**REPORT**

Joint Technical and Review Meeting Report - UNDP & IOM Liberia/Cote d’ Ivoire

**For the Project:**

«Cross-Border Cooperation Between Cote d’ Ivoire and Liberia for Sustainable Peace and Social Cohesion»

**22nd - 25th May 2018**

**Boulevard Palace; Monrovia, Liberia**



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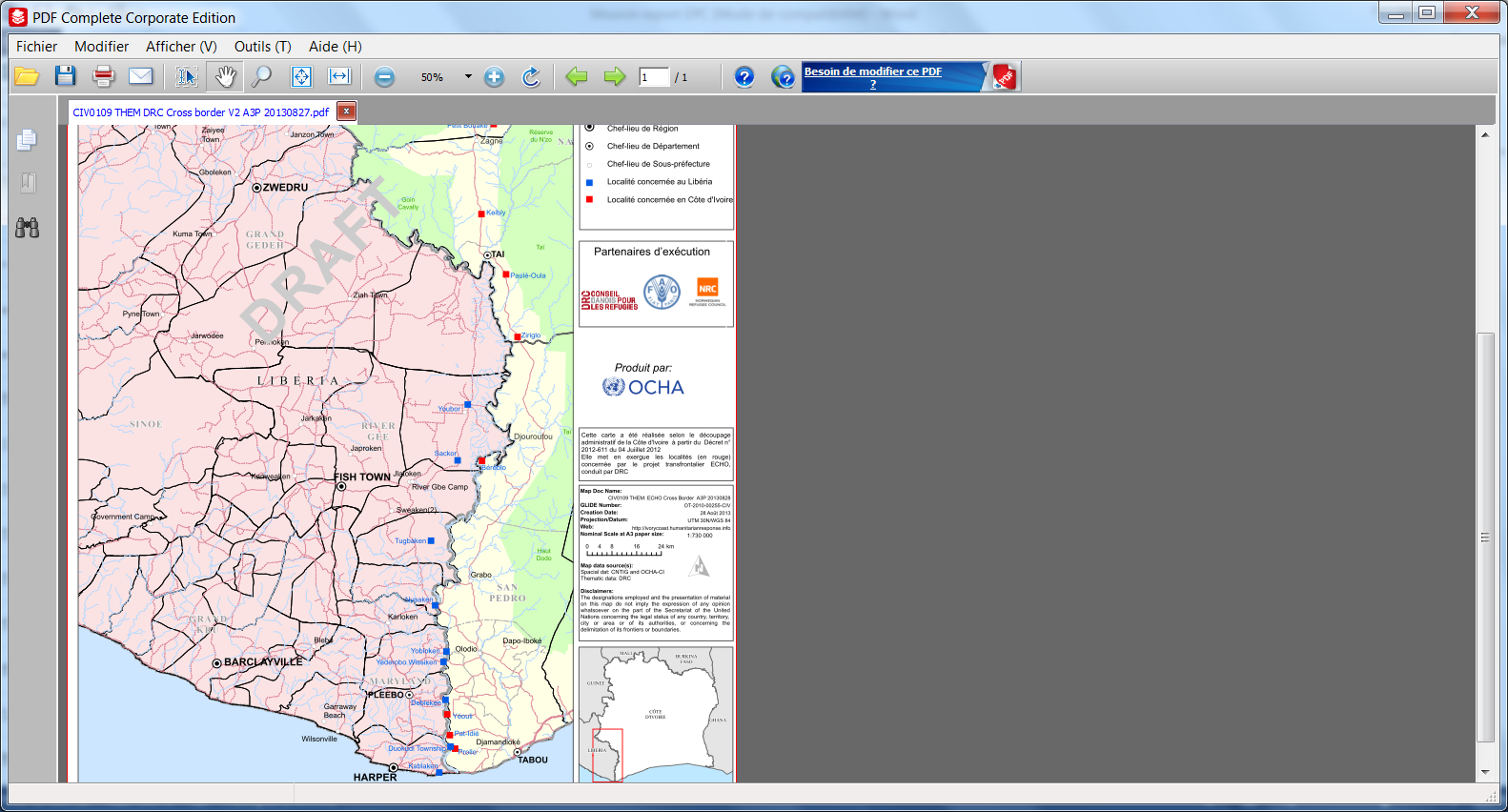
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**LIST OF ACRONYMS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| AWP | Annual Wok Plan |
| CBOs | Community Based Organizations |
| CCCA | Conseil Conjoint des Chefs coutumiers et des Anciens |
| CFA | Communauté Financière Africaine |
| CSOs | Civil Society Organizations |
| ECOWAS | Economic Community of West African States |
| EVD | Ebola virus Disease |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization |
| GoL | Government of Liberia |
| IEC | Information Education and Communication |
| IGAs | Income Generation Activities |
| IOM | International Organization of Migration |
| JCCEMs | Joint Committee of Chief and Elders Meetings |
| LDEA | Liberia Drugs Enforcement Agency |
| LIS | Liberia Immigration Service |
| LNP | Liberia National Police |
| MIA | Ministry of Internal Affairs |
| M&E | Measurement and Evaluation |
| MOJ | Ministry of Justice |
| MRU | Mano River Union |
| PBF | Peace Building Fund |
| PBSO | Peace Building Support Office |
| PLWDs | People Living With Disabilities |
| PoE | Points of Entry |
| PRF | Peacebuilding Recovery Financing Facility |
| RC | Resident Coordinator |
| RUNOs | Responsible United Nations Organisations |
| ToRs | Terms of Reference |
| UN | United Nation |
| UNCT | United Nations Country Team |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| UNMIL | United Nations Mission in Liberia |
| UNOCI | United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire |
| USD | United States Dollars |

Project Map: Zones of Intervention

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**Executive Summary**

The project: «Cross-Border Cooperation Between Cote d’Ivoire and Liberia for Sustainable Peace and Social Cohesion » is a $ 3 million funding provided by the Peace Building Fund to implement cross border activities in the Liberian-Côte d’Ivoire border to foster social cohesion, promote peaceful co-existence amongst border communities and help to bring about improved bilateral cooperation and border stabilization. The project is a result of a joint high level meeting in Guiglo “Deuxieme réunion du Conseil Conjoint des Chefs coutumiers et des Anciens (CCCA”) in January 2016 that brought together the two Heads of States and traditional leaders of the two countries to discuss and strategize towards addressing the rising cross border tension.

The ultimate goal of this project is to increase cooperation and trust between Ivorian and Liberian border communities by strengthening border and human security, as well as mitigating potential intra and inter-community conflict escalation and regional destabilization, through community engagement and cross-border socio-cultural contact for peaceful co-existence. The project covers community borders of Tabou and Tai in Cote d’Ivoire mirroring with community borders of Maryland and River Gee counties in Liberia.

The PBF funded project intends to achieve the following interlinked outcomes:

* **Outcome 1:** Improving trust between security forces / border organizations and communities through capacity building of joint cross-border and local mechanisms, as well as through increased intra / cross-border cooperation.
* **Outcome 2**: Improving social cohesion and peaceful coexistence of cross-border communities through cross-border community dialogues and enhancing cooperation between existing local dispute resolution mechanisms that will also be strengthened through outreach activities, Cross-border socio-economic cooperation and cultural exchanges.

Project implementation started in June 2017 with activities implementation more than half way through. As part of the project design, the project implementation teams in both countries facilitated a joint biannual technical and review meeting in Monrovia Liberia from 22nd -25th May 2018. The overall approach was a two-component meeting consisting of (i) a Technical Preparatory Meeting of the RUNOs and PBF Secretariat in the two countries, followed by (ii) Main Review Meeting which involved leadership of key stakeholders in the two countries, including UN agencies, government and beneficiary communities’ representatives. It also involved presentations followed by groups and/or plenary discussions.

The Technical Preparatory Meeting was held at the UNDP Office in Liberia which prepared and firmed up presentations and joint progress reports for the project board meeting. This meeting lasted for two days, followed by another two days of meeting for the joint review project board and final closure on the second day.

The meetings brought together all partners and stakeholders involved in the project implementation. This meeting is commensurate to the project board and intended to review joint progress, share and discuss lessons learned, best practices and way forward. The main purpose of the biannual joint technical and review meeting wasto enhance the joint programming nature of the project, ensuring synergies and complementarities between PBF and the partners as well as to assess progress of work, share and discuss ideas.

The specific objectives were to:

* Share implementation updates, challenges and lessons learnt with project board
* Determine areas of synergy and complementarity for effective implementation in both countries;
* Review and synergize 2018 annual work plans with special focus on cross-border activities;
* Review prevailing risks and update mitigation measures; and
* Gather stakeholder’s perception on project activities

At the review meeting, both high level invited guest and participants commended the successes of the project with senior government officials calling for the continuation and large-scale implementation of the Cross- Border Project in other bordering counties within the MRU.

1. **Background**

The civil war and crisis in Liberia and Cote d’Ivoire lead to the United Nations Security Council establishing peacekeeping operation missions in both countries; The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and UNOCI in Côte d'Ivoire. These missions work in close collaboration with United Nations Country Teams. In addition to the effort of the UN Mission and UNCT, the United Nations PBF provided significant investments for peacebuilding and national reconciliation through a funding window of “Peacebuilding Recovery Financing Facility (PRF)”.

UNMIL has been in place since the peace treaty of 2003, with the mandate to protect the responsibility of Liberian authorities, the civilian population from threat of physical violence, support the reform of security and justice institutions, carrying out the promotion, protection and monitoring activities of human rights and protect UN personnel. In Côte d’Ivoire, UNOCI was established by the Security Council as of April 4th, 2004 with a mandate to facilitate the implementation by the Ivorian parties of the peace agreement signed by them in January 2003. However, the missions in both countries have almost completed their drawdown which started on June 30th 2016. This means that both countries’ governments are to assume full national security responsibility as per the Security Council Resolution 2239 (2015). This process has been gradual and both governments are now assuming their responsibilities.

Notwithstanding, tensions along the two countries’ borders still remain and needs to be addressed. This was more evident during the emergence and spread of the Ebola virus (EVD) in Liberia and Guinea leading to the closure of international land borders between Côte d'Ivoire and its two neighbouring countries (Liberia and Guinea). The closure of the border had a significant impact on social cohesion within and between border communities, which compromises the steady flow of people and goods. It has also contributed to the impoverishment of border Liberian communities. These communities share many social-economic and cultural dynamics, with peace and security in one country influencing developments in the other country.

In order to address the above-mentioned community and cross borders peace and security challenges, and considering the strong recommendation of the Joint high-level meeting in Guiglo Ivory Coast held in 2016, the Peacebuilding Fund provided $ 3 million to support the implementation of the “Cross-Border Cooperation between Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia for Sustainable Peace and Social Cohesion” project. The ultimate goal of this project is to increase cooperation and trust between Ivorian and Liberian border communities by strengthening border and human security, as well as mitigating potential intra and inter-community conflict escalation and regional destabilization, through community engagement and cross-border socio-cultural contact for peaceful co-existence. The project covers community borders of Tabou and Tai in Cote d’Ivoire mirroring with community borders of Maryland and River Gee counties in Liberia.

Prior to this funding a joint high level meeting in Guiglo “Deuxieme réunion du Conseil Conjoint des Chefs coutumiers et des Anciens (CCCA”) in January 2016 brought together the two Heads of States and traditional leaders of the two countries to discuss and strategize towards addressing the rising cross border tensions. The meeting concluded that though there is improvement in the general security situation in the border area, continuous engagement between the two countries towards finding durable solutions for security and socio-economic development would help consolidating peace and social cohesion between the border communities that share historical and cultural ties. The Final communique outlines decisions to be implemented by the two countries and this proposal is developed to contribute to peacebuilding in the border areas. At the Joint Committee of Chief and Elders Meetings (JCCEMs), Presidents of both countries called for peace and increased social cohesion along the borders. The activities of UNMIL, UNOCI and the PBF funded programmes have been especially important in addressing tension and incidents of violence in communities along the Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia border.

The Cross-border cooperation initiatives which started in June 2017 seeks to implement cross border activities in the Liberian-Côte d’Ivoire border to foster social cohesion, promote peaceful co-existence amongst border communities and help to bring about improved bilateral cooperation and border stabilization. This is especially important now that Liberia is going through a twin transition: the ushering of a new government in January 2018 and UNMIL transition also in March 2018.This project further seeks to implement the MRU cross-border security strategy; support to joint border security and confidence building measures, including working with civil society organizations; strengthen the capacities of law enforcement agencies (transnational crime units, etc.) to address cross-border threats to internal security; as well as support the implementation of recommendations and work plan developed from the January 2016 second meeting of the Joint Council of Chiefs and elders held in Guiglo, Côte d’Ivoire with respect to peace consolidation, stability and security, especially with regards to facilitating community level engagement. The beneficiaries of the project are the security agencies, youth of border communities, internal affairs county officials, cross-border market women and other women groups, community members along the Liberia-Cote d’Ivoire border. Project implementation is more than half way through in both countries and lessons have been learnt during the implementation period.

Inthe light of the above and as part of the project design, the project implementation teams in both countries facilitated a joint biannual technical and review meeting in Monrovia Liberia from 22nd to 26th May 2018. This meeting brought together all partners and stakeholders involved in the project implementation. The meeting is commensurate to the project board and intended to review joint progress, share and discuss lessons learned, best practices and way forward. The meeting started with a technical committee review meeting followed by the larger review meeting.

**a) Objectives of the Review Meeting:**

The main purpose of the biannual joint technical and review meeting wasto enhance the joint programming nature of the project, ensuring synergies and complementarities between PBF and the partners as well as to assess progress of work, share and discuss ideas, the specific objectives were to:

* Share implementation updates, challenges and lessons learnt with project board
* Determine areas of synergy and complementarity for effective implementation in both countries;
* Review and synergize 2018 annual work plans with special focus on cross-border activities;
* Review prevailing risks and update mitigation measures; and
* Gather stakeholder’s perception on project activities

**b) Expected Outcomes:**

By the end of the meeting, the following were expected to be achieved:

* Stakeholders perception on project activities
* Agreement on implementation of remaining joint cross-border activities
* Revised projects implementation risks/assumptions log and mitigation measures;

**c) Workshop Participants:**

The workshop participants included representatives from UNDP, IOM, PBF Secretariats, Government counterpart institutions and CSOs/CBOs. Each country made a deliberate effort to ensure gender representation among the participants. See Annex for list of participants.

**d) Approach/Methodology**

The overall approach was a two-component meeting consisting of (i) a Technical Preparatory Meeting of the RUNOs and PBF Secretariat of the two countries, followed by (ii) Main Review Meeting which involved leadership of key stakeholders in the two countries, including UN agencies, government and beneficiary communities’ representatives. A combination of presentations, groups exercises and plenary discussions were employed.

The Technical Preparatory Meeting was held at the UNDP Office in Liberia which prepared and firmed up presentations and joint progress reports for the project board meeting. This meeting lasted for two days, followed by another two days of meeting for the joint review project board and final closure on the second day.

In order to set the context of the meeting, participants’ expectation and concerns were solicited and aligned with the meeting objectives.

1. **Official Opening of the Meeting**

The meeting was officially opened by the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Liberia – Hon. Varney A. Sirleaf. Other dignitaries who graced the occasion included senior government and UN Officials such as the Resident Coordinators of Liberia, Mr. Yacoub El Hillo, and Ms. Marina Schramm, IOM Chief of Mission, who represented the Resident Coordinator of Cote d’Ivoire, the Inspector General of Police of Liberia, Mr. Patrick Sudue, Representative of the Ivorian Minister of Interior, Mr. Ibrahima Bayo. Also was the ECOWAS Ambassador, Mr. Babatunde Ajisoma and the MRU Representative, Mr. Christian Jallah.

In his welcome remarks, the Inspector General of the Liberia National Police, Mr. Patrick Sudue said that the Cross-border project has promoted town hall meetings, cross-border recreational activities, peaceful co-existence and social cohesion. He emphasized that the two countries are one people especially those living along the borders with long history of common cultural practices and hence the need to live in peace with each other and cooperate for mutual development. Mr. Sudue highlighted the gains the project has made with particular reference to logistical and capacity support provided to the security apparatus to help promote peace and security at the borders and said he was proud to be part of the meeting and more so to make the welcome address. He went further to state that he has no doubt of the success of the project as the security official and participants present will further attest to that but advised for the project teams to listen and learn from the communities as they implement in order to foster continuity and sustainability. He pledged the support and cooperation of the security wing and thanked all those who left their busy schedules to attend this important review meeting and wish them all fruitful deliberations and a peaceful stay.

The welcome remarks were followed by key statements from the government officials’ regional counterparts and UN family from both countries.

* **Statement by Ibrahima Bayo, Representative from the Ministry of Interior and leader of delegation of Cote d’Ivoire**

The senior government representative of the Ivorian delegation, Hon. Ibrahima Bayo of the Ministry of Interior, Cote d’ Ivoire recalled that the cross-border project has helped to promote private investments, address challenges, promoted security and social cohesion, consolidated peace and eradicated violence in the two project countries and advocating for the continuation of the project for its sustainability in the communities. He stressed that there is no need for tensions among people along the borders as they are all one people with similar identities, cultures and ethnicities. On behalf of the government of Cote d’Ivoire he maintained the interest of the government in promoting social cohesion among the two countries and particularly along the borders, elimination of violence, commitment to support project activities and promotion of development. He further made reference to the project been an initiative and follow on of the high level Zwedru and Giglo meeting attended by the two presidents and 2016 prompting the commitment to peace consolidation. He concluded by appealing to the project teams and participants of the review meeting to pay attention to the recommendations from the Giglo meeting, multiple activities of the project including trainings for the two countries to be beneficial, promote peace and development and to enhance sustainability.

* **Statement by** **Marina Schramm, IOM Chief of Mission and Representative of the UN Resident Coordinator Cote d’Ivoire**

Marina Schramm the IOM chief of mission representing the UN resident Coordinator from Cote d’Ivoire after observing all protocols started by saying that government and UN agencies should continue to support security agencies to promote peace in the two countries especially at the borders and the region at large. She continued by stating that since the inception of this project, key successes has been made along the borders of project implementation including enhancing capacity and logistical support to security, promoting peace and social cohesion and encouraged everyone to consolidate the gains and build on the successes. She encouraged project participants, implementation teams and community people to be frank in during the deliberations to help improve on quality delivery and sustainability of project intervensions.

* **Statement by Yacoub El Hillo, UN Resident Coordinator Liberia**

Mr.El Hillo started his stamen by recognizing the different dignitaries present and making reference to the Giglo high level meeting attended by the two presidents in 2016 that lead to this project and thank all present for the support over the past implementation period. He mentioned his experience in relation to working in Liberia over two different periods which he said strengthens his knowledge about the country and the region. Furthering on he mentioned that the meeting is very important taking the successes of the project as this is an opportunity to take stock of the project activities, gains, challenges and lessons on both sides of the border in order to build on and improve implementation of the remaining activities. With reference to consolidating peace and enhancing development, Mr. El Hillo mentioned that when communities choose peace apart from violence, it is easy to move on and foster development. He went on to stress that the cross- border project should collectively mobilize resources to sustain the continuation of the project’s activities to jointly achieve project objectives and to address challenges along the borders and between the two countries. He mentioned that while the project is used as a pilot project to test the social cohesion and peaceful co-existence between the bordering communities in River Gee and Maryland Counties in Liberia and Tai and Tabou in Cote d’Ivoire, it has improved the peaceful co-existence of Liberian and Ivorian citizens at large.

While he also encouraged the continuous political will of the two governments, he encouraged the continuous support to the security agencies to promote peace and social cohesion along the border communities. He concluded his statement by thanking all present and wished the visitors a pleasant stay and everyone fruitful discussions to improve project successes.

* **Statement by Ambassador Babatunde Ajisomo, Special Representative of the Presidents of ECOWAS Liberia**

In his statement at the opening ceremony, the ECOWAS’ Ambassador to Liberia, His Excellency Ambasador Babatunde Ajisomo, Stressed on the 1979 ECOWAS Protocol of free movements of people, goods and services as the fundamental protocol for the formation of ECOWAS. He also emphasized on inadequate implementation of the three cardinal or fundamental rights of citizens; Right to Entry, Right to Residence and the Right to Engage into economic activities within the sub-region including the fair treatment of all citizens. He continued by citing the importance of promoting peaceful co-existence within the region, between the two countries and particularly along the borders. He stressed the role of security to archive and sustain peace that will provided the basis for development and encouraged the security apparatus to secure citizens and promote free movement of citizens which is one of the key protocols of ECOWAS. He mentioned that the goal for free movement is to promote the oneness in the region and need for the promotion of development. He recognized the sacrifice that the security personnel are making and emphasized the need for modern border posts along our borders. To promote joint security with communities, he encouraged the provision of opportunities for citizens to have a means of registering their complaints especially along the borders and stressed the need for all citizens to understand how to procure travel documents sating that ECOWAS is working on ways to simplify this and also to have mobile courts to deal with complaints. In relation to modern border posts, he recommended to UNDP and IOM to support the erection of modern border posts between Liberia and Cote d’Ivoire that will contain medical facilities, residential quarters as done in other neighboring West African nations e.g. Nigeria and Benin Republic.

Mr Ajisomo stressed the importance of the project, pledged his support to ensuring success and collaborating with the two governments to yield the intended outcomes.

* **Opening Remarks by Hon. Varney A. Sirleaf, Minister Ministry of Internal Affairs Liberia**

The honorable Minister of Internal Affairs(MIA) of Liberia, Hon. Varney A. Sirleaf in his opening remarks, welcomed the participants to Liberia and expressed the Government of Liberia’s willingness to support and promote peace initiatives along the Liberian- Ivorian Borders. He further reiterated the Joint Committee of Chief and Elders Meetings (JCCEMs) Giglo meeting in 2016 which led to this project and subsequently launched in its bid to promote peace and social –cohesion and trade along border communities. He mentioned his personal and government of Liberia’s appreciation of the project in improving peace and social cohesion along the borders in the project locations and encouraged all stakeholders and communities to consolidate and sustain the peace and successes of the project as this remain a critical foundation in fostering development. The Honorable minister attested to positive feedback and reports from security agencies and community member’s appreciation of the project and emphasized the appropriate use of logistics provided by the project and knowledge gained to yield the intended outcomes.

He cautioned Custom officers to abide by approved tariffs on goods and services based on the spirit of ECOWAS protocol and urged the Superintendents of River Gee and Maryland Counties and other bordering counties in Liberia to facilitate regular cross-border meetings and other activities aimed at promoting social cohesion with their counterparts in Tai and Tabou Regions in Cote d’Ivoire in collaboration with the local communities (youths, women leaders, chiefs) along the borders. Before declaring the meeting formally open, he thanked the donor and the implementing organizations (UNDP & IOM) and pledged the governments support to collaborate in sustaining the gains of the project. He however, pleaded for continuity of the project activities and expansion in all locations along border counties. Citing the Governments shortage of funds, he pleaded for funding from different donors for extension and expansion of project interventions.

1. **Substantive Presentations and Discussions**

* **Presentation of Project progress updates, challenges and lessons learnt by Eric Opoku and Arsene Arsende; Project focal points for Liberia and Cote d’Ivoire respectively**

The presentation highlighted the following:

**Progress Updates:**

* Six seven-member cross border committees, three per county has been established in the two project counties. TORs have been developed and members have been orientated on their roles and responsibilities.

* Two motorbikes have been procured to support the movement of staff.
* UNDP and IOM Procured and distributed 34 motor bikes to LNP, LIS & LDEA in the two project counties to enhance their operational support
* Two sets of training on topics such as Human Rights, Gender-Based Violence, Immigration Laws of Liberia (including border crossing requirements), Land rights and Conflict Prevention and Resolution have been organised in the two counties for a spectrum of local government and community leaders, as well as youth and women groups representatives. In addition, two sets of trainings on Entrepreneurial and Business Management skills training have also been facilitated for selected youth in the two counties.
* IOM and partners (LIS, LNP DEA) completed a joint needs assessment for the twelve Points of Entry(PoEs) in the two project counties. Assessment guided rehabilitation of PoEs which is to start soon and logistical support provided by IOM and UNDP to support effective functioning of the PoEs.
* Facilitated cross-border sporting, cultural and trade fair activities between Liberia and Cote d’Ivoire in collaboration with FAO, IOM and national partners, in Nyaaken (River Gee) and Doukudi(Maryland) to discuss improved collaboration and coordination between security personnel, local authorities and community members along the border communities.
* IOM in close collaboration with UNDP and Local Authorities, carried out awareness raising campaign through various channels in county capitals and at selected border communities, Pedebo, Kablaken and Harper (Maryland County); Nyaaken, Geeblaken and Fish Town (River Gee). This included the contracting of two local radio stations to broadcast messages developed in partnership with local NGO to translate into local dialect (Gbrebo) and endorsed by the Cross-Border working group.
* IOM also supported LIS, LNP, LDEA with several logistics (lap &desk tops, printers, solar units, metal detectors, body detectors, office furniture camp beds, hand held radios,etc) to support their efficient functioning.

**Results of the Project**

Under **Outcome 1: “**Increased confidence between security forces/agencies and border communities through enhanced capacity of joint local cross border mechanisms, as well as increased intra-/cross-border cooperation”, the presentation highlighted the following results:

* Community members are currently collaborating more closely with the security agencies - reporting criminal activities, such as rape cases, illegal crossings and others that could cause insecurity along the border.
* Adjoining and mirroring border communities are co-habiting peacefully and are more engaged in cross border trade and social activities
* Increased patrols and response rate to even hard to reach borders communities, as well as enhanced communication amongst security agencies have boosted the confidence of the community members in the security apparatus.
* Working conditions and morale of border security personnel improved following rehabilitation and equipping of POEs (Cote d’Ivoire)
* Community information sharing and sensitization have been boosted through support to local radio stations.
* Women's interest and engagement in security issues have increased due to their active involvement in project activities.

Similarly, under **Outcome 2:** “Improved social cohesion and peaceful co-existence in cross border communities through cross border community dialogues and reinforcing of cooperation between existing local conflict resolution mechanisms strengthened by cross-border cooperative socio-economic stabilization and cultural exchanges”, the project has achieved the following results:

* Cross-border communities are living peacefully with each other and cooperating through periodic meetings to discuss and address mutual security and other social concerns/issues.

* Trust and confidence between communities and securities apparatus have improved and is imparting positively on security, which is creating congenial atmosphere for peace and development in the border areas.
* Project has contributed to increased community confidence in national security following strengthening of the capacity of national security apparatus as UNOCI/UNMIL exit.
* Capacity of selected youth and women in entrepreneurial and business management enhanced for livelihood development and social cohesion through skills training and trade fairs.
* Rehabilitation of water pumps in selected communities has contributed to reduced tension and improved social cohesion.

**Challenges:**

In spite of the above achievement/ results, the project has not been devoid of challenges. Key among them are:

* Bad road, rough terrain and lack of access to some remote communities.
* Communication challenges due to language barrier (French/English).
* Alignment of joint project activities due to conflicting programmes in respective countries.
* Long and delayed procurement processes.
* No issuance of receipts by border officials for payment made for issued documents or charges.

**Emerging Issues:**

Discussions are the project areas and are the review meeting among others stressed on the following issues:

* Low manpower in the counties/inadequate security officers in some border communities.
* Due to insufficient number of official points of entry (12 Liberia and 2 Cote d’Ivoire), attendance of Ivorian security personnel during joint cross-border meetings and activities is irregular.
* Disagreements between traders and security personnel over the exchange rates of the two countries’ currencies (CFA and the USD/Liberian dollar [Liberty]).
* Absence and/or inadequate application of approved custom fees at border crossing points.
* The absence of Liberian custom and health officers at some border crossing points.
* Mounting of illegal barriers and extortion of people especially traders by locals of some border communities where there are no officials point of entry. This is creating retribution on both side of the border and has the potential to create tension and needs to be addressed.
* Regular reports of extortion at crossing points by security personnel.

No issuance of receipts by border officials for payment made for charges and documents issued.

**Lessons Learnt:**

The project implementation has been very interesting, insightful and challenging. Lessons learnt that can inform implementation of remaining activities and future projects are the fact that:

* Involvement and good relationship with stakeholders at all levels strengthens project ownership and potential for sustainability.
* Regular communication and information sharing among project staff and stakeholders facilitates effective implementation and management of cross border projects, since activities in the two countries may conflict at certain points and a lot of flexibility needs to be exercised
* Though the two countries are members of ECOWAS, knowledge and appreciation of ECOWAS free movement of citizens’ protocols is limited and hardly adhered to, hence challenges at crossing points.
* Due to challenging road conditions, it became expedient to combine different project activities over a long period.

Emerging issues were discussed and the following recommendations and follow up actions were suggested.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Issue** | **Recommendation** | **Follow up Action** |
| Irregular attendance of meetings by Cote d’Ivoire security personnel during joint cross-border meetings due to insufficient number of official points of entry (12 Liberia and 2 Cote d’Ivoire), | Cote d’Ivoire government officials to discuss with government and senior security leaders to open more official border crossing points | Cote d’Ivoire project team to follow up with government officials |
| The absence of Liberian custom and health officers at some border crossing points | Liberia government officials to follow up with customs and Ministry of Health to ensure presence of Custom and Health Officials at all official border crossing points | Liberia project team to follow up with government official and county authorities |
| Disagreements between traders and security personnel over the exchange rates of the two countries’ currencies (CFA and the USD/Liberian dollar [Liberty]). | Repeated awareness raising and sharing information on exchange rates on the main currencies used at the border including through local radios | Communities, security personnel and peace committees to enhance this move |
| Absence and/or inadequate application of approved custom fees at border crossing points. | Increase awareness on custom fees for all items crossing the border and work with customs to mount bill boards with approved custom fees | Project teams to work with customs and relevant government officials and support mounting of bill boards |
| Mounting of illegal barriers and extortion of people especially traders by locals of some border communities where there are no officials point of entry. | Community leaders and peace committees to intervene and avoid the occurrence of such | Community Leaders and peace committee members to follow and laisse with security personnel |
| Regular reports of extortion at crossing points by security personnel | Set up complaints mechanisms at border crossing points and enhance their effective functioning | Community Leaders and peace committee members to follow and laisse with security personnel |
| No issuance of receipts by border officials for payment made for charges and documents issued | Custom Officials and all others receiving charges at crossing points to issue receipts for all monies received from border users | Government and county officials to ensure compliance |
| Periodic joint security patrols along borders | Recommended to increase on such patrols | Joint patrols concept note to be developed by project team and shared with relevant security personnel for inputs and review. |

* **Presentations and Discussions on 2018 Work Plan by Herve Karege and Paulette Degonzague-IOM Project Focal Persons for Liberia and Cote d’Ivoire Respectively**

The presentations of the Joint 2018 Work Plans (project’s remaining activities) was done by the project IOM ‘s representatives of (Liberia and Cote d’Ivoire) respectively. Herve and Paulette presented the project remaining activities in both countries while allowing the participants to ask questions on details of some activities that was not properly understood. After the presentations, activities that are likely to be jointly implemented were identified and further discussions done on them. The key ones on joint patrols and social cohesion were discussed in more details, specifically joint security meeting, sporting, cultural and trade fair activities during later sessions of the programme. During the discussions, of the reaming activities, participants emphasized working on project activities for sustainability and promotion of peaceful co-existence and social cohesion. It was advised to pay attention to the below points:

* Joint meetings and dialogues with all security agencies and local communities to enhance social cohesion and cooperation.
* Proposed joint cross- border cultural and sporting activities.
* Implement and enhance the capacity of the local communities and the security agencies.
* Propose joint border patrol between Liberia and Cote d’Ivoire security agencies.
* Strategies for conflict resolution and management.
* Awareness through local radio communication and other means of communication.

At the end of the remaining activities implementation discussions, it was stressed to improve on the inclusion of more citizens living on both sides of the border communities in security related issues.

* **Presentation on the review and updates of project risks and assumptions and mitigation measures by: Eric Opoku and Arsene Arsende; Project focal points for Liberia and Cote d’Ivoire respectively**

To update the project risk matrix including the mitigation measures, the UNDP project focal points in both countries projected the project risk matrix previously developed during project design with Eric explaining in English and Arsene in French. The presenters went through each risk, probability, impact level and mitigation measure one after the other while allowing the whole group to review together and agree with participants if the risk still prevail or not and agree on whether to maintain, remove or revise the risk. During the presentation, the risks were discussed and reviewed with the participants who jointly recommended the following based on some changes in the perceived risks and assumptions before, during project implementation and current prevailing situation. Below is a summary of the agreements reached:

* Risk 1 Maintained (Peace & security)
* Risk 2 Omitted (Border closure)
* Risk 3 revised for local elections(Elections)
* Risk 4 omitted (Commitment of partners)
* Risk 5 revised and add Lassa fever (EVD)
* Risk 6 revised and maintained (Security threat due to missions’ withdrawal)
* Risk 7,8& 9 all maintained (Livelihoods, roads, timely cooperation of stakeholders)
* **Presentations and Discussions on communication and visibility by. Augusta Pshorr- UNDP Liberia Communications Officer**

UNDP’s Liberia, Community Specialist highlighted the importance on the coordination mechanism, communication and visibility in the implementation of projects. During her presentations, she stressed the following points for the achievements of projects’ goals and objectives:

* Helps share objectives, progress made on the objectives.
* Understand the environment and context
* Be strategic (what communication works well?), Advocacy, outreach mainstreaming, campaigns.

**Specific activities**

* Talk shows, field missions’/visits pictorial, live broadcasts, adverts, announcements
* Identify the targets(stakeholders)

**Results**

* Good stories, regular use of press releases, features for both print and broadcast, regular recognition donors, etc.

**Audio Visual Production**

* The use of photograph to tell a story about projects.

**Comments:**

* The importance of communication in the implementation of cross- border activities.
* The dissemination of project activities information in the various vernaculars (local languages) in both project countries to have positive impacts

**Recommendations:**

* Encouraged all stakeholders to invest into communication to promote ALL the project activities for its success.
* Encourage all stakeholders and community people to capture important events and project successes and share with project team for documentation and further use as project teams are not always on field
* **Presentations and Discussions on Coordination and Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms (Liberia and Cote d’Ivoire PBF Secretariat)**

The Monitoring and Evaluation(M&E) Specialists from the PBF Secretariat in both project countries John Denis for Liberia and Konan Fabrice for Cote d’Ivoire made presentations on project monitoring and its essence in achieving projects’ objectives. The following points were highlighted on the essences of monitoring and evaluation as related to cross-border and community based projects:

* Monitoring – looks at impacts of the project on the population
* Inputs- collect efforts into project (human resources, time, money, materials etc)
* Reduce tension
* Improved relations between citizens and security.
* Reduction in conflict
* Implement all project activities to achieve results (dialogues, recreational, cultural and sporting activities)
* Monitoring Visit Report- Information System, Joint field trips
* Evaluation –ensure that all participants(stakeholders) benefit, changes and impacts

1. **Community perspective on project: Feedbacks from project communities**

Following all the presentations and discussions during the two days meeting, it was critical to get the community perspective of the project interventions over the past implementation period. With the presence of a wide range of community people like the women and youth leaders, traditional leaders, county authorities and security personnel based at the border crossing points, the views and perspective of the community people was gathered from both countries. The feedbacks concentrated on the successes, constraints and recommendations on the current project. At least three representatives from each country gave feedback including one women’s form each country. From Liberia, the youth leaders from Maryland and River Gee, the women’s leaders from both counties the traditional leader from Maryland and the county Superintendent from Maryland provided their perspective. From Cote d’Ivoire the women’s leader from Taboo the youth leader from Tabou and Tai and Sous-Prefectuere (Superintendent) form Tabou provided their perspective of the project. Below are views captured from the speakers.

**Feedbacks from project communities (Liberia)**

* Trainings for communities and security agencies has helped to build trust and improved on both parties’ knowledge
* Free channels of communication between communities and security agencies on both sides
* Regular cross-border activities (meetings, etc) helping to boost social cohesion
* Open trade and free movements
* Involvement of vulnerable groups (women, girls, PLWDs) into project activities which is helping inclusion at community level
* More involvement of the beneficiaries into all project activities.
* Lots of benefits achieved
* Improved security along the borders
* Improved patrols and confidence of communities’ in security agencies
* Better collaboration and coordination among security agencies and communities.
* Ownership of the project by communities
* Social cohesion and cross- border cooperation improved

**Feedbacks from project communities (Cote d’Ivoire)**

* Activities resulted in community member avoiding the use of shortcuts and unmanned crossing points during cross- border movements to avoid embarrassment from security officers assigned at the borders.
* Improved recreational activities (sporting, cultural, etc)
* Cross- border activities encouraged to continue
* Inclusion of livelihood(IGAs) activities into next project activities to enhance and promote cross-border social cohesion and cooperation
* The inclusion of more youths and women into all project activities (at all levels of implementation)
* Improved cross-border social cohesion and cooperation along the borders
* Empowerment of communities through IGAs. (Self-reliance)
* Discourage all illegal activities (e.g. mining) along the borders.

After getting the perspectives of the community people from both countries, unanimously the immediate project effects and impacts were listed and validated by all participants. Below are the highlighted most immediate impacts or effects of the project:

**Impacts of the Cross- Border Social Cohesion and Cooperation Project in the project communities and people located in Liberia and Cote d’Ivoire.**

* Improved closeness of border communities compared to the past
* Improved information sharing (Information dissemination improved between local communities and security agencies in project countries)
* Improved dialoguing
* Improved living conditions for security officers assigned/living along the borders
* Improved logistical support to security personnel in both countries (vehicles, bikes, office equipment’s, communication gadgets etc)
* Increased use of Community Based Approaches in project implementation and improved inclusion
* Improvement in the movements of people, goods and services.
* Improved commitments from the beneficiaries on project activities implementation
* Improved social cohesion and peaceful co-existence along the borders
* Increased patrols by security agencies along the borders
* Reduction in crimes in border communities
* Strengthened and improved conflict resolution mechanisms along the borders
* Improved on trust between security agencies and communities

1. **Discussion and planning on Joint Cross-border Activities focusing on mirroring activities, synergies and complementarity**

Following all the presentations and discussions, the planning of joint cross border activities between the two countries done in group sessions concluded the review meeting. Participants were divided into two groups with each group comprising representatives from both countries. One group did the planning on the joint cross border patrols mainly involving the security agencies and their leaders and the other group did the planning for the cross border inter cultural, sporting and trade fair activities which mainly comprised community people including, women youth, traditional leaders and county authorities. After the group planning exercise, representatives from the groups presented their work in the plenary session.

During the group’s plenary discussions and presentations, the following points were agreed to be implemented.

* **Joint securities; patrols along the borders**
* Agreed to jointly carry out five patrols before project ends in October 2018 at least one per month (specific dates to be determined and confirmed later)
* Patrol types will be a combination of land and water as appropriate per location.
* Patrol locations will be explored to happen alon mirroring communities along the borders of the two countries: Padebo (Maryland) with Prolo (tai);Nyaaken ( River Gee) with Tiboto (tai); Kablaken (Maryland) with Blielon (tai);
* As Taboo is not mirroring with project operational counties in Liberia, separate patrols will be organized their while linking it with border communities in Liberia in those locations.
* Project teams are to do draft concept notes and share with security personnel focal persons for further details, review and finalization
* **Joint Cross border sporting, cultural and trade fair activities**
* Facilitation of regular meetings between border communities in both countries
* Support recreational activities such as football matches, talent shows, cultural dances etc on both sides
* Promote information sharing and cultural exchanges
* Proposed 15th June 2018 for the firsts joint communities meeting after the reviw in Happer (to be confirmed)
* Proposed 15th July 2018 sporting, cultural dances and trade fair activities in Mary land involving both countries (To be confirmed)
* Proposed the two countries leaders along borders to invite community members during each country’s independence day and other key event celebrations.
* Proposed to have a joint leadership structure in all project location in the two countries (Maryland, Rive Gee, Taboo and Tai) for leading project activities implementation and to promote peace and social cohesion.

1. **Closing Remarks**

At the end of the two days’ deliberations, the closing remarks were done by government representatives from both Liberia and Cote d’Ivoire

In his closing remarks, the Head of the Ivorian Delegation Hon. Ibrahima Bayo from the Ministry of Interior stressed the needs to promote social cohesion and cooperation as encouraged people dwelling along the borders to understand the need to live together as one people. He thanked the organizers of the review meeting for the fruitful two days’ deliberations and the project teams in the two countries for the successes so far and encouraged all to sustain the gains. He further promised the government of Cote d’Ivoire’s commitment to supporting and sustaining the project interventions and appealed for more sustainable approaches and inclusion of the remaining project activities.

The final closing remarks were made by the Head of Mano River Secretariat in Liberia, Hon. Christian Jallah who spoke on behalf of the Liberian government. He extended thanks and appreciation to the United Nations family for the project and pleaded with all the stakeholders to see the project as their own and take ownership to sustain the project for the maintenance and promotion of peace, security and social cohesion in the Mano River Basin. He continued by saying he is impressed by the many successes and impacts the project is making along the borders as per what he said is getting from the project participants and community members. In relation to continuity, he said it is very important for such a project to be extended to other border locations along all the borders in Mano River Union and pleaded with the UN family to continue the interventions and source more funds to extend the project to other locations and encouraged the government officials to pay key attention and prioritize the sustainability of the project interventions. He continued by saying we are all one people within the MRU and beyond and encouraged everyone to promote peaceful co-existence, social cohesion along the borders and promote peace. He pledged the MRU’s support to project interventions and continuity as well as collaborating with ECOWAS to ensure sustainability. He concluded his statement by again thanking the organizers of the review meeting, project implementation teams, implored communities to sustain project successes and wished the visiting delegations safe journey.

1. **Review Meeting Evaluation**

After the closing remarks, the UNDP project Focal Persons, presented a simple evaluation format for the review meeting which they explained to participants for rating. The table below shows the ratings done by the participants present of the different issues during the review meeting.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Description** | **Ratings**  **Scales:1 = poor : 5 = Excellent** | | | | |
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| 1. | Content/Materials |  |  | 3 | 7 | 8 |
| 2. | Facilitations/Interaction |  |  | 3 | 10 | 5 |
| 3. | Accommodation | 2 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | Meals |  | 1 | 2 | 7 | 7 |
| 5. | Objectives | 1 |  | 1 | 9 | 5 |

**Annexes:**

* Concept Notes
* Logistics Note
* Meeting Agenda
* List of Participants
* Presentations