



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

***Terminal Evaluation of Strengthening Conflict Prevention
through Establishing of Multi-Stakeholder Platforms and
Improved Alternative Livelihoods for Concession Affected
Communities Project***

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Disclaimer

This End of Project Evaluation report was prepared by two (2) Independent Consultants: -Dr. Hindowa B. Momoh and Angelance Browne. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNDP and FAO.

Acronyms/Abbreviations

ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AfT	Agenda for Transformation
BIN	Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization
CO	Country Office
CPC	County Peace Committee
EVD	Ebola Virus Disease
GoL	Government of Liberia
HQ	Headquarters
IP	Implementing Partner
IRF	Immediate Response Facility
JNV	Junior National Volunteer
JSC	Joint Steering Committee
JSJP	Justice and Security Joint Programme
LC	Land Commission
LCC	Land Coordination Center
LNP	Liberia National Police
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDTFO	Multi-Donor Trust Fund Office
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MSP	Multi-Stakeholder Platforms
NBC	National Bureau of Concession
NYSP	National Youth Service Program
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PBO	Peacebuilding Office
PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office
PP	Priority Plan
PRF	Peacebuilding Recovery Facility
PRS	Liberia Poverty Reduction Strategy
RUNO	Recipient United Nations Organizations
SMC	Statement of Mutual Commitments
SSR	Security sector reform
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMIL	United Nations Mission to Liberia
UNSG	UN Secretary-General

PROJECT INFORMATION

Programme Summary



Project ID	0091495
Project Starting Date	March 26, 2018
Planned End Date	June 30, 2019
Effective End Date	October 8, 2019
Approved Budget (US\$)	US\$ 3,052,583.22 (2,761, 069 (PBF); 291,320.26 UNDP)
Funding Partners	PBF, UNDP
Implementing Agency	UNDP and FAO
Lead Coordinating Agency (s)	NBC
Location	Liberia
Responsible Party(ies)	MFDP MIA, MOA, MME, EPA, CARI, INHRC, EduCare, IREDD



Fifteen (15) Multi Stakeholders Platforms located in Nine Counties of Liberia



Executive Summary

The civil war in Liberia officially ended in 2003. In October 2003, the UN Security Council established the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and deployed 15,000 peacekeepers across the country. The mission, which lasted for fifteen years, ended in March 2018. The end of UNMIL clearly meant that national ownership for both security and strengthening peacebuilding efforts to maintain the gains made and address critical root causes of conflict rested on the Government of Liberia (GoL). The country's vast agricultural and mining endowments have been variously controlled by international investors. These natural resources, which are the sources of hope for inclusive economic growth and development, have not been properly managed and continue to pose a threat to sustainable peace especially in concession communities. The Liberian Government Conflict Mapping exercise of 2016 stated that land and property disputes were the most predominant of the three conflict drivers. The study also identified the triggering factors as being driven by citizens' grievances and deep civil resentment and marginalization.

Purpose and Objectives: The thrust of the assignment was to undertake an end of project evaluation of the Strengthening Conflict Prevention through the establishment of Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs) and improved alternative livelihoods for concession affected communities to assess outcomes/results achieved in the course of its implementation. The evaluation focused on assessing the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, cross-cutting issues (human rights, gender and youth) and initial impact vis-à-vis the qualitative and quantitative objectives initially planned. Specifically, the consultancy was to assess, measure and identify: results obtained, changes that have taken place, the role played by local authorities, the critical challenges facing concession communities, distil lessons learned and proffer recommendations.

Methodology: The evaluation team employed a qualitatively dominant performance evaluation approach, based on the OECD/UNDP evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, women, youths and human rights, and sustainability. The methodological approach to data collection and analysis was highly participatory and was laced with human rights considerations. The all-encompassing and transparent process involved the two UN agencies, namely UNDP and FAO, the Peace Building Fund (PBF), the Government of Liberia (GoL), the National Bureau of Concessions (NBC), other Ministries, Agencies and Commissions (MACs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), beneficiaries and traditional Leaders and local government officials. The techniques employed for gathering data included review of relevant documents, stakeholder interviews and consultations, focus group discussions, observation and change stories. The consultants sought additional information from debriefing meetings/sessions, comments from project staff, feedback, suggestions from the relevant stakeholders at both national and local levels. These techniques provided information on the processes involved in project design, implementation, monitoring, reporting and management. Consultants collected data based on the results achieved, identified gaps and performance information in five counties: Bomi, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Bassa, Nimba and Bong counties.

The evaluation team reached a total number of 267 stakeholders (245 in focus group discussions and 21 interviewees) in the locations listed above. The analysis of information gathered involved the triangulation of data from the sources mentioned above and based on the evaluation criteria: relevance,

effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, gender, youths and human rights, lessons learned and recommendations. The information gathered from available documentation was corroborated with data collected through Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) and interviews and vice versa. At this stage, gaps were identified, success stories and project performance recorded under each criterion measured. Critical to data gathering and analysis was the centrality of gender and human rights principles.

Findings:

Relevance: The Concession project was timely, apt and relevant and attempted to fill the gap and address some of the root causes of the civil war in Liberia. The project was the first attempt at addressing the conflict-laden situation between concessionaires and affected communities in the agricultural and mining sectors. The project created an infrastructure for peace by establishing and building the capacities of the Multi-stakeholder Platform (MSPs), to promote peace, reconciliation and social cohesion in affected communities. Alternative livelihood through agricultural activities and agro-business were also implemented to address hunger and poverty but more so, the issue of access to land to facilitate agricultural production for increased income generation. The project was found to be aligned to the national and sectoral plans drafted and or endorsed by the GoL particularly the AfT, the PAPD and the Sustainable Development Goals. The project presents a home-grown, community-based and focused approach at ensuring durable peace in conflict-laden concession communities. However, the project did not fully consult local stakeholders in its design stage, which was a missed opportunity.

Effectiveness: The project has reached planned targets for most of its key performance indicators and has made significant progress towards most of its expected results under the two outcomes areas. **Under outcome Component 1**, the project has exhibited effectiveness in its implementation as evidenced in the establishment of fifteen MSPs in 15 communities of 9 counties in Liberia that clearly attempted to address the root causes of the civil war. The MSPs remain a ground-breaking platform with a total membership of 300 (200 men & 100 women), ensuring effectiveness in conflict prevention and dispute resolution relative to land concessions and promoting peacebuilding and social cohesion, a direct outcome and result-based UNDP and FAO project implementation strategy. These MSPs have contributed greatly to resolving differences amicably and have also preserved agreements between all concerned parties through MOUs and agreements.

Under Outcome Component 2, the project worked closely with MSPs in Bomi, Nimba, Ministry of Agriculture and other relevant stakeholders including Sime Darby to support concession-affected communities to create alternative livelihood opportunities within the communities which has helped to increase awareness among them and changed young men and women perception about daily reliance on the concessions for employment opportunities especially, exposing them to agricultural activities whereby they can be empowered economically and create sustainable livelihoods. The project has had a catalytic effect when it comes to, for instance, farmers accessing post-harvest facilities for adding value to crops (rice and cassava) in Bomi (Moore Town) and Nimba (Makinto) enhanced, over 300 women having access to and knowledge on use of agro processors improved, building the capacity of over two Hundred and forty (240) women in VSLA & business management; four improved poultry facilities to enhance the production and productivity of meat and eggs established in Gbar-Bomi and Zolowee-Nimba, among others.

Efficiency: The efficiency of the project was satisfactorily maintained. As such, it has delivered most of its financial and technical support for the entire Project implementation. Financial management was strong with clear budget tracking to account for commitments, expenditure and fund utilization. Review of the data on resource mobilization and utilization of Project resources show that the project has exhibited a high degree of efficiency. The Project progress reports were transparent and provided accountability of how resources were utilized, what activities were undertaken and what were achieved as informed by the quarterly and annual progress reports and AWP. There has been economical use of financial and human resources, and those resources were used for the intended planned activities and concentrated on the achievements of those results as reflected in the results matrix. Project funding provided through the Multi-party Trust fund/Peace building Fund was US\$ 2,761,070.00, UNDP US\$291,320.26 and the Government of Liberia US\$ 25,000 (in kind), which was equivalent to the total budget of US\$ 3,052,390. As at the project duration date 2018 – 2019, contribution received from donors amounting to US\$3,052,390.26 have been utilized to the tune of US\$2,829,807.00 with an unspent balance of US\$222,583.22 for (commitments/ongoing contractual construction services). The cumulative average delivery to date is 93%. Pledges made by concessionaires amounted to US\$ 347,200 but most of the Concessionaires have not yet honored their pledges directly to the project although they have provided in-kind contribution to various MSPs.

Sustainability: The establishment of the MSPs provided a good avenue for affected communities to continuously engage concessionaires not only on conflict mitigation but also addressing community challenges such as education, health care, safe drinking water, pollution etc. Trends from interviews indicated that MSPs will continue to keep the concessionaires on their toes thereby taking off a lot of responsibility of the GoL. The agricultural components: agriculture and agro-business will be key for sustainability when the current vegetable and cassava gardens, lowland rice are harvested and VSLA kicks in to provide knowledge and skills on financial resource management to women to engage in small businesses. The uniqueness observed about this project is that MSPs are both stakeholders and beneficiaries, which is a critical to sustainability of project results.

Impact: Although impact is a long-term goal, the concession project is already having a positive impact on communities and its relationship with concessionaires and vice versa. Concession communities have gone over a year without major violence and project intervention has brought concessionaires and MSPs to engage in dialogue and negotiation with the view to end protests and hostilities that had characterized their relationships. As such, the project has facilitated reconciliation, helped build social cohesion and trust and citizens and concessionaires now prefer dialogue and negotiation to violent demonstrations and protests that have been in vogue concession communities. However, given that some activities of agricultural production and agro-business under the alternative livelihood component are underway, not much can be attributed to this component in terms of impact *albeit* the potentials exist.

Women, Youths and Human Rights: Trends from interviews and documents reviewed indicate that the project clearly took steps to ensure gender mainstreaming in its portfolio and to address issues of youth and women's empowerment and human rights (addressing land availability and accessibility). Several activities targeted women and others incorporated efforts to ensure female participation in the project activities such as in MSP executives. Women and youths are serving in top decision-making as chairpersons, co-chairs, secretaries etc. These efforts improved women's understanding of their legal

rights, increased their confidence and recognized their status as key community players. However, adequate data does not exist to assess whether or not women have benefited from a higher awareness, quality of participation and leadership roles. Youths played a key role in the MSPs executives and served as peace monitors and ambassadors of peace building in communities. That notwithstanding, many more youths remain unemployed and lack access to agricultural land. With regards to human rights, the project has done very little to address access to ancestral and agricultural land, and this remains a critical conflict flashpoint in concession communities.

Lessons Learned

- **Early engagement of all stakeholders in project design and planning** and holding technical meetings to discuss critical challenges can go a long way to mitigate risks and unlock delays in project implementation;
- An important lesson learned was that the **UN Agencies were more concerned about carrying out project activities** rather than working together collaboratively. In doing so, focus on producing results was completely lost;
- **Project designs and plans need to be realistic** and take into consideration contextual challenges. For instance, the effect of the unpredictable (due to climate change) and long rainy season on project activities needs to be factored into project planning. Rains inhibit mobility (given the poor state of the roads) and obstruct constructions and, therefore, slow down project implementation;
- **Consultations with key stakeholders** particularly beneficiaries are quintessential and should be incorporated into every stage of the project's lifespan. This is critical to avoid misunderstanding of project goals and expectations but more so, it increases local voices and build a better understanding of their role in project implementation. For instance, had local stakeholders been consulted and involved at the design stage of the project, they would have been more willing to provide needed local resources (labor, tools) for the agricultural component of the project;
- **Traditional approaches to peacebuilding** (utilization of traditional leaders, women's peace huts and indigenous approaches to peacemaking) are less expensive, easily available and accessible and when enlisted into a peace infrastructure can serve as durable and sustained peace making mechanism. Equally worth noting is the fact that Local and traditional leaders remain relevant to any community development and peace building efforts in concession areas;
- Another key lesson learned is that **lack of synergetic and strategic approach to joint programming and monitoring results** in the project was missing resulting to the inability to identify critical programmatic challenges at an early stage and respond to them accordingly. This undermines the Delivering as One (DaO) principle.

Conclusion and Recommendations

FINDINGS	CONCLUSION	RECOMMENDATIONS
RELEVANCE		
<p>Finding 1: The Concession Project was in sync with national development priorities and the first at addressing and bringing peace to the conflict-laden situation between concessionaires and affected communities in the agricultural and mining sectors of Liberia.</p>	<p>The consultants conclude that the programme was relevant because it was aligned to national development strategies ; assisted in the establishment and empowerment of MSPs ; contributed to the achievements of the PAPD and Aft and helped to bring and build peace in the once volatile concession communities. However, consultation at the design stage was lacking.</p> <p>Note : This conclusion is in respect of and applicable to findings 1,2, 3 and 4.</p>	<p>For the concession project to remain relevant, it is recommended that the GoL and national partners continue to provide support to and promote efforts of the MSPs, Women Peace Huts and other local peace structures as infrastructure of peace in the country. It is also recommended that national implementing partners for agricultural and agro-business continue to provide support to farmers to increase yield, provide employment to youths and women and, by implication, promote increased income and sustainable peace.</p> <p>Note : This recommendation is in respect of and applicable to findings 1, 2, 3 and 4.</p>
<p>Finding 2: The Project addressed the two outcomes and attendant outputs in the Prodoc and contributed to the PAPD and Aft corresponding pillars : Pillar 2: “Power to the People”, Pillar 3: “Economic and Job creation” and Pillar 4: “Sustaining the Peace” of the PAPD and Pillar 1 (Peace, Security and Rule of Law) and Pillar 2 (Economic Transformation), Pillar 5: that addresses gender equality and Youth Empowerment of the Aft.</p>	Same as above	Same as above
<p>Finding 3: The project was relevant because it addressed the critical and substantive burning issues of sustaining the peace and improving livelihood by responding to social injustice, land disputes, marginalization and exclusion of youths and women in decision-making processes, and addressing corruption, mismanagement of natural resources, to name a few.</p>	Same as above	Same as above
<p>Finding 4: Regardless of the relevance of the project, the evaluation team noted that concession communities were not fully consulted during the design stage of the project, which led to the delay in implementing outcome two.</p>	Same as above	Same as above

EFFECTIVENESS

<p>Findings 5: Qualitative data collected and reviewed shows that the Project has reduced and/or prevented conflicts and provided sustainable livelihood for the beneficiaries, which has contributed to intended changes in their lives in the affected concession communities. However, collaboration between UNDP and FAO was weak in project implementation.</p>	<p>The project stands to gain from adopting a holistic and joint approach to project implementation, undertaking joint and efficient delivery of interventions, strengthening of monitoring tools/processes, and continue to work with MSPs, local leaders, women and youths, CSOs and national partners with the view to improve agricultural production, build trust, social cohesion and sustain the peace.</p> <p>Note : This conclusion is in respect of and applicable to findings 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10.</p>	<p>Collaboration and partnership are two key UN priorities/strategies used in promoting the Delivery as One principle. There is, therefore, the need for joint platform between FAO and UNDP that flows smoothly and sequentially particularly in joint programming, planning, implementation, M&E and reporting to ensure maximum impact.</p> <p>(Eg. Building of synergy with the Rule of Law project to effectively tackle the land issue is paramount to successful implementation of the project).</p> <p>Note: This recommendation is in respect of and applicable to findings 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10.</p>
<p>Finding 6: The evaluation established that the National Bureau of Concession (NBC) worked through implementing partners, local leaders and CSO's including EDUCARE and IREDD and built MSPs capacities, who in turn facilitated conflict management and peacebuilding initiatives/processes between local leadership, stakeholders and concessionaires. This led to peaceful co-existence among the responsible parties and beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Concession communities have not experienced any major violent demonstration or protest over a year now largely due to NBCs and other national actors' engagement of MSPs as peace builders.</p>	<p>NBC, along with UNDP and FAO, should document best practices for future reference; develop and share knowledge products for other countries to follow.</p>
<p>Finding 7: The alternative livelihood component has made meaningful progress towards the achievement of the outcome, through increased community access to post-harvest facilities for value addition, enhanced beneficiaries capacity to produce quality meat and eggs, secured access to over 20 hectares of encumbered lowlands to improve production and productivity of rice in Nimba, to name a few.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Same as 5 above</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Same as 5 above</p>
<p>Finding 8: The project has been successful in establishing and strengthening 15 MSPs in 15 communities in nine counties who are presently helping to build trust and maintain good relationships between communities and companies. The project has been effective in regaining some pieces of land where communities are now undertaking agricultural activities.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Same as 5 above</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Same as 5 above</p>

<p>Finding 9 : The project reached beneficiaries by addressing their rights to access agricultural land, settle land disputes, have a say in natural resource management, enhanced social cohesion and cooperation between stakeholders (local authorities and MSPs working together) and is yielding results such as information sharing, conducting town hall meetings and community conflict resolutions.</p>	<p>Same as 5 above</p>	<p>Same as 5 above</p>
<p>Finding 10 : Trends from documents reviewed show that there exist a draft comprehensive M&E plan, which envisions quarterly monitoring, spot visits and site assessments but is yet to be implemented. M&E and joint project implementation in UNDP/FAO remain weak.</p>	<p>Same as 5 above</p>	<p>Same as 5 above</p>
<p>EFFICIENCY</p>		
<p>Finding 11: The evaluation team established that the project delivery was done through a Direct Implementation Modality (DIM). They also note that the Project utilized all of the processes during project implementation including good planning and giving priority to result oriented activities but although faced with monitoring challenges.</p>	<p>The concession project has, to a large extent, demonstrated efficiency in its financial operations and management, timely delivery of key activities especially for outcome one. In the case of outcome 2, some delays were experienced affecting the agricultural activities which require much more time.</p> <p>Note : This conclusion is also in respect of and applicable to finding 14.</p>	<p>Efficiency is critical in timely project delivery and management of resources. UN partners particularly FAO should redouble its efforts in promoting agriculture and agro-business, and work more on project planning and staffing to ensure the timely and quality implementation of project.</p> <p>Note : This recommendations is in respect of and applicable to finding 14.</p>
<p>Finding 12: The evaluation team found that the project has not attracted additional support, although some funding commitments were made through Memorandum of Agreement, (MOA) by concessions but were never translated into real cash. Besides, the GoL continuous demand of advance payment of corporate social development fund owing to fulfillment of corporate responsibilities of these companies has compounded the problem.</p>	<p>The evaluation team concludes that the project did not attract additional funding/ support from concessions and the GoL</p>	<p>It is recommended that the GoL provides support (financial, material etc.) to the operations of the MSPs in the post-project era.</p>
<p>Finding 13: Stakeholder interviews revealed that coordination between FAO and UNDP on the one hand, and the PBF secretariat on the other, was initially weak at the inception stage of the project implementation. However, significant improvement has been made and coordination now defines the relationship in the remaining period of project implementation.</p>	<p>The evaluation concludes that efficient collaboration and coordination at all stages of the project is critical to optimum output</p>	<p>The team recommends the existence of flexibility for agencies to look at PBF's funding criteria by facing the reality on the ground ensuring that their funding requirements are based on analysis of the country context.</p>
<p>Finding 14 : According to the expenditure delivery summary for resoources utilized for the period 2018-2019, it shows that out of a total approved budget of US\$3,025,390.26 million, the total amount utilized was US\$ 2,829,807.04 and the un-spent balance reflected US\$ 222,583.22 averaging 69% for</p>	<p>Same as 11 above</p>	<p>Same as 11 above</p>

2018 and 141% for 2019 with average delivery of 93%.		
IMPACT		
Finding 15 : The consultants established that there is community ownership of the project as peace structures such as the MSPs and the Women's Peace Huts continue to settle conflicts/disputes and bring together concessionaires and communities. However, the alternative livelihood component that emphasizes agricultural production and agrobusiness is yet to have an impact on communities as some activities are being concluded.	The evaluation concludes that the MSPs and other peace infrastructure established will be key in sustaining peace, social cohesion and promoting reconciliation in concession communities for a long time This conclusion is in respect of and applicable to findings 15 and 16.	FAO and national partners should endeavour to complete the ongoing agricultural component of the project to ensure provision of alternative livelihoods to the affected communities. This recommendation also holds for findings 15 and 16.
Finding 16 : Reconciliation, social cohesion and trust are being built and citizens and concessionaires now prefer dialogue and negotiation to violent demonstrations and protests that have characterized concession communities.	Same as above	Same as above
SUSTAINABILITY		
Finding 17: The project established and built the capacity of local structures (MSPs, Women Peace Huts etc) in project affected communities and enlisted all categories of people (local leaders, the old, young men and women, CSOs) to participate in driving the peace agenda in these communities, which speaks to the development principles of the GoL as it relates to the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) and the AFT.	The project has a very good chance to be sustainable because MSPs provide a good avenue for communities to continue engaging concessions and their legal status will allow them deal with companies, provide space to negotiate and build the peace	It is recommended that NBC facilitates the legalization of MSPs, position and empower them to negotiate, on behalf of their communities, with concessionaires.
Finding 18: FAO has contributed to building the logistical capacity of the MoA (donation of mobiles) through the CACs (Bomi & Nimba) and DAOs for use to monitor the project after it has ended.	The results will be sustained through the enhanced efforts of MoA, the local community leaders, women groups and youths who have been empowered and fully engaged in the implementation, and have now taken ownership Note : This conclusion is in respect of and applicable to findings 19.	MoA, through its existing decentralized structures (CACs and DAOs), should continue to facilitate and support the agricultural component of the project. Note : The recommendation holds for finding 19.
Finding 19: The consultants established that the agricultural sector will be key for sustainability when the current vegetable and cassava gardens are harvested and VSLA takes off ground. FAO has brought in more staff that will eventually improve delivery of outcome 2 for sustainability in the agricultural sector.		

WOMEN, YOUTHS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

<p>Finding 20: The project clearly addressed women and youth issues by involving them in the implementation and monitoring of programme activities and outputs. For instance, out of the 300 MSPs, at least 33% of them were females and women and youths hold executive positipon in MSPs</p>	<p>The concession project is clearly addressing and adopting gender-based approach, accessing alternative livelihoods, and promoting greater inclusion, participation and increased voice of women and youths in decision-making process in concession communities.</p> <p>Note : This cconclusion is also in respect of and applicable to finding 21.</p>	<p>The consultants recommend that UNDP/FAO continue to support women’s and youth initiatives by building their capacities in management and leadership, human rights, VSLA, BDS, vocational and technical skills.</p>
<p>Finding 21 : The project adopted a gender-based sensitive approach. The agricultural component was heavily tilted toward engaging young men and women in farming. Trends from documents reviewed noted that affected communities access to improved alternative livelihoods, particularly agro-based ones for young men and women, are taking center stage in concession communities.</p>	<p>Same as above</p>	<p>It is also recommended that NBC and other MACs (MIA MoA) empower women’s peace huts that are currently serving as agents of peace and reducing tension in communities.</p>

Chapter One

1.0 Background of the Project

1.1 General Background

Sustaining peace in Liberia requires long-term investment in national institutions to help them be inclusive, accountable and responsive. In the process, it is critical to ensure that the Government is committed to providing opportunities and services to all Liberians, including youth and women. After a decade of successful peacekeeping interventions, there was an urgent need to further strengthen peacebuilding interventions to maintain the gains made and address the key remaining conflict drivers as captured in the Liberia Peacebuilding plan prepared by the Government of Liberia with the support of international partners including the UN Country Team in response to UNSCR 2333, which emphasizes sustainable peace in the absence of UNMIL. Many issues threaten the gains made to peace consolidation in Liberia. They include but not restricted to: land dispute between Concession companies and local communities, inaccessible land for agricultural activities, mismanagement and inadequate distribution of natural resources that have given birth to citizens grievances and deep resentment, social injustice and marginalization perpetuated by disadvantage against youths and women, corruption, loss of livelihood, unemployment and boundary disputes identified as root causes of the civil war in Liberia which remain unaddressed and continue to be the main proximate triggers of violence in post-war Liberia.

In order to help the government of Liberia (GoL) prevent the emerging violence within concession communities, the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) provided funding amounting to US\$ 2,761,069 as support for the implementation of the ***Strengthening Conflict Prevention through Establishment of Multi-Stakeholder Platforms and Improved Alternative Livelihoods in Concession Areas Project***. Financial commitments totaling US\$ 472,200 outside PBF's approved fund were made available by UNDP (US\$ 100,000), Concession holders (US\$ 347,200) and the Government of Liberia (US\$ 25,000). The project which covered the period from January 2018 to September 2019 was implemented by UNDP and UN FAO. However, an additional three-month No Cost Extension (NCE) was requested for the implementation of the remaining project activities that could not be carried out due to the heavy downpour of rain.

The Project is designed to help strengthen local capacities to address the underlying causes of concessions-related conflicts and embrace mitigating and preventive measures led by the MSPs in the catchment communities of the project. Consequently, it has established and operationalized four new MSPs in Bomi, Grand Bassa, Grand Kru and Maryland counties, and consolidated three existing ones in Sinoe, Maryland and Nimba counties to engage in networking, coordinating and taking lead in conflict prevention/mitigation. The Project has built on UNDP's Strengthening National Reconciliation through Improved Understanding of Conflict Drivers in Concession Areas and Establishment of Stakeholder Platforms and Improved Alternative Livelihood for Concession Affected Communities done by FAO focusing on three hotspot concession areas: Maryland, Nimba, and Sinoe counties. The Concessions Project has contributed to strengthening the Sustainable Partnership Initiative (SP1) by bringing 18 Project Affected Communities (PACs), relevant government entities, civil society, development partners and concessionaires to a common platform to work through specific concerns arising from concession operations as well as framing collective agendas. The Project has two outcomes namely:-

Outcome 1: Increased citizen engagement, including meaningful participation of women in concessions management for conflict mitigation.

This outcome aims to create structures for managing tensions to bring order, predictability and trust to situations where, otherwise, competition and conflicting interests would be rife.

It also addresses/identifies the need for reforms in large-scale land investment by modeling community engagement and transforming community rights into economic opportunities. It has built on UNDP's global experience and expertise in multi-stakeholder and democratic dialogue processes, concessions conflict management and UN joint programme on Land Reforms.

Outcome 2: Improved alternative livelihoods for concession-affected communities for human security.

While concession companies have made one-time payments to communities for losing access to farmlands and loss of livelihood, it does not provide communities with alternative livelihoods opportunities to sustain themselves. This has been the chief grievance shared by all Project Affected Communities (PACs) that has fueled conflicts across all concessions.

This outcome addresses, through the provision of alternative livelihood, potential conflict drivers ranging from land disputes, compensation for crops, shrines and residential structures destroyed by companies' operations, unemployment among youths, disempowerment of women, mitigation measures to prevent pollution of land, air, water and crop destruction by chemical waste, provision of safe drinking water, toilet facilities, health care centers and schools.

Against this backdrop, UNDP has commissioned a terminal evaluation to assess the project's interventions and ascertain its impact made in the beneficiaries' communities.

1.2 Programme Budget

The Project funding has been provided through the Multi-party Trust fund/Peace building Fund, US\$ 2,761,070.00, UNDP US\$291,320.26 and the Government of Liberia US\$ 25,000 (in kind) which is equivalent to the total budget of US\$ 3,052,390. Since the commencement of implementation, the project has directly engaged a total of fifteen (15) MSP's in fifteen communities that are located in nine (9) counties of Liberia. It has directly benefitted women, men and youths in these affected communities. The project sustainable livelihood component located in two counties (Bomi, Nimba) of the nine counties has established 17 farms approximately 40 hectares, two poultry facilities and two model gardens in nine communities. The Project benefitted from a no-cost extension until September 2019 during which time, only the same two donors pledged funding from continuation up to and including the end of the project implementation. As at the project duration date 2018 – 2019, contribution received from donors amounting to US\$3,052,390.26 have been utilized to the tune of US\$2,829,807.00 with an un-spent balance of US\$222,583.22. The cumulative utilization average delivery to date is 93%. **Note:** unspent balance represents contractual commitment for ongoing construction.

Table (1- A): Project Budget

Contributions from Partners		Amount (US\$)
1	Government of Liberia	US\$ 25,000 (kind)
2	UNDP	291,320.26
2	MPTF /PBF	2, 761,070.00
TOTAL PROJECT COST:		US\$ 3,052,390.26

Table (1- B) Expenditure Delivery Summary

Donor	Year 2018	Year 2019	Total Budget	Total Expenditure Utilized	Unspent Balance	% Utilization(Delivery)
GOL	25,000 (kind)	- 0 -	25,000(kind)			
UNDP	118,396.29	172,923.97	291,320.26	190,869.05	100,451.21	66%
MPTF/PBF	1,232,749.00	28,321.00	1,761,000.00	1,638,937.99	122,132.01	93%
FAO	7,000,000.00	300,000.00	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	0.00	100%
TOTAL	2,015,145.29	1,001,244.97	3,052,390.26	2,829,807.04	222,583.22	Cum. Ave 93%

Note: Unspent balance represents (commitments for ongoing contractual services-construction)

1.3 Programme Management

The Concession Project in Liberia was managed by two UN agencies in the country: UNDP and FAO while PBF provided strategic direction and funding for the project. UNDP served as the lead UN agency, ensuring overall implementation particularly **Outcome 1: Increased citizen engagement, including meaningful participation of women in concessions management for conflict mitigation.** FAO, on the other hand, implemented **Outcome 2: Improved alternative livelihoods for concession-affected communities for human security.** FAO brings on board its specialized technical knowledge and policy support role on agriculture and food security. UNDP, due to its comparative advantage in strengthening state and non-state institutions and governance, provided support in the implementation of outcome 1.

A Project Management Unit was established at UNDP with a designated Project Manager responsible for the overall Project coordination and supervision with support from FAO and PBF.

On behalf of the Government of Liberia, the Concession project is jointly implemented by the National Bureau of Concessions (NBC), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI).

1.4 Programme Indicator

The Performance outputs for all the project's indicators have been established and progress made during the implementation of the project for the period under review are reflected in the performance-based indicator assessment. **(See table -2 in annex 4).**

Chapter Two

2.0 Country Context

The Republic of Liberia is located on the West Coast of Africa. It covers approximately 111 396 km and has a population of fewer than 4 million (3,476,608) people.¹ Liberia is bounded by Guinea to the north, Cote D'Ivoire to the east, Sierra Leone to the west and the Atlantic to the south. It is estimated that Liberia contains about 40% of West Africa rain forest. The country's climate is tropical with two seasons: the dry season from mid-October to mid-April and the wet season from mid-April to Mid-October.

Demographically, Liberia is divided into 15 political counties: Bomi, Bong, Gbarpolu, Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Lofa, Margibi, Maryland, Montserrado, Nimba, Rivercess, River Gee and Sinoe. Monrovia, which is the capital city, is the largest city and serves as the political, commercial and financial capital of the country. Liberia's population is 50.1 male, 49.9 female and with a young population approximately 52.7% under the age 20 years.² The relatively young population, combined with factors such as high rates of teenage pregnancy (32%) and low levels of contraceptive prevalence (11% overall) contribute to the country's high total fertility rate of 5.9% children per woman.³

Following 17 years of civil conflict, Liberians have been able to achieve a level of reconciliation that has allowed society to function peacefully. Further, three relatively peaceful, democratic elections have been held (2005, 2011 and 2017). This success reflects hard work on the part of the citizens but also the government's actions to strengthen social cohesion; build capacities to manage tensions without outbreaks of violence; promote reconciliation; and gradually lessen political polarization. As part of the PRS, Liberian security institutions, primarily the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and the Liberia National Police (LNP) were rebuilt and reformed into professional and capable organizations. Although challenges remain and Liberia continues to rely on the support of a large force of United Nations peacekeepers, the country will take full responsibility for maintenance of security over the coming years. This peace and security has allowed Liberians to return to their farms, start businesses, return to their country from abroad, and to witness leading global firms invest in their country.⁴

Irrespective of these laudable achievements recorded so far, the critical issues of exclusion and marginalization of significant portions of society in political governance; inaccessibility and unavailability of land for agricultural production and agro-processes; mismanagement of natural resources; over-concentration of power particularly in the Capital, Monrovia, economic malfeasance, ethnic and class animosities and rivalries, which were the main roots of the conflict are yet to be fully addressed. This situation is compounded by the lack of a robust economic growth necessary for effectively addressing the pervasive poverty in the country.

Peacebuilding in Liberia has been ongoing for over a decade, resulting in several major governance and policy achievements. However, despite progress in building peace, several root causes of conflict remain

¹ See 2008 National population and housing census: preliminary results, Monrovia, Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS), 2008.

² For detail, see Liberia's Demographic Health Survey, 2008

³ Liberia Malaria Indicator Survey, Monrovia, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, 2011

⁴ Agenda for Transformation, p. 4.

unaddressed. Despite the many gains made in maintaining national peace and security, issues identified as root causes of Liberia's 14-year civil war remain unaddressed and recent assessments show that land disputes, corruption, boundary disputes and concession related tensions continue to be the main proximate triggers of violence. The lives of many women are particularly insecure due to societal inequalities and sexual and gender-based violence, further weakening social cohesion in communities. Low commodity prices and the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) have limited economic growth and impeded development gains, undermining high expectations around the speed of post-war recovery and the delivery of peace dividends. Liberia's economic performance has still not recovered from the devastating impact of EVD, with the country's average loss of GDP estimated at US\$187.7 million per year, or an average of 13.7 percent of GDP during the 2014/2017 period. These challenges are compounded by limited capacities in the security and rule of law sectors, slow progress in national reconciliation and limited implementation of critical government reforms. Relations between the executive branch of Government and society have improved, but remain strained, in the absence of meaningful national reconciliation, compounded by the limited confidence in the justice and security institutions, whose presence remains extremely limited outside of Monrovia. The drawdown of UNMIL and the weak capacities of national Human Right institutions raise fears that the human rights of citizens will be severely compromised.⁵

Liberia's natural resources continue to be a major source of hope for inclusive economic growth and development, as well as social transformation. Land concessions are an important source of employment and income for a workforce of about 22,000 persons in Liberia. It is particularly important for youth and ex-combatants in rural areas where alternative job opportunities are scarce and low paying. An additional 200,000 people, dependent family members and employees in downstream industries such as transportation and catering, rely on incomes from concession workers.

The stark reality, however, is that concessions have not lived up to the expectations of the key stakeholders- the Government, the investors, and the Project Affected Communities (PACs). While the decline in global commodity prices since 2011 has undermined revenues, several other factors account for the underperformance of this sector. Progress in developing some of the concessions has been slow, particularly in the agriculture sector, expected contributions to tax revenue and royalties from the investments have not been realized and local/community development spin-offs have not been delivered. Alongside these challenges, land concession conflicts and labour disputes associated with concessions continue to be a key driver of conflict.

2.1 The Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

The purpose of this consultancy is to carry out a terminal evaluation of the Strengthening Conflict Prevention through establishment of Multi-Stakeholder Platforms and improved alternative livelihoods for concession affected communities to assess outcomes/results achieved in the course of its implementation. The evaluation will focus on assessing the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, cross-cutting issues (human rights, gender and youth) and initial impact vis-à-vis the qualitative and quantitative objectives initially planned.

⁵ See Project Document of 2018 for details

2.2 Evaluation Objectives

The objectives of this consultancy are outlined as follows:

- To appreciate the results obtained with regards to the previously defined objectives and the expectations of the targeted Concession communities;
- To appreciate the changes, both positive and negative, attributable to project interventions;
- Did the project encourage and or access funding from other sources such as the concessions companies towards achieving the two outcomes;
- To assess the role of local authorities in promoting the timely and successful project implementation;
- To measure progress in Multi Stakeholder Platform communities;
- To note the use of disbursed funds in relation to the needs initially identified;
- To identify constraints related to the implementation of the project;
- To make recommendations aimed at consolidating the achievements of the project and ensuring sustainability; and
- To distil lessons from this project that will be useful to UNDP, FAO and the National Bureau of Concessions and similar future programmes.

The Terminal Evaluation was to focus on the following key areas, namely: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, results and sustainability. All areas were expected to be examined with a focus on women, youth and human rights considerations. It would apply the four OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness (including coordination issues), efficiency, and sustainability) and Human Rights and Gender Equality as an additional criterion.

2.3 Evaluation Criteria and Guiding Questions

The evaluation seeks to answer the following key evaluation questions and sub-questions that were organized under five key criteria areas as reflected in the below table. The consulting team has developed guiding questions, which are embedded within the framework of the evaluation criteria as indicated in annex 1 of the report.

Table (3) Evaluation Criteria and Questions	
RELEVANCE	<i>To what extent the objectives envisaged by the project during its design meet the needs of the target population in response to national priorities, which the project seeks to address?</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent does the project align with national development, peace building and livelihood priorities? • To what extent have the outputs and outcomes in the Project Document (ProDoc) contributed to AfT and PAPD corresponding pillar(s)? <p>To what extent the substantive peacebuilding areas were addressed?</p> <p>To what extent the project implemented addressed the Theory of Change?</p>
EFFECTIVENESS	<i>To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved or are expected/ likely to be achieved.</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the project been able to achieve its results and what is

	<p>the evidence?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did it facilitate peaceful co-existence between project beneficiaries and concessionaires as well as the provision of land for the implementation of alternative livelihood activities? • To what extent progress has been made towards achievement of the expected outcomes and results; results achieved, the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement of the project results? • To what extent have been the project's greatest accomplishments/ contributions and value-added to supporting peace building, social cohesion and alternative livelihood? • How successful was the project at improving the relationships and trust between the affected communities and the land concessionaires? • To what extent the project has reached its targeted beneficiaries? Are they satisfied with the project's results? • Does the project have effective monitoring mechanisms in place to measure progress towards achievement of results? • What evidence is there that the project has contributed towards an improvement in MSPs social cohesion in affected communities? • To what extent the MSPs interventions prevented conflict between the affected communities and the Concessionaires? • Has local authority been supportive of the MSP's activities in the affected communities? • To what extent was the project effectively coordinated by National Bureau of Concession (NBC)? <p>To what extent UNDP and FAO are perceived by stakeholders as a strong advocate for improving government effectiveness and integrity within the project communities?</p>
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EFFICIENCY - A measure of how economically resources / inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) were converted to results.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the project's selected method of delivery been appropriate to its objectives and the development context? • To what extent were quality outputs delivered in time? • To what extent did the project attract additional support (financial and none financial) outside PBF's investment? • To what extent were relevant national stakeholders and actors included in the programming and execution of the project? • How successful was the coordination between the project implementing agencies and with the PBF Secretariat? • How effective was the selection and oversight of any sub-contractors or grantees of the project? • Have the project resources been well utilized for the attainment of the project objectives? • Was the staffing adequate for the implementation of the project? • Were Concessionaires supportive of the Project implementation within the affected communities?
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IMPACT - <i>Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by the Project directly or indirectly, intended or unintended</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the project impacted behavioral and attitude change of communities towards the concessionaires and vice versa? • What socio-economic impact has the project had on the local economy through its interventions within the affected communities? • What are the conflict prevention impacts that could be attributed to this project? • What are the main lessons learnt for the UN in engaging on land concession issues, peacebuilding, social cohesion and alternative livelihood in the affected communities?
SUSTAINABILITY - <i>The likelihood of a continuation of benefits for the affected communities from a development intervention after the intervention is completed or the probability of continued long-term benefits.</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the project managed to adhere to key development principles, including national ownership, and ensure sustainability of results? • What is the likelihood of the project results continuing beyond the duration of the project and how will they be supported after the end of the project? • Has the project managed risks effectively and responsibly? • How effective was the exit/sustainability strategy of the project to sustain positive changes made by the project? • Are there nationally or locally owned structures and mechanisms to maintain the project's interventions? • What are the strategies to be recommended for the post-project phase, given the success or not and how to mobilize additional funds and promote the internalization of project achievements by the target groups?
WOMEN & YOUTH – <i>An extent to which gender main streaming and youth related issues have been factored into the project.</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has gender and youth related issues been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project by NBC? • To what extent have UNDP and FAO been able to adopt gender-sensitive and peacebuilding -based approaches to their work? • Is the gender marker data assigned to project representative of reality? • To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality? Were there any unintended effects? • What might be the impact of women's participation on issues of conflict prevention and livelihood in the communities to sustain peace?

Chapter Three

3.0 Evaluation Methodology

3.1 Evaluation Approach

To ensure that the evaluation is of maximum value to UNDP, FAO, PBF, Development Partners, the GoL and the beneficiaries, the specific focus and approach to the evaluation was discussed with the Project Manager and Team at UNDP, FAO, PBF and national Stakeholders particularly NBC. Communities for field work and critical key stakeholders were identified including expectations of the client with regards to the evaluation. As a participatory and transparent process, the consultants ensured that the needs and expectations became central throughout the evaluation process with the objective to ensure that the Terminal Evaluation is of maximum value to the UN Agencies and the people of Liberia.

A combination of data collection and analysis tools was employed to capture and record results relating to Project relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, women, youths and human rights and lessons learned. The approach helped the consultants to generate evidence from one source and corroborate it with findings from other source (s). Evidences gathered from this triangulation have been substantive to produce a report that is all-encompassing. The triangulation also helped in producing results that are robust, verifiable and of high quality.

3.2 Theory of Change

The evaluation team examined the Theory of Change (TOC) underlying the project's outcomes ensuring that they are aligned with the national development strategies and country context providing citizens in the concession areas the right in concession management that could improve their livelihood in a sustainable way.

The Theory of Change (TOC) was fundamental to this evaluation, and as such the evaluation team used a mix of approaches to assess the programme theory on the one hand, and to evaluate its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact, women, youths and human rights in the implementation of the concession project in Liberia, on the other. These methods included but were not restricted to reviewing the programme documents, articulating the mental models of the programme stakeholders (UNDP, FAO, NBC, other MACs, NGOs/CSOs, beneficiaries) and reviewing prevailing literature on the project. Conclusions were drawn regarding the level of concordance between the articulated project theory and the implementation of the project in reality.

The consultants applied the TOC to analyze the two outcome areas and the many activities with the objective to providing credible evidence justifying why the project priorities are or have been the most appropriate and most likely to contribute to higher level of change in concession communities in Liberia. The project-built capacities and provided training sessions on conflict management, leadership skills, non-violent approach to peacebuilding with the view to change the attitude and behaviors of concession communities. To a large extent, these trainings influenced and positively changed the behavior and attitudes of the citizens who became agents of change and peace in their communities. Further, the project addressed improved community engagement in project activities; changed the perception about

the concessions among young men and women; and improved women and youth participation in land concessions. Women and youth involvement in agricultural activities in concession communities also helped to divert their attention from the protests and violent demonstrations that had preoccupied them before. They saw a new dawn in their lives that changed the dynamics in their relationship with the concessionaires. Indeed, the TOC was integral to project implementation.

3.3 Evaluability

The consultants employed methodological approaches that ensured the evaluation is reliable and credible. The consulting team interrogated the objectives, programme logic and activities with the view to capture the project's success stories, challenges, sustainability and ownership. The evaluation also addressed whether the project achieved its planned activities and outputs against the stated outcomes.

3.4 Sampling

The evaluation team worked with the Programme Management Team to obtain a representative sample of programmatic activities that would best meet the learning objectives of the evaluation. For instance, a sample size from Program Management, MACs, CSOs, Communities to be visited etc. were agreed upon by the consulting team and the project management. As such, the following stakeholders were targeted and interviewed: Concessionaires, MSPs, PACs, CSOs, SDIs, GoL (MoA, MiA, EPA, National Bureau of Concessions) and beneficiaries (see annex 4 for face-to-face sample questions).

The evaluators visited Bomi, Cape Mount, Grand Bassa, Nimba and Bong Counties during field visits. In consultations with NBC and UNDP, the consultants remotely administered questionnaires in hard-to-reach counties (Maryland and Sinoe) because of the poor road network. The evaluation team also had telephone conversations with key local stakeholders in these two counties where necessary. The rationale behind this approach was to ensure that the evaluation reflects national flavor and outlook. The tools for field work are provided in the annex.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

The terminal evaluation entailed a desk-based review of key documents (e.g. annual and quarterly progress reports, annual work plans, monitoring reports, ProDoc etc.), stakeholder meetings in Monrovia and fieldwork in a selected counties and communities where the project was implemented.

1. **Document Review and Content Analysis:** The evaluators reviewed all Project related documents including the Prodoc, results framework, annual progress reports and reviews, monitoring reports, a selection of implementing partner reports, plus key studies and knowledge products on peacebuilding in post-war countries. In addition, the team reviewed key Government of Liberia documents (e.g. Agenda for Transformation, PAPD, Agenda 2030 etc.), documents on the wider policy, political and social context in Liberia as well as evidence and best practices in implementing peacebuilding Programmes.
2. **Key Informant Interviews:** Stakeholder Interviews with UNDP, FAO, PBF, NBC, other MDCs and stakeholders in the communities were conducted and programme staff, government officials at national and local levels and CSOs were interviewed. Specifically, the consultants interviewed with the FAO Country Representative, the Deputy Resident Representative (RR), the Programme Coordinator and Head PBF and team, the Director-General of National Bureau of Concessions (NBC) and Team and the Project Manager at UNDP. Where face-to-face interviews were not possible as was the case in Sinoe and Maryland, telephone calls were arranged. A carefully

prepared semi-structured questionnaire and interview guide was designed and administered accordingly. This was done in consultation with Project Management Team.



MSP IN CAPE MOUNT COUNTY

3. **Focus Group Discussions:** The consultants carried out Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) by engaging CSOs and critical beneficiaries particularly women and youths in the communities to gauge their perceptions on the project's performance, the changes that have occurred as a result of the intervention, constraints experienced, progress made in establishing the multi-stakeholder committees and livelihood support, implementation issues, improvement in relations etc., impact of the intervention and the sustainability of results. The consultants prepared and administered FGD guide with specific questions (why, for what and how questions) that targeted project beneficiaries, local authorities, concessionaries and CBOs. The consultants purposefully focused on how the project has helped communities prevent conflicts and build peace, build trust and engender social cohesion, relationship with concessionaries and local authorities, local ownership of the process, improvement in their livelihoods, and many others. This was critical because people were privileged to voice out their opinions and share their views on project effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, impact, women and youth considerations and sustainability. FDGs also helped the consultants to observe some of the positive or negative, intended and unintended impacts of the intervention. The evaluation team captured success stories, gaps in implementation, coordination/partnership issues, sustainability of results, ownership, challenges and how to plan for any other future intervention.
4. **Field Work/Visits:** This aspect concentrated in the communities where the project has been implemented. The consultants commenced field work from October 17th and returned to Monrovia on October 30, 2019. The team visited one MSP project site in Bomi, two in Grand

Cape Mount, three in Grand Bassa, two in Nimba and two in Bong counties. Additionally, the consultants visited two FAO sites in Bomi and four in Nimba Counties. KIIs with two MSP leaders and two concessionaries in each of the counties were carried out. Five (5) focus group discussions (at least 15 in each group) with local authorities, youths and women, CSOs and other beneficiaries in each of the five counties to collect primary data on the program effectiveness, impact and sustainability, challenges, success stories and for drawing lessons relevant to focusing and calibrating future priorities and programming. Information collected through these focus groups served to cross-reference data and validate findings.



FAO WAREHOUSE IN NIMBA COUNTY



FAO MODEL GARDEN IN NIMBA COUNTY

Table (4): Field Visits to communities disaggregated by gender

County	Community	Men	Women	Total
Bong	Beh Sao	9	9	18
	Mo Town	6	5	11
Grand Cape Mount	Ballah Town	10	5	15
	Kinjor	11	9	20
Grand Bassa	PASDAC	8	8	16
	Zewein	8	7	15

	ABOLA	5	8	13
Nimba	Gbarpa	10	6	16
	Zolowee			
Bong	Kokoya	18	8	26
	Grand Total	85	73	185

5. **Change Stories:** Change stories were one of the key data collection tools employed to gauge beneficiaries' views on Project impact, effectiveness, successes, challenges, sustainability and women and youth issues. Accordingly, the consultants interviewed beneficiaries of all categories (local authorities, women, youths etc.) and selected the Most Significant Change Stories for the report. As a participatory evaluation technique, one local authority, three women and three men (mostly youths) in each focus group was given opportunity to describe the most significant impact of the project on his/her status whether at a personal, community/company relationship, livelihood issues etc. The evaluation team then selected six stories they felt best captured the most important changes brought about by the Project in their communities. The six stories are recorded and transcribed in the report.

3.6 Instruments for Data Collection

The evaluation team developed semi-structured questions that targeted the following categories: UN Agencies, MACs, NGOs/CSOs, Local Authorities, beneficiary groups, etc. to gather information from respondents. These questions were based on the evaluation objectives and questions developed under each criterion and were administered for both stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions.

In addition, the evaluation team utilized other participatory tools for data collection which included:

- a) **Change Story Tool** was used for ensuring that beneficiaries could describe what had changed in their communities and in their lives since the project was implemented; and
- b) **Problem Analysis Tool** was utilized to introduce a short task with a group to analyze some of the challenges faced by concession communities with the objective to get the group's views.

3.7 Data Analysis

Information collected from fieldwork was transcribed and analyzed through categorization of themes and content analysis. Using triangulation, secondary data from literature review and one collected from primary sources especially from the field was analyzed and verified leading to the development of this comprehensive report. Stakeholder's perspectives were taken on board to ensure their insights are represented in the final product.

Data gathered from the interviews, focus groups discussions and change stories were also analyzed by triangulation. That is, data from one source was validated with information collected from another source to ensure validity of result. The framework was guided by the key evaluation criteria under relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, coordination, women, youth and human rights considerations. The consultants recorded lessons learned and best practices and proffered recommendations in the final report.

3.8 Report Writing and Presentation

The Draft Concession Evaluation report is an assessment of the projects activities and interventions, key verifiable results from the interventions and lessons learned. The report contains the identification of

best practices and recommendations. Skype discussions, telephone conversations, comments from Programme staff and implementing agencies and suggestions arising from the exit debriefing were addressed and incorporated that helped produce this draft report.

3.9 Limitations and Mitigation Measures

Rainy season and poor road network: The poor quality of Liberia’s roads posed a constraint on the areas (Sinoe and Maryland) that the team could reach during their fieldwork. The evaluation occurred during Liberia’s rainy season, which caused further deterioration of roads. The team responded by visiting counties that could be reached (Bomi, Cape Mount, Grand Bassa, Nimba and Bong) and remotely administered questionnaire in Sinoe and Maryland to ensure the evaluation had a national outlook. Telephone conversations with stakeholders in the two counties were also carried out.

Threats to validity: The evaluation team experienced some bias and untruthful statements in Bong and Nimba counties as some respondents were not forthcoming with credible evidences relating to efforts from the concessionaries towards their communities. The team sought to mitigate this bias by framing questions in ways that could help assist accurate recall (without “leading” respondents) and by cross-checking information with company representatives during the FGDs.

3.10 Scoring Criteria

The evaluators used the rating scale below to measure the performance of each criterion (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, women and youth) of the Project. The rating scale assesses the Project’s activities, outputs and outcomes and identifies successes and challenges inherent therein.

Table (5) Rating for evaluation Table

Excellent	The Programme’s overall design, planning, implementation activities and monitoring successfully carried out and achieved without any challenges. That is, the Programme plans, design, implementation and monitoring results were fully attained and successful.
Very Good	The Programme’s overall design, planning, implementation activities and monitoring successfully undertaken and achieved with minor challenges. Programme design, implementation and monitoring results were attained with minimal obstacles.
Good	The Programme’s overall plans, design, planning, implementation and monitoring activities successfully carried out and achieved with some challenges. The programme results were attained with limited obstacles.
Fair	The Programme’s overall plans, design, planning, implementation and monitoring activities, undertaken with little success or moderately attained, and with substantial challenges.
Poor	The Programme’s overall plans, design, planning, implementation and monitoring activities were not achieved. Overall, the results show that there was no successful Programme implementation.

Chapter Four

4.0 Findings

4.1 Relevance

Reflects the extent to which the objectives envisaged by the project during its design stage meet the needs of the target population in response to national priorities as addressed below:-

To what extent does the project align with national development, peace building and livelihood priorities?

A review of the project documents and interviews conducted indicated that the project clearly reflected Liberia's development priorities and strategies. In particular, the project was aligned to the PAPD, the AfT and Agenda 2030. Interviews with FAO, UNDP, PBF, and NBC indicate that the project strategies were developed based on the Liberia's post-war rebuilding and development plans and priorities. For instance, the Prodoc was clearly in sync with Pillar 2 "power to the people", Pillar 3 "economic growth and job creation and pillar 4: Sustaining the Peace". In support of the government's effort to maintain sustainable peace, empower the citizens and strive for development, the project identified, established and built the capacities of 15 Multi-Stakeholders Platforms (MSPs) in nine targeted Counties and engaged in sustainable livelihood projects through agricultural activities (cassava, vegetable, poultry, VSLA, rice farming) in concession communities that have been constantly under the threat of violence. From the evaluators' viewpoint, the establishment of MSPs in Project Affected Communities (PACs) to prevent conflict and maintain peace around concession affected areas is one milestone that correspond with Pillar 1 (Peace, Security and Rule of Law) and Pillar 2 (Economic Transformation), Pillar 5: that addresses gender equality and Youth Empowerment of the AfT.

The Projects' two outcomes and attendant outputs show its commitment to continue engaging all stakeholders with the view to build and strengthen local and national institutions to prevent Liberia from sliding back into conflict on the one hand, and providing alternative livelihoods (access to the benefits of natural resources, land for agriculture, employment) that could sustain the lives of the many deprived citizens living in concession communities, on the other. It also seeks to reform the large-scale land investment business model by modeling community engagement and transforming community rights into economic opportunities.⁶

To what extent have the outputs and outcomes in the Project Document (ProDoc) contributed to AfT and PAPD corresponding pillar(s)?

Dovetailing with the above, the project outputs and outcomes were addressed and contributed to the AfT and the PAPD through the following activities: seven hundred sixty-seven (767) small holders' farmers supported across Bomi and Nimba.; 303 farmers (Bomi), 464 farmers (Nimba); 453 farmers supported for rice and cassava crops production; 314 farmers supported for poultry rearing integrated with vegetables production. The project trained 350 farmers (125 women,225 men) practically trained

⁶ See Project Document, 2018

to improve crop production and value chain involving the following practices:-Planting cassava on ridges and mounds, Vegetable field layout and planting distances set up, Integrated pest management practices, Compost preparation and methods of application, and Fertilizers application methods.⁷ Additionally, two storage facilities constructed, one in each County (Bomi & Nimba), equipped with post-harvest technologies (rice mills, threshers, de-stoners, and cassava grater, 240 women trained on VSLA methodologies and business management skills in order to help them manage their businesses and turn produce into profits for sustainable livelihood, and 560 beneficiaries trained on improved crops and poultry productions (200-Women) (360-men); 50 women, 50 men trained on agro processors operation to improve crop production and value chain. These activities directly speak to the corresponding pillars of the AfT and the PAPD mentioned above and contributed to the successful rolling out of the PAPD and the AfT.

To what extent the substantive peacebuilding areas were addressed?

Closely linked to the afore-mentioned, the project addressed the substantive issue of citizens losing access to ancestral and farmlands and, by implication, loss of livelihood. Concession companies have not provided communities with alternative livelihood opportunities for communities to sustain themselves, a chief grievance shared by all PACs that has fueled conflict across all concessions.⁸ Stakeholder engagements and document reviews reveal that most of the protests and conflicts that had characterized concession communities were related to allocation that have deprived communities control over and benefits from their own land. A study carried out by FAO⁹ identified over 34 potential conflict drivers ranging from land related claims and disputes; compensation for crops, shrines and residential structures destroyed by company operations; employment and /or dismissal of affected local community citizens; contribution to community schools, clinics, agriculture projects; mitigation measures taken to prevent pollution of land, water, air, fish and crop destruction by chemical waste; provision of safe drinking water facilities, etc. The relevance of the project to address these cannot, therefore, be overstated.

To what extent the project implemented addressed the Theory of Change?

The evaluation employed mixed approaches to assess the programme theory on the one hand, and to evaluate its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact, cross-cutting issues and partnership in the implementation of the project, on the other. Several respondents noted that the project built citizens' capacities and provided training sessions on conflict management, leadership skills, non-violent approach to peacebuilding with the view to change the attitude and behaviors of concession communities towards concessionaires. The capacity building efforts succeeded in changing the *modus operandi* particularly the relationship between concessionaires and communities. The once violent-prone and trigger-happy youths have become harbingers of peace, dialogue and reconciliation in their communities. The project changed the attitudes, behavior, mindset and thought processes of youths who preferred dialogue with the companies to confrontation and protests. There was, therefore, concordance between the articulated programme theory and the implementation of the programme on the ground.

⁷ See Progress Report of 2018 for details

⁸ Ibid, pp. 19-20.

⁹ See Drivers of Conflict, 2017

Although consultation was a challenge at the initial stage of the project, the team established that as the project implementation progressed, greater efforts were made to ensure adequate consultations of local stakeholders as evidenced in the workshop held in Ghanta that attracted all MSP in the 15 counties.

Rating:

Relevance - very good

4.2 Effectiveness

Measures the expected outcomes and objectives of the project achieved or are expected to be achieved. The project consisted of various outputs under its implementation framework ensuring compliance with the result framework. These prioritized outputs are linked to its 2 outcome areas. Achievements of the expected outcomes and results are at two (2) levels including six (6) outputs and twenty-eight (28) activities as reflected in the expected result framework specified in **(Annex 5)**. Regarding detailed data of the project outputs-planned results and actual achievements of activities for the period under review, see Expected project result matrix in **(Annex-3)**.

To what extent has the project been able to achieve its results and what is the evidence?

The project has been largely effective in achieving its desired results. The project reached planned targets for most of its key performance indicators and the consultants established that the Programme has made significant progress towards most of its expected results under the Two (2) outcomes and (6) outputs. Qualitative data collected and reviewed during the period under review shows that the Project strategy has reduced and/or prevented conflicts with the potential to provide sustainable peace and alternative livelihood for the beneficiaries. As noted earlier, 15 MSPs were established in nine counties and they have been effective in preventing conflicts and building peace in PACs. These have been achieved through regular meetings between communities, local authorities, concessions and peace monitors established in affected communities etc.

Substantially, the project has achieved the following under outcome 2: farmers access to post-harvest facilities for adding value to crops (rice and cassava) in Bomi (Moore Town) and Nimba (Makinto) enhanced; ten hectares integrated model gardens to increase production and productivity of high-valued vegetables established in Bomi (Moore Town) and Nimba (Sippi town); Over 300 women access to agro processors improved; two Hundred and forty (240) women capacity enhanced in VSLA & business management; four improved poultry facilities to enhance the production and productivity of meat and eggs established in Gbar-Bomi and Zolowee-Nimba; over 20 hectares of encumbered lowland to improve production and productivity of rice secured in Nimba. **It is worth nothing that outcome 2 comprised of an agricultural component and as such,** it takes more time and requires approximately 3 years to be completed. That notwithstanding, it is anticipated that in six months period, vegetable will be harvested while poultry production (The two poultry houses in Bomi & Nimba counties are currently at 85% level of completion) will commence in February and March of 2020 at which time, sales of the first batch of chicken and eggs will be expected.

How did it facilitate peaceful co-existence between project beneficiaries and concessionaires as well as the provision of land for the implementation of alternative livelihood activities?

The National Bureau of Concession (NBC) was the principal implementing agency of the Concession project. As such, it worked with implementing partners and CSO's including EDUCARE and IREDD to build MSPs capacities, which in turn facilitated conflict management and peacebuilding initiatives/processes between local leadership, stakeholders and concessionaires. The essence of the exercise was to create an enabling environment, space and platform for citizens in concession communities, stakeholders and concessionaires to interact, exchange and dialogue on how to live in peace with one another. While it was a slow process at the beginning, greater understanding was created among these actors as the project progressed and shortly before this assessment, there was evidence of coordination and understanding that resulted in, for instance, concessionaires and MSPs working together to bring the much needed social amenities such as clean water, build schools and health care center in the deprived communities. The consultants view this as a measure of collaborative effort with the objective to building trust between concessionaires and communities that invariably resulted in facilitating peaceful co-existence.

Trends from interviews indicated that the project mobilized the beneficiaries in groups and encouraged communal, rather than individual farming. Additionally, the project linked peace-building and social cohesion with agriculture through the provision of alternative agriculture-based livelihoods to reduce vulnerability, unemployment and reliance on concessions as the only means for accessing livelihoods. Through the MSPs, the communities were able to access land for productive activities, which increased their confidence to peacefully co-exist with concessions and among themselves.

To what extent progress has been made towards achievement of the expected outcomes and results; results achieved the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement of the project results?

By all indications, results and impacts from the outputs and outcomes are visible in Project Affected Communities. NBC and, to some extent, FAO are rolling out project activities (cassava and rice cultivation, poultry etc.) and are yielding results. The alternative livelihood component made meaningful progress towards achievement of the outcome, through the following results: Increased community access to post-harvest facilities for value addition; Enhanced beneficiaries' capacity to produce quality meat and eggs; Secured access to over 20 hectares of encumbered lowlands to improve production and productivity of rice in Nimba; Established over 10 hectares of land for integrated farming (high-valued vegetable and poultry) to increase farmers' income and productivity; Enhanced capacity of 240 women in access to finance. Though results cannot be measured as fully achieved, they were possible through collective efforts of the local authorities, MSP, beneficiaries and FAO. Challenges leading to delays were mitigated through concerted efforts of the MSPs and local leaders.

In terms of accomplishments, the project succeeded in quelling hostilities and violent protests in concession communities. Interviews and documents reviewed also point to the project's implementation strategy that put emphasis on establishing community-based structures such as the MSPs, youth peace monitors, women peace huts, and providing the space and platform for them to operate as peace makers and peace builders in their communities. This was a great accomplishment and the consultants view this as a people-centered and indigenous approach to peacebuilding that is inexpensive, easily available and accessible to the majority in PACs. This approach went in tandem with building networks that engaged in facilitating social cohesion and reconciliation. This had a catalytic effect on the project. MSPs are now capable of developing work plans, settle land disputes, negotiate with Companies on MoU, and organize communities for agricultural activities and changing citizen's attitudes and behavior towards peace.

This has improved communities' participation in project activities, changed perceptions about concessions among young men and women, and reduced youth participation in land concession related violence.

How successful was the project at improving the relationships and trust between the affected communities and the land concessionaires?

Building trust and improving relationships cannot be achieved in the short term especially considering the violent engagements between concessionaires and the communities that left mental and psychological scars on both perpetrators and victims. Such was the situation in the concession communities when the project kicked in. However, the project has been successful in establishing and strengthening 15 MSPs in nine counties who are presently helping to build trust and maintain good relationships between communities and companies. Their achievement cannot be overstated. The fact that concessions can go for more than a year without a major crisis is worthy of mentioning. During field visits, the consultants observed that relationships have been improved as exhibited by the cordiality and the coordination of effort to maintain the peace gained. Regular meetings, dialogue sessions, negotiations and mediation and above all, mutual respect for each other's views have been central in improving relationships between the affected communities and the concessionaires. MSPs are empowered to have informed engagement with concession companies on many issues including land and employment issues. For instance, MSPs have intervened and amicably settled several concessions related cases with communities including the train accident that led to the death of one youth in Nimba, and another in Grand Bassa with PASADC which advocated for the employment of 3 additional community residents at the EPO Mill where 22 were earlier employed through the similar intervention by the MSP. Accordingly, there was no violent incidence throughout the project implementation period.

To what extent the project has reached its targeted beneficiaries. Are they satisfied with the project's results?

NBC built the capacities of MSPs (both stakeholders and beneficiaries) to develop work plans; settle land conflicts; negotiate with Concession on MoU and contribution to CSR. Enhanced involvement of women and youths in conflict prevention and decision-making processes is also visible. The project reached beneficiaries by addressing their rights to access agricultural land, settle land disputes, have a say in natural resource management etc.; Enhanced social cohesion and cooperation between stakeholders (local authorities and MSPs working together) and is yielding results such as information sharing, conducting town hall meetings and community conflict management/resolutions; Job creation, construction of schools and vocational centers, hand pumps etc. for concession communities. There is improvement in the protection and promotion of social justice and the rights of citizens in the concession communities. The communities are enjoying increased voice and participation of women and youths—expression of satisfaction with project results.

FAO interventions were made in 3 concession-affected communities in Bomi, and 5 communities in Nimba. The project experienced delay due to constraint in accessing lands to implement activities. Because of delay in acquiring land to implement activities, one cropping season for rice production was missed. The beneficiaries are not entirely satisfied with this, however, with accelerated efforts, they are reassured of sustaining the benefits that the project has availed so far.

What evidence is there that the project has contributed towards an improvement in MSPs social cohesion in affected communities?

There is substantial evidence from the literature reviewed and interviews with national and local stakeholders that the MSPs have been trained by Educare and IREDD to develop AWP, conflict management approaches, PB, report writing, and drafting of MoU for the community development, which is helping build peace and trust. The project supported the training of 60 women in acquiring knowledge on Human rights, Gender Equality, Gender-based Violence, Land and Community rights and Conflict resolutions; The trainings have enabled them to have informed engagement with the concession companies on land issues and implementation of existing MOUs; Office spaces have been provided to some MSPs, for instance in Grand Cape Mount, where men, women and youths congregate to address burning community issues and plan community development strategies. Closely related to the above, the evaluators found that communities with potential to implement FAO projects, including the community access to agricultural land, have been assessed and identified and MoA signed; FAO agricultural activities are bringing different communities together to undertake a common project (lowland farming) thus increasing team building, social cohesion and team work.

Document reviews and stakeholder interviews also reveal that the MSPs and the concessionaires established a very good working relationship that helped mitigate the occurrence of violence and demonstrations. In many ways, these collaborative efforts (one of the project's strategies) were designed to identify trouble spots or conflict flashpoints and seek ways to prevent from occurring. The consultants found that the process was an all-embracing one, community-led and all-inclusive (participation of traditional leaders, youths and women, concessionaires and in some cases NBC staff). It is, therefore, fair to assert that such a process would eventually put mechanisms in place to prevent conflicts in communities. Some of the mechanisms included but not restricted to the establishment of peace and cohesion peace huts in concession areas resulting in the creation of local dispute mechanism structures; monthly meetings for all stakeholders, community-based monitoring, palava huts to settle disputes and awareness creation for a, all of which contributed toward peacebuilding.

Also worth noting were community-based monitoring, establishing peace structures and peaceful negotiations to access agricultural lands have prevented conflicts between communities and concessionaires; Training sessions for VSLA in Beh Sao, Moore Town and Gbah communities will help women improve their earning power and gain sustainable livelihood.

While these have been laudable ventures, the consultants conclude that the structures are still not strong enough to be sustainable, the issue of access to agricultural land remains a key concern and has the potential to escalate violence if not addressed; and over-dependence on concessionaires also has the tendency to undermine self-respect and self-worth of the people.

Has local authority been supportive of the MSP's activities in the affected communities?

One of the greatest achievements of this project was its strategy of inclusivity. The Ministry of Agriculture through the County Agriculture Coordinator (CAC) and District Agriculture Officers (DAOs) were actively involved in the implementation through provision of extension services to the beneficiaries. In addition, through the intervention of the Counties Legislative caucuses of Bomi & Nimba for example, Sime Darby provided machine to support clearing of 5 hectares in Behsao for cassava production. The Ministry of Internal Affairs through the town chiefs and district commissioners were also involved in Mobilization of the community. It is the view of the consultants that the collaboration efforts need to be further strengthened through the provision of capacity development and training facilities for these national and local stakeholders.

The NBC was a key implementing partner for the project. It coordinated and implemented outcome 1 of the project and worked with MACs (MoA, MIA, LRA, and EPA) and NGOS (EDUCARE, IREDD) in project

implementation; NBC facilitated monthly meetings with MSPs; conducted concession monitoring and evaluation to ensure compliance. However, the evaluation notes that FAO activities have not been fully coordinated with the NBC.

To what extent UNDP and FAO are perceived by stakeholders as a strong advocate for improving government effectiveness and integrity within the project communities?

Interviews with all stakeholders, communities and NBC indicate that UNDP has remained focused and supportive to the Project overall achievement of various outcomes. The agency is also perceived as one of the strong UN agencies that the GoL relies on in improving government’s effectiveness in project communities. Working closely with NBC, UNDP provided leadership, technical, logistical and financial support for the implementation of outcome 1 that has been largely successful with limited challenges. Stakeholders perceive UNDP as strong in leadership, technical capacity but bureaucratic in procurement procedures that cause delays and, by extension, slowing down implementation, and not too strong in monitoring of and, sometimes, reporting on projects.

Although there exist mixed responses from respondents about FAO (regarding, for instance, delays in implementing outcome 2), there are records of accomplishment whereby FAO is being considered a strong advocate for improving government effectiveness in addressing food security through capacity supports to the Ministry of Agriculture. The agency has comparative advantage in food production and food security, and the government relies on its expertise in these fields. Although there was improvement in collaboration between UNDP and FAO at the latter stage of implementation, coordination of effort is required at every stage of project implementation. This will enhance and strengthen the UN Delivery as One principle.

The evaluation team also found that the project has a draft comprehensive M&E plan, which envisions quarterly monitoring, spot visits and site assessments but is yet to be implemented. The participation of GoL, civil society, private sector and other partners in joint planning and joint monitoring through field visits should have been a priority but was found to be lacking. Additionally, periodic meetings between the UN Agencies and the GoL, CSOs and other partners were not regularly held as anticipated. In the absence of adequate M & E reports, consultants utilized Key informant interviews (KII) to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and impacts of the project from beneficiaries. Focus group discussions were held to also generate qualitative data on Project’s activities. Overall, UNDP/FAO project monitoring is extremely weak and needs to be improved involving a joint collaborated and coordinated efforts towards successful project implementation. The evaluation team also noted that AWP’s were not prepared on time and procurement procedures were time-consuming all of which delayed project implementations thereby affecting effectiveness.

Rating:	Effectiveness - Good
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4.3 Efficiency

Measure of how economically resources / inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) were converted to results. Review of the data on resource mobilization and utilization of Project resources shows that the project has exhibited a high degree of efficiency which are reflected in the results matrix in **(Annex-3)** and below in resource table **(Table-2 and under the question below** where appropriate data and narrative to support consultants’ analysis are found.

To what extent has the project's selected method of delivery been appropriate to its objectives and the development context, and to what extent were quality outputs delivered on time?

In terms of methods of Delivery, the project delivery was done through a Direct Implementation Modality (DIM). Additionally, the Project utilized all the processes during project implementation including good planning and giving priority to result oriented activities but without monitoring of these planned activities effectively and adequately in order to further increase existing delivery.

During the evaluation it was discovered that although the selected method of delivery was appropriate, it did not have a latitude adequate to account for the seasonality of agriculture production activities in addition to delay in accessing land which affected timeliness of project implementation. Had the initial project design considered this adequately, appropriate mitigation strategies would have been pre-determined.

The project resources were allocated strategically to enhance achievement of project outcomes especially for outcome (1). However, given the seasonal nature of outcome (2) involving agricultural activities, which were not time bound, delivery was problematic and resulted in some delays in the project implementation especially during the rainy season. The evaluators note that adequate planning and mitigation measures are required for future projects that have agriculture and agro-business as components.

To what extent did the project attract additional support (financial and none financial) outside PBF's investment?

The project has not attracted additional financial support. Some funding commitments made through Memorandum of Agreement, (MOA) by concessions but they never translated into real cash even though some concessions have provided office space, built schools and health facilities for some communities. Besides, the Government of Liberia continuous demand for advance payment of corporate social development fund in fulfillment of corporate responsibilities of these concessions has compounded the problem.

How successful was the coordination between the project implementing agencies and with the PBF Secretariat?

Coordination between FAO and the other implementing agencies, UNDP and PBF secretariat, was weak at the inception stage of the project. However, significant improvement has been made and coordination now defines the relationship in the remaining period of project implementation. FAO has attended coordination meetings and provided regular update to PBF secretariat.

With regards to contracting and oversight, the evaluation found that contractors under the Project were vetted in accordance with the Standard Bidding Instructions and processes acceptable by UN standards; In most cases, contractors and consultants vetted were made to sign on to contracts with terms and conditions for services provided.

Have the project resources been well utilized for the attainment of the project objectives?

The total project approved budget was **US\$3,025,390.26** million over a two (2) year period 2018-2019. This support came from the Donor's Multiple Partner Trust Fund (MTPF/PBF) and UNDP. The Government of Liberia donated only **US\$25,000.00** (In kind). Resources utilized, according to the expenditure delivery summary, for the period 2018-2019, shows that out of a total approved budget of **US\$3,025,390.26** million, the total amount utilized was **US\$ 2,829,807.04** and the un-spent balance

reflected **US\$ 222,583.22** averaging **69% for 2018** and **141% for 2019**. The 69% decline was due to some ongoing and pending activities completed in 2019. However, the project overall implementation utilization and delivery rate stood at average cumulative delivery of **93%**. **Note:** total unspent balance of **US\$222,583.22** which is 7% of total budget represents funds already committed to contractors pending completion of ongoing construction work for two poultry facilities in Bomi & Nimba currently at 85% completion level (**See Resource Analysis Table -7 below**).

It is also worth noting that pledges were made up to the closure of the project in October, 2019, Including: the Liberia Agriculture Companies Association (LACA), Sime Darby Plantations, Liberia (SDPL) Concession Company pledged US\$93,699; Equatorial Palm Oil (EPO) Concession Company - US\$62,000; Cavalla Rubber Corporation (CRC) Concessions Company - US\$462,000 and other companies together - US\$128,800, totaling US\$347,200. Most of the Concessionaires have not yet honored their pledges directly to the project but they have provided in-kind contribution to the MSPs. For instance, through effective engagement and collaboration, Sime Darby Company has built an office for the PAC-MSP in Grand Cape Mount and provided them with a borehole fitted with water pump. SDPL has also given palm hauling contracts to the Zodua Land Management Committee. The ZLMC now carries out its own recruitment of citizens interested in working with the transport system of the MSP.

Table (7)

RESOURCE ANALYSIS

Type Resources	Donor	Contribution / Core Budget			Expenditure			Un-spent Balance			% Utilization / Delivery		
		2018	2019	TOTAL	2018	2019	TOTAL	2018	2019	TOTAL	2018	2019	TOTAL
Core	UNDP	118,396.29	172,923.97	291,320.26	81,1075.59	109,793.10	190,869.05	37,320.34	63,130.87	100,451.21	68%	63%	66%
Non-Core	MPTF	1,232,749.00	528,321.00	1,761,070.00	652,897.74	986,040.25	1,638,937.99	579,851.26	(457,719.25)	122,132.01	53%	187%	93%
Non-Core	FAD	700,000.00	300,000.00	1,000,000.00	685,853.15	314,146.85	1,000,000.00	14,146.85	(14,164.85)	0.00	98%	105%	100%
TOTALS		2,051,145.25	1,001,244.97	3,052,390.26	1,419,826.84	1,409,980.20	2,829,807.04	631,318.45	(408,735.23)	222,583.22	69%	141%	93% Ave. Cumulative Delivery

Were Concessionaires supportive of the Project implementation within the affected communities and was staffing adequate?

In many instances, the concessionaires had a good working relationship with MSPs; provided support to construction of their office in Cape Mount. Concessions also supported the project by working with established MSPs to maintain a peaceful concession environment. It was revealed in communities visited that concessionaires attended regular meetings called by MSPs to discuss preventive measures in order to address potential concession conflicts.

What is however urgent is the GoL's commitment to disburse the corporate social development fund to the counties that could support the efforts of the structures (MSPs, Women's peace huts, community monitors etc.) to function in the absence of external funding.

Yes, staffing was adequate with majority of the staff based with government IPs. Project activities were carried out in a timely manner. FAO initially had staffing issues but greatly improved later with new recruitments.

Rating: Efficiency- Good

4.4 Sustainability

Refers to the likelihood of a continuation of benefits for the affected communities from a development intervention after the intervention is completed or the probability of continued long-term benefits

Has the project managed to adhere to key development principles, including national ownership, and ensure sustainability of results?

The project has adhered to key development principles and has a very good chance to be sustainable because MSPs provide a good avenue for communities to continue engaging concessions after the project ends. Trends emerging from interviews show that the concession project was community-driven. MSPs are serving both as stakeholders and beneficiaries, which—in itself—is key to national ownership and sustainability of results. The NBC established and built the capacity of local structures (MSPs, Women Peace Huts etc.) in project affected communities and enlisted all categories of people (local leaders, the old, young men and women, CSOs) to participate in driving the peace agenda in these communities. This venture speaks to the development principles of the GoL as it relates to the pro-poor agenda for prosperity and development (PAPD), looking at pillars one and two that emphasized, “Giving power to the people, strengthening the economy and providing job opportunities”. The consultants established that the sustainability of the MSPs will be more compelling when their legal status is actualized and effectively put into use to engage and negotiate issues with companies on how to resolve the myriad of challenges facing communities. As local structures, MSPs have the potential to sustain the results achieved during the lifespan of the concession project. There is no gainsaying the fact that the involvement of young men and women and increasing their voices in community led initiatives to peacebuilding is critical for sustainability. There is, therefore, greater potential that even when the funding for the project ends, some of these peacebuilding and conflict management efforts and activities will continue. For instance, youth community monitoring groups and peace huts that had been constructed will continue to provide space for young people and the community to talk about peace, settle disputes, receive skills training and engage in agricultural activities. The challenge of sustaining PBF funded projects was consistently noted by respondents across stakeholder groups.

It is evident from documents reviewed and stakeholder interviewed that there are plans to register the MSPs as legal entities. This is intended to enable the MSPs to provide some basic services to the concessionaires earn some revenue and thus make them self-reliant to sustain their operations. In addition, the affected communities (Nimba and Bomi counties) have been equipped with storage facilities and agro machinery that will be used for crop processing and value addition, which will enable communities to continue with their activities at end of project expiration. The storage facilities will help farmers store their post-harvest products, provide time to locate markets and preserve their goods. Similarly, the agro machines will be used to enhance agricultural production and productivity. The Ministry of Agriculture and local community leaders, women groups and youth leaders that have been trained and fully engaged in the implementations, have demonstrated commitment and have taken ownership.¹⁰ Therefore, it is optimistic that activities will continue after the project.

The integration of multi-stakeholder interventions into recurrent national budgetary allocations to the NBC will ensure they implement their mandate with fewer constraints. In that light, MSPs will take a lot of responsibility away from the GoL. It is, therefore, clear that NBC will continue to provide some support to the survivability and continued performance of the MSPs in concession communities. Equally worth noting, the NBC Strategic Plan is underway and would provide vision and a way forward for future programming for concession communities when it is validated.

The potentials exist for the project results to continue beyond the duration of the project. The results will be sustained through the enhanced efforts of the local community leaders, women groups and youths who have been fully engaged in the implementation and have now taken ownership. In addition, FAO has contributed to building the logistical capacity of the MoA (donation of mobiles) through the CACs (Bomi & Nimba) and DAOs for use to monitor the project after it has ended. Therefore, there is optimism that activities will continue after project.

Has the project managed risks effectively and responsibly?

Access to and availability of land for agricultural activities remains critical in concession communities. Although it was not initially thought of as a risk, it posed a threat to the implementation of outcome 2. Land provided for agricultural activities (in Zolowee-Nimba and Ghah in Bomi) were real virgin land that required the utilization of machinery to clear them. Initially, these communities would have been excluded from participating in the project because of land availability. FAO strategically managed the situation by involving the MoA and using its leverage to acquire the land, which was later cleared.

As indicated earlier, the FAO component of the project was delayed due to many challenges such as the unpredictable rainy season and access to land. Besides, FAO had limited capacity in terms of personnel that also militated against earlier planning for the execution of outcome 2. This invariably impacted on the commencement of the project. This situation was managed by recruiting more staff at FAO who were able to plan better and facilitate agricultural activities in the two counties under review.

How effective was the exit/sustainability strategy of the project to sustain positive changes made by the project?

The evaluation established that most respondents were lukewarm regarding the prospect for sustainability of the concession project. A critical impediment to sustainability has been the lack of budgetary support from Liberia's national budget to implement project and sustain gains made. GoL commitment to provide seed funding for the project has not been forthcoming and this has the potential to negatively impact on sustainability strategy for the project. The current state of play with

¹⁰ See Progress Report of October 2019 for details

the country's economy particularly the recession and competing budgetary priorities certainly limit the GoL's ability to provide funds for the project that would ensure sustainability. The agricultural sector will be key for sustainability when the current vegetable and cassava gardens are harvested and VSLA takes off ground.

Progress reports indicate that within the No Cost Extension period, construction of two storage facilities with drying floors were completed in Makinto, Nimba County and Moore Town, Bomi county, equipped with post-harvest technologies (2 rice mills, 2 De Stoner, 2 rice threshers, and 2 motorized cassava graters) have been turned over to the communities. Improved cassava cuttings delivered to beneficiaries in Bomi and Nimba and planted on 10 ha. Six metric tons of improved rice seeds procured for Bomi and Nimba, and 10 ha. Up land (individuals) rice farms planted in Moore town. Four improved poultry units were constructed and stocked with 4000 birds. Inputs procured and distributed; 560 (200-Women) (360-men) trained on improved crops and poultry productions and 240 women trained on Village Saving and Loan Association (VSLA) methodology and management, and 50 women, 50 men trained on the usage and operations of agro processors.¹¹ All of these are positive signs for sustainability.

Are there nationally or locally owned structures and mechanisms to maintain the project's interventions?

Trends emerging from across stakeholder groups thought the project is seen by the people as their own and the morale of MSPs were very high during field visits. The MSPs are local structures established to sustain peace and their efforts are going beyond local initiatives catching the attention of national peacebuilding efforts. Their capacities have been developed to manage and resolve conflicts, and by all indications, they will work without support to maintain the peace their communities are enjoying beyond project duration.

The institution of chieftaincy in the communities is one local structure that has the potential to maintain project's intervention beyond duration. Chiefs are the custodians of the land and the people and their involvement as key players in the MSPs will further boost post-project engagement with the concessionaires.

At the national level, the Ministry of Agriculture is the government counterpart that has collaborated with FAO to implement the project. With the contribution to FAO towards enhancing the logistical capacity of the MoA, project activities will be monitored going forward. Similarly, the MIA will continue to provide oversight role of the MSPs in the post-project era.

Rating: Sustainability Good

4.5 Impact

The impact of the project reflects positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by the Project directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

To what extent has the project impacted behavioral and attitude change of communities towards the concessionaires and vice versa?

Impact cannot be appraised in a short term. It is a long-term goal that assesses positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by an intervention. Information collected during field

¹¹ Progress report of October 2019

visits indicates that individuals who had once preached and led violent demonstrations against the concessionaires are now advocates and forerunners of peace in their communities. Changes in attitude and behavior, which in large part were positive, had been influenced by the numerous engagements and capacity building efforts NBC exposed MSPs to in the last two years. Training sessions tailored on peaceful co-existence, peacebuilding approaches, dialogue, conflict management and reconciliation were some of the packages MSPs benefitted from that resulted in the dramatic change in attitude and mentality of the people. Communities came to embrace dialogue and negotiations as the means of resolving community/concessionaires' differences and planning for greater community development. Talking to concessionaires during field visits, they did not only reveal that perceptions about some members of the community that had led violent demonstrations have changed, but also that working relationships have improved dramatically. A company representative from Nimba County had this to say:

Initially, the company blacklisted individuals who had orchestrated and carried out violent demonstrations against the company destroying anything they see in sight. With the establishment of MSPs and the trainings received from NBC on the need to dialogue with communities, our attitude has changed. The company now appreciates some of our community members who led protests in the past as integral to the peacebuilding efforts preached by this project.

Trends emerging from document review indicated that the alternative livelihoods component of the intervention engaged stakeholders and worked with the communities, through the MSP dialogues to prevent and mitigate conflicts. The MSP helped to increase awareness among affected communities not to be reliant on concessions for employment when there are other opportunities to gain livelihoods within their communities through agricultural activities. This has improved the level of participation in project activities and changed some of the perception about the concession among young men and women.

What socio-economic impact has the project had on the local economy through its interventions within the affected communities?

The evaluation team established that the socio-economic impact of the project has been the absence of violence and demonstrations that has necessitated the free movement of people to conduct their businesses unhindered. Conducting business and other economic activities in an atmosphere devoid of violence has the potential to positively impact on the local economy in concession communities. Alternative livelihood activities such as lowland farming, vegetable gardening, poultry farming etc. have great potentials to positively impact the socio-economic conditions of citizens and by extension, impact on the local economy. Social cohesion is gradually being promoted and the prevalence of peace in the last one year is a good sign that is impacting concession communities.

Agricultural activities have the potential to increase incomes, contribute to local economy, provide employment for women and youths and provide other livelihoods opportunities in concession communities. A back-to-office report of 2019 noted that "The presence of cassava and rice processors will immensely benefit Zepheh Clan, which has 3 wards that consist of 7 towns, 11 villages and 11 camps (concession related areas). According to the Clan Chief, citizens of these areas currently process their rice and cassava manually, which affects the level of production coupled with hard labour. "The clan mostly produces cassava which has big market. Gari (processed cassava) is expensive on the market.

This is a great relief for our people”, the Chief concluded. The potentials for improved local economic growth and increased in individual household incomes cannot be overstated.

What are the conflict prevention impacts that could be attributed to this project?

Up to the Project closure on October 8, 2019, MSPs remain the ground-breaking platforms with a total membership of 300 (200 men & 100 women), ensuring effectiveness in conflict prevention and dispute resolution related to land concessions and promoting peacebuilding and social cohesion, a direct outcome and result-based UNDP and FAO project implementation strategy. These Platforms over time offered meaningful contributions to the discourse and helped resolved differences amicably, preserving agreements between all parties through MOUs and agreements. As an agent of change and immediate representation of affected communities, MSPs have ensured cordial and effective working relationship with several companies. A change story of a Paramount Chief of Gbarpa Community in Nimba County is instructive:

We the local leaders are working with everyone to ensure peace exist in our community. We have established small groups of people who are responsible for bringing to our knowledge any tension or dispute in the community. We quickly come together to prevent these things from escalating. I am very happy with the way the MSPs are working and they are very cooperative.

From the foregoing, the consultants conclude that the project is already having a catalytic impact on both concession communities and concessionnaires in terms of creating an atmosphere of peace and harmony, promoting socio-economic opportunities through agriculture and agro-processing, building the infrastructure of peace, trust and social cohesion, building synergies and serving as peace ambassadors to other communities in Liberia.

Rating: Impact - Good

4.6 Women, Youth and Human Rights Considerations

Considers the extent to which gender main streaming and youth related issues have been factored into the project.

To what extent has gender and youth related issues been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project by NBC?

Trends emerging from interviews indicate that while there were improvements in addressing the needs of women, youth and human rights, there is still much more that can be done to improve the lives of these groups. FGDs and stakeholder interviews agreed that the project addressed women and youth issues in the implementation and monitoring of the project but not at the design stage. As stated earlier, the project did not consult nor involve communities in the project design which invariably point to a big lapse although there were many programs that focused on supporting women and youth and human rights, including: The Peace Huts, the VSLA program started by FAO, capacity building in SGBV, and efforts to raise women’s awareness of their legal rights. There were also efforts to maintain gender balance in the MSPs. For instance, “to increase citizen engagement, including meaningful participation of women in concession management for conflict mitigation, the project supported the training of 60 women in acquiring knowledge on Human rights, Gender Equality, Land and Community rights and Conflict resolutions. The trainings have enabled them to have informed engagement with the

concession companies on land issues and implementation of existing MOUs between the community and the concession companies.”¹²

Additionally, the project clearly addressed women and youth issues by involving them in the implementation and monitoring of programme activities and outputs. For instance, out of the 300 MSPs, at least 33% of them were females. It was revealed during FGDs that women and youths occupy key decision-making roles (such as Chair-ladies, financial secretaries, treasurers, advisers etc.), which is critical to increasing voice and participation. Equally worth noting is that capacity building initiatives have targeted youth and women, but adequate data have not been gathered to assess whether or not women have benefited from a higher awareness and training. In the same vein, the capacity of youths has been developed and they are now serving as peace monitors and peace ambassadors playing critical roles in building social cohesion and resolving community disputes.

To what extent have UNDP and FAO been able to adopt gender-sensitive and peacebuilding -based approaches to their work?

Women and youths have been prioritized and are actively engaged in peace building efforts in project affected communities. For instance, through their participation in projects such as Peace Huts and awareness campaigns, women were better able to understand their rights and to more effectively advocate their rights and those of their children. Besides, women have become active and are participating more effectively in local decision-making processes and advancing women’s agenda. Government officials and CSO respondents pointed out that the Palava Hut project made a specific effort to ensure the inclusion of women and youth and addressed human right issues. A female Financial Secretary from Beh Sao had this to say:

NBC trained us in many things including conflict management, SGBV, human rights etc. They made us understand our right especially the right to equality and participation in decision-making. Today, I sit in the executive of the MSP and take decisions just like the men. Women did not have this privilege before but we are enjoying this right which is good for us, our girls and for our well-being.

FAO also adopted a gender-based sensitive approach in the implementation of outcome 2. The agricultural component was heavily tilted toward engaging young men and women in farming. Trends from documents reviewed noted that “...affected communities’ access to improved alternative livelihoods, particularly agro-based ones for young men and women, are taking center stage in concession communities...this project has innovatively stimulated non-dependence on concessions as the only source of employment especially among the youth. Support to community agro-based livelihoods for affected communities will help improve food security and farmers’ incomes in the communities, while reducing youth participation in concession related violence”.¹³ FAO creates awareness about gender equality in work places, promotes equal participations in decisions making processes and encourage equal participation in leadership decisions irrespective of sex.

The overall gender marker for the UN is score 2. It is a project that has gender equality as a significant objective.

To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality? Were there any unintended effects?

¹² See the 2018 Annual Progress Report, p. 6.

¹³ 2019 First Quarter Report, p. 4.

Stakeholder interviews and FGDs indicate that the project intentionally advanced gender equality and women empowerment. The involvement of women and youths in the executive of MSPs was both strategic and policy-driven. It was strategic because it addressed the fundamental issue of exclusion and marginalization plaguing concession communities. As a policy, the project was aligned to both the PAPD and the AfT as they relate to and fulfil the clarion call of the “Gender Equality, Power to the People” mantra. As such, the project took steps to promote positive changes and to ensure gender mainstreaming especially at implementation stage of the project. In many instances, the concession project improved women’s understanding of their legal rights and their participation in community decision-making processes. During the establishment of the MSPs, it was deliberate that women and youths’ interests were advanced in the elections of MSP leadership wherein when a male became chairman, a female was the co-chair. In some instances, youths also became key decision-makers when they were elected as chairpersons or co-chairs of their MSPs. This was a positive approach taken by the project that is positively changing the gender landscape in concession communities. With the trainings conducted by Universal Empowerment Mission (UEM), the CSO contracted, it is confirmed that 240 women beneficiaries have been trained in both Nimba and Bong counties. This will financially empower them and promote positive changes in their lives.

Similarly, the project also brought on board young people that aimed at empowering youth, which were effective. Youths became peace monitors thereby advancing the peacebuilding approach of the project in affected communities. However, the project missed an opportunity for broadening the scope of the youth targeted probably because of the short span of the project.

In tandem with the above, the project facilitated and supported women to establish Women Peace Hut, which became a rallying point for women in communities and provided safe space where women across religions, ethnic and or political affiliations congregate on common ground and for common purposes to advance community peacebuilding.

What might be the impact of women’s participation on issues of conflict prevention and livelihood in the communities to sustain peace? How have attention to/ integration of gender, youths and human rights concerns advance the area of work?

Women constitute majority of the marginalized and vulnerable persons in project-affected communities. Their participations on issues about conflict prevention and livelihood in the communities will increase food security, reduce vulnerability, and improve trust and social cohesion in communities.

There were glaring examples that women participated in conflict prevention measures. Women’s participation in projects such as Peace Huts and awareness campaigns, they were better able to understand their rights and to more effectively advocate on their own and their children’s behalf. The establishment of Peace Huts aimed at improving the ability of women to participate more effectively in local decision-making processes, manage and resolve disputes and conflicts emerging from concession communities, and advancing women’s empowerment. Women were trained in peacebuilding and leadership skills, domestic violence, increased female civic participation and increased feeling of self-worth in areas with Peace Huts. The chairlady of Deen’s Town in Nimba County narrated her story thus:

Grateful for the establishment of the MSP which has opened our eyes. We have been provided training in conflict management, peacemaking, SGBV and we can today participate in community development discussions. We never knew how to face these challenges but today we are proud of ourselves as women contributing to maintaining peace and catering for ourselves and our children

The human right aspect of the project remains a challenge. Although women and youths are involved in most of the peacebuilding infrastructure of the deprived communities, the entrenched patriarchal system and chauvinism in rural areas where the project was implemented continue to marginalize these groups. The socio-cultural ethos of these communities is still based on patriarchy that can hardly go away. Equal and fair treatment of men and women in these communities can hardly be achieved as women's viewpoints play a second fiddle. It is the view of the evaluators that future similar projects pay a close attention to the human rights aspect that benefits all in the deprived communities.

4.6 Challenges

Project Fragmentation

A critical challenge unearthed by the consultants is that the project is not promoting the principle of Delivering as One (DaO) in some cases. It was established that the two UN agencies were most of the time very busy implementing what is their comparative advantage, which tended to inhibit building synergies in the execution of the two outcome areas as one project.

Issue of Land

Availability and access to land was one of the root causes that brought civil war in Liberia and this issue remains unaddressed in the post war era. Citizens in concession communities have been deprived of ancestral land and worse, land for livelihood and daily sustenance is not available. This is a right issue and stakeholders in concession communities need redress from the GoL or else it remains a conflict flashpoint;

Concession Agreements

Concession agreements were signed without the input of community stakeholders. These agreements are found to be tilted more towards financial benefits rather than catering for bringing benefits that could facilitate sustainable development efforts in affected communities.

Coordination and Collaboration

There is no gainsaying the fact that the project has recorded achievements. Yet, coordination and collaboration between UNDP and FAO remain weak and, in most cases, non-existent. The evaluation noted that meetings and workshops conducted are not jointly coordinated which resulted in each UN agency wearing its agency cap in executing the project. Lack of coordination and synergy led to disjointed efforts yielding very little results. Equally worth noting, coordination between and among national institutions (NBC, Land Commission, MME, EPA, MoA, MIA etc.) to address the thorny issue of and give priority to access to land was found to be completely missing.

Gender Mainstreaming

Although gender mainstreaming has been addressed in most of the project designs, accurate data does not exist to show that they have been fully integrated into the implementation and monitoring of projects. This has implications for achieving the project's objectives in gender empowerment

Joint Monitoring

Joint monitoring of project and information sharing by UN partners remain a challenge. The consultants found that UNDP and FAO M&E plans are not speaking to each other and the draft consolidated M&E plan is yet to be finalized. Generally, monitoring remains weak.

Reporting System

Most of the progress (quarterly and annual) reports are not entirely free of inaccuracies and incoherence. This is largely due to Implementing Partners not following the UNDP reporting template, but more importantly, lack of effective project monitoring to ensure that reports from the field reflect the true picture on the ground. Inaccurate reports have resulted in presenting the wrong picture on project activities to consultants.

Stakeholder Consultations

Consultations are key to achieving maximum cooperation and ensure local ownership of the project. Reports from stakeholders in the communities and corroborated by partners indicate that there was lack of consultations at the design stage of the project. This resulted in communities refusing to cooperate in providing local resources (man-power, tools such as cutlasses for land clearing, etc.) that delayed the implementation of outcome 2.

Logistics and Operational Support

The MSPs play a key role in carrying out peace building approaches and conflict management exercises in concession communities. But they are doing this with enormous constraints because they lack operational and logistical facilities such as office space, furniture, computers and accessories etc. Additionally, MSPs lack robust capacity building in leadership skills, office management, and additional skills in business management, VSLA and youth empowerment (vocational, technical trainings and sensitization of land rights).

GoL Financial Commitment

The GoL commitment to financially contribute to the project's programmatic initiatives and activities remain uncertain. This has the tendency to weaken ownership and sustainability of the project.

4.7 Lessons Learned and Best Practices

- Early engagement of all stakeholders in project design and planning and holding technical meetings to discuss critical challenges can go a long way to mitigate risks and unlock delays in project implementation;
- An important lesson learned was that the UN Agencies were more concerned about carrying out project activities rather than working together collaboratively. In doing so, focus on producing results was completely lost;
- Project designs and plans need to be realistic and take into consideration contextual challenges. For instance, the effect of the unpredictable (due to climate change) and long rainy season on project activities needs to be factored into project planning. Rains inhibit mobility (given the poor state of the roads) and obstruct constructions and, therefore, slow down project implementation;
- Consultations with key stakeholders particularly beneficiaries are quintessential and should be incorporated into every stage of the project's lifespan. This is critical to avoid misunderstanding of project goals and expectations but more so, it increases local voices and build a better understanding of their role in project implementation. For instance, had local stakeholders been consulted and involved at the design stage of the project, they would have been more willing to provide needed local resources (labor, tools) for the agricultural project;
- Traditional approaches to peacebuilding (utilization of traditional leaders, women's peace huts and indigenous approaches to peacemaking) are less expensive, easily available and accessible and when enlisted into a peace infrastructure can serve as durable and sustained peace-making

mechanism. Equally worth noting is the fact that Local and traditional leaders remain relevant to any community development and peace building efforts in concession areas;

- Another key lesson learned is that lack of synergetic and strategic approach to Joint programming and monitoring results in the project was missing resulting in lacking capacity to identify critical programmatic challenges at an early stage and respond to them accordingly. This undermines the Delivering as One (DaO) principle.

Chapter Five

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.0 Conclusion

Relevance

The concession project design, planning, strategies and approaches were appropriate and relevant to national development priorities and strategies. Considering their comparative advantage, UNDP and FAO rolled out outcomes 1 and 2 in concession communities that addressed the critical and substantive burning issues and responded to social injustice, land disputes, marginalization and exclusion of youths and women in decision-making processes, corruption, mismanagement of natural resources, to name a few prevalent in concession communities.

The project also tried to address some of the root cause of Liberia's fragility. Finding solutions to land conflicts, building trust and social cohesion in concession communities, establishing working relationships between concessionaires and communities to dialogue and negotiate, building the capacities of MSPs to champion peacebuilding and conflict management roles and bringing on board women and youths to play key decision-making roles clearly speak to the relevance of the project. However, the project did not consult local stakeholders and beneficiaries at design stage on project goals and objectives.

Effectiveness

Trends from interviews and documents reviewed reveal that the project has reached planned targets for most of its key performance indicators and has made significant progress towards most of its expected results under the two outcomes areas. The project has exhibited effectiveness in implementing outcome one as evidenced by its results reflected up to the project closure on October 8, 2019. As stated earlier, 15 MSPs have been established in 15 communities of 9 counties in Liberia. MSP remains a ground-breaking platform with a total membership of 300 (200 men & 100 women), ensuring effectiveness in conflict prevention and dispute resolution relative to land concessions and promoting peacebuilding and social cohesion, a direct outcome and result-based UNDP and FAO project implementation strategy. These MSPs have contributed greatly to resolving differences amicably and have also preserved agreements between all concerned parties through MOUs and agreements. These MSPs have ensured cordial and effective working relationship with several companies as an agent of change and immediate representation of affected communities.

Under Outcome Component 2, the project worked closely with MSPs in Bomi, Nimba, Ministry of Agriculture and other relevant stakeholders including Sime Darby to support concession-affected communities to create alternative livelihood opportunities within the communities. This has resulted in increased awareness and has changed young men and women's perception about daily reliance on the concessions for employment opportunities. The project exposed concession communities to agricultural activities, which has helped in economically empowering them and building their livelihood sustenance. It is evident that farmers access to post-harvest facilities for adding value to crops (rice and cassava) in Bomi (Moore Town) and Nimba (Makinto) enhanced; Ten hectares integrated model gardens to increase production and productivity of high-valued vegetables established in Bomi (Moore Town) and Nimba (Sippi town); Over 300 women access to agro processors improved; Two Hundred and forty (240) women capacity enhanced in VSLA & business management; four improved poultry facilities to enhance the production and productivity of meat and eggs established in Gbar-Bomi and Zolowee-Nimba; over 20 hectares of encumbered lowland to improve production and productivity of rice secured in Nimba.

Efficiency

The consultants found that the project delivered most of its financial and technical support for the entire Project implementation. Financial management was strong with clear budget tracking to account for commitments, expenditure and fund utilization. Review of the data on resource mobilization and utilization of Project resources shows that the project has exhibited a high degree of efficiency. The Project progress reports were transparent and provided accountability of how resources were utilized, what activities were undertaken and what were achieved as informed by the quarterly and annual progress reports and AWP. There has been economical use of financial and human resources, and those resources were used for the intended planned activities and concentrated on the achievements of those results as reflected in the results matrix. Project funding provided through the Multi-party Trust fund/Peace building Fund was US\$ 2,761,070.00, UNDP US\$291,320.26 and the Government of Liberia US\$ 25,000 (in kind), which was equivalent to the total budget of US\$ 3,052,390. As at the project duration date 2018 – 2019, contribution received from donors amounting to US\$3,052,390.26 have been utilized to the tune of US\$2,829,807.00 with an un-spent balance of US\$222,583.22 (commitments/ongoing contractual construction services). The cumulative average delivery to date is 93%. Pledges made by concessions amounted to US\$ 347,200 but most of the Concessionaires have not yet honored their pledges directly to the project although they have provided in-kind contribution to various MSPs.

Sustainability

The project has a very good chance to be sustainable because MSPs are both beneficiaries and stakeholders and they provide a good avenue for communities to continue engaging concessions after the project ends. This is key to national ownership and sustainability. MSPs serve as a platform for resolving and managing conflicts, promoting dialogue between communities and concessionaires and facilitating land disputes. It is anticipated that when MSPs legal status is streamlined, they will have the leverage to engage companies on variety of things. The GoL would not want to see MSPs collapse and therefore, will keep them on the front burner. MSPs will be used as infrastructure of peace and a good lifeline for sustaining peace in concession communities. However, the GoL's financial contributions and unconditional support to the MSPs will be key for sustaining the results achieved.

Gender, Youth and Human Right

The project deliberately took steps to ensure gender mainstreaming in its activities and to address issues of youth, women and human rights. There were a number of activities that specifically targeted women, including the Peace Huts, while others, such as the composition of MSPs executive, incorporated efforts to ensure female participation in the project activities. Interviews indicated these efforts improved women’s understanding of their legal rights and to their participation in community decision-making process. They also had some positive unanticipated results, such as empowering women to advocate more effectively on their own and on their children’s behalf. However, interviewees also raised concerns that too often focus was on increasing the number of female participants rather than ensuring the quality of their participation. Youths served as peace monitors and occupied positions in MSPs executive that enabled them advocate for themselves and push their agenda through. Available data indicates that despite progress much work still needs to be done in addressing gender equality and women’s empowerment in a highly traditional and chauvinistic society.

Impact

The Concession project lasted for two years and, therefore, difficult to measure impact. However, the change of attitude and behaviours of members of the communities towards concessionaires and vice versa greatly contributed to the peace experienced in concession communities. Demonstrations and violent protests that have characterized community company relationship have given way to dialogue and negotiations. The change in the approach in dealing with concessionaires has helped keep the peace and build trust between the communities and the companies.

Most youths and women who, in previous years, had orchestrated and advocated conflicts are today the mainstay preaching peace and serving as foot soldiers to bring reconciliation and social cohesion in communities. In a large measure, women peace huts and youths peace monitoring is having an impact on the relationships between the communities and the concessionaires. The fact that concession communities can go for more than a year without incidence of violence is an impact. Impact can be further sustained when the GoL address the issue of land head-long.

Conclusion and Recommendations

FINDINGS	CONCLUSION	RECOMMENDATIONS
RELEVANCE		
<p>Finding 1: The Concession Project was in sync with national development priorities and the first at addressing and bringing peace to the conflict-laden situation between concessionaires and affected communities in the agricultural and mining sectors of Liberia.</p>	<p>The consultants conclude that the programme was relevant because it was aligned to national development strategies; assisted in the establishment and empowerment of MSPs ; contributed to the achievements of the PAPD and AfT and helped to bring and build peace in the once volatile concession communities. However,</p>	<p>For the concession project to remain relevant, it is recommended that the GoL and national partners continue to provide support to and promote efforts of the MSPs, Women Peace Huts and other local peace structures as infrastructure of peace in the country. It is also recommended that national implementing partners for</p>

	<p>consultation at the design stage was lacking.</p> <p>Note : This conclusion is in respect of and applicable to findings 1,2, 3 and 4. .</p>	<p>agricultural and agri-business continue to provide support to farmers to increase yield, provide employment to youths and women and, by implication, promote increased income and sustainable peace.</p> <p>This recommendation is in respect of and applicable to findings 1, 2, 3 and 4.</p>
<p>Finding 2: The Project addressed the two outcomes and attendant outputs in the Prodoc and contributed to the PAPD and Aft cprresponding pillars : Pillar 2: “Power to the People”, Pillar 3: “Economic and Job creation” and Pillar 4: “Sustaining the Peace” of the PAPD and Pillar 1 (Peace, Security and Rule of Law) and Pillar 2 (Economic Transformation), Pillar 5: that addresses gender equality and Youth Empowerment of the Aft.</p>	<p>Same as above</p> <p>Same as above</p>	<p>Same as above</p> <p>Same as above</p>
<p>Finding 3: The project was relevant because it addressed the critical and substantive burning issues of sustaining the peace and improving livelihood by responding to social injustice, land disputes, marginalization and exclusion of youths and women in decision-making processes, and addressing</p>	<p>Same as above</p>	<p>Same as above</p>

<p>corruption, mismanagement of natural resources, to name a few.</p>		
<p>Finding 4: Regardless of the relevance of the project, the evaluation team noted that concession communities were not fully consulted during the design stage of the project, which led to the delay in implementing outcome two.</p>	<p>Same as above</p>	<p>Same as above</p>
<p>EFFECTIVENESS</p>		
<p>Findings 5: Qualitative data collected and reviewed shows that the Project has reduced and/or prevented conflicts and provided sustainable livelihood for the beneficiaries, which has contributed to intended changes in their lives in the affected concession communities. However, collaboration between UNDP and FAO was weak in project implementation.</p>	<p>The project stands to gain from adopting a holistic and joint approach to project implementation, undertaking joint and efficient delivery of interventions, strengthening of monitoring tools/processes, and continue to work with MSPs, local leaders, women and youths, CSOs and national partners with the view to improve agricultural production, build trust, social cohesion and sustain the peace.</p> <p>Note : This conclusion is in respect of findings 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10.</p>	<p>Collaboration and partnership are two key UN priorities/strategies used in promoting the Delivery as One principle. There is, therefore, the need for joint platform between FAO and UNDP that flows smoothly and sequentially particularly in joint programming, planning, implementation, M&E and reporting to ensure maximum impact.</p> <p>(Eg. Building of synergy with the Rule of Law project to effectively tackle the land issue is paramount to successful implementation of the project).</p> <p>This recommendation is in respect of findings 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10.</p>

<p>Finding 6: The evaluation established that the National Bureau of Concession (NBC) worked through implementing partners, local leaders and CSO's including EDUCARE and IREDD and built MSPs capacities, who in turn facilitated conflict management and peacebuilding initiatives/processes between local leadership, stakeholders and concessionaires. This led to peaceful co-existence among the responsible parties and beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Concession communities have not experienced any major violent demonstration or protest over a year now largely due to NBCs and other national actors' engagement of MSPs as peace builders.</p>	<p>NBC, along with UNDP and FAO, should document best practices for future reference; develop and share knowledge products for other countries to follow.</p>
<p>Finding 7: The alternative livelihood component has made meaningful progress towards the achievement of the outcome, through increased community access to post-harvest facilities for value addition, enhanced beneficiaries capacity to produce quality meat and eggs, secured access to over 20 hectares of encumbered lowlands to improve production and productivity of rice in Nimba, to name a few.</p>	<p>Same as 5 above</p>	<p>Same as 5 above</p>
<p>Finding 8: The project has been successful in establishing and strengthening 15 MSPs in 15 communities in nine counties who are presently helping to build trust and maintain good relationships between communities and companies. The project has been effective in</p>	<p>Same as 5 above</p>	<p>Same as 5 above</p>

regaining some pieces of land where communities are now undertaking agricultural activities.		
Finding 9 : The project reached beneficiaries by addressing their rights to access agricultural land, settle land disputes, have a say in natural resource management, enhanced social cohesion and cooperation between stakeholders (local authorities and MSPs working together) and is yielding results such as information sharing, conducting town hall meetings and community conflict resolutions.	Same as 5 above	Same as 5 above
Finding 10 : Trends from documents reviewed show that there exist a draft comprehensive M&E plan, which envisions quarterly monitoring, spot visits and site assessments but is yet to be implemented. M&E and joint project implementation in UNDP/FAO remain weak.	Same as 5 above	Same as 5 above
EFFICIENCY		
Finding 11: The evaluation team established that the project delivery was done through a Direct Implementation Modality (DIM). They also note that the Project utilized all of the processes during project implementation including good planning and giving priority to result oriented activities but	The concession project has, to a large extent, demonstrated efficiency in its financial operations and management, timely delivery of key activities especially for outcome one. In the case of outcome 2, some delays were experienced affecting the agricultural activities which require much	Efficiency is critical in timely project delivery and management of resources. UN partners particularly FAO should redouble its efforts in promoting agriculture and agro-business, and work more on project planning and staffing to ensure the timely and quality

although faced with monitoring challenges.	more time. This conclusion is also in respect of and applicable to finding 14.	implementation of project. This recommendations also holds for finding 14.
Finding 12: The evaluation team found that the project has not attracted additional support, although some funding commitments were made through Memorandum of Agreement, (MOA) by concessions but were never translated into real cash. Besides, the GoL continuous demand of advance payment of corporate social development fund owing to fulfillment of corporate responsibilities of these companies has compounded the problem.	The evaluation team concludes that the project did not attract additional funding/ support from concessions and the GoL	It is recommended that the GoL provides support (financial, material etc.) to the operations of the MSPs in the post-project era
Finding 13: Stakeholder interviews revealed that coordination between FAO and UNDP on the one hand, and the PBF secretariat on the other, was initially weak at the inception stage of the project implementation. However, significant improvement has been made and coordination now defines the relationship in the remaining period of project implementation.	The evaluation concludes that efficient collaboration and coordination at all stages of the project is critical to optimum output	The team recommends the existence of flexibility for agencies to look at PBF's criteria by facing the reality on the ground ensuring that their funding requirements are based on analysis of the country context.
Finding 14 : According to the expenditure delivery summary for resoiurces utilized for the period 2018-2019, it shows that out of a total approved budget of US\$3,025,390.26 million, the total amount utilized was US\$ 2,829,807.04 and the un-spent balance reflected US\$	Same as 11 above	Same as 11 above

222,583.22 averaging 69% for 2018 and 141% for 2019 with average delivery of 93%.		
IMPACT		
<p>Finding 15: The consultants established that there is community ownership of the project as peace structures such as the MSPs and the Women’s Peace Huts continue to settle conflicts/disputes and bring together concessionaires and communities. However, the alternative livelihood component that emphasizes agricultural production and agro-business is yet to have an impact on communities as some activities are being concluded.</p>	<p>The evaluation concludes that the MSPs and other peace infrastructure established will be key in sustaining peace, social cohesion and promoting reconciliation in concession communities for a long time</p> <p>This conclusion is in respect of findings 15 and 16.</p>	<p>FAO and national partners should endeavour to complete the ongoing agricultural component of the project to ensure provision of alternative livelihoods to the affected communities.</p> <p>This recommendation also holds for findings 15 and 16.</p>
<p>Finding 16 : Reconciliation, social cohesion and trust are being built and citizens and concessionaires now prefer dialogue and negotiation to violent demonstrations and protests that have characterized concession communities.</p>	<p>Same as 15 above</p>	<p>Same as 15 above</p>
SUSTAINABILITY		
<p>Finding 17: The project established and built the capacity of local structures (MSPs, Women Peace Huts etc) in project affected communities and enlisted all categories of people (local leaders, the old, young men and women, CSOs) to participate in driving the peace agenda in these communities, which speaks to the</p>	<p>The project has a very good chance to be sustainable because MSPs provide a good avenue for communities to continue engaging concessions and their legal status will allow them deal with companies, provide space to negotiate and build the peace</p>	<p>It is recommended that NBC facilitates the legalization of MSPs, position and empower them to negotiate, on behalf of their communities, with concessionaires.</p>

<p>development principles of the GoL as it relates to the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) and the Aft.</p>		
<p>Finding 18:.. FAO has contributed to building the logistical capacity of the MoA (donation of mobiles) through the CACs (Bomi & Nimba) and DAOs for use to monitor the project after it has ended.</p>	<p>The results will be sustained through the enhanced efforts of MoA, the local community leaders, women groups and youths who have been empowered and fully engaged in the implementation, and have now taken ownership</p> <p>Also in respect of and applicable to finding 19.</p>	<p>MoA, through its existing decentralized structures (CACs and DAOs), should continue to facilitate and support the agricultural component of the project.</p> <p>The recommendation holds for finding 19.</p>
<p>Finding 19: The consultants established that the agricultural sector will be key for sustainability when the current vegetable and cassava gardens are harvested and VSLA takes off ground. FAO has brought in more staff that will eventually improve delivery of outcome 2 for sustainability in the agricultural sector.</p>		
<p>WOMEN, YOUTHS AND HUMAN RIGHTS</p>		
<p>Finding 20: The project clearly addressed women and youth issues by involving them in the implementation and monitoring of programme activities and outputs. For instance, out of the 300 MSPs, at least 33% of them were females and women and youths hold executive positipon</p>	<p>The concession project is clearly addressing and adopting gender-based approach, accessing alternative livelihoods, and promoting greater inclusion, participation and increased voice of women and youths in decision-making process in concession communities.</p>	<p>The consultants recommend that UNDP/FAO continue to support women’s and youth initiatives by building their capacities in management and leadership, human rights, VSLA, BDS, vocational and technical skills.</p>

in MSPs	This conclusion is also in respect of finding 21.	
<p>Finding 21 : The project adopted a gender-based sensitive approach. The agricultural component was heavily tilted toward engaging young men and women in farming. Trends from documents reviewed noted that affected communities access to improved alternative livelihoods, particularly agro-based ones for young men and women, are taking center stage in concession communities.</p>	Same as above	It is also recommended that NBC and other MACs (MIA MoA) empower women’s peace huts that are currently serving as agents of peace and reducing tension in communities.