National Aid and NGO Policy of Liberia

Table of Contents

Acronyms

AAA	Accra Agenda for Action
AfT	Agenda for Transformation
AMCU	Aid Management and Coordination Unit
AMP	Aid Management Platform
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DMC	Debt Management Committee
DP	Development Partner
GoL	Government of Liberia
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LDA	Liberia Development Alliance
LISGIS	Liberia Institute of Statistics & Geo-Information Services
LRDC	Liberia Reconstruction and Development Committee
MACs	Ministries, Agencies and Commissions
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NAPL	National Aid and NGO Policy of Liberia
NDMS	National Debt Management Strategy
NCDS	National Capacity Development Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAPD	Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development
PEFA	Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability
PD	Paris Declaration
PFM	Public Financial Management
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PTA	Pillar Technical Advisor
SWG	Sector Working Group
TA	Technical Assistance

Foreword

In the immediate aftermath of the 14-year civil conflict, Liberia was faced with capacity constraints and unsustainable debt. The role of external assistance, especially humanitarian relief, was critical in helping the country remain on the path of peace and stability. The enactment of the Public Financial Management Law of 2009, establishment of the Aid Management and Coordination Unit (AMCU) and the subsequent adoption of this National Aid and NGO Policy of Liberia has facilitated a new era of better coordinated aid flows to Liberia. We have transitioned from a country in need of emergency humanitarian assistance to one with government ownership of the development process and a vision of preferred development aid modalities for long-term sustainability. The level of cooperation shown by our development partners (DPs) throughout this process is an unerring example of true commitment to the principles of international development and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The impact of external assistance in Liberia from the emergency period in 2003 to a stable leadership cannot be understated. For instance, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the percentage of people living on less than one US dollar per day declined from 64 percent in 2007 to 56 percent in 2011 while the population grew from 3.47 million to 3.7 million. In 2008, the Financial Times in a series examining external assistance to Africa, reported foreign aid as a percentage of government spending for Liberia at 771%, up from 652% in 2007, 369% in 2006 and 218% in 2005.

To achieve our vision of becoming a middle-income country by 2030, we recognize the need to gradually decrease our reliance on external assistance. We are pursuing sources of revenue necessary to meet our expenditure needs to achieve an aid-independent era. We are also putting into place the requisite institutional reforms to meet the demands of that era. Liberia is rich in natural resources including iron ore, rubber, timber, diamonds, gold, and tin. We have developed a clear strategy to tap into those resources with an unprecedented level of transparency and sustainability. With the establishment of our National Capacity Development Strategy, we hope to overcome our current capacity constraints. And, recognizing the importance of the private sector, we have also committed to creating a stable investment climate and encouraging the growth of Small & Medium Enterprises. Together, we hope to build a better and prosperous Liberia.

Samuel D. Tweah, Jr.
Minister of Finance and Development Planning
Liberia, August 2020

Acknowledgment from the Deputy Minister for Economic Management

I wish to extend my sincere gratitude for the endearing commitment of our staff team that spent invaluable moments meeting, engaging, researching and drafting the content of this policy document. I am thankful to Hon. Samuel D. Tweah, Jr. for his guidance and motivation to us in driving the formulation of the Aid and NGO Policy document, and facilitating the process for its validation by the Cabinet. We are especially grateful to the President, H.E. Dr. George Manneh Weah, for his commitment and support in leading the vision for a renewed impetus for national development and nation building.

My profound gratitude goes to the civil society organizations, development partners, and ministries, agencies and commissions of Government that participated in technical sessions, including the validation of this Aid and NGO policy document. I am especially grateful to the Aid Management and Coordination Unit and the NGO Coordination Unit of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning for their hard work and support in organizing the technical sessions and mobilizing various stakeholder groups to contribute to this exercise.

We also acknowledge the roles of various technical specialists consulted and their contributions to series of outcomes resulting in the formulation and validation of the Aid and NGO Policy document including the development of the Liberia Project Dashboard. We are particularly grateful to the African Development Bank(AfDB) for supporting all of the discussions, drafting, and finalization.

Lastly, we thank the Government of Sweden for supporting the development of the Liberia Project Dashboard which will support the full collection and reporting of data gathered as the result of the application of the AID and NGO policy.

Your work and unflinching support to this national endeavor is highly acknowledged and contributes to results towards the goal of the Government of Liberia to foster aid effectively and the quality of partnerships for Official Development Assistance.

Augustus J. Flomo
Deputy Minister for Economic Management
Ministry of Finance & Development Planning

Executive Summary

Before the establishment of an Aid Management Unit (now Aid Management and Coordination Unit) in 2009, aid operations were managed on a fairly ad hoc basis, with roles loosely shared among various government institutions. Aid Management has progressed significantly, as evidenced by recent assessments (2012, 2014, 2016 PEFA) of Liberia's aid architecture. Yet issuessuch as limited human and institutional capacity, a lack of alignment between external assistance and national priorities, poor predictability, fragmentation in donor funding, huge transaction costs, untimely reporting of aid information, and the inadequate use of country system, among others, remain a challenge. Against this backdrop, this National Policy on the management of development assistance and partnership cooperation provides both a framework and a joint commitment by GoL and its partners for the effective mobilization, negotiation, and coordination of external assistance.

Objectives

The main objectives of the policy are to improve the effectiveness of aid, mobilize aid in a coordinated way with a wider reach, produce more visible results, collaborate more closely with NGOs, and serve as a reference for the Government of Liberia and Development Partners in the management of official development assistance.

Guiding Principles

This document is based on the following principles articulated in international aid effectiveness
forums including Accra (2008), Busan (2011), Nairobi (2016), as well as the New Deal (2011):

a. **Country-led and country-owned** development programs
b. **Alignment** to national development priorities
c. **Inclusive partnerships** in the management of external assistance
d. Prioritizing the use of **country systems**
e. Ensuring **aid predictability**
f. **Transparency** and **mutual accountability** in the management of donor funding
g. **Results Based Management**

Policies

To achieve these objectives, the GoL asserts a number of policies outlining how it prefers to receive external assistance. Among the several modalities through which aid is provided, the GoL prefers aid that is aligned to country priorities and uses country systems. In light of this, direct budget support is the first preference of the Government. This is followed by sector budget support, pool fund, project support, technical assistance and in-kind aid, respectively, reflecting the steep reduction in the use of country systems by each of these modalities. Grants are preferred over loans, except where a loan meets the provisions set out in the National Debt Management Strategy. That allows for loans only in the context of infrastructure projects and only loans of a concessional nature. Having made significant progress in recent years to reduce the debt burden, GoL is keenly aware of the importance of ensuring debt levels remain sustainable.

More than half of donor funded projects are implemented by both local and international NGOs, underscoring their importance in ensuring the effectiveness of aid. All NGOs are required to be registered and accredited, in order to operate in Liberia. This process shall help ensure that projects implemented are aligned with national development priorities.

The GoL emphasizes harmonization of DPs' processes and procedures with government policies, for instance, through pooled fund mechanisms. This includes compliance with the financial oversight and accountability procedures outlined in the Public Financial Management Law.

Responsibilities in the Management of External Assistance

To ensure effective coordination of donor funding, the responsibilities of each actor in the aid architecture must be clearly defined. The Division of External Resources and Debt Management at the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) is the center for all aid operations. It shall work with line Ministries, Agencies and Commissions (MACs) as well as Development Partners on every step of the aid cycle to secure and implement external assistance.

Implementation and Management Arrangements

Implementing the National Aid Policy of Liberia requires concerted efforts by GoL and its Development Partners. Both parties are therefore mutually accountable for its implementation. The National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework shall be used as an instrument to monitor and track progress made in the implementation of this policy.

Mechanisms for Dialogue

Effective coordination calls for structures that encourage dialogue and communication with major stakeholders. The Policy identifies five forums for such dialogue: at the policy level, technical level, engagement with individual Development Partners, an Annual Policy Review, and engagement with the general public.

1.   BACKGROUND

1.1   Prior to the establishment of an Aid Management and Coordination Unit in 2009, aid operations were managed on a fairly ad hoc basis, with roles loosely shared among Institutions. This was due to limited human and institutional capacity, a lack of alignment between external assistance and national priorities, poor predictability, fragmentation in donor funding, high transaction costs, untimely reporting of aid information, and the inadequate use of country systems, among others.

1.2   The Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) Assessment Report (2012) and the Paris Declaration Survey (2010) on Liberia highlighted progress in the context of aid management and coordination. Nonetheless, the lack of a clear national policy framework to date has undermined effective aid management and coordination efforts.

Thus, in order to meet the Government of Liberia's (GoL) development objectives, this National Aid Policy of Liberia (NAPL) seeks to enhance the management, coordination, and most importantly the effectiveness of Official Development Assistance (ODA) by tackling the impediments that threaten the proper administration of external assistance.   These impediments include:

Capacity Challenge

1.3   The years of conflict significantly limited the development of GoL's human and institutional capacity needed to effectively respond to the growing challenges in managing aid processes. Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability Assessments showed improvements in most areas of government financial management from 2012 to 2016, reflecting efforts undertaken by GoL to enhance capacity and effectiveness. By contrast, there was no change in the indicators covering donor practices, where performance remained at the poorest level. Nevertheless, limited capacity and weak institutional mechanisms affected GoL's ability to effectively plan, coordinate and implement aid management strategies and interventions. It is now evidenced that the GoL ability to effectively manage projects and programs is gradually improving and must be enhanced to ensure effective implementation of projects/programs.

Poor Alignment

1.4   International aid instruments require alignment of external assistance to recipient countries' national development agenda. However, some Development Partners continue
to promote their agenda while implementing partners, particularly non-governmental organizations, remain unaligned with Government priorities. There remains a significant disconnect at the sectoral level due to a limited coordination between DPs and MACs. As a result, there is a relative lack of ownership from MACs of development assistance programs at the sector level.

Unpredictability of aid funding

1.5   The Government of Liberia recognizes that short-term development aid commitments are not an effective tool for delivering long-term development programs. International aid effectiveness narratives suggest that to enable predictable development planning,
Development Partners' aid commitments must be integrated with the Government's Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). DPs' long procurement and financial management procedures as well as legislative proceedings combined with insufficient GoL technical and administrative capacities lead to delayed disbursements, creating financing gaps. This makes it difficult for the GoL to take donor funding into account when planning its activities.

Weak Coordination

1.6   Coordination in achieving any level of success is very critical. However, it has been noticed over the years that coordination between MACs and development partners remained seriously weak. Funding to the GoL comes from multiple sources in each sector, delivered mainly through projects. These funded projects must create a frame that support a stronger coordination; however, this has really not been forthcoming. Looking into the future will mean there is need to establish working modalities for improved coordination under this policy implementation.

High Transaction Cost

1.7   Receiving external assistance from DPs also comes at a cost to the Government, both in terms of expenses on fund administration and in terms of management capacity. Highly fragmented donor programs and small-scale projects pose a heavy burden on implementation. More effort to harmonize DPs procedures shall help cut transaction costs and optimize the

use of staff time and resources.

1.8   Financial charges related to administration of funds or foreign exchange conversion can represent significant costs to GoL even for grant-funded projects and need to be considered appropriately.

Unplanned recurrent cost

1.9   External assistance in many cases has implications for recurrent government expenditure, either through financing assets that require government funding to be sustained or through temporarily financing recurrent costs, which have to be shouldered by the government once development funds are exhausted. These costs can pose a heavy burden on the government budget, especially given the magnitude of aid financing compared to government funds. Furthermore, where DP projects are not integrated within the government's own budgeting and planning system, sufficient funds for recurrent costs may not be made available. This clearly has major implications on the sustainability of such development efforts.

Limited flow of aid information

1.10   Transparency, accountability, coordination and other goals in assistance delivery cannot be achieved without good information. The government relies on information from DPs in order to gain a comprehensive picture of external assistance to Liberia. However, reporting is oftentimes incomplete, and many DPs have often not been forthcoming in response to requests for aid information.

Inadequate use of country systems

1.11   External assistance, if not channeled or coordinated through the Government, risks creating parallel structures and undermining country systems. To ensure the proper financial management of aid and to minimize transaction costs, donor funds channeled through government systems must be subject to the same financial management procedures that apply to government expenditure financed by domestic revenue.

Transparency and Risk Management

1.12   Fiduciary and other risks remain key factors in DPs' decision to use country system. Many DPs have cited systemic weaknesses in the government's public financial management system as a reason for operating outside the system. Although, the PFM system continues to show lapses, improvements in PEFA Assessment scores from 2012 to 2016 demonstrates the commitment of GoL to improve the PFM systems. Incremental usage of country systems by DPs will help to strengthen these systems even further.

The Importance of addressing impediments

1.13   The aforementioned impediments have substantially contributed to the GoL's inability to adequately mobilize impactful and high-quality external assistance in support of the implementation of the national development agenda. A framework such as the NAPL that guides the actions of every actor within the aid architecture is, therefore, needed to address the impediments and to hold each actor accountable for the management and coordination of external assistance.

2. Objectives of the National Aid Policy of Liberia

The overall objective of the National Aid Policy is to ensure the effective delivery and coordination of Official Development Assistance (ODA). It provides an agreed framework and serves as a point of reference for both Government and Development Partners. It thereby forms the basis for improving aid effectiveness, mobilizing high quality aid, coordinating NGO activities, strengthening the use of country systems, and enhancing transparency and risk management.

Providing an agreed framework and point of reference for GoL and Development Partners

2.1   The NAPL serves as a reference guide for both the government of Liberia and development partners on how to manage and coordinate aid in Liberia in line with the government's own development priorities. NAPL advances best practices in aid effectiveness by removing any ambiguity in processes for the implementation of development assistance programs in Liberia.

Improving Aid/Development Effectiveness

2.2   Aid has proven ineffective because of the obstacles outlined above in Section 1. In order to ensure effective sustainable development, these obstacles must be addressed in accordance with the policies outlined in this document. Effective aid improves service delivery and further strengthens GoL's accountability to the public. The implementation of these policies shall give leadership and ownership of development assistance to Liberia and encourage the use of its country systems. Where country systems cannot be used, GoL encourages the use of mechanisms that promote effectiveness, coordination and alignment with GoL priorities and minimize transaction costs. Regardless of aid modality, regular reporting to MFDP is essential.

Mobilizing High Quality Aid

2.3   High quality aid aligned with the country's development plans shall successfully

impact the Liberian citizenry. The GoL recognizes that mobilizing high quality aid is more important than simply increasing external assistance. While the Government seeks additional external resources in the immediate short term, it aims to reduce its dependence on aid in the long term.

2.4 High quality aid, excluding emergency assistance, should target development outcomes sustainable over the long term. In order to ensure this, the design of aid projects in Liberia should include a clear theory of change, detailing how gains from an intervention shall be sustained beyond the lifetime of the project.

Coordinating NGO activities

2.5   MFDP is responsible for the coordination of NGO activities in the country. The NGO Section shall establish a broad framework for legal and institutional arrangements to facilitate their operations.

2.6   The Manual of Procedures outlines the registration & accreditation requirements, and encourages better coordination between NGOs operating in Liberia and MACs.

2.7   It provides a framework for NGOs to operate effectively within Liberia, such that the resources channeled through these organizations support and complement the efforts of Government.

3.   Guiding Principles

3.1   This policy document is based on a set of principles articulated in a series of international aid effectiveness agreements including the Paris Declaration, Accra Agenda for Action, OECD DAC Principles, Monrovia Roadmap and the Busan High Level Forum. It reflects mutually adopted strategies by GoL and development partners in the management of donor funding to achieve the goals set out in the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) and other subsequent medium-term development strategies, in accordance with the Liberia RISING 2030 Vision.

3.2   Having recognized Liberia's fragility, GoL and its partners have committed to support a country-led and country-owned transition out of fragility. To ensure country ownership, the GoL shall attract external assistance that reinforces rather than undermines its development vision.

3.3   The alignment of donor funding to national development priorities is of primary importance in the achievement of the peace building and state-building goals emphasized in the New Deal. This requires robust coordination between DPs and GoL to ensure adherence to one vision, one plan.

3.4   The GoL recognizes the importance of an inclusive approach in the management of external assistance. Thus, the participation of major stakeholders such as civil society leaders, women, and youth in political and development dialogues is strongly supported.

3.5   The use of country systems has been stressed in successive international aid effectiveness commitments. More emphasis should be made on further strengthening the capacity of GoL's PFM systems to meet mutually agreed upon standards. This shall increase DPs' confidence to deliver aid through country systems and thereby improve alignment with national development priorities.

3.6   Predictability is paramount to the government's own planning and budgeting process. GoL, therefore, emphasizes the importance of scheduled disbursements and reliable mediumterm forecasts.

3.7   To ensure transparency, the GoL recognizes the importance of strengthening the linkages between public expenditure and results. This requires joint accountability measures in the management of external assistance.

3.8   To ensure results-based management, development projects must have clear targets and outcomes monitored through GoL's systems, taking into consideration the capacity of the implementing institutions to meet those targets.

3.9   This Policy is open to revision as the needs and the capacities of the Government evolve and improve. It is the overarching reference governing the management of external assistance.

4.   Policies

4.1   This Section of the policy is a statement of the GoL clearly articulating its position on issues relating to the types of external assistance provided to Liberia. It addresses aid modalities, articulates policies and the rationale behind them and the methods for adherence to these policies.

4.2   GoL reserves the right to reject any form of external assistance that conflicts with its national interest.

Alignment to Government Priorities

4.3   All external resources channeled to the country must be consistent with principles and priorities set out in the NAPL and the GoL's medium-term development strategy – the PAPD and its successors. DP support must be aligned with the strategic objectives and priority interventions outlined in this development agenda using harmonized financing and implementation mechanisms, while striving to improve transparency in aid flows.

4.4   In order to ensure alignment with the major sectors in the country, MACs shall work with DPs and MFDP including Sector Working Groups (SWGs) to explore how current sector activities offer possibilities for alignment. GoL shall work closely with DPs to ensure that sector strategies and plans are fully consistent with the national development agenda and investment priorities and that this is also consistent with regional as well as international development goals.

4.5   In order to strengthen alignment of DP funds, strategic plans from each sector must contain clear objectives and targets.

Preferred Aid Modalities

Direct Budget Support

4.6   Although a diverse portfolio of Development Partner funds can be beneficial, direct budget support is GoL's preferred aid modality. This support can be most effectively allocated across sectors to meet national policy and development objectives.

4.7   The GoL has a strong preference for direct budget support in order to increase government ownership and promote alignment to national priorities. The government commits to the strengthening of its PFM systems to encourage the use of direct budget support by DPs.

4.8   The GoL emphasizes the importance of developing a monitoring framework with measurable and quantifiable indicators standardized across DPs providing budget support, so that the GoL and DPs can jointly track progress and focus on capacity-building, and ensuring the sustainability of reforms.

4.9   In order to establish a firm anchor for alignment, the Government shall continue in its efforts to strengthen the budget process through the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF).

4.10   The PFM Action Plan shows the steps the Government is taking to increase "aid on budget." DPs' support is essential to ensure the effective implementation of this Plan, in line with the principles of the NAPL, the Paris, Accra, Busan and Nairobi declarations on aid effectiveness and the New Deal.

Sector Budget Support

4.11   The Government's next preferred aid modality is sector budget support. Though it constrains the ability of GoL to allocate resources across sectors to meet national development goals, it also supports alignment to GoL systems and priorities, while reducing transaction costs.

Reimbursement Mechanisms

4.12   Due to limited fiscal space, reimbursement mechanisms pose pre-financing challenges to the GoL, which in turn affects activity implementation. However, this modality of support makes more use of country systems in comparison to all other modalities except direct budget support. The use of Reimbursement Mechanisms is, therefore, encouraged as a path towards direct budget support.

Pooled Funds

4.13   At the sectoral level, as part of the transition towards budget support, DPs are encouraged to contribute to the already established pooled funds for health and education and the trust fund for infrastructure.

Project Support

4.14   The benefits from project support are often poorly aligned to GoL priorities and, therefore, undermine Government objectives. The GoL reserves the right to decline any offer of external assistance where the alignment to GoL priorities is weak and transaction or recurrent budgetary costs high.

Technical Assistance

4.15   In principle and in practice, it is important for technical assistance (TA) to be demand driven and sustainable through transferring skills and promoting development of the GoL's own capacity. In terms of demand-driven approaches, as the Government is increasingly equipped to define programs and projects based on its priorities, the articulation of technical assistance support needs shall be developed by the relevant ministry in consultation with DPs.

4.16   Technical assistance in all sectors must be explicitly defined and operationalized in the context of knowledge transfer to local staff. All TAs are required to work with national counterparts and shall have a component of their functional work focused on the transfer of knowledge and skills to local staff.

4.17   The creation and utilization of project implementation units to support large-scale technical assistance shall be systematically reviewed and monitored by MFDP to ensure that these implementation units are not creating "parallel structures" within Government offices.

4.18   Furthermore, institutional capacity development support shall aim to facilitate the integration of project implementation units within the operations of the relevant MAC with a goal of eventually main streaming the implementation functions into Government managed operations.

In-kind Aid

4.19   In-kind aid refers to goods and services with no payment in money or debt instruments in exchange. In some cases, "commodity aid" goods (such as grain) are subsequently sold and the receipts are used for public expenditure. The Government of Liberia prefers not to receive in-kind aid from DPs except in times of emergency and natural disasters.

Public Debt

4.20   The strategy for contracting and managing new debts, both domestic and external, is governed by the Debt Management Committee (DMC), articulated in the medium-term National Debt Management Strategy (NDMS) and the PFM Act of 2009.

4.21   The GoL prefers assistance in the form of Grants, conscious of the importance of maintaining a sustainable debt burden. However, where assistance is provided in the form of Loans, provisions for the acceptance of such loans are outlined in the Medium-Term National Debt Management Strategy. This requires that loans are only used for infrastructure projects, and must be concessional in nature as spelled out in the NDMS.

NGOs

4.22   The GoL recognizes the important contribution that local and international NGOs have made to the recovery and rebuilding process of Liberia. NGOs remain important partners in the delivery of development goals in Liberia.

4.23   In adherence to the principles of alignment to government priorities outlined in 4.3 above, and the principles of ownership specified in 3.2, all NGOs must ensure that projects implemented are in line with the PAPD and its successors.

4.24   NGOs should harmonize initiatives for national development through joint project assessments and implementation in collaboration with MACs. NGOs are encouraged to join coordinated networks.

4.25   This document reaffirms the responsibility of GoL in facilitating the operations of all NGOs by providing the enabling environment and freedom of movement of their personnel and goods; and upholding all provisions for the right to assembly, association, and speech under the laws of Liberia. In turn, these organizations are expected to adhere to the Government's laws, standards, and provisions.

4.26   All NGOs must be registered and accredited in order to effectively operate within the confines of the Republic of Liberia as detailed in the Manual of Procedures. NGOs are obliged to comply with all the provisions of the Tax

and Revenue Code of Liberia, immigration law and labor law.

4.27 Long term sustainability of development gains made through NGO projects depends on the expertise and financial resources of national & international NGOs, as well as local implementing partners. Capacity building plans for national NGOs that are supported financially by development partners should be developed in collaboration with the GoL.

4.28 The NGO Unit of MFDP shall work in collaboration with all international NGOs in consultation with their relevant sector ministries to develop an exit strategy.

Development Partner Harmonization

4.29 In addition to having pooled funds as a basis for harmonization among DPs, GoL shall encourage DPs to work together under joint assistance strategies anchored in the GoL national development framework and in sector strategies and priorities, to ensure an appropriate division of labor. This shall minimize fragmentation and underfunding in priority areas.

4.30 To reinforce division of labor and alignment, GoL shall work with DPs collectively rather than individually through Sector Working Groups (SWGs). Division of labor shall be governed by the objectives of reducing fragmentation, with DPs working in fewer sectors; aligning with sector strategies; maintaining overall resources and sector resources; ensuring DPs do not stretch themselves too thin, concentrating on a discrete number of sectors where they can have substantive impact and providing other DPs' assistance through delegated partnerships.

4.31 GoL wishes to improve the alignment of aid with priorities and to increasingly shift ownership of aid-financed activities to the MACs through direct budgetary support. To that end, MFDP shall play a leading role in working with MACs to ensure full alignment of sector strategies and plans with the national agenda.

4.32 The AMCU within the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other relevant MACs, shall be responsible for coordinating development partner harmonization and common arrangements for planning, managing and delivering aid.

Financial Oversight & Accountability

4.33 With the passage of the Public Financial Management (PFM) law in August 2009, the GoL has improved its economic governance framework and transformed the quality of public financial management, executing expenditures transparently, and strengthened auditing, public reporting and

intra-governmental coordination. The implementation of this law is monitored by the PFM Reform Coordination Unit at MFDP.

4.34   All DPs and NGOs are expected to comply with the Government's financial oversight and accountability procedures, articulated in Sections 30, 35, and 36 of the Public Financial Management Law and Regulations. Under the law, spending entities that are beneficiaries of Development Partner funding, including all registered national and international NGOs, are required to submit information on their activities, including financial information, to MFDP through the AMCU and the NGO Unit.

5.   Responsibilities in the Management of External Assistance

5.1   The Government of Liberia's aid management cycle contains seven phases which include Initiation, Appraisal, Alignment, Negotiation, Effectiveness, Implementation and Supervision, Project Closure and Evaluation. In addition to the distribution of responsibilities during each phase outlined below, the AMCU has produced a detailed manual of procedures and processes for the management of external assistance.

Initiation

5.2   Ministries, Agencies and Commissions are required to develop proposals in line with national development objectives and to consult with prospective DPs on the feasibility of their proposals.

5.3   All requests to DPs for aid and existing arrangements shall be consolidated and managed by the Ministry of Finance & Development Planning. MFDP shall collaborate with MACs in identifying potential new DPs and mobilizing resources from them.

5.4   In accordance with the PFM Law (Section 29), no MAC or SOE may enter into negotiations with a DP and sign an agreement of any sort that financially commits GoL without approval and oversight from MFDP.

5.5   The MFDP shall coordinate and consult with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in garnering support at the highest level around resource mobilization, particularly with bilateral DPs.

5.6   All MACs seeking to mobilize external assistance must write to the Minister of Finance & Development Planning, outlining the nature of the proposal, its fit with the national development agenda, and the details of any initial discussions with development partners.

5.7   The Minister of Finance and Development Planning may engage with potentially interested DPs to invite a proposal for assistance and receive DP

proposals for financing.

5.8 Any investment project submitted to become part of the pipeline in MFDP will be subjected to a standardized appraisal process. The Ministry or Agency remains responsible for evaluating the technical soundness of a proposal, while MFDP ensures the proposal is aligned with national priorities and policies.

5.9 The MFDP plays a supporting role in the evaluation of large projects to ensure economic and financial soundness. It also records pre-appraisal information.

Alignment

5.10 The MFDP shall ensure that Development Partner funds are aligned with national priorities. It shall play a lead role in engaging DPs and MACs to ensure that country assistance strategies and sector plans are aligned to the national development plan.

Fulfilling Effectiveness Conditions

5.11 MFDP shall be responsible to coordinate and facilitate the fulfillment of all effectiveness conditions in collaboration with MACs and when required, the National Legislature.

Negotiation

5.12 When the Minister of Finance and Development Planning receives notice of a DP's interest in financing a proposal, he or she shall inform the relevant MACs.

5.13 The MFDP shall lead on technical meetings with the relevant MACs to assess the position to be adopted in negotiation with DPs.

5.14 The MFDP shall consult with the Ministry of Justice to receive guidance on the legal implications of aid modalities and conditionality when aid or assistance is non-grant or "tied."

5.15 The Minister of Finance & Development Planning shall lead negotiations between the relevant MACs and DPs, receiving support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when relevant.

5.16 In accordance with its statutory mandate, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can initiate and lead negotiations on bilateral aid involving grants with technical support from MFDP.

5.17 Where the outcome of negotiations satisfies both the GoL and DPs, they shall produce a written record, in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding or similar document.

5.18   The Minister of Finance and Development Planning as National Coordinator shall sign such documentation for and on behalf of the GoL. In addition, when required the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Justice shall also sign.

Implementation

5.19   The MAC identified as chief beneficiary of external assistance is responsible for overseeing the technical implementation of the project, and shall work with MFDP to track progress and identify bottlenecks.

5.20   Implementing and spending entities of DP financed-activities shall provide quarterly expenditure reports to MFDP.

Evaluation

5.21   MFDP shall maintain a full database of commitments, disbursements and expenditure on projects, and produce statistical reports to be updated on a quarterly basis culminating with an annual report. Timely data from DPs is essential for meeting this objective.

5.22   MFDP shall record aid information in the aid information management system, a webbased tool that enhances the government's ability to manage aid information and track development assistance.

5.23   The MFDP shall ensure that aid data become part of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), and liaise with the Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) to enable official reporting of aid statistics.

5.24   Both the GoL and DPs shall undertake joint evaluation of donor-financed activities with emphasis on results and value for money. Evaluation and project completion reports shall be submitted to MFDP by implementing and spending entities and must be considered in all assessments for additional financing.

5.25   MFDP shall regularly monitor and evaluate DP's overall performance by conducting annual portfolio reviews.

6.   Implementation and Management Arrangements

6.1   The GOL supports mutual engagement in the implementation of this policy with DPs, as well as international and local NGO's/CSOs.

Institutional Arrangements

6.2   The External Resource Division at MFDP is responsible for aid management and coordination. The NGO Unit is responsible for coordinating NGO activities. The Bilateral and Economic Cooperation Section at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the negotiation and acquisition of

additional bilateral aid.

Development Partner Reporting Requirements

6.3 Consistent with Public Financial Management (PFM) regulations, DPs shall submit quarterly reports to the GOL on funds disbursed against annual commitments/projections on development projects. Development Partners should also present updated projected disbursement schedules for the medium term forecast of expenditure.

6.4 The MFDP shall develop a consolidated reporting mechanism to enable the reporting of bilateral and multilateral aid information in coordination with Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other line ministries, agencies and commissions. In addition, the MFDP shall coordinate with all MACs prior to the beginning of the Aid Mobilization Cycle to ensure that policy priorities are fully articulated.

6.5 The GoL shall periodically review compliance, providing DP scorecards, and reserves the right to refuse assistance from any non-complying entity.

NGO Reporting Requirements

6.6 NGO reporting requirements are articulated in the Manual of Procedures and managed by the NGO Unit of MFDP. All NGOs are required to comply accordingly.

Mutual Accountability

6.7 In light of capacity challenges within government and the private sector, the GoL recognizes the importance of increasing its ability to report and account for the revenues it collects, both external and domestic, and for public expenditures, and to strengthen its auditing arm as well as the Legislature, enabling them to execute better their oversight function.

6.8 Consistent with international commitments to the use of country systems, DPs and the GoL shall undertake periodic joint assessments of country systems with the objective of expanding their use. These include a use of country systems assessments and joint annual portfolio reviews.

6.9 Both the GoL and DPs shall hold each other accountable for development results as well as commitments to improve aid effectiveness. This mutual accountability process shall include periodic reviews of development partners' portfolios with the objectives of jointly setting targets and assessing performance.

Tracking, Monitoring and Evaluation

6.10 To promote development effectiveness, the Government continues to be actively engaged in mobilizing and reporting on aid flows and in

strengthening existing mechanisms for effectively utilizing and tracking aid. The monitoring and evaluation of this policy instrument shall be part of the national Monitoring & Evaluation Framework. The M&E Unit under the Division of Development Planning is responsible for verifying outputs and outcomes of development projects carried out by Government Ministries and Agencies as well as DPs and implementing partners.

6.11   The National M&E Framework monitors the resources invested, the activities implemented, and services delivered as well as evaluate outcomes achieved and the longterm impact of external assistance.

6.12   The institutional focus of the database of aid flows shall be the AMCU in MFDP. The Government shall ensure that the capacity of the AMCU is built to ensure its effectiveness in serving as the interlocutor of Government with DPs.

6.13   M&E mechanisms shall ensure data quality. The Liberia Projects Dashboard, which is the GoL's aid information management system, shall respond to the data needs imposed by the NAPL and ensure mutual accountability.

DP and GoL Commitments

6.14   As Liberia enters a new phase of development planning, the GoL, DPs, and civil society agree to renew partnerships for development in line with the following principles agreed upon at recent international aid summits:

   a.   The Government is the lead on aid coordination and management at all levels.

   b.   The Government shall manage aid through an inclusive approach, engaging with other national constituencies such as the Legislature, Private Sector and Civil Society.

   c.   Country systems and processes that meet mutually agreed upon standards shall be used to deliver aid as the first option; DPs shall co-develop plans on increasing the use of country systems with GoL and work within the country-led division of labor.

   d.   DPs shall adopt government development priorities for the implementation and management of aid to support the government national agenda.

   e.   National authorities shall strengthen the linkages between public expenditures and results, and information on aid shall be made transparent, including timely provision of DP information on planned aid to the country.

   f.   Both the Government and DPs shall improve efforts to have mutual

assessment reviews, complemented with credible independent evidence, to identify aid management and implementation challenges and improvements.

g.   Aid impact shall also be determined by the ability to extend support to marginalized groups through pro-poor strategies.

h.   The DPs are expected to support implementation processes, and to ensure they meet their obligations under the NAPL.

i.   The Government shall comply with Public Financial Management Act and Regulations and work to further strengthen its public financial management. Spending entities that are beneficiaries of DP funding are required to submit financial information on their activities to MFDP.

7.   Mechanisms for Dialogue and Communication

7.1   There shall be continuous dialogue at the policy and technical levels on aid coordination and management.

Policy Level

7.2   The national development plan implementation Steering Committee is a high-level coordination forum comprising the GoL, DPs, Private Sector and civil society organizations, chaired by the President. The Steering Committee and the Cabinet shall provide policy guidance on the implementation of the development plan and shall be responsible for coordination and oversight during the implementation period. The structure of the committee and frequency of meetings shall be clearly described in the development plan. The Division of Development Planning of MFDP is responsible for organizing and facilitating the steering committee meetings.

7.3   There shall be bi-annual aid coordination meetings to facilitate on-going dialogue with development Partners. This shall be chaired by the Minister of Finance and Development Planning or the Deputy Minister for Economic Management, and co-chaired by a designated representative selected by the partners from the development partner community.

7.4   Meeting frequencies shall be reviewed periodically and adjusted.

Technical Level

7.5   The Aid Management & Coordination Unit within the Ministry of Finance & Development Planning shall focus on in-depth operational issues and collaborate with MACs and DPs as needed. Focal points shall be designated

for each DP and MAC to facilitate information flow.

7.6   The Division of Development Planning at MFDP shall lead in ensuring that aid proposals are aligned with sector and national-level government strategies. This includes ensuring that projects and programs implemented by NGOs are aligned.

7.7   There shall be periodic meetings led by the Department of Economic Management at the technical level.   These meetings shall focus on improving coordination with DPs and the implementation of the NAPL. The platform shall also bring together key MACs and PIUs to review project implementation progress and address implementation bottlenecks.

Individual DPs

7.8   Dialogue with individual DPs shall be led by MFDP involving other MACs, as deemed appropriate. This will include annual DP portfolio reviews to monitor progress on the realization of agreed upon annual goals on both sides. It shall put emphasis on results, reviewing the previous year's initiatives and evaluating outcomes. The review shall help to identify key issues and solutions that set the agenda for better and more sustainable performance.

7.9   All DPs shall assign focal points to work directly with MFDP and other MACs.

General Public

7.10   As GoL and DPs facilitate recovery and development, public perceptions of progress and processes associated with aid management and coordination become very important. Citizens and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) engaged in monitoring the impact of aid shall be encouraged to work with GoL to evaluate the implementation of aid-funded projects and to negotiate solutions to some of the challenges of aid management and coordination. CSOs will serve as key members of the steering committee meetings to ensure transparency in the implementation of the national development plan and to hold GoL accountable to the public.

Annex A: References

1. **Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development**
   National medium-term development plan for 2019-2023; produced by MFDP.

2. **NEW DEAL for engagement in fragile states**
   Proposes key Peace-building and State-building Goals; focuses on new ways of engagement; and identifies commitments to build mutual trust and achieve better results in fragile states.

3. **External Assistance Manual of Procedures**
   Technical document produced by the AMCU. It outlines reporting requirements, operational procedures and best practices.

4. **Liberia RISING 2030 Vision**
   Liberia's long term vision developed through nationwide consultation; produced by the Governance Commission and MFDP

5. **Medium Term Expenditure Framework**
   Three-year projection of national expenditure and DPs' projects produced by Department of Budget, MFDP.

6. **National Capacity Development Strategy (NCDS)**
   Identifies capacities needs in demanding sectors, and objectives for their development in the medium to long term; produced by the National Capacity Development Unit (NCDU)/MFDP.

7. **National Debt Management Strategy**
   Policies and procedures for servicing existing loans, and initiating new ones, produced by the Debt Management Unit, MFDP.

8. **National Monitoring & Evaluation strategy**
   Outlines data collection policies and procedures for all projects implemented in Liberia, produced by the M&E Unit, MFDP.

9. **NGO Manual of Procedures**
   This document outlines NGOs accreditation, reporting and exit procedures for all related organizations as defined in the policy; this Manual is produced by the NGO Coordination Unit of the MFDP.

10. **Paris Declaration Survey 2010 on Liberia**
    This document measures Liberia's performance against principles as outlined in the Paris declaration; produced by the (previous) MoF, MPEA in partnership with UNDP

11. **Public Expenditure & Financial Accountability Assessment Report (2012)**
    An Assessment of GoL's public financial management systems conducted by the World Bank. Aid Management received a D, prompting reforms and new initiatives to improve performance.

12. **Public Financial Management (PFM) Law**
    Legal document enacted in 2009, enforced by the Reform Coordination Unit (RCU) at MFDP.

13. **PFM Action Plan**
    Outlines steps to implement the PFM reforms in government M&A's; produced by the RCU, MFDP.

Annex B: Definition of Terms

Aid Cycle – the processes involved in contracting and managing Official Development Assistance. These processes include: Initiation, Appraisal, Alignment, Negotiation, Fulfilling Effectiveness Conditions, Project Implementation and Supervision, Project Closure and Evaluation.

Aid Modalities - preferred ways in which aid is provided by DPs to recipient governments.

Aid-on-budget - According to the Collaborative Africa Budget Reform Initiative (CABRI), there are six ways that aid can be included on Budget. These are:

Term	Definition
On plan	Programme and project aid spending is integrated into spending agencies' strategic planning and supporting documentation for policy intentions behind the budget submissions.
On budget	External financing, including programme and project financing, and its intended use are reported in the budget documentation.
On parliament	External financing is included in the revenue and appropriations approved by parliament.
On treasury	External financing is disbursed into the main revenue funds of government and managed through government's systems.
On accounting	External financing is recorded and accounted for in the government's accounting system, in line with the government's classification system.
On audit	External financing is audited by the government's auditing system.
On report	External financing is included in ex post reports by government.

Source: Inception Report (Mokoro Ltd, 2007a)

Budget support – International development assistance directly transferred to the national treasury in support of national development or reform policy and strategy.

Community Based Organization (CBO) – an assembly of community members working collectively as an independent non-profit making benevolent body. A CBO cannot register as an NGO.

High Quality Aid – refers to all external assistance that are on-budget as described above, and that are tied/aligned to the national development agenda at the level of activity interventions or at the level of the national indicators, and that incorporate several components of country system (on plan, on budget, on parliament, on treasury, on execution, on procurement, on accounting, on report and on audit) during

---
[1]*Putting Aid on Budget (CABRI & SPA 2008)*

implementation.

NGO - An organization that is independent of the government in its organization and management and involved in non-governmental related activities. No amalgamation with other types of activities shall be allowed, whether religious or otherwise. (E.g. Religious organizations desirous of engaging in NGO activities should establish a separate division/unit to carry out such functions).

Project Implementation Units (PIUs) - dedicated management units designed to support the implementation and administration of projects or programs. PIUs are required to perform subsidiary tasks with regard to the implementation of a project or program monitoring and reporting on technical and/or financial progress, accounting, procurement of works, goods and services, drawing-up terms of reference, contract supervision, detailed design or equipment specification. PIUs are often established at the request of a DP following the inception of a project or program. All PIU managements are subject to the overall supervision and approval of the head of Ministry, Agency, Commission and entity.

Project Support – aid used for specific, clearly defined, short-term support aligned to Government priorities with defined exit strategies.

Technical Assistance – demand-driven aid support to recipient government for education, training, payment for consultants and related equipment.

Annex C: Aid Data Collection in Liberia: Data Requests to Development Partners

In the Paris Declaration, Accra Agenda for Action, the New Deal following Busan, and the PAPD, the Government of Liberia (GoL) and Development Partners agreed that greater predictability in the provision of aid flow is very important to enable Liberia to effectively plan how external resources are being utilized in country, in order to maximize development outcomes.

In the context of these agreements, the following have been identified as priorities for Liberia:

I. GoL will strengthen budget processes for managing domestic and external flows and will improve the linkages between expenditures and results over the medium term;

ii. DPs will provide full and timely information on quarterly planned expenditure (MTEF projections), actual disbursements and actual expenditure so that Liberia is in a position to accurately record all aid flows and support the national budget process;

iii. On an annual basis DPs will provide, at country level, comprehensive estimates of aid flow they plan to provide over 3-5 year period (MTEF); and,

iv. GoL and DPs will work together at the international level to review ways of further improving medium term predictability of aid through transparency initiatives such as IATI.

The provision of data from Development Partners is vital for the Government of Liberia to plan, allocate and manage resources effectively. It is in the interest of all partners in Liberia's development that resources achieve their maximum possible impact.

Accordingly, DPs are requested to provide the following data for each project:

• Once per quarter: total disbursements in the previous quarter. Data should be provided within 15 days after the end of the quarter.

• Once per year: forward disbursement projections (also known as MTEF Projections) by quarter for the next fiscal year, and by year for the subsequent two fiscal years.

• *Note that the Liberian Fiscal Year (FY) runs July 1st – June 30th.*

Project data are required at the following points:

Date	Required data
January 15th	Disbursement data for Q2 of the current FY (October-December).
February 15th	Forward disbursement projections: • For the next FY (beginning July), broken down by quarter. • For the subsequent two FYs, broken down by year.
April 15th	Disbursement data for Q3 of the current FY (January-March).
July 15th	Disbursement data for Q4 of the previous FY (April-June).
October 15th	Disbursement data for Q1 of the current FY (July-September).

The Liberia Projects Dashboard is intended as the Government of Liberia's central source of data on aid projects. Data will be requested according to the above calendar; initially via an Excel template, which will be pre-filled by MFDP/AMCU using data from the Dashboard.

Annex D: DATA Management Plan for the Operationalization of the Liberia Project Dashboard

Republic of Liberia

Data Management Plan for the Operationalization
of the Liberia Project Dashboard

Date: September 2020
Version 1

Annex D Outline

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0   Introduction

In the past, information on Liberia's Official Development Assistance (ODA) has been collected and maintained by means of Excel spreadsheet. However, this method of data collection and management has reached its limits and has proved cumbersome when responding to the different needs of stakeholders. These constraints have led the Government of Liberia to commission the piloting of the Liberia Project Dashboard (LPD) which was successfully launched in 2019.

In the current national development plan, the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD), the Paris Declaration for Aid Effectiveness, Accra Agenda for Action and the New Deal Principles following Busan, the Government of Liberia has agreed that greater predictability in the provision of aid flow is very important in funding national development programs for sustainable outcomes; and to effectively plan how external resources are being mobilized and utilized in country. Pursuant to this:

i.   Liberia will strengthen budget planning processes for managing domestic and external resources and will improve the linkages between expenditures and results over the medium term;

ii.   Development Partners (DPs) will provide full and timely information on annual planned expenditure (MTEF projections), actual disbursements and actual expenditures; and planned and actual government counterpart disbursements (allotments) so that Liberia is in a position to accurately record all aid flow in the Liberia Project Dashboard to facilitate the national budget preparation;

iii.   On an annual basis DPs will provide, at Country Level, comprehensive estimates of aid flow they plan to provide over a 3-5year period (MTEF); and

iv.   The Government of Liberia and DPs will work together at the International Level to review ways of further improving medium term predictability of aid by applying and leveraging transparency initiatives such as the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI).

1.1   Purpose of the Data Management Plan

These notes and the attending national policies, laws and regulations including the national budgeting process/calendars/schedules and the Operational Manual for Aid Management in Liberia, seek to establish a clear system in which the responsibilities of the Government and Development Partners are clearly delineated in such a manner

that, as a matter of routine, the Liberia Project Dashboard is kept up to date, maximizing its effectiveness as a tool for improving aid management in Liberia.

1.2   Structure

This Data Management Plan begins by summarizing the governance arrangements for public investment data collection, verification, reporting, and the Liberia Project Dashboard management. The second section details the Government and DPs required roles and responsibilities regarding management and data entry into the Liberia Project Dashboard. It then offers specific guidance on what data is required to be entered into the system for certain data fields, before giving details on how certain types of project should be handled. Annexes provide additional information on roles and responsibilities, calendars for management, data entry and reporting, and contact information.

II. MANAGING THE LIBERIA PROJECT DASHBOARD
2.0   What is the Liberia Project Dashboard?

The Liberia Project Dashboard is an online Aid Information Management System (AIMS) that is used to track basic information on Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Public Sector Investment Project (PSIP).

2.1   Access to the Liberia Project Dashboard

To access the Dashboard, there must be an internet connection. With the internet access, you open an internet browser page (example: Firefox or Google chrome). In the address bar of the internet browser, type www.liberiaProject.org and hit the enter button on your computer keyboard. The page will open requesting a username and password. The Dashboard Administrative User will create your credentials to have access to the dashboard.

2.2 Governance Structure of the Liberia Project Dashboard (LPD)

There shall be established a Liberia Project Dashboard Working Group, which shall serve as a small technical working group to address key issues and propose solutions related to the implementation, data entry, reporting and rollout of the system to Development Partners and Ministries, Agencies and Commissions (MACs) of the Government of Liberia. The work of the Liberia Project Dashboard Working Group, in the first year in particular, will be critical for establishing the roles/responsibilities that will guide the usage and ensure the relevance of the LPD system over time.

The optimum task of the LPD Working Group will include:
1. Draft and periodically update the Data Management Plan, which is envisioned to be a living document that would include (but is not limited to) the following:

- o **Roles/responsibilities** of focal points (e.g., who is responsible for data input; who validates; schedule for data entry - an LPD user Code of Conduct could be included);
- o **Calendar** and explanation of workflow processes
- o **Definitions** of key LPD fields such as Project Status (e.g. when a project can be considered "Ongoing" versus "Planned");
- o **Implementation plan** with proposed schedule for rollout to all donors and priority line ministries.
2. Create synergy that ensures harmony between data collection and NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN reporting
3. Draft guidance for all LPD users
4. Consider measures to incentivize LPD usage and a process for ensuring compliance with the agreed upon schedule/responsibilities
5. Address logistical issues for training and rollout (e.g. identify/arrange training facilities)
6. Define a process/schedule for reporting progress/challenges/developments to the broader donor group
7. Report to a higher-level Government quarterly Donor Forum

2.3 Composition of the Group

The Liberia Project Dashboard Working Group shall be composed of eleven (11) members:

a) Three (3) persons from AMCU; three (3) from PIU; the Assistant Minster for External Resources and one (1) representative from the Office of Office of the Deputy Minister for Economic Management. Others include, one (1) representative from the Ministry of State, specifically the President's Delivery Unit, and one (1) representative from the Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo Information Services (LIGSIS).

b) One Bilateral and Multilateral Development Partner representative (specifically representative of the Donor Focal Point who provides data to the AMCU).

The LPD Working Group will be chaired by the Aid Management and Coordination Unit, and cochaired by a representative of the Development Partners (as in b above). The Group shall meet quarterly; however, the initial meeting of the Group shall be convened following the Official Launch of the Liberia Project Dashboard. The initial meeting will focus on deriving a workplan to implement the Group's tasks. Subsequent meetings will focus on the progress of the workplan.

2.4　Implementation of Liberia Project Dashboard

The Implementation of the Liberia Project Dashboard is expected to:

a. Support the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning in the management of Official Development Assistance in accordance with the Budget process and the National Development Plan:

o Facilitate reporting of Development Partners' medium term expenditure projections, actual disbursements and actual expenditures on all Official Development Assistance to MFDP (both to Government and non-state actors), with increasing accuracy and data quality ('visibility' incentives of DPs to report on time);

o Facilitate reporting on domestic Project projections and results;

o Allow the majority of MFDP required reports to be predefined and generated on demand, including on project/program results and outputs; and,

o Meet new monitoring and reporting needs on the national development plan, Paris indicators, Accra and new commitments made in Busan.

b. Increase transparency and accountability by introducing broad access to a data repository on ODA and nationally funded Project/programs

o Make public investment –ODA & domestic Project data visible online to different users through predefined access rights to LPD;

o Increase the analytical capacity of both DPs and Government on the volume, distribution and effectiveness of ODA and other funding;

o Seek to capture the involvement of implementing partners (Project Implementation Units) and non-state actors in implementing ODA funds and programs and facilitate their integration into Government planning processes; and,

o Allow stakeholders to analyse their contributions at several different levels (national, sector, region, modality, etc.) allowing stakeholders to use the system for their internal planning processes.

c. Better alignment of aid through improved mapping of aid resources against national development plan pillars and policy areas.

d. Further progress on division of labour through sectoral/DPs based aid mapping.

e. Increase DPs confidence in government systems through an improved data recording and reporting system, and enhance government-led coordination, allowing the government to take even more control of its own development process.

f. Online visualization dashboards and mapping tools to public investment in the planning process.

However, for the system to bear such results, high quality information must be entered into the database on a regular basis.

III. STAKEHOLDERS' ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES IN DATA MANAGEMENT

3.0 MFDP's Responsibilities to Dashboard Inputs and Outputs

The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, through the Aid Management and Coordination Unit will undertake key related activities to ensure that the Liberia Project Dashboard continues to be accurately and comprehensively populated with project information. Many of these roles and responsibilities have already been established under the previous excel template reporting system; however, they are re-articulated here to ensure a transparent division of responsibilities is established between Government of Liberia (GoL) and Development Partners (DPs) under the new decentralized system of managing externally and domestically funded Project in the Dashboard.

The AMCU, upon approval from the Liberia Project Dashboard Working Group, will assume the following management and training roles:

1. Setting up new user workspaces and individual logins for each DPs and MACs' Data Focal Points (DFP);
2. Conducting tri-annual training sessions on using the dashboard system and to address any DP or MAC concerns over its usability;
3. Providing 'as-needed' training sessions for individual DPs and MACs following the introduction of new staff or to deal with specific issues in the data entry and verification processes;
4. Monitoring development partner's compliance with aid reporting commitments and compiling a compliance table each quarter to show the extent to which development partners and Implementing Units/MACs are adhering to data provision requirements. This table is to be shared across GoL and DPs and published in the Quarterly Development Assistance Report.

3.1 Data Entry and Management Roles of MFDP

Desk Officers & Analysts in MFDP units responsible for public investments are primarily responsible for keeping data about their donors up to date in the system. They can update the system whenever required to ensure the system is as accurate as possible, given available information. Donors and other users can view the data and flag to the relevant desk officer where information is not accurate or could be

improved.

AMCU Desk Officers/Analysts are primarily responsible for entering all project data/information for their assigned donors. Desk Officers have **edit rights** to donors they are responsible for and should update data:

    a. On a *quarterly basis*, after receiving disbursement data for the previous quarter from their donor counterparts

    b. On an annual basis, after receiving projection data for the next fiscal year

    c. On an *ongoing basis*, as issues with the existing data are raised by donors or other stakeholders.

    d. The system will always show the most current data captured in the system (so Desk Officers can quickly address any problems).

Project Implementation Unit (PIU) analysts will collect data from spending entities and give them to the PIU Data Focal Person who will upload the data onto the system with the approval of the Unit's Director. PIU DFP will have **edit rights** to domestic funded Project in the LPD. The DFP will be responsible to update data:

    a. On an annual basis, after receiving project proposal and projection data for the next fiscal year

    b. On a *quarterly basis*, after receiving disbursement and implementation data for the previous quarter from the spending entities

    c. On a *periodic basis*, as need be from time to time.

3.2   Data Management Roles of Development Partners

Development Partners have the right to see data that is held about their aid activities. DPs have **viewing rights** for their respective Project.

    a. Donors can provide their data to AMCU Desk Officers on Excel templates to simplify data collection. They can also recommend changes to Desk Officers on an ongoing basis.

    b. For now, donors do not have edit rights for the system, but this will be revisited in future (e.g., after considering appropriate validation processes).

## 3.3   Data Entry and Management Roles of MAC PIUs

The Government of Liberia Ministries, Agencies & Commissions (MACs) must identify a single Data Focal Point (DFP) within the PIU of each of their agencies to act as the primary authority on entering and extracting information from the Liberia

Project Dashboard. Only DFP's which have completed the annual MFDP/AMCU Dashboard user training sessions will be given log-in right allowing them to enter new information into the system. AMCU will be available to provide ad-hoc training for DFPs where requested.

The MAC PIU Data Focal Point (DFP) will be responsible for entering the expenditure details for each project with respect to the PFM Law and accompanying Regulation; Part G – G1 – G5. Specifically Implementing Units/MACs will enter the following into the Dashboard on close of each quarter (with a deadline for data entry of the 15th Working Day of the month after the quarter ends):

- o Actual Quarterly donor expenditure
- o Actual Quarterly GoL expenditure of counterpart funding, where relevant
- o Update of planned GoL disbursements (allotment) for counterpart funding, where relevant
- o Monitoring and Evaluation data.

3.4 Diagram Depicting Stakeholders' Roles and Responsibilities to the Liberia Project Dashboard
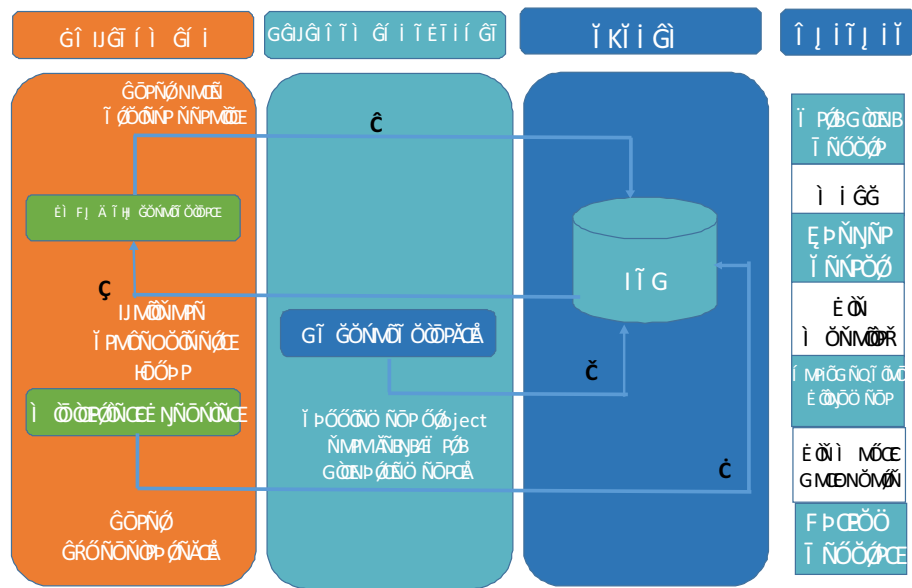
SIMPLIFIED USER INFORMATION

4.0   Editing a single activity

Where a user is authorized, updating data on a particular project is simple. From the Activities page, click the **Edit** icon to the right of any project. You will see the activity editor. As you click across the various tabs, you will see all the project data that can be edited, including:

- **Basic** - title, description, start and end dates, and other basic classifications of the project
- **Sectors** - the MTEF Sector, aligned ministry/agency, SDGs and National Development Plan
  Pillar
- **Location** - the sub-national location(s) where this activity is active
- **Financials** - commitments (the total value of the project), disbursements, and forward spending plans (MTEF Projections).
- **Milestones**(*currently only for PSIP Project*) - select which milestones are now complete
- **Conditions** - add donors' expected counterpart funding *(in future, this tab will also allow the inclusion of effectiveness conditions)*

The activity editor is quite straightforward and quick to use; all data is saved as you edit and move through the interface. However, sometimes you may want to update many activities at once. For this, you can use Excel update templates. The following sections describe how this works for the reporting of (quarterly)disbursement dataand (annual)MTEF projections.

4.1   Quarterly update of disbursement data

In the past, it took a lot of effort each quarter to update disbursement data for every donor. This is now much simpler and faster, if you follow these steps:

1. On the Export Datatab, scroll down to Excel reporting templates
2. Click on the Quarterly disbursement reporting drop-down to expand it, if the section is not already visible.
3. Select a template to download.
4. Send the template *as an email attachment* to the relevant donor. Ask them to update the quarterly disbursements column.
5. Review the file you receive back from the donor and check to see that the numbers make sense. If you're happy, continue to the next section and import the file.

4.2   Importing the updated data

1. On theExport Datatab, scroll down to Excel reporting templates

2. Click on the Quarterly disbursement reporting drop-down to expand it, if the section is not already visible.
3. Upload the file you received back from the donor. All Project will be updated according to the data entered into the file by the donor.

The following fields will be automatically updated:
- Disbursement for previous fiscal quarter
- Activity Status
- Activity Start Date
- Activity End Date

4.3   Annual update of MTEF projections data

Each year, MTEF projections data have to be collected from donors for the forthcoming fiscal years as part of the budget process. This should be a fairly straightforward process to collect and input these data, if you follow these steps:

1. On the Export Data tab, scroll down to Excel reporting templates
2. Click on the MTEF projections reporting drop-down to expand it, if it's not already visible.
3. Select a template to download.
4. Send the template *as an email attachment* to the relevant donor. Ask them to update the quarterly disbursements column.
5. Review the file you receive back from the donor and check the numbers make sense. If you're satisfied with the figures, continue to the next section and import the file.

4.4   Importing the updated data

1. On the Export Data tab, scroll down to Excel reporting templates
2. Click on the MTEF projections reporting drop-down to expand it, if it's not already visible.
3. Upload the file you received back from the donor. All Project will be updated according to the data entered into the file by the donor.

The following fields will be automatically updated:
- MTEF Projections for relevant FY (amount columns)
- Activity Status
- Activity Start Date
- Activity End Date

4.5 Reports and Exports

A number of standard reports are automatically updated as the data is updated throughout the system:

> On the home page:
>   - o disbursements, projected disbursements, and new commitments by sector (you can select for a specific Fiscal Year)
>   - o change by sector over time (you can select to see this by disbursements, projected disbursements, or new commitments)
>   - o commitments and disbursements by sector and source to date   On the reports drop-down (from the menu at the top of the page):
>
>   counterpart funding requirements
>   - o   o   milestone_tracking(for PSIP Project)

Note: You may not have access to all of these reports.

4.6 Exporting data

There are a couple of ways of exporting data from the system:

1. If you want to generate an export of all activities, you can do so on the Export Datatab.
2. **Export data in Excel Format** will export data according to AMCU's existing Excel format.
3. **Download detailed AMCU financial transactions data for analysis** provides a more detailed and advanced format, useful for time-series analysis.
4. **Download integrated dataset of AMCU and PSIP Project** follows the same format as the AMCU Excel format, but includes also PSIP Project.
5. If you want to generate an export of a subsection of activities, you can filter for activities on the ActivitiesTab and then click Export selection to Excel.

V. Definition of Project Terminology

1.   Home Page: It is the summary of the information that is on the Project Dashboard. This information includes Project graphs and mapping

2.   Activities: Activity is the column on the project dashboard that contains basic project information details. There are several fields found under the activities column such as:

I.   Title: Title is the field that contains the project name.

ii.   Organizations: Organization is the field that contains basic information about Development Assistance partners, e.g., World Bank, AfDB, OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), GOL, etc.

iii.   Commitments: is the amounts Development Partners agreed to contribute towards the implementation of a project (s).

iv.   Disbursement: It is the amount that is expended out of the total commitment for a project on a quarterly basis.

v.   Last updated: is the current information uploaded on the Liberia Project Dashboard.

vi.   Edit: It is the field used to modify project information on the dashboard.

vii.   Delete: The field used to remove project information from the dashboard.

viii.   New activities: It is the field where additional information is provided.

ix.   Project Code: It is the unique number assigned to a particular project for identification.

x.   Description: It is the summary detail of a project

xi.   Start Date: It is the agreed date for the commencement of the implementation of the project.

xii.   End date: It is the completion date of a project.

xiii.   Activity status: Is the outlook or progress of the implementation of the project activities.

xiv.   Aid types: It is the modality used for the delivery of external assistance to the recipient country.

xv.   Finance types: Refer to a grant or loan.

VI. Data Calendar

The Liberia Project Dashboard is intended as the Government of Liberia's central source of data on aid Project. Data will be requested according to the calendar illustrated below, initially via an Excel template, which will be pre-filled by MFDP/AMCU using data from the Dashboard.

In the context of the aid framework, the following has been identified as priorities for Liberia:

6.1. GoL will strengthen budget processes for managing domestic and external flows and will improve the linkages between expenditures and results over the medium term;

6.2. DPs will provide full and timely information on quarterly planned expenditure (MTEF projections), actual disbursements and actual expenditure so that Liberia is in a position to accurately record all aid flow and support the national budget process;

6.3. On an annual basis DPs will provide, at country level, comprehensive estimates of aid flow they plan to provide over 3-5 year period (MTEF); and

6.4. GoL and DPs will work together at the international level to review ways of further improving medium term predictability of aid through transparency initiatives such as IATI.

The provision of data from Development Partners is vital for the Government of Liberia to plan, allocate and manage resources effectively. It is in the interest of all partners in Liberia's development that resources achieve their maximum possible impact.

Accordingly, DPs are requested to provide the following data for each project:

- Once per quarter: total disbursements in the previous quarter. Data should be provided within 15 days after the end of the quarter.
- Once per year: forward disbursement projections (also known as MTEF Projections) by quarter for the next fiscal year, and by year for the subsequent two fiscal years.
- *Note that the Liberian Fiscal Year (FY) runs July 1st – June 30th.*

Project data is required at the following points

Date	Required data
January 15th	Disbursement data for Q2 of the current FY (October-December).
February 15th	Forward disbursement projections: • For the next FY (beginning July), broken down by quarter. • For the subsequent two FYs, broken down by year.
April 15th	Disbursement data for Q3 of the current FY (January-March).
July 15th	Disbursement data for Q4 of the previous FY (April-June).
October 15th	Disbursement data for Q1 of the current FY (July-September).