

**Terms of Reference**

**Project Evaluation**

**Liberia Decentralization Support Programme (LDSP)**

# Background

The Liberia Decentralization Support Program (LDSP) is a five year (2013 – 2017) Government of Liberia program designed to facilitate the implementation of the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Government. The program supports the decentralization of administrative, political and fiscal governance in Liberia. The program is aligned with Pillar IV of the **Agenda for Transformation (AfT)** namely, **Government and Public Sector Modernization,** which states: “In partnership with citizens, create transparent, accountable and responsible public institutions that contribute to economic and social development as well as inclusive and participatory governance systems”.

The LDSP commenced in June 2013 and is funded by a consortium of donor partners. The total project cost is estimated at US$ 18 million over the five (5) - year period. In line with UNDP’s programming approach, its implementation represents a policy shift from direct implementation (DIM) by donor agencies to a national implementation modality (NIM) under which major implementation responsibilities as well as the attendant authorities and accountabilities have been transferred to government institutions led by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and the Governance Commission (GC). Its work plan, developed year to year defines major program activities for the period of its implementation and presents the outputs and outcomes the LDSP seeks to achieve under each of its five (5) main established outcomes and the core actions that will be implemented towards achieving those outputs.

The Matrix below presents the Outcomes and Outputs of the Program.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Outcomes | Outputs |
| 1 | De-concentrated services and corresponding resources managed at the assigned level of government. | **Output 1.1:** The MACs of the government of Liberia tangibly and visibly transfer functions, decision making and corresponding resources to the counties according to the de-concentration strategy.  **Output 1.2:** Enhanced coordination, sharing and pooling of resources across units of macs at the county level achieved.  **Output 1.3:** Improved infrastructure to support the de-concentration process.  **Output 1.4:** Citizens are organized and informed to participate in the de-concentration process. |
| 2 | Service delivery and accountability of local government improved. | **Output 2.1:** Output 2.1: Capacity for participatory planning, budgeting and managing of development funds as well as revenue collection strengthened with focus on marginalized groups.  **Output 2.2:** Anti-corruption measures (systems and enforcement mechanisms) established and functional at county, city, district and community levels.  **Output 2.3:** Capacity of women and girls to participate in local government as leaders enhanced. |
| 3 | Legal and regulatory framework for decentralization is in place. | **Outcome 3.1:** Efforts to finalize local government act and other requisite legislation sustained.  **Output 3.2:** Civil service reforms aligned with decentralization policy and all signed international conventions that ensure equal access to civil service.  **Output 3.3:** Criteria established for districts, municipalities, chiefdoms and clans to rationalize and restructure them to ensure economic viability and sustainability. |
| 4 | MIA is capacitated to lead and implement decentralization reforms. | **Output 4.1:** Institutional and human capacity of MIA built to coordinate and lead the implementation of decentralization nationally.  **Output 4.2:** GC Capacitated to undertake governance assessment and monitoring strengthen.  **Output 4.3: ICT and working environment of county administrations improved.**  **Output 4.4:** Capacity for concurrent monitoring and evaluation of decentralization implementation established at MIA and the county government level |
| 5 | Program Management | **Output 5.1:**  Efficient and effective support and coordination of the implementation of the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Government. |

# Program Strategy

As the Government has noted, Liberia is still a fragile, post-conflict nation, which is making a determined effort to transition from recovery and reconstruction to inclusive growth and sustainable human development. The extended conflict in Liberia, which led to the economic and social destruction of the country over a 14-year period up till the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2003, is recognized as having two root causes. The first was the systematic marginalization and exclusion of significant proportions of the population from the political process. The second, and related was an economic crisis that emerged through the 1970s and 1980s leading to increasing impoverishment.

Preventing re-occurrence of the conditions that led to conflict consequently requires action at boththepolitical and economic levels. Both require to be inclusive in terms of geographical and social scope, enabling greater “voice” and space for participation by the citizens of Liberia. Decentralization of power, decision-making and government authority and corresponding resources will improve governance over time, increase transparency of government processes, enhance accountability and ultimately result in better delivery of services and the fulfilment of the Government’s responsibilities “to serve the Liberian people, promote democracy and reduce poverty.”

Based upon consultation at the national, county, district and chiefdom levels, there is a consensus that decentralization will contribute first and foremost to a “country led and country-owned transition out of fragility.” As a means to accomplish this, the GoL and its development partners have agreed that a coordinated programmatic framework will facilitate a more flexible and government-led implementation process, including efficient and effective management of financial resources, The Liberia Decentralization Support Program:

* Serves as a mechanism for donor coordination and harmonization in support of decentralization reforms;
* Supports GoL leadership of the reform process but at the same time seek to involve a broad range of stakeholders including civil society;
* Works nationwide, while being sensitive to the possible different approaches needed in the different Counties;
* Aims for a flexible and responsive approach to the reform process; and
* Works in an inclusive gender and conflict sensitive manner.

This program views decentralization as an all-inclusive process that imposes itself as the principal focus of governance reform and the designated vehicle for implementing this all government reform. The strategy for implementation of decentralization in Liberia has been guided by the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Government (NPDLG). Section 6.0 of the NPDLG reads:

*“the implementation of the NPDLG shall be incremental over a period of ten years. This incremental approach shall include amendment to the Constitution of Liberia to provide for the election of county superintendents and administrative district commissioners. The strategy is to pursue the process of constitutional amendment while simultaneously establishing conditions for successful deconcentration as the first stage of the process of decentralization. Such conditions which include local capacity development, institutional restructuring for economic governance, and empowerment of existing local structures, among others, shall be established within the first three years of the ten-year period of incremental implementation.”*

The NPDLG goes on to assign the responsibility of developing a comprehensive strategy for the implementation of the policy to Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Governance Commission, the Ministry of Finance, Planning an Economic Affairs and other MACs.

In the review of the program in the last half of 2014, the need to align the program more directly with the NPDLG has been highlighted, resulting in a 2-track approach.

Track 1 is pragmatic - responding to the “immediate needs for citizens to tangibly receive some peace dividends” by prioritizing the implementation of deconcentration, focusing on service delivery to the counties. The emphasis on deconcentrating services deliberately mean that a A menu of services[[1]](#footnote-1) have been identified by MACs for moving to the from the central government to the counties, taking into consideration efficiency (cost and time), collaboration and ownership and leadership by the county administration;

Track two continues to make preparations for the more devolved local governance anticipated in the 10-year timeline, when local leaders will be elected and able to assume the functions envisaged in the draft LGA.

Alongside these two tracks is a strong focus on capacity building, considereda crosscutting issue targeting the professionalization of identified personnel to become the career civil service who will manage the local government structures and systems. Coming out of conflict Liberia has seen a proliferation of units of local government like towns, cities and townships.

# Purpose of the Evaluation

UNDP is commissioning this evaluation of the LDSP to capture evaluative evidence of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of current programming under the LDSP, taking into account the objectives of the decentralization policy, and which can be used to strengthen existing strategies and/or to set the stage for strategic realignment. The evaluation will serve an important accountability function, providing national stakeholders and partners in Liberia with an impartial assessment of the results of the investment into the decentralization reform.

# Evaluation Scope

The evaluation will be conducted during the months of August to September 2016, with a view to enhancing programmes while providing strategic direction and inputs to the preparation of the AWP 2017 and the next phase of decentralization in Liberia. Specifically, the evaluation will assess progress of programming toward the set objectives, namely:

* transfer of authority and responsibilities from national to local governments in Liberia include the following:
* Enhance sensitivity, responsiveness and capabilities of local governments and make them accountable to local people;
* Accelerate effective and efficient service delivery and poverty alleviation by developing and strengthening local level planning, monitoring and management capacity and providing access to national and local resources through fiscal decentralization;
* Increase equitable distribution of the nation’s resources so as to ensure a more wholesome process of development and democratic governance; and
* Enhance participatory decision-making to engender peace-building and reconciliation.

The evaluation will take into consideration the synergies between the decentralization reform and other major GoL reforms, particularly the constitutional review processes, electoral reform and the public sector reform.

# Evaluation Questions

The evaluation will seek to provide answers to the following questions:

### Relevance:

* To what extent is LDSP relevant to the strategic considerations of the GoL, in the political, economic and social context of Liberia?
* To what extent is the LDSP implementation strategy appropriate to achieve the objectives?
* Has decentralization penetrated the national discourse governance issues and has it influenced national policies?

### Effectiveness

* What evidence is there that LDSP has contributed towards an achieving the objectives of decentralization?
* Has LDSP been effective in moving governance at the local level in Liberia? Do these local results aggregate into nationally significant results?
* Has LDSP worked effectively with other national and international delivery partners to deliver governance services?
* How effective has LDSP been in partnering with civil society and the private sector to effect decentralization?
* Has LDSP utilised innovative techniques and best practices in its programming?
* Has LDSP incorporated anti-corruption and integrity institutions in the implementation of decentralization, particularly in the deconcentration phase?
* Taking into account the technical capacity and institutional arrangements of the MIA and GC, is the LDSP strategy suited to ensuring that the 2 institutions can lead the decentralization agenda?
* What contributing factors and impediments enhance or impede LDSP’s performance in this area?

### Efficiency

* Are LDSP approaches, resources, models, conceptual framework relevant to achieve the planned outcome? Are they sufficiently sensitive to the political and development constraints of the country (political stability, post crisis situations, etc)?
* Has LDSP’s strategy and execution been efficient and cost effective?
* Has there been an economical use of financial and human resources?
* Are the monitoring and evaluation systems that LDSP has in place helping to ensure that programmes are managed efficiently and effectively?
* Are there alternative approaches that could achieve better results that the current design of the Projects?

### Sustainability

* What is the likelihood that UNDP governance interventions are sustainable?
* What mechanisms have been set in place by UNDP to support the government of Liberia to sustain improvements made through these governance interventions?
* How should the governance portfolio be enhanced to support central authorities, local communities and civil society in improving service delivery over the long term?
* What changes should be made in the current set of governance partnerships in order to promote long term sustainability?

*Partnership strategy*

* + Has the partnership strategy in the governance sector been appropriate and effective?
  + Are there current or potential complementarities or overlaps with existing national partners’ programmes?
  + How have partnerships affected the progress towards achieving the outputs
  + Has UNDP worked effectively with other international delivery partners to deliver on good governance initiatives?
  + How effective has UNDP been in partnering with civil society (where applicable) and the private sector to promote good governance in the region?

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

### Gender Equality

* To what extent has gender been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the program?
* To what extent has LDSP support promoted positive changes in gender equality? Were there any unintended effects?

Human rights

* To what extent has the programme actively promoted the fulfilment of human rights?
* In its design and implementation, does it include opportunities to integrate human rights in each outcome of the programme and prioritize the principles of accountability, meaningful participation, and non-discrimination?
* In its design and implementation, does it take into account any potential adverse impacts on enjoyment of human rights and were these rigorously assessed and identified with appropriate mitigation and management measures incorporated into programme rational, strategy, and results and resource framework?

Based on the above analysis, the evaluators are expected to provide overarching conclusions on LDSP results, as well as recommendations on how the LDSP can be adjusted in programming, partnership arrangements, resource mobilization strategies, and capacities to ensure that the full achievement of current planned outcomes. The evaluation is additionally expected to offer wider lessons for the program in Liberia, based on this analysis.

# Methodology

The evaluation of the LDSP will be carried out by a team of external evaluators, and will engage a wide array of stakeholders and beneficiaries, including national and local government officials, donors, civil society organizations, academics and subject experts, private sector representatives and community members. The evaluation is expected to take a “theory of change’’ (TOC) approach that examines the root-cause analysis and backed by rigorous and credible evidence justifying why the programme priorities are the most appropriate and most likely to contribute to higher level development change. It will seek to determine causal links between the interventions of the program, and progress towards achieving the set objectives of the program at national and local levels in Liberia. Evidence obtained and used to assess the results of LDSP support should be triangulated from a variety of sources, including verifiable data on indicator achievement, existing reports, evaluations and technical papers, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, surveys and site visits.

The following steps in data collection are anticipated:

## 5.1 Desk Review

A desk review should be carried out of the key strategies and documents underpinning the implementation of the program. This includes reviewing the Agenda for Transformation (AfT), Vision 2030, National Policy on Decentralization and Local Government (2012), Deconcentration Implementation Strategy (DIS) (2014), Deconcentration Platform (2015), the Liberia Decentralization Support Program PRODOC as amended in 2015, The Draft Local Government Act, program quarterly, annual reports, the EU Results Oriented Monitoring Report; TORs, evaluations, technical assessment reports and all products of the program. The evaluators are expected to review other pertinent strategies and reports developed by the Government of Liberia that are relevant to the decentralization agenda.

## 5.2 Field Data Collection

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

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

# Deliverables

The following reports and deliverables are required for the evaluation:

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

Seven (7) days after contract signing, the evaluation manager will produce an **inception report,** including an evaluation matrix presenting the evaluation questions, data sources, data collection, analysis tools and methods to be used. The inception report should detail the specific timing for evaluation activities and deliverables, and propose specific site visits and stakeholders to be interviewed. Protocols for different stakeholders should be developed. The inception report will be discussed and agreed with the MIA, GC and the implementing MACs, and the donor partners before the evaluators proceed with site visits.

The **draft evaluation report** will be shared with stakeholders, and presented in a validation workshop, that the MIA and GC will organise. Feedback received from these sessions should be taken into account when preparing the final report. The evaluators will produce an ‘audit trail’ indicating whether and how each comment received was addressed in revisions to the **final report**. The suggested table of contents of the evaluation report is as follows:

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

Annexes

# Evaluation Team Composition and Required Competencies

The LDSP evaluation will be undertaken by 2 external evaluators, hired as consultants, comprised of an Evaluation Manager and an Evaluation Associate. Both international and national consultants can be considered for both positions.

## Required Qualifications of the Evaluation Manager

* Minimum Master’s degree in law, economics, political science, public administration, regional development/planning, or other social science;
* Minimum 10-15 years of professional experience in public sector development, including in the areas of democratic governance, regional development, gender equality and social services.
* At least 5 years of experience in conducting evaluations of government and international aid organisations, preferably with direct experience with civil service capacity building;
* Sound knowledge of results-based management systems, and monitoring and evaluation methodologies; including experience in applying SMART (S Specific; M Measurable; A Achievable; R Relevant; T Time-bound) indicators;
* Excellent reporting and communication skills

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

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

## Required qualification of the Evaluation Associate

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

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

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

# Evaluation Ethics

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

# Implementation Arrangements

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

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

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

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

# Time-Frame for the Evaluation Process

The evaluation is expected to take 22 working days for each of the two consultants, over a period of six weeks starting 20 June 2016. A tentative date for the stakeholder workshop is ……….., and the final draft evaluation report is due the ……………. 2016. The following table provides an indicative breakout for activities and delivery:

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

# Fees and payments

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Inception report | 10% |
| Draft Evaluation Report | 70% |
| Final Evaluation Report | 20% |

1. Birth certificates, traditional marriage certificates, registration of private schools, driver’s license, license plates, transport related services, business registration, psychosocial support, [↑](#footnote-ref-1)