel the draft report will be circulated to all key stakeholders for written comments.

- When submitting the revised report, the Team Leader should also submit a Summary Table setting out which comments have been addressed and where, and which comments have not been addressed and the reasons why they have not been addressed.

- Global Debriefing: Once the draft report has been prepared, the Team Leader will be asked to make an oral presentation by teleconference of the team's main findings and recommendations to UNCDF, UNDP. This debriefing will be chaired by the UNCDF Executive Secretary.

- The Final Evaluation Report should be submitted by the evaluation team leader to the RO M&E Officer in Dakar. The report must include an Annex for the Management Response using the prescribed template where the Team leader will include the main recommendations listed in order of priority.

NOTE: Depending on the quality of the first draft report submitted by the Team Leader, several rounds of comments may be needed to meet the quality standards expected by the UNCDF Evaluation Unit. A quality standard for UN evaluation reports is attached in **Annex 8** "*UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports*".

The report will not be considered final until approved by the UNCDF HQ Evaluation Unit.

6. Schedule of main deliverables:

The Evaluation Team Leader is responsible for preparing and submitting the following deliverables:

MAIN DELIVERABLES	SUBMISSION DATE
Inception report (max 20 pages). Must include a clear description of the data collection methods to be used, template provided.	By Day 1 or 2 of the country phase
Power Point Presentation for national debriefing (max 15 slides and 20 minutes presentation).	At the end of field mission, to be shared with evaluation managers (Regional M&E officer and HQ Evaluation Unit) before presentation
Draft Evaluation Report (max 35-40 pages excluding annexes) and **Executive Summary** (max 2-3 pages). The consultant is also requested to submit concise summary notes of interviews with key stakeholders and focus groups.	By the end of the 2nd week, after the mission
Summary Table setting out which comments have been addressed and where (page number), and which comments have not been addressed and the reasons why they have not been addressed.	At the end of 3rd week
Power Point Presentation for HQ debriefing (max 20 slides and 20 minutes presentation).	At the end of 3rd week
Final Evaluation Report and Executive Summary	At the end of 3rd week

IMPORTANT: The Consultant's contractual obligations are complete only after UNCDF HQ Evaluation Unit's approval of the Final Evaluation Report for quality and completeness as per the TOR.

7. Composition of Evaluation Team:

The LDLD Evaluation will be conducted by an international consultant. The profile and responsibilities are outlined below:

- Minimum of 10 years of accumulated experience in Local Development Finance and in the field of public service delivery in rural areas, including the design, monitoring and evaluation of projects supporting decentralization and local development.

- Demonstrated experience in leading evaluations of programmes involving Local Development Finance.
- Proven ability to use participatory evaluation methods and in applying qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods to assess programme results at individual, institutional, sector and policy level.
- Thorough understanding of key elements of results-based programme management and its link to high quality evaluation
- Knowledge of the UNCDF LDF approach and experience of working in the countries where the programme is implemented is considered an asset.
- Familiarity with UNEG Norms and Standards in Evaluation.

Responsibilities (in addition to all other generic responsibilities and expected deliverables outlined in this TOR)**:**

- Documentation review
- Developing and presenting the necessary data collection tools in the Inception Report.
- Ensuring the use of best practice evaluation methodologies
- Leading the presentation of the draft evaluation findings and recommendations
- Leading the drafting and finalization of the evaluation report, integrating to the extent possible all comments received from different partners
- Present the main findings and recommendations in the final debriefing.
- Regularly updating UNCDF on the progress of the evaluation
- Quality control throughout the evaluation and for the final evaluation report.
- Adherence to UNCDF templates and other requirements as specified in this TOR.

ANNEXES:

Annex 1: Adapted LDLD Evaluation Matrix (separate word file)

Annex 2: Programme expected results

Annex 3: Intervention logic for UNCDF Local Development Finance

Annex 4: Indicative Documentation List

Annex 5: Template in Country Work plan

Annex 6: Outline Final Evaluation Report and Executive Summary

Annex 7: Inception Report template (separate word file)

Annex 8: UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports (separate pdf file)

Annex 1: Proposed LDLD Evaluation Matrix (separate word file)

The Matrix is meant to be adapted by the consultant during the inception phase

Annex 2: Programme expected results and actual implementation status

(to be updated by the consultant)

As set out in the results and resources framework of the original project document, the expected results of the programme are as follows:

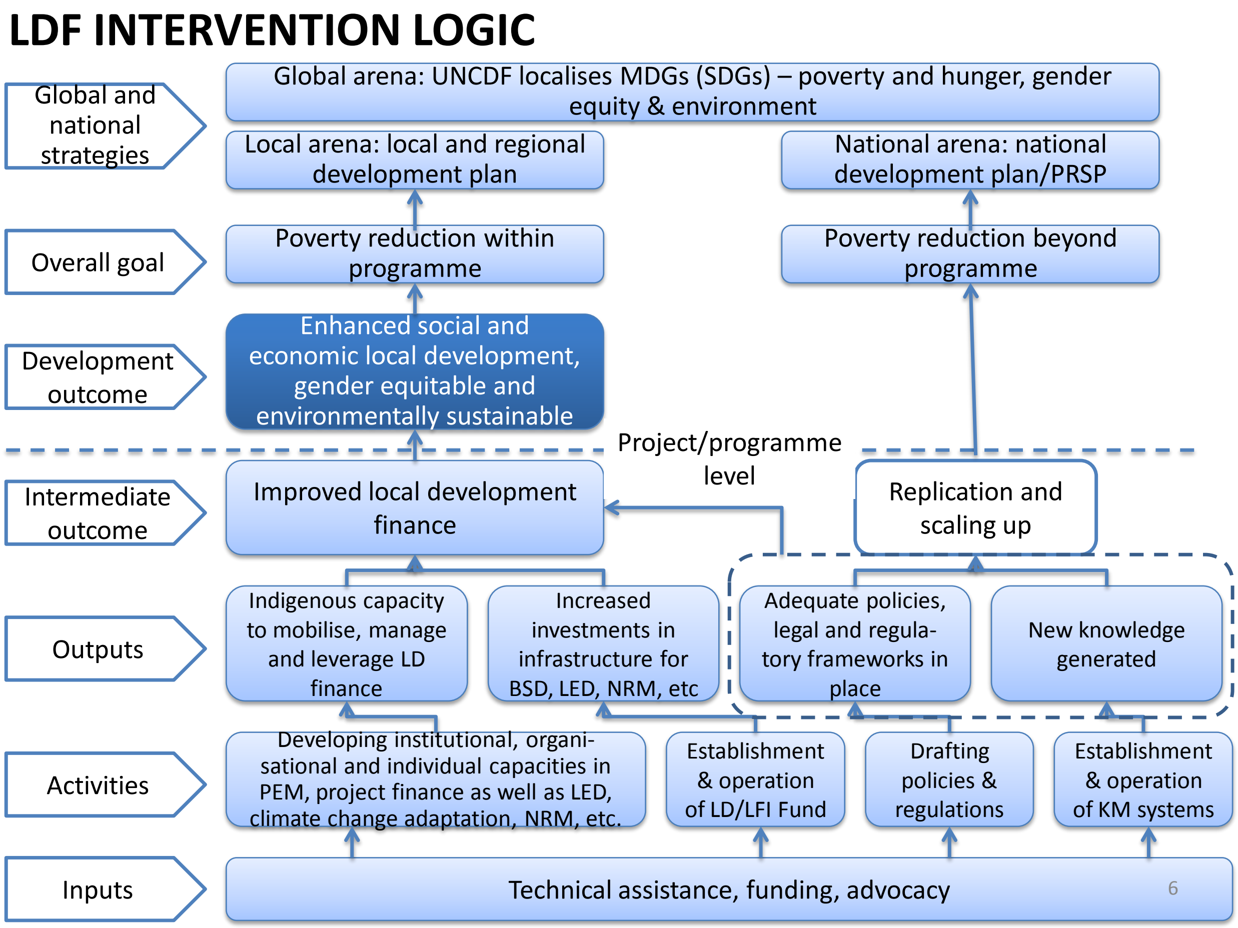
Intended outcome (as stated in the Country Programme Results and Resources Framework): Strengthening of Local Governance, with the immediate objective of establishing Liberia's decentralization strategy.

Objective:
The main objective is to promote the adoption of policies that establish and strengthen fiscal decentralization, administrative and local governance systems in Liberia, as the LDLD installs an adequate organizational capacity to management systems that promote pro-poor infrastructure and service delivery, while stimulating local economic development and sustainable resources' management.

Strategic area I: Promote policy and strategy development – The LDLD will support the GOL to define and operationalize a national decentralization policy which reverses the historic centralization of the state and strengthens the functioning of the sub-national spheres of government-counties, districts, towns and villages	**Strategic area II:** System and institutional development – support for the establishment and elaboration of procedures, processes and systems for effective public expenditure management and infrastructure/service delivery	**Strategic area III:** Sectoral investments and Local Development – to stimulate local economic development by promoting local investments in infrastructure and services, with a view to address poverty in improving prospects for long-term growth and communities prosperity	**Strategic area IV: ensure effective program management**
Output 1: Liberia's decentralization policy and the legal framework established	**Output 2:** Establishment and elaboration of procedures, processes and systems for effective public expenditure management and infrastructure/service delivery.	**Output 3:** Local investment projects implemented	

Annex 3: Intervention logic for Local Development Finance

LDF Practice Area (LDFP) works with local governments, local administrations and local investors as strategic partners of choice. LDFP develops and strengthens local public financial management institutions often through the application of seed capital to test new mechanisms and systems. This promotes the mobilisation, allocation, investment of capital to the local level, with local accountability. In this way LDFP catalyses additional capital flows to responsive institutions. This leads to sustainable, inclusive and equitable local development. The LDF Theory of Change is summarised in the graphic below:



ANNEX 2
UNCDF EVALUATION MISSION
20 – 31 May 2013
ITINERARY & PEOPLE MET

Date & Time	Activity
May 20	Arrival, Transfer to Mamba Point Hotel
6:00 pm to 7:00 pm	Meeting with Kns Nair, CTA **Location: Taaj Hotel**
May 21	**Day 1**
8:30 am – 9:00 am 9:30 am-10:30 am 11:00 am-11:45 am 12:noon – 1:00 pm 1:15 pm – 2:00 pm 2:30 pm to 5:00 pm	Meeting with Kns Nair, CTA **Location: FSA Office, UNDP First Floor** Briefing/Meetings **Ministry of Internal Affairs** Minister Morris M. Dukuly Sr. Dy. Minister Varney Sirleaf Dy. Minister Ranney B. Jackson Sr. Dy. Minister Tiah Nagbe Dy. Amos Tweh Chief, Traditional Council Augustine Kollie **Location: MIA Conference Room** **Briefing - UNDP Senior Management** Dominic Sam Cleophas Torori Nessi Golakai **Location: CD's Office** **Governance Commission** Mrs Mulbah Com. Weh-Dorliae Dr. Alfred Kulah **Location: GC** Lunch **Working session with LDLD/MIA PMU** John Dennis Alexander Zinah Augustine Kollie Loseni Sayon Maryline Logan William Kokolo Bailey Togba Eng. Jackson Berkley James Beajeh Robert Dorliae Kns Nair **Location: MIA Conference Room**
May 22	**(Day 2)**
8:00 am to 9:00 am 9:00am-	Kns Nair/Desk Review **MOF**

10:30am	Romeo Gbartea Maxwell Tody Marama Sougum Lawrence Taylor **Location: 4th floor, MOF**
11.30am – 12.00 pm	**European Union Delegation** Paula Vasquez-Horyaans, Head of Operations Location: EU Delegation
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	**Ministry of Gender** Madhu Mita, Advisor to Minister Deputy Minister Location: Gender Ministry
2:30 pm – 4.00 pm	**LACE** Ramses Kumbuya, Director General Koffa Chie, Head M&E Crispin Tuley, Head IEC **Location: LACE Head Office**
4:00 pm – 5.00	Kns Nair/Desk Review
May 23	**Day 3**
07:00 am– 9:00 am	Travel to Robertsport, Grand Cape Mount County ——(Departure Monrovia)
9:30 am to 10:30 am	Meet with County Authority: Superintendent Asst Superintendent for Development **Location: Robertsport, Supt. Office**
10:30 am to 11:30 am	County Inspector, County Planner/Finance Officer, County Filed Monitor, Public Works Engineer, Gender Coordinator, Agriculture Coordinator (MIA) **Location: Robertsport**
11:30 am to 12:30 pm	HoFO, UNMIL
12:30 pm to 1:30 pm	Lunch
2:00 pm to 4:30 pm	Visit to CDF and SDF funded projects in Robertsport and Commonwealth District Meeting with General Town Chief and community members in Latia Town
4:30 pm to 6:30 pm	Return to Monrovia
May 24	**Day 4**
8:00 to 11:00am	Travel to Bong County, Gbarnga (Departure Monrovia)
11:00 to 11:30 am	Meeting with County Authority Superintendent, Asst Superintendent for Development, **Location: Gbarnga, Supt. Office**
11: to 12:30 pm	County Inspector, County Planner/Finance Officer, County Filed Monitor, HoFo UNMIL, Public Works Engineer, Gender Coordinator, Agriculture Coordinator MIA **Location: Gbarnga: Conference Room**
1:30 to 1:30 pm	Travel to LDF community, Gbondoi

2.00 to 4:30 pm	Town hall Meeting with Gbondoi Community Members/ PMT, DDMC (Location: Gbondoi) Tour various LDF project sites and meet other group members
4:30 to 5:30 pm	Departure from Gbondoi to Gbarnga
5:30 to 6:00 pm	
6:00 pm	Retire, stay overnight , **Location: Gbarnga**
May 25	**Day 5**
8:00 to 10:00 pm	Meeting with Asst County Superintendent for Development, Chair PMC for CDF/SDF, PMC Controller, & PMC project specialist
10:00 to 12:00 pm	Visit SDF, CDF funded projects in/nr Gbarnga town
12:00 to 12.30 pm	Lunch
1:00 to 3:00 pm	Meeting with Gbondoi community members and site visit to LDF investment
3:00 to 6:00 pm	Travel back to Monrovia
May 26, 2013	(**Day 6)** Reading documents, drafting notes in hotel, Monrovia
May 27, 2013	**(Day 7)**
7:00 to 11:00	Travel to Rivercess County, (Departure Monrovia)
11:00 to 13:00	Meeting with County Superviser in Snaah Town, Nyweern District of Rivercess Visit LDF investment site (pineapple plantation) and meeting with group members
13.30 to 15.00 pm	Visit LDF investment site (rice mill, etc.) and meeting with group members in Darsaw Town, Zarfrahn District Travel on to Cestos Visit LDF investment site in Cestos (fisheries project) & meeting with Fisheries Community Members
15.00 to 15.30 pm	
15.30 to 17.00 pm	Meeting and dinner with County Supervisor in Cestos
17.00 to 18.00 pm	
May 28, 2013	**(Day 8) Continue in Rivercess County**
8:00 am to 10 am	Tour SDF, CDF funded projects
10 am to 12 noon	Meeting with County Supervisor, County officials, County Field Monitor, LDF Project Coordinator
1:00pm to 5:00pm	Travel back to Monrovia
7 pm	Skype call with Monica Lomena Gelis and Andrew Fyfe
May 29, 2013	**(Day 9)**
Morning	Preparation of debriefing report
13.00 – 13.45	Meeting Marja SIDA Governance Advisor

14.00 – 16.00 16.00 – 17.00	Attendance Project Board meeting for review and approval of AWP or LDSP (successor programme to LDLD) Meeting KNS Nair Preparation of debriefing report
May 30, 2013	**(Day 10)**
10:00 am – **12:00 am** **14.00 – 15.00**	De-briefing MIA, GC, UNMIL **Location: MIA Conference Room** UNDP/UNCDF De- Briefing **Location: FSA Office, UNDP Fourth Floor**
May 31, 2013	**(Day 11)**
	Departure to Airport

ANNEXE 3 – DOCUMENTATION MADE AVAILABLE TO THE MISSION

1. LDLD PRODOC
2. MoU UNCDF and MIA 2009
3. Last disbursement figures
4. Folder AWP: Annual work plans 2008, 2009, 2010 (2 docs), 2011, 2012 (6 docs)
5. Folder Board Meetings: minuets 2010, minutes + attendance 2011, minutes + attendance 2012 Board meeting (5 docs)
6. Folder CDA Reports: 9 reports for the 9 counties
    - Bomi County Development Agenda, CDA (2008-2012)
    - Bong County Development Agenda (2008-2012)
    - Gbarpolu County Development Agenda (2008-2012)
    - Grand Bassa County Development Agenda, CDA (2008-2012)
    - Grand Gedeh County Development Agenda, CDA (2008-2012)
    - Grand Kru County Development Agenda, CDA (2008-2012)
    - Montserrado CDA report
    - River Cess CDA report
    - River Gee CDA report

7. Folder Evaluations and similar :
    - COMBINED EVALUATION (2012) OF THE COUNTRY SUPPORT TEAM (CST) JOINT PROGRAMME; LIBERIA DECENTRALISATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT (LDLD) PROGRAMME; AND NATIONAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT CENTRE (NIMAC) PROJECT, evaluation of UNDP
    - European Commission "Results-Oriented Monitoring, ROM of LDLD", mission 2010 and press release on March 2011
    - UNDP Assessment of Development Results in Liberia (2012)

8. Folder LDLD progress reports: 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, LDLD Progress Report Q1, Q2, Q3 2012 (7 docs)

9. Folder macro-policy-capacity building:
    - Common vision for uncommon results. An overview of UN integration in Liberia
    - UNDAF
    - Liberia National Policy on Decentralization and Local Governance
    - LDIP Liberia Decentralization Implementation Plan 2013-2017

- Public Financial Management Regulations (2009)
- LIPA –Local Government Training Needs Assessment Report
- Liberia NCDS – National Capacity Development Strategy
- Liberia Capacity Building Strategy
- Roles of Traditional Chiefs in a Decentralized Governance System in Liberia (June 2012)
- Anti Corruption Measures Report 2012
- County Civil Service Report - GC Study 2012
- Development Aid Coordination at LG levels 2012
- Boundary Harmonization and demarcation- GOVERNANCE COMMISSION 2012
- Towards inter-governmental fiscal transfer in Liberia – 2012
- Inter-Governmental Reporting Relationships 2012
- THE STATUTE FOR THE MODEL LIBERIAN CITY 2012
- Liberia Local Government Act 2013
- Auditor General's Report on County Development Fund 2009
- Auditor General's Report on County Development Fund - Nimba County 2009

10. Folder news: February 2010 (3), March 2010, Dec 2010, June 2011 (4), January 2012, July 2012 (18 docs in total)

11. UNCDF missions
    - A "light" Program Review of LDLD, Keith Wright, 2011
    - BTOR for UNCDF missions in 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012
    - Annex 1: Debriefing Note for LDLD Mission (May 2012)
    - Selected emails between UNCDF RO Dakar and UNDP Country Office

12. LDF Operational Guidelines with project profiles for each County

- ANNEX 5 -

RESULTS & RESOURCES FRAMEWORK FOR THE LDLD

FROM THE PROGRAMME DOCUMENT

- ANNEX 6 -

LIBERIA DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (LDLDP)
DRAFT INCEPTION REPORT FOR FINAL EVALUATION

1. EVALUATION PURPOSE & SCOPE

This final UNCDF-led evaluation of the Liberia Decentralization and Local Development Programme (LDLDP) aims to complement the recent "combined evaluation"[14] conducted by UNDP. The current evaluation will specifically aim explore the relevance, efficacy and results achieved of the Local Development Fund piloted within the vehicle of the LDLP, and will aim to draw lessons of wider interest.

To that end, this exercise will examine primarily Focus Areas II & III and corresponding Outputs 2 and 3 of LDLP, although will also review, validate and – if needed – supplement the analysis and conclusions of the "combined evaluation" in regard to Focus Area and Output 1, relating to the policy, legal and regulatory framework for decentralisation.

Beyond the direct auditing & accountability function of this evaluation mission it is also hoped to learn lessons of wider significance, esp. in relation to UNCDF programming strategy in support of local development financing and PFM in fragile states, and to inform the strategy and design of a possible successor programme in Liberia.

Such a final evaluation is in accordance with UNCDF corporate Evaluation Policy and with its Evaluation Plan 2012-13.

2. PROJECT HYPOTHESIS

The strategy, logic and design of LDLP is - supposedly - to some extent inspired by UNCDF experience with, and the hypotheses of, local development programmes elsewhere in Africa and Asia.

The broad results structure & logic of these LDPs is generally as follows:

A. A set of activities leading to a hierarchy of results impacting on the national policy, legal and regulatory framework and – relatedly – on national government and development partner funding of local development (aiming to sustain and replicate LDP innovations).
B. A set of activities leading to a hierarchy of results impacting on sub-national government institutional "capacities" and "accountabilities" (institn. arrangements, systems, procedures, etc.) for better local public expenditure/financial management and accountability. (These aim to be innovative and "piloted" such that they can inform & influence results under A.)
C. A set of activities – and financial resources, often with performance access conditions - leading to a hierarchy of results associated with delivery of local investments. (These also aim to be innovative and "piloted" such that they can inform & influence results under A.)

Considerations on the Results Structure

The rationale, the ambitious expected results and the wide range of proposed activities of the LDLP are laid down in the first instance in the LDLD Concept Paper (2006) and then – somewhat adapted – in the subsequent LDLD Programme document (2007).

[14] This exercise was "combined" in that it evaluated not only the LDLP but also the much larger multi-donor supported County Support Team programme and the National Information Management Centre.

The result logic of the prodoc appears at first glance to be aligned with the broad LDP logic outlined above. However, discerning the intended project logic from this latter document is rather complicated by the unclear articulation of the proposed Focus Areas and their respective Outputs, and the repetition of activities across Outputs 1-3.

1. Decentralisation Policy & Legal Framework established. It is supposed that this will be achieved by a series of policy and legal advisory activities, and by support to MIA .. but it is also suggested that the project will "adopt sector decentralization policies, etc." and "establish the local civil service", both of which being results at an Outcome or higher level and not activities.
2. Establishment & Elaboration of procedures, processes & systems for sub-national government institutions. It is supposed that this will be achieved by a disparate range of activities, such as: supporting MIA (again), support to defining roles of different levels of government and to reorganizing local government structures (both more appropriately located in the logic of Output 1), and strengthening local planning & budgeting and PEM.
3. Local Investment projects implemented at county and district levels. It is supposed that this will be achieved through piloting in selected Counties of: support to various planning procedures (again), support to training mechanisms for these same planning procedures, support for accountability arrangements – and for setting up County/District Development Funds and associated procedures and guidelines. (It must also be said here that the characterisation of Output 3 as an Output – ie as under the control of the project – is problematic, since actual implementation of investments occurs further "up" the results chain and is not under direct project control.)

[Lastly, and rather differently:

4. To ensure the proper utilization of resources and effective management of LDLD. It is supposed that this will be achieved by setting up a PMU within MIA, and with a series of workplanning, monitoring, ad hoc advisory support and reporting functions.]

Implicit Project Hypothesis & Logic

Despite the repetition of activities between Outputs, the mischaracterization of some Outputs/results, and the lack of clear delineation of results between Outputs 1, 2 and 3, it does appear that at the core of the project logic is the implicit "UNCDF hypothesis" that the sort of "piloting" of innovations in LD financing and PEM procedures under Output 3, will – if proven successful, and with suitable dissemination of results, and advocacy and advisory inputs – be potentially adopted nation-wide under Outputs 1 and perhaps 2.

Overpage is a schematic depiction of causal chains:

- **Downwards**, from LDLD activities (in the blue cells) to higher-order results (in purple and orange cells) outside of direct project control;
- **From left and middle columns to right hand column**, from piloting activities into policy and upscale

SCHEMATIC DEPICTION OF CAUSAL CHAINS OF LDLDP RESULTS

Strategic Area III/Output 3: **Piloting of Funding Innovation**	**Strategic Areas II & III/Outputs 2 & 3 (some confusion):** **Piloting of PEM innovations**	**Strategic Areas I & II/Outputs 1 and 2 (some confusion):** **Upscale:** **Feeding into Policy, Law or Regulation, or into Donor Replication**
Design of a DDF mechanism & procedures	Design of improved PEM procedures	Monitoring & documentation of piloting innovations which work well
Establishment of a DDF mechanism	Training roll-out, monitoring & adjustment of improved PEM procedures	Dissemination of lessons to key national policy stakeholders (MIA, MoF etc and donors)
Commitment of DDF funds by UNCDF and other parties	Adoption/use of improved PEM procedures by CDCs, DDCs, CDCs in an efficient, equitable, gender-sensitive and accountable manner	Advisory & advocacy support to facilitate discussion and debate of policy, legal or regulatory implications of lessons (for GoL) or of programme strategy reforms (for other donors).
Timely & Equitable allocation of DDF Funds from UNCDF to Liberia, and on to Counties & Districts	Investment plans which faithfully and fairly reflect community & local development priorities, are selected on merit, and which comprise well screened and costed projects	Internal official (GoL, Parliament etc) discussion – and adoption – or otherwise – of the lessons into policy, law or regulation and/or into changed donor programme strategy and funding.
Incremental expenditures on investments emerging from local planning process	Project profiles which respond to local development priorities in an equitable and gender-sensitive manner and are feasible, implementable and maintainable	
	Projects which are efficiently, equitably and transparently implemented	
	Project assets of quality, which are efficiently and equitably maintained in the long run	
Incremental investment assets which better match local priorities and are more efficiently delivered and sustained to yield benefits to local users – in a gender-sensitive manner - than **“otherwise” (counterfactual)**		In case of adoption, LD financing and/or PEM innovations thereby upscaled and “sustained”

- ***Blue = LDLD project activities leading to outputs (ie under project control)***
- ***Purple = LDLD higher order results***
- ***Orange = LDLD impact/similar***

In regard to the **"piloting" logic** we should note things which are - and also are not - said explicitly in the prodoc:

- **Piloting innovations**: this would comprise piloting both (i) a District Development Fund and also (ii) PEM innovations in 3 (or more) counties and their respective districts "to utilise the standard UNCDF methodology which has been globally tested to channel district funds through the Counties etc. .." - but little analysis is given of the failings in current PEM arrangements. Further, the rationale for the DDF as adjunct to the existing CDF is not clearly explained in the Annex to the prodoc. A key assumption is also noted in the prodoc, that all this "will require strong support from MoF .. GRC .. and MIA ..".
- **Building on CSP institutional platforms**: since there are no elected local governments in Liberia and there is a vacuum in institutional representation, this piloting will also leverage the County- and District-level institutions being supported by the CSP – and that fill the sub-national institutional vacuum given the lack of any elected local government bodies - and hence be dependent on their viability. But the prodoc says nothing much about these key institutions, their strengths and weaknesses, or generally about strategy in their regard.

3. VALIDATING THE EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Structured Enquiry by Results

The **Matrix attached as Annex 1** – see separate file - outlines the lines of enquiry to be pursued in the course of the mission, the manner in which information and opinion will be sought, and the information and opinion sources – i.e. categories of informant and of documentation to be consulted. This will be developed and adjusted in the course of the mission.

Clearly, limitations of time and access will mean that the same informants will often be consulted for lines of enquiry spanning several "levels" of result and several.

The evaluation will also be governed by the standards and principles set out in the UNEG evaluation checklist – attached.

Semi-Structured Interviews or Focus Group Meetings (preliminary)

To ensure consistency, the following is an indication of some key lines of enquiry which it will be attempted to follow as consistently as possible, depending on the type of informant. However, it is also recognized that full consistency in interviewing will not always be possible – due to knowledge of the informant of the issues, time constraints, interruptions, and also to serendipity (i.e. the need to opportunistically capture or elicit "unexpected" information or opinions which may go beyond the planned frame of enquiry).

<u>Views on Project-as-Designed:</u>

- Relevance to Liberia in 2007-08 (to then political challenges, to then policy priorities) and as things have evolved ?
- Suitability of local institutional arrangements: use of CDCs, DDCs etc., of role assigned to Chiefs, etc. ?
- Suitability of DDF as adjunct to CDF ? rather than integrated with CDF ?
- Suitability of piloting strategy in a few counties as opposed to straight upscale ?
- Suitability of MIA as lead agency ? of inter-Ministerial cooperation on decentralization?
- The UNDP/UNCDF funding and TA allocations?
- The "fit" between LDLD and CT projects?
- Any changes which might have been made later, but weren't, or vice versa ?

- How broad-based was design or consultation process ? Were changes proposed which were/not adopted by UNCDF ?

Views on Some Key Features of Results Achieved:

- *LDF funding mechanism*: how developed? menu, County/District allocations, performance links, fund channeling, reporting ..? delays, misuse ? public knowledge of funds and expenses ? similarities & differences re. the County Dev. Fund ? similarities & differences re. the CEP ? how clear and well understood are guidelines? What scope for mainstreaming for future LGs?
- *PEM procedures*: how developed? How clear and appropriate for: planning, budgeting, investment project preparation? Procurement? Implementation? Monitoring? Asset management? How rolled out? how clear and well understood are guidelines? How accessible for people at different levels? What aids & tools & formats ? How modified? What failed ? Used only for LDF or for CDF and other funds? How different from previous or other procedures? What scope for national roll-out for future LGs?
- *Viability and accountability of Sub-National Institutions Supported (CDCs, DDCs, CDCs)*: how are they constituted? Same people/rotation? Role of County and District officials ? What modus operandi? What accountability mechanisms if any to local areas? Are they dominated/coopted? how is each managing these innovations in procedure?
- *Upscaling, policy impact & replication*: what role played by LDLD in major policy & legislative results ? via advisers .. ? via results from pilots ? how was latter effected – dissemination results, workshops, CT programme ..? what were problem areas for upscaling ?

Written notes will be kept for all meetings – with recording of name(s), gender(s), institution, location, date and time.

Counterfactual Evidence

Insofar as possible LDLP will be evaluated by comparison with evidence from counterfactual scenarios. Which counterfactuals are appropriate will depend: performance in some areas will be assessed against whatever evidence exist of the “pre-project” or baseline situation; performance in other areas will be assessed by comparing performance between Counties where LDLDP has been active, and those where it has not; and performance in yet other areas may assessed by comparing performance of the “DDF model” with that of other local development investment delivery models, such as the Community Empowerment Project, managed by LACE and supported by the World Bank. Pragmatism will be used in making any such comparisons.

Sampling Strategy

For field work, a major concern will be to assess LDLDP results as far as possible against those achieved under counterfactual scenario. In this regard, the two most plausible comparators are (i) Counties where piloting has not been undertaken; (ii) Procedures for allocating and for managing the County Development Fund even in Counties where piloting has been undertaken, and (iii) activities and results under similar but different local development arrangements – a prime candidate seems to be the World Bank supported Community Empowerment Project (CEP). This has consequences for sampling strategy:

Geographic sampling

- Field visits will be undertaken to at least one County where LDLD piloting has been ongoing since the start of the project (ie first batch Counties), and to at least one County where no such piloting had been undertaken.
- If time permits a third County visit, preference would probably be for one where piloting has been undertaken but is more recent.

- In each County the aim will be to spend adequate time at County HQ, to visit at least two different District HQs, and to visit at least three Clan localities.
- In all cases logistics will be a key determinant in selecting the areas but an effort will be made to ensure this is not at the cost of a representative sample.

Investment sampling

An effort will be made to "track" (i.e. through examination of planning & procurement reports, etc, as well as through site visits and meetings with persons associated & users) a sample of investments funded by LDLDP. This would take account of:

- Need for a mix of both economic productive investments and of more "public" socio-economic infrastructure.
- Need for a mix of recent investments and of investments which were made early on , and where O&M issues may be more apparent.
- Need for a mix of investment-types where users likely differ by gender.
- Need for a mix of investments deemed both "successful" and "failures" by local people.
- Here too logistics will be key, as will being able to visit sites where users are available for meetings – again, an effort will be made to ensure this is not at the cost of a representative sample.
- An effort will also be made to "track" comparable investment-types funded under the County Development Fund and the CEP.

4. SETTING UP THE EVALUATION PROGRAMME

Broad Plan

Broadly, the plan will be to spend:

- the first 2 (max. 3) days in Monrovia for initial briefings with key national-level informants, to identify/copy key documents, and to finalise plans and logistics for the field trips.

- then 5 days in the field – though logistics may require return through Monrovia for redeparture.

- and 2-3 days in Monrovia to follow-up with key informants, pursue lines of enquiry suggested by fieldwork, and to prepare for debriefing.

- as close to the end of the mission as possible a debriefing session will be held with as many government, donor and UNDP/UN stakeholders as is feasible.

List of Informants

National:

- MIA: CTA, PMU staff and staff in key Divisions; Deputy Minister Tiah Nagbe ?
- MoFinance: Bureau of Budget; Policy staff; Bernard Jappah ?
- Governance Commission: Dr Sawyer, Dr Kula ?
- MoGender Dev't: Senior Policy staff
- MoPlanning: Senior Policy staff
- LIPA: Director and/or staff who train County/District officials
- Parliament (Women's caucus members ?)
- Traditional Council of Chiefs
- Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE): Director/Manager or senior staff
- World Bank: Chief Economist or PFM specialist

- UNDP: CD etc.
- EC
- SIDA
- UNMIL: political/civil affairs officer (longstanding)
- NDI (if anyone working on local governance)
- Carter Centre (if anyone working on local governance)

Local (in both pilot and non-pilot Counties, and selected Districts in each):

- County Supervisor/Deputy
- Key CDC members
- County officials: planner, finance, engineer/works officer, gender development officer ..
- UNMIL field officer
- LACE staff at County level
- District Commissioner/Deputy
- Key DDC members
- Clan Development Committee members
- Chief
- Users/community groups associated with investments

Some informants will most efficiently be met individually – others in groups.

5. ANNEX UNEG CHECKLIST

The consultant will adhere to the principles and standards laid down in the United Nations Evaluation Group checklist – this is attached as Annex 2.

ANNEX 7 – INCORPORATION OF COMMENTS

DEBRIEFING AT MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS – 3OTH MAY (10 AM)

QUESTION OR COMMENT	HOW REPORT ADDRESSES THE QUESTION OR COMMENT
Minister: Agrees with the conclusions. Notes past failures of farm mechanization in Liberia, citing his own experience as farmer. Notes the importance of education. *Leaves meeting after comments.*	N.A.
Dy Minister Jackson. Asks how far the problems faced by investment groups noted are due to inadequate capacity building.	*See answers to Qn. 3 and Qn. 5* Problems relate mainly to issues of basic institutional, technical and financial feasibility
Dy Minister Niagbe: Agrees with overall presentation and notes the importance of the conclusions for the future programme. Stresses need to raise personal/household incomes in Liberia, hence need to focus on agricultural development; wants increasing focus on local economic development and decreasing focus on social infrastructure Sees LDF as a 1st step towards LED, and need to learn and adjust.	*See answers to Qn 5. and Recommendations* LED is key but (i) role of local government is primarily in providing enabling public infrastructure for LED (direct investments by local government are a much greater step in difficulty and risk) and (ii) agricultural technology upgrade probably best left to a dedicated project/programme and support agency.
Mr. Kullah, GC: Sees LDF as intended forerunner to fiscal decentralisation Asks (a) what connection between LDF and CDF ? (b) what impact of LED ? Notes that Districts in many cases are unclear as units, in number and boundaries.	*See answers to Qn. 3, 4 and 5* LDF was indeed intended as a forerunner, but the manner of its implementation has prevented it being a model for CDF. Impact of LED has been largely doubtful.
KNS: Agrees that DDMC as of now is too narrow a base for District planning. Notes problems faced in rolling out LDF after 2011 elections when many County officials changed and knowledge of LDF largely lost – and lack of UNCDF funds for support and monitoring of LDF in 2012.	*See answers to Qn. 2 & 3* Noted. Lack of UNCDF technical support funding was recorded as a problem under Qn 3.
Adriano Cassandra, Civil Affairs, UNMIL: Claims to have been involved in LDLP/LDF design and notes that aim of LDF was to test community input into a mechanism which would inform the CDF – currently	*See answers to Qns. 3, 4, 5 and 6* LDF was indeed intended to provide a model for District planning based on community input but the manner of its implementation has prevented this.

dominated by County officials.	
Notes confusion in rules between LDF, CDF & SDF.	LDF has not engaged with CDF/SDF – the original aim.
Says current LED model inadequate because lacks resources for marketing and storage of agric. prodn.	The mission believes there were more basic problems with the LED approach adopted. The virtue of investing even more LDF resources in the same groups is very questionable, on both efficiency and equity grounds.
Dy Minister Niagbe: Wants to redesign 2nd phase of programme in light of LDF lessons, and upscale across whole country; need to develop District development agendas and consolidate into County agendas.	*See Recommendations* The mission recommends that the 2nd phase return to the original strategy and focus on testing basic innovations in District funding and PEM – and leave LED support until later (or to another project/agency).
Francis Kai Kai, Head Civil Affairs, UNMIL: Notes that prodoc needed better institutional and risk analysis. Underlines that direct investment impact – weak as it may have been – was not main aim – main aim was to test improved procedures.	*See answers to Qn. 1 and 3.* Unfortunately the procedures actually tested were not designed to provide a model for reforming CDF/SDF or for any other future local government funding or PEM arrangements.
Borntree Adile, UNMIL: Asks if producer groups are better off, or not, after the project ?	*See answer to Qn. 5* They have all received a substantial amount of subsidized inputs which in some cases have generated short term income increases but the long term benefits not always clear.
Dy Minister Niagbe: Returns to earlier point – for time being may need to focus on social infrastructure, but over time this should decrease and funds be shifted to LED – also to generate income to maintain the social infra.	*See Recommendations* The mission recommends that the 2nd phase return to the original strategy and focus on testing basic innovations in District funding and PEM – and leave LED support until later (or to another project/agency).
KNS: Agrees direct impact is doubtful – but stresses importance of institutional impact. Notes that the prodoc assumptions regarding DDCs were questionable.	*See answer to Qn. 1 and 3* Unfortunately the procedures actually tested were not designed to provide a model for reforming CDF/SDF or for any other future local government funding or PEM arrangements.
Dy Minister Jackson: The project was visionary in its community focus, but need now to see how to raise to District level.	*See answer to Qn. 3 and Recommendations* This is indeed the challenge.
Dy Minister Niagbe: *Closes the meeting.*	

DEBRIEFING AT UNDP COUNTRY OFFICE – WITH UNCDF NEW YORK & UNCDF DAKAR ON VIDEO/AUDIO LINK – 30TH MAY (2 PM)

QUESTION OR COMMENT	**HOW REPORT ADDRESSES THE QUESTION OR COMMENT**
David Jackson: Asks (a) which elements of the LED approach worked ? (b) whether UNCDF "budget" problem was related to AWP process or to non-release of full initial commitment (if latter, not necessarily a problem, due to proven absorption problems).	*See answer to Qn. 2 & 5 and Recommendations* (a) Overall the LED strategy as implemented has not been successful. (b) Problem has been in the uncertain annual allocations and in the poor planning of capital grant requirements (given the likely weak direct impact of investments, the fact that all funds not released can not be said to be problematic)
Andrew Fyfe: Asks about sample size as (a) proportion of overall LDF coverage and (b) in light of LDF sequencing over time ?	*See section 2.* Mission visited 2 of 9 pilot Counties and most investments/groups in these Counties (i.e. approx.. 20% sample coverage). 1 was an "early starter" and 1 "a late starter" pilot County
Monica Lomena Gelis: Asks what lessons learnt from the CEP, cited as possible counterfactual in the inception report ?	*See section 2.* CEP funded basic public infrastructure and so no obvious value as counterfactual in comparing investment quality, efficiencies or impact with LDF investments.
KNS: Notes that UNCDF budget for TA declined, causing problems. Argues that LED activities should not be judged as to whether they generate high economic rates of return. Menu offered to communities should not be restrictive.	*See answers to Qn. 2, 3, 5* UNCDF TA support problems noted. This mission not measuring LDF investments by the high standard of economic returns (EIRR etc), but simply by the most basic standards of technical and commercial viability, which many appear not to meet. A major problem with the LDF procedures is precisely that they do not offer real choice to communities.
Dominic Sam: Notes that programme has been highly relevant.	*See answer to Qn. 1*

ANNEX 8: LDF INVESTMENTS

Strategic Plan for LDF Investments

Initial Investment Plan & Costs (2010)

Actual Investments (based on 2013 MIA M&E Monitoring report)

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR LDF INVESTMENTS		
Name of the investment	**Type of investment**	**Location (Sites visited in bold)**
Marketing support for agriculture products	Marketing for surplus goods in local community and extend to neighboring towns and cities.	Beajeh (Bomi) **Gbondoi (Bong)** Gbarma (Gbarpolu) Desso (Grand Bassa) Dukpoken (Maryland) Kparblee (Nimba) **Wheesaye (Rivercess)** Juwehpo (River Gee) Saygbeken (Sinoe)
Cassava group farming	Farming assets - Procurement of agricultural tools and machinery such as power tiller, shovel, rain boot, hand gloves, cutlasses, wheelbarrow, hoes, files, rain coots, digger, knapsack sprayer, axes, power saw and accessories.	Beajeh (Bomi) **Gbondoi (Bong)** Gbarma (Gbarpolu) Desso (Grand Bassa) Dukpoken (Maryland) Kparblee (Nimba) **Wheesaye (Rivercess)** Jaytoken (River Gee)
Swamp rice group farming	Farming machinery, tools and inputs such as thresher, power tiller, shovel, rain boot, hand gloves, cutlasses, wheelbarrow, hoes, files, axes, rain coots, Digger, tarpaulin, knapsack sprayer, power saw and accessories.	Beajeh (Bomi) **Gbondoi (Bong)** Gbarma (Gbarpolu) Desso (Grand Bassa) Dukpoken (Maryland) Kparblee (Nimba) **Wheesaye (Rivercess)** Juwehpo (River Gee)
Pineapple group farming	Procurement of material such as Axe, hand gloves, rain boots, plastic rope Rain coats, hoe, shovel, cutlasses, kpanach sprayer, files, rake, wheelbarrow, power saw and accessories	Beajeh (Bomi) Gbarma (Gbarpolu) Desso (Grand Bassa) **Wheesaye (Rivercess)** Juwehpo (River Gee)
Mixed crops group farming	Procurement of tools and materials such as Axe, hand gloves, rain boots, plastic rope, rain coats, hoe, shovel, cutlasses, kpanach sprayer, files, rake, wheelbarrow, power saw and accessories	**Gbondoi (Bong**) Dukpoken (Maryland) Kparblee (Nimba)
Plantain group farming	Procurement of tools and materials such as power tiller, shovel, rain boot, hand gloves, cutlasses, wheelbarrow, hoes, files, axes, rain coots, Digger, tarpaulin, kpanack sprayer, power saw	Kparblee (Nimba)
Fisheries sector	Equipment, tools and accessories (Canoe, engine, nets, etc.)	**Cestos (Rivercess)**
Agro -- Processing	Construction, Machinery Training	**Gbondoi (Bong)** Dukpoken (Maryland) Kparblee (Nimba) Beajeh (Bomi) Gbarma (Gbarpolu) Desso (Grand Bassa) **Wheesaye (Rivercess**) Pennoken (River Gee) Saygbeken (Sinoe)

Training	Capacity development for economic empowerment and access to basic services	**Gbondoi (Bong)** Kparblee (Nimba) Dukpoken (Maryland) Beajeh (Bomi) Gbarma (Gbarpolu) Desso (Grand Bassa) **Wheesaye (Rivercess)** Pennoken (River Gee) Saygbeken (Sinoe)

LDF: INITIAL INVESTMENT PLAN FOR 6 COUNTIES (2010)

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Type of Investment	GBARPOLU Gbarma	RIVER CESS Cestos	RIVER GEE Fishtown	BOMI Beajeh/Senjeh	SINOE Greenville	GRAND BASSA Desso/Comp No.3	TOTAL	%
Fisheries								
Boats		2,000					2,000	0.3%
Fisheries Infrastructure		40,000			40,000		80,000	13.3%
Farming								
Swamp Rice Cultivation	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	10,000	15,000	85,000	14.2%
Cassava Cultivation	7,000	5,000	7,000	10,000	5,000	5,000	39,000	6.5%
Pineapple Cultivation	8,000	5,000	8,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	36,000	6.0%
Crop-Processing								
Rice Mill	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	25,000	100,000	16.7%
Cassava Mill	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	30,000	5.0%
Marketing Support (TBD)	25,000		25,000	25,000		25,000	100,000	16.7%
General								
Community Hall/Training Centre	10,000		10,000	10,000	5,000	5,000	40,000	6.7%
Training	5,000	3,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	28,000	4.7%
Management & Monitoring								
County	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	18,000	3.0%
DDMC	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	24,000	4.0%
MIA/CDSS	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	18,000	3.0%
TOTAL	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	600,000	

LDF: INVESTMENTS IN 6 COUNTIES: EXTRACT FROM MIA M&E DIVISION MONITORING REPORT, MARCH 2013

Project Name	Project No	Sector	Project Type	County	District	Locality	Contractor	Start Date	End Date	Project Cost	Payment to date	Project Status	Percent Completed	Remarks
Mixed crops	00245	Agriculture	mixed crops	Bong	Yeallequelleh	Gbondoi		May 05, 2012	Aug 05, 2012	$9,000	$13,000	ongoing	55%	First phase of the project is completed with the community earning more than L$200,000.
Construction of Swamp Rice and Cassava Processing Facility	00307	Agriculture	Construction	Bong	Yeallequelleh	Gbondoi	Community	Jan 10, 2012	Dec 31, 2013	$29,000	-	ongoing	75%	The project is ongoing
Swamp Rice Cultivation	00308	Agriculture	Swamp Rice	Bong	Yeallequelleh	Gbondoi	Community	Jan 10, 2012	Jan 10, 2013	$18,000	-	ongoing	30%	This project has met only 30% of its target. It's a community project that intends to continue following the end of donor's support.
Cassava cultivation	00309	Agriculture	Cassava Production	Bong	Yeallequelleh	Gbondoi	Community	Jan 10, 2012	Jan 10, 2013	$12,000	-	ongoing	27%	It has met 27% of its expected output
DDMC establishment and supervision	00311	Governance	Surpervision and Monitoring	Bong	Yeallequelleh	Gbondoi		Jan 09, 2012	Dec 31, 2013	$4,000	-	ongoing		This is an ongoing project under the community structure called District Development Management Committee (DDMC), which is supervised by the county.
County system Monitoring	00312	Governance	Surpervision and Monitoring	Bong	Jorquelleh	Gbarnga	County Administration	Jan 05, 2012	Jan 31, 2013	$3,000	-	ongoing	72%	This is a community based project that needs constant monitoring on the part of the county for which this amount is provided.
MIA Monitoring and Technical Support	00313	Governance	Surpervision and Monitoring	Bong	Yeallequelleh	Gbondoi	Ministry of Internal Affairs	Jan 05, 2012	Jan 31, 2013	$3,000	-	ongoing	95%	MIA provides technical support and monitor the projects through its county field monitoring officers (CFMOs).
Training Farmers in Modern Agri Technology	00314	Agriculture	Capacity Building	Bong	Yeallequelleh	Gbondoi	County Administration			$5,000	-	Yet to start	0%	There has not been any training started.
Training in Burned Bricks making	00315	Other	Capacity Building	Bong	Yeallequelleh	Gbondoi				$3,000	-	Yet to start	0%	The training is yet to start.
Swamp rice farm (for communities' empowerment in rural Liberia)	00041	Agriculture	Swamp Rice	River Cess	Zarflahn	Darsaw	Community	Aug 02, 2010	Dec 02, 2013	$15,000	-	ongoing	75%	The first phase of the project has been completed. The county is planning to recommence the project.
Pineapple farm project	00042	Agriculture	Pineapple production	River Cess	Norwein	Snaah Town	Community	Aug 07, 2010	Dec 07, 2013	$5,000	-	ongoing	40%	The community should cultivated 25 acres but has done 10. They have promised to continue brushing to meet their target. There seems to be limited commitment on the part of the county and district administrations to ensure adequate progress.
Agro-processing Equipment	00043	Agriculture	Agro-processing	River Cess	Zarflahn	Darsaw	Community	Dec 09, 2010	Feb 12, 2011	$15,875	-	completed	100%	The equipment have been installed.
Agro-processing Shelter construction	00044	Agriculture	Agro-processing	River Cess	Zarflahn	Darsaw	Community	Feb 09, 2012	Oct 05, 2012	$20,000	-	completed	100%	Building was completed but structure looks overstated.
Support to Fishery Infrastructure	00045	Agriculture	Fishery	River Cess	Zarflahn	Cestos City	Community	Oct 08, 2010	Oct 13, 2012	$35,000	-	ongoing	30%	Only one of the three canoes along with accessories was purchased. The county redirected most of the funds to other projects.
Cassava Project	00046	Agriculture	Cassava Production	River Cess	Norwein	Yakpa Town	Community	Aug 07, 2010	Dec 31, 2013	$5,000	-	Failed	2%	This project failed. The community was not proactive. The county has decided to relocate the project equipment to Wheasaye where cassava production is reportedly high. The equipment are currently in Darsaw, Zarflahn District.
County supervision and Monitoring	00047	Governance	Surpervision and Monitoring	River Cess	All project districts	Yakpa, Snaah and Darsaw towns	Community	Aug 10, 2010	Dec 31, 2013	$3,000	-	slow progress		Monitoring of the projects by the county was not very effective, which led to failure in the cassava project and low output of the swamp rice project.
Project Assurance and Local Development Fund compliance	00048	Governance	Monitoring	River Cess	All project districts	Snaah, Darsaw, Yakpa and Cestos	Ministry of Internal Affairs	Aug 10, 2010	Dec 31, 2013	$3,000	-	ongoing		MIA has been providing monitoring support under this project.
Establishment & Functionality of DDMCs	00049	Governance	Surpervision and Monitoring	River Cess	All project districts	Snaah, Nyorwein, Darsaw, Cestos		Aug 07, 2010	Dec 31, 2013	$4,000	-	ongoing		The commissioners who are chairs of the District Development Management Committees have not been effective in supervising and monitoring the projects at the district level for which funds were provided.

Fishery	003557	Agriculture	Capacity Building	Sinoe	Commonwealth	Greenville				$40,000	-	Failed		Citizens agreed on priority, and the procurement process was initiated to buy canoes but follow up was never made by county administration. Funds have been mismanaged by county authorities.
Agro-processing machinery and agricultural related support	003558	Agriculture	agro-processing center/shelter	Sinoe	Getroh	Saygbeken and Wortuken				$60,000	-	incomplete	40%	County is dishonest in implementation
Swamp Rice Project	00083	Agriculture	Swamp Rice	River Gee	Potupo	Juwelpo	Community	Aug 10, 2010	Dec 31, 2012	$15,000	-	ongoing		Phase one of the project has been concluded.
Cassava Project	00084	Agriculture	Cassava Production	River Gee	Potupo	Jaytoken	Community	Aug 10, 2010	Dec 31, 2012	$10,000	-	incomplete	16%	Out of 32 acres, the community was only able to cultivate 16% of its expected output.
Pineapple Cultivation	00089	Agriculture	Pineapple production	River Gee	Potupo	Pennoken	Community	Aug 07, 2010	Dec 31, 2012	$5,000	-	ongoing	47%	The pineapple project has met 47% of its expected outputs. 7 out of 15 acres of pineaaple farm have been cultivated.
Construction of Community Hall/Training Center	00092	Public Housing & Buildings	Construction	River Gee	Potupo	Fish Town		Aug 09, 2010	Dec 31, 2012	$10,000	-	Standstill	2%	The county mismanaged the fund.
Agro-processing facility with accessories	00094	Agriculture	Agro-processing	River Gee	Potupo	Juwelpo	Community	Dec 16, 2010	Dec 16, 2010	$15,875	-	completed		
Training in modern agriculture techniques and project management for project owners	00096	Education	training	River Gee	Potupo	All localities	Local Consultant	Sep 16, 2010	Sep 23, 2010	$5,000	-	ongoing	45%	Training of project owners have not been concluded.
County system for monitoring of LDF Projects	00100	Governance	Surpervision and Monitoring	River Gee	Potupo	Pennoken, Juwelpo, Jaytoken	County Administration	Aug 20, 2010	Dec 31, 2012	$3,000	-	Failed		The county has not shown any level of effectiveness in supervising and monitoring the projects.
Establishment of DDMC for district supervision and monitoring	00101	Governance	Surpervision and Monitoring	River Gee	Potupo	Jaytoken, Pennoken, Juwelpo	Community	Aug 16, 2010	Dec 31, 2012	$4,000	-	Standstill		The District Commissioner who is the head of the District Development Management Committee (DDMC) chair has been largely ineffective and corrupt. He has mismanaged materials entrusted to him.
cassava project	00299	Agriculture	Cassava Production	Maryland	Barrobo	Dougboken	Community	Jan 15, 2012	Dec 31, 2013	$15,000	-	slow progress	15%	This county is one of the new supported LDF counties.
school	00300	Education	construction of school	Maryland	Barrobo	Dougboken	Community	Jan 15, 2012	Dec 31, 2013	$17,000	-	slow progress	10%	
agro-processing shelter and equipment	00301	Public Housing & Buildings	agro-processing center/shelter	Maryland	Barrobo	Dougboken	Community	Jan 15, 2012	Dec 31, 2013	$41,000	-	ongoing	70%	
mixed crops project	00302	Agriculture	mixed crops	Maryland	Barrobo	Dougboken	Community	Jan 15, 2012	Dec 31, 2013	$10,000	-	Yet to start	0%	Community withdrew funds but yet to start the project.
county monitoring of LDF	00303	Governance	Surpervision and Monitoring	Maryland	Barrobo	Duogboken		Jan 15, 2012	Dec 31, 2013	$3,000	-	ongoing	55%	County needs to improve on monitoring and supervision.
MIA Monitoring	00304	Governance	Monitoring	Maryland	Barrobo	Duogboken	Ministry of Internal Affairs	Jan 15, 2012	Dec 31, 2013	$3,000	-	ongoing	90%	MIA through its M&E is conducting monitoring.
training farmers	00305	Agriculture	Training	Maryland	Barrobo	Dugboken	County Administration			$5,000	-	Yet to start	0%	
Feeding for farmers	00306	Agriculture	mixed crops	Maryland	Barrobo	Dugboken	Community	Jan 15, 2012	Dec 31, 2012	$2,000	-			
Marketing support	003559	Agriculture	Transportation	Bomi	Senjeh	Beajah	Community	Jan 10, 2011	Dec 31, 2011	$25,000	-	incomplete	15%	Vehicle was never purchased
Construction of community Training Hall	003560	Public Housing & Buildings	Capacity Building	Bomi	Senjeh	Beajah	Community	Jan 10, 2011	Dec 31, 2011	$10,000	-	completed	100%	The funds was used to rehabilitate an old structure which is completed and in use.
Purchase of Agro-processing equipment	03561	Agriculture	Agro-processing	Bomi	Senjeh	Beajah	County Authority	Jan 05, 2011	Dec 31, 2011	$15,000	-	completed	100%	Equipment were purchased.