



EVALUATION OF THE GRB/WPS JOINT PROJECT

“Advancing implementation of UNSCRs on Women Peace and Security (WPS) through strengthening accountability frameworks, innovative financing and Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)”

December 2019 – June 2021 (18 months)
LIBERIA

EVALUATION REPORT

Version of 19 May 2022

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgment

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Executive Summary

I - Background and Context	11
1.1 Background on Liberia	11
1.1.1 Framework on Women Peace and Security/UNSCR 1325 in Liberia	11
1.1.2 Human Rights and Gender Equality in Liberia	12
1.1.3 Violence Against Women and Girls in Liberia	12
1.1.4 Challenges faced by Civil Society in Liberia in peacebuilding	12
1.1.5 COVID-19 and its socioeconomic effects on women	13
1.2 UN in Liberia	13
1.2.1 UN Women in Liberia	14
1.2.2 OHCHR in Liberia	14
1.2.3 PBF in Liberia	14
II. OVERVIEW OF THE GRB/WPS JOINT PROJECT	15
2.1 GRB/WPS Joint Project Overview, Objectives and Scope	15
▪ Geographical coverage	
▪ Human and Financial Resources	
▪ GRB/WPS Joint Project Matrix and Analysis	
2.2 Theory of Change	17
III Evaluability Assessment	19
3.1 Evaluability Assessment	19
IV. Evaluation framework and methodology	19
4.1 Evaluation Objectives and Scope	19
4.2 UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation	20
4.3 Evaluation methods and approach	20
4.4 Data analysis, collection methods and scoring	21
4.5 Ethical approach	21
4.6 Data management plan	22
4.7 Evaluation Limitations	22
4.8 Evaluation Team and Management	23
V. Evaluation Findings	24
A. Relevance	24
B. Efficiency	29
C. Effectiveness	35
D. Sustainability	44
E. Gender Equality and Human Rights	46
VI. Conclusions and Recommendations	50
VII - Lessons learned and best practices	55
VIII. Annexes	
Annex 1: Evaluability Assessment	

Annex 2: Scoring and rating used for this evaluation
Annex 3: Documents reviewed
Annex 4: Planned Time Frame and Work Plan
Annex 5: List of institutions staff interviewed, and sites visited
Annex 6: Evaluation Matrix
Annex 7: Project's Risk Analysis and Mitigation
Annex 8. Stakeholder Analysis Matrix
Annex 9. Evaluation tools (questionnaires, interview guides, etc.)
Annex 10: ERG Members
Annex 11: Evaluation Team and Management
Annex 12: Evaluation Workplan
Annex 13: Results framework Assessment of WPS Joint Project of UN Women & OHCHR
Annex 14: Terms of Reference

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADFI	Association of Disabled females International
AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ECOWAS	The Economic Community of West African States
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
FLY	Federation of Liberia Youth
GRPB	Gender-responsive Planning and Budget Policy
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GOL	Government of Liberia
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INHCR	Independent National Commission for Human Rights
IOM	International Organization for Migration/United Nations Agency for Migration
IREDD	Institute for Research and Democratic Development
KII	Key Informant Interview(s)
LNP	Liberian National Police
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affaires
MFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
MGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NAP1325	National Action Plan on UNSCR1325
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	UH Human Rights Office
PADP	Agenda for Prosperity and Development
PBF	United Nations Peacebuilding Fund
SGBV	Sexual Gender Based Violence
SSI	Security Sector Institutions
ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNEG United	Nations Evaluation Group
UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordination Office
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WPS	Women Peace and Security
UNSCR1325	United Nations Resolution on Women, Peace and Security
WONGOSOL	Women's Non-Governmental Secretariat of Liberia
WANEP	Women in Peacebuilding Network
YAL	National Women Peace Hut network, Youth Alive Liberia
1325	Network Women, Youth, Peace and Security Working Group in West Africa and the Sahel and Liberia

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

• GRB/WPS Joint Project Background

In 2023, Liberia will achieve a milestone of maintaining peace for two decades since its civil war ended in 2003. There have been efforts to advance gender equality in Liberia. Electing a woman to the position of president, the highest seat of the country in 2005 and 2011 marked the beginning of transformation in the legal framework of the country. The government adopted also several international treaties and developed national policies like the National Gender Policy (NGP) of 2009. The GOL developed the same year a national framework for implementing the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR1325) through the development of a Women Peace and Security National Action Plan (WPS NAP). The development of the NAP made Liberia the first post-conflict country with a national framework to implement the UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security¹.

The WPS NAP provided a platform for women to contribute to peacebuilding efforts, having played a cardinal role in ending Liberia's civil war, from 1991 to 2003².

Despite these efforts, there are still challenges in promoting gender equality and the advancement of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in the country. Traditional and religious beliefs as well as the customary law consider women as subordinate and men as superior. These beliefs have led to sustained gender inequality and marginalization of women in Liberia. These perceptions and practices contradict the 1986 constitution of Liberia which promotes the realization of social justice and increase in citizens' access to political and economic participation. Specifically, Article 11 lays out the principle of no discrimination in these processes. But there remain unequal gender and power relations, lack of access to basic services and properties, economic disempowerment, low participation in decision making and lack of access to legal and judicial services among others.³ Over 80 percent of Liberia women suffered violence during the civil war.⁴ An assessment conducted in 2018 asserts Liberia records the highest rate of sexual violence against women in the world.⁵ Since the civil war ended, 2019 marked the highest rates of rape cases reported in Liberia. A total of 2,708 cases of violence were reported; of which the total cases of violence against women reported, 2,141 (79%) were rape cases. Coronavirus increased the vulnerability of women, resulting in rising rates of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and violence against women.

• Description of the GRB/WPS Joint Project

UN Women and OHCHR with funding from the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) implemented the joint project “*Advancing implementation of UNSCRs on Women Peace and Security (WPS) through strengthening accountability frameworks, innovative financing and Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)*”.

¹ Caesar R. G., Garlo C. K., Nagarajan C. And Schoofs S. (2010). Ip Gender Cluster Country Case Study: Liberia Implementing Resolution 1325 In Liberia: Reflections Of Women's Associations.

² Bekoe D. And Parajon C (2007). Women's Role in Liberia's Reconstruction. Peace Brief

³ 2018 Gender Assessment Report prepared by the Liberia Strategic Analysis reviewed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

⁴ UNFPA (2007). Majority of Liberian women suffered sexual violence during war, says new study.

⁵ Gender Assessment Report (2018). This Publication Was Produced for Review By The United States Agency For International Development (USAID).

The aim of the joint project was to enhance allocation of financial resources for the implementation of the Second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP WPS) through innovative financing and Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB). Innovative approaches for enhancement of resource allocation for the implementation of the second NAP WPS are intended to accelerate the implementation of International Commitments on WPS and to address the specific conflict drivers in a gender responsive manner.

This project started in January 2020 and was planned to end in November 2021. A no-cost extension of 6 months was requested by the UN agencies and granted by the donor (PBF) to ensure full implementation of the project. The budget for the entire project implementation is USD 1,500,000. It was implemented at national level and in two counties namely: Nimba and Grand Bassa in partnership with government. The GRB/WPS Joint Project was designed around two (2) outcomes:

Outcome 1: Targeted Line Ministries Government Agencies and local governments are implementing the NAP WPS in a more effective manner by generating financial resources through innovative financing and GRB and by creating monitoring and accountability mechanisms and capacities.

Outcome 2: More women, including marginalized women, in targeted counties hold the government accountable for the NAP WPS and support the implementation of the peacebuilding related activities of the NAP WPS

• **Evaluation Purpose and Objectives**

This evaluation assessed the achievements of the project advancing implementation of UNSCRs on Women Peace and Security (WPS) through strengthening accountability frameworks, innovative financing and Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)” in an inclusive way and to determine its overall added value to peacebuilding in Liberia. It answered questions related to the evaluation criteria of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), including relevance, development efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, in addition to assessing the program on Gender, Equity and Human Rights principles. The time scope of the evaluation covered all GRB/WPS Joint Project activities implemented since January 2020 to November 2021 (and extended until April 2022) at the national and sub-national levels.

• **Evaluation methodology**

In line with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and UN Women & GERAAS standards, a gender-responsive and human rights-based approach was applied throughout the evaluation process. The evaluation applied an inclusive and participatory approach which ensured an active participation and involvement of stakeholders at all levels of the Joint Project on GRB/WPS. In addition, the disability framework provided by the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy⁶ was applied to assess the extent to which this GRB/WPS Joint Project was inclusive and the extent to which women and men living with disabilities were integrated by the project at all stages. The evaluation also analyzed Value-for Money assessment (VFM). This Value-for Money assessment examined the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of this WPS Joint Project.

⁶<https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/>

The evaluators used mixed research methods in data gathering and analysis (sequential implementation implying collecting both quantitative and qualitative data in phases), so that the formulated evaluation questions can be effectively answered. A total of 79 respondents (34 Peace Hut, 14 Non-peace Hut, 10 GOL Staff at National level, 9 GOL staff at Sub-national level, 6 Civil Society and 6 UN Agencies) were consulted through mixed methodologies (Desk review and analysis of strategic frameworks, policies and project documents, Field visit to Montserrado, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Observations, Focus group discussions, In-depth interviews (semi structured and face-to-face) with key informants, Interviews via Whatsapp and Phone.)

- **Evaluation Findings (OVERALL SCORE of the GRB/WPS Joint Project: B)**

The GRB/WPS Joint Project was highly relevant and was fully in line with the national priorities in the area of WPS / UNSCR1325, CEDAW and other African and National policies and protocols on Women, peace and Security as well as UNSDCF (2020 and 2024). It also managed to involve a National Union of Disable Organizations in its design to capture the general needs and priorities of women and girls with disabilities in Peace and Security related issues but failed to systematically involve them in the project implementation in the targeted counties and communities. The evaluation also found that this GRB/WPS Joint Project was also very innovative in the context of Liberia and its main focus on strengthening capacity of GOL structures, CSOs and peace-hut on GRB, Innovative Financing, WPS and NAP1325 was very effective. There is a general good value-for money for this GRB/WPS innovative project that was implemented in a very challenging context affected by COVID-19 constraints (2019-2021). However, the weak M&E coupled by some challenges in delivering as ONE in the communities and the reported delays (up to 4 months) in the disbursements of funds to the implementing partner in the communities including to the involved peace huts challenged the project. The achieved results must be further consolidated through various mechanisms presented in the recommendations below:

- **Recommendations**

Conclusions	Recommendations	Responsible (s)	Priority
<p>Conclusion 1 <i>Based on findings 1, 10, 12</i></p>	<p>1.1 UN Women, OHCHR and Donor (PBF) should conduct a vulnerable and marginalized group assessment in the counties and communities targeted by WPS interventions. The findings should inform the design of an appropriate marginalized group and vulnerable strategy & plan that will inform further programming on how WPS projects will involve PWDs and marginalized women & men at various levels. Support the plan with appropriate indicators to track the progress. Refer here for further orientation to available UN guidelines and examples under the links below:</p> <p><i>VMGF guideline led by UN Women for inspiration:</i> https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ESEAAsia/Docs/Publications/2020/03/ap-COVID-19_Community-Engagement_130320.pdf</p> <p><i>UN Guide one LNOB principles:</i> https://unsdg.un.org/resources/leaving-no-one-behind-unsdg-operational-guide-un-country-teams</p>	<p>UN Women OHCHR Ministry of Gender</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>Conclusion 2 <i>Based on findings 4, 5 and 6</i></p>	<p>2.1 PBF should ensure that each funded project has a clear communication strategy and plan in place in line with the recommendations of UN guide to communicating as One (2014). In the guide, The United Nations underlines the importance of Joint communications strategy that includes shared messaging in support of the One Programme and the development of standard joint communication products, as well as shared crisis communications; and Common, established visual identity for joint United Nations products and communication.</p> <p>2.2 Assess the knowledge and skills of UN Women & OHCHR project in RBM and take action to strengthen their capacities through various actions, such as coaching, mentorship or additional training, etc. In addition, UN Women and OHCHR should ensure RBM is effectively applied in programming, budgeting, monitoring and reporting. All joint interventions must meet RBM requirements. This measure / action will be very helpful in regard to the observed turnover of M&E staff in the two implementing UN agencies.</p>	<p>Donor (PBF)</p> <p>UN Women / Regional Office OHCHR</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>Conclusion 3 <i>Based on findings 6, 7 and 8</i></p>	<p>3.1 Provide further support for the implementation of the IFS strategy and plan that was validated in 2021 by the GOL. Further support the capacity of GOL representatives and CSO in other counties and communities on GRB/Innovative Financing, WPS/HRBA. Detailed recommendations on Innovative financing and GRB are listed below or/ and in the annexes of this report.*</p>	<p>UN Women OHCHR Ministry of Finance Ministry of Gender</p>	<p>Mid-term</p>

Conclusions	Recommendations	Responsible (s)	Priority
	3.2 Ensure that all WPS materials produced are accessible to all inclusive PWDs in the 15 counties and communities. Further disseminate the NAP 1325 in the counties and districts to ensure understanding and accountability at district and community levels.	UN Women	Immediate
Conclusion 4 <i>based on finding 9</i>	4.1 For future intervention on WPS in the communities Peace Hut should be involved as partners rather than beneficiaries to implement WPS activities at community level. This will strengthen their capacities and positions in the communities and will contribute to ensuring their economic sustainability. Non-peace hut communities that are already organized around VSLA must be further supported to become peace-hut and a more structured.	UN Women PBF	Mid-term

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background on Liberia

1.1.1 Peace and Security: Framework on Women Peace and Security/UNSCR 1325 in Liberia

In 2023, Liberia will achieve a milestone of maintaining peace for two decades since its civil war ended in 2003. Though many root causes of the conflict still exist, the country has managed to maintain peace for almost twenty years. Over this period, the country has organized and conducted three⁷ successful general and presidential elections, including the 2005, 2011, and 2017 election, which ushered in a democratic transition in almost seventy years⁸.

The peace that Liberia enjoys today is an outcome of many years of investments by the international community, the Government of Liberia (GOL), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Community-based organizations (CBOs), women and men. On the ground, Women of Liberia were highly influential in achieving the peace and recovery in post-conflict Liberia⁹. Women played crucial role in bringing peace to Liberia¹⁰. During the war, women established organizations, including Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET), and Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia (AFELL) which engaged warring parties to negotiate for a peaceful ending of the civil war. During the war, they were seen wearing all-white clothing on the streets of Monrovia (around Fish Market) demanding for an end to violence in Liberia. This pressured Liberian men (the Warlords) to pursue peace agreement in

⁷ These Include The 2005, 2011, And 2017 General And Presidential Elections

⁸ The 2018 Transition From Former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf To President George Manneh Weah Was The First Transition From One Democratically-Elected President To Another In Almost Seventy Years

⁹ D. Masitoh (2020). The Success Of Women's Participation In Resolving Conflicts In Liberia. Journal Of Governance Volume 5, Issue 1, June 2020 (71-90) (P-Issn 2528-276x) (E-Issn 2598-6465). [Http://Dx.Doi.Org/10.31506/Jog.V5i1.7951](http://Dx.Doi.Org/10.31506/Jog.V5i1.7951).

¹⁰ United States Institute Of Peace (2007). Women's Role In Liberia's Reconstruction. Peace Brief.

2003.¹¹ At both national and sub-national levels, women organizations continue to play important roles in sustaining peace, and several of these interventions have changed the lives of many women.¹²

In 2009, the GOL developed a national framework for implementing the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR)1325 through the development of a Women Peace and Security National Action Plan (WPS NAP). The development of the NAP made Liberia the first post-conflict country with a national framework to implement the UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security¹³. The NAP provided a platform for women to contribute to peacebuilding efforts, having played a cardinal role in ending Liberia's civil war, from 1991 to 2003¹⁴. In addition, the GOL adopted a number of legislations and developed strategies and plans to promote peacebuilding and make the security sector more inclusive. It developed a Strategic Roadmap for National Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation (2013-2030), Liberia Peacebuilding Plan (2017), Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PADP) (2018-2023). In 2018, the GOL partnered with UN Women to develop the second WPS NAP (2019-2023). The development of the second NAP WPS coincided with the development of Liberia's first-ever policy on gender-responsive planning and budgeting.

To ensure that the country's national budget responds to the specific needs of women, the GOL developed and adopted the Gender-responsive Planning and Budget Policy (GRPB) (2019-2023)¹⁵.

1.1.2 Human Rights and Gender Equality in Liberia

There have been efforts to advance gender equality in Liberia. Electing a woman to the position of president, the highest seat of the country in 2005 and 2011 marked the beginning of transformation in the legal framework of the country. The government adopted also several international treaties and developed national policies like the National Gender Policy (NGP) of 2009. The NGP recognizes the traditional and religious perceptions of women and men. The traditional and religious beliefs as well as the customary law consider women as subordinate and men as superior. These beliefs have led to sustained gender inequality and marginalization of women in Liberia.¹⁶ While efforts are being applied to address the situation of women and human rights, there is a huge disparity in accessing services that correlates to a lack of representation of women at higher decision-making level even though a woman has been elected as president of the country. The underrepresentation of women in leadership and decision-making at top government level have limited their voice and attention to their pressing issues like limited access to sexual and productive health care and the continued practices of harmful traditions.

1.1.3 Violence Against Women and Girls in Liberia

Over 80 percent of Liberia women suffered violence during the civil war.¹⁷ An assessment conducted in 2018 asserts Liberia records the highest rate of sexual violence against women in the

¹¹ Vrisnilasari, K. A. (2013). Strategi Diplomasi Organisasi Nonpemerintah Dalam Resolusi Perang Sipil: Marwopnet Di Liberia 2000- 2003. Program Studi S1 Hubungan Internasional, Universitas Airlangga, 15-18.

¹² Rashed, H. (2019). The Nobel Prize. November. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2011/gbowee/biographical/>

¹³ Caesar R. G., Garlo C. K., Nagarajan C. And Schoofs S. (2010). Ip Gender Cluster Country Case Study: Liberia Implementing Resolution 1325 In Liberia: Reflections Of Women's Associations.

¹⁴ Bekoe D. And Parajon C (2007). Women's Role In Liberia's Reconstruction. Peace Brief

¹⁵ Beijing+25 National Review Report. 25th Anniversary Of The Fourth Conference On Women And Adoption Of The Beijing Declaration And Platform For Action (1995). Final Report (2019).

¹⁶ The Liberia National Gender Policy (2009). Abridged Version

¹⁷ UNFPA (2007). Majority of Liberian women suffered sexual violence during war, says new study.

world.¹⁸ Since the civil war ended, 2019 marked the highest rates of rape cases reported in Liberia. A total of 2,708 cases of violence were reported; of which the total cases of violence against women reported, 2,141 (79%) were rape cases. Coronavirus increased vulnerability of women, resulting into rising rates of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and violence against women.

The Liberia 2021 Human Rights report referenced a report of INCHR (2021) that found perpetrators of rape enjoyed impunity citing bureaucratic obstacles, poverty and traditions as key factors. It pointed fingers at institutional weaknesses of government to prosecute gender-based violence cases reported.¹⁹ It found parents of rape victims sometimes requesting money from the perpetrators as a form of redress and a high practice of perpetrators offering money to victims' parents to prevent the cases from going to court.

1.1.4 Challenges faced by Civil Society in Liberia in peacebuilding

Civil society in Liberia has been recognized as a strong social and economic force with enormous potential to create free, fair and just society. The civil society continued to play transformative role in the future of Liberia.¹ It has been instrumental in promoting peace, evident by sections of civil society participation in Liberia's peace talks in Accra. Civil society organizations have successfully promoted their agendas, in particular women's organisations and environmental groups.²

They have played significant roles in promoting transparency, accountability and equal representation as well as represented citizens' interest. Their collective actions have helped to ensure women and youth, the poor and other marginalized groups' interests are weighed by public institutions through policy making and allocation of resources.

However, the civil society and government actors have always had serious standoffs while promoting citizen's interests. The lack of trust and confidence between civil society and the government, and a fragmentation civil society due to competition and under-resourcing largely resulting from focus on basic service delivery and humanitarian relief and limited capacity to manage funds and human resources are some of the major challenges facing the civil society in Liberia.³ This is responsible for their underperformance and effectiveness to promoting good governance and lasting social benefits.

1.1.5 COVID-19 and its socioeconomic effects on women

COVID-19 pandemic struck Liberia and increased the economic hardship. This outbreak coupled with the 14 years of civil unrest and the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) weakened the already struggling population of Liberia. While this affected the entire country, women were drastically affected considering their socio-economic status. Most Liberian women have to sell basic commodities to survive. About 90 percent of women in Liberia work in the informal sector. Approximately, 30 percent of owners of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises are women. A large percent of women in rural Liberia is involved in crop production. Women who are producing food crops and vegetables sell mainly on the local markets and survive on daily incomes. The shock in the global economy ravaged by the pandemic and the lockdown measure created barriers for women to carry out their normal activities for livelihoods. The lockdown measures instituted by the

¹⁸ Gender Assessment Report (2018). This Publication Was Produced For Review By The United States Agency For International Development (USAID).

¹⁹ INCHR (2021). August Human Rights Situation Report

government which included restriction of movement resulted in a greater negative impact on women's livelihoods. Attempts to recover from the shock created by COVID pandemic, the Government of Liberia (GOL) developed a national COVID-19 pandemic response plan, with implementation support from development partners. The government also adopted a number of social, economic and fiscal measures to alleviate both the health and socio-economic impacts of the pandemic²⁰. About US\$ 25 million was committed to 60 days' food distributions among vulnerable population and promised free electricity and water during the lockdown. It suspended charges on imported goods for six months. Despite the considerable efforts by government and international partners, social-economic situation in Liberia has worsened.²¹

1.2 UN System in Liberia

The United Nations in Liberia is comprised of 18 agencies. In August 2019, the United Nations in Liberia and the GOL signed the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2020 - 2024) aimed at supporting Liberia's development agenda. This framework guides UN development support to Liberia's PADP. The framework is aligned to the PAPDP, specifically on pillars that focus on "Power to the People; Economy and Jobs; Peace and Security; and Governance and Transparency.

1.2.1 UN Women in Liberia

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Since 2004, UN Women has been providing strategic support in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in Liberia. It works to address the most pressing gender equality concerns for women and girls in Liberia, which is built around five pillars, including Women's Political Participation and Leadership (WPPL); Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE); Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Actions (WPS); Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG); and Gender-Responsive Planning, Policy and Budgeting (GRPB). Through these pillars, UN Women Liberia plays a leading role in facilitating change and has worked with partners to record tremendous gains in gender equality and women empowerment in Liberia. In collaboration with the Government of Liberia, UN system and civil society, UN Women Liberia is engaged in implementing projects that aligned to the government's agenda²².

It supports the integration of gender in national planning and budgeting and provides training for national officials to execute them and strengthen the abilities of women's movements to advocate for and monitor them. UN Women Liberia supported improvement of vital services for women in post-conflict Liberia.

1.2.2 OHCHR in Liberia

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) works to promote and protect human rights that are guaranteed under international law and stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. Its mandate derives from Articles 1, 13 and 55 of the Charter of the United Nations.²³ Since 2018, the organization has worked closely with the government to ensure a full human rights promotion and protection as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human

²⁰ Rapid Assessment of Covid-19 Impact and Roadmap For Recovery In Liberia. October 2020

²¹ Ilo, Ilo Brief, May 2020, See Reference 84.

²² <https://www.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/africa>

²³ General Assembly Resolution 48/141 Of 20 December 1993 (A/Res/48/141). Un Document.

Rights; contribute to national efforts in promoting respect for, and observance of human rights; observe the human rights situation and inform authorities; provide capacity building to support to national institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs), and individual regarding promotion and protection of human rights; among others. OHCHR has implemented projects tailored to human rights and protection. OHCHR and UN Women are partner international organizations implementing this project ‘advancing women peace and security’.

1.2.3 Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) in Liberia

The UN Secretary-General’s Peacebuilding Fund is the organization's financial instrument of first resort to sustain peace in countries or situations at risk or affected by violent conflict²⁴. It works through different partners, including UN entities, governments, regional organizations, multilateral banks, national multi-donor trust funds or civil society organizations. In Liberia, PBF supports sustained and coordinated international community’s support to Liberia and supports Liberia’s development agenda. PBF has provided support to the strengthening of gender taskforces, operation of women peace huts as local dispute resolution platforms, women’s local leadership and the Women Situation Room mechanism, amongst other interventions. PBF also contributed to the development of the second NAP WPS, and the development of the GOL’s first Innovative Financing Strategy for gender equality.

II. OVERVIEW OF THE GRB/WPS JOINT PROJECT

2.1 GRB/WPS Joint Project Overview, Objectives and Scope

In 2019, after the adoption of the second WPS NAP, UN Women and OHCHR launched the “Advancing the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) on Women Peace and Security (WPS) through Strengthening Accountability Frameworks, Innovative Financing and Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)” project. The project focused on the advancement of the human rights-based implementation of peacebuilding activities from the Second NAP WPS by fostering partnership with CSOs and Government Institutions and strengthening coordination among national structures. It also sought to enhance the allocation of financial resources for the implementation of the second WPS NAP through innovative financing and Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB). Particularly, the project focused on strengthening the capacity of women’s organizations and targeted GOL agencies on GRB and innovative financing. It sought to strengthen the accountability, monitoring and reporting mechanism of the NAPWPS, and to facilitate learning exchanges and knowledge sharing between Liberia and other countries within the region.

UN Women and OHCHR with funding from the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) implemented the joint project “*Advancing implementation of UNSCRs on Women Peace and Security (WPS) through strengthening accountability frameworks, innovative financing and Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)*”. The aim of the joint project was to enhance allocation of financial resources for the implementation of the Second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP WPS) through innovative financing and Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB). Innovative approaches for enhancement of resource allocation for the implementation of the second NAP WPS are intended to accelerate the implementation of International Commitments on WPS and to address the specific conflict drivers in a gender responsive manner.

²⁴ Pbf (2021). The Secretary-General’s Peacebuilding Fund Liberia. June 2021.

The GRB/WPS Joint Project addressed some of the causes of conflict and peacebuilding gaps including property and limited economic opportunities for women and high youth unemployment, land tenure and property rights and exclusion of women, rural women, women with disabilities and young women from peacebuilding processes by mobilizing resources through GRB and innovative financing for the implementation of the Second NAP WPS. It also aimed to further strengthen the capacity of women's organizations and vulnerable groups to hold the government accountable.

This project started in January 2020 with the first tranche that was transferred by PBF to UN Women and OHCHR and ended in November 2021. The budget for the entire project implementation is USD 1,500,000.

It was implemented at national level and in two counties namely: Nimba and Grand Bassa with the support from government representatives (Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP), Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Liberian National Police (LNP), Independent National Commission for Human Rights (INCHR), Liberian Revenue Authority (LRA). The programme involved also Civil Society Organizations (CSO) namely Women's Non-Governmental Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL), Women in Peacebuilding Network (WANEP), Institute for Research and Democratic Development (IREDD), Women, Youth, Peace and Security Working Group in West Africa and the Sahel and Liberia (1325 Network), Federation of Liberia Youth (FLY), Association of Disabled females International (ADFI), National Women Peace Hut network, Youth Alive Liberia (YAL), Human Rights Advocacy Platform and the National Rural Women Structure. A detailed stakeholder mapping analysis is placed in the annexes of this evaluation report.

The GRB/WPS Joint Project was designed around two (2) outcomes and five outputs as follows:

Outcome 1: Targeted Line Ministries²⁵ Government Agencies and local governments are implementing the NAP WPS in a more effective manner by generating financial resources through innovative financing and GRB and by creating monitoring and accountability mechanisms and capacities.

Output 1.1: Targeted Government actors at national and local level are aware and have the capacity to implement the NAP WPS. Limited understanding and knowledge on the NAP WPS and the UNSCR on WPS was one of the major challenges faced during the first phase of the NAP WPS. Based on learnings from the past, this intervention will therefore strengthen the capacity of targeted civil servants and decision makers in charge of the implementation of the second phase of NAP WPS.

Output 1.2: Government actors and Women Organizations have strengthened capacity on innovative financing and GRB, to ensure increased allocation of financial resources for the implementation of the NAP WPS. The innovative financing project will generate resources for the peacebuilding activities of the Second NAP WPS (2019-2023), which was considered as a low priority by the Government, hence limited or no resources were allocated in its implementation in the first phase of the NAP WPS.

Output 1.3. Targeted government institutions have access to relevant coordination, monitoring and reporting tools and capacity to use them. This intervention aimed to build a strong monitoring, reporting and coordination mechanism to strengthen the accountability of the NAP WPS. The NAP is a planning and monitoring tool for the Government of Liberia (GOL) and its partners to assess progress in the advancement of women's issues.

²⁵Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice and LNP

Outcome 2: More women, including marginalized women, in targeted counties hold the government accountable for the NAP WPS and support the implementation of the peacebuilding related activities of the NAP WPS

Output 2.1. Women Organizations have strengthened capacities to implement, monitor, report and promote evidence-based advocacy to ensure implementation of the NAP WPS. Alongside the strengthening of state institutions and mechanisms for implementation of the NAP WPS, the convening Agencies will continue strengthening their investments in targeted communities to further develop core skills and capacities, including advocacy and monitoring for accountability to enable women's groups, young women, and women with disabilities to meaningfully participate and shape more equitable and inclusive peacebuilding and local plans.

Output 2.2. Men, boys and local leaders are aware and understand the rights of women, including marginalized women to participate in public and peacebuilding processes. To change the dominant traditional cultural perception that the right place for women is their homes and hard security matters and peacebuilding is a masculine domain, the project aimed to conduct a perception assessment and Gender and power analysis to assess their understanding on HR issues and change existing gender stereotypes in peacebuilding processes.

• **Geographic Coverage**

The project was designed to be implemented at the national and sub-national levels.

The project counties were Montserrado, Grand Bassa and Nimba counties. In Bassa and Nimba, the project targeted peace hut and non-peace hut communities. In both counties, the project worked with implementing partners, governmental and women groups.



2.2 Theory of Change

IF Targeted Line Ministries, Government Agencies and local governments are aware and have the capacity to implement the peacebuilding activities of the NAP WPS, IF local and national Government institutions and Women Organizations have strengthened capacity on innovative financing and GRB to ensure increased allocation of financial resources for the implementation of the NAP WPS, IF Targeted government institutions at national and local level have access to relevant coordination, monitoring and reporting tools and capacity to use them, IF Women Organizations have strengthened capacities to implement, monitor, report and promote evidenced-based advocacy to ensure implementation of the NAP WPS, and IF Men, boys and local leaders are aware and understand the rights of women, including marginalized women to participate in public and peacebuilding processes, THEN more women, including rural women, women with disabilities and young women will participate in peacebuilding processes to sustain peace BECAUSE Targeted Line Ministries, Government Agencies and local governments will implement the NAP WPS in a more effective manner by generating financial resources through innovative financing and GRB and by creating monitoring and accountability mechanisms with their enhanced capacities, And BECAUSE More women, including marginalized women, in targeted counties will hold the government accountable for the NAP WPS and support the implementation of the peacebuilding related activities of the NAP WPS.

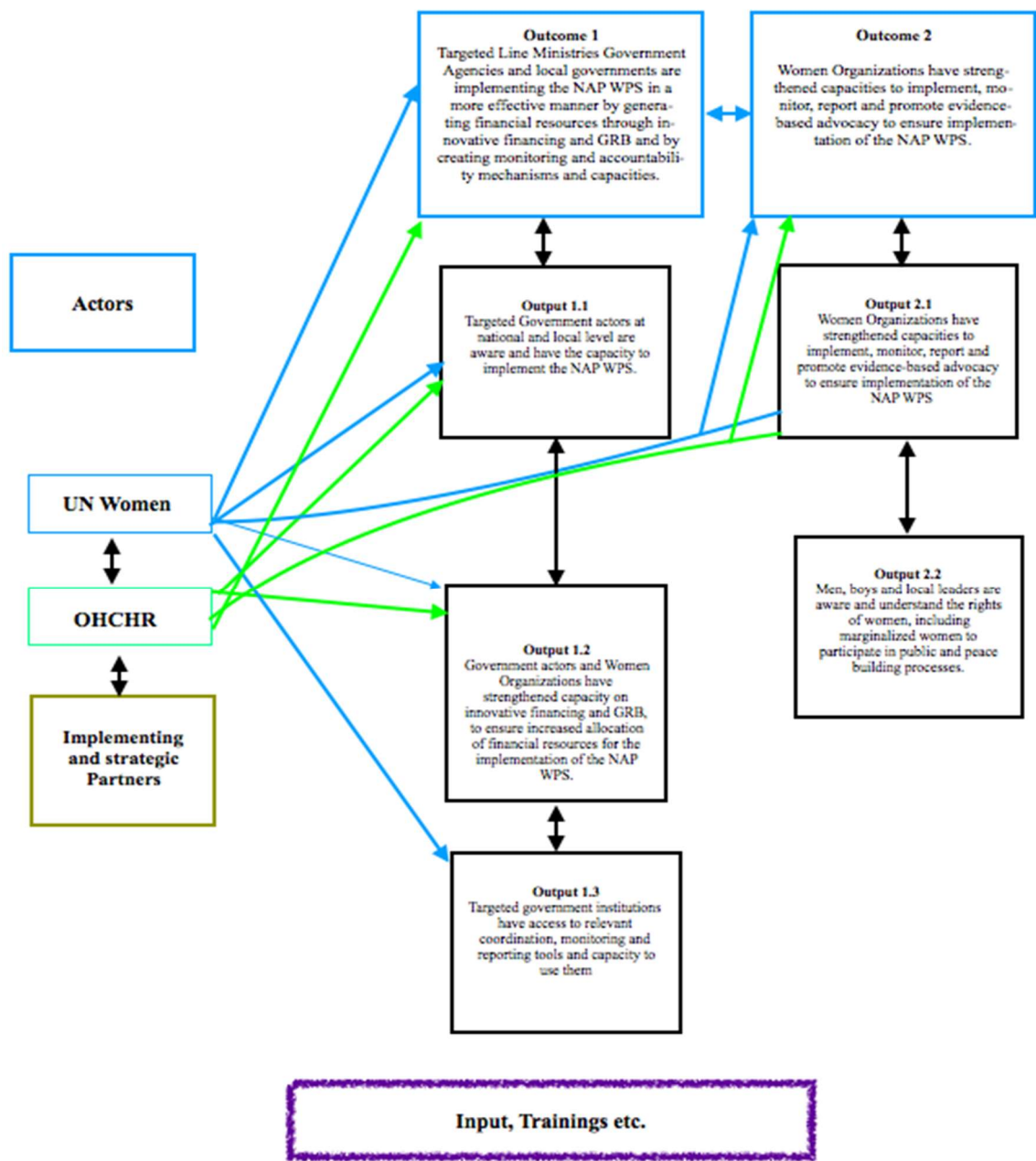
The Theory of Change was based on the following assumptions:

- Government commitment to implement the WPS agenda at national level;
 - stakeholders are able/willing to coordinate to maximize impact of their work.
 - decentralization process is in progress.
 - Existence of Government commitment to implement the GRB policy.
- **Theory of Change Analysis**

The evaluation assessed the internal logic of this joint project and the extent to which outputs were logically connected (from cause-to- effect) to intended outcomes, and the extent to which intended outcomes logically connected to expected impact. The evaluation found that the internal logic of this project is strong, and all essential outputs and outcomes have been considered in the project design. Main reported drivers and relevant assumptions were adequately considered and the formal logframe of the intervention was designed in a way to ensure necessary adjustments in case certain

critical assumptions proved to be invalid. The review of available progress reports and donor report demonstrate at this stage a good likelihood of this project contribution to the expected impact. This was verified and confirmed based on additional evidence provided during data collection phase of this evaluation.

• **Graph of the ToC Analysis**



III. EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT

3.1 Evaluability Assessment

An assessment of the availability of secondary data necessary for this evaluation was conducted. Detailed analysis and evaluability assessment matrix are placed in the annexes of this evaluation report. The evaluation found very good results in assessing the Quality of the Results

Framework. All Outcome and output indicators had baseline and target values except for output 2.2.1. The indicators are strongly formulated according to the SMART approach providing specific and realistic information to support the measurement of progress and achievements of this WPS joint project between January 2020 and November 2021.

IV. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Evaluation Objectives and Scope

This evaluation assessed the achievements of the project advancing implementation of UNSCRs on Women Peace and Security (WPS) through strengthening accountability frameworks, innovative financing and Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) in an inclusive way and to determine its overall added value to peacebuilding in Liberia. As a formative evaluation, the purpose of this evaluation was to examine project progress and results. The evaluation generated substantial evidence for informed future policy choices and best practices. It identified findings, challenges, lessons learnt, good practices and formulated recommendations to improve future joint programming and foster organizational learning and accountability.

This evaluation will inform the implementation of the Government's Strategic Plan, new strategic documents such as the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and future programming actions of UN Women and OHCHR, including joint programming actions. The findings of this evaluation will also be used by the UN to further refine its approaches towards the promotion of WPS agenda and to inform the development of strategic documents including the 2020-2024 Strategic Note of UN Women Liberia CO.

Furthermore, national stakeholders such as the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, line Ministries in charge of the implementation of the NAP WPS, Women NGO Secretariat, Foundation for Community Initiatives, Search for Common Ground, Peace Hut Network and other CSOs.

Ultimately, the results of this evaluation will be publicly accessible through the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation User- GATE system for global learning and the PBF website.

4.2 UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation

This evaluation applied the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation. It answered questions related to the evaluation criteria of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), including relevance, development efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, in addition to assessing the program on Gender, Equity and Human Rights principles. The evaluation matrix inclusive the main evaluation questions are placed in the annexes of this report.

In addition, **the disability framework provided by the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy²⁶** was applied to assess the extent to which this WPS Joint Project was inclusive and the extent to which women and men living with disabilities were integrated by the project at all stages.

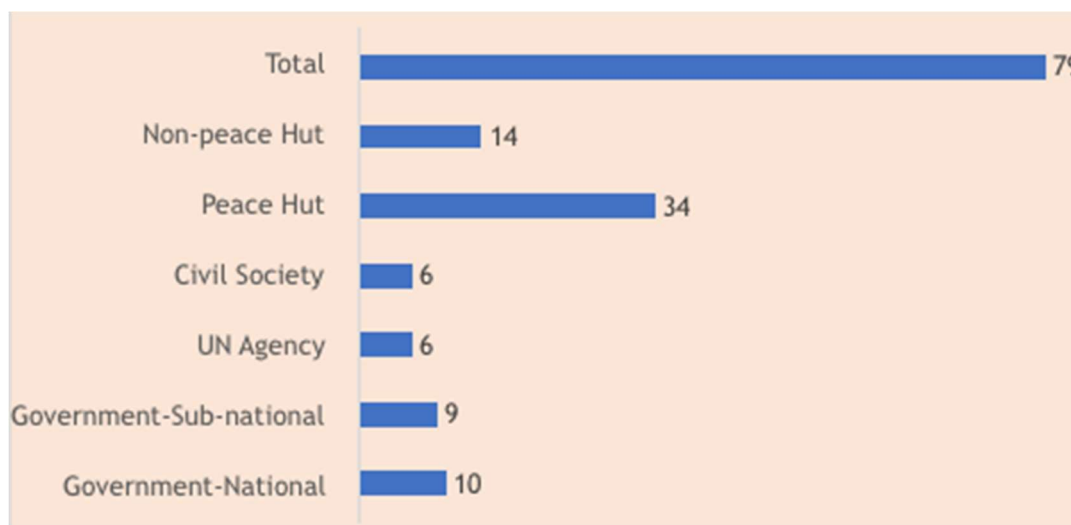
4.3 Evaluation methods and approach

In line with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and UN Women & GERAAS standards, a gender-responsive and human rights-based approach was applied throughout the evaluation process. The evaluation applied an inclusive and participatory approach which ensured an active participation and involvement of stakeholders at all levels of the Joint Project on GRB/WPS.

25 men and 54 women (A total of 79 respondents) were consulted through mixed methodologies (Desk review and analysis of strategic frameworks, policies and project documents, Field visit to Monterrado, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Observations, Focus group discussions, In-depth interviews (semi structured and face-to-face) with key informants, Interviews via Whatsapp and Phone).

Out of the 79 respondents, 34 Peace Hut, 14 Non-peace Hut, 10 GOL Staff at National level, 9 GOL staff at Sub-national level, 6 Civil Society and 6 UN Agencies were interviewed.

Stakeholders consulted



4.4 Data analysis, collection method and scoring

The evaluators used mixed research methods in data gathering and analysis (sequential implementation implying collecting both quantitative and qualitative data in phases), so that the formulated evaluation questions can be effectively answered.

The Evaluation Team adopted an inclusive Gender Equality and Human Rights- based Approach (HRBA) by examining processes and the results as well as by designing an appropriate system-

²⁶<https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/>

based methodology to understand the various linkages in the Results Chain - Strategies, Outcomes and Theory of Change (ToC) - and verifying the assumptions behind the two outcomes of the project. The use of a combination and triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data was key to the evaluation as this ensured that the limitations of one type of data are balanced by the strengths of another. The evaluation also analyzed Value-for Money assessment (VFM). This Value-for Money assessment examined the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of this WPS Joint Project.

The Evaluation Team used following mixed methodologies:

- Desk review and analysis of strategic frameworks, policies and project documents
- Field visit to Montserrat, Nimba, Grand Bassa.
- Observations, Focus group discussions and In-depth interviews (semi structured and face-to-face) with key informants

- **Scoring criteria**

The scoring applied followed the logic of the Evaluation Rating of UNEP (2018) that is based on a six-point scale (*Highly Satisfactory; Satisfactory; Moderately Satisfactory; Moderately Unsatisfactory; Unsatisfactory and; Highly Unsatisfactory*). This evaluation combined these scale six-point scale into four main scoring below to support a common interpretation of points on the scale for each evaluation criterion. A matrix is placed as an annex in this evaluation report with more details regarding the scoring and rating processes.

These ratings are ‘weighted’ to derive the Overall Project Rating as follows:

Scoring A: The project **performed well and no** changes were required

Scoring B: The project **performed well but some** changes were required

Scoring C: The project **performed but significant changes were necessary**

Scoring D: The project **did not perform at all on the criterion.**

4.5 Ethical approach

Protection and confidentiality of data as recommended by UNEG²⁷ and the related code of conduct for evaluation in the UN system was respected by this evaluation, namely: Independence and Impartiality; Credibility; Honesty and Integrity; Accountability; Confidentiality; Respect for Dignity and Diversity; Avoidance of Harm; Accuracy, Completeness and Reliability; Transparency.

More concretely, the evaluators paid equal attention to all involved stakeholders (UN, CSOs and GoL presented in the matrix placed in the annexes of this report) that were consulted during this exercise and at various levels to avoid elitism and a reinforcement of discriminatory or unjust social relationships. Visits were also conducted by the evaluators in remote communities to ensure that beneficiaries and marginalized groups (even the poorest and illiterate), were equal participants to this exercise. Finally, some meetings were organized in secure places where confidentiality during consultations was ensured to avoid putting participants at risk of recriminations. In some cases where the evaluators observed imbalance power dynamics among women and men during a meeting, evaluators organized additional consultations with specific participants.

²⁷<http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/100>

4.6 Data management plan

Different types of data were used and produced during this evaluation: numeric (databases, spreadsheets), textual (documents), image, audio, and/or mixed media. Data collected through this evaluation was subjected to the UN Women Information Security Policy that sets out the basis for UN Women in protecting the confidentiality, integrity and availability of its data to protect these assets against unauthorized usage, access, modification, destruction, disclosure, loss or transfer of data, whether accidental or intentional. Information captured was recorded in a database with links from UN Women server and iCloud to each item. Data were stored in clouds and backed up regularly and automatically during this evaluation. The evaluation used the NVIVO software for transcription and supporting data analysis.

4.7 Evaluation Limitations

The Evaluation Team found the organization & logistics management of this evaluation good. The logistics, the organization of the various meetings with the partners and beneficiaries, the availability of the project staff (UN Women and OHCHR), the support provided by the Donor (PBF) in the case additional data and information were needed and the support of various stakeholders in conducting this exercise were elements that have contributed to the success of this in-country data collection phase.

However, there have been some limited constraints faced by the evaluation team as follows:

- **Accessibility to some communities and Availability of some beneficiaries & implementing partners:** This evaluation is gender-responsive and committed to ensure equal participation of various categories of stakeholders and groups to this exercise. During data collection phase, some partners and direct beneficiaries of this programme were not always available during the field visits conducted by the evaluators. This impacted the workplan agreed during the inception phase and required some flexibility from the evaluation team who organized in some cases, additional calls and meetings during weekends and outside the working hours to ensure that the voice of some beneficiaries and partners inclusive marginalized groups were also heard and considered by this evaluation.
- **Delays in the submission of Means of Verification (MoVs):** This evaluation is evidence-based. Some data were not always submitted in a timely manner to be integrated in the preliminary analysis of data available. Delays in submitting some relevant means of verifications challenged the validation of some reported activities and achievements of this programme and required additional time for the work. To mitigate this, the evaluation team used different data sources and conducted additional research in some cases to verify some information.

• 4.8 Evaluation Team and Management

The evaluation was conducted by one international consultant who had the overall evaluation responsibility and accountability for the report writing, data analyses and reported to UN Women & Regional Office, OHCHR, PBF and to the Reference Group and one national consultant who supported the evaluation process. The Evaluators were responsible for the following evaluation phases: Inception phase; Data collection phase; Data analysis and synthesis phase; Validation.

In addition, an Evaluation Management Group (EMG) was established to oversee the evaluation process, make key decisions and quality assurance of deliverables. The EMG is chaired by RO Regional Evaluation Specialist, who is ultimately responsible for validation of deliverables

More information on Evaluation Team and Management of this evaluation are presented in the annexes 11 of this report.



Pictures of the Evaluation Team, Driver and Team in the Field

V. EVALUATION FINDINGS

A. RELEVANCE

The extent to which the GRN/WPS Joint Project Objectives are responsive to the needs and priorities of women, Government of Liberia, Partners and Stakeholders as well as its alignment with Government, African and International priorities, policies and strategies on WPS agenda.

SCORING A. The GRB/WPS Joint Project performed well and no changes were required.

FINDING 1: The joint WPS/GRB project design was informed by the findings and recommendations on previous funded interventions on WPS. In addition, the evaluation found a good involvement of various stakeholders and partners including the National Commission on Disability in Liberia at national level. More involvement of organizations working with PWDs would have further strengthened the project design.

The evaluation found that the joint project was informed by the lessons from the first NAP 1325 of Liberia that did not achieve its intended objectives due to various reasons such as lack of adequate government financing, inadequate awareness among implementers, low women's inclusion in peace and security processes, weak capacity among implementers to monitor and evaluate impact. In addition, the design of this joint project was also informed by the previous PBF funded project on WPS “*Nothing for Us and Without Us*”²⁸ that was implemented by UN Women, IOM and UNDP (10 January 2018 - 8 July 2019) with a budget of USD 2, 000 000,-. The evaluation conclusions 2, 3, 5 and 7 as well as the recommendations 2.1 on budget allocation to the implementation of the NAP 1325 ; recommendation 3.1 on WPS further capacity building and recommendation 5.1 on VSLA enhancement were fully considered in the design of this joint project.

The joint project conducted a baseline survey at its early stage (2019) and consulted a total of 21 strategic stakeholders and implementing partners at national and county levels. By involving such a high number of partners and stakeholders into a 18-month project, the joint project ensured at the design stage that the “Leave no-one Behind” principles of the United Nations were considered. The development of the Theory of Changes (ToC) was also participative and joint meetings were organized in the course of 2019 in the three targeted counties namely Montserrado, Nimba and Grand Bassa.

This GRB/WPS Joint Project also managed to actively involve a National Union of Disable in its design phase to capture the needs and priorities of women and girls living with disabilities in Peace and Security related issues in Liberia. Their perspectives were to a good extent integrated into the joint project design. Interviews conducted with the representative of the National Commission on Disability during the data collection of this evaluation revealed his active participation at the design stage and attendance to various consultative meetings held in the course of 2019 at Mamba hotel Liberia and at the Ministry of Gender.

However, the estimated number of organizations working with PWDs is 46. Involving the umbrella organization (the union) was not sufficient in understanding the specific needs of PWDs in security and justice related issues and in effectively addressing them in the targeted counties and communities. Specific needs of PWDs were not therefore fully integrated and addressed by this project. There was no evidence of vulnerability assessment for the most at risk group in Liberia and the targeted counties / communities.

FINDING 2: There is a very strong alignment to global policies and protocols on Women, Peace and Security.

²⁸ A review matrix and the linkages between the previous WPS Project led by UN Women in Liberia and this WPS / GRB Joint Project is placed in the annexes of this report.

- **At the international level**

The joint project goal and objectives are fully aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals number 5, “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.” and 16 “promote just, peaceful and inclusive society.”

There is also an alignment to other UN resolutions as follows:

- The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1960 (adopted in 2010) and Resolution 2106 (adopted in 2013) respectively reiterate the importance of ending sexual violence in conflict and provide the operational details for combating sexual violence.
- Reinforcing the role and relevance of women in peace and security, UNSCR 2122 (adopted in 2013) focuses on stronger implementation measures and monitoring mechanisms to enable women to engage in conflict resolution and recovery.

- **At national level**

The evaluation found a very strong alignment of this project with the Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting Policy (Mainstreaming Gender into public financial management) 2019-2023. Through this policy the government committed to utilize gender-responsive planning and budgeting as a tool to mainstream gender issues into the public financial management system with the main purpose of ensuring that the benefits of plans and budgets reach the vulnerable groups characterized by their different gender needs and priorities. There is also a good alignment to the national development plan (Pro Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development the PAPD) and contributes to the following outcomes:

Pillar 1, Outcome 4: It is entrenched here as a crosscutting issue leading to more empowered women and girls and clearer understanding among men and boys to act as champions.

Pillar 3, Outcome 3: A society where justice, rule of law and equitable human rights prevail

Pillar 4, Outcome 4: Improved security services delivery nationwide that is also gender responsive.

With the active involvement of the national organization for disabled at the design phase, this joint project was aligned to *SI 6: Access to Justice and Social Protection* of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Persons with Disabilities (2018-2022) that contributed to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons living with Disability (CRPD).

- **At African Union Level²⁹**

The active involvement of marginalized group in this joint project contributed to its alignment to the AU Agenda 2063, which places gender equality at the Centre of Africa’s development and commits to end all forms of oppression and gender-based discrimination.

This joint project is also fully aligned to the African Union (AU) Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), which calls for the need to ensure the full and effective participation and representation of women in peace processes. At the regional and country level, the Regional Economic Communities and AU Member States have developed gender policies and adopted gender declarations and United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 action plans that guide their gender-mainstreaming in peace processes. The evaluation found also a strong alignment to AU strategy for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (2017–2027) that calls

²⁹https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/35958-doc-continental_result_framework_on_wps_agenda_in_africa.pdf

for equal participation of women in peace processes. The joint project is also aligned to the 2006 policy on Post- Conflict Reconstruction and Development incorporates the principle of Inclusiveness, Equity and Non-Discrimination in addressing conflict. The policy commits to undertaking initiatives that promote participation and address the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups such as women and girls, among others.

The Review of the Results Framework revealed an alignment of the project indicators to some of the set of indicators of the Continental Results Framework (CRF) for Monitoring and Reporting on the WPS Agenda in Africa (African Union (2018 - 2028)). The CRF provides twenty-eight (28) indicators agreed upon by Member States for tracking and reporting on the implementation of the WPS Agenda in Africa. The indicators are structured around the four pillars of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (prevention; participation; protection; relief and recovery), with an additional theme on ‘WPS in the context of emerging security threats’ incorporated. There is a particular alignment of this joint project to the indicator 2 of the CRF under Pillar on Prevention that focuses on “Proportion of national budget allocated to government departments that address the WPS Agenda” as well as indicator 11 of the CRF under pillar participation that focuses on “11. Number of women’s CSOs participating in government-led peacebuilding processes: c. dialogues and indicator 1 on “*Existence of legal and policy frameworks that protect the rights of women, including protection from sexual and gender-based violence*” under pillar protection. There is also an alignment of this joint project to the indicator 2 of the CRF on “*Proportion of post-conflict recovery budget set aside for gender equality and women’s empowerment*” under Relief and recovery pillar.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2020 - 2024)

The United Nations in Liberia³⁰ is represented by 18 Agencies, Funds, Programmes, the World Bank and African Development Bank comprising the UN Country Team. Under Delivering as One they work together through the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2020 - 2024) supporting the Government's national agenda “The Pro Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development”. The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework is aligned to the Pro Poor Agenda, which has four pillars: Power to the People, Economy and Jobs, Peace and Security and Governance and Transparency. This guides the UN programmatic interventions to the government over the next five years. The new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2020 - 2024) was signed by the Government of Liberia and United Nations in August 2019, and implementation started on January 1st, 2020. The UNSDCF is informed by recommendations and lessons learned from the previous UNDAF, the Common Country Assessment, Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. It is also guided by the UN Vision 2030.

The goal objectives and content of this joint UN Women and OHCHR project on Women, Peace and Security is fully aligned to the UNSCDF. The evaluation found that this joint WPS / GRB project contributed to the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) goal 5, which sets 2024 as the deadline by which “women, girls, men and boys in Liberia experience more sustained peace, inclusive and sustainable growth and development through strengthened formal and informal institutions, providing access to effective and equitable justice and security services; promoting and protecting human rights; and strengthening social cohesion and reconciliation». Under Outcome 1 of this joint WPS/GRB project, the outputs 1.1 and output 1.3 are strongly aligned to the outcome 3 of the UNSDCF “*By 2021, Liberia consolidates,*

³⁰<https://unsdg.un.org/un-in-action/liberia>

sustains peace and enhances social cohesion, has strengthened formal and informal institutions capable of providing access to inclusive, effectiveness, equitable justice and security services, capable of promoting and protecting human rights of all". There is also a strong alignment to the outcome 4 "By 2024 people in Liberia especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged benefit from strengthened institutions that are more effective, accountable, transparent, inclusive and gender responsive in the delivery of essential services at the national and sub-national levels".

Finding 3: The project design was very relevant in addressing the needs and priorities of the GoL in providing strategic support to improve funding mechanisms of the NAP WPS as well as in responding to the priorities and needs of women in the targeted communities. There were also efforts done in the design to address most gaps challenging the implementation of the NAP WPS in Liberia.

Consultations conducted by this project in its early stage to inform its design revealed major challenges that were likely to manifest in the implementation of the second phase of the NAP WPS in Liberia.

In the communities, the most vulnerable women have limited access to equitable and creditable land dispute resolution mechanisms or lacks adequate understanding of legal frameworks governing property rights. They face constraints in accessing justice regardless of the channels used (court system, semi-formal and informal). Due to their poverty, illiteracy, family care and limited economic opportunities, women including young women and women with disabilities are excluded from peacebuilding processes in the communities. As results men dominate and take control over peacebuilding and security mechanisms including in the peace committees.

At national level, the project identified in its design phase limited gender responsiveness of the existing peacebuilding infrastructure, the lack of funding dedicated to NAP WPS implementation by GOL. International funds were for example committed to support the Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD) and coordination, but not to support WPS activities and Implementers. CSOs lacked the capacity to monitor and evaluate WPS results, which resulted in a lack of evidence of the NAP's impacts and led to a decrease in overall commitment to advancing its mission and further gaps of quality data to inform decisions and strategies on WPS.

At both national and community levels, consultations conducted found a high prevalence of violence on women due to harmful traditional practices (HTPs), lack of accountability for human rights abuses and insufficient access to justice for survivors.

The project in its design, planned to address these gaps at community and national levels through various approaches and strategies.

Regarding harmful traditional practices (HTPs) affecting women at national and community levels, the project planned to work with men inclusive male traditional leaders in the communities to address toxic masculinities and traditional norms hindering the effective participation of women in peacebuilding processes. At national level, the project gave a particular focus on strengthening security institutions in gender equality and WPS related issues.

Regarding the lack of funding dedicated to NAP WPS implementation by GOL at national level, the project designed an ambitious innovative approach in financing the NAP WPS through the establishment of innovative financing mechanisms coupled by capacity building and

development of relevant ministries, CSOs and community-based structures on Gender Responsive Budgeting.

At community level where women face economic constraints causing conflicts at household level, the project intended to support VSLA activities and enhance the capacity of peace hut women and non-peace hut Women on GRB. Through the capacity building on GRB, the project expected to provide them with tools to mobilize funds for their peace building activities.

Regarding the specific needs of women with disabilities, the project intended to use prohibited grounds of discrimination to identify individuals left behind. UN Women and OHCHR and their implementing partners committed to develop criteria of selection and engage in advance with the respective communities to inform their selection. The implementing partners planned to be involved were partners with good expertise in the two selected and experience in mobilizing the most marginalized, including rural women, youth, and women with disabilities.

By involving the Ministry of Gender in this project design, the project intended to address some of the challenges for women in accessing justice.

A. EFFICIENCY

The extent to which the GRB/WPS Joint Project delivered maximum results for the resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.).

SCORING C: The GRB/WPS Joint Project performed but significant changes were necessary.

FINDING 4: The complex GRB/WPS Joint Project organigramme, the high number of involved stakeholders and the synergies built at national level by this intervention contributed to the very good project delivery at output levels and good results achieved at outcome levels.

This GRB/WPS Joint Project had an organigramme in place that was complex in regard to the number of project staff, experts and stakeholders involved but also regarding their roles and responsibilities in this innovative project that required technical staff with good practices and capacity of RBM in the project management process.

According to the project documents³¹ reviewed and progress reports available, this GRB/WPS Joint Project was led by UN Women and jointly coordinated with OHCHR and the government of Liberia. UN Women assigned a national project officer (NOC) to coordinate, manage the project and report to the project board (composed of Minister of Gender, Children and social Protection, The Minister of Justice, the Minister of Finance and Development, involved CSOs representatives, UN Women and OHCHR representatives) on the implementation of the project activities, achievements, results and financial related issues. The project officer was also in charge of coordinating activities between the UN agencies, Taskforce and the implementing partners to ensure complementarity and implementing of M&E framework. OHCHR intended to recruit an international UNV partially funded by the Peacebuilding Fund for the oversight and implementation of the activities under OHCHR's responsibility.

At national level, both UN Women project officer (WPS Project Specialist) and OHCHR HRO (UNV) had the responsibility to provide technical support to Government and CSO for quality assurance and capacity building purposes. A GRB Officer recruited by UN Women (partially funded by the Peacebuilding Fund) provided technical support for the implementation of the GRB related activities and innovative financing. At community / sub-national level, the GRB/WPS Joint Project collaborated with national partners to carry out capacity building activities, awareness raising campaigns and events.

The following matrix presents the joint project team according to the Prodoc:

UN Women	OHCHR
1. Country Deputy Representative – Not funded by PBF	1. Deputy Country Representative – Not funded by the PBF
2. WPS Project Specialist – Partially funded by PBF	2. HR Officer – Partially funded by the PBF (IUNV, 42%)

³¹P. 19-20

UN Women	OHCHR
3. GRB Project Specialist – Partially funded by PBF	3. Human Rights Officer – Not funded by the PBF
4. Finance Associate – Not Funded by PBF	4. Finance / Admin Officer – Not funded by the PBF
5. Logistic and Supply Team – Not funded by the PBF	5. M&E Officer – Not Funded by the PBF*
6. M&E Specialist – Not funded by the PBF*	6. Driver – Not funded by the PBF
7. Driver – Not funded by the PBF	

* M&E Specialists of both organizations resigned (UN Women) and left (OHCHR) during the project implementation. More information are highlighted in the Finding on M&E below.

The evaluation found that this GRB/WPS Joint Project structure contributed to a good extent to the appropriate project implementation and the success of the achievements. The selection processes of staff assigned to this specific project could not be determined by this evaluation but UN Women and OHCHR assigned, in fact, functional unit staff to the project on a part-time basis. Overlaps between the functional unit and the project were observed and the resources (time) allocated to this project challenged. The joint project therefore recruited external experts (national and international) to support project management or to facilitate some trainings (UN Women). Some project components were outsourced by signing an MoU with an organization (UN Women, FCI and Search for Common Ground / Talking Drum Studio) to implement activities in the communities. UN Women and OHCHR staff and personnel in charge of managing this GRB/WPS Joint Project had senior expertise on WPS and HRBA that was an important factor to the success of the project and its achievements. The fact that UN Women and OHCHR already collaborated with PBF and operate in a very sensitive environment helped to identify and mitigate the high risks associated with the innovative dimensions of this intervention implemented under COVID-19 constraints. Risk analysis conducted by this joint project is placed in the annexes of this evaluation report.

Evidence revealed that the functional structures of UN Women and OHCHR did not create a Platform to support consistent interaction, communication and coordination amongst the project team members and between the project structure and the functional units of their respective organizations. This would have helped to strengthen the internal and external communication of the GRB/WPS Joint Project. There have been also some important gaps and weaknesses identified in the communication strategy adopted by this project structure that was not aligned to the « deliver as one » principles of UN. In its *Guide to communicating as One* (2014)³² The United Nations underlines the importance of joint communications strategy that includes shared messaging in support of the One Programme and the development of standard joint communication products, as well as shared crisis communications; and Common, established visual identity for joint United Nations products and communication.

³²<https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/Guide-to-Communicating-as-One-edited-1.pdf>

The evaluation found that communication materials produced by this joint intervention did not highlight the joint efforts of the involved UN entities.

In most of the project materials produced in the communities that were found during field visits, only one UN Entity logo out of the two logos of the implementing UN entities was visible.

In interviews this project was often identified by the direct beneficiaries as “OHCHR” or “UN Women” intervention and not as a UN joint project (UN Women and OHCHR with PBF funding).



Example of communication & knowledge products of the programme in the communities

FINDING 5: The evaluation found concerning gaps in M&E that negatively affected the project delivery in the communities and within the targeted peace huts and non-peace huts.

The signed Project Document of this intervention indicated that UN Women and OHCHR had the overall responsibilities of management and monitoring mechanisms established at various levels by the joint project. UN Women had the lead for the coordination and M&E responsibilities to ensure project implementation. The GRB / WPS Joint Project also designed an M&E plan covering the year 2020-2021. The M&E plan that was elaborated at the level of the LMPTF and for each PBF supported project determined the extent to which the indicators were expected to be tracked for the measuring of results.

The project also initially planned that Women, Youth, Peace and Security Working Group in West Africa and the Sahel and the working group Liberia, a multi-platform established in April 2009 and composed of the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the NAP WPS and for supporting learning exchanges between Liberia and other countries to ensure the implementation of NAP WP and innovative initiative.

Monitoring activities were also expected to be supported by WONGOSOL, an organ established in 1998 for coordinating activities of women organizations in Liberia and WAPNET, an umbrella organization that works closely with grassroots organizations in peacebuilding related issues. 5% of the total budget was allocated by the donor (PBF) to the implementation of the M&E framework and plan developed by this project. However, the evaluation found that M&E activities suffered from the M&E staff turnover within the two involved UN agencies.

At UN Women level, the International UNV in charge of M&E within the agency resigned in 2020. An M&E assistant joined in 2021 to support the work of the agency on M&E but he was not recruited for / by this specific joint project.

So, this project was implemented without an M&E staff and the project management supported to a limited extent some M&E activities to cover the gaps until someone was recruited by UN Women, in May 2022 during this evaluation. The evaluation found that efforts applied during project management was not sufficient to achieve expected good quality of M&E work particularly in

relation to the complexity of M&E requirements in a time of Covid-19 constraints and dynamics, where access to some communities and counties were limited and regarding the high number of involved stakeholders (21 strategic, implementing partners and beneficiaries).

At OHCHR level, the evaluation also noted a gap of M&E staff. The acting OHCHR M&E officer left during the project implementation because her contract ended in July 2020 and was replaced by OHCHR Human Rights Officer who serves as acting M&E focal person. By the time of this evaluation, OHCHR continues to seek funding to hire a full time M&E officer to replace the former M&E Officer.

The turnover of M&E staff within the two UN agencies affected the quality of the monitoring of the project activities. The evaluation noted in this regard that a limited number of joint monitoring activities particularly joint field visits to the communities were organized at the project end of implementation only. OHCHR conducted a total of two (2) monitoring visits in Nimba and one (1) in Bassa during the entire project duration. There is no evidence of monitoring visits conducted by UN Women to the communities during the project implementation. A joint monitoring mission comprised of all projects implementing partners including UN Women, OHCHR, FCI, TDS, etc. was conducted in the two counties with two (2) visits by the project end. Because of the fragile and inconsistent monitoring of this GRB/WPS Joint Project, some planned activities in the peace huts were not implemented as planned. With limited M&E, the evaluation found for example that funds allocated to peace huts in Little Bassa and Edina for economic empowerment and VSLA activities (USD 3 000 each) were used to build new peace huts instead of being invested in socio economic activities of women highly affected by the economic challenges caused by the Covid-19 restrictions and constraints.

FINDING 6: This evaluation conducted a Value-for-Money assessment that examined the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of this PBF funded intervention. The evaluation found that this GRB/WPS Joint Project was very innovative in the context of Liberia and its main focus on strengthening capacity of GOL structures, CSOs and peace-hut on GRB, Innovative Financing, WPS and NAP1325 was effective.

This evaluation conducted a Value-for-Money assessment that examined the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of this PBF funded intervention. The economy, effectiveness and efficiency (3Es) and cost-effectiveness (CE) framework was applied.

PBF funded this intervention on GRB and innovative Financing to support the implementation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2019.2023). The evaluation found that this joint project was very innovative in the context of Liberia and its main focus was on strengthening the capacity of GOL structures, CSOs and peace hut on GRB, Innovative Financing, WPS and NAP1325.

Evidence shows that this intervention was also very effective in supporting innovative activities and approaches of this GRB/WPS Joint Project which would otherwise not be feasible with Regular Budget mobilization on advancement of WPS agenda alone.

The use of innovative methods applied by this project and the main results achieved on GRB and innovative financing has helped PBF to fulfill its catalytic mandate.

There were no delays in the fund's disbursements from PBF to the implementing agencies

(UN Women and OHCHR) but some delays up to 4 months in the disbursements of funds from UN Women to the implementing partner in the communities inclusive to the involved peace huts were reported. The main reasons reported were linked to UN Women internal procedures and COVID-19 restrictions that limited some operations. As consequences there were some delays in implementing some activities according to plan and in a timely manner in the communities. Some activities of the peace hut involved in agriculture were delays and women reported some loss of goods that were produced late and then not sold (wasted).

This coupled with some COVID-19 restrictions challenged the timeliness of the project delivery. A no-cost extension was requested by the implementing agencies and granted by the donor to ensure full implementation of the planned activities.

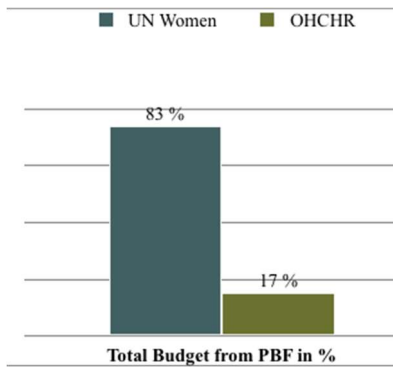
Economy: The evaluation reviewed all the various components and the costs of the project implementation; The total project expenditure was USD 1,500,000.00. The cost data were based on project accounting records provided by UN Women. When data were not clear, the evaluation team biased with the finance manager for more detail. The intervention gave a high focus on capacity building and development of GOL representatives CSOs, Peace Huts. Cost of training included the component costs of training manuals, venue, equipment and travel for national and international facilitators. The most cost-intensive part of the expenditure (UN Women Budget) was costs relating to Transfers and Grants to Counterparts with USD 600,000.00 (UN Women signed MoU with FCI and Common Ground to implement awareness raising activities in the targeted counties and communities). This represents 40% of the total budget. Followed by staff and contractual services (staff, national and international facilitators and experts to support project implementation) USD 598 677,50. This represents 39,9 % of the total budget.

Efficiency: The target to train and capacitate 640 Civil servants identified as focal points from line Ministries and Agencies, women's organizations, 1325 Taskforce members, peace huts and direct beneficiaries on GRB/Innovative financing / WPS / HRBA/ Monitoring and Reporting (CEDAW, CRPD) by the end of the project was met. Training costs that included manuals, capacity assessment, learning exchanges, tools and strategies developed, venue, equipment and travel for national and international facilitators were USD 873 477. Each participant was trained and capacitated for approximately USD 76 per month or USD 1 365 per participant for the 18- month project. This is good because of the innovative approaches and methods on GRB and Innovative Financing applied by this joint project and the costs linked to the recruitment of national and international facilitators to support the project implementation. The evaluation also found that working closely with the targeted line ministries at national and county levels ensured that the appropriate staff from the GOL were capacitated and efforts as well as resources were not duplicated.

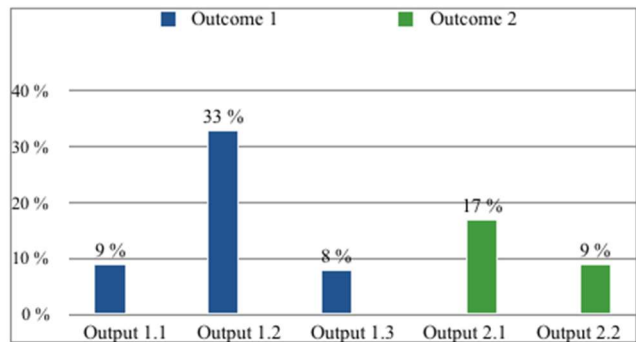
Effectiveness: Cost-effectiveness analysis was used to compare costs and benefits at baseline and follow up. The overall VfM assessment revealed that the training was conducted in two counties that served as pilot areas for the implementation of GRB and innovative financing to localize and implement the NAP1325 in Liberia. The selected counties (Montserrado, Nimba and Grand Bassa) and communities are areas with the greatest need on WPS implementation compared to other counties. Montserrado is the smallest at 737 square miles (1,909 km²) but is by far the most populous county in Liberia (population 1,118,241, or 32.2% of the national total), followed by Nimba (462,026), and Grand Bassa (221,693) ranked 5th of the most populous county after Bong and Lofa. The targeted counties of this project Montserrado, Nimba and Grand Bassa are among the six most populous counties (Montserado, Nimba. Grand Bassa, Bong, Lofa and Margibi) that comprises 44% of Liberia's land area but contain 75.4% of the total national population. The three most populous counties (Montserrado, Nimba, and Bong) are home to 55% of the national population affected by socio economic challenges such as youth high rate of unemployment,

insecurity, land conflicts and challenges in accessing justice. Moreover, harmful traditional practices such as early marriages are still being carried out in Nimba and Grand Bassa. All these factors put these counties at risk of conflicts. Therefore implementing the project activities on WPS / HRBA in these communities and actively strengthening capacity of local government on GRB and innovative financing for the localization and implementation of the costed NAP1325 were very meaningful. The evaluation found also that innovation of this joint project on GRB and Innovative Financing contributed to prevent duplication.

Budget distribution between UN Women & OHCHR



Project Budget per outcome and output



C. EFFECTIVENESS

The extent to which the GRB/WPS Joint Project objectives were achieved and the interventions' success in producing the expected outputs and achieving milestones.

SCORING A. The Joint GRB/WPS Joint Project performed well and no changes were required.

FINDING 7: The evaluation found a very high satisfaction level among involved stakeholders and implementing partners and a good satisfaction level among the direct beneficiaries regarding the achievement of the expected results.

The aim of this GRB /WPS Joint Project was to enhance allocation of financial resources for the implementation of the Second Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan (NAP 1325) through innovative financing and Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB). It also aimed to further strengthen the capacity of women's organizations and vulnerable groups to hold the government accountable.

The joint project was built around two (2) outcomes, five (5) outputs and 21 activities. Its implementation fully began in the third quarter following the lifting of the State of Emergency (SOE) that had been imposed to contain COVID-19 in July 2020³³.

A six-months delay in project implementation due to the COVID-19 pandemic and some internal issues linked to the procedures were noted. A no-cost extension was requested by UN Women & OHCHR and granted by the donor (PBF) to ensure full implementation of the project activities.

The evaluation found that OUTCOME 1 (*Targeted Line Ministries³⁴ Government Agencies and local governments are implementing the NAP WPS in a more effective manner by generating financial resources through innovative financing and GRB and by creating monitoring and accountability mechanisms and capacities*) was partially achieved. The three (3) outputs under this outcome 1 were fully achieved. Delivery rate is 100%.

Outcome 1 intended to ensure that at least two line ministries and government agencies (Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance and development planning, Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection, Ministry of Internal Affairs, LNP, Government agencies and local government) allocate financial resources to implement the NAP WPS in a more effective manner through innovative Financing and GRB and by creating monitoring and accountability mechanisms and capacities. Out of the two (2) line ministries targeted by this joint project, the evaluation found that only the Ministry of Internal Affairs under its Gender unit allocated USD 20 000,- for Gender activities for this year 2021/2022. It was reported that the gender activities are also covering the NAP1325 related activities. This **Outcome 1** also planned to ensure that at least USD 50,000.- were allocated in the budget cycle 2021/2022 by the government for the implementation of the NAP 1325. In this regard, the GRB / Joint project through various capacity building and development on NAP1325 implementation and innovative financing, the development in April 2021 of a toolkit on GRPBM to

³³ Final report of the GRB/WPS Project (27/05/2021)

³⁴ Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice and LNP

support civil society organizations (CSOs) and Government Agencies to influence budget cycle, and ensure that adequate resources are allocated to the implementation of the second LNAP WPS, contributed to the observed increase in gender budget /resources by the government of Liberia from USD 200,000.00 to USD 300,000.00 in the 2021 and 2022 national fiscal budgets. This budget was reported to contribute to a certain extent to the implementation of some NAP WPS activities. Under this **Outcome 1**, the GRB / WPS Joint Project also committed to support the development of at least two innovative financing mechanisms at national level to support the mobilizing of financial resources by 2021. The evaluation found that the joint project successfully developed an IFS strategy inclusive implementation plan and IFFL that was validated by the Government of Liberia in August 2021.

The joint project managed to develop resources mobilization framework through five instruments: Diaspora Bonds (DBL), Innovative Matching Funds (IFMF), Air Ticket Levy (ATL), Extractive Industries Solidarity Contribution (EISC) and Crowdfunding for Liberia (CFL). These instruments are not yet effectively used to secure mobilization of resources needed to support the implementation of the WPS agenda in Liberia / NAP 1325.

Various project documents on GRB as well as the report on capacity building on innovative financing and GRB³⁵ that were reviewed demonstrated that an estimated amount of \$54 million (discounted value) is planned to be mobilized from 2022 over a ten-year period to finance NAP projects and activities. The NAP WPS was costed for \$28 million. The revenues mobilized through the IFS are expected to finance the full costs of the NAP WPS, provide a revolving fund to ensure the sustainability of NAP and new projects.

The financial instruments included in the IFS portfolio were contextualized to the context of Liberia and selected based on two criteria (Potential for sustainable resource mobilization and Feasibility in the current legal, socio-economic and political context).

As far as the *Potential for sustainable resource mobilization* is concerned, the total cost of the NAP WPS (2019-2023) was estimated at 28,215,000 USD. In a context of tight fiscal space and growing financing needs, aggravated by the consequences of the Covid-19 crisis, the portfolio was designed in a way that it could be enriched with financial instruments with high potential in terms of volume of resources to be mobilized.

Regarding the *Feasibility in the current legal, socio-economic and political context*, the IFS involves several stakeholders. For some instruments, a new law is needed for secured framework for investors. There is therefore a very strong political will required to support this process. Without this, the IFS strategy and IFFL could not be implemented as the validated IFS strategy and its implementation must now go through the legislature in order to be effective.

At output level, the evaluation found that Output 1.1 under outcome 1 (*Targeted Government actors at national and local level are aware and have the capacity to implement the NAP WPS*) was fully achieved.

The Joint Project successfully implemented various capacity building and development activities that are highlighted in the matrix with the title “*RF Assessment*” placed in the annexes of this report. The implemented activities directly contributed to enhance the capacity of targeted women’s organizations, and networks (WONGOSOL) in monitoring the implementation of the NAP WPS at national level. An assessment of the knowledge gap on gender, masculinities, human rights

³⁵2021, p.11

standards, HRBA and NAP WPS was conducted, and the findings discussed and validated on 12/03/2021 in Monrovia. A capacity building plan was then designed to address the identified gaps and 1325 Taskforce members³⁶ (Officials, private sector and peace hut women) were trained on NAP WPS and HRBA.

In addition, the GRB / WPS Joint Project also effectively addressed toxic masculinities in the targeted communities that was identified in the baseline study conducted in 2019 as a hindering factor of the advancement of the WPS agenda at national and county levels. The project successfully involved men at community level in the project activities and managed to have specific activities with them regarding toxic masculinities and its transformation for peace. In Tiapa for example, some men joined the peace huts and are providing them with support when needed. They are also the ones raising awareness in male dominated sittings and traditional networks for women's rights and SGBV prevention.

Finally, this project also successfully managed under this **output 1.1** to conduct at national level a Capacity Assessment to support the targeted ministries, agencies and women rights organizations in developing the innovative financing strategy for the implementation of the WPS /NAP 1325.

Output 1.2 (Government actors and Women Organizations have strengthened capacity on innovative financing and GRB, to ensure increased allocation of financial resources for the implementation of the NAP WPS) was fully achieved.

This project planned to support the design of additional interventions on economic empowerment of women to be integrated in the resource's mobilization strategy of involved stakeholders (GoL and CSOs). The evaluation found in line with this point that some relevant partners (FCI for community-based intervention) and the Ministry of Gender (At national level) were both actively supported in designing interventions to mobilize further resources as planned for the peacebuilding activities of the Second NAP WPS (2019-2023) namely “ *Women Economic Empowerment and Campaign to end Violence Against Women and Girls to be promoted by Foundation for Community Initiatives (FCI)*” and “*Women Entrepreneurship and Financial Inclusion in Liberia (WEFIL) to be promoted by Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection (MGCSP)*”.

The designed interventions that are under the responsibilities of FCI and Ministry of Gender are not only documents but important tools to support their efforts in mobilizing additional funds for further interventions to support implementation of the WPS agenda in Liberia.

Output 1.3 (Targeted government institutions have access to relevant coordination, monitoring and reporting tools and capacity to use them) was fully achieved.

This GRB/WPS Joint Project managed to build good monitoring, reporting and coordination mechanisms to strengthen the accountability of the NAP WPS. The evaluation found for example that this joint project developed on 08 March 2021 a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning System (MEL System), M&E Framework and Capacity Building Plan (CBP) for the implementation and coordination of Liberia National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (2019-2023). Reporting templates on Performance and Indicators were also developed by the project on 20 January 2021. Various trainings on Results Based Management (NAP - WPS) & Gender Responsive Monitoring and Reporting (NAP-WPS) were also organized as well as CEDAW

³⁶The evaluation found that the taskforce members are composed of ca. 15 members in Nimba and 14 in Gand Bassa (based on the coordination and members interviewed).

Shadow Report Writing Training Workshop (NAP-WPS) organized at Nimba County (Ganta) on 20/08/2021.

As results, the evaluation found that the Shadow Report of CSO platform of Liberia on the 9th Periodic Report of Liberia Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was produced to support evidence-based advocacy and periodic reporting on CEDAW at international level. The shadow report was validated by members of civil society organizations, representatives from government ministries including Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Gender, Children Social Protection; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR); and the Legislative Human Rights Association of the National Legislature. The validation was held on 27/05/2021 in Ganta City, Nimba County, Republic of Liberia.

The evaluation found that OUTCOME 2 (*More women, including marginalized women, in targeted counties hold the government accountable for the NAP WPS and support the implementation of the peacebuilding related activities of the NAP WPS*) was partially achieved. The two (2) outputs under this outcome were fully achieved. Delivery rate is 100%.

The GRB / WPS Joint Project planned to support two counties (Grand Bassa and Nimba) out of the fifteen counties in Liberia in integrating peacebuilding activities from the NAP WPS into local plans and budgets. The evaluation found that capacity building activities on WPS and GRB were effectively conducted with the officials in the targeted counties. The evaluation noted some progress in this regard. It was reported that the 1325 Taskforce established in February 2022 in Grand Bassa is actively implementing awareness raising activities on WPS in Buchanan³⁷. The development of a costed local plan is not yet initiated. This was also the case in Nimba where the established 1325 Taskforce in August 2021 is facing challenges in localizing the costed NAP1325.

The GRB / WPS Joint Project also planned to ensure the active participation of at least 25 (marginalized) women from the targeted counties (Grand Bassa and Nimba) in local sittings /meetings. The evaluation found in this regard that Peace Hut and Non-Peace Hut women were both capacitated through various activities on WPS /HRBA. As results some changes in their perception, roles and responsibilities in implementing the national agenda on UNSCR 1325 at community level were observed. The evaluation observed also here a good level of confidence among women in speaking up SGBV in the presence of men without fear or feeling intimidated. The GRB / WPS Joint Project hired for example an individual consultant who conducted training in Grand Bassa and Nimba on gender responsive budgeting with the Peace Hut Women. The training was conducted for 3 days in July and September 2021 and provided women with skills to mobilize additional resources for their own activities on peacebuilding in the community. FCI directly worked with peace-hut and non peace-hut women on WPS related issues and economic empowerment in line with the Relief and Recovery Pillar of the UNSCR 1325. In the two (2) targeted counties, some peace-hut women were invited to join some local sittings organized by the 1325 taskforce aimed to discuss WPS related issues at county and community levels but this was not consistent enough to influence any process on Peace and Security in the county or communities. In Nimba for example, it was reported that Peace hut women attended a total of two (2) coordination meetings of the 1325 Taskforce since its establishment in 2021. In Grand Bassa the evaluation noted the absence of the peace hut women in the meetings /sittings but reckoned their membership in the 1325 Taskforce.

Non-peace hut women in Nimba did not attend local sittings /meetings on WPS / HRBA as initially planned. The 1325 taskforce in both counties are resource challenged to involve taskforce members in communities far from the county capitals where the meetings are hosted.

³⁷Buchanan, also previously known as Grand Bassa on some maps, is the third largest city in Liberia.

At output level, Output 2.1 (*Women Organizations have strengthened capacities to implement, monitor, report and promote evidence-based advocacy to ensure implementation of the NAP WPS*) was fully achieved.

The GRB/WPS Joint project managed to strengthen targeted state institutions & Women Organizations for implementation of the NAP WPS in Grand Bassa and Nimba.

The evaluation found that various training on M&E and reporting were conducted at county level. A few meaningful examples are the 5-day mobile data collection training (NAP - WPS) conducted on 19-23 July 2021 in Buchanan City Hall (Grand Bassa County) with a total of 22 participants (6 females and 16 males), the CEDAW Shadow Writing Training Workshop (NAP-WPS) Nimba County - Ganta organized on 20 August 2021, the ToT conducted for Women's Organizations and CSOs on GRB in the peace huts in Nimba and Grand Bassa or trainings on advocacy, WPS and HRBA with local authorities. As a result, the evaluation observed positive transformations regarding the monitoring, reporting and evidence-based advocacy for the implementation of the NAP 1325. An Advocacy tool was also produced with the title "*Effective and Efficient Advocacy. A tool for engagement with partners on ensuring the implementation of the WPS NAP*" to support further evidence-based advocacy on NAP1325 implementation in Liberia as well as a Manual For Training of Trainers (TOT) in Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB) to address the capacity deficit for mainstreaming Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB) into the national budget processes. However, at district level the evaluation found a concerning gap in strengthening the capacity in monitoring the implementation of the NAP 1325. The GRB / WPS Joint Project did not implement capacity building activities in the districts and the government representatives in the districts (Nimba and Grand Bassa) interviewed during the data collection phase of this evaluation were not at all informed about the NAP 1325, its monitoring mechanisms and this project.

Output 2.2. (*Men, boys and local leaders are aware and understand the rights of women, including marginalized women to participate in public and peacebuilding processes.*) was fully achieved.

The GRB/WPS Joint Project successfully managed to address with a limited audience only prevailing socio cultural and traditional norms and perceptions preventing women from participating in peace and security related activities, interventions and discussions. The project conducted a perception assessment and Gender & power analysis as planned to identify main challenges that were addressed by various awareness raising activities involving men. In addition, awareness raising activities & performing and visual arts with the title "*Drama MenEngaged*" written and produced by Talking Drum Studio were implemented to Support Women's Rights and Shift Perceptions around Gender Stereotypes in Grand Bassa and Nimba Counties between September to October 2021.

* Review of Outcome Indicators of WPS Joint Project of UN Women & OHCHR

OUTCOME 1: Targeted Line Ministries (Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance and development planning, Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection, Ministry of Internal Affairs, LNP) , Government agencies and local governments are implementing the NAP WPS in a more effective manner by generating financial resources through innovative Financing and GRB and by creating monitoring and accountability mechanisms and capacities

Outcome indicator 1 a. Number of Line Ministries and Government Agencies that allocate resources for the implementation of the NAP WPS.

Baseline : 1 Ministry of Justice (2019)

Target 2021:At least 2 additional

FINDINGS:

The Ministry of Internal Affairs under its Gender Unit allocated USD 20 000 for Gender activities for this year 2021/2022. This is the very time. The gender activities are also covering the NAP1325 related activities.

Target partially achieved (50%): One (1) additional line ministry allocated resources through its gender budget for the implementation of the NAP WPS activities.

Outcome indicator 1.b. Amount of resources allocated by the government for the implementation of the NAP WPS

Baseline: USD 16,000 (2019)

Target: At least USD 50,000 (2021/2022 budget cycle)

FINDINGS:

The evaluation found an increased in gender budget /resources from USD 200,000.00 to USD 300,000.00 in the 2021/22 and 2022/23 national fiscal budgets. This is planned be used for the implementation of some NAP WPS activities.

Target partially achieved (50%)

Outcome indicator 1.c

Number of innovative financing mechanism developed nationally and started mobilizing resources.

Baseline 2019: 0

Target 2021: At least 2

FINDINGS:

The evaluation found that this joint project developed an IFS strategy inclusive implementation plan and IFFL that was validated by the Government of Liberia in August 2021. Now this must go through legislature in order to be operational / effective.

Target partially achieved (50%)

OUTCOME 2: More Women, including marginalized Women, in targeted counties hold the government accountable for the NAP WPS and support the implementation of the peacebuilding related activities of the NAP WPS

Outcome indicator 2a. Number of Targeted Counties (Grand Bassa and Nimba) that integrate peacebuilding activities from the NAP WPS into local plans and budgets

Baseline: 0

Target: At least 2 counties

FINDINGS:

Capacity building activities on NAP WPS and GRB were conducted with the officials in the targeted counties. The evaluation noted some transformation in this regard, and it was further reported that the 1325 Taskforce in Grand Bassa is now implementing awareness raising activities in Buchanan. In Nimba, the 1325 taskforce is in the process of beginning to work in their local plans. However, the localization of the NAP 1325 and budgets were not implemented in this joint project.

Target partially achieved. Process initiated is still ongoing.

Outcome indicator 2b. Women including marginalized women in targeted counties (Grand Bassa and Nimba), that participate in local sittings

Baseline: 0

Target: at least 25 by the end of the project

FINDINGS:

Peace hut and non-peace hut women were capacitated through various activities on WPS /HRBA. In the targeted counties, some peace hut women were invited to join some sittings but this was not consistent enough. At 1325 Taskforce level, women are actively participating in the meetings /sittings. In Nimba, it was reported that Peace hut women attended a total of 2 coordination meetings of the 1325 Taskforce since its establishment. In Grand Bassa the evaluation noted the absence of the peace hut women in the meetings /sittings but reckon their participation as Taskforce member.

Target partially achieved as follows:

- Regarding the active participation of women as taskforce members in the meetings / sittings: **100% achieved.**
- Regarding the active participation of marginalized women and peace hut women in the sittings / meetings: in Nimba out of the three 1325 taskforce meetings, they joined 2 meetings: **67% achieved.** In Buchanan marginalized women and peace hut women were not actively part of the sittings / meetings: **0%.**

FINDING 8: This evaluation observed limited coordination amongst stakeholders at governmental level. Some Ministries and stakeholders were unaware of their specific roles and responsibilities in the coordination mechanisms established by this GRB/WPS Joint Project. At county level, some weaknesses and gaps were also observed.

The GRB/WPS Joint Project had a project management board composed of Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Finance and Development, involved CSOs representatives, UN Women / OHCHR representatives, to represent the project at the Peacebuilding Fund Steering Committee.

At Government level, according to the project document MGCP should have been in charge of ensuring the overall coordination, monitoring and implementation of the second NAP WPS and was expected to be responsible for the management and coordination of innovative financing initiatives in the country. The Ministry of Finance was expected to have the lead in promoting GRB and in coordinating innovative financing related activities. The Ministry of Internal Affairs was expected to have the responsibility of oversight of county administration. The evaluation found that the roles and responsibilities stipulated in the Project Document (ProDoc) were not clear to all involved

stakeholders of this WPS / GRB joint project. While the Ministry of Gender is confirming its joint coordination role on GRB & WPS with the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Finance is mentioning the fact that their role within this WPS / GRB joint project was limited to consultations and attendance as beneficiaries to some activities on GRB. Moreover, the evaluation found that the GRB Unit of the Ministry of Finance is implementing activities in GRB under the Spotlight Programme and were not actively part of the coordination and implementation of this joint project that focused on GRB / Innovative financing. Regarding innovative financing, the Ministry of Finance and other targeted stakeholders were actively involved in various consultative activities that have led to the development of an IFS Strategy and IFFL. Throughout the process of designing an innovative financing strategy on WPS, the Ministry provided insight and guidance to the process that was led / facilitated by a Senior International Consultant hired by UN Women who worked in Liberia and remotely in 2020-2021. However, regarding GRB activities, the evaluation found a very limited role play by the Ministry of Finance under this joint project. While the Ministry of Gender confirmed its joint coordination role on GRB & WPS with the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Finance mentioned the fact that their role within this WPS / GRB joint project was limited to consultations and attendance as beneficiary to some activities on GRB only. During the in-depth interviews with the involved stakeholders the evaluation noted that the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) which was expected to be the main lead partner regarding the implementation of GRB and Innovative finance activities as well as the advocate for the validated IFS Strategy and plan, was not at all aware of its roles and responsibilities within this GRB /WPS Joint Project. The Ministry Finance sees for example the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) as leading on GRB, while MGCSP sees it the other way around. In addition, within MFDP, the departments of GRPB and Revenue & Taxes are unfamiliar to each other's roles. These misunderstandings were identified as limiting the efforts of stakeholders in promoting GRB and innovative financing within the framework of this joint project.

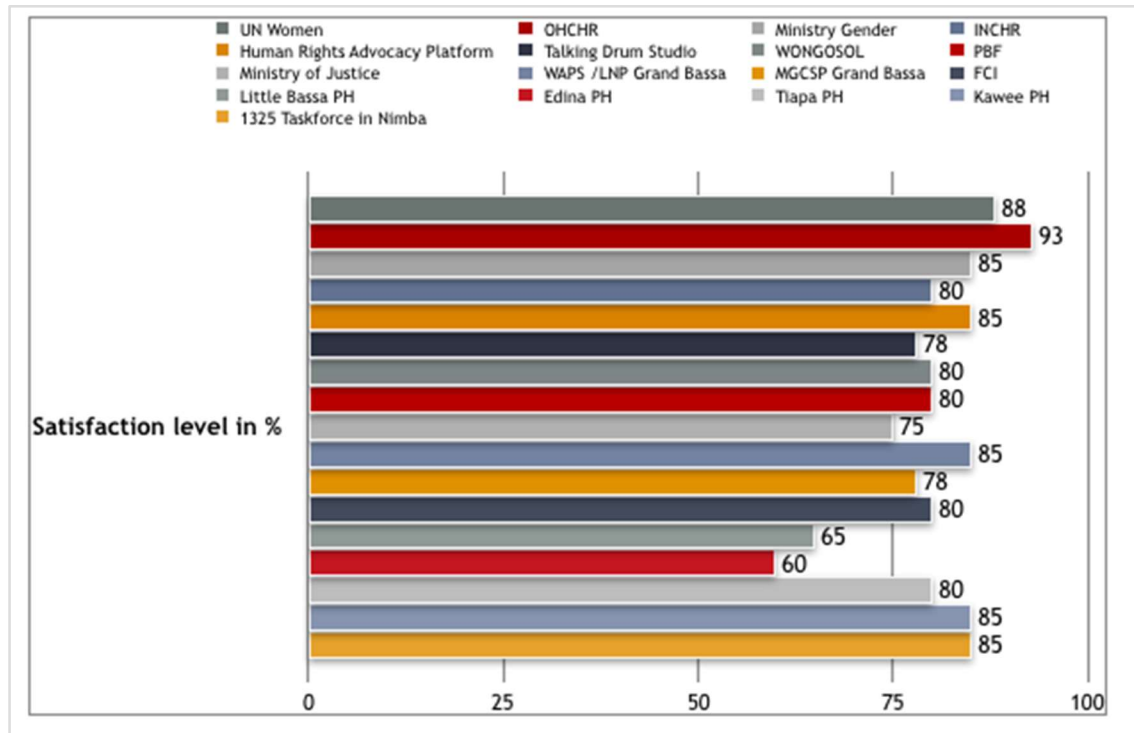
The evaluation also found that the GRB Unit of the Ministry of Finance is implementing activities in GRB under the Spotlight Programme led by UN Women in Liberia and were not at all part of the coordination of this GRB/WPS joint project. Finally, there were not at all synergies built between the coordination mechanisms established by this GRB/WPS Joint Project and the existing GRB Coordination Technical Group hosted at the Ministry of finance with line / targeted ministries acting as members.

At county level, the establishment of the 1325 Taskforce at the end of this project in the targeted counties (Nimba August 2021 and Grand Bassa in February 2022) following various trainings provided to its members on WPS/HRBA /GRB enabled the 1325 Taskforce members to organize for both Nimba and Grand Bassa coordination meetings on a Monthly basis.

In Nimba, the 1325 Taskforce is comprised of County Rural Women, Peace Hut, Ministry of Gender, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice and the Security Council, due to the absence of the Ministry of Defense in the county and the Liberia National Police. The 1325 Taskforce also included the private sector comprising of Acelor Mittal, Nimba Rubber Corporation. They meet once a month. During the monthly meeting, members of the Taskforce bring their reports for review and discussion. Each member provides an update on activities implemented on the NAP 1325 and challenges to be addressed. In Grand Bassa and Nimba, training on Women Peace and Security in December 2021 and January 2022 included CSO/CBOs, and Community leaders. The training focused on the development of a structure at the county level for coordinating the implementation of the NAP. In February 2022, the 1325 Taskforce was set up. The Taskforce is composed of the Ministry of Gender is the Chair, co-chair by the Bassa Women Development Association (BAWODA), and co-chair by LNP. Other members include the Office of the Development Superintendent, Project Coordinator from Ministry of Internal Affairs and Marketing Association.

At UN level, the evaluation found that monthly coordination and technical meetings (In-person and then online due to Covid-19 mobility restrictions) were organized with UN Women, OHCHR and the Donor PBF. These meetings aimed at discussing the project progress and required mitigation strategies to apply where needed. These meetings supported the coordination of the GRB/WPS Joint Project and contributed to the observed good delivery rate of this intervention.

*** Satisfaction level of stakeholders and beneficiaries of the Joint GRB/WPS Project in Liberia**



D. SUSTAINABILITY

The likelihood of a continuation of project results after the project is completed.

SCORING B. *The GRB/WPS Joint Project performed well but some changes were required.*

FINDING 9: The evaluation found good elements of sustainability of this GRB/WPS Joint project that must be further enhanced.

At normative level, the evaluation found that GRB/WPS Joint Project closely collaborated with the Government to allocate budget to address gender issues. This has led to a reported increase in the gender budget from US\$200,000.00 to US\$300,000.00 in the 2021/22 and 2022/23 national fiscal budgets. Moreover, the Ministry of Internal Affairs under its Gender Unit allocated for the first time USD 20 000 for gender activities for the budget year 2021/2022. The gender activities are also reportedly planned to cover some of the NAP1325 related activities.

Within a short period of time (18months), this GRB/WPS Joint Project successfully developed an IFS Strategy and implementation plan as well as an IFFL that were validated on June 29th, 2021 by the GOL. The Strategy and plan must now go through the legislature in order to be operational and effective.

At capacity development and Building level, the project focused its main activities on enhancing the skills and knowledge of the targeted line ministries, CSOs, Peace Huts & targeted 640 direct beneficiaries on WPS / HRBA / WHR commitments / GRB and Innovative Financing.

This strategy was to a certain extent successful as the evaluation found evidence demonstrating the good commitment of the GOL in implementing to a certain extent GRB and innovative financing in Liberia for the advancement of the WPS agenda. In addition, there are also some efforts done by the GOL to implement the NAP1325. According to some national taskforce members, the government of Liberia has shown some level of commitment. In some public security institutions, women were given priority during recruitment processes. It was also reported that during the recent recruitment process of Arm Forces of Liberia (AFL), the Ministry of Defense (MOD) organized a pre-recruitment exercise for women willing to enroll in the AFL. It was reported that the Liberia National Police (LNP) considers a 50-50 chance for both men and women willing to enroll in the Police.

At Socioeconomic level, economic empowerment activities around VSLA in TIAPA were successful. The evaluation found that in Tiapa, women successfully managed to invest the acquired funds from the funds allocated by this project to VSLA activities and performed very well. The evaluation found for example that the Peace Hut managed to establish identity cards for its members with the interests generated by the funds allocated by this joint project. The peace hut invested also in the protection system for women and SGBV survivors forms the communities. This contributed to enhancing their reporting system to local authorities. They also generated important interests from the economic activities that are now helping the structure in diversifying their income greeting activities.

Non-Peace Hut in Nimba and Peace Hut in Grand Bassa (Little Bassa and Edina) did not perform well. The evaluation identified a few weaknesses that challenged the sustainability of efforts done by this GRB/WPS Joint Project at economic level.

In Little Bassa, the USD 3 000,- allocated to VSLA were used as planned and generated interests that were invested in the construction of a new peace hut by women instead of being used for further activities within the peace hut where women were affected by the socio economic challenges of the COVID-19. But the leadership of the Peace hut decided without prior consultation with the project to use the interests generated to build a new peace hut as the one that was built in 2011 is no longer functional. Consequently, women now need additional funds to finalize the construction of their new Peace Hut. In Edina, Peace Hut women invested all the funds allocated by the GRB/WPS Joint Project to VSLA to build a new peace hut because the peace hut built in 2010 is no longer functional. Therefore, there was not support in economic activities for this peace hut of more than 200 members. This created frustration among some peace hut members as their economic needs were not addressed by the structure and the project.

In Nimba, Non-Peace Hut Women joined their efforts in a VSLA and invested the funds allocated by this project (USD 3 000,-) in farming. However, the access to local market impacted their economic activities and some goods were not sold and wasted.

E. GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The extent to which the GRB/ WPS Joint Project activities were designed, implemented and monitored to promote human rights, gender equality inclusion of disability, the meaningful political participation of women and to minimize negative effects of social exclusion.

SCORING B. *The GRB/WPS Joint Project performed well but some changes were required*

FINDING 10: The evaluation found a very good involvement of government institutions and women-led civil society organizations to the project design and implementation. Youth participated also in some awareness raising activities addressing gender stereotypes, power dynamics and toxic masculinities by the project. However, at district levels, GOL structures and other relevant CSOs for the WPS implementation were excluded.

This GRB/WPS applied a participatory approach that ensured active involvement of relevant government institutions, women-led civil society organizations and community-based organizations inclusive peace hut women in Nimba and Grand Bassa. They were actively consulted at the design phase of this GRB/WPS Joint Project in 2019 and provided insightful and meaningful input to the project objectives and content.

At the community level, there were efforts done to promote women participation in local leadership. The evaluation found that some women are now serving as paramount, clan, sessional and town chiefs, which have been traditional positions reserved for men. They are now demanding shares and participating in land discussion. Though these cannot be totally credited to this project, it provided training and awareness among women in the communities on women participation in leadership.

As far as the involvement of **youth** is concerned, the evaluation noted that this project planned to collaborate with The Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY) expected to mobilize youth at community level. However, there is no evidence of their involvement in the project as planned. According to participants in focus group discussion, the youth particularly the young men and some elders were trained by Talking Drum Studio and participated only in awareness raising activities on "*Positive Masculinity and Gender Awareness*". It is important to note that youth in Liberia are faced with numerous challenges including limited education, unemployment and violence, amongst others. The youth employment rate is estimated at 35.1% which is of particular concern.³⁸ Because the youth are mostly unemployed and involved in drug abuse, they are often used as vehicles for conflict. Actively involving them in WPS interventions would contribute to significant progress in changing their attitudes.

At district level, the evaluation found concerning gaps. This GRB/WPS Joint Project failed to involve government officials and CSOs. District officials and CBOs proved no knowledge of the NAP1325 and were not at all informed about the project and its objectives on GRB/Innovative Financing and accountability to the implementation of the WPS agenda. Some declared not at all informed about NAPP1325 and its structures established at both national and county levels and

³⁸ Agency Social Protection Assessment (SPA) Initiative (2014). Liberia Youth, Employment, Skills (YES) Project and Liberia Youth Employment Program (LYEP) Country Pilot Report.

demonstrated during the interviews very weak understanding and knowledge about Women, Peace and Security.

FINDING 11: The GRB/WPS Joint Project successfully addressed SGBV and Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs) related issues in its activities although this was not the main aim of the intervention.

Even though SGBV was not a focus of this GRB/WPS Joint Project, it was effectively considered and addressed during its implementation.

SGBV remains a serious challenge in Liberia and in the counties where this project was implemented. An evaluation report of UN Women Liberia on SGBV (2020)³⁹ found that SGBV, especially rape, remains one of the most concerning Human Rights violations in the country. According to statistics provided by the MGCSP the high prevalence of impunity in SGBV cases, accessibility of initial services for SGBV including medical and psychological access to adequate information in effectively reporting and handling cases are main challenges in addressing SGBV and HTPs in the country. In addressing SGBV in its awareness raising activities and some trainings on WPS and NAP1325 where SGBV referral pathways were also presented to participants, the GRB/WPS Joint Project implemented some recommendations from the previous evaluation of the UN Joint Programme on preventing Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs) and SGBV in Liberia (2020)⁴⁰ and contributed to the UN Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) and its article 4-I, which calls upon state to take measures to ensure that law enforcement officers and public officials responsible for implementing policies to prevent, investigate and punish VAWG receive training to sensitize them to the needs of women.

Regarding Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs), it was found that in Grand Bassa and Nimba, women are now actively participating in community development with some communities but still face resistance from men who are still in control of decision at family community levels. There is still an unequal power relationship between men and women in the visited communities and interviews conducted with men supporting the peace hut demonstrated for example the urgent need to further address gender stereotypes and unequal power relations that cause some conflicts in the households.

It was also observed that harmful traditional practices are still being carried out in Nimba and Grand Bassa. This and other factors including poverty, early marriage and single parenting affect women and limit girls' education in the project communities, especially in Grand Bassa.

FINDING 12: The GRB/WPS Joint Project failed to consistently involve PWDs at the county and community levels. The evaluation did not find evidence of the active participation of women/men with disability in various GRB/WPS/HRBA activities implemented by this joint project in the targeted counties and communities. Some training and information materials on WPS remain sophisticated for PWDs and not relevant to their specific needs.

The evaluation found that the National Union of Disable Organizations in Liberia was involved in the project design as recommended by the Government of Liberia in its efforts to improving the rights of PWDs through the implementation of the United Nations Convention

39

⁴⁰<https://gate.unwomen.org/Evaluation/Details?EvaluationId=11459>

on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD) which was signed and ratified by the Government of Liberia in 2012. The umbrella organization (National Union of Disable Organizations) of the Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) was consulted during this project design and made input into the project document. Its representative participated in a training of trainers (TOT) organized by this project. At the end of the training, participants received certificates for participation and were certified to replicate the training for their respective members. After the TOT, according to key informants, the Representative of the National Union of Disable Organizations conducted three trainings for some PWDs using the contents of the TOT.

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) was also highly involved in this project design and implementation. Involving the MGCSP is a consideration of the social protection for the marginalized groups. In 2016, the government of Liberia added a social protection component to the Ministry of Gender making it MGCSP to handle issues of disability along with the National Commission on Disability. Both institutions have received financial support from the government to deal with issues of PWDs. However, even though the government is supporting PWDs through the existing structures like MGCSP and NCD, most of their challenges remain unaddressed, and some respondents of this evaluation expected this GRB/WPS Joint Project intervention in this direction.

This GRB/WPS Joint Project did not develop useful materials to PWDs.

In interviews, it was stated that PWDs were unable to fully participate or contribute to the implementation of this joint project on NAP WPS and felt excluded in its implementation. Despite efforts made in simplifying the NAP WPS for ordinary citizens and some marginalized groups in the communities to understand and contribute to its implementation, it was reported that these materials were “sophisticated” for PWD. Further document reviewed revealed also that this GBR/WPS Joint Project did not conduct a vulnerability assessment for the most vulnerable group at risk of violence, discrimination and exclusion, the PWDs. There was also no systematic plan involving PWDs at the national, sub-national and community levels.

* Performance rating of the GRB / WPS Joint Project

Criteria and key parameters	Rating	Justification
Relevance	A	Design: The joint project was informed by the lessons from the first NAP 1325 of Liberia, recommendations from the previous PBF funded project on WPS and findings of various consultations of relevant stakeholders conducted in 2019 in the targeted counties. The project also actively involved at the design stage a National Commission on Disability in its design to capture the needs and priorities of women and girls with disabilities in Peace and Security related issues. ToC design was also participative.
Project design	A	
Alignment to global, african and national policies & protocols on Women, Peace and Security	A	
Alignment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2020 - 2024)	A	
Efficiency	C	General good value-for money for an innovative project implemented in a very challenging context that was also affected by COVID-19 constraints (2019-2021). However, weak M&E coupled by some delays up to 4 months in the disbursements of funds to the implementing partners in the communities inclusive to the involved peace huts challenged the project efficiency.
Value-for money	B	
Management Efficiency	C	
M&E	C	
Effectiveness	A	Very good project delivery rate at output level and good delivery rate at outcome level contributed to the very good results of the project effectiveness
Delivery rate	A	
Achieving stated outputs	A	
Achieving stated outcomes	B	
Sustainability	B	Development and validation of the IFS Strategy & Plan by the GOL as well as observed acquired skills and knowledge of government officials and CSOs on WPS/HRBA /GRB and Innovative Financing contributed to the good results on sustainability.
GRB/Innovative Financing	B	
Capacity building and development on WPS/HRBA and GRB/Innovative Financing	B	
GE/HR	B	Relevant government institutions and women-led civil society organizations and communities in Nimba and Grand Bassa relevant to implement the NAP1325 in Liberia were actively consulted and involved in the project cycle. SGBV was not the focus of this Joint Project and was successfully addressed during the implementation. However, PWDs were involved in the project design through consultations with an umbrella organization for PWDs but were not systematically integrated in the project implementation. The project failed to involve relevant structure at district levels.
Project inclusiveness	B	
PWDs involvement in the project design and implementation	B	

VI - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall GRB/WPS Score: B

- **CONCLUSION 1** *(Based on findings 1, 3, 9, 11)*

The GRB/WPS Joint Project was highly relevant and was fully in line with the national priorities in the area of WPS / UNSCR1325, CEDAW and other African and National policies and protocols on Women, peace and Security as well as UNSDCF (2020 and 2024).

It was informed by the lessons from the first NAP 1325 of Liberia and by the conclusions 2,3,5 and 7 as well as recommendations 2.1 on budget allocation to the implementation of the NAP 1325 ; 3.1 on WPS further capacity building on WPS and 5.1 on VSLA enhancement provided by the evaluation of previous PBF funded project on WPS “ *Nothing for Us and Without Us*” that was implemented by UN Women, IOM and UNDP (10 January 2018- 8 July 2019). The evaluation found also that this joint project conducted a baseline survey at its early design stage (2019) and various consultations with 21 strategic stakeholders and implementing partners were conducted. The joint project also managed to involve a National Commission on Disability in its design to capture the general needs and priorities of women and girls with disabilities in Peace and Security related issues. However, the estimated number of organizations working with PWDs is 46. Involving the umbrella organization (the union) was not sufficient in understanding the specific needs of PWDs in security and justice related issues and in effectively addressing them in the targeted counties and communities. Specific needs of PWDs were therefore not fully integrated and addressed by this project. There was no evidence of vulnerability assessment for the most at risk group in Liberia and the targeted counties / communities.

- **CONCLUSION 2** *(Based on findings 4, 5 and 6)*

This GRB/WPS Joint Project was very innovative in the context of Liberia and its main focus on strengthening capacity of GOL structures, CSOs and peace hut on GRB, Innovative Financing, WPS and NAP1325 was very effective. There is a general good value-for money for this GRB/WPS innovative project that was implemented in a very challenging context affected by COVID-19 constraints (2019-2021). However, the weak M&E coupled by some challenges in delivering as ONE in the communities and the reported delays (up to 4 months) in the disbursements of funds to the implementing partner in the communities inclusive to the involved peace huts challenged the project efficiency.

- **CONCLUSION 3** *(Based on findings 6, 7 and 8)*

The joint project was built around two (2) outcomes, five (5) outputs and 21 activities. Its implementation fully began in the third quarter following the lifting of the State of Emergency (SOE) that had been imposed to contain COVID-19 in July 2020. Nevertheless, the evaluation found a very good satisfaction level of involved parties and beneficiaries due to the very good project delivery rate at output level (*100% of 5 outputs were achieved*) and a good delivery rate at outcome level (*50% outcome 1 and outcome 2, one target is in progress. One target was 100% achieved and another one at 67% achieved*)

The project also successfully developed an IFS strategy inclusive implementation plan and IFFL that was validated by the Government of Liberia in August 2021. Prevailing socio cultural and traditional norms and perceptions preventing women from participating in peace and security related activities were also addressed. As results some changes in their perception, roles and responsibilities in implementing the national agenda on UNSCR 1325 at community level were observed. The evaluation observed also here a good level of confidence among women in speaking up SGBV in the presence of men without fear or feeling intimidated.

This contributed to the very good results of the project effectiveness. However, some challenges and gaps in coordination mechanisms at governmental and at county levels were observed.

- **CONCLUSION 4** (*Based on finding 9*)

This GRB/WPS Joint Project achieved good sustainable results. At normative level, the project closely collaborated with the Government to allocate budget to address gender and WPS related issues. An increase in the gender budget from US\$200,000.00 to US\$300,000.00 in the 2021/22 and 2022/23 national fiscal budgets was observed and the Ministry of Internal Affairs under its Gender Unit allocated for the first time USD 20 000 for gender and WPS activities for the budget year 2021/2022. This GRB/WPS Joint Project successfully developed also an IFS Strategy and implementation plan as well as an IFFL that were validated on June 29th, 2021, by the Government of Liberia. The Strategy and plan must now go through the legislature in order to be operational and effective. There were also good results observed at capacity development and Building levels on WPS / HRBA / WHR commitments / GRB and Innovative Financing. However, there were some weaknesses observed at economic level and activities around VSLA did not fully achieve the expected results in the communities.

- **CONCLUSION 5** (*Based on findings 1, 3, 10, 11, 12*)

Although SGBV was not the primary focus of this GRB/WPS Joint Project it was successfully addressed during the implementation phase. Youth and Men were also included in some awareness raising activities addressing gender stereotypes, unfair power relation dynamics and toxic masculinities in the communities that are hindering the advancement of the WPS agenda in Liberia. However, PWDs were not systematically involved in the implementation of the project activities. At district level, relevant stakeholders and structures were excluded from the project design and implementation. The evaluation found that they were not at all aware of the project activities, its contents and objectives. This challenged to some extent the inclusiveness and GE/HR results of this project.

* Recommendations

The following recommendations are formulated to address the issues and constraints identified in this assessment and to directly respond to key findings that emerged from the qualitative and quantitative analyses conducted by this evaluation. They were discussed during consultations with programme staff and partners and presented in the preliminary presentation workshop held on 5th of May 2022 in Monrovia, Liberia.

Conclusions	Recommendations	Responsible (s)	Priority
<p>Conclusion 1 <i>Based on findings 1, 10, 12</i></p>	<p>1.1 UN Women, OHCHR and Donor (PBF) should conduct a vulnerable and marginalized group assessment in the counties and communities targeted by WPS interventions. The findings should inform the design of an appropriate marginalized group and vulnerable strategy & plan that will inform further programming on how WPS projects will involve PWDs and marginalized women & men at various levels. Refer to available UN guidelines and examples:</p> <p><i>VMGF guideline led by UN Women for inspiration:</i> https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ESEAsia/Docs/Publications/2020/03/ap-COVID-19_Community-Engagement_130320.pdf</p> <p><i>UN Guide one LNOB principles:</i>https://unsdg.un.org/resources/leaving-no-one-behind-unsdg-operational-guide-un-country-teams</p>	<p>UN Women OHCHR Ministry of Gender</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
<p>Conclusion 2 <i>Based on findings 4, 5 and 6</i></p>	<p>2.1 PBF should ensure that each funded project has a clear communication strategy and plan in place in line with the recommendations of UN guide to communicating as One (2014). In the guide, The United Nations underlines the importance of Joint communications strategy that includes shared messaging in support of the One Programme and the development of standard joint communication products, as well as shared crisis communications; and Common, established visual identity for joint United Nations products and communication.</p> <p>2.2 Assess the knowledge and skills of UN Women & OHCHR project in RBM and take action to strengthen their capacities through various actions, such as coaching, mentorship or additional training, etc. In addition, UN Women and OHCHR Ensure RBM is effectively applied in programming, budgeting, monitoring and reporting. All joint interventions must meet RBM requirements. This measure / action will be very helpful in regard to the observed turnover of M&E staff in the two implementing UN agencies.</p>	<p>Donor (PBF)</p> <p>UN Women / Regional Office OHCHR</p>	<p>Immediate</p>

Conclusions	Recommendations	Responsible (s)	Priority
Conclusion 3 <i>Based on findings 6, 7 and 8</i>	3.1 Provide further support for the implementation of the IFS strategy and plan that was validated in 2021 by the GOL. Further support the capacity of GOL representatives and CSO in other counties and communities on GRB/Innovative Financing, WPS/HRBA. Detailed recommendations on Innovative financing and GRB are listed below.*	UN Women OHCHR Ministry of Finance Ministry of Gender	Mid-term
	3.2 Ensure that all WPS materials produced are accessible to all inclusive PWDs in the 15 counties and communities. Further disseminate the NAP 1325 in the counties and districts to ensure understanding and accountability at district and community levels.	UN Women	Immediate
Conclusion 4 <i>based on finding 9</i>	4.1 For future intervention on WPS in the communities Peace Hut should be involved as partners rather than beneficiaries to implement WPS activities at community level. This will strengthen their capacities and positions in the communities and will contribute to ensuring their economic sustainability.	UN Women PBF	Mid-term
	Non-peace hut communities that are already organized around VSLA must be further supported to become peace-hut and more structured.		

* Detailed recommendations on Innovative financing and GRB (Conclusion 3)*

Innovative Financing:

- **3.1.1** Advocate, mobilize and sensitize GOL and state agencies for the implementation of the IFS Strategy and its IFFL component. In particular, it will be essential to mobilize, sensitize, popularize and advocate for the buy-in of the IFS's target population, state agencies, WROs and CSOs. An advocacy tool has been developed and should help to achieve this goal.
- **3.1.2** Implement the main recommendations provided by the international expert after completion of its assignment on the implementation of the IFS Strategy, IFFL, IFMF, CFL and IFMF as indicated in the IFS Strategy validated in June 2021 by the GOL.

GRB:

- **3.1.3** UN Women / OHCHR, the Ministry of Gender and the Ministry of Finance must further strengthen the existing GRB coordination structure at the Ministry of Finance. At county level, a GRB technical group must be established for the oversight of GRB activities at county level.
- **3.1.4** UN Women / OHCHR must support the localization process of the NAP1325 in the targeted counties. At least 30% of additional counties must be supported in designing their local action plan on 1325 that will directly contribute to the NAP1325. The local action plan on UNSCR1325 must reflect the realities, challenges and WPS risks in the counties / districts and communities that differ from one county to another. Communities and districts must play a critical role in this process to ensure local ownership of the local action plans **Bottom-Up approach is key here**. The implementation of the WPS agenda must be from the communities, districts and counties up to national level.
- **3.1.5** Further technical support must be provided to the targeted counties and the pilot ones (30% of the counties at high risk of conflict in Liberia). Ensure that by 2023 the targeted counties have a costed local plan on UNSCR1325 and allocate at least 2% by 2023 of county budget to its implementation.

Capacity Building on innovative financing & GRB

- **3.1.6** Innovative finance and GRB are new topics in Liberia. There is a need to further strengthen additional CSOs, partners and GOL representatives.

VII - LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

• Elements of Innovation and best practices of this GRB/WPS Joint Project

Innovation and Best Practices

Linkages between WPS and HRBA in all capacity building and development activities of the project

WPS agenda is often seen as a standalone instrument for women in peacebuilding with limited linkages to other Human Rights agendas and instruments like CEDAW. This intervention successfully integrated an integrated approach based on coherence between political and security measures, development and human rights agendas, including gender equality and the rule of law. This is aligned to resolution 2122, that recognizes the importance of CEDAW and its Optional Protocol to the WPS agenda.

Enhanced accountability mechanisms in the communities in localization and implementing the NAP1325.

Civil society and other relevant stakeholders play an important role in strengthening the accountability process on WPS implementation including by increasing women's participation in peace dialogues and peacebuilding efforts and by allocating funds to support the implementation of the local and national actions plans on 1325. By strengthening the capacity of key line ministries and private sector (in Nimba for example) as well as community-based structures like peace huts, this project equipped them with knowledge and tools to understand the accountability mechanisms to be adopted in ensuring the full implementation of the NAP 1325 in Liberia.

Various NAP 1325 developed and adopted by UN Member States fail to mobilize / secure funds for full implementation. This was also the case of the previous NAP I on WPS in Liberia.

GRB and Innovative Financing for the WPS agenda in Liberia

The baseline survey on “Advancing the Implementation of UNSCR Women in Peace and Security through Strengthening Accountability Frameworks, Innovative Financing and Gender Responsive Budgeting (WPS) Project” conducted by UN Women and OHCHR (P. 17) found that following the review and analysis of the national budgets 2019/20, it was established that there was no budget line related to the NAP WPS and key output areas of the NAP WPS were also not funded under other activities. The national budget 2020/21, also has not included a budget line for implementation of the NAP WPS. Additionally, the objectives of the 2020/21 budget does not include the NAP WPS as a policy instrument to be implemented but makes mention of other policy instruments like the National Social Policy Frameworks.

By strengthening skills of line ministries on GRB & inclusive innovative financing and by developing an IFS strategy and plan that was validated by the GOL in 2021, this Joint project provided a framework of the implementation of the national action plan on WPS.

Involvement of counties and communities in the process is very important and is linked to accountability efforts on WPS advancement done by this joint project.

Involvement of Private Sector in the 1325 task forces in the counties : Example of Nimba

Under the “Relief & Recovery” pillar of the WPS agenda, socio economic empowerment is very critical. The Joint project addressed this by providing funds to VSLAs in peace hut but also non-peace hut communities to boost their economic activities that were affected by COVID-19 constraints. Some challenges were raised by the beneficiaries such as access to the labor market, diversification of their activities etc. In Nimba, the newly established taskforce involved the private sector to address these issues. This is innovative and very relevant.

