

Liberia Multi-Partner Trust Fund/Peace Building Fund (LMPTF/PBF)

Evaluability Assessment Report

February 2020

1. Introduction

Despite the United Nations Mission in Liberia's (UNMIL) successful completion of its mandate and subsequent departure in 2018, Liberia remains with many challenges. The country is ranked 176 out of 189 countries on the 2019 UNDP Human Development Index, with an HDI value of 0.465 for 2018 placing it in the low human development category. Liberia is also the 19th most fragile country (out of 58 fragile countries, according to the 2018 OECD Fragile Framework), facing severe multi-dimensional fragilities with respect to the political, economic, environmental, societal and security dimensions.

External support remains crucial in helping to address some of the challenges and risks faced by the country, with potential ramifications for peace and stability in Liberia and the sub-region. The Government looks to the UN Country Team and donor community to receive direct and indirect budgetary and technical support to address the political and economic fragility.

The UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) has been supporting peace consolidation and national reconciliation in Liberia since 2008 by strengthening security sector and legal reforms, building the capacity of civil authorities, and promoting human rights, gender mainstreaming and economic empowerment, among others. In early 2019, the PBF provided US\$ 5 million seed funding under its Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility (PRF) through the Liberia Multi-Partner Trust Fund (LMPTF), to support peacebuilding priorities consistent with the government's peace and development framework Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)¹. The funds are being channeled through qualified UN agencies to support the Government with the help of three interventions: the empowerment of disadvantaged youth; sustaining peace and improving social cohesion through the promotion of rural employment opportunities for youth in conflict prone areas; and advancing reconciliation through legislative reform and civic engagement. The below table provides a brief overview of these three projects. A fourth project provided startup capital for establishing the LMPTF and funding its Secretariat².

¹ The UNDAF has since been succeeded by the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) which came into effect on 1 January 2020 to run until 31 Dec. 2024.

² Additional funding of \$600,000 was provided in December 2019 for continued support to the Secretariat's coordination role until the end of December 2020.

PBF Projects under Review

Project name & Budget	RUNOs	Budget (USD)	Duration	Geographic Location	Focus
Socio-Economic Empowerment of Disadvantaged Youth in Liberia (SEED) USD 1.4 million	UNDP-Lead Agency	900,000.56	18 Months (19 Feb 2019 - 31 Aug. 2020)	Montserrado County	Empowerment of disadvantaged youth including those affected by drugs and homelessness.
	UNFPA	500,000.40			
Advancing Reconciliation through Legislative Reforms and Civic Engagement USD 1.6 million	OHCHR-Lead Agency	541,582.64	18 Months (2 Jan. 2019 - 30 June 2020)	Nationwide	Legislative reforms and promotion of national reconciliation through dialogues at national and local levels.
	UNDP	635,648.28			
	UN Women	422,769.31			
Sustaining peace and improving social cohesion through the promotion of rural employment opportunities for youth in conflict-prone areas USD1.5 million	FAO-Lead Agency	760,041.60	24 Months (14 Feb. 2019 - 28 Feb. 2021)	Bong and Lofa Counties, North and Central Liberia	Sustaining peace by addressing two inter-linked root causes of conflict in Liberia: grievances over insufficient participation of young women and men in local dispute resolution and lack of employment and livelihoods opportunities for rural youth.
	ILO	405,699.81			
	WFP	334,258.59			

The PBF Guidelines provide for the conduct of an Evaluability Assessment managed and/or facilitated by the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) within the first 6-9 months of project implementation. The Assessment provides an opportunity for an early appraisal of the logic, approach, feasibility, and existing monitoring and reporting arrangements of the PBF portfolio. It avails a platform for needed adjustments to increase the likelihood of achieving intended results premised on identified challenges, gaps, lessons learned and way forward. The assessment also sets the basis for an effective final evaluation.

2. Context

After the civil war, Liberia successfully held two democratic elections in 2005 and 2011. In late 2017, it made an important advance towards consolidating its peacebuilding agenda when the country experienced a peaceful transfer of power from one elected government to another for the first time

in over 70 years. This was followed by the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), which officially completed its mandate in March 2018. Yet despite these important milestones, peace in Liberia remains fragile. Several analyses have pointed to ongoing drivers of conflict, including political antagonism surrounding the 2017 elections, land and property disputes, and a lack of livelihood opportunities for ex-combatants and marginalized youth.

The LMPTF was established in July 2018 by the Government of Liberia with support from the UN system to address the remaining root causes of fragility in support of the country's efforts to sustain peace and implement the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The LMPTF brings together the Government, development partners, the UN system, and other relevant stakeholders. The architecture of the LMPTF is designed to support and accelerate the implementation of the PAPD (2018 – 2023) which was launched in October 2018, through the UNDAF (2013-2019) and its successor, the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2020 – 2024. The LMPTF result areas are hinged on the UNSDCF pillars (as they were under the UNDAF): 1) Human Development & Essential Services; 2) Sustainable Economic Development; 3) Sustaining Peace, Security & Rule of Law; and 4) Governance and Transparency. The PBF's support, through LMPTF, is linked to Pillar 3.

In late 2018, the PBF approved three new projects³ under the LMPTF following an in-country prioritization carried out by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, the UN Country Team, the Government of Liberia, and PBSO. The three projects are aligned with Government priorities laid out in the Government's Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development, which incorporates priorities from the Liberia Peacebuilding Plan (LPP)⁴. Key priorities of the Peacebuilding Plan include inclusive and peaceful elections in 2017; peace, security and rule of law; economic transformation; governance and public institutions; and youth and gender as cross-cutting issues. Preceding the three projects under review, the PBF had supported four interventions⁵, which were also premised on the LPP. The PBF's support in response to the LPP has made significant contributions to addressing key conflict drivers based on the conflict analysis that informed the design of the LPP. For instance, support to the 2017 general elections, which saw the first democratic transfer of power since 1944, recorded the least post-conflict electoral violence with no properties destroyed or deaths reported.

The overarching goal of the three projects under review is to sustain peace and mitigate conflicts through different interventions including livelihood support to conflict prone communities. The three projects' interventions are heavily aligned to goal of Pillar III of the Government's PAPD which focuses on sustainable peace and economic transformation: "A more peaceful and unified society that enables economic transformation and sustainable development"; while they make generic contributions through specific outcomes in Pillars II and IV. For example, the SEED and Sustaining Peace Projects are also responding to Pillar II (Economy and Jobs) since they are empowering youth with employable and livelihood skills. Liberia has a youthful population of 65%, many of whom remain unemployed.

³ A fourth project was approved to support the establishment of a Joint LMPTF/PBF Secretariat for oversight and coordination of the Portfolio.

⁴ The LPP provides a framework for sustaining peace and is developed in accordance with Security Council Resolution 2333 (2016) to guide the UN system and other partners in supporting Liberia during the drawdown of UNMIL and beyond.

⁵ These were implemented through four projects concluded in the second and third quarter of 2019 namely Enhancing Youth Participation in the 2017 General Elections; Rule of Law: Addressing Pretrial Detention and Rolling-out Community Policing; Prevention of Conflict through Multi-Partner Platforms in Concession Areas; and Inclusive Security: Nothing for Us without Us.

To support the successful implementation of the LMPTF/PBF Portfolio, the Secretariat conducted an internal Evaluability assessment to detect and resolve potential deviation from project objectives and emerging challenges and to make recommendations to improve implementation and to allow for an effective final evaluation.ee

3. Methodology

The Evaluability exercise was based on Terms of Reference (ToR) developed and agreed to by both PBSO and the LMPTF/PBF Secretariat. The Assessment was led by the Secretariat team in Monrovia with technical support from a headquarter-based consultant and focused on the projects managed under the LMPTF/PBF Portfolio. It commenced with desk reviews of the projects focusing on their design, logic, approach, theory of change, and alignment of outcomes to the Government PAPD and UNSCDF.

The PBF Secretariat team conducted Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) of UN agencies; relevant government ministries and agencies; and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) participating in the implementation of the three LMPTF projects; as well as beneficiaries. A total of 12 FGDs were held with 86 participants (47% women and 53% men) from 18 organizations including UN Agencies; and beneficiaries in three counties as indicated in the following categories:

Category of Participants	Number of Participants	Number of FGDs Conducted	Location
UN Agencies	12	3	Montserrado County
Government Partners	13	3	Montserrado County
CSOs/INGOs/NGOs	10	3	Montserrado County
Beneficiaries	51	3	Montserrado, Bong and Margibi Counties.
Total	86	12	Three Counties

The discussions were organized in the indicated categories: UN Recipient Organizations (RUNOs); implementing partners (government and civil society); and beneficiaries (in Bong, Margibi and Montserrado counties).

For consistency in the collation of data, the discussions were conducted using the same topic guide and questions for the first two categories of interviewees. While the beneficiary question guide focused on the same thematic areas as that of the first two categories, it was simplified and customized to suit the respective situations of the four different groups involved. The assessment questions were framed under 10 broad areas:

- (a) LMPTF: Emerging risks/challenges that should be addressed/considered at the Fund level
- (b) Relevance and coherence of the project portfolio, considering alignment to government and the UN Sustainable Cooperative Development Framework (UNSCDF)
- (c) Appropriateness/relevance of project outcomes
- (d) Assessment of Project Results Frameworks, with specific questions on the appropriateness of the indicators
- (e) Effectiveness of existing monitoring mechanisms
- (f) Adequacy of resourcing

- (g) Assessment of the implementation and coordination mechanisms
- (h) Target beneficiaries and geographic locations
- (i) Gender and youth
- (j) Conflict sensitivity

Field missions to Bong, Margibi and Rural Montserrado counties provided an opportunity to triangulate the information gathered from respondents in the initial two categories with the beneficiaries' views; and compare the existing realities on the grounds in terms of implementation. Assessment consultations with UN agencies, government, implementing partners and beneficiaries were conducted between 3 December 2019 and 25 January 2020.

4. Findings

4.1 Political Overview and Risk Assessment of the LMPTF

Key risks that require close monitoring, and regular review of mitigation strategies include:

Political

Risk 1: Government's inability to commit funding for the 2020 senatorial election poses a huge risk to national stability. It could specifically affect beneficiaries in some of the PBF-supported projects, for instance, that targeting disadvantaged youth (including those that drug-affected and homeless) who could be used to destabilize peace by some politicians. Essentially, if people feel their voices cannot be heard through the ballot box, given the current political tensions and hardship in the country, some may opt for violent means.

Risk 2: Regionally, political stability in the sub-region is a concern. Liberia's senatorial elections may affect regional stability if not well handled by the Government. Further, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire will hold parliamentary and presidential elections in March and October 2020 respectively. Border communities in these countries share cultural practices as well as ethnic similarities, which influence the movement of people across the border during electoral periods to register and vote. Citizens from these communities are hardly distinguished given intermarriages, which fueled the crises both in Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire during the countries' respective civil wars. Lofa, which is at the border with Guinea, is one of two counties where the *Sustaining Peace Project* is being implemented to engage youth in productive peacebuilding initiatives to prevent and mitigate conflicts through established land dispute mechanisms as well as increased livelihoods. Lofa County, located in northern Liberia, was the headquarters of the largest warring faction, LURD, from 1999 to 2003, with many former fighters, yet to be fully rehabilitated. The selection of Lofa County to implement the project was based on conflict analysis of the county; and instability could result to losing peace gains achieved so far.

Economic

Risk 3: The current economic situation in Liberia is dire and may require donors to provide support outside their traditional areas. This could be one of the reasons causing donor fatigue in the country. As much as possible, PBF support should consider the most vulnerable to help address issues of poverty and marginalization in communities as a means of preventing conflict. The SEED project attempts to address some of these but not in a holistic approach.

Risk 4: There is an increased risk that government counterparts may not support implementation of projects where their control of funds is limited. RUNOs continue to receive requests from government counterparts to provide incentives for their involvement in projects because many of the civil servants have not received salaries for more than four months. Senior ministry officials also continue to push for control of project funds despite evidence of lack accountability previously⁶. If this persists, project implementation will be adversely affected because of inadequate government coordination and ownership.

Rule of Law

Risk 5: While the Sustaining Peace Project addresses conflict prevention and mitigation around land disputes through the established resolution mechanisms in two communities each in Bong and Lofa Counties, restoring confidence in the rule of law is cardinal to fully regaining the people's trust and sustain peace. This calls for continued support for capacity strengthening of the judicial and justice institutions for speedy and fair resolution of issues related to conflict drivers including disputes around land and political participation in elections.

4.2 Project Specific Implementation Progress

The RUNOs received their respective disbursements in March 2019, owing to administrative issues between PBSO and MPTFO. This led to delays in the initiation of project activities by the agencies which had lost the first two months of the year. The three projects reviewed here are being implemented by seven UN agencies. The *Socio-Economic Empowerment of Disadvantaged Youth in Liberia* (SEED) and *Advancing Reconciliation through Legislative Reforms and Civil Engagement* have a combined value of \$3 million, of which UNDP is allocated 51 percent (\$1,535,648.28) while the other three agencies combined have 49 percent of the budget - making UNDP the highest recipient agency.

For the third project - *Sustaining Peace and improving social cohesion through the promotion of rural employment opportunities for youth in conflict prone areas* - (FAO) is the lead agency with 50.6 percent (\$760,041.60) of the \$1.5 million budget; and the World Food Programme (WFP) and International Labour Organization (ILO), which share 49 percent, are the implementing partners.

The three projects are complementary and aim to address various conflict factors as outlined by the theory of change for each and in response to the Government of Liberia's Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development.: "The PAPD presents results frameworks for each of the four pillars as tools to assist Ministries, Agencies, Commissions (MACs) and partners to logically link interventions to the high-level goals over the next five years; which in turn will bring Liberia closer to the realization of the aspirations defined in the Vision 2030 process⁷". The projects are complementing Pillar III Goal of the of the PAPD which states "A more peaceful and unified society that enables

⁶ In 2019, the UNCT raised concerns about delayed programme and financial reports by various government ministries and agencies - some as far back as 2017. This led to an official communication from the UN Resident Coordinator to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (which was, unfortunately, leaked to the public) requesting support to facilitate submission of reports by concerned institutions.

⁷ Government of Liberia Development Framework, Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development 2018-2023, p.19

economic transformation and sustainable development”. Despite several challenges, implementation of all three was ongoing at the time of the assessment.

Following the full rollout of the projects in the second and third quarters of 2019, steady progress has been made in meeting delivery targets by two of the three projects. The *Advancing Reconciliation through Legislative Reforms and Civic Engagement* project had the highest combined financial delivery rate of 72 percent by the end of 2019⁸. This project was on track considering its overall delivery. This is followed by *Sustaining Peace and Improving Social Cohesion* with a combined delivery rate of 48 percent. This project was behind in its financial delivery, which it attributed to the late commencement of activities in April, after the fund was transferred at the end of February. and finally, the SEED Project with 41 percent (See Annex 1). The SEED project delivery was far behind schedule due to limited coordination at both agency and project implementation levels.

With financial delivery pegged on disbursements received so far (70 percent of the total budget), the assessment showed that several achievements have been recorded and efforts were ongoing to address certain challenges and to accelerate implementation. The relevance and appropriateness of the three projects remain undoubtably explicit, with the involvement of Government at both policy (Steering Committee) and technical (Technical Working Group Meetings) levels engendering the need for enhanced collaboration to improve delivery. The relevance of the projects can be reflected in the composition of the Advisory Board of the Sustaining Peace Project, where the Ministries of Labor and Youth and Sports co-chair along with the Country Representative of FAO. The Advisory Board is a mid-level policy body that oversees the implementation of the project. This body is also considered the project board which each project must have to discuss project specific implementation issues. Similar structure has been established under the SEED Project, where the Minister of Youth & Sports chairs with representations from the Ministry of Health, Catholic Agencies for Overseas Development (CAFOD) and partner agencies (UNDP, UNFPA) attending. This effort was initiated following the commencement of the evaluability exercise to enhance coordination and delivery.

The *Advancing Reconciliation* Project remains relevant in addressing national reconciliation. For instance, the assessment found key achievements under Outcome 2 which seek to support national reconciliation efforts that address key conflict drivers identified by the project. A three-day National Reconciliation and Economic Dialogue (NRED) was convened and generated several recommendations for sustaining peace. This included the establishment of a War and Economic Crimes Court, which reinforces the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) Report recommendations that is a focus area of the Project. Although the NRED was not originally one of the project’s core activities, it was co-funded by the project on recommendation by other donors based on its peacebuilding niche⁹. Further, four County Reconciliation Action Plans (River Gee, Bomi, Bassa Gbarpolu), that will inform the creation of a National Reconciliation Policy for Liberia, were developed.

Despite these achievements of the Reconciliation Project, the Assessment found some areas that need reinforcement. These include delays in the construction of memorials in 14 counties to honour victims of the civil war; an under-estimation of the logistical budget; and political interference by

⁸ Of the total amount disbursed as the first tranche, which is 70 percent of the total project budget.

⁹ This was achieved through reallocating funds (\$41,000) from activity 2.2.7 under output 2.2, which covers support to government to organize three dialogues to promote national reconciliation. A note-to-file was prepared to capture this change.

local officials who want to use the memorials for self-glorification by influencing the location of proposed sites. There is weak coordination on the ground coupled with limited logistical capacity to regularly conduct monitoring. Poor/minimal communication between the Independent National Commission on Human Rights' (INCHR) main office in Monrovia and its field offices, where sometimes decisions were not clearly communicated, was also noted. For instance, the officer in Naama, Bong County, was not aware of what was happening at one of the memorial sites and was learning of the changes/decisions made from the Assessment Team. The assessment established the continued support by OHCHR to the INCHR to strengthen their technical and logistical capacity for the implementation of the TRC recommendations in response to Output 2.1 of the project. The PBF's support attracted additional funding from Sweden through the OHCHR to assist the INCHR in promoting the TRC recommendations.

Led by FAO, the *Sustaining Peace and Improving Social Cohesion through Promotion of Rural Employment* Project is making relatively good progress. The assessment found that the project has established a strong coordination structure. It worked closely with the ministries of Agriculture, and Youth and Sports as its lead government partners as confirmed by beneficiaries. Under outcome 1, to fast-track implementation based on evidence, the project conducted a scoping exercise to map youth, gender and land related conflict drivers and peace infrastructure. This enabled the Project to plan and respond to drivers of conflict based on empirical data collected in Bong and Lofa counties. The Project conducted a community-based participatory planning (CBPP) practical session in Salayea and Zorzor, Lofa County, attended by 50 participants in each location including 12 youth. The conduct of the other two CBPP sessions in Salala and Totota, Bong County, are scheduled to be held in April 2020 due to delays in recruiting a local CSO to conduct the CBPP. This approach underpinned the importance of engaging youth as social actors of peace through actively presenting their views and contributions. The Assessment noted ongoing livelihood activities under output 2.1 with slight delays in rolling out Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops. These activities were being planned during the close of the Assessment.

Sustaining Peace experienced challenges with seasonality and environmental conditions at project inception. Activities commenced during the rainy season making it difficult for the project team to access project locations. Actual roll-out of project activities commenced in June 2019 after a Program Coordinator was recruited by FAO to hasten implementation. Additionally, besides FAO, the Assessment found that WFP and ILO presence on the ground was very limited as stated by beneficiaries. This contributed to delays in implementation of activities. WFP noted the observation during the assessment and informed its field office in the adjacent county, Nimba, to provide coverage by enhancing monitoring. The ILO has a smaller office with fewer staff, thereby limiting its capacity to have field presence. However, field presence was enhanced following our assessment through joint monitoring efforts.

Initial project activities have been rolled-out under the *SEED* Project. These include the registration of 1,400 disadvantaged youth through three drop-in centers established in consultation with the Ministry of Health; and training of 15 social workers and 15 mental health clinicians in psychosocial counselling and support services. Of the youth registered for assessment, 223 have undergone psychosocial screening, and enrolled in the skills and vocational training phase of the project against the target of 500.

A key challenge affecting the *SEED* Project is coordination – between RUNOs, between RUNOs and implementing partners, and among implementing partners. The evaluability assessment noted

several issues emanating from limited coordination among partners. For instance, implementing partners under the SEED project were not very familiar with one another and the activities implemented. This was due to limited engagement among and between agencies which adversely affected coordination at the implementation level.

This was raised by project partners, including the Government, CSOs and beneficiaries. It was not clear what each partner was responsible for and on what timeline, hence causing delays in the sequencing and completion of planned activities. There was also no clear understanding on the project strategy and expected results, which undermined complementarity and synergy. The Assessment also noted a delay in the procurement of mental health drugs, which affected the regular attendance of some beneficiaries. The drugs had been fully procured and delivered by the time of writing this report.

The assessment also found that some of the CSOs implementing the *Advancing Reconciliation through Legislative Reforms and Civic Engagement* project did not know what their counterparts were doing. For instance, the Institute for Research and Democratic Development (IREDD) did not know which activity NAYMOTE-Partner for Democratic Development, another CSO, was implementing, although their respective activities could complement each other through sharing experiences and lessons learned.

Adequacy of Resourcing and Geographic Targeting

Funding allocation for staffing and operations was considered adequate given the remaining time, and the fact that most of the projects were yet to qualify for disbursement of the second tranche. Nevertheless, considering coordination challenge that faces the project, a No-Cost Extension may be required to complete planned activities.

Project partners and beneficiaries viewed the targeting as adequate given the project scope and duration. Project locations had been selected in line with the initial analyses in the project proposals. However, government counterparts felt that all the three projects should have been granted more time and financial resources to cover more areas and beneficiaries given the needs in the country. The government has assigned dedicated project Focal Points to provide technical and coordination support as part of its contributions. So far, however, it has not been able to contribute financially in any of the three projects to address potential gaps, due to economic constraints facing the country.

Theory of Change and Project Outcomes

The Assessment reviewed the Theory of Change (ToC) of each project in Annex 2. It established that they are linked to the national development plan commonly known as Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD), UNDAF and the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The outcomes relate to the ToC and are well linked to the outputs and activities.

Advancing Reconciliation through Legislative Reforms and Civil Engagement project is contributing to **UNDAF (2012-2019) Outcome 1.1 Rule of Law; Outcome 1.2** Peace and Reconciliation and **Outcome 4.1** Strengthening key governance Institutions. It also contributes to **Outcome3** Sustaining the Peace of the new UN Cooperative Development Framework and **Outcome 4 on Governance and Accountability** respectively. All these **outcomes** feed into **PAPD Pillar 3 and 4** separately.

The two outcomes are clear, concise and in response to their respective outputs, except for activities 2.2.7 and 2.2.8 that seem ambitious for the amount budgeted to implement them. A revision of these activities is required to achieve realistic results.

The *Sustaining Peace and Improving Social Cohesion through the Promotion of Rural Employment Opportunities for Youth in Conflict Prone Areas* Project contributes to **outcomes 1.2, 2.1 and 2.2** of UNDAF (2012-2019) and outcomes 2 and 3 of the new UN development Cooperative Framework, feeding **into Pillar 2 and 3** of PAPD. While the outcomes, outputs and corresponding activities are well aligned, the achievement of output 2.3 may not be realized if RUNOs and government partners do not upscale implementation. For instance, the Assessment found that less than 40 percent of the planned 60 hectares of land in Bong and Lofa Counties have been cultivated.

The *SEED* project ToC also remains relevant. It is linked to UNDAF **outcome 1.2** Peace and Reconciliation, **Outcome 2.2** Private Sector Development and **Outcome 3.1** Health and Nutrition. Coordination between UNFPA and UNDP at the time of the assessment was very weak. Improved coordination is required for timely achievement of results.

The indicated outcomes of the three projects are linked to SDGs 5,10,11,16 and 17.

Gender and Youth

Participants viewed the LMPTF projects as gender and youth sensitive, as most of the activities address gender and youth. The assessment established the significant gains PBF support has made and continues to make in promoting and addressing gender mainstreaming in Liberia, including the passage of the Domestic Violence Act. Prior to the passage and subsequent enactment of the Domestic Violence Act on 14 August 2019, the project supported a two-day advocacy and awareness dialogue session with the National Legislature from 19-20 January 2019; with UN Women emphasizing the need to have the bill passed.

Gender is mainstreamed in activities implemented by the projects in various ways. For example, two studies conducted by the projects (*Advancing Reconciliation*¹⁰ and *Sustaining Peace*¹¹) paid deliberate attention to women's views and needs. They will inform project baselines and interventions to ensure gender inclusiveness. RUNO/joint M&E teams comprise both genders for objective and comprehensive assessment. Of the three projects, the *SEED* Project indicators are gender disaggregated while the *Sustaining Peace* and *Advancing Reconciliation* project indicators are only partially disaggregated.

4.3 Governance and Coordination Arrangement

The governance structure of the LMPTF includes a Steering Committee, Thematic Working Groups and a Secretariat.

LMPTF Steering Committee: The Fund's key governing body is the Steering Committee (SC), which approved the three projects under review. The LMPTF Steering Committee provides strategic oversight and general supervision of the Fund. It is co-chaired by the Minister of Finance and Development Planning and the UN Resident Coordinator and made up of two representatives from

¹⁰ Mapping and Assessing the Gender-Responsiveness of Peace Infrastructures in Liberia by UN Women.

¹¹ Profile and Analysis of Youth, Gender and Land Related Drivers of Conflicts in Bong and Lofa Counties.

the Government, two representatives of UN Agencies, and two rotating representatives of the donors. In addition, one civil society representative, one World Bank representative, one EU representative, and one African Development Bank representative are invited as observers. The LMPTF's governance structure ensures national ownership. The Steering Committee takes its decisions by consensus and meets bi-annually at the minimum.

Thematic Working Groups: The Thematic Working Groups (TWGs) reviewed and prequalified the three projects and recommended their approval by the Steering Committee. The TWGs provide technical analysis and strategic advice to the Steering Committee, serve as coordination platforms and support project implementation. Comments from the TWGs were considered by the project teams during design and helped to ensure participation by all partners.

LMPTF Secretariat: The Secretariat oversaw the daily functioning of the Fund and provided technical and management support to the Steering Committee. As a Joint Secretariat, it coordinated the implementation of the three projects and other under the LMPTF and PBF. The Secretariat coordinated the convening of the SC on strategic priorities; and programmatic and financial management at the fund level. It provided oversight and quality assurance for projects under the portfolio; and actively interfaced with the MPTFO for approvals, reporting and other programmatic issues. The Secretariat liaised with RUNOs to ensure regular and effective monitoring and evaluation of projects. It also coordinated the realization of TWG and monthly technical Fund review meetings.

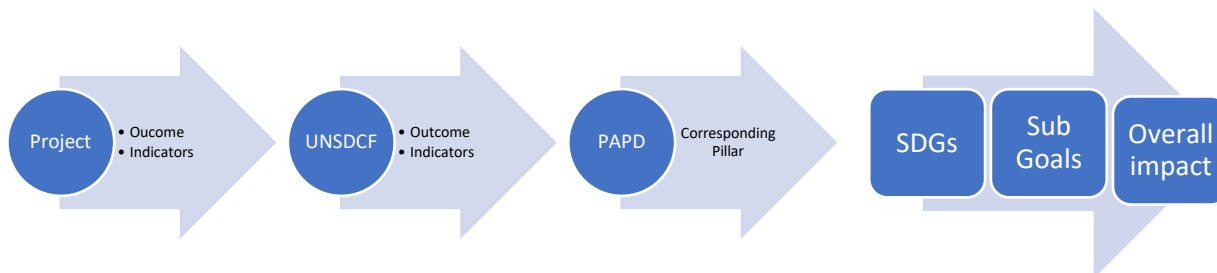
The UN Agencies and project partners confirmed good and collaborative relationship with the LMPTF/PBF Secretariat. The Secretariat has devised several means of following up on project progress through monthly Technical Coordination meetings, bilateral meetings with individual agencies and partners and frequent follow ups through emails and phone calls. This has enabled many of the projects to improve their overall delivery. RUNOs requested additional time when responding to calls for proposals. An earlier announcement around June/July will allow agencies to have more time to consult with a wider group of stakeholders and prepare higher quality proposals. They also asked for increased sharing of project documents developed by the RUNOs for better project/agency visibility and knowledge management; more joint M&E visits to project sites; and coordinated planning of meetings schedules (i.e. SC, TWG, TCC with Government, etc.) for RUNOs' planning purposes.

Internal coordination between RUNOs, between RUNOs and their partners, and among partners was noted as inadequate. RUNO coordination meetings were not as frequent as required. Agencies were often concerned implementing individual activities rather than joint project approach. Additionally, coordination between RUNOs and their partners, including the government was also not optimal as stated by various partners. Partly because of the weak coordination between RUNOs, contact between partners was also weak resulting in implementational delays. It is, therefore, critical, that RUNOs work to improve coordination for timely and better delivery.

4.4 Monitoring & Evaluation

To enhance monitoring and ensure effective quality assurance and support the M&E functions of the projects, the LMPTF Secretariat has developed a Fund Level Results Framework which will compare data at project level to M&E data collated at Fund level. This will ensure alignment to the UNSDCF. Frequency of data analysis and reporting at the Fund level will largely depend on the frequency of

the UNSDCF data generation and reporting mechanism, for the purpose of validation. The Fund Level Results Framework is based on a results chain that aligns project outcomes and associated indicators with that of the UNSDCF that feeds into the Government's Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development Framework as well as the Sustainable Development Goals and Sub-goals. Data will be collated and compare in a sequential approach to measure and determine results.



The three results frameworks were assessed to determine their viability in terms of being Specific, Measurable, Accurate, Realistic and Timebound (SMART).

During the review, it was observed that some of the projects' outputs were not consistent and indicators are sometimes repetitive, not clearly defined, and need to be merged; while others will need to be adjusted given the remaining implementation time. For example, the *Sustaining Peace* project has six outputs and 29 core activities to be achieved before the end of the project in February 2021, which is unlikely to happen considering its delivery rate at the time of the assessment. The general concept of the outputs is clearly aligned to the outcomes; but there is a variance in the number of hectares to be cultivated in output 2.3 of the main prodoc and that of the Results Framework. Output 2.3 in the main prodoc has sixty (60) hectares for integrated lowland farming while the results framework has thirty (30) hectares, which is reduced by half. The lead agency, FAO will need to review and adjust the number to enable realistic targeting and monitoring to ensure value for money. The review also revealed that output 2.1 is repeated in the RF, while some indicators including 2.1b, c, and 2.4d will need to be reviewed and refined. The project had not updated its baselines during the assessment. The project informed the assessment team that a final report of the baseline will be available in early April 2020.

During the initial briefing with the agencies, WFP committed to robust monitoring to make use of its field office in Nimba to support the *Sustaining Peace* project in Bong County. At the time of the Assessment, agencies had/were concluding studies to set baseline values for accurate measurement of progress. These will inform the requisite review of the Results Frameworks to facilitate regular monitoring and final evaluations.

For *SEED Project*, while the project outcomes and outputs seem to be in agreement with the ToC all of the indicator targets including outcome indicator 1.2 and output indicators 1.1.3 will need to be adjusted considering outstanding activities against low delivery; coupled with the end of project in June 2020. The process of rehabilitation and reintegration requires reasonable time to achieve its intended objectives. The two key concepts need to also be clearly defined through the means of verification. Indicator target for output 2.1.2 will need to be dated. Outcome 1.1 indicator will need to be reviewed for modification if the government will not be providing drugs after the project shall have ended. The assessment established that there was indication during the design of the project that government, through the Mental Health Unit of the Ministry of Health, would have provided

mental health drugs at its drop in centers while the project would cover for the gap as indicated in output 1.1.3 Adjustments in the targets also apply to many of the targets under outcome 2.1..

Generally, the *SEED* Results Framework and indicators remained responsive to the objectives except for a few aspects like data collection methods that remained unclear to some of the implementing partners that the RUNOs are required to review with Government partners. The assessment also noted a lack of clear understanding of key project results by different partners. The project team committed to convene a partners' strategic meeting to review roles and responsibilities, and the results framework for improved coordination. The meeting is scheduled to occur before mid-February 2020. The Secretariat will follow-up to ensure implementation of the partners' recommendations.

Regarding the *Advancing Reconciliation and Legislative Reforms through Civic Engagement project*, several indicators under Output 2.2 relating to participants of events are unclear in terms of disaggregation of participants. While the outcomes and outputs of the three projects remain relevant, the indicators will need to be reviewed in line with the limited time left to achieve results. Some of the indicators of the project were useful based on achievements outlined by the project which were validated with the partners. However, the field assessment and beneficiaries presented a different picture as key activities had not taken off due to delays in delivery of tools as well as training required by the communities. Progress for some of the activities was not as reported as they were behind. This is possibly caused by the fact that monitoring is conducted by partners, and RUNOs do not go to the field often to verify.

To improve monitoring of project progress, the Secretariat has started setting up community-based monitoring groups mainly comprised of community members. These include representatives of project beneficiaries and local leaders (youth and women groups, and traditional leaders). So far, community monitoring groups have been established in Totota, Salala, Tumutu and Naama communities in central Liberia. The Secretariat plans to establish additional community-based monitoring groups in the northern and southeastern parts of Liberia where other PBF projects are being implemented. It is expected that these community monitoring groups will provide periodic updates on project progress based on output indicators for effective implementation.

4.5 Key Recommendations

LMPTF/PBF Secretariat

- The Secretariat should enhance its monitoring of RUNOs through regular joint assessments with partners; spot-checks; and community-based monitoring to ensure effective implementation of projects.
- Enhanced coordination with agencies and partners to maintain a clear understanding and realization of project logic and strategy. This will help strengthen coordination among agencies and partners and avoid a situation similar to what exists in SEED where partners do not have the same understanding of the project strategy and expected results.

RUNOs

- Project implementation:

- RUNOs should prepare and strictly implement project acceleration plans, within one month, to recover lost time occurred by delays; and ensure that all planned activities will be implemented on time and within the agreed project duration.
- Results frameworks and M&E:
 - RUNOs should increase monitoring of project activities and beneficiaries, particularly in the field/ outside Monrovia to proactively identify and address any challenges that may cause delays in implementation. For instance, with the exception of FAO, the other two implementing UN agencies (ILO and WFP) do not have visible field presence in the *Sustaining Peace* project. This has caused delays in timely roll-out of field activities.
 - FAO will need to review the *Sustaining Peace* prodoc and correct Output 2.3 which has sixty (60) hectares for integrated lowland farming while the Results framework has thirty (30) hectares, which is reduced by half. Also output 2.1 is repeated in the RF, while some indicators including 2.1b, c, and 2.4d will need to be reviewed and refined as well.
 - RUNOs should ensure that all relevant indicators are disaggregated by gender. This will require projects, in particular the *Sustaining Peace* and *Advancing Reconciliation* projects, to review their Result Frameworks to complete and/or update data on gender disaggregation.
- Coordination:
 - It is recommended that the lead agencies organize a monthly inter-agency coordination meeting to discuss progress, challenges and way forward ahead of the TCC meetings organized by the Secretariat. The assessment showed that challenges facing the SEED project have mainly been caused by limited coordination between UNDP and UNFPA; and these RUNOs and their partners, including the Government.
 - SEED project team should convene a partners' strategic meeting to review roles and responsibilities, and the results framework for improved coordination.
 - Agencies should Conduct regular project coordination meetings where their respective partners/CSOs can share lessons learned for the purpose of learning and better acquaintance. This is necessary to avoid the experience of IRED and NAYMOTE, two CSOs implementing for the Advancing Reconciliation project with limited knowledge of what the other was doing.
 - It is recommended that prodocs be shared with project teams across the agencies for the purpose of sharing experience as well as to promote better project/agency visibility and knowledge management.
- Risk management:
 - Given the sensitivity of the LMPTF projects, the project teams should regularly update their respective risk management matrix to identify and follow-up on potential risk to the projects. For example, if the risk matrix of the SEED project had been updated on a regular basis, the issue of limited coordination and attempts by government to take charge of project funds in the absence of credible evidence of financial discipline would have been addressed prior to the assessment.
 - It is recommended that RUNOs be given additional time when responding to calls for proposals. An earlier announcement around June/July will allow agencies to

have more time to consult with a wider group of stakeholders and prepare higher quality proposals.

- Management: Management should work to ensure that project activities are not excessively disrupted by staff turnover; staff overload and/or inadequate capacities. While staff movement cannot be completely avoided for many reasons including change management, it is imperative that new project focal points are given ample induction and take time to understand critical project aspects for effective and timely implementation. This scenario affected the SEED Project, when the programme manager left it took time for his temporary replacement to understand the project.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Projects' Financial Delivery as at 31 Dec. 2019

Project	Total PBF Approved Amount	70% Disbursement to Agencies	Project Delivery Rate
	\$1.6 million	\$1,120,000.16	72%
Advancing Reconciliation through Legislative reforms and civic engagement	UN Women	\$295,938.51	101%
	UNDP (Lead)	\$444,953.79	61%
	OHCHR	379,107.85	54%
Project	Total PBF Approved Amount	70% Disbursement to Agencies	Project Delivery Rate
	\$1.5 million	\$1,050,000.00	48%
Sustaining peace and improving social cohesion through the promotion of rural employment opportunities for youth in conflict-prone areas.	WFP	\$233,981.01	65%
	ILO	\$283,989.87	41%
	FAO (Lead)	\$532,029.12	38%
Project	Total PBF Approved Amount	70% Disbursement to Agencies	Project Delivery Rate
	\$1.4 million	\$980,000.66	41%
Socio-Economic Empowerment of Disadvantaged (SEED) Youth in Liberia	UNFPA	\$ 350,000.27	46%
	UNDP (Lead)	\$ 630,000.39	36%

ANNEX 2: Projects' Theory of Change

The evaluability assessed and reviewed the Theory of Change (ToC) of each project as well as their outcomes and established that they are linked to the national development plan commonly known as Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD), UNDAF and the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

a) Advancing Reconciliation through Legislative Reforms and Civil Engagement

Project & ToC	Alignment of TOC to Outcomes, Outputs and Activities	Achievements against the TOC by January 2020	Project specific Challenges/Issues
<p>ToC: IF capacity of leadership/membership of Law Reform Commission, Legislative Drafting Bureau and relevant legislative Committees is strengthened to address triggers of conflict through HR based legislations IF interaction between the Liberian legislature and external oversight bodies, civil society organizations (CSOs) and the citizenry is enhanced to influence legislative reforms to address conflict drivers and emerging gender and human rights concerns IF Capacity of INCHR, TJWG, CSO, at National and sub-National level are strengthened for the implementation of TRC recommendations IF TRC recommendations related to Memorialization, truth-telling and atonement are further implemented THEN Transitional justice processes and institutional mechanisms will increasingly facilitate the realization of right to truth telling, reparations to achieve national reconciliation and peace BECAUSE an enabling legislative environment, and institutional oversight and accountability mechanisms for implementation of TRC recommendations will have been strengthened.</p>	<p>UNDAF (2012 -2019): Aligned to Outcome 1.1 Rule of Law; Outcome 1.2 Peace and Reconciliation and Outcome 4.1 Strengthening key governance Institutions.</p> <p>UNSDCF (2020-2025): Aligned to Outcome3 Sustaining the Peace of the new UN Cooperative Development Framework and Outcome4 on Governance and Accountability respectively</p> <p>PAPD (2018 -2021): PAPD Pillar 3 and 4</p> <p>Ultimate project goal not clearly articulated: several goals are mentioned in the prodoc: legislative reform, the promotion of human rights and gender, improved transitional justice processes, reconciliation.</p> <p>Outcomes: As a result, the link between the two project outcomes is not clear: outcome 1 focuses on legislative capacity to promote better respect of human rights; outcome 2 focuses on "transitional justice processes". The link between a general respect for human rights to peacebuilding under output 1 is not clearly articulated. The contribution of outcome 2 to peacebuilding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant legislative committees and CSOs received capacity building to influence the development and passage of GEWE bills • Legislature enacted the Domestic Violence law on 14 August 2019 • National Economic and Reconciliation dialogue to address emerging economic and peace & reconciliation challenges convened, leading to incremental changes to Liberia's economic and peacebuilding context. For instance, President George Weah requested the National Legislature to advice on the establishment of War and Economic Crimes Court, as one of the recommendations of the dialogue. The Liberia National Bar Association submitted draft Bill to the House for its approval to establish the court. • Countywide reconciliation dialogues held in preparation of a national reconciliation policy of Liberia. • One inclusive National Colloquium organized to discuss the recommendations of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely construction and completion of 14 memorials • Bureaucratic bottlenecks of disbursement and approval of funds by OHCHR HQ, which sometimes affect project implementation. While the funds are provided by PBF, project level disbursements are approved by OHCHR Geneva Office. The OHCHR Liberia Office cannot sign or approve anything, except authorized by their HQ.

	<p>is more obvious, as "truth telling" and "reparations" are explicitly mentioned as mechanisms to focus on to achieve "reconciliation and peace".</p> <p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Output 1.1 speaks of addressing "triggers of conflict" through legislation and enhanced capacity of legislative leaders while the activities mainly relate to proper legal review procedures in line with human rights and women's rights standards. The link between improved legislative capacity/procedures and addressing conflict triggers is not clear (also which conflict triggers? Maybe they meant to say "drivers of conflict"?). ○ Outputs 2.1 and 2.2 are clearer since they clarify that the project is focused on strengthening the capacity and links between various institutions to discuss and implement the TRC recommendations; it is assumed that the implementation of the TRC recommendations address existing grievances among certain groups and contribute to reconciliation. 	<p>the TRC report. A communique was produced at the end of the colloquium calling for a bill to establish a War and Economic Crimes Court. This contributed to the National Economic Dialogue's call for the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report.</p>	
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b) Sustaining Peace and Improving Social Cohesion through Employment Opportunities for Youth in Conflict Prone Areas.

Project & ToC	Alignment of TOC to Outcomes, Outputs and Activities	Achievements against the TOC by January 2020	Project specific Challenges/Issues
<p>ToC; IF young women and men have more conflict resolution skills and better access to local (land) conflict resolution mechanisms and to sustainable rural employment and livelihood opportunities; THEN youth will be able to act as active agents and messengers of peace and be less likely to be affected by drivers of violence; BECAUSE the intervention addresses existing constraints for youth to participate in local conflict resolution, notably access and increases economic opportunities, and lessen grievances over young people's exclusion in the economic sphere.</p>	<p>UNDAF (2012 -2019): Aligned to Outcomes 1.2, 2.1 and 2.2 UNSDCF (2020-2025): Aligned to Outcomes 2 and Outcome 3 PAPD (2018 -2021): PAPD Pillar 2 and 3</p> <p>The two outcomes and six outputs of the project are clearly linked to the TOC. The achievement of the 29 core activities in the prodoc may not be realized before the end of the project February 2021. Particularly outcome 2 which has 4 outputs and 23 core activities on sustainable livelihoods. This will require the creation and expansion of agri-businesses following the cultivation of lowland farming and poultry production.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project conducted a scoping exercise, mapping youth, gender and land related conflict drivers as well as peace infrastructures, which helped the project to plan and respond to drivers of conflict based on empirical data collated in Bong and Lofa counties. Conducted community-based participatory planning (CBPP) practical session was undertaken in Salayea, Lofa County, central and northern Liberia respectively. The exercise supported by WFP assisted community members to develop their respective peacebuilding and development plans for potential support. Livelihood activities have been initiated by FAO working closely with the communities in Northern and Central Liberia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Lead Agency FAO is needs to step up its leadership to have project activities timely rollout. The livelihood component of the project is yet to cultivate 40% of the 60 hectares targeted for lowland farming in two counties. This may not be realized this year due to the rainy season that is fast approaching.

c) Socio-Economic Empowerment of Disadvantaged Youth in Liberia (SEED)

Project and ToC	Alignment of TOC to Outcomes, Outputs and Activities	Progress	Project specific Challenges/Issues
<p>ToC: IF Zogos/Zogesse are rehabilitated and provided access to psychosocial support and services; IF Zogos/Zogesse are capacitated as agents of peace and effectively participate in local conflict prevention mechanisms; IF the Zogos/Zogesse are provided with access to sustainable job opportunities in Montserrado</p>	<p>UNDAF outcome 1.2 Peace and Reconciliation, Outcome 2.2 Private Sector Development and Outcome 3.1 Health and Nutrition SDGs: 5,10,11,16 and 17</p> <p>The project outcomes and outputs are responsive to the ToC, with some adjustments required to be made to the indicator targets as mentioned in the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project has rolled out psycho-social and training activities. The frequency of implementation is often affected by limited coordination at both agency and partner levels. 1,400 disadvantaged youth were registered during the intake process at the drop-in-centers. Out of the number registered for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination at partner and agency levels was the main issue faced by this project.

<p>County through vocational and business management training, with basic start-up capital; and IF community leaders and members are adequately engaged and sensitized on the need and how to support Zogos/Zogesse to rehabilitate and reintegrate into their families and communities; THEN their economic and social status will improve, and peace and social cohesion in their communities and counties will be enhanced; BECAUSE they will be no longer perceived as actors of violence (due to behavioral change) and accepted as valued members of their families, and thus facilitate their reintegrated into their communities, through the combination of the community sensitization programmes, rehabilitation and economic empowerment of the zogos/zogesse.</p>	<p>section under the results framework.</p>	<p>assessment, 223 have passed psychosocial screening and enrolled in the skills and vocational training phase of the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project also supported the establishment of three drop-in centers; and training of 15 social workers and 15 mental health clinicians in psychosocial counselling and support services. • Beneficiaries are in high spirit as they accessed training, but this momentum was often diluted by the absence of mental health drugs, which were finally procured by UNFPA during the assessment. The availability of mental health drugs was a precursor to stabilizing beneficiaries who are enslaved to drugs. 	
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