



**FINAL EVALUATION REPORT OF THE PROJECT
“SUSTAINING PEACE AND RECONCILIATION THROUGH
STRENGTHENING LAND GOVERNANCE AND DISPUTE
RESOLUTION MECHANISMS IN LIBERIA”**



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Acronyms and abbreviations

ADR	Alternative dispute resolution
CLDMC	Community land development and management committee
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CPC	County peace committee
CSO	Civil society organization
CIDRE	Creative Initiative for Development & Relief
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FGD	Focus group discussion
FPIC	Free, prior, informed consent
GATE	Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use
GERAAS	Global Evaluation Report Assessment and Analysis System
GEWE	Gender equality and women's empowerment
GoL	Government of Liberia
HDI	Human Development Index
IP	Implementing partner
IREDD	Institute for Research and Democratic Development
KII	Key informant interview
LGA	Local Government Act
LISGS	Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services
LLA	Liberia Land Authority
LMPTF	Liberia Multi-Partner Trust Fund
LNROWS	Liberia National Rural Women Structure
LRA	Land Rights Act
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MSP	Multi-stakeholder platform
NBC	National Bureau of Concessions
NCCRM	National Centre for Coordination of Response Mechanisms
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
OLA	Office of the Legal Advisor
PAPD	Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PBO	Peacebuilding Office
RRF	Rights and Rice Foundation
SC	Steering committee
SPRC	Special Presidential Review Committee
ToC	Theory of change
TOR	Terms of reference
TWG	Thematic working group
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNSCDF	United Nations Development Cooperation Framework
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VOSIEDA	Volunteers for Sustainable Development in Africa
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WFP	World Food Programme
WPS	Women, peace and security

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and introduction

This report is the product of the final evaluation of the project “Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation through Strengthening Land Governance and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms in Liberia” (2020–2023). This project was implemented by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Food Programme (WFP) from 2020 to 2023 with funding from the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). Its broad goal was to support the implementation of the Land Rights Act (LRA) and the Local Government Act (LGA) in Liberia. The initiation of the project was informed by the understanding that the root causes of the Liberian civil war remain unresolved. Furthermore, evidence from recent assessments show that land disputes, lawlessness, corruption, boundary disputes and concession-related tensions continue to be the main triggers of conflicts in Liberia. To address some of the land-related problems, the Government of Liberia passed the LRA in 2018. The Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project was established to support the implementation of the LRA through strengthening the effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness of land administrative structures at the national and county levels and of concession-awarding processes, as well as strengthening the existing semi-formal and informal land dispute resolution mechanisms in Liberia’s counties. The overall objective of the final evaluation was to assess the extent to which the Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project has achieved its objectives.

Methodology

The evaluation applied the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, coherence and sustainability. The evaluation also took into consideration gender equality and human rights as separate, stand-alone criteria. These criteria were used as the main analytical framework in line with the UN Women evaluation policy. The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach involving document review, interviews, and focus group and survey techniques to collect qualitative and quantitative data. Participants included representatives of the project recipients, including members of multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs), Peace Huts, and community land development and management committees (CLDMCs); staff of the Liberian Land Authority (LLA), the National Centre for Coordination of Response Mechanisms (NCCRM), the National Bureau of Concessions (NBC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); community beneficiaries in the counties; and the project team made up of UN Women, UNDP and WFP staff. Survey participants were purposively selected based on the accessibility of the counties. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, and thematic coding was used to analyse qualitative data. Findings from qualitative and quantitative data analysis were thus triangulated by source before concluding. The intended audience of the evaluation includes UN Women, UNDP and WFP in Liberia, and PBF and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) more broadly.

Findings

Relevance

Findings from this evaluation show that the project results addressed the major peacebuilding needs of the target groups and counties in Liberia. Peacebuilding is a top development priority need in Liberia. Evidence from assessments has revealed that the issues identified as the root causes of Liberia’s 14-year civil war remain unaddressed, and it also reveals that land disputes, boundary disputes and concession-related tensions continue to be the main triggers of violence. In addition, the capacity of government institutions to implement the newly enacted laws and policies is still low because of a lack of continuous training and facilities to function optimally at the county level. The Sustaining Peace project was initiated to address these peacebuilding needs. The outcomes of the project, including strengthening the effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness of land administrative structures at the national and county levels, and strengthening existing semi-formal and informal land dispute resolution mechanisms by building the capacity of the relevant platforms to participate in the decision-making processes of the land dispute mechanisms, were all relevant to the targeted beneficiaries. The Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project was found to be in complete alignment with Liberia’s national plans on gender right promotion, with the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), and with specific government priorities on land governance and land conflict. The Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project was founded on the basis of national plans, policies and strategies, with the

various outputs of the project falling under the pillars and priority areas of several national plans, policies and strategies..

Effectiveness

The evaluation found that the project was effective and had made significant progress towards the achievement of the expected outputs and outcomes. The project was effective in increasing awareness of the LRA among customary governance authorities and communities in targeted counties, and in improving understanding of women's and youth rights to land. The project was also effective in building the capacities of county land offices and county land boards in targeted counties and putting procedures and systems in place for formalizing customary land in a way that reflects the rights and needs of all community members. Evidence from interviews and document reviews confirmed that the project's theory of change proved realistic and was implemented to a large extent. The evaluation found that several innovative practices were mainstreamed in both the design and implementation of the project, including the recognition of the important roles of government partners such as the NBC, EPA and PBO in its design and implementation; the adoption of the implementation modality by the project team; and how the project built on the results of and lessons learned from past United Nations projects. In addition to this, the issuance of statutory land-titled deeds and maps to eight customary communities in Nimba, Sinoe, Maryland and Grand Cape Mount Counties under the project was considered innovative. Evidence from the quantitative survey and Interviews conducted among the beneficiaries in the counties revealed that about 85 percent males, 89 percent of female beneficiaries are satisfied with the results achieved by the project.

Efficiency

The review of project documents and interviews with the project team confirmed that available resources were allocated strategically to achieve the project outcomes. The project lasted 36 months, with a planned budget of US\$3,996,522.48. Of these funds, US\$3,409,033.68 was budgeted for project implementation activities, which represents 85.33 percent of the total budget, while US\$587,488.80 was budgeted for staff personnel, which represents 14.7 percent of the total budget of the project. As at June 2023, 100 per cent of all allocated budgets for the project activities had been spent, which represents a good absorption rate for the project. Evidence from the budget analysis also revealed that UN Women received the highest budget allocation of all project team members, of US\$2,087,727.83, which represents 52.2 per cent of the total budget, followed by UNDP, with a total budget allocation of US\$1,043,557.73, representing 26.1 per cent of the total budget, then WFP, which received US\$865,236.92, representing 21.7 per cent of the total budget. A review of the activities implemented by output shows that UN Women, through its partners, implemented 22 activities across the two outcomes of the project, while UNDP and WFP implemented 19 and 16 activities, respectively. The number of outputs and the types of activities implemented informed the allocation of resources. Evidence from interviews confirmed that the budget allocated for the entire duration of the project was adequate, and several measures were put in place to limit fraud while ensuring that the project's inputs were efficiently utilized. Some of the measures included:

- ✚ The direct coordination of events in the field by the LLA and local community leaders
- ✚ The use of local facilitators for most of the capacity-building activities and of volunteers (members of MSP and CLDMCs), which reduced transaction costs for project implementation activities
- ✚ The competitive procurement of all goods and services to ensure value for money
- ✚ The use of local implementing partners for project implementation
- ✚ The regular monitoring of implementation activities by United Nations agencies.

Impact

The evaluation found that the project effected the target group and larger society in several ways. The project made significant progress in addressing the social, environmental and economic challenges arising from government land concessionary activities in targeted communities. In partnership with the EPA, the project provided environmental safeguarding training to strengthen community early warning monitoring and water pollution detection capabilities. In terms of the local economy, the communities affected by concessionary activities witnessed tangible improvements in their livelihoods through the adoption of alternative livelihood opportunities introduced by the project. This intervention brought about positive changes and economic empowerment for the affected communities. The project's evaluation revealed numerous indirect positive effects on the target groups in the counties. Particularly noteworthy were the successful boundary harmonization efforts and the erection of cornerstones to clearly demarcate boundaries between communities. As a result of this

harmonization, the project's intervention communities received legally probated and registered titled land deeds, replacing the outdated tribal certificates, which further secured their land rights. Furthermore, the project had a significant impact on communities' perceptions of women's right to land ownership. As a result of the project, women are now able to inherit land, and their participation in land discussions, decision-making processes, dispute resolution, leadership, community development and peacebuilding activities has substantially increased. At the national level, the project played a crucial role in contributing to the formulation of gender policies for the NBC. In addition, the project contributed to the production of a communication strategy, which was validated by relevant stakeholders. However, owing to certain constraints, the communication strategy could not be implemented. The media and communication component are expected to yield beneficial impacts when eventually implemented.

Sustainability

The project targeted key national institutions, such as the NRCCM, NBC, PBO and LLA, and, at the local level, the county land authorities. The project strengthened the capacities of these institutions as a key strategy for ensuring that the benefits of the project were sustainable. The project promoted national ownership through wide consultation with national institutions, aligning the project objectives with the national priorities of the government and adapting existing alternative conflict resolution mechanisms, such as MSPs and Peace Huts, for use by the project. This approach of promoting the participation of the project duty bearers and rights holders enhanced the likelihood of the benefits of the project being sustained. Furthermore, the project focused on building the capacities of different stakeholders, including duty bearers and rights holders. Building the capacities of government institutions and beneficiaries was utilized as a strategy for building ownership and ensuring the sustainability of the project results. The evaluation found that the intervention design included appropriate sustainability and exit strategies. Some of the sustainability strategies of the project included the adoption of existing alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in the counties, such as the MSPs, CLDMCs and Peace Huts, into the project design. This adoption will ensure that the MSP, CLDMC and Peace Hut will continue to run with the goal of the project beyond the project lifetime. In addition, the use of local facilitators such as the NBC and LLA for the various capacity-building activities, as well as the local implementing partners, will ensure that knowledge gained by both the facilitators and trainees remains at the national and intervention community levels.

Coherence

The project created synergies with several other programmes being implemented at the country level by United Nations agencies, international non-governmental organizations and the Government of Liberia. Evidence shows that the project created synergies with the Just Energy Transition project, implemented by the Sustainable Development Institute, and the Land Governance Support Activity (LGSA), funded by the United States Agency for International Development. The project also created synergies with other land governance initiatives being implemented by other institutions, such as the projects "Securing Land Rights for Women and Rural Communities in South-Eastern Liberia", implemented by ActionAid Liberia, ForumCiv, Development Education Network-Liberia and JSGB, and "Capacity Development in Land Administration", funded by the Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency. However, it is essential to actively coordinate project implementation with the implementation of other programmes in the country, rather than leaving it to chance, as is currently the case with project implementation. Evaluative evidence reveals that the project complemented, and worked in harmony and coordination with, other interventions in this area. The project was implemented in collaboration with development partners that have widely supported the development of the land sector. This was achieved through the formation of the Land Donor Working Group, which brings together all the partners involved in land projects in Liberia. Within this group, a matrix was developed to identify each partner's specific project and its location. This high level of coordination has proven invaluable in preventing duplication of effort among the various stakeholders working in the land sector in Liberia.

Gender equality and human rights

The evaluative evidence confirmed that gender equality and human rights considerations were integrated into the project's design and implementation. All objectives, strategies, approaches and activities highlighted in the project focused on addressing the root causes of gender inequalities with respect to land. The project was designed to target women and young in specific counties, to strengthen their capacity and skills and enable them to participate in the decision-making processes of land dispute mechanisms. The project also targeted men and other members of the communities in the counties to address the underlying sociocultural challenges in the intervention areas and change the dominant traditional cultural perception that the right place for women is in

the home, and the narrative that land-related matters and peacebuilding is a masculine domain. Further key evidence of gender consideration is the development of a gender policy for the NBC and a gender-responsive performance-monitoring matrix to support concession contract renegotiations between the government and concessionaries. However, there is a need to involve more women-led organizations as implementing partners. Evaluative evidence confirmed that the project budget was gender-responsive to a large extent. Evidence shows that 80 per cent of the budget contributed to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). For instance, about US\$3,200,000 was budgeted for activities promoting GEWE. Evaluative evidence shows that there was no discrimination of any kind, as all stakeholders were involved in the implementation of the project.

Lessons learned

Lesson 1. The design of the Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project, based on experience and lessons learned from previous interventions, contributed to its effectiveness.

The design of the Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project was based on the lessons learned from several interventions in the same context, including the Liberia Land Administration Project, funded by the World Bank (2018–2022); the Voluntary Global Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forest in the Context of National Food Security; and the LGSA (2016–2020). By mainstreaming successful practices from previous projects into the Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project, while also being mindful of potential pitfalls, the project's overall achievements were significantly enhanced. As a result, the project recorded substantial successes, thanks to the incorporation of proven effective methods and the avoidance of previous shortcomings.

Lesson 2. Working with local people and organizations to implement project activities and implementing partners in supporting project implementation activities is critical to promoting ownership and sustainability of project benefits.

The Sustaining Peace project utilized local people and organizations as well as local implementing partners in the implementation of project activities. The project worked with local implementing partners such as the Rice and Rights Foundation and Volunteers for Sustainable Development in Africa to implement project activities in the targeted communities. Not only did this inclusive strategy foster local ownership of the initiatives, but it also ensured the sustainability of project benefits within the intervention communities.

Lesson 3. Capacity-building activities for project beneficiaries are necessary for both promoting ownership and ensuring the sustainability of project benefits.

The Sustaining Peace project implemented capacity-building activities for both government bodies and community mechanisms, specifically the LLA, NCCRM, MSP, CLDMCs and members of the community in the intervention counties. The capacity-building activities were unique to the different categories of project beneficiaries. The capacity-building activities for county land offices, county land boards and CLDMCs focused on putting in place procedures and systems for the formalization of customary land in a way that reflects the rights and needs of all community members. For communities, capacity-building focused on building the skills needed to participate in formal and informal land dispute mechanisms, while, for the NBC, it focused on strategies for effectively preventing potential conflict triggers from arising among concessionaires. The approach of the project ensured that the knowledge gained remained with the beneficiaries after the end of the programme.

Lesson 4. Engaging relevant government institutions and community leaders in the intervention communities is important for successful project implementation.

The Sustaining Peace project, from the beginning, engaged relevant government institutions such as the LLA, NCCRM and NBC, as well as community leaders, as key stakeholders. This approach provided entry points into government institutions and intervention communities, which, in the long run, promoted government buy-in and ownership of the project. Similarly, working with various community leaders in the targeted counties not only provided easy access to local community mechanisms for community members but also contributed to achieving the project objectives, as evident in the inclusion of women and youth in the community leadership structures in some of the targeted communities.

Lesson 5. The duration of an intervention focusing on addressing the underlying causes of gender inequality is an important factor that contributes to achieving project objectives and the sustainability of benefits.

Addressing the deep-rooted, underlying causes of gender inequality and people’s deeply held views requires a considerable amount of time. The Sustaining Peace project was a 36-month project with one key objective, namely, to change communities’ perceptions of women’s and youth rights to land. While the project was successful in meeting this objective, the sustainability of the results will remain in doubt unless sustained awareness-raising activities and long-term interventions to address the root causes of gender inequality are implemented in the intervention counties.

Lesson 6. The timing of the project’s implementation after the enactment of the LRA and LGA ensured alignment with the project and government priorities and played a significant role in the acceptance of the project by the government and local communities.

The Sustaining Peace project was strategically designed and implemented to coincide with government efforts to implement the LRA and LGA. This alignment enabled the project to provide valuable support for government initiatives, which significantly contributed to securing government buy-in and acceptance of the project at both the national and county levels. Moreover, the project’s timing was crucial, as it coincided with a period of heightened conflict in the intervention communities. This context served to underscore the project’s relevance and importance, leading to strong acceptance and support from the local communities in the counties. Overall, the project’s alignment with government priorities and its timely response to the prevailing conflict challenges were instrumental in garnering support from stakeholders at all levels and creating an environment conducive to successful implementation.

Lesson 7. The joint nature of the project allowed the three UN agencies involved to bring into the project their comparative advantage, which increased the effectiveness of the project’s overall design and implementation.

The Sustaining Peace project was implemented jointly by three UN agencies: UN Women, UNDP and WFP. While it was not directly implemented on the ground by these UN partners, the project’s outcomes and outputs were tied to the specific mandates of the UN partners and therefore made use of their specialist knowledge, skills and experience . While UN Women project activities focused on the advancement and full realization of women’s rights and opportunities with respect to land, UNDP supported the institutionalization of land governance structures through the implementation of boundary harmonization in the intervention communities. WFP, in line with its mandate under the project, delivered rounds of food assistance and livelihood opportunities as a pathway to peace, stability and prosperity for the intervention communities.

Lesson 8. Linking the livelihood component of the project with the Home Grown School Feeding Programme and training on the use of forest residues and agricultural waste for economic production boosted the livelihood opportunities and potential of the targeted beneficiaries.

The lesson learned from the project’s linking of the livelihood component with the Home Grown School Feeding Programme, which provided a source of markets for the sale of agricultural produce, was considered important. In addition, training on the use of forest residues and agricultural waste (including rice and coconut husks, dried palm branches and sugar cane straws) for economic production increased the livelihood opportunities for targeted beneficiaries and therefore should be replicated in future interventions.

Recommendations

The evaluation has identified 11 recommendations that are critical for ensuring that UN agencies can make a valuable contribution to peacebuilding in Liberia. They have been listed in order of importance, as perceived by the evaluation team. The recommendations are based on the evaluation framework and the analysis that informed findings and conclusions. However, they will be validated by the project team during the review of this draft evaluation report.

Recommendations actions, who is responsible and timeframe

Specific recommendations	Responsibility	Priority
1. Consider expanding the customary boundary harmonization to more communities, accompanied by the issuance of land title deeds. This	UN Women, UNDP, WFP	Immediate

	is critical to sustaining peace in the intervention communities (Findings 6 and 9)		
2.	Consider improving the livelihood component of the intervention by focusing on distribution of farm inputs rather than food distribution, and also provide start-up capital for the Village Savings and Loan Association (Finding 19)	UN Women, UNDP, WFP	Immediate
3.	Consider sustaining the awareness-raising activities on women's land rights and their participation in decision-making at the community level, since gender inequality this is a deep-rooted traditional norm in the intervention communities (Findings 6 and 19)	UN Women, UNDP, WFP	Immediate
4.	Consider including a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) unit in the overall management structure of the project. While the evaluation rated the management structure of the project "good", it is good practice to locate the M&E unit within the organizational structure of any project, as it is an important component of the project team (Finding 14)	UN Women, UNDP, WFP	Immediate
5.	Consider whether the implementing partners have an adequate number of staff for project implementation and also consider including women-led organizations as implementing partners. Women-led organizations can play a pivotal role in advocating for women's land rights and promoting gender equality within the community (Findings 9 and 12)	UN Women, UNDP, WFP	Immediate
6.	Consider developing a coordinating mechanism for all development partners working in the same intervention communities, to ensure that project complementarity occurs as planned (Finding 27)	UN Women, UNDP, WFP	Immediate
7.	Consider continuing capacity-building activities for government institutions, to strengthen their knowledge, skills and ability to address issues related to women's and youth land rights effectively (Findings 18 and 20)	UN Women, UNDP, WFP	Immediate
8.	Consider implementing another phase of the project to cover more counties and communities (particularly heightened land conflict areas), to extend the benefits of the project to other communities (Finding 19)	UN Women, UNDP, WFP	Immediate
9.	Consider testing and implementing the communication strategy developed by the project, which will help to consolidate the benefits of the project in the intervention communities (Finding 30)	UN Women, UNDP, WFP	Immediate
10.	Consider linking Peace Huts, MSPs and CLDMCs with public bodies, such as the courts and security institutions, to foster collaboration between local dispute resolution mechanisms and public bodies operating in the same location. This integration can create a more comprehensive and efficient system for resolving land-related disputes and conflicts within the community (Finding 18)	UN Women, UNDP, WFP	Immediate
11.	Consider replicating the lessons learned and good practice identified by the evaluation in other contexts.		

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Food Programme (WFP) commissioned an end-of-project evaluation of a 36-month joint project called “Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation through Strengthening Land Governance and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms in Liberia”, hereafter referred to as “the Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project” or “the project”. The project received generous funding amounting to US\$3,996,522.48 from the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). The project supported the Government of Liberia in strengthening the dispute resolution capacity of county land offices, further linking them with existing land dispute-related structures and new structures created through the passage of the Land Rights Act (LRA). The project also supported the formalization of customary land as a measure to prevent disputes relating to customary landowners and users, with a focus on Nimba, Grand Cape Mount, Sinoe and Maryland Counties. The Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project was a 3-year project, running from January 2020 to January 2023; a 3-month no-cost extension request was granted to allow time to finalize some residual activities and this evaluation. This document outlines the findings of the evaluation of the project.

1.1. Background and context of the evaluation

1.1.1. Location and demographic characteristics

Liberia is located on the Atlantic Coast in the southern part of West Africa on latitudes 4°20' to 8°30'N and longitudes 7°18' to 11°30'W, and covers an area of 111,369 km².¹ The country borders Côte d'Ivoire to the east, Sierra Leone to the west, Guinea to the north and the Atlantic Ocean to the south, with a 350-mile coastline.² The results of five major censuses show that the population of Liberia was 1.02 million in 1962, 1.5 million in 1974 (GOL, 2008), 2.1 million in 1984 (LISGIS, 2009), 3.48 million in 2008 (LISGIS, 2009) and estimated to be 4.2 million in 2016.³ As at 2020, Liberia had a population of 5.05 million, with 49.7 per cent being female and 50.3 per cent being male,⁴ with Montserrado, Nimba and Bong Counties having the highest concentration of females – 50.8 per cent, 50.2 per cent and 50.6 per cent, respectively.⁵ The sex ratio of the population was 1.011 males to 1 female, which is lower than the global sex ratio (of 1.016 males to 1 female). About 70 per cent of the population was below the age of 35 and nearly half (44.5 per cent) of the population was below the age of 15 in 2016.⁶

However, the provisional 2022 census results released by the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) reveal that the country's population stands at 5.2 million, with males accounting for 50.4 per cent of the population and females accounting for 49.6 per cent, giving a national sex ratio of 101.5 males to every 100 females.⁷ While the geographical location of Liberia has no immediate implications for land governance and dispute resolution mechanisms, the demographic scenario of almost equal proportions of women and men in the total population supports the need for gender mainstreaming in land governance and dispute resolution frameworks across the regions and counties in Liberia.

1.1.2. Gender inequalities in Liberia

The Government of Liberia is a signatory to multiple human rights treaties, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ratified in 2004), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (also ratified in 2004), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ratified in 1976), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (ratified in 1984), the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (ratified in 2004), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified in 1993) and the Convention

¹ <https://dicf.unepgrid.ch/liberia>.

² Liberia Environmental Protection Agency (2020). *Liberia's First Biennial Update Report to UNFCCC*. Monrovia: EPA.

³ Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (2016).

⁴ World Bank Group (2020). *Women's Financial Inclusion and the Law*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

⁵ Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (2021). *Demographic and Health Survey 2019–20*. Monrovia, Liberia, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services, Ministry of Health and ICF.

⁶ Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (2016).

⁷ <https://www.liberianobserver.com/liberia-census-results-are-vooodoo-numbers>.

on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ratified in 2012). These instruments have played important roles in the progression of gender equality and the protection of the rights of women and girls, which was achieved by integrating the instruments into Liberia’s national actions.

Despite this, there is still widespread evidence of gender inequalities in Liberia. Gender inequalities and women’s marginalization in Liberia are maintained by sociocultural perceptions and practices supporting female subordination and male superiority.⁸ Girls and boys, and women and men are socialized into taking different roles in society. In turn, these roles are transferred to schools, public life, institutions and workplaces. Women’s combined role in the family as caregiver and provider creates an excessive workload burden and therefore curtails their participation in the formal economy. Women are constantly missing out on opportunities, including opportunities to participate in management and decision-making at all levels of society.⁹

With respect to the poverty situation, available evidence from LISGS in 2017 revealed that about 2.2 million Liberians are classified as poor. The rate of poverty is higher in rural areas (71.6 per cent of the population) than in urban areas (31.5 per cent). Around 39.1 per cent of the population is food poor. Male-headed households are on average poorer than female-headed households, with absolute poverty at 52.3 per cent and 46.3 per cent, respectively.¹⁰ Since 2000, Liberia has maintained a general upwards trend in its Human Development Index (HDI) score. Between 2000 and 2019, Liberia’s HDI score increased from 0.435 to 0.480, an increase of 10.3 per cent driven by life expectancy at birth, which increased by 12.4 years (from 51.7 to 64.1 years), and the average number of years of schooling, which increased by 1.3 years (from 3.5 to 4.8 years). Liberia’s HDI for women and girls in 2021 was 0.447, lagging behind that of men and boys, which was 0.513 in 2021.¹¹ A review of the Gender Inequality Index shows that Liberia has a score of 0.648, ranking it 164 out of 170 countries in 2021.^{12,13} On economic opportunity and participation, the country recorded a score of 0.64 in 2014 and 0.804 in 2022, indicating a reduction in the gender gap with respect to economic opportunity and participation for women (Table 1). On political participation of women, Liberia’s index score ranged from 0.21 in 2014 to 0.225 in 2022. This indicates that over a period of 10 years little or no progress was made with respect to women’s political participation in Liberia. However, the overall global index score increased, from 0.65 in 2014 to 0.71 in 2022, ranking Liberia 78 out of 146 countries in 2022.¹⁴

Table 1: Liberia’s global gender index scores and ranking out of 146 countries (shown in parentheses) for several indicators (2014–2022)

Indicator	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2020	2021	2022
Economic opportunity and participation	0.64 (94)	0.62 (99)	0.61 (103)	0.70 (58)	0.73 (41)	0.714 (53)	0.717 (53)	0.804 (8)
Political empowerment	0.21 (46)	0.22 (47)	0.23 (46)	0.24 (45)	0.24 (47)	0.218 (63)	0.255 (55)	0.255 (52)
Overall (global index)	0.65 (111)	0.65 (112)	0.65 (114)	0.67 (107)	0.68 (96)	0.685 (97)	0.693 (94)	0.709 (78)

Source: UN Women Liberia gender equality profile 2021, updated by the author.

⁸ Ministry of Gender and Development (2009). “Liberia National Gender Policy: Republic of Liberia (2010–2015)”. Monrovia: Ministry of Gender and Development.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (2017). *Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2016 Statistical Abstract*. Monrovia, Liberia, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services.

¹¹ <https://www.undp.org/liberia/press-releases/multiple-global-crises-reverse-human-development-gains-worldwide-undp-report-finds>.

¹² <https://www.undp.org/liberia/press-releases/multiple-global-crises-reverse-human-development-gains-worldwide-undp-report-finds>

¹³ <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/thematic-composite-indices/gender-inequality-index#/indicies/GII>.

¹⁴ https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2022/in-full?_gl=1*860doi*_up*MQ_&gclid=CjwKCAjw4ZWkBhA4EjwAVjXwqek47qhkpotpNVc_SAx-Qi5vw00mtxYF9CyUebGl26CafwhHOKjXsoCg1gQAvD_BwE.

In terms of reproductive health, Liberia had the second highest rate of maternal mortality globally in 2017, at 661 per 100,000 live births.¹⁵ In terms of empowerment, which is measured by the share of parliamentary seats held by men and women, the share of women in elected positions was as low as 10.3 per cent after the 2020 senatorial election (11 per cent of House of Representatives members and 7 per cent of Senate members).¹⁶ The nation had a very low Gender Development Index score of 0.509 in 2019 (female 0.273; male 0.535).¹⁷

Gender-based violence, especially violence against women and girls, has remained widespread in Liberia. Gender-based violence includes sexual violence, physical violence, emotional and psychological violence, child marriage, trafficking, female genital mutilation, domestic violence and rape. In Liberia, in 2019, 60 per cent of women aged 45–49 years were circumcised.¹⁸ The Government of Liberia recently approved the 2019 Domestic Violence Bill, which aims to abolish all forms of violence against women, children and men, and provides assistance to, and protection for, victims of violence. However, the percentage of women who have experienced at least one form of physical violence since the age of 15 has increased by 16 percentage points, from 44 per cent in 2007 to 60 per cent in 2019–2020. To date, 61 per cent of women aged 15–49 years have experienced either physical or sexual violence in Liberia.¹⁹

Gender inequality is also manifested in the lack of female participation in peacebuilding and conflict resolution during and after the conflict. While considerable progress has been made in this area, some of the root causes of the initial conflict remain, disproportionately affecting women and girls. Furthermore, there has been limited consideration of historically excluded women, such as women with disabilities and women living in rural areas, and girls. In addition, women in the agricultural sector are more likely to report not receiving corresponding payments for their work than women working in sales and retail, despite this being in clear violation of Liberian labour laws. These situations arise frequently because of the informality of the agricultural sector, where most women are either self-employed or work for a family member, thereby creating an unstable environment where laws related to labour rights are not adhered to. When women do not receive their salaries or cash income, their livelihoods are endangered and they are limited in their capacity to improve their socioeconomic status, ultimately creating a sizable barrier for achieving gender equality.

1.1.3. Land, conflicts and insecurity

In Liberia, as in most parts of the world, land is an important determinant of one's heritage and dignity, without which self-determination and peaceful coexistence are threatened. Land serves as a livelihood asset, and it forms an integral part of indigenous religions. It is a source of social, political and economic power, and of identity at the personal, household and community levels.²⁰ Broad-based land tenure security and equitable land governance are pressing issues in Liberia. About 70 per cent of the working population is dependent on agriculture for their livelihood, and over half of the country's inhabitants live in rural areas.²¹ Despite all the peacebuilding efforts advocated by various governments and other relevant bodies to resolve the civil conflict in Liberia, the prevalence of conflict, especially in relation to land, remains high.²² An estimated 90 per cent of civil court cases in Liberia are related to land conflicts.^{23,24} In addition, as many as 63 per cent of violent incidents in Liberia have their roots in land rights issues, with the main causes of land conflict in Liberia being five-fold.²⁵ The source of this conflict

¹⁵ World Bank Group (2021a). *Gender Data Portal*. Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/data/datatopics/gender/country/Liberia>.

¹⁶ <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas/country-view/173/35>.

¹⁷ <https://hdr.undp.org/gender-development-index#/indicies/GDI>.

¹⁸ Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services, Ministry of Health (Liberia) and ICF (2021). *Liberia Demographic and Health Survey 2019-20*. Monrovia, Liberia, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services, Ministry of Health and ICF.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ <https://www.forumciv.org/int/latest/forward-female-land-ownership-liberia>.

²¹ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (2018). *The World Factbook: Liberia*. CIA World Factbook 2018 edition. Washington, DC: CIA.

²² Hartman, A. (2010). "Comparative Analysis of Land Conflicts in Liberia: Grand Gedeh, Lofa and Nimba Counties". Oslo, Norway: The Norwegian Refugee Council.

²³ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-liberia-land-palmoil-idINKCN0XX17U>.

²⁴ United States Agency for International Development (2022). *Liberia Conflict Assessment Report*. Available at: https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/content/Detail_Presto.aspx?ctID=ODVhZjk4NWQzM2YyMi00YjRmLTkxNjktZTcxMjM2NDNmY2Uy&rID=NjEwNzc0&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery&vID=47.

²⁵ Bruce, J. (2016). "A Strategy for Further Reform of Liberia's Law on Land: Liberia Land Governance Support Activity". USAID/Tetra Tech. Available at https://www.land-links.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/USAID_Land_Tenure_LGSA_Report_Reform_Strategy_Liberia_Law_Land.pdf.

mainly lies in the insecure customary land tenure system, in which the State did not endow traditional leaders with any authority to govern land-related issues. Therefore, there is always a conflicting claim, given that the State considers customary tenure as mere “occupants” or “squatters” on the land.²⁶ In some areas, land disputes are the result of long-standing conflicts within communities (e.g. between the Mandingo and the Gio and Mano tribes in Nimba County).²⁷ New land disputes have also emerged; during the civil war, land was often taken by squatters or by armed groups who would give the land to their supporters as rewards.²⁸ Since the end of the war, many displaced people have returned to reclaim their land, and conflict has ensued.

A conflict assessment conducted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 2021 identified land conflict as a significant cause of discord in Liberia. These conflicts were discovered to be widespread across all counties and were made worse by ineffective land governance, clashes between tribal and statutory land systems, limited capacity for resolving disputes, and the tendency for land conflicts to intersect with tribal, ethnic, religious and political tensions. Various types of land conflicts were observed, including disagreements over boundaries within families and communities, conflicts within and between political and administrative divisions (counties, districts) and conflicts involving war returnees, particularly in Nimba County. Other issues included the unauthorized occupation of public land by political elites, disputes over ownership and use of customary lands, land-grabbing, cases of fraudulent duplicate land titles and double sales of land, and disputes over the commercialization and formal titling of communal lands. Pressures resulting from population growth, urbanization and climate change have further intensified tensions related to land. Land conflicts often escalate through the use of coercion, threats and hired violence by the parties involved, all of whom are striving to achieve their objectives. Moreover, conflicts escalate when they acquire identity-based characteristics, pitting ethnic or religious groups against each other. This has been observed in Nimba County, where long-standing land conflicts between Mandingo Muslims and Christian and traditional Loma groups have occasionally led to broader communal tensions.²⁹

The LRA, adopted in September 2018, was formulated to address several inequities in land access and land governance, giving communities ownership rights and empowering them to make decisions on the lands that they have customarily accessed for decades.³⁰ The LRA plays a crucial role in promoting women’s inclusion in land governance. By granting decision-making powers over customary land ownership to customary communities and establishing mechanisms for determining land claims, this law enables women and youth in Liberia to actively participate in the development and management of land within their communities. In the past, these decisions were predominantly made by men, but now women have an equal say.

The Act provides enhanced protection for women’s land rights, including provisions for their participation in local land management committees. It also ensures that spouses have equal rights to be members of land-owning communities, thereby safeguarding women’s interests. Notably, the law recognizes the authority of all community members to collectively make significant decisions regarding customary land through a two-thirds vote. In addition, it mandates equal representation of men, women and youth within these committees, acknowledging the importance of diverse stakeholder engagement. Under the LRA, each community member, regardless of gender, has the right to own a specified parcel of land exclusively for residential use within the larger customary land parcel. Women can now enjoy individual ownership of land in their customary communities, with the ability to have their own name on the land deeds. This provision grants women economic security in their place of residence and allows them to leverage land ownership as collateral for loans and for other financial purposes. By empowering women within their communities, this transformative policy and legal framework can foster women’s economic agency.

²⁶ Unruh, J.D. (2009). “Land Rights in Post-war Liberia: The Volatile Part of the Peace Process”. *Land Use Policy* 26(2): 425–433.

²⁷ Paczynska, A. (2010). “Liberia Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework Report (ICAF Report)”. US Department of State. Available at: http://scar.gmu.edu/sites/default/files/Final_ICAF_Report_0.pdf.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ United States Agency for International Development (2022). *Liberia Conflict Assessment Report*. Available at: https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/content/Detail_Presto.aspx?ctID=ODVhZjk4NWQ0M2YyMi00YjRmLTkxNjktZTcxMjM2NDNmY2Uy&rID=NjEwNzc0&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery&vID=47.

³⁰ Bruce, J. (2016). “A Strategy for Further Reform of Liberia’s Law on Land. Land Governance Support Activity”. USAID/Tetra Tech. Available at: https://www.land-links.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/USAID_Land_Tenure_LGSA_Report_Reform_Strategy_Liberia_Law_Land.pdf.

However, despite the concrete provisions in the LRA, there are challenges in implementing and monitoring the legal framework to ensure gender equality. The Government of Liberia (2019, 11) has highlighted evidence suggesting that women are often excluded from consultations related to property ownership. Barriers such as illiteracy rates, limited access to information and travel costs affect both men and women in rural areas when accessing formal justice systems. However, women face even greater barriers due to higher illiteracy rates and gender and social norms that hinder their access to these mechanisms.

Before the enactment of the LRA, Liberian law did not recognize women's right to land, even though women constitute 80 per cent of agricultural labour in the country. Consequently, only 14 per cent of women own their land compared with 28 per cent of men. In addition, 76 per cent of women and 78 per cent of men who own land do not have a title or deed.³¹ Previous land law allowed communities to collectively own land, but, since decision-making in communities traditionally involves only men, women were left out and remained landless.³² Women's land rights is an issue that affects millions of families in Liberia, as 40 per cent of all Liberian women work in agriculture. Unfortunately, at least half of Liberian women feel insecure about their land tenure, and patriarchal norms contribute to land disputes.³³ Compounding this, women and girls working in agriculture usually experience deprived physical, psychological and social conditions translating to serious human rights violations.³⁴ Women usually face serious challenges in navigating the criminal justice system, given limitations in understanding their rights, language barriers and illiteracy.

1.1.4. Women and peacebuilding in Liberia

In 2009, Liberia became the first post-conflict country with a national action plan to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women, peace and security.³⁵ The significance of the resolution is that it urges the international community and United Nations Member States to enhance women's participation in peace processes. Peacebuilding, reconciliation and ensuring improved security for all are key challenges that post-conflict Liberia faces. Representation of women in the security sector remains limited. Most judicial officers are male. At the county level, administrative structures are dominated by male officials, chiefs and elders.³⁶ For instance, of the five justices on the Supreme Court, two are female (40 per cent), and of the 16 Circuit Court judges, five are women (31.3 per cent), while only four women are among the 35 specialized court judges (11.4 per cent) in Liberia.³⁷

Grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, UN Women assists countries and the UN system to progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment. UN Women works to support the Government of Liberia's national priorities, which include the empowerment of women and girls and their contribution to all areas of economic, political and social development. The objective of building and sustaining peace and security across the country is critical for Liberia, which faces several security challenges relating to land conflict. UNSCR 1325 is a landmark resolution on women, peace and security that affirms the importance of the participation of women and the inclusion of gender perspectives in peacebuilding, peacekeeping operations, post-conflict peacebuilding and governance, and humanitarian planning.

However, current initiatives aimed at mitigating or resolving conflicts have limited the participation of women, at all levels. Women are often seen only as victims of conflicts who need to be protected rather than as agents of change for peace and security. This leaves untapped the potential and capacities of women whose contributions can be harnessed to promote transformative change and sustainable peace. Through the Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project, UN Women, UNDP and WFP worked to support the Government of Liberia (GoL) in the implementation of the LRA and Local Government Act (LGA) by strengthening the capacity of

³¹ Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services, Ministry of Health (Liberia) and ICF (2021). *Liberia Demographic and Health Survey 2019-20*. Monrovia, Liberia, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services, Ministry of Health and ICF.

³² <https://www.forumciv.org/int/latest/forward-female-land-ownership-liberia>.

³³ <https://blogs.worldbank.org/dev4peace/why-strengthening-womens-land-rights-conflict-affected-countries-should-be-priority>.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Gibson Caesar, R., Konah Garlo, C., Nagarajan, C. and Schoofs, S. (2010). "Country Case Study: Liberia. Implementing Resolution 1325 in Liberia: Reflections of Women's Associations". London: International Alert.

³⁶ Ministry of Gender and Development (2009). "Liberia National Gender Policy: Republic of Liberia (2010–2015)". Monrovia: Ministry of Gender and Development.

³⁷ National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (2018). Report on Women's Empowerment in Liberia: Diamond Leadership Role Model Project. Washington, DC: National Democratic Institute for International Affairs.

county land offices and linking them with existing land dispute-related structures and new structures created through the passage of LRA, and by supporting the initial steps of the formalization of customary land as a measure to prevent disputes relating to customary landowners and users. This is believed to help the GoL fulfil its commitment to UNSCR 1325. The UN Women, UNDP and WFP Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project was developed to address the above-identified gender inequality challenges in Liberia, with a focus on conflict-prone counties (Grand Cape Mount, Sinoe, Maryland and Nimba).

1.2. Description of the project

1.3. The Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project was funded by the PBF. The project was implemented by UN Women, UNDP and WFP in Nimba, Grand Cape Mount, Sinoe and Maryland Counties. In these counties, the project's aim was to strengthen the capacity of county land offices and further link them with existing land dispute-related structures and new structures created through the passage of the LRA, and to support the initial steps of the formalization of customary land as a measure to prevent disputes relating to customary landowners and users. In addition, several interventions aimed to strengthen existing semi-formal and informal land dispute resolution mechanisms, such as multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs), and the new mechanisms established with the LRA, such as community land development and management committees (CLDMCs), with a view to reducing conflicts in a more transparent, effective and gender- and youth-responsive manner. The project started in January 2020 and was due to end in January 2023 – an implementation period of 36 months. The total budget for the entire project duration was US\$3,996,522.48. A 3-month no-cost extension was sought to finalize some residual activities and this evaluation.

At the national level, the initiative supports the implementation of the 2017 Peacebuilding Plan, which was integrated into “Pillar 3: Sustaining Peace” of the Government of Liberia’s national development plan – the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD). The PAPD also calls for improving socioeconomic human rights by passing and implementing the LRA to improve land tenure security; developing a regulatory framework for the actualization of the Liberia Land Authority Act; securing access to land by harmonizing customary and statutory land tenure systems; and strengthening the community land administration and governance framework (ensuring the inclusion of youth, women and marginalized community members).

The project is also aligned with the 2018 National Gender Policy, which clearly calls for supporting women’s, land tenure and property rights, including advocating for and promoting women’s access to and control over land/land-based resources and other forms of property and assets. In addition, the project is aligned with the Liberia National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2019–2023), which emphasizes the importance of land, inheritance and property rights for women. Moreover, the intervention was designed to support the Government of Liberia in implementing the LRA and LGA, including the Legal Aid Policy (2019) and the Land Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy. The government has identified land-related issues as critical drivers of conflict as well as the root cause of intercommunity divisions. Land disputes at the local level impede development and have the potential to turn into large-scale conflicts. The passage of the LRA and LGA will have significant peace dividends if successfully implemented. The LGA provides for the decentralization of services and brings government closer to the people, thereby reducing the potential for conflicts and addressing some of Liberia’s main conflict triggers and grievances. Further to this, the effects of environmental hazards vis-à-vis concessions are more likely to fuel conflicts, in addition to existing land disputes. Dialogue and confidence-building between concessionaires and communities was an integral part of the project, enabling peacebuilding opportunities to be harnessed.

The key partners and project beneficiaries also consulted during project development include communities from the targeted counties, Contours Limited, Volunteers for Sustainable Development in Africa (VOSEIDA), the Rights and Rice Foundation (RRF), government institutions such as the Liberia Land Authority (LLA), the Peacebuilding Office (PBO), the National Bureau of Concessions (NBC), the National Centre for Coordination of Response Mechanisms (NCCRM), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), concession companies and civil society organizations (CSOs). Taking into account the experience of past and ongoing projects in the land sector, the project aimed to tackle major problems identified by government and CSO partners, and respond to the issues identified through previous and existing conflict analysis and land-related assessments. The project outcomes responded to two key aspects identified: (i) the limited capacity of the government to prevent land-related conflicts and the need to strengthen the effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness of land

administrative structures at the national and county levels; and (ii) the need to strengthen existing land dispute resolution mechanisms.

1.2.1. Overview of project outcomes and outputs

Outcome 1. Authorities at the national and local levels manage land allocation, registration and licensing processes in a more effective, transparent and inclusive manner, reducing conflict.

Output 1.1. Customary governance authorities and communities in targeted counties are aware of the LRA, existing land dispute resolution mechanisms, concession agreements and their role, and have an improved understanding of women's and youth rights to land.

Output 1.2. County land offices and county land boards in targeted counties have the capacity, procedures and systems in place to formalize customary land in a way that reflects the rights and needs of all community members.

Output 1.3. CLDMCs are established in targeted counties and have the capacity to initiate the formalization and recognition of their land rights.

Output 1.4. Early warning and response mechanism is engendered and integrates land dispute-related data.

Output 1.5. The institutional capacity of the LLA/EPA/NBC/Special Presidential Review Committee (SPRC) is strengthened to effectively prevent conflicts driven by the depletion of livelihood opportunities and environmental hazards.

Outcome 2. Existing semi-formal and informal land dispute resolution mechanisms are strengthened, more sustainable and able to reduce conflict in a more effective and gender-responsive manner.

Output 2.1. Existing semi-formal land dispute resolution bodies (county peace committees, CLDMCs, SPRC, Peace Huts, MSPs) have strengthened capacity to resolve disputes in a sustainable and gender- and youth-responsive manner.

Output 2.2. Communities, including women and youth, in targeted counties have the capacity and skills to participate in formal and informal land dispute mechanisms.

Output 2.3. Coordination between government agencies in charge of implementing the LRA and LGA, development partners and CSOs is strengthened.

Output 2.4. Enhanced MSP capacity to find agreeable solutions, propose alternative livelihoods and address the effects of environmental hazards.

The project implementation strategy is underlined by capacity-building and institutional strengthening of key sectors, as well as facilitating the sustainable implementation of the 2017 Peacebuilding Plan and the LRA and LGA, including the Legal Aid Policy (2019) and the Land Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy.

The programme's theory of change is discussed in section 1.3 below. The primary stakeholders of the project are the PBF (donor partner), members of the programme steering committee (SC), communities from targeted counties, VOSIEDA, the RRF, government institutions such as the LLA, the PBO, the NBC, the NCCRM, the EPA, concession companies and CSOs. The specific activities of the stakeholders are shown below:

1. **Rights and Rice Foundation:** The RRF is a Liberian non-governmental organization that is working for social justice and community empowerment in Liberia. The RRF has been one of the key organizations leading the land reform process in Liberia. The RRF partnered with UN Women to implement Outputs 1.1, 2.1 and 2.2. Key activities of the RRF include rolling out awareness campaigns targeting women and youth on their rights to participate in semi-formal and informal structures for dispute resolution; training women and youth on existing formal and informal land dispute resolution mechanisms; raising awareness among local and traditional leaders to promote women and youth participation in informal and semi-formal land dispute resolution structures. The RRF was included in the evaluation to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. The evaluation team also organized a face-to-face meeting and group discussions with their representatives.
2. **National Centre for the Coordination of Response Mechanisms:** The NCCRM was established to improve early warning capacity in Liberia, which allows the State to proactively identify emerging crises and improve its response mechanisms once a crisis begins. The centre conducted a gender and human resources assessment and training on the early warning mechanisms at county and district levels during the implementation of the project. NCCRM was included in the evaluation to assess the project's

relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. The evaluation team organized a face-to-face meeting and group discussions with their representatives.

3. **Liberia Peacebuilding Office:** To help support the implementation of the Liberia Peacebuilding Priority Plan and subsequent plans, as well as to provide secretarial support to the joint steering committee, the PBO was established in early 2009. The PBO supports the Liberian Government to build capacity to lead peacebuilding work. In the Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project, the PBO supported the strengthening of the capacities of conflict early warning monitors, MSPs, CLDMCs, Peace Huts and county peace committees through training on gender mainstreaming, the use of gender-responsive indicators in early warning monitoring, land disputes and how to collect data related to these incidents. The PBO was included in the evaluation to provide evidence to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The evaluation team organized a face-to-face meeting and group discussions with their representatives.
4. **Creative initiative for Development & Relief: Is an organization that conducted the boundary harmonization and confirmatory survey which led to the issuing of the 8 deeds.**
5. **Contours Limited:** Contours Limited is a geo-spatial firm that provides services for the built environment. The firm produced boundary maps in project counties using global positioning systems. Stakeholders from this firm served as key informant interviewees during data collection.
6. **National Peace Hut Women of Liberia:** Founded in 2004, the National Peace Hut Women of Liberia helped women and former child soldiers become agents of change in their communities following the country's civil war. Peace Huts provide space for women's voices to be heard on peacebuilding, security, rule of law, and political and economic issues, thus filling a critical gap in facilitating women's access to justice in communities where structures such as a judiciary system and police service are not available. In 2018, this women-led network transformed into a formal platform for the advancement of peacebuilding and women's rights initiatives at the community level. Peace Huts were charged with the responsibility of mobilizing women from the initiative for the project. Peace Huts were included in the evaluation to provide evidence to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The evaluation team organized a face-to-face meeting and group discussions with their representatives.
7. **Volunteers for Sustainable Development in Africa:** This organization supported the strengthening of community resilience to create their own assets as an alternative livelihood source. It supported the strengthening of the capacity of vulnerable communities through training, and the provision of seeds, tools and equipment. The organization also supported the institutional capacity strengthening of the NBC, LLA and EPA to effectively address the issues of land tenure and livelihood depletion. VOSIEDA was included in the evaluation to provide evidence to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The evaluation team organized a face-to-face meeting and group discussions with their representatives.
8. **The steering committee:** The SC provided strategic guidance and ensured oversight of the LMPTF, including approving projects and allocating funds, supervising the progress of the funds result frameworks, assessing risks, reviewing, and approving LMPTF reports. The SC was included in the evaluation to provide evidence to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The evaluation team organized a face-to-face meeting and group discussions with their representatives.
9. **The thematic working group (TWG):** The TWG was charged with the responsibility of reviewing reports to ensure relevance and technical quality and recommending projects to the SC for approval and making recommendations to the secretariat. The TWG was included in the evaluation to provide evidence to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The evaluation team organized a face-to-face meeting and group discussions with their representatives.
10. **United Nations Peacebuilding Fund:** The PBF provided the funding for the implementation of the project activities. Key personnel from the fund were included in the evaluation to provide evidence to assess the project's relevance.

1.3. Theory of change

Based on the review of the project documents, the Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project is anchored on a theory of change (ToC). This ToC represents the main hypothesis used in the evaluation to assess the project.

IF customary governance authorities and communities in targeted counties are aware of the LRA and LGA, existing land dispute resolution mechanisms, concession agreements and their role, and have an improved understanding of women's and youth rights to land; IF county land offices, county land boards and CLDMCs in targeted counties have the capacity, procedures and systems in place to formalize customary land in a way that reflects the rights and needs of all community members; IF existing semi-formal land dispute resolution bodies (i.e. MSPs) have the capacity to provide a safe and inclusive platform for communities, government and concession companies to resolve disputes in a gender- and youth-responsive manner; IF communities, including women and youth, in targeted counties have the capacity and skills to participate in formal and informal land dispute mechanisms; IF institutional capacity of the LLA/NBC/EPA are strengthened to effectively prevent potential conflict triggers arising from concessionaires (i.e. environmental hazards and limited livelihood opportunities); and IF early warning and response mechanisms become more sensitive to land disputes; THEN land management will be more effective and inclusive, and land disputes will be better prevented and managed in targeted counties because existing semi-formal and informal land dispute resolution mechanisms, and government land management systems and capacities, will be strengthened to reduce land-related conflicts.

The ToC is based on the following assumptions:

- ✦ The government is committed to implementing the LRA, LGA and the Land Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy at the national and subnational levels.
- ✦ The government is willing to mainstream gender in their policies, rules and procedures.
- ✦ Concessionaires are willing to deliver their commitments.
- ✦ Targeted communities are willing to change attitudes towards women's, youth and vulnerable groups' rights to land.
- ✦ Stakeholders (government, private sector, CSOs, development partners) are able/willing to coordinate to maximize the impact of their work.

The analysis of the ToC shows that it is relevant, as it is plausible, clear and logical in its description of how the project strategy intended to contribute to the desired changes at the outcome and impact levels without any gaps in knowledge. The result statements are unambiguous, the time frame for achieving the results is reasonable and the assumptions are realistic and unambiguous. In addition, the assumption and risks most relevant to whether the change will be realized were clearly stated in the ToC. However, while the ToC was set in the context of the internationally agreed development goals, norms and instruments that outline the necessary conditions and key actions required for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, there was little or no evidence to show that the ToC was based on knowledge and lessons learned from credible sources, as no references were specified. Furthermore, there is no evidence to show that the ToC was developed based on collaborative and participatory process involving multiple stakeholders' perspectives. Ideally, a ToC should be presented in a diagram and embedded in the narrative of the ToC section, but this was not found in the programme document containing the ToC. Overall, the ToC is very relevant to the goal of the project.

1.3.1. Existing data availability

To understand the ToC and provide a robust analysis of the results framework, the evaluation team relied on data shared by the UN Women project team. For an effective review, the evaluators classified the documents into four categories: donor annual reports, survey reports, implementing partners' reports and project design reports. A review of the documents shared indicated that they were generally good and provided a clear direction of the focus of the project in terms of design and activities implemented in the targeted counties. Reports from implementing partners were also of good quality. Overall, the project was designed broadly to facilitate the management of land allocation, concessions, registration and licensing processes in a more effective, transparent and inclusive manner, and to increase awareness of the LRA and existing land dispute resolution mechanisms among communities in the county. Further to this, and most critically, all progress reports, as well as the baseline, endline and perception surveys, disaggregated data by sex of activity participant and by county. The evaluation

maintained the disaggregation of data by sex and county to gain deeper insights into the results of the project in different dimensions.

1.0. OBJECTIVES OF THE FINAL EVALUATION

This evaluation is a mandatory component of project management, and the final evaluation report will be submitted to United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). The purpose of this evaluation is to examine project progress and results. The evaluation generated substantial evidence for informed future interventions and best practices. The evaluation identified key results, challenges, lessons learned, good practices, conclusions and recommendations that will support future joint programming and foster organizational learning and accountability. The evaluation was guided by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee evaluation criteria and the Global Evaluation Report Assessment and Analysis System criteria list, i.e. it focused on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, coherence, sustainability, and human rights and gender equality.

The objectives of the evaluation were to:

- ✚ Assess the relevance of the intervention, strategy and approach in the implementation of the women's peace and security agenda, the achievement of women's land rights and the broader peacebuilding needs of Liberia, as well as the needs of the targeted communities.
- ✚ Assess the effectiveness of the project implementation, including what outcomes and outputs were achieved and how they contributed to peacebuilding objectives.
- ✚ Assess the efficiency of the project in the achievement of results, including efficiency of project management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), coordination, timeliness and value for money.
- ✚ Assess the project coherence, including quality of the inter-agency coordination mechanisms that were established at country level, and also coherence with previous relevant interventions and interventions by other actors.
- ✚ Assess the sustainability of the project.
- ✚ Determine whether a human rights approach and gender equality principles are integrated adequately into the project.
- ✚ Assess the overall impact of the project in terms of changing behaviours and attitudes related to land conflict and land management, and women, peace and security within this theme.
- ✚ Identify and highlight important lessons learned, best practices and strategies for replication, and provide actionable recommendations for the design and implementation of future interventions.
- ✚ Identify and highlight innovative approaches taken in all aspects of the project.
- ✚ Document and analyse possible weaknesses in order to improve the next steps of UN programming in the area of women, peace and security programming and land governance.

2.1. Scope of the evaluation

This end-of-project evaluation was conducted for the "Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation through Strengthening Land Governance and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms" project, hereafter referred to as the "Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project" or "the project", which was implemented during the period January 2020 to January 2023. The evaluation covered two outcome areas and nine output areas covering four counties – Nimba, Grand Cape Mount, Maryland and Sinoe. The evaluation provided a comprehensive assessment of the joint programme, covering all three levels of the programme scope and their interconnections:

- ✚ Community level: An assessment was carried out of how the joint programme initiatives, particularly those of implementing partners on the ground, have created favourable conditions for women to exercise their rights to land and have led to enhanced participation of women in land governance and decision-making processes, dispute resolution processes, etc.
- ✚ County level: The impact of the project on the capacities of county-level land administrative bodies was analysed.
- ✚ National level: The achievements over the last months of implementation were analysed, and, more specifically, the successes, opportunities missed and constraints encountered were identified.

The project was evaluated in terms of its progress towards achieving expected results, measured against the logframes and targets, and using project indicators. The evaluation identified and documented any short-term, intermediate and long-term results achieved by the project. It also assessed progress towards achieving the project outcomes and the potential impact by the end of the project's implementing period.

2.2. Evaluation stakeholders

A stakeholder analysis using the United Nations Evaluation Group Matrix was applied (Annex 3). The analysis indicated that there were three main levels of stakeholders. At the first level were the Evaluation Manager, Evaluation Technical Committee, Evaluation Reference Group, UN Women Evaluation Manager (Liberia), UN Women Regional Evaluation Analyst, Liberia Multi-Partner Trust Fund-Peacebuilding Fund Regional Evaluation Specialist, Secretariat M&E Analyst, and Project Focal Points from the United Nations Development Programme and World Food Programme. These first-level stakeholders were involved in the joint evaluation of the project and provided an oversight function in the validation of the inception. They also contributed to the finalization of the draft report. At the second level at were the national stakeholders such as the Liberia Land Authority (LLA), Liberia Peacebuilding Office (Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)), Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP), National Bureau of Concession (NBC), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and National Centre for the Coordination of Response Mechanisms (NCCRM). This category represents national institutions and ministries that participated in the project. The third level includes civil society organizations (CSOs), including the Rights and Rice Foundation (RRF), Peace Hut Women of Liberia and Volunteers for Sustainable Development in Africa (VOSIEDA). The CSOs helped in the implementation of the project. This category represents the project beneficiaries in the four counties covered by the project. . This list of stakeholders helped to identify key informants for in-depth and semi-structured interviews conducted during the evaluation. The project team provided a self-assessment of the project performance, challenges and lessons learned. They also provided logistical support to the evaluation team by mobilizing the project beneficiaries at the national and community levels. Government officials were also part of the beneficiaries of the project and provided evidence of the relevance of the project, its effectiveness, and impact of the project on their respective ministries and agencies. The implementing partners, on the other hand, supported the mobilization of the project beneficiaries for interviews, while also providing information on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the project and the sustainability of the project benefits at the community level. The project beneficiaries provided the required information on the relevance, effectiveness and impact of the project and the sustainability of the project benefits at the community level.

2.3. Evaluation users

The main evaluation users will include UN Women, UNDP and WFP in Liberia, as well as the PBF and United Nations Country Team (UNCT) more broadly. The national stakeholders that will benefit from the evaluation will include the MGCSP, LLA, NBC, MIA, PBO, Office of the Legal Advisor to the President, Environmental Protection Agency, NCCRM, RRF and other CSOs. This evaluation informs the implementation of the Liberian Government's Strategic Plan, new strategic documents such as the new United Nations Development Cooperation Framework, and future programming actions of UN Women, UNDP and WFP, including joint programming actions. The findings of this evaluation will also be used by the United Nations to further refine its approaches towards the promotion of the women, peace and security agenda and to inform the implementation of strategic documents, including the 2020–2024 Strategic Note of UN Women Liberia County Office. Ultimately, the results of the evaluation will be publicly accessible through the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system for global learning and the PBF website.

3.0. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Results-based management approach: theory of change

The “Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation through Strengthening Land Governance and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms” project was evaluated against the results-based management–theory of change (ToC) approach. Information from the project and other documents were reviewed and used to produce an updated ToC model. The revised notes helped to promote a clear understanding of the project logic, inputs and outputs, as well as planned and expected outcomes, risks and underlying assumptions. The notes from the ToC were used as a basis for developing detailed evaluation questions, guiding the development of related methods and protocols, and analysing the broader progress towards outcomes through the aggregation of available evidence on a broader scale and from longer term results.

3.2. Development of key questions in relation to the evaluation criteria

The evaluation applied the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, coherence and sustainability. The evaluation also took into consideration gender equality and human rights, and disability inclusion, as separate, stand-alone criteria. These criteria were used as the main analytical framework in line with the UN Women evaluation policy.³⁸ The evaluation questions developed around the thematic evaluation areas of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, gender equality and human rights, and disability inclusion are presented in Annex 1.

Various key questions were developed around the thematic evaluation areas and are further expatiated in the evaluation matrix (Annex 3). Throughout the evaluation process, gender and inequality concerns were assessed in line with UN Women's gender-responsive evaluation policy.³⁹ All data collected were gender-disaggregated and the different needs of women, men, boys and girls, as well as those of vulnerable groups targeted by the project, were considered throughout the evaluation process. The evaluation was carried out following United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards and UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation. The process followed the UN Women evaluation policy and ethical guidelines for evaluations in the UN system. The final evaluation report was further prepared following the UN Women Global Evaluation Report Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS). The evaluators identified vulnerable sub-populations and ensured that they were included in the data-gathering process. These included women, girls, the elderly, youth, people living with disabilities and others generally less included in political and economic processes and events in the community.

The evaluators were aware of potential biases that can arise in the selection of methods, and avoided this through the inclusion of a full range of appropriate stakeholder groups and a variety of data collection tools. To facilitate more transparent and participatory processes, enabling more equitable, gender-balanced contributions by all stakeholders, and to facilitate capacity-building of all stakeholders to contribute freely, evaluators addressed transparency, independence, evaluation ethics and confidentiality issues, including sensitivity to language use, during data collection.

With respect to transparency, the evaluation report described the sources of information used (documentation, respondents, literature, etc.) in sufficient detail, so that the adequacy of the information could be assessed. In addition, complete lists of interviewees and documents consulted were included, to the extent that this did not compromise the privacy and confidentiality of participants. For reliability, the evaluation cross-validated and critically assessed the information sources used and the validity of the data using a variety of methods and sources of information. With respect to independence, the evaluators exhibited a high level of independence during the evaluation process, and possible conflicts of interest were addressed openly and honestly. Relevant critical measures adopted during data collection included gathering stakeholders in separate groups where they could express themselves freely. Evaluators also visited stakeholders in their localities and used appropriate cultural approaches and local languages to facilitate easy access and increased participation.

3.3. Methodological approach

The purpose of this evaluation was both formative and summative (i.e. to inform UN Women Liberia future programming in gender equality and women empowerment in Liberia, and determine the extent to which the Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation through Strengthening Land Governance and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms project has met its planned goals and objectives). Accordingly, and in line with the Terms of Reference, the evaluation utilized both quantitative and qualitative research methods and a desk review of secondary data documents. Primary and secondary sources of data were utilized to inform the findings of the evaluation. This mix of methods allowed for information to be triangulated and verified. Thus, a mixed methodological approach to data collection was used, including document analysis, key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). The key informants and focus group discussants were representatives of the recipients of various project interventions. The data collected included both individual and institutional responses to the evaluation questions. This mixed approach ensured the collection of different types

³⁸ <https://genderevaluation.unwomen.org/-/media/files/un%20women/gender%20evaluation/handbook/evaluationhandbook-web-final-0apr2015.pdf?la=en&vs=4246>.

³⁹ Ibid.

of data from different stakeholders, enriched data management and resulted in the comprehensive assessment of the impact of the project. The approach ensured that the evaluation was user-friendly, gender-responsive, and explicitly integrated human rights-based approaches to data management. The evaluation also utilized gender-sensitive participatory methods to capture relevant case studies. Data were further disaggregated by sex. The research methods promoted complementarity and allowed for cross-verification, corroboration and triangulation of evidence collected from different sources, thus enhancing the reliability and validity of the data collected.

3.4. Secondary data collection

A desk review of all relevant project documentation was carried out. The documents were shared by the project team and were complemented by other sources where necessary. The content analysis of the documents revealed that the documents contained most of the relevant data. The document reviews were conducted in line with the key evaluation questions and the listed indicators in the project result , using the content analysis method. This provided useful background information to the evaluation team in understanding the project and assessing the extent of project activity implementation. The information was used to verify and validate (triangulate) the data obtained from other tools. The review therefore helped to provide evidence to meet some of the logframe indicators and the evaluation questions. The desk review was used at inception, during data collection, and at the triangulation stage. Its advantage is that it was inexpensive, and data were obtained relatively fast and easily because of the project's rich literature and reports. The desk review also captured periodic information and data, which were used to compare baseline values with end-line values.

3.5. Primary data collection

The instruments deployed for data collection included a questionnaire, KII guide and FGD guide. The questionnaire and the FGD guide targeted project beneficiaries in the counties, while the KII guide targeted the implementing partners, government partners and the project team. The evaluation team developed different guides for different categories of stakeholder depending on their roles in the design and implementation of the project. The data collected using these different sets of tools covered all the evaluation questions raised across the evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impacts and sustainability, and also gender equality, human rights and disability inclusion. The combination of questionnaires, KIIs and FGDs was useful for this evaluation, as it helped to generate both qualitative and quantitative data, which facilitated the triangulation of data. The FGDs and KIIs provided qualitative data relevant to increasing the depth and detailed data scoping from the various stakeholders. They also enabled the evaluation team to have a deeper understanding of the context of the evaluation. FGDs were preferred because they were very useful in obtaining detailed information about individual and group feelings, perceptions and opinions, and group interactions had the advantage of bringing out nuances of stakeholder dynamics.

3.6. Sampling and data collection

The sampling design was developed after the stakeholder analysis conducted during the inception phase. The evaluation adopted a census sampling approach to all key participating stakeholder institutions and project implementing partners, as well as beneficiaries in the counties, which allowed the evaluators to study and fully understand the roles played by each institution and the interventions they participated in. Purposive sampling was utilized to choose specific individuals depending on their involvement. Using the stakeholder analysis matrix, which defined the roles and nature of participation of stakeholders in various interventions, the evaluators were able to purposively select key stakeholders for data collection. The evaluation covered all four counties covered by the project, as well as the national level, which represented 100 per cent of the intervention areas. This spread provided the required representation of all the stakeholders covered by the intervention, as well as guaranteeing the required reliability, validity and generalizability of the findings derived from the data collected. Forty-three communities across the four counties were covered by the intervention. The evaluation team purposively selected five communities from each county using certain criteria such as accessibility, security concerns and the number of beneficiaries in the county. However, due to accessibility concerns because of bad roads, stakeholders in Maryland and Sinoe were reached via telephone. The project team, stakeholders at the national level, and community leaders were interviewed as key informants, and they were purposively selected depending on the nature of their involvement in the design and implementation of the project.

In all, a total of 16 FGDs and 43 KIIs were conducted across the four counties covered by the intervention. At the national level, the sampling of stakeholders was conducted through stakeholder analysis. This broad-based strategy ensured that the evaluation was all-inclusive, eliminated bias and improved the reliability of the data collected. Tables 2 and 3 below show national- and county-level disaggregated.

Table 2: National-level disaggregation of data collection

Name of institution	Location	Method of data collection	No. of participants	Males	Females	Total
Liberia Land Authority	Monrovia	KII	2	1	1	2
Liberia Peacebuilding Office (MIA)	Monrovia	KII	3	3	0	3
National Bureau of Concession	Monrovia	KII	2	2	0	2
Volunteers for Sustainable Development in Africa	Monrovia	KII	4	3	1	4
Environmental Protection Agency	Monrovia	KII	1	1	0	1
National Centre for the Coordination of Response Mechanisms	Monrovia	KII	2	1	1	2
Rights and Rice Foundation	Monrovia	KII	2	1	1	2
National Peace Hut Women of Liberia	Monrovia	KII	2	0	2	2
Mohamed A. Sheriff	Monrovia	KII	1	1	0	1
Patmillia Doe Paivey	Monrovia	KII	1	1	0	1
UN Women (lead agency)	Monrovia	KII	2	1	1	2
UNDP	Monrovia	KII	2	2	0	2
WFP	Monrovia	KII	4	3	1	4
PBF	Monrovia	KII	1	1	0	1
Contours Limited	Monrovia	KII	1	1	0	1
Total						30

Table 3: County-level disaggregation of data collection

Location	Questionnaire	Method of data collection		No. of KIIs (males)	No. of KIIs (females)	No. of FGDs (males)	No. of FGDs (females)
		KII	FGD				
Grand Cape Mount	13	15	8	6	9	4	4
Sinoe	2	4	0	3	1	0	0
Maryland	5	4	0	2	2	0	0
Nimba	57	20	8	9	11	4	4
Total	77	43	16	20	23	8	8

3.7. Gender and human rights

Mainstreaming gender and human rights in evaluation requires including women and men who are marginalized and/or discriminated against in the evaluation process. This provided significant information on how the intervention was seen from the perspective of different beneficiaries of the intervention, while ensuring that balanced and complete evaluation evidence was generated. Thus, a full range of stakeholder groups (including duty bearers and rights holders) was carefully selected and included in the evaluation to avoid biases such as gender, distance (including the less accessible), power (enabling less powerful interviewees to speak freely by addressing privacy and confidentiality concerns), etc. One method used to foster this inclusion was working with the project team to discuss the evaluation purpose, focus and methodology during the inception phase of the evaluation. Particular attention was paid to the inclusion of women and individuals/groups who are marginalized and/or discriminated against. The evaluation team also explored the barriers to participation that these groups may face, and strategies were devised to address these barriers. For instance, people living with disabilities were identified and visited by the evaluation team during data collection, while people in remote locations were reached via telephone by the evaluation team to give them the opportunity to participate in the evaluation process. In addition, some rights-based and gender-sensitive indicators were incorporated into the evaluation questions to ensure the evaluation was gender- and human rights-responsive.

3.8. Validity and reliability of data

Validating the accuracy, clarity and specificity of data collected was crucial in this evaluation to ensure the validity of findings and general inferences from the analysis of data. Therefore, throughout the various stages of the evaluation, data management was of vital importance in ensuring the validity and reliability of the data. To achieve this important outcome, the evaluation team developed and administered different tools, and all the tools contained similar wording for the same question. In addition, representative samples and adequate sample sizes

were purposively selected from each of the identified stakeholder groups for the evaluation. While using multiple methods of data collection, the evaluation team also carried out data triangulation. The evaluation team also used appropriate and rigorous interpretative techniques and reported results accurately and transparently. The draft report was validated at a workshop with all key stakeholders, where the findings were examined through engagement with stakeholders and management debriefings.

3.9. Data analysis and reporting

In this evaluation, data analysis was carried out at each stages of the evaluation process. However, once all information and data had been collected, a different analytical process was utilized and involved a systematic organization, comparison, and synthesis of information and data derived at each stage and using all methods.⁴⁰ The evaluation triangulated information obtained from different stakeholders using different data collection tools and sources of information to ensure robust findings. The evaluators also made judgments based on the evidence from the finding. The evaluation report further described the analytical process undertaken and the underlying rationale for judgments made. To increase the gender-responsiveness of evaluation findings, evaluators adopted a gender analysis framework that examined factors related to gender, assessed and promoted gender equality, and provided an analysis of structures of political and social control that create gender equality. This technique ensured that the data collected was used for the following purposes:

- ✚ Determining the claims of rights holders and obligations of duty bearers within the context of the project
- ✚ Assessing the extent to which the intervention was guided by the relevant international (and national and regional) normative frameworks for gender equality and women's rights, and UN system-wide mandates and organizational objectives, including maintenance of peace and security, improved status for women and population, etc.
- ✚ Comparing data and information collected with existing information about human rights and gender equality in the counties, country, etc.
- ✚ Identifying trends, common responses and differences between groups of stakeholders (disaggregation of data), for example using graphs or illustrative quotes (that do not enable identification of the individual)
- ✚ Integrating into the analysis the context, relationships, power dynamics, etc.
- ✚ Analysing the structures that contribute to inequalities experienced by women, men, girls and boys, especially those experiencing multiple forms of exclusion within the context of the project
- ✚ Assessing the extent to which participation and inclusiveness (with respect to rights holders and duty bearers) were maximized in the intervention's planning, design, implementation and decision-making processes
- ✚ Triangulating information and sources of information to identify similarities and/or discrepancies in data obtained in different ways (i.e. interviews, focus groups, observations, etc.) and from different stakeholders (duty bearers, rights holders, etc.)
- ✚ Identifying the context behind the numbers and people (using case studies to illustrate broader findings or go into more depth on an issue)
- ✚ Comparing the results obtained with the original plan (e.g. through the application of the evaluation matrix)
- ✚ Assessing the extent to which sustainability was built into the intervention through the empowerment and capacity-building of women and groups of rights holders and duty bearers.⁴¹

Adopting the gender analysis framework, as highlighted above, ensured that the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the final evaluation report reflected a gender analysis. Based on evidence from the analysis of data, the evaluation team developed an interim report that was reviewed by the evaluation reference group. This interim reporting of findings by the evaluation team built an understanding of findings as the evaluation process got under way and led to greater buy-in and use of evaluation results. This was an opportunity for the team to field the emerging trends from primary data collection against the reactions of the oversight groups. This enabled them to provide further information, point out key gaps in data and errors of interpretation, and validate the findings. The final evaluation report addressed other issues identified through the stakeholders' validation workshop. The findings assessed progress towards the achievement of the objectives of the project against the standard evaluation principles of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact.

⁴⁰ UN Women (2016). *How to Manage Gender-responsive Evaluations: Evaluation Handbook*. New York: UN Women, p. 76.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

Quantitative data analysis. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics to meet the objectives of the evaluation. Relevant tables and columns were developed showing disaggregated data by gender, age, State and disability, and were used in drafting the various sections of the report.

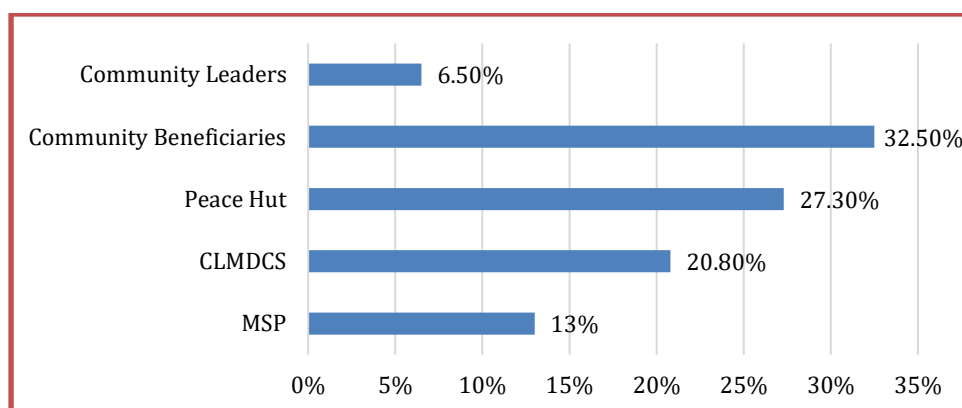
Qualitative data analysis. The evaluation team used thematic coding to analyse qualitative data. The codes and themes were determined by the evaluation objectives and criteria. Examples of the themes used include relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, as well as cross-cutting issues and disability inclusion. The content analysis method was employed in the desk review of all available reports, documents and collected data sets. The evaluation team reviewed all relevant programme documents, and findings were triangulated and refined based on the comments of key informants and through cross-checking to ensure factual credibility. The findings from the qualitative and quantitative data analysis were also triangulated by source and methods to obtain descriptive findings and conclusions relevant to responding to the objectives of this evaluation.

The following methods for data analysis were used:

- ✚ Qualitative content analysis was used to evaluate patterns across multiple pieces of content of words, phrases or images to identify the frequency and patterns of deeper underlying interpretations.
- ✚ Thematic analysis was used to examine the patterns of meaning in a data set comprising interviews or focus group transcripts by grouping them according to similarities/themes to derive the meaning of the content.
- ✚ Budget and expenditure analysis was used to analyse burn rate.
- ✚ Descriptive analysis and trend analysis were applied to available data on project activities and completion rates by partners.

The analysis of the quantitative data collected from the questionnaire indicated that 54.5 per cent of the respondents were female and 45.5 per cent were male. The majority (55.8 per cent) of the respondents were within the age bracket of 36–50 years, while 20.8 per cent were within the age bracket of 50–60 years. The average age of the respondents was 45 years; by gender, the average age of male respondents was 50 years and the average age of female respondents was 43 years. Evidence also shows that 32.5 per cent and 27.3 per cent of the respondents were members of community beneficiaries and members of Peace Huts, respectively (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Distribution of respondents by category of beneficiary



3.10. Ethical considerations

The evaluation team adhered fully to the ethics and principles of research and evaluation. In addition, the consultant also adhered strictly to the UNEG standards for evaluation and the UN Women evaluation policy and ethical guidelines for evaluations in the UN system. Once finalized, the evaluation report was quality assessed based on the UN Women GERAAS. Specific safety measures were put in place to promote the safety of both the respondents and the evaluation team during data collection. The safety measures mainstreamed during the data collection exercise included the following:

- ✚ Data collection tools were designed in a way that is culturally appropriate and did not create distress for respondents.
- ✚ Data collection visits were organized at the appropriate times and places to minimize risk to respondents.

- ✚ Interviewers were provided with information on how individuals in situations of risk can seek support.
- ✚ A plan was put in place to protect the rights of the respondent, including privacy and confidentiality.
- ✚ The evaluation team was trained in collecting sensitive information, and, in cases where the topic of the evaluation may touch on violence against women, evaluators had previous experience in this area.
- ✚ The evaluators were competent in identifying the complexity of cultural identities and in identifying power dynamics between and within different groups.

Rights, peace and security issues can also constitute sensitive information, and therefore the respondents' anonymity, as well as the non-attribution of their answers, were carefully safeguarded. The evaluators also created a "safe space" during the interaction with respondents so that different categories of beneficiaries were able to speak out. For each participant, informed consent to participate in the evaluation was ensured. The evaluation team followed the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct,⁴² as listed below:

- ✚ Respect for dignity and diversity
- ✚ Right to self-determination
- ✚ Right to participate or withdraw at any time
- ✚ Fair representation
- ✚ Alignment with codes for vulnerable groups
- ✚ Redress
- ✚ Confidentiality
- ✚ Avoidance of harm.

3.11. Risks and assumptions

The risk management table summarizes critical risks to the evaluation, along with our proposed mitigation measures (Annex 1). Risk level refers to the likelihood of the risk occurring (low, medium, high), while risk impact describes the degree of potentially negative impact (low, medium, high) the risk would have on evaluation quality and feasibility.

4.0. EVALUATION FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the evaluation based on the analysis of various data collected. The findings of the evaluation were structured according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee evaluation criteria, with a focus on key priority questions identified for this evaluation.

4.1. Relevance

Finding 1: The extent to which the project results addressed the major peacebuilding needs of the target groups and of the country.

Evaluative evidence from document reviews and key informants' interviews confirmed that the project results addressed the major peacebuilding needs of the target groups and the counties in Liberia. Peacebuilding is a top development priority need in Liberia. Post-war recovery efforts in Liberia have recorded major achievements, as exemplified by the transfer of security responsibilities from the United Nations Mission in Liberia to the government on 30 June 2016, the successful and peaceful conduct of presidential and legislative elections over the period, and the development of important national policy initiatives, such as Liberia Rising: Vision 2030; the Agenda for Transformation (2012–2017); the Strategic Road Map for National Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation (2013–2030); the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) 2018 to 2023; and the 2018 Land Rights Act (LRA); however, issues identified as the root causes of Liberia's 14-year civil war remained unaddressed.⁴³ The results of several assessments have shown that land disputes, boundary disputes and concession-related tensions continue to be the main triggers of violence.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the institutional capacity of government institutions to implement the newly enacted laws and policies was found to be low. The Sustaining Peace project was initiated to address these peacebuilding needs.

⁴² https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/Guidelines/UNEG_Ethical_Guidelines_for_Evaluation_2020.pdf.

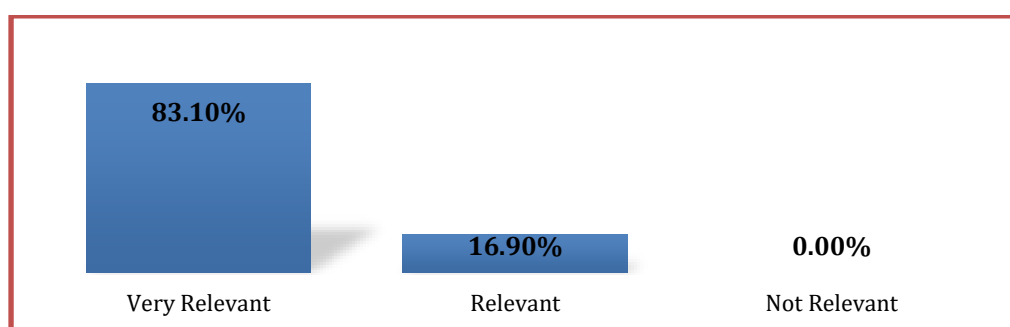
⁴³ Liberia Multi-Partner Trust Fund (LMP TF) Project Document.

⁴⁴ United States Agency for International Development (2018). *Women's Land Rights in Liberia in Law, Practice and Future Reforms: LGS-A Women's Land Rights Study*. Washington, DC: USAID.

Thus, the first outcome of the project targeted strengthening the effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness of land administrative structures at the national and county level. To enhance the effective implementation of the LRA and the Local Government Act (LGA), the project built the capacity of county land offices and further linked them up with existing land dispute-related structures, as well as the new structures created through the passage of LRA.

The second outcome of the project targeted existing semi-formal and informal land dispute resolution mechanisms, such as multi-stakeholder platforms, and the new mechanisms established with the LRA, such as community land development and management committees (CLDMCs). The project built the capacities of these platforms as well as the capacity of women and youth in targeted counties to participate in the decision-making processes of land dispute mechanisms. Evidence from the quantitative survey of the beneficiaries indicates that the Sustaining Peace project was very relevant to their priority needs (Figure 2). About 83.1 per cent of the respondents noted that the project was very relevant to them. Evidence shows that 94.3 per cent of these respondents were male and 73.8 per cent were female.

Figure 2: Relevance of the project to the beneficiaries



From the evidence, it is plausible to conclude that the project results addressed the major peacebuilding needs of the target groups and of the country to a large extent.

Finding 2: Timeliness and urgency of the project vis-à-vis the sustaining peace context in Liberia and effectiveness in the utilization of political opportunities.

Our evidence set from the review of project documents and interviews with project team and beneficiaries indicates that the project activities were timely vis-à-vis the sustaining peace context in Liberia. Several pieces of evidence attest to this fact. First, the project started at a time when there were several concession conflicts in the intervention counties. For instance, rural communities in Grand Cape Mount, north-western Liberia, have been at the sharp end of a dispute with Malaysian oil palm giant Sime Darby that has received national and international attention.⁴⁵ In Sinoe, another of the targeted counties, there have been reported cases of conflict between Golden Agri-Resources/Golden Veroleum Palm Oil Plantations and the local communities.⁴⁶ In addition, a violent protest took place in Nimba involving ArcelorMittal in 2014, and there are ongoing boundary disputes, coupled with issues regarding the non-payment of community benefits.⁴⁷ There were also observed intercommunal land conflicts due to boundary disputes across the communities in the targeted counties.

Second, the Sustaining Peace project started at the commencement of the implementation of the newly signed LRA, which was signed into law in 2018. The LRA establishes the legal framework for securing customary collective community land and resource rights. Similarly, the Sustaining Peace project started at the commencement of the implementation of the LGA, also signed into law in 2018. The legislation authorizes and directs national governance decentralization in Liberia. The Sustaining Peace project supported the implementation of the LRA and LGA.

⁴⁵ <https://reliefweb.int/report/liberia/%E2%80%9Cwe-who-live-here-own-land%E2%80%9D-customary-land-tenure-grand-cape-mount-and-community>.

⁴⁶ <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/golden-agri-resources-veroleum-palm-oil-plantations-sinoe-liberia>.

⁴⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-liberia-arcelormittal-sa-idUSKBN0F924020140704>.

In addition, the project started at the point of the implementation of the PAPD 2018–2023 strategy document for Liberia. Pillar three of the PAPD focused on sustaining peace in Liberia, which is the overarching objective of the Sustaining Peace project. Based on the above evidence, the evaluation found that the project was not only timely but also very proactive in its design and implementation. The evaluation also found that the project has been able to effectively utilize political opportunities starting from the design to the implementation of the various activities of the project. The design of the project was proactive as it leveraged the enactment of the LRA and LGA by the government into its design as a way of contributing to peacebuilding in Liberia. In its implementation, the project has also worked with leaders of key government institutions such as the Liberian Land Authority (LLA), Peacebuilding Office (PBO), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and National Bureau of Concessions (NBC), which promoted government buy-in into the project. Overall and to a large extent, the project was effective in the utilization of political opportunities.

Finding 3: Suitability of the project in addressing the main issues in which it is engaged (i.e. women’s right to land, women’s participation in land governance processes, alternative dispute resolution, strengthening government institutions at the national and local level, enhanced livelihoods for concessions-affected communities).

The evaluation found that the project context was very suitable to the range of substantive areas in which the project is engaged. Concerning women’s right to land and women’s participation in land governance processes, our evidence set indicates that in the Liberian context, women’s legal and practical rights to land in Liberia are still lagging behind those of men. A 2016 assessment concluded that although women’s access to, and ownership of, land has improved since the end of the civil war in 2003, their access is still poor compared to that of their male counterparts, as many women are still denied access to their father’s land.⁴⁸ A 2018 assessment of women’s land rights in Liberia found that women faced obstacles to ownership and dispute settlement more than their male counterparts. In addition, a 2018 United States Agency for International Development (USAID) legal assessment found that women are generally excluded from groups that make decisions about land governance at the community level.⁴⁹ Women’s role in official land governance institutions was also found to be limited when compared to men’s role, with fewer women in positions of decision-making authority in both the customary system and the statutory governance system (including at the municipal, county and national levels).⁵⁰ This context was very suitable and appropriate for the project implementation of activities relating to improving knowledge of land rights and women’s access to, and understanding of, the LGA and LRA, women’s and youth rights to land, and enhancing effective dispute resolution mechanisms.

Concerning strengthening government institutions at the national and local levels, our evidence set indicates that in the Liberian context, the Government of Liberia faces technical challenges in implementing the LRA and LGA laws, including insufficient resources and institutional capacity for both decentralization and the effective management and governance of land. Across the county’s offices, the centres were understaffed and lacked the logistical capacity to effectively serve the public.⁵¹ Evidence also revealed that coordinating the land sector poses challenges such that sector ministries and agencies and non-governmental organizations proceeded with activities and projects in a non-coordinated way.⁵² Again, the evaluation found that this context was very suitable and appropriate for the project implementation of activities in Outcome 1 of the project, which focused on strengthening the effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness of land administrative structures at the national and county levels. Concerning enhanced livelihoods for concessions-affected communities, our evidence set revealed that several concession areas and communities are deprived of their forests, lands and rivers that form the basis of their sustenance, livelihoods and sacred sites. Vital water sources for drinking, fishing and washing have also been dammed, polluted or taken over by private companies, which has triggered conflicts in some of the communities.⁵³

⁴⁸ United States Agency for International Development (2016). *Land Market Survey Conducted in Montserrado, Margibi, Bong, Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties for LGS.A*. Washington, DC: USAID, p. 6.

⁴⁹ United States Agency for International Development (2018). *Women’s Land Rights in Liberia in Law, Practice and Future Reforms. LGS.A Women’s Land Rights Study*. Washington, DC: USAID.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ United States Agency for International Development (2016). *Land Market Survey Conducted in Montserrado, Margibi, Bong, Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties for LGS.A*. Washington, DC: USAID.

⁵² “Liberian Land Commission 2014 Annual Report”.

⁵³ <https://rightsandresources.org/blog/case-study-large-scale-concessions-liberia-violate-womens-land-resource-rights-fail-deliver-promised-benefits/>.

Through the project intervention, concessions-affected communities in the targeted counties are now benefiting from alternative livelihood interventions as a way of mitigating conflicts as well as restoring the much-needed income that was lost due to concession operations. Farming interventions supported through the project have increased communities' ability to properly utilize their lands. The project has achieved this through training for farmers on best agricultural practices and climate-smart agriculture to improve production and increase yields, business development and entrepreneurship training, and provision of farming equipment to communities.⁵⁴ Overall, the evaluation adjudged the project context to be highly suitable for the implemented activities.

Finding 4: Alignment of the project with Liberia's national plans on gender promotion as well as with the PAPD and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and with the specific government priorities on land governance and land conflict.

The Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project was found to be in total alignment with Liberia's national plans on gender promotion as well as with the PAPD and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and with the specific government priorities on land governance and land conflict. The foundation of the Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project is laid on the national plans, policies and strategies. The various outputs of the project fall under the pillars and priority areas of several national plans, policies and strategies. Starting with the Liberia National Gender Policy, the Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project aligns with Pillar 5 (Support women's equal access and participation in development processes, decision-making structures, and peace-building initiatives) and Pillar 6 (Develop the capabilities of both women and men to pursue equal access and control over productive resources, services and opportunities for the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment). The project also aligns with 6 of the 19 priority areas of the National Gender Policy.

In addition, the project aligns with Pillar 3 (Sustaining the Peace – Promoting a cohesive society for sustainable development) of the PAPD 2018–2023. It also aligns with Pillar 3 (Participation of women, young women and girls in decision-making processes related to the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts and countering terrorism) of the second National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security.

The Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project also fully aligns with the LRA, which acts as a framework for customary land ownership and management in Liberia. The project also strongly aligns with the LGA, especially Strategic Priorities 2.3 (Boundary harmonization) and 2.4 (Strengthening county service centres). With respect to human rights, the Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project also aligns with the National Human Rights Action Plan (2018–2023), which aims to promote and protect human rights and improve the human rights situation throughout Liberia. Evidence also indicates that the project strongly aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Liberia ("Cooperation Framework") for the period 2020–2024, especially Outcome 3 (Sustaining peace, security and rule of law). Overall, the evaluation found strong evidence of alignment of the project with national plans on gender promotion as well as with the PAPD, UNSDCF and specific government priorities on land governance and land conflict in Liberia.

4.2. Effectiveness

Finding 5: Assessing the success of the project in terms of the progress made towards the achievement of the expected outcomes and outputs.

Progress on results at outcome and output levels was measured in line with indicators in the results framework. Progress on outcomes and outputs are discussed below.

Outcome 1: Authorities at the national and local levels manage land allocation, registration and licensing processes in a more effective, transparent and inclusive manner, reducing conflict.

Table 4 shows that three indicators were used to measure progress on Outcome 1 of the project. The first indicator measured the percentage of members of the communities that coexisted and expressed satisfaction with land allocation, registration and leasing processes. The baseline was 40 per cent, 20 per cent and 17 per cent

⁵⁴ "Peacebuilding Fund Project Final Progress Report" (2023).

of men, women and youth, respectively, and the target was 60 per cent, while over 60 per cent was achieved at the end of the project for men, women and youth. The second indicator measured the existence of an operational gender-responsive monitoring system on land disputes, which was not available at baseline, but was achieved by the project with the installation of a gender-responsive monitoring system on land disputes in the counties and the establishment of a gender and social inclusion unit at the NBC to champion and programme institutional social inclusion and gender mainstreaming across the NBC's operations and work. The unit works to implement the government's commitment to gender equality and social inclusion in the concessions-awarding and implementation processes by providing gender and social inclusion technical support across the NBC's work.⁵⁵ The third indicator measured the percentage of community members that felt that women's rights to land were better respected, with the target of 60 per cent of men, women and youth also achieved, with the project recording 72 per cent for males, 79 per cent for females and 66 per cent for youth. Overall, the key outcome indicator targets for Outcome 1 were all achieved by the project.

Table 4: Accomplishment of the project in Outcome 1 indicators

Outcome indicators	Indicator baseline	End-of-project indicator target	Indicator progress to date	Status
Indicator 1.1a.: Percentage of members of the communities (disaggregated by sex, age) that coexist and express satisfaction on land allocation, registration and leasing processes	40% of men 20% of women 17% of youth	At least 60% of men, women and youth by the end of the project (2022)	60% of men, women and youth between the ages of 18 and 65 years by the end of 2022	Achieved
Indicator 1.2. Existence of an operational gender-responsive monitoring system on land disputes	No	A gender-responsive monitoring system on land disputes is in place	A gender-responsive monitoring system on land disputes developed and functional	Achieved
Indicator 1.3. Percentage of community members (disaggregated by sex, age) that feel that women's rights to land are better respected	30% of men 30% of women 26% of youth	At least 60% of men, women and youth	72% of men, 79% of women and 66% of youth between the ages of 18 and 65 years	Achieved

Output 1.1: Customary governance authorities and communities in targeted counties are aware of the LRA, existing land dispute resolution mechanisms, concession agreements and their role, and have an improved understanding of women's and youth rights to land.

Table 5 shows that two indicators were used to measure the attainment of Output 1.1. The first indicator measured the number of community members (disaggregated by sex, age) with enhanced knowledge of LRA and existing land dispute mechanisms, and women's and youth rights to land. The second indicator measured the percentage of community members who had an improved understanding of existing concession agreements. The baseline for both indicators was 0, with a target of 500 individuals. The two indicator targets were achieved by the project, recording over 100 per cent achievement rate for the two indicators (Table 5). The project has significantly contributed to increasing women's awareness of their rights, especially regarding inheritance. In addition, the findings from focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted with women in Nimba and Cape Mount indicate a noticeable improvement in their understanding of land rights. One participant even said:

Before, we were in the kitchen, but now we are now sitting together to discuss issues with the men in the community.⁵⁶

This demonstrates the positive impact of the project in empowering women and promoting gender equality within the community. The evaluation acknowledged the progress made in enhancing women's understanding of their land rights. However, it also highlighted a concerning gap in access to legal assistance for women facing challenges to or questioning of their ownership. In situations where their land ownership is contested, there is a need to address this issue to ensure equitable access to legal support and protection of women's land rights. Evidence from the analysis of the quantitative data (Figure 3) shows that over 87 per cent of the respondents

⁵⁵ Terms of Reference – Gender and Social Inclusion Unit.

⁵⁶ Excerpt from women focus group in Cape Mount.

noted that the project has contributed to promoting awareness of the rights of women to own land in the intervention counties.

Figure 3: Extent to which the project activities contributed to promoting awareness of the rights of women to own land

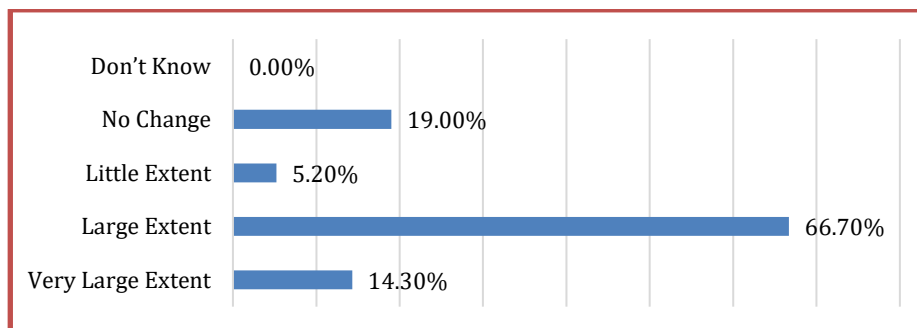


Table 5: Accomplishment of the project in Output 1.1 indicators

Output indicators	Indicator baseline	End-of-project indicator target	Indicator progress to date	Status
Indicator 1.1.a. Number of community members (disaggregated by sex, age) with enhanced knowledge of LRA and existing land dispute mechanisms, and women's and youth rights to land	0	At least 500 individuals (250 women and 250 men)	1,630 males and 1,964 females with enhanced knowledge of the LRA. Of this number, 30% are youth (between the ages of 18 and 35 years)	Achieved
Indicator 1.1.b. Number of community members (disaggregated by sex, age) who have an improved understanding of existing concession agreements	0	At least 500 individuals (250 women and 250 men)	582 community members (293 males and 289 females) with improved knowledge of existing concession agreements. Of this number, 30% are youth (between the ages of 17 and 35 years)	Achieved

Output 1.2: County land offices and county land boards in targeted counties have the capacity, procedures and systems in place to formalize customary land in a way that reflects the rights and needs of all community members.

Table 6 shows that three indicators were used to measure the attainment of Output 1.2. The first indicator measured the number of civil servants from the LLA with enhanced knowledge of gender and land rights, with a baseline of 0 and target of 50. The project attained 59, which represents 118 per cent achievement by the project at the end of the implementation period. The second indicator for Output 1.2 measured the existence of gender-responsive procedures for formalization of customary land, which was absent at baseline, with a target of having such procedures in place by the end of the implementation period. This indicator target was achieved with the development of a comprehensive communication strategy focusing on land rights. While the strategy was validated by relevant stakeholders, evidence shows that the strategy was not tested, as stated in the following comment:

The testing of the communication messages was not conducted due to a lack of resources, which was not the fault of UN Women. The LLA had intended to deploy a larger team for field testing, but the necessary resources were unavailable. The objective of the testing was to evaluate the compatibility of culture and certain activities with the messages.⁵⁷

The third indicator measured the number of governance structures (County Land Office, County Land Board) established and functional. The baseline for the indicator was 0, with a target of three at endline. The indicator

⁵⁷ Excerpt from key informant interview with project implementing partner.

target was achieved by the project, as four structures were established, constituting a 133 per cent achievement rate for the indicator (Table 6).

Table 6: Accomplishment of the project in Output 1.2 indicators

Output indicators	Indicator baseline	End-of-project indicator target	Indicator progress to date	Status
Indicator 1.2.a. Number of civil servants from the LLA with enhanced knowledge of gender and land rights	0	At least 50 (25 women and 25 men)	59 (27 women and 32 men): 30 (16 men, 14 women) LLA staff, 12 (5 men, 7 women) PBO staff and 17 (11 men, 6 women) NCCRM staff with enhanced knowledge of gender and land rights	Achieved
Indicator 1.2.b. Existence of gender-responsive procedures for formalization of customary land	No	Yes	Yes. These have been developed with support from other development partners and validated by the LLA. Final regulations are yet to be shared	Achieved
Indicator 1.2.c. Number of governance structures (CLO, CLB) established and functional	No	3	4 functional governance structures (1 per county)	Achieved

Output 1.3: Community land development and management committees (CLDMCs) are established in targeted counties and have the capacity to initiate the formalization and recognition of their land rights.

Table 7 shows that two indicators were used to measure the attainment of Output 1.3. The first indicator measured the number of CLDMCs operational and effective in implementing their functions, with a baseline of 0 and a target of 10. This was also achieved, with 10 CLDMCs established across the four counties covered by the intervention. The second indicator measured the number of members (women and men) of the CLDMCs with enhanced knowledge of formalization of customary land, with a baseline of 0 and target of 200. However, a total of 147 members were recorded at endline. This indicator target was not achieved by the project, but it made significant progress, recording a 73.5 per cent achievement rate at the end of the implementation period.

Table 7: Accomplishment of the project in Output 1.3 indicators

Output indicators	Indicator baseline	End-of-project indicator target	Indicator progress to date	Status
Indicator 1.3.a. Number of CLDMCs operational and effective in implementing their functions	0	10 by 2021	10 CLDMCs established in Grand Cape Mount, Sinoe, Maryland and Nimba counties	Achieved
Indicator 1.3.b. Number of members (women and men) of the CLDMCs with enhanced knowledge of formalization of customary land	0	100 women and 100 men	147 members (62 women, 85 men) have a good understanding of customary land formalization	Achieved

Output 1.4: Early warning and response mechanisms are engendered and integrate land dispute-related data.

Table 8 shows that two indicators were used to measure the attainment of Output 1.4. The first indicator (land-related incidents are systematically monitored by the PBO/LLA in coordination with multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs), CLDMCs), which was no at baseline, had a target of yes at endline. This indicator target was achieved by the project through the National Centre for Coordination of Response Mechanisms (NCCRM), which uses its early warning system to monitor (MSPs, CLMDCs, etc.) and produce regular briefs on land-related incidents. The second indicator measured the existence of land dispute-related data in the Early Warning Response Mechanism. This indicator target was also achieved by the project, as the NCCRM has established a database that is tracking and recording disputes related to land.

Table 8: Accomplishment of the project in Output 1.4 indicators

Output indicators	Indicator baseline	End-of-project indicator target	Indicator progress to date	Status
Indicator 1.4.a. Land-related incidents are systematically monitored by the PBO/LLA in coordination with MSPs, CLDMCs	No	Yes	Yes	Achieved
Indicator 1.4.b. Existence of land dispute-related data in the EWRM	No	Yes	Yes	Achieved

Output 1.5: Institutional capacity of the LLA/EPA/NBC/SPRC is strengthened to effectively prevent conflicts driven by the depletion of livelihood opportunities and environmental hazards.

Table 9 shows that three indicators were used to measure the attainment of Output 1.5. The first indicator measured the number of LLA/NBC/EPA staff members trained in free, prior, informed consent (FPIC) principles, prevention of different environmental hazards and rights of local communities, with a baseline of 0 and a target of 80. This was achieved, as 80 people were trained in FPIC principles and United Nations guiding principles on business and human rights by the project team, recording a 100 per cent achievement rate. The second indicator measured the percentage of existing water sources in concession areas rejuvenated/cleaned through community platform leadership, with a baseline of 0 and target of 20. This indicator target was achieved by the project team at endline. The third indicator (number of NBC/LLA/EPA staff members trained in counteracting livelihood depletion in targeted concessions areas, disaggregated by sex and age) was achieved, as the project recorded 51 staff members trained against the set target of 50. Overall, out of 15 indicators relating to Outcome 1 of the project, 14 of the indicators were achieved by the project team at the end of the implementation period, which represents over 93 per cent achievement under Outcome 1.

Table 9: Accomplishment of the project in Output 1.5 indicators

Output indicators	Indicator baseline	End-of-project indicator target	Indicator progress to date	Status
Indicator 1.5.1.a. Number of LLA/NBC/EPA staff members trained in FPIC principles, prevention of different environmental hazards, and rights of local communities, disaggregated by sex and age	0	80 from LLA	80 people trained in FPIC principles and United Nations guiding principles on business and human rights	Achieved
Indicator 1.5.1.b. Percentage of existing water sources in concession areas rejuvenated/cleaned through community platform leadership	0	20%	35%	Achieved
Indicator 1.5.1.c. Number of NBC/LLA/EPA staff members trained on counteracting livelihood depletion in targeted concessions areas, disaggregated by sex and age	0	50	51 staff members from the NBC, EPA and Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection with enhanced knowledge of counteracting livelihood depletion	Achieved

Outcome 2: Existing semi-formal and informal land dispute resolution mechanisms are strengthened, more sustainable, and able to reduce conflict in a more effective and gender-responsive manner.

Table 10 shows that three indicators were used to measure progress on Outcome 2 of the project. The first indicator measured the number of land disputes resolved in targeted counties by semi-formal mechanisms (CLDMCs, SPRCs, MSPs, etc.), with a baseline of 0 and a target of 10. This was not achieved by the end of the project, as the project reported 7 disputes resolved against the set target of 10. The second indicator measured the percentage of community members (disaggregated by sex) who felt that their land disputes were being resolved more effectively and transparently, with a baseline of 23 per cent and a target of 50 per cent. This indicator target was achieved, as 62.5 per cent of community members reported feeling that land disputes were being resolved more effectively and transparently after project implementation. Overall, two out of the three key outcome indicators of Outcome 2 were achieved by the end of the project. Evidence from the quantitative survey indicates that 76.2 per cent of respondents noted that the project activities contributed to promoting women's and youth participation in informal and semi-informal land dispute resolution in the intervention counties.

Table 10: Accomplishment of the project in Outcome 2 indicators

Outcome indicators	Indicator baseline	End-of-project indicator target	Indicator progress to date	Status
Indicator 2.a. Number of land disputes resolved in targeted counties by semi-formal mechanisms (CLDMCs, SPRCs, MSPs, etc.)	0	10	7 land conflicts resolved so far	Achieved
Indicator 2.b. Percentage of community members (disaggregated by sex) that feel that their land disputes are being resolved more effectively and transparently	23%	50%	62.5%	Achieved
Indicator 2.c. Number of semi-formal mechanisms in targeted counties that are financially sustainable (MSPs, CLDMCs, Peace Huts)	0	9	7 Peace Huts received a small grant and are now implementing their sustainability plans 2 MSPs	Achieved

Output 2.1: Existing semi-formal land dispute resolution bodies (county peace committees, CLDMCs, SPRCs, Peace Huts, MSPs) have strengthened capacity to resolve disputes in a sustainable and gender- and youth-responsive manner.

Table 11 shows that three indicators were used to measure the attainment of Output 2.1. The first indicator is the number of members of existing semi-formal land dispute resolution bodies with strengthened skills and knowledge on gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive conflict prevention, and mediation. It had a baseline of 0 and a target of 200, and this was achieved, with the project reporting 250 members whose skills were strengthened. The second indicator measured the number of semi-formal mechanisms in targeted counties with capacity to resolve land dispute cases in a gender-sensitive manner. The baseline was 0, while the target was 6. The target was met, with the project reporting 7 Peace Huts, 3 MSPs and 5 CLMDCs whose members' skills were strengthened. The third indicator measured the number of successful actions carried out in follow-up to agreements made at MSPs between concessionaries and communities in the targeted counties. The baseline was 0, while the target was 15. However, only 2 were reported, implying that the indicator target was not achieved.

Table 11: Accomplishment of the project in Output 2.1 indicators

Output indicators	Indicator baseline	End-of-project indicator target	Indicator progress to date	Status
Indicator 2.1.a. Number of members of existing semi-formal land dispute resolution bodies with strengthened skills and knowledge on gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive conflict prevention, and mediation	0	200 (100 women and 100 men)	250 people (150 women and 100 men) have enhanced knowledge of conflict resolution	Achieved
Indicator 2.1.b. Number of semi-formal mechanisms in targeted counties with capacity to resolve land dispute cases in a gender-sensitive manner	0	At least 6 (MSPs, CLDMCs, Peace Huts)	7 Peace Huts 5 CLMDCs 3 MSPs	Achieved
Indicator 2.1.c. Number of successful actions carried out in follow-up to agreements made at MSPs between concessionaries and communities in the targeted counties	0	At least 15	2 actions have been carried out: NRI has given the CACs in Nimba compensation to an amount of US\$37,000 and committed further to giving retirement benefits to the retirees. GVI in Sinoe County has committed to supporting livelihood interventions with CACs in the county	Not achieved

Output 2.2: Communities, including women and youth, in targeted counties have the capacity and skills to participate in formal and informal land dispute resolution mechanisms.

Table 12 shows that two indicators were used to measure the attainment of Output 2.2. The first indicator measured the percentage of women and youth in targeted districts that participated in CLDMCs and MSPs, with a baseline of 0 and a target of 25 per cent. This was achieved, as the project recorded a 50 per cent participation rate at the end of the implementation period. The second indicator measured the number of rural women and youth with enhanced knowledge and skills to enable them to influence MSPs, and CLDMC decisions, with a baseline of 0 and a target of 200. This was also achieved by the project, as 50 rural women and youth in each of the four counties reported enhanced knowledge and skills that enabled them to influence MSP and CLDMC decisions as a result of their participation in the project.

Table 12: Accomplishment of the project in Output 2.2 indicators

Output indicators	Indicator baseline	End-of-project indicator target	Indicator progress to date	Status
Indicator 2.2.a. Percentage of women and youth in targeted districts that participate in CLDMCs and MSPs	0	At least 25% by the end of the project	50%	Achieved
Indicator 2.2.b. Number of rural women and youth with enhanced knowledge and skills to enable them to influence MSPs, and CLDMC decisions	0	200	200 (50 in Nimba, 50 in Grand Cape Mount, 50 in Sinoe and 50 in Maryland)	Achieved

Output 2.3: Government agencies in charge of implementing the LRA and LGA, and development partners and civil society organizations (CSOs), are strengthened.

Table 13 shows that two indicators were also used to measure the attainment of Output 2.3. The first indicator measured the number of meetings organized to improve coordinated implementation of the LRA/LGA, with a baseline of 0 and a target of 12. This indicator target was achieved, as the project organized 13 meetings, which represents over 108 per cent achievement by the project. The second indicator measured the number of successful agreed actions/plans arising from coordination between donors, government and CSOs, with a baseline of 0 and a target of 1, which was also achieved by the project.

Table 13: Accomplishment of the project in Output 2.3 indicators

Output indicators	Indicator baseline	End-of-project indicator target	Indicator progress to date	Status
Indicator 2.3.a. Number of meetings organized to improve coordinated implementation of the LRA/LGA	0	12 (quarterly basis)	13 meetings since the inception of the project	Achieved
Indicator 2.3.b. Number of successful agreed actions/plans arising from coordination between donors, government and CSOs	0	At least 1	1	Achieved

Output 2.4: Enhanced MSP capacities to find agreeable solutions, propose alternative livelihoods and address the effects of environmental hazards.

Table 14 shows that two indicators were used to measure the attainment of Output 2.4. The first indicator measured the number of community members (disaggregated by age and sex) trained in alternative livelihood and environmental hazard management, with a baseline of 60 (30 men and 30 women) and a target of 200. This indicator target was achieved by the project, as it recorded 1,091 community members with alternative livelihood and environmental hazard management. The second indicator measured the percentage of target population (disaggregated by sex) expressing satisfaction with the process of identifying and addressing livelihood and environmental hazard concerns through MSPs and CLDMCs with a baseline of 0 and a target of 80 per cent. This was also achieved by the project, as 80 per cent of the targeted population expressed their satisfaction with how they now address their livelihood and environmental needs. The establishment of a call centre enabled communities to report issues related to conflicts and environmental pollution.

Table 14: Accomplishment of the project in Output 2.4 indicators

Output indicators	Indicator baseline	End-of-project indicator target	Indicator progress to date	Status
Indicator 2.4.1.a. Number of community members (disaggregated by age and sex) with alternative livelihood and environmental hazard management (e.g. rice productivity; charcoal production)	60 (30 men and 30 women)	At least 200 (100 women and 100 men)	1,091 people (783 women, 552 men); of this number, 42% are youth (between the ages of 18 and 35)	Achieved
Indicator 2.4.1.b Percentage of target population (disaggregated by sex) expressing satisfaction with identifying and addressing livelihood and environmental hazard concerns through MSPs and CLDMCs as relevant	0	At least 80%	80% of the targeted population has expressed their satisfaction with how they can now address their livelihood and environmental needs	Achieved

Overall, the project made significant progress towards the achievement of the expected outputs and outcomes. The following is a summary of the results achieved by the project:

- ✚ Communities and customary governance authorities in targeted counties are aware of the LRA and existing land dispute resolution mechanisms, and have improved perceptions about women’s and youth rights to land.
- ✚ County land offices and county land boards in project counties have the capacity, procedures and systems in place to formalize customary land.
- ✚ Communities in the project counties now have easy access to land-related services and are participating in land governance and dispute resolution activities.
- ✚ A gender-responsive early warning and response tool has been developed.
- ✚ An alternative dispute resolution (ADR) training manual and standard operating procedures (SOPs) have been developed.
- ✚ Land governance structures, such as CLDMCs, Peace Huts and MSPs, have been established.
- ✚ Coordination between the NBC, the NCCRM and the LLA has been strengthened in the project counties.
- ✚ Mapping of customary land and subsequent boundary harmonization and confirmatory surveys has been completed.
- ✚ Alternative livelihoods for concessions-affected communities in the project counties have been provided.
- ✚ A gender policy has been developed for the NBC.

Evaluative evidence from document reviews and interviews with the project team and beneficiaries confirmed that several interventions were implemented by the project team that contributed to the achievement of the outcomes and outputs. One of the interventions of the project that contributed to the achievement of the outcomes and outputs was the implementation of awareness-raising activities to change gender stereotypes in targeted counties. This activity was very critical given the dominant traditional cultural perception that the right place for women is in the home and the narrative that land-related matters and peacebuilding are masculine domains.

Another major intervention of the project was the comprehensive mapping and assessment of ADR and informal mechanisms in the targeted counties. This activity was very relevant as it helped in the establishment of ADR in the targeted counties and in the design and adaptation of knowledge materials used for sensitization in the targeted communities.

Furthermore, the project strengthened the capacity of county land offices and county land boards in targeted counties and installed procedures and systems to support the formalization of customary land in a way that reflects the rights and needs of all community members. This activity contributed to boundary harmonization and the issuance of legally probated titled land deeds to communities in the targeted counties replacing tribal certificates informally administered by local elders but often challenged in courts of law. Another significant intervention in the counties by the project was the establishment of CLDMCs and the strengthening of their

capacity to initiate the formalization and recognition of their land rights. CLMDCs applied ADR skills acquired from training in negotiations with concession companies thereby reducing conflict in their communities.

Another major intervention that contributed immensely to the achievements of outputs and outcomes of the project was the development of an early warning and early response mechanism that was gender-responsive and integrated land dispute-related data. This was made possible by the NCCRM-established database that is tracking and recording disputes related to land.

Beyond this, the project also intervened by providing alternative sources of livelihood for beneficiaries in concession communities who have been deprived of sources of livelihood as a result of the grabbing of their land and negative consequences like pollution of water bodies and land, which are major sources of livelihood of the people. Challenges related to environmental hazards and livelihood, such as land and water pollution, have been one of the major sources of conflict in concession communities. To ensure environmental compliance within concession areas, the project coordinated with the EPA, CLMDCs and MSPs to liaise with the companies to conduct regular environmental impact assessments (EIAs) and environmental social impact assessments (ESIAs). Under this activity, the project trained community beneficiaries on strategies for identifying emerging risks to environmental quality and how to treat the domestic water supply so that it is suitable for drinking.

The project also contributed to strengthening existing semi-formal and informal land dispute resolution mechanisms (Peace Huts, MSPs, CLMDCs) to enable them to reduce conflict in a more effective and gender-responsive manner. As part of the intervention, the project organized two major national stakeholder consultative meetings with all the major concession companies, relevant government authorities (national and subnational), the affected communities, CSOs, etc. These engagements led to signing of provisional concession memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with the affected communities, since the initial concession agreements were signed at central level without considering FPIC processes. These MOUs, in addition to the benefits communities started receiving from some of the concession companies, improved the relationship between the parties and have reduced persistent tension between affected communities and concessions. The evaluation found the various interventions of the project to be very significant and found that they contributed to the successes recorded by the project relating to the achievement of the project outcomes and outputs. While these were focused on land governance, the evaluation noted that this has been extended to addressing other social issues in the community. Accounts from the Peace Hut women revealed that they receive different types of cases and mediate amicably.

Finding 6: The extent to which the beneficiaries are satisfied with the project results.

Evidence from the quantitative survey and interviews conducted with the beneficiaries in the counties revealed that the beneficiaries are satisfied with the results achieved by the project. For instance, about 85 percent of male beneficiaries and 89 percent of female beneficiaries noted that they were satisfied with the results achieved by the project. Among the various ADR mechanisms, about 95 per cent of MSPs and 88 per cent of Peace Huts noted that they were satisfied with the results achieved by the project. The following excerpts from FGDs conducted among the beneficiaries in the counties helped to support above finding:

This project is a good one. In this community, women were never involved in any decision-making process even when the issue affect the women. But this project has changed that situation in this community. Now you can see women considered as members of MSP and CLMDCs. I am very satisfied with the performance of the project in our community.⁵⁸

I am very satisfied by the results achieved by the project because it came at the right time. This was a time when there were so much conflict in the community as a result of the concession activities. Today, I can say that there is much harmony between concession companies and local communities as benefits are now being paid to communities.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Excerpt from FGD among women beneficiaries in Sinoe.

⁵⁹ Excerpt from FGD among women beneficiaries in Grand Cape Mount.

Finding 7: The extent to which the project’s theory of change proved realistic and was implemented.

Evaluative evidence from the review of project documents and interviews with the project team confirmed that the project’s theory of change proved realistic and was implemented to a large extent. The first evidence identified by the evaluation was the fact that the project team focused on the implementation of activities relating to the “IF” conditions in the stated theory of change. The first “IF” condition related to increasing the awareness level of customary governance authorities and communities in targeted counties of the LRA and LGA, existing land dispute resolution mechanisms, concession agreements, and women’s and youth rights to land. The evaluation found that the project implemented activities to increase the awareness of the LRA and LGA, existing land disputes resolution mechanisms, concession agreements, and women’s and youth rights to land among customary governance authorities and communities in targeted counties.

The second “IF” condition related to strengthening the capacities of county land offices, county land boards and CLDMCs, and putting procedures and systems in place to formalize customary land in a way that reflects the rights and needs of all community members. Again, this condition was pursued by the project team with the implementation of activities to build the capacities of county land offices, county land boards and CLDMCs. As noted in Finding 6 above, all the output indicators relating to this were all achieved by the project.

The third “IF” condition related to strengthening the capacities of existing semi-formal land dispute resolution bodies (MSPs) to provide a safe and inclusive platform for communities, government and concession companies to resolve disputes in a gender- and youth-responsive manner. Our evidence set confirmed that the project implemented activities to strengthen the capacities of existing semi-formal and informal land dispute resolution mechanisms (Peace Huts, MSPs, CLDMCs) to reduce conflict in a more effective and gender-responsive manner. As noted previously, the project organized two major national stakeholder consultative meetings, which led to concession companies going into provisional MOUs with the affected communities and the subsequent payments of benefits to concession communities. Evaluative evidence also confirmed that the fourth and fifth “IF” conditions were realistic and that activities were implemented by the project team to fulfil these conditions. Overall, the evaluation found the project’s theory of change to be realistic and also confirmed that activities were implemented to realize the IF conditions.

Finding 9: The extent to which the project approaches and strategies were innovative.

The evaluation revealed that the project successfully mainstreamed several innovative practices in both its design and implementation. Notably, evaluators considered the recognition of the crucial roles played by government partners such as the NBC, EPA and PBO in the project’s development and execution particularly innovative. It is important to emphasize that the NBC had already established the MSPs in the concession communities, serving as a vital link between the concession companies, the NBC and the local communities. This linkage has been instrumental in fostering cooperation and understanding between the involved parties. Furthermore, the EPA has played a leading role in ensuring that concession companies comply with environmental standards to prevent pollution of land and water bodies in the concession communities. This proactive approach has addressed one of the major sources of conflict between concession companies and local communities. In addition, the PBO has been a valuable partner in the government’s efforts to address various conflict issues across the country. It has engaged closely with local peace structures and provided support in mediating conflicts, including those arising in concession areas. Integrating these government partners into the project’s design and implementation was not only innovative but also crucial in fostering government buy-in and ensuring the overall sustainability of the project. By leveraging the expertise and collaboration of these key stakeholders, the project was able to achieve its objectives more effectively and have a positive impact on the communities involved.

The second innovative practice identified by the evaluation was the implementation modality adopted by the project team. While it was not directly implemented by the UN joint partners, the project outcomes and outputs were tied to the specific mandate of the UN partners and therefore leveraged their comparative advantage. In this regard, UN Women led and coordinated efforts to advance the full realization of women’s rights and opportunities with respect to land, while UNDP supported the institutionalization of land governance structures through implementation of boundary harmonization in the intervention communities. WFP, in line with its mandate under the project, delivered rounds of food assistance and livelihood opportunities as a pathway to peace, stability and prosperity in the intervention communities.

The project design builds upon the results and lessons learned from past UN projects such as the Joint Project “Strengthening Conflict Prevention through Establishment of Multi-stakeholder Platforms and Improved Alternative Livelihoods in Concessions Areas” funded by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and implemented by the Government of Liberia, UNDP and FAO (2018–2019), and the Liberia Decentralization Support Programme implemented by UNDP (2013–2019). The integration of key lessons into the project design was considered a commendable practice by the evaluation. These lessons played a crucial role in ensuring the effective implementation and successful delivery of the key project outcomes and outputs by the end of the implementation period.

Furthermore, the project strategy of creating linkages with existing land dispute-related structures, such as MSPs, and the new mechanisms established with the LRA, such as CLDMCs, with a view to reducing conflicts in a more transparent, effective and gender- and youth-responsive manner was found to be a good practice by the evaluation. The project linking of the livelihood component with the Home Grown School Feeding Programme, which provided a source of markets for the sale of agricultural produce, was considered another innovation by the evaluation. Another key innovation of the project was the training provided by the project on the proper use of forest residues and agricultural wastes (including rice and coconut husk, dried palm branches and sugar cane straws) for economic production and a cleaner and more environmentally friendly alternative to charcoal production.

In addition to this, the issuance of statutory land-titled deeds and maps to eight customary communities in Nimba, Sinoe, Maryland and Grand Cape Mount Counties under the project was also considered innovative by the evaluation. It is pertinent to state that the overall aim of the LRA is to transfer ownership of land to communities. This would not be possible without the issuance of the land-titled deeds to the communities. The community not only recognized this as a legal step but also appreciated its symbolic significance in gaining legal ownership of their deeds. One community leader in Maryland reported that there were unresolved boundary issues between Gedetarbo Clan and Gborobo Clan.⁶⁰ This major gap was addressed by the Sustaining Peace project by ensuring that land-titled deeds were issued to the communities. In addition, the project implementation strategy, underlined by policy-level interventions, capacity-building and institutional strengthening of key bodies in the land sector, including the LLA, NBC and other platforms such as MSPs and CLDMCs, was innovative and good practice. The project approach did not only address the manifestation of the problem but also addressed the underlying causes of the problem, such as poor public perception of women’s rights to land and personal property as well as their participation in decision-making positions and processes. Overall, on a scale of 1–5, with 1 indicating low innovation and 5 indicating high innovation, the evaluation rated the project 4, suggesting that the evaluation considers the project approaches and strategies as innovative to a large extent.

Finding 10: The extent to which the project built synergies with other programmes being implemented at the country level by United Nations, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Government of Liberia.

The review of project documents and interviews with the project team showed that the Sustaining Peace project, to a large extent, built synergies with other programmes being implemented at the country level by United Nations, international NGOs and the Government of Liberia. These programmes include the Capacity Development in Land Administration project funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). The overall goal of the intervention was to contribute to “inclusive, transparent, effective and efficient delivery of land management and administration services in Liberia”. In addition, the intervention was expected to have an effect on the wider land sector, including capacitating civil society to carry out outreach and information campaigns on women’s land rights and improving the tenure security of customary land-owning communities through improved systems for land demarcation and registration.⁶¹

The project was also in synergy with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Integrated Land and Resource Governance programme. In response to weak land governance and protection of customary land rights, USAID contracted Tetra Tech to carry out Land Governance Support Activity (LGSA)

⁶⁰ Excerpt from key informant interview with community leader.

⁶¹ <https://openaid.se/en/activities/SE-0-SE-6-11699A0102-LBR-43031>.

to strengthen land policy, improve human and institutional capacity, document community land rights and engage civil society. Through LGSA, Tetra Tech supports the LLA and other land governance stakeholders in Liberia to establish more effective land governance systems with improved service delivery and tenure security.⁶² Evidence also shows that the project built synergies with the Land Administration Project funded by the World Bank and implemented by the LLA. The project aims to strengthen the institutional capacity of the LLA and establish a land administration system. The project comprised four components. The first component was support to LLA in capacity-building, while the second component was support for inventory and analysis of tribal land certificates. The third component supported the development of a land administration system and the fourth was project coordination, monitoring and evaluation.⁶³ The project also built synergies with the activities of other partners such as the Rights and Rice Foundation and Volunteers for Sustainable Development in Africa, who are supporting the implementation of different land governance activities in the intervention counties. Overall, the project the project built synergies with other programmes being implemented at country level by United Nations, international NGOs and the Government of Liberia to a large extent.

4.3. Efficiency

Finding 11: Have resources been allocated strategically to achieve project outcomes?

The review of project documents and interviews with the project team confirmed that available resources were allocated strategically to achieve the project outcomes. The project lasted 36 months, with a planned budget of US\$3,996,522.48 (Table 15). Of these funds, US\$3,409,378.44 was budgeted for project implementation activities, which represents 85.3 per cent of the total budget, while US\$587,144.04 was budgeted for staff personnel, which represents 14.7 per cent of the total budget of the project (Table 15). As of June 2023, 100 per cent of all allocated budgets for the project activities had been spent, which represent a good absorption rate for the project. This was also good given that all planned activities of the project have been implemented using the allocated resources.

Evidence from the budget analysis also revealed that UN Women received the highest budget allocation of US\$2,087,727.83, which represents 52.2 per cent of the total budget, followed by UNDP with a total budget allocation of US\$1,043,557.73, representing 26.1 per cent of the total budget, and WFP, which received US\$865,236.92, representing 21.7 per cent of the total budget. A review of the activities implemented by output shows that UN Women, through its partners, implemented 22 activities across the two outcomes of the project, while UNDP and WFP implemented 19 and 16 activities, respectively. As noted from interviews with the project team, the number of outputs and the types of activities implemented informed the allocation of resources, which explains why the highest budgetary allocation was allocated to UN Women. Outcome 1 has 5 outputs and received US\$1,571,605.47, while outcome 2, with 4 outputs, received US\$1,251,299.53.

As noted previously, the targets for several of the indicators were achieved by the project at the end of implementation, and the fact that no cost extension was given for the project suggests that the project resources were optimally utilized. Table 15 also shows that all the disbursements and project expenditures were in line with the budgetary allocations to a large extent. The evaluation found the project's utilization of 85.3 per cent of the total budget on project implementation activities compared with 14.7 per cent on personnel highly commendable. Considering the above findings, it is fair to conclude that the financial resources of the project were strategically allocated to achieve the project outcome.

Table 15: Total budget spent by sector (US\$)

Categories	Project total	Overall expenses	Overall delivery (%)
1. Staff and other personnel	587,144.04	587,144.04	100
2. Supplies, commodities, materials	42,000.00	42,000.00	100
3. Equipment, vehicles and furniture (including depreciation)	149,850.00	149,850.00	100
4. Contractual services	1,474,397.00	1,474,397.00	100
5. Travel	513,939.00	512,939.00	100

⁶² <https://www.tetrattech.com/en/projects/land-governance-support-in-liberia>.

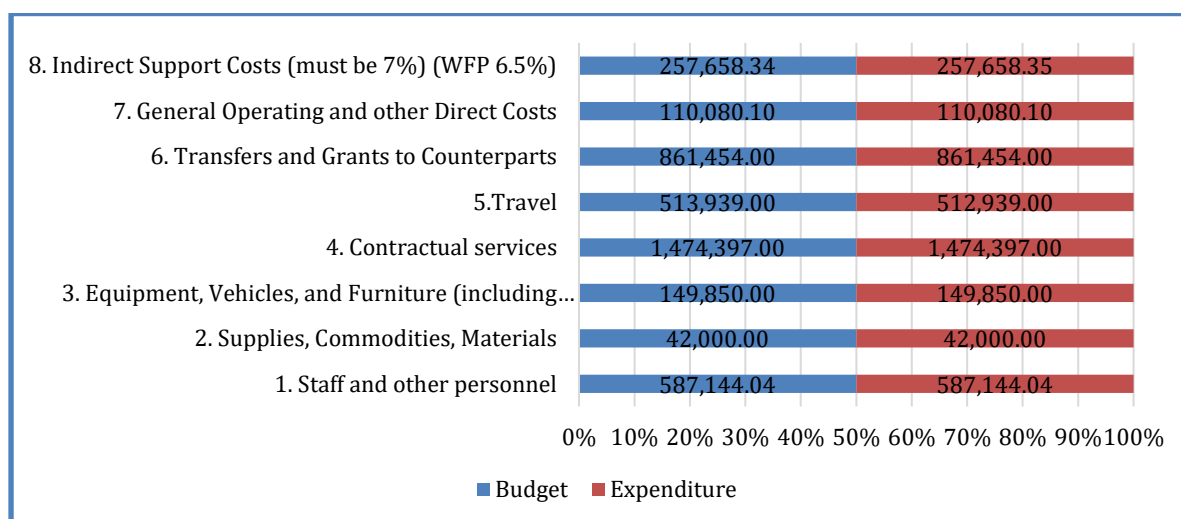
⁶³ <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P162893?lang=en>.

6. Transfers and grants to counterparts	861,454.00	861,454.00	100
7. General operating and other direct costs	110,080.10	110,080.10	100
Sub-total of project costs	3,738,864.14	3,737,864.14	100
8. Indirect support costs (must be 7%) (WFP 6.5%)	257,658.34	257,658.35	100
TOTAL	3,996,522.48	3,995,522.49	100

Finding 12: Were resources sufficient to enable achievement of the expected outputs?

Evaluative evidence confirms that the resources were sufficient to enable achievement of the expected outputs. As noted previously, all planned activities of the project were implemented without cost extension. Furthermore, all budget allocations for different activities were implemented as planned, which, to a large extent, suggests that the resources were sufficient to enable achievement of the expected outputs (Figure 4). However, some of the implementing partners interviewed noted that the budget allocation for project implementation was modest which limited their capacity to engage more staff to support project implementation. Despite this, given that all activities of the project have been implemented as planned, the evaluation considered that project resources were sufficient to enable achievement of the expected outputs.

Figure 4: Allocation versus expenditure (sub-outputs)



Finding 13: Was the joint project and its components cost-effective? Could activities and outputs have been delivered with fewer resources without comprising project quality?

According to the findings so far, the Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project activities were cost-effective. The first evidence of this is the high percentage of the total budget allocated to developmental activity relative to other budget lines, as mentioned earlier. Further evidence from document reviews and interviews suggests that goods and services were competitively procured, ensuring value for money, and negotiated to ensure savings where possible. Furthermore, evidence from interviews with the finance team confirmed that the budget allocated for the entire duration of the project was adequate, and several measures were put in place to limit fraud while ensuring that the project's inputs were efficiently utilized to conduct project activities and achieve the project's intended results. Some of the measures included:

- ✚ The use of local facilitators and volunteers (members of MSPs and CLDMCs) for most of the capacity-building activities, which reduced transaction costs for project implementation activities
- ✚ Obtaining all goods and services through competitive procurement, to ensure value for money
- ✚ The use local implementing partners for project implementation
- ✚ The regular monitoring of implementation activities by the UN agencies.

Overall, the evaluation found that project implementation was efficient given the volatile context of project implementation and the level of achievement of output level results.

Finding 14: Assessing the effectiveness of the project’s organizational structure, management and coordination mechanisms in terms of project implementation and monitoring.

The management set-up of the project can best be described as a line management structure characterized by a flow of authority from top to bottom towards achieving the goals of the intervention. In the Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project, the coordination and oversight arrangement was composed of two main layers:

The Steering Committee (SC) was made up of high-level government partners and the UN country representatives of UN Women, UNDP and WFP. The SC provided strategic guidance and ensured oversight of the project, such as approving projects and allocating funding, and supervising the progress of the PBF’s results framework. However, evidence from interviews shows that bringing the SC members together for meetings was difficult due to busy schedules, and sometimes members sent representatives to meetings, which sometimes affected quick decision-making with respect to project implementation activities.

The Project Management Team (PMT), below the SC, was led by UN Women to support coordination with WFP and UNDP, CSOs and the Government of Liberia. The PMT coordinated and managed the project, developing joint plans and reporting to the SC on the implementation of activities, achievement of results and financial accountability of the project. The PMT also coordinated activities between the UN agencies, government agencies and the implementing partners, ensuring that all the activities were complementary, and that implementation and monitoring of the project was in line with the endorsed work plan and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework. The PMT also worked closely with the government and CSO partners, providing technical support where needed in land management, land dispute resolution and gender.

The project further established a Land Donor Working Group that brought all partners working on land together. The group developed a matrix detailing what each partner was doing and the locations. This coordination was necessary to avoid duplication of activities by partners in the intervention communities. However, there was no provision for the M&E unit in the overall management structure of the project, even though the project was effectively monitored based on the available monitoring reports, such as the semi-annual and annual progress reports. While the evaluation found that the management structure of the project was good and had the potential to deliver on the overall goal of the project, it is good practice to locate the M&E unit within the organizational structure of any project, as it is an important component of the project team.

Finding 15: Assessing how the joint nature of the project improved efficiency in terms of delivery, including reduced duplication, burdens and transaction costs.

Evaluative evidence from document reviews and interviews with the project team shows that the joint nature of the project contributed to improved efficiency in delivery of project outputs. This efficiency in delivery was brought to bear in the project when the three UN agencies leveraged their comparative advantage in the delivery of the project activities. For instance, UN Women focused on the mainstreaming of gender into project activity implementation, while WFP focused on improving access to livelihood opportunities for concessions-affected communities. The joint nature of the project also ensured a reduction in the duplication of project activities since the project activities were derived from the joint work plan developed by the UN Women, UNDP and WFP. In the work plan, the activities to be implemented by each of the agencies were clearly defined, which helped reduce duplication of effort. The joint nature of the project also promoted joint monitoring of project activities, which also ensured that there was no duplication of project activities by the implementing partners. However, the evaluation did not find any evidence to show that the joint nature of the project promoted reduction of workloads and transaction costs, as the project activities and costs were defined in the joint work plan.

Finding 16: Evidence of the use of monitoring data for management action and decision-making.

Evidence from interviews with the project team and document reviews indicate that three major monitoring visits were made during the life of the project. These were as follows::

1. A joint monitoring visit by UN Women, WFP and LLA conducted in Nimba, Maryland and Sinoe Counties
2. A joint monitoring visit by the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations, the PBF Secretariat, the UN Women Country Representative, UNDP, the LLA, CSOs and other local authorities of Grand Cape Mount, conducted in Grand Cape Mount County.



A joint monitoring visit was conducted by UN Women and the LLA.⁶⁴

In the project design, some of the listed monitoring actions of the project included quarterly joint monitoring field visits by UN Women/UNDP/WFP as well as the use of a complaint feedback mechanism to collect feedback from the communities. However, evidence shows that only three monitoring visits were made against the 12 proposed monitoring visits in the three years of the project. In addition, the complaint feedback mechanism toll lines is no longer working, as confirmed by project beneficiaries in the counties. Furthermore, while the monitoring of the projects produced several recommendations, there was no evidence to show that they were adapted and utilized to inform management action and decision-making for the project. Overall, the evaluation notes that three monitoring visits for a three-year project, which amounts to one monitoring visit per year, was insufficient to effectively track implementation activities.

Finding 17: Effectiveness of the monitoring mechanisms in place to measure progress towards achievement of results.

The evaluation found that the monitoring mechanisms in place to measure progress towards achievement of results was weak. There was no evidence of a predefined monitoring plan that defined the baseline, targets and sources of verification, the time and frequency of data collection, as well as the person responsible for data collection and the reporting format. The achievements of the project were gleaned from the PBF project progress report for June 2023, as shown previously in Tables 3–13. Evidence from interviews with the project team shows that monitoring of the project was done at three levels: individual UN agency monitoring, joint monitoring and participating institution monitoring. However, this was not enough, as it fell short of the number of monitoring visits stated in the project design. Furthermore, the evaluation did not find any evidence of a dedicated M&E officer for the project, which is necessary to track project progress. Although the overall achievement of the

⁶⁴ “Peacebuilding Fund Project Progress Report” (2023).

project was reported, the monitoring mechanisms in place to measure progress towards achievement of results was rated weak by the evaluation.

4.4. Sustainability

Finding 18: Likelihood that the project results will be used and maintained for a reasonably long period of time once the project ends.

Evaluative evidence from documents reviewed and interviews with the project team revealed evidence of mainstreaming of sustainability measures into the project. The project targeted key national institutions such as the NRCCM, NBC, PBO and LLA and at the local level, such as the county land authorities. The project contributed to strengthening the capacities of these institutions as a key strategy for the sustainability of the benefits of the project. The project promoted national ownership through wide consultations with national institutions, alignment of the project objectives with national priorities of the government, and adaptation of existing alternative conflict resolution mechanisms, such as MSPs and Peace Huts, into the project implementation. This approach of promoting participation of the project duty bearers and rights holders enhanced the likelihood of the benefits from the project being sustained for a reasonably long period beyond the end of the project. However, to improve the efficiency of informal dispute resolution mechanisms such as Peace Huts, CLDMCs and MSPs, it is important to link them to existing formal dispute resolution mechanisms, such as the courts and security agencies, to smoothen their operational effectiveness in resolution of conflicts.

Furthermore, the project focused on building the capacities of different stakeholders, including duty bearers and rights holders. The project enhanced the gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) knowledge and capacity of national stakeholders, including the NBC, through the development of a gender policy, and the NRCCM, through capacity-building on gender mainstreaming. At the county level, the project strengthened the capacities of the members of the MSPs, CLDMCs and Peace Huts. In addition, the project provided environmental safeguarding training to strengthen the capacity of the community for early warning monitoring and detecting water pollution. As one of the sustainability measures, the project developed a gender-responsive ADR training manual and SOPs, which are being used by actors in the land sector to support capacity development of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. All these components of the project contributed to strengthening the capacities of both duty bearers and rights holders to promote and advocate for women's right to land and their participation in alternative dispute resolution processes. Building the capacities of government institutions and beneficiaries was utilized as a strategy for building ownership and ensuring the sustainability of project results. Respondents, particularly at the county level, maintained that the project benefits will be sustained, as shown by the following interview excerpts:

The group farming activities will be sustained. We have been working as a farming group before the project started. The project has strengthened the capacity of the group through the training programmes and the provision of farm input support to the group by WFP. So, whether the project ends or not, we are continuing with our group farming, which has really helped us in the community.⁶⁵

The capacity-building activities on gender mainstreaming organized by UN women for NCCRM were very good. It strengthened our capacity on gender mainstreaming which was lacking among our staff. What we learned will remain with us and we will continue to apply it in the coordination of response mechanisms in the counties.⁶⁶

Furthermore, the project involved a broad spectrum of stakeholders, starting from project design through to their participation in baseline assessments and various consultations by the project team with local communities in the counties. For instance, the project conducted a gender and human rights assessment of the early warning mechanisms at county and district levels. It also conducted a perception survey and gender power analysis, as well as an assessment of ADR mechanisms and the gender sensitiveness of semi-formal land dispute resolution

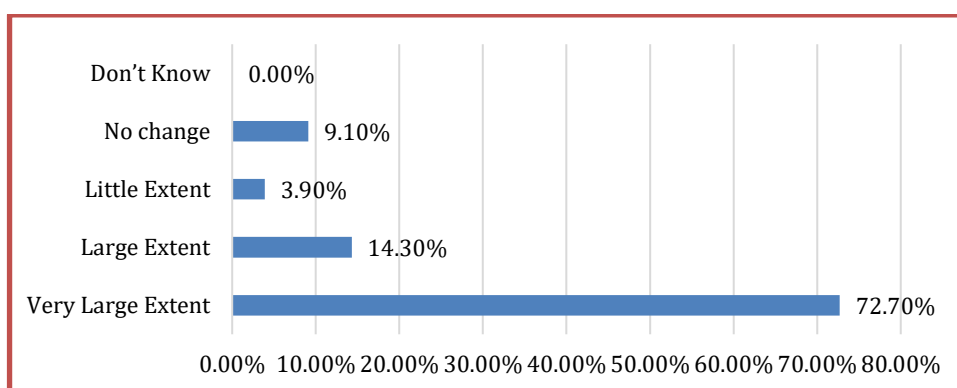
⁶⁵ Excerpt from FGD with men from the Korsein community in Nimba County.

⁶⁶ Excerpt from key informant interview with NCCRM official.

bodies in targeted counties. The findings from these assessments informed the design of the project. During implementation, the various stakeholders were also involved through their participation in various training programmes organized under the project. Their involvement promoted ownership, which ensured that programme benefits were not truncated at the end of the implementation period. Furthermore, the involvement of the LLA will ensure that the gains of the project are sustained, since it has the constitutional mandate to support and implement the LRA.

The development of gender policies for the NBC contributed to the institutionalization and sustainability of the project benefits. The implementation of the policy will, however, depend on the availability of adequate human and financial resources at the NBC. Another critical component of the project that will be sustained is the boundary harmonization and the issuance of legally probated titled land deeds to the project-affected community, replacing tribal certificates informally administered by local elders. This is one of the major milestones of the project and will be sustained at the end of the project, since it is enshrined in the law. Evidence from the quantitative survey indicates that over 72 per cent of the project beneficiaries noted that the project benefits are likely to be sustained when the project ends.

Figure 5: Extent to which the benefits of the project are likely to be sustained when the project ends



Finding 19: Components of the project that should be carried over into the next phase.

Based on evidence from the project team and stakeholders, certain key components of the project have been identified as highly impactful and should be continued in the next phase. During the first phase of the project, the boundary harmonization conducted received positive feedback from the benefiting communities. However, it was noted that not all intervention communities were covered by this process. Interviews and FGDs conducted in these communities revealed a strong desire for the implementation of boundary harmonization. As boundary issues have been identified as a major source of conflict in the targeted areas, extending this initiative to more communities in the next phase is essential. Furthermore, complementing it with the issuance of legally probated titled land deeds, as done in the first phase, will be crucial in reinforcing land tenure and reducing disputes. Another critical component that should be continued in the next phase is community engagement and awareness-raising regarding women’s rights to land and property ownership. The project has begun to challenge deep-rooted sociocultural and traditional norms, but sustainable progress in changing mindsets takes time. By implementing this engagement for another phase of the project, we can continue the positive trajectory towards gender equality in land and property ownership. While the evaluation acknowledged the project’s overall timely delivery, it also highlighted that the duration of various training was too short, as indicated by many trainers. To address this issue and ensure the effectiveness of the training efforts, it is imperative to include this extended training and community engagement in the next phase of the project. By incorporating these key learnings and successful elements from the first phase into the next phase, the project can build upon its achievements, address existing gaps and further its positive impact on the communities involved.

Findings from the FGDs and interviews conducted in the intervention communities among the beneficiaries also revealed that the livelihood component of the project was identified as a crucial aspect that should be carried over to the next phase. However, one element of the livelihood component that should not be continued in the next phase is food distribution. There was no evidence to demonstrate that individuals in the counties were experiencing critical phases of food insecurity that would justify the rounds of food distribution. Instead, the

funds should be allocated for the purchase of farm inputs, as beneficiaries complained that the support provided in this regard was grossly inadequate.

In addition, the Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) approach should be modified by providing seed money to groups at the beginning of their formation. Many members of the VSLA interviewed across the communities noted that they were given empty boxes by the implementing partners after the formation of the VSLA, which is not good practice in VSLA formation.

Finding 20: Whether partnerships (with governments, the United Nations, donors, NGOs, CSOs, religious leaders, the media) established by the project can foster sustainability of results.

Evaluative evidence from the review of project documents and interviews revealed that the project has established partnership with governments, United Nations, donors, CSOs and community leaders during the implementation of the project, which has raised the project's potential for sustainability. The partnerships occur in different forms with different stakeholders. With government partners, the project has focused on building the capacity of the LLA, NBC and NRCCM to enable them to deliver on their respective mandates. The project built the capacities of LLA, NBC and NRCCM staff to enhance their knowledge of gender and land rights. The project's support to the LLA has empowered it to decentralize its services and establish community structures. For the NBC, capacity-building has enhanced its ability to monitor and address triggers of conflicts in a timely manner. The capacity-building of government partners promoted ownership and will foster sustainability, since the skills developed will remain with them. However, the evaluation did not find any evidence on how the project's partnerships with United Nations and CSOs can foster sustainability of results. For instance, during the field mission to intervention communities, most of the CSOs that supported the implementation of the project did not have a physical presence in the communities, which suggests that CSO supports for sustaining the benefits of the projects in the communities will not be available.

Finding 21: Whether the intervention design includes an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy (including promoting national/local ownership, use of local capacity, etc.) to support positive changes, including in gender equality and human rights, after the end of the intervention.

The evaluation found that the intervention design included an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy. This was achieved using different approaches by the project. First, the project design recognized that governments at national and county levels more readily assume ownership when initiatives are built on participation, consultations, and government visions, strategies and frameworks. Thus, during the project implementation, consultations were held with different categories of stakeholders from the launch of the project onwards. Evidence collected in this evaluation shows that key government institutions, such as the NBC, NCCRM, EPA, LLA, Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), PBO, Office of the legal advisor to the President and Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP), were consulted and also participated in the various capacity programmes organized under the project. This approach promoted national ownership of the project and represents an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy from the evaluation perspective.

Second, the project was aligned with the national priorities of the Government of Liberia, especially the 2017 Peacebuilding Plan, PAPD, the 2018 National Gender Policy and the Liberian National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security (2019–2023), as well as the LRA and LGA. The implementation of these policies by government will help in sustaining the benefits of the project and therefore represents an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy for the project. In addition, the project built the capacity of government institutions in charge of the implementation of the LLA and LGA. This capacity-building will sustain development progress beyond the duration of support from this project.

Another sustainability and exit strategy included in the project design was the integration of existing ADR mechanisms in the counties, such as MSPs and Peace Huts, into the project framework. This integration will ensure that MSPs and Peace Huts continue to operate in line with the project's objectives even after the project's conclusion, thus serving as an effective sustainability and exit plan. However, it is crucial to note that evidence from members of the MSPs and Peace Huts has indicated a lack of incentives to support this effort. Therefore, addressing this issue becomes imperative to ensure the smooth and continued functioning of these mechanisms beyond the project's lifespan.

Another important sustainability and exit strategy included in the project design was the use of local facilitators such as the NBC and LLA for the various capacity-building activities. This was acknowledged by multiple stakeholders to be an efficient method of project implementation. The approach ensured that knowledge gained by both facilitators and trainees remained at the national level and in the intervention communities. This is compared to alternatives such as bringing facilitators in from outside the intervention areas, who will leave with the knowledge gain after the implementation of project activities. Overall, the evaluation confirmed that the intervention design included an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy to support positive changes, including in gender equality and human rights, after the end of the intervention.

4.5. Gender equality and human rights

Finding 22: The extent to which gender equality and human rights (GE&HR) considerations were integrated into the project design and implementation.

The evaluative evidence from FGDs and key informant interviews with beneficiaries confirmed that GE&HR considerations were integrated into the project design and implementation. All objectives, strategies, approaches and activities highlighted in the project were focused on addressing the root causes of gender inequalities with respect to land. From the design stage, the project targeted women and youth in intervention counties to strengthen their capacity and skills to enable them to participate in decision-making processes of the land dispute mechanisms. The project also targeted men and other members of the communities in the counties to address the underlying sociocultural challenge in the intervention areas and change the dominant traditional cultural perception that the right place for women is in the home and the narrative that land-related matters and peacebuilding are masculine domains. The engagement of community leaders at the county level was a deliberate effort to promote long-term change in the communities concerning the inclusion of women in decision-making processes of the land dispute mechanisms. The Sustaining Peace project was therefore inclusive and non-discriminatory, with deliberate strategies to engage stakeholders and target beneficiaries at all levels, in line with the principle of “leaving no one behind”.

Further key evidence of gender consideration is the development of a gender-responsive performance-monitoring matrix (GRPM) to support concessions contract renegotiations between the government and concessionaries by the project.⁶⁷ The GRPM aims to provide gender mainstreaming interventions for concessions contract reviews and renegotiation monitoring processes, and provide imperatives for monitoring gender impacts during the concessions contract review and renegotiating. The GRPM is an important gender mainstreaming instrument in the intervention counties, as it will help to bridge the gender gap and uphold women’s equal rights in the concession review process.

The Sustaining Peace project was also conceived and formulated to support national priorities on and commitment to GEWE in response to poor participation of women in decision-making processes of the land dispute mechanisms and land rights. Evidence also shows that different categories of stakeholders, including women, men, boys and girls, were involved in the design and implementation of project. However, there is a need to involve more women-led organizations as implementing partners. None of the implementing partners engaged by the project was woman-led. A project promoting the rights of women to land such as the Sustaining Peace project should have engaged a women-led organization as one of the implementing partners, as evidence shows that exclusion of women-led organizations not only undermines the effectiveness of humanitarian action, but also impedes the potential for transformative impact.⁶⁸ Overall, the evaluation found that the project did well in integrating GE&HR into the project design and implementation to a large extent.

Finding 23: The extent to which GE&HR were reflected in the overall intervention budget.

Evaluative evidence confirmed that the project budget was gender-responsive to a large extent. Evidence shows that 80 per cent of the budget contributed to GEWE. For instance, about US\$3,200,000 was budgeted for activities promoting GEWE, while all the budget was expended on efforts contributing to gender equality or women’s empowerment. Overall, the evaluation notes that GE&HR were reflected in the overall intervention budget to a large extent.

⁶⁷ “A Gender-Responsive Performance-Monitoring Matrix to Support Contract Renegotiations Between the Government and Concessionaries”.

⁶⁸ <https://www.unicef.org/documents/partnering-women-and-girl-led-organizations>.

Finding 24: Whether there were constraints to or facilitators (e.g. political, practical, bureaucratic) of addressing GE&HR issues during implementation.

The evaluation found that there were both constraints to and facilitators of addressing GE&HR issues during implementation. The main constraint experienced, which occurred at the beginning of the project, was resistance among the community leaders with respect to changing the dominant traditional cultural perception that the right place for women is in the home and the narrative that land-related matters and peacebuilding are masculine domains. However, this was addressed by the implementing partners through continuous advocacy visits to the communities and awareness-raising activities in the counties.

The evaluation also identified facilitating factors, including the existence of the LRA and LGA, and land institutional frameworks like the LLA, NBC and NRCCM, which provided the needed government buy-in into the project. The availability of the LRA and LGA, and land institutional frameworks like the LLA, NBC and NRCCM, greatly supported the project in addressing GE&HR issues during implementation.

The availability of Peace Huts was another facilitating factor that helped in addressing GE&HR issues during implementation. The National Peace Hut Women of Liberia is an innovative, women-led and community-based conflict resolution mechanism. Peace Huts focused on supporting and strengthening community dynamics and women's roles in fostering dialogue and mediation, and justice seeking. The Sustaining Peace project integrated Peace Huts into the project, which contributed to addressing GE&HR issues during implementation.

Finding 25: Whether the processes and activities implemented during the intervention were free from discrimination against all stakeholders.

Evaluative evidence shows that there was no discrimination of any kind, as all stakeholders were carried along in the implementation of the project. The key stakeholders were the duty bearers and rights holders. On the part of the duty bearers, the project engaged all relevant ministries and agencies, including the NCCRM, MIA/PBO, EPA, NBC, LLA and MGCSF.

A review of the duty bearers engaged in the project revealed that they are all key stakeholders in Liberia, responsible for land management, conflict prevention and the promotion of GE&HR. The project demonstrated commendable inclusivity in engaging various groups of rights holders, including women, men, boys, girls and people with disabilities, throughout its implementation. Interviews with project beneficiaries in the counties confirmed that no discrimination occurred, and that all interested individuals had the opportunity to participate in the project. The Sustaining Peace project was carefully conceptualized and designed to align with national priorities and commitments to promote GEWE, addressing the issue of low female participation in peace and security processes.

Furthermore, evidence highlighted that diverse stakeholders, encompassing women, men, boys, girls and people with disabilities, actively participated in both the design and execution of the programme. The inclusion of individuals with disabilities serves as a strong indication that the project thoroughly integrated GE&HR considerations into its overall framework. The evaluation conclusively attests that the project's activities were conducted without any form of discrimination. The commitment to inclusivity fostered a positive environment where all members of the community had the chance to contribute to and benefit from the programme's initiatives.

4.6. Coherence

Finding 26: Whether the project built synergies with other programmes being implemented at country level by United Nations, international NGOs and the Government of Liberia.

Evaluative evidence from document reviews and interviews with the project team indicates that the project built synergies with several other programmes being implemented at country level by United Nations, international NGOs and the Government of Liberia. Evidence shows that the project built synergy with the Just Energy Transition (JET) project implemented by the Sustainable Development Institute (SDI) as part of its Community Rights & Corporate Governance Program (CRGP). The primary objective of the JET project is to advocate for the adoption and promotion of renewable energy sources, while simultaneously upholding and respecting human rights principles. The project also built synergy with the LGSA, funded by USAID, which aims to promote more efficient land governance systems capable of implementing comprehensive reforms. Evidence

also revealed that the project was in synergy with the ActionAid Liberia and ForumCiv, Development Education Network-Liberia (DEN-L), JSGB and LLA project titled “Securing Land Rights for Women and Rural Communities in South-Eastern Liberia”. This project is being implemented across 30 communities located in Grand Gedeh, River Gee and Sinoe Counties. The primary objective of this project is to empower women and rural communities within Grand Gedeh, River Gee and Sinoe Counties in south-eastern Liberia, enabling them to secure their land rights. The Sustaining Peace project also built synergy with the project “Capacity Development in Land Administration” funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). The project focused on capacity-building among LLA staff and supporting women to increase their participation in land administration and management, which is in line with the objectives of the Sustaining Peace project. However, the synergy with other programmes being implemented at the county level needs to be coordinated rather than happen by chance, as was the case in this project.

Finding 27: The extent to which the project’s intervention was consistent with interventions of others in the same context.

As noted in finding 26, the project’s intervention was consistent with several interventions of other projects in the same context. The Sustaining Peace project was consistent with the JET project implemented by the SDI. It also aligned with the “Securing Land Rights for Women and Rural Communities in South-Eastern Liberia” project implemented by ActionAid Liberia and ForumCiv, DEN-L, JSGB and the LLA. The Sustaining Peace project also was consistent with the Capacity Development in Land Administration project funded by SIDA, which focused on capacity-building among LLA staff and supporting women to increase their participation in land administration and management, which is in line with the objectives of the Sustaining Peace project.

Finding 28: The extent to which the project is complementary to, and harmonized and coordinated with other interventions in this area.

Evaluative evidence revealed that the project complemented, and was harmonized and coordinated with other interventions in this area. The project was implemented in coordination and in collaboration with development partners who have widely supported the development of the land sector. This was achieved through the formation of the Land Donor Working Group, which brought together all the key stakeholders involved in land initiatives in Liberia. Within this group, a comprehensive matrix was developed, detailing each partner’s specific project and its location. This level of coordination helped to avoid duplication of effort among the various partners working in the land sector in Liberia.

4.7. Impact

Finding 29: Whether the project identified and addressed social, environmental and economic effects of the intervention that are longer term.

Evaluative evidence from document reviews and interviews with the project team indicate that the project did not create social, environmental, and economic challenges. Rather, the project contributed to addressing the social, environmental and economic challenges occasioned by government land concessionary activities in the intervention communities. The project addressed conflict, which is one of the social problems in the intervention counties. Conflicts related to overlapping boundaries, rightful ownership, and conflicting claims and land grabbing among communities, as well as between communities and concessionaires, were identified and addressed by the project. This was achieved through strengthening the effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness of land administrative structures at national and county levels, as well as the formalization of customary land and improving communities’ understanding of the LGA and LRA, concession agreements, and women’s and youth rights to land. All these contributions of the project helped in addressing conflict.

In the environmental sector, the project’s partnership with the EPA provided environmental safeguarding training to strengthen the capacity of the community for early warning monitoring and detection of water pollution. The agency also procured handheld equipment and other laboratory testing equipment, and tested domestic water sources for rejuvenation. The project also supported the government’s nationally determined contribution of COP26 to address the adverse effect of climate change through building the capacity of local communities to properly use forest residues and agricultural wastes (including rice and coconut husks, dried palm branches and sugar cane straws) for economic production, which is a cleaner and more environmentally friendly alternative to charcoal production. Indeed, this contributed to the effective management of agricultural wastes

and the mitigation of the devastating effects of deforestation resulting from the current practice of using forest trees for charcoal production.⁶⁹

In the local economy, concessions-affected communities are realizing improved livelihoods through the adoption of alternative opportunities as a result of the livelihood intervention in the communities. Farming interventions in six communities, Konjah and Gohn Zodua (Cape Mount County), Korsein, Torkopa and Yarsonoh (Nimba County), and Tambo (Maryland County), supported through the project, have increased communities' ability to properly utilize their lands (see Plate 2). The project has achieved this through training for farmers on agricultural best practices and climate-smart agriculture to improve production and increase yields, and through business development and entrepreneurship training and provision of farming equipment to communities. Such community-led and community-driven interventions have not only enhanced livelihoods but have also promoted social cohesion, unity, gender equality and inclusivity.



Rice seedling farm of Korsein Farming Group in Nimba County

Finding 30: Indirect, secondary and potential consequences of the intervention have been captured.

The evaluation found several positive indirect effects produced by the project on the target group in the counties. These include successful boundary harmonization and the erection of cornerstones as demarcation between communities. The boundary harmonization led to the issuance of legally probated titled land deeds to the project-affected community, replacing tribal certificates.

The Sustaining Peace project also contributed to changes in the communities' perception of women's rights to land ownership. Women are now inheriting lands. Many participants of the FGDs conducted in the intervention counties confirmed this, shown in the following excerpts:

Lands have become more accessible to us women in Koinjah community. Before the project started, the community leaders will tell us that women have no right to their family land. But the project came, it taught the community leaders and the women that they have equal right like the men to family land. This has helped women to have more access to land in this community.⁷⁰

One of the most important contributions of the project is increasing women access to land in the communities. Before now, lands were regarded as the exclusive rights

⁶⁹ "Peacebuilding Fund Project Progress Report" (2023).

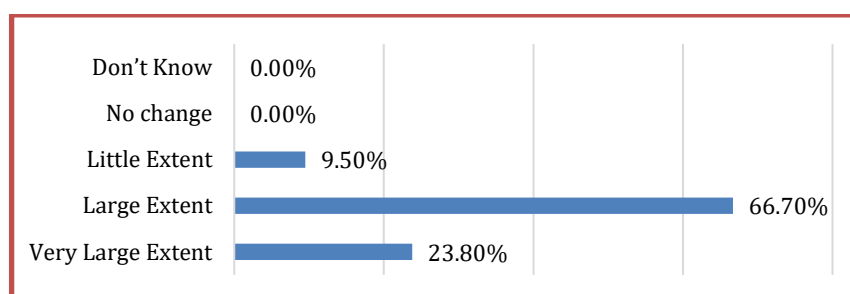
⁷⁰ Excerpt from women FGD in Ganta community.

of men in the communities. But this project has succeeded in changing this wrong perception in the community, as women are now coming to speak and claim their rights. The community leaders themselves have realized this and are given women and the needed.⁷¹

Before now no woman talk about inheriting family land in this community but this UN women project has changed that for the women. Land is now for both men and women and women are claiming their rights to land in this community.⁷²

Evidence from the quantitative survey indicated that over 90 per cent of the project beneficiaries noted that the project succeeded in promoting awareness of the rights of women to own land in the intervention counties.

Figure 6: Extent to which the project activities contributed to promoting awareness of the rights of women to own land



Similarly, another positive consequence of the project was the increase in women's participation in land discussions and decision-making, including dispute resolution and leadership processes, and in community development and peacebuilding activities. Evidence of this can be found in the inclusion of women as members of the MSPs and CLDMCs across the intervention counties. During the field mission, multiple interviews with members of MSPs and CLDMCs noted that women are included as members of the platform and have equal rights, just as the men who are members of the platform.

Furthermore, evidence shows that the project contributed positively to improving the livelihood of concessions-affected communities. For instance, members of the farming group in Korsein community noted that the project has increased their membership from 106 to 264 members, comprising 138 women and 126 men, as well as increasing the size of their farm. The excerpt below helps to confirm this finding:

The greatest benefit of the programme lies in its livelihood component. The community members now exhibit more unity, possess the ability to manage their own conflicts, and have access to farming machinery. Additional benefits include the MSP receiving further training on conflict management and alternative dispute resolution, as well as the establishment of Village Savings and Loan Associations.⁷³

The project also made an important contribution to addressing conflict in the community. Many beneficiaries of the project at the county level maintained that they now resolve their disputes using the community dispute resolution mechanism created by the project, which is cheaper than going to the court. The following excerpt helps to confirm this finding:

The project played a role in addressing these issues. Other types of conflicts that have occurred were resolved through the intervention of the MSP or CLMDCs (community-led mediation and dialogue committees) and the

⁷¹ Excerpt from key informant interview with community in Ganta community.

⁷² Excerpt from key informant interview with member of CLMDC in Gohn community.

⁷³ Excerpt from FGD among men in Ballah Town in Cape Mount County.

resolutions reached were binding. For instance, the case of the endowment fund payment, which originated from the Sam Darby case as land obligations, was resolved. However, the new company has not fully complied with this agreement.⁷⁴

At the national level, the programme contributed to the production of gender policies for the NBC. The project also contributed to the production of a communication strategy, which was validated by relevant stakeholders. The aim of the communication strategy was to provide education on the LLA targeting women, men and youth in the intervention communities. However, evidence shows that the communication strategy was not tested and implemented in the intervention communities at the end of the project. It is important to state that the evaluation found no negative effects of the project from document reviews and interviews with relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, there was no evidence of any negative effects of the project on the four cross-cutting issues of gender, human rights, climate and the environment. Figure 7 shows the main contributions of the project based on the perception of the respondents.

Figure 7: The main change produced by the project

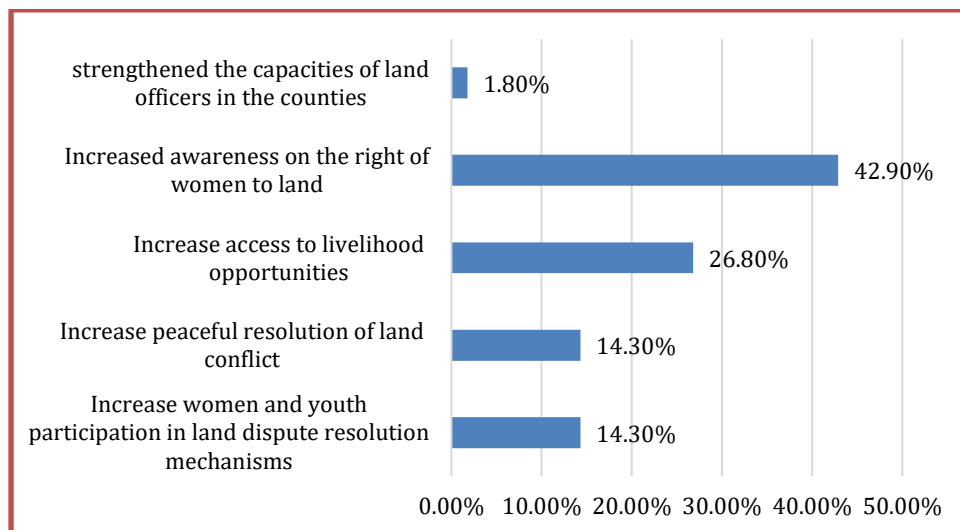


Figure 7 shows that the main change produced by the project in the intervention communities, as noted by the project beneficiaries, were increased awareness of the right of women to land (42.9 per cent), increased access to livelihood opportunities (26.8 per cent), increased resolution of land conflicts (14.3 per cent) and increased women and youth participation in land dispute resolution (14.3 per cent).

5.0. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusions

The overarching conclusion of this evaluation is that the Sustaining Peace project was relevant to the targeted beneficiaries, including the staff of government agencies such as the Liberia Land Authority (LLA) and National Bureau of Concessions (NBC). The project was successful in increasing women’s effective participation in land discussions and decision-making, including dispute resolution and leadership processes, and in community development and peacebuilding activities. The project was also successful in improving knowledge of land rights and women’s access to and understanding of the Local Government Act (LGA) and the Land Rights Act (LRA). The findings above provide the basis for the overall conclusions and recommendations resulting from this evaluation. Building on the above findings, these conclusions aim to provide UN Women, UNDP and WFP with actionable suggestions and recommendations to support its future programming in the counties. The specific conclusions are given below.

⁷⁴ Excerpt from FGD among men in Ballah Town in Cape Mount County.

5.1.1. Relevance of the Sustaining Peace project in addressing peacebuilding needs, and the timeliness and urgency of the project vis-à-vis the sustaining peace context in Liberia

Conclusion 1 (based on Findings 1 and 2, on relevance)

The Sustaining Peace project implemented in Nimba, Cape Mount, Sinoe and Maryland Counties with the support of UN Women, UNDP and WFP was relevant to addressing peacebuilding needs in the targeted counties and was very timely, although the duration of activities such as capacity-building programmes were short.

Several assessments show that land disputes, lawlessness, corruption, boundary disputes and concession-related tensions remain the main triggers of conflicts. The assessments also reveal that disputes related to overlapping boundaries, rightful ownership, conflicting claims and land grabbing are the most pronounced among communities, as well as between communities and concessionaires. The assessments also reveal that communities in general are affected by concessions due to a lack of transparency in allocating land to concessions, and that most concession contracts are negotiated in Monrovia with little or no consultation. Neither are the agreements shared with local communities. Furthermore, the activities of the concession companies, such as the production of palm oil and rubber, and the extraction of gold, diamonds and iron ore, have severely impacted the environment and livelihoods of the local communities. Poor community perception of women's rights to land and personal property and of their right to participate in decision-making positions and processes was also observed. These scenarios have continued to brew conflicts across the concession communities. The project successfully addressed this peacebuilding need through capacity-building, awareness-raising about the rights of women to land, boundary harmonization and provision of livelihood opportunities for households in concession communities. The project was timely as it coincided with a period when there was high tension between concession communities and concession companies, and between communities and neighbouring communities, over land disputes. However, the short duration of the training activities, usually 3–4 days, was a major limitation of the project in effectively addressing the identified needs of the targeted beneficiaries.

Conclusion 2 (based on Findings 3 and 4, on relevance)

The context of the range of substantive areas in which the project was engaged (i.e. women's rights to land, women's participation in land governance processes, alternative dispute resolution, strengthening government institutions at the national and local levels, livelihoods for concessions-affected communities) was suitable, and the project aligned with national plans on gender promotion, the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD), the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and other government priorities on land governance and land conflict.

The project context was very suitable to the range of substantive areas in which the project was engaged. Concerning women's rights to land and women's participation in land governance processes, women's legal and practical rights to land in Liberia are still lagging behind those of men. Women face obstacles to ownership and dispute settlement more than their male counterparts, and women are generally excluded from groups that make decisions about land governance at the community level. Women's role in official land governance institutions was also found to be limited when compared with men's roles, with fewer women in positions of decision-making authority in both the customary system and the statutory governance system (including at the district, county and national levels). This context was very suitable and appropriate for the project implementation of activities relating to improving knowledge of land rights and women's access to, and understanding of, the LGA, LRA, women's and youth rights to land, and to enhancing effective dispute resolution mechanisms. The Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project was found to be in total alignment with Liberia's national plans on gender promotion, and with the PAPD, UNSDCF and the specific government priorities on land governance and land conflict. The various outputs of the project fall under the pillars and priority areas of several national plans, policies and strategies. The project strongly aligns with the UNSDCF for Liberia ("Cooperation Framework") for the period 2020–2024, especially Outcome 3 (Sustaining peace, security and rule of law).

5.1.2. Effectiveness of the programme in terms of the progress made towards the achievement of the expected results

Conclusion 3 (based on Findings 5–8, on effectiveness)

The project was successful, as major outputs and outcomes of the project were achieved. Major interventions that contributed to the achievement of the project outcomes and outputs include capacity-building of land authorities at national and local levels to manage land allocation, registration and licensing processes in a more effective, transparent and inclusive manner, and the strengthening of existing semi-formal and informal land dispute resolution mechanisms to enable them to reduce conflict in a more effective and gender-responsive manner. The project's theory of change proved realistic and was implemented.

The Sustaining Peace project was successful in terms of the progress made towards the achievement of the expected outcomes and outputs of the project. The project made an important contribution in raising awareness of the rights of women to land, boundary harmonization and provision of livelihood opportunities for households in concession communities. The project also made an important contribution in building the capacities of county land offices and county land boards, and instituted procedures and systems to formalize customary land development, including the development of an alternative dispute resolution training manual and standard operating procedures. The project also made an important contribution in the mapping of customary land and subsequent boundary harmonization, as well as the establishment of land governance structures such as the community land development and management committees (CLDMCs), Peace Huts and multi-stakeholders platforms (MSPs). The evaluation confirmed that the project's theory of change proved realistic and was implemented. Evidence of this is the implementation of activities to achieve all the "IF" conditions in the theory of change, including increasing the awareness level of customary governance authorities and communities in targeted counties, strengthening the capacities of county land offices, county land boards and CLDMCs, putting procedures and systems in place to formalize customary land in a way that reflects the rights and needs of all community members, and strengthening existing semi-formal and informal land dispute resolution mechanisms.

Conclusion 4 (based on Findings 9 and 10, on effectiveness)

The project approaches and strategies were innovative. The project built synergies with other programmes being implemented at country level by United Nations, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Government of Liberia.

The evaluation found that several innovative practices were mainstreamed both in the design and implementation of the project. This includes the recognition and involvement of government partners such as the NBC, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Peacebuilding Office (PBO) in the design and implementation of the project, the implementation modality adopted by the project team. Although the project was not directly implemented by the UN joint partners, the project outcomes and outputs were closely aligned with the specific mandate of the UN partners, allowing the project to leverage their comparative advantage. The project design was informed by the results of and lessons learned from previous UN projects, which was considered a valuable practice by the evaluation. Integrating key lessons into the project design facilitated the effective implementation and successful delivery of the key project outcomes and outputs within the designated implementation period. Moreover, the creation of linkages with existing land dispute-related structures, such as MSPs, and with the new mechanisms established with the LRA, such as CLDMCs, with a view to reducing conflicts in a more transparent, effective and gender- and youth-responsive manner, was found to be good practice by the evaluation. The project's linking of the livelihood component with the Home Grown School Feeding Programme, which provided a source of markets for the sale of agricultural produce, was considered another innovation by the evaluation. The training provided by the project on the use of forest residues and agricultural wastes for economic production and an environmentally friendly alternative to charcoal production was considered innovative by the evaluation. Beyond this, the issuance of statutory land-titled deeds and maps to eight customary communities was also considered innovative by the evaluation. The project, to a large extent, built synergies with other programmes, including the Capacity Development in Land Administration project, the United States Agency for International Development Integrated Land and Resource Governance programme, and the Land Administration Project funded by the World Bank and implemented by the LLA. However, there is a need to strengthen these synergies, to avoid duplication of effort and implementing similar project activities in the same intervention communities in the counties.

5.1.3 Efficiency of the project in terms of the resource allocation measures taken to ensure that resources were efficiently used

Conclusion 5 (based on Findings 11–17, on efficiency)

The project resources were allocated strategically and were efficiently utilized to achieve the programme outcomes.

The Sustaining Peace project demonstrated efficiency in the allocation and utilization of both human and material resources, which was instrumental to the achievements recorded by the project in the targeted counties. The project's organizational structures, managerial support and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the delivery of the project objectives; however, there is room for improvement. The human resource capacity of the implementing partners was not sufficient, with some having only three staff to support the implementation of the project in four counties. The Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project activities were cost-effective based on the high percentage of the total budget allocated to developmental activity relative to other budget lines. The joint nature of the project contributed to improved efficiency in delivery of project outputs. This efficiency in delivery was brought to bear in the project when the three UN agencies leveraged their comparative advantage in the delivery of the project activities. Although financial resources were used sufficiently and efficiently, in the mid- to long term these resources are not adequate to serve UN Women's mandate and its partners regarding programming for women's empowerment in the intervention counties, given the number of counties and communities not covered by the current project.

Conclusion 6 (based on Findings 21–24 on sustainability)

The project strengthened the capacities of national partners in both technical and operational areas. The project played a critical role in building the capacities of National Centre for Coordination of Response Mechanisms (NCCRM), NBC, PBO and LLA staff as a sustainability strategy, and also promoted national ownership through involvement of government partners in the project implementation.

The project targeted key national institutions such as the NCCRM, NBC, PBO and LLA, and, at the local level, the county land authorities. The project contributed to strengthening the capacities of these institutions as a key strategy for the sustainability of the project benefits. The project promoted national ownership through wide consultations with national institutions, alignment of the project objectives with the national priorities of the government, and adaptation of existing alternative conflict resolution mechanisms such as MSPs, CLDMCs and Peace Huts into the project implementation. This approach of promoting participation of the project duty bearers and rights holders enhanced the likelihood of the benefits of the project being sustained for a reasonably long period beyond the end of the project. Another critical component of the project that will be sustained is the boundary harmonization and the issuance of legally probated titled land deeds. This is one of the major milestones of the project, and will be sustained at the end of the project, since gazetted by the law. However, this needs to be extended to cover more communities in the counties. Furthermore, some components of the project need to be carried into the next phase to consolidate the achievements of the project. Such components include boundary harmonization, community engagement and awareness-raising to change the mindsets of the community members about women's rights to land and property ownership, and the Villages Savings and Loans Association. It is also important to consider working with the partners for another phase of the project to consolidate the gains and benefits of the project at the county level.

5.1.4. Gender equality and human rights mainstreaming in the project

Conclusion 7 (based on Findings 22–25 on gender equality and human rights mainstreaming)

The evaluation confirmed that gender equality and human rights considerations were integrated into the project design and implementation. All objectives, strategies, approaches and activities highlighted in the project were focused on addressing the root causes of gender inequalities with respect to land.

The integration of gender equality and human rights into programmes implies that all programmes of development co-operation, policies and technical assistance should further the realization of human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments. From the design stage, the project targeted women and youth in intervention counties to strengthen their capacity and skills to enable them to participate in decision-making processes of the land dispute mechanisms. The project also targeted men and other members of the communities in the counties to address the underlying sociocultural challenge in the intervention areas by changing the dominant traditional cultural perception that the right place

for women is in the home and the narrative that land-related matters and peacebuilding are masculine domains. The Sustaining Peace project was therefore inclusive and non-discriminatory, with deliberate strategies to engage stakeholders and target beneficiaries at all levels, in line with the principle of “leaving no one behind”. Furthermore, 80 per cent of the budget contributed to gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE), while about US\$3,200,000 was budgeted for activities promoting GEWE. Overall, the evaluation acknowledges that the project has made significant strides in integrating gender equality and human rights into its design and implementation. However, it is essential to consider involving women-led organizations as implementing partners. The evidence strongly suggests that these organizations are often the first responders at the onset of a crisis and provide support for gender equality and human rights.

5.1.5. Coherence

Conclusion 8 (based on Findings 26–28 on coherence)

The evaluation found that the project built synergies with several other programmes being implemented at country level by United Nations, international NGOs and the Government of Liberia. This included the Just Energy Transition (JET) project, the Land Governance Support Activity (LGSA), the ActionAid Liberia and ForumCiv, Development Education Network-Liberia (DEN-L), JSGB and LLA project “Securing Land Rights for Women and Rural Communities in South-Eastern Liberia” and the Capacity Development in Land Administration project funded by SIDA. However, there is a need for better coordination with other programmes being implemented at the county level as currently, synergies appear to occur by chance rather than as a result of planning. .

5.1.6. Impact produced by the project, positive and negative, intended or unintended, directly (target groups) and indirectly (larger society)

Conclusion 9 (based on Findings 29 and 30, on impact)

The project contributed to addressing social, environmental and economic challenges occasioned by government land concessionary activities in the intervention communities. In addition, it tackled conflicts, which are one of the prevailing social problems in the intervention counties. These conflicts were related to overlapping boundaries, rightful ownership, and conflicting claims and land grabbing among and between communities and concessionaires. The project achieved this by strengthening the effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness of land administrative structures at both the national and county levels. Furthermore, the project formed a partnership with the EPA to enhance the capacity of the community for early warning monitoring and detecting water pollution. As a result of the livelihood intervention, the concessions-affected communities are now experiencing improved livelihoods through the adoption of alternative livelihood opportunities. The evaluation identified several positive indirect effects produced by the project on the target group in the counties. Remarkably, the successful boundary harmonization and erection of cornerstones as demarcations between communities led to the issuance of legally probated titled land deeds to the project-affected community, replacing tribal certificates. This change in land tenure further contributed to changes in the communities’ perception of women’s rights to land ownership, with women now being able to inherit lands. Moreover, the project played a role in the production of a communication strategy, which was validated by relevant stakeholders. The aim of this strategy was to provide education on the LLA, targeting women, men and youth in the intervention communities. However, it is important to note that evidence indicates that the communication strategy was not tested and implemented in the intervention communities during the course of the project.

5.2. Lessons learned

Lesson 1. The design of the Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation project, based on experience and lessons learned from previous interventions, as per the evaluation conducted on the intervention, contributed to its effectiveness.

The design of the Sustaining Peace project was based on the lessons learned from several interventions in the same context, including the Liberia Land Administration Project, funded by the World Bank (2018–2022); the Voluntary Global Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forest in the Context of National Food Security; and the LGSA (2016–2020). By mainstreaming the successful practices of previous projects into the Sustaining Peace initiative, while also being mindful of potential pitfalls, the project’s overall achievements were significantly enhanced. As a result, the project recorded substantial successes, thanks to the incorporation of proven effective methods and the avoidance of previous shortcomings.

Lesson 2. The use of available local resource persons and implementing partners in supporting project implementation activities is critical to promoting ownership and sustainability of project benefits.

The Sustaining Peace project utilized local resource persons as well as local implementing partners in the implementation of project activities. The project utilized local implementing partners such as the Rights and Rice Foundation and Volunteers for Sustainable Development in Africa to implement project activities in the targeted communities. Not only did this inclusive strategy foster local ownership of the initiatives, but it also ensured the sustainability of project benefits within the intervention communities.

Lesson 3. Capacity-building activities for project beneficiaries are necessary for both promoting ownership and ensuring the sustainability of project benefits.

The Sustaining Peace project implemented capacity-building activities for both government bodies and community mechanisms, specifically the LLA, NCCRM, MSPs, CLDMCs and members of the community in the intervention counties. The capacity-building activities were unique to the different categories of the project beneficiaries. The capacity-building activities for county land offices, county land boards and CLDMCs focused on putting in place procedures and systems for the formalization of customary land in a way that reflects the rights and needs of all community members. For the communities, the capacity-building focused on building the skills needed to participate in formal and informal land dispute mechanisms, while, for the NBC, it focused on strategies for effectively preventing potential conflict triggers from arising among concessionaires. The approach of the project ensured that the knowledge gained remained with the beneficiaries after the end of the programme.

Lesson 4. Engaging relevant government institutions and community leaders in the intervention communities is important for successful project implementation.

The Sustaining Peace project, from the beginning, engaged relevant government institutions such as the LLA, NCCRM and NBC, as well as community leaders, as key stakeholders of the project. This project approach provided the entry points into government institutions and intervention communities, which, in the long run promoted government buy-in and ownership of the project. Similarly, working with the various community leaders in the targeted counties not only provided easy access to the local community mechanisms for community members, but also contributed to achieving the project objectives, as evident in the inclusion of women and youth in the community leadership structures in some of the targeted communities.

Lesson 5. The duration of an intervention focusing on addressing underlying causes of gender inequality is an important factor that contributes to achieving project objectives and sustainability of benefits.

Addressing the deep-rooted, underlying causes of gender inequality that are deeply ingrained in the minds of people requires a considerable amount of time. The Sustaining Peace project was a 36-month project with one key objective, namely to change communities' perceptions of women's and youth rights to land. While the project was successful in meeting this objective, the sustainability of the results is in doubt without sustained awareness-raising activities and long-term interventions to address the root causes of gender inequality in the intervention counties.

Lesson 6. The timing of the project's implementation after the enactment of the LRA and LGA promoted complementarity and relevance of the project to government priorities, and played a significant role in the acceptance of the project by the government and local communities.

The Sustaining Peace project was strategically designed and implemented to coincide with government efforts to implement the LRA and LGA. This alignment enabled the project to provide valuable support for government initiatives, which significantly contributed to securing government buy-in and acceptance of the project at both the national and county levels. Moreover, the project's timing was crucial, as it coincided with a period of heightened conflict in the intervention communities. This context served to underscore the project's relevance and importance, leading to strong acceptance and support from the local communities in the counties. Overall, the project's alignment with government priorities and its timely response to the prevailing conflict challenges were instrumental in garnering support from stakeholders at all levels and creating an environment conducive to successful implementation.

Lesson 7. The joint nature of the project allowed the three UN agencies involved to bring into the project their comparative advantage, which increased the effectiveness of the project's overall design and implementation.

The Sustaining Peace project was implemented jointly by three UN agencies: UN Women, UNDP and WFP. While it was not directly implemented by these UN partners, the project outcomes and outputs were tied to the specific mandates of the UN partners and therefore leveraged their comparative advantage. While UN Women project activities focused on the advancement and the full realization of women's rights and opportunities with

respect to land, UNDP supported the institutionalization of land governance structures through implementation of boundary harmonization in the intervention communities. WFP, in line with its mandate under the project, delivered rounds of food assistance and livelihood opportunities as a pathway to peace, stability and prosperity for the intervention communities.

Lesson 8. Linking the livelihood component of the project with the Home Grown School Feeding Programme and training on the use of forest residues and agricultural wastes for economic production boosted the livelihood opportunities and potential of the targeted beneficiaries.

The lesson learned from the project’s linking of the livelihood component with the Home Grown School Feeding Programme, which provided a source of markets for the sale of agricultural produce, was considered important lesson. In addition, training on the use of forest residues and agricultural wastes (including rice and coconut husks, dried palm branches and sugar cane straws) for economic production increased the livelihood opportunities for targeted beneficiaries and therefore should be replicated in future interventions.

6.0. RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation has identified 10 recommendations that are critical for ensuring that UN agencies can make a contribution to peacebuilding in Liberia (Table 16). They have been listed in order of their importance, as perceived by the evaluation team. The recommendations are based on the evaluation framework and the analysis that informed findings and conclusions. However, they will be validated by the project team during the review of this evaluation report.

Table 16: Recommendations with the specification of action and time frame

Specific recommendations	Responsibility	Priority
Programme recommendations:		
1. Consider expanding the boundary harmonization to more communities, accompanied by the issuance of land title deeds. This is critical to sustaining peace in the intervention communities (Findings 6 and 9)	UN Women, UNDP, WFP	Immediate
2. Consider improving the livelihood component of the intervention by focusing on distribution of farm inputs rather than food distribution, and also provide start-up capital for the Village Savings and Loan Association (Finding 19)	UN Women, UNDP, WFP	Immediate
3. Consider sustaining the awareness-raising activities on women’s land rights and their participation in decision-making at the community level, since this is a deep-rooted traditional norm in the intervention communities (Findings 6 and 19)	UN Women	Immediate
4. There is a need for a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) unit in the overall management structure of the project. While the evaluation rated the management structure of the project “good”, it is good practice to locate the M&E unit within the organizational structure of any project, as it is an important component of the project team (Finding 14)	UN Women, UNDP, WFP	Immediate
5. Ensure that the implementing partners have an adequate number of staff for project implementation and also consider including women-led organizations as implementing partners. Women-led organizations can play a pivotal role in advocating for women’s land rights and promoting gender equality within the community (Findings 9 and 12)	UN Women, UNDP, WFP	Immediate
6. Consider developing a coordinating mechanism for all development partners working in the same intervention communities, to ensure that project complementarity occurs as planned and not be left to chance (Finding 27)	UN Women, UNDP, WFP	Immediate
7. Consider continuing capacity-building activities for government institutions, to strengthen their knowledge, skills and ability to address issues related to women’s and youth land rights effectively (Findings 18 and 20)	UN Women, UNDP, WFP	Immediate

8. Consider implementing another phase of the project to cover more counties and communities, to extend the benefits of the project to other communities (Finding 19)	UN Women, UNDP, WFP	Immediate
9. Consider testing and implementing the communication strategy developed by the project, which will help to consolidate the benefits of the project in the intervention communities (Finding 30)	UN Women, UNDP, WFP	Immediate
10. Consider linking Peace Huts, MSPs and CLDMCs with public actors, to foster collaboration between local dispute resolution mechanisms and public actors, such as the courts and security institutions, operating in the same location. This integration can create a more comprehensive and efficient system for resolving land-related disputes and conflicts within the community (Finding 18)	UN Women, UNDP, WFP	Immediate
11. Consider replicating the lessons learned and good practice as identified by the evaluation in other contexts or sectors in the future		

ANNEX 1: RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Assignment execution risks	Impact on objective	Likelihood of occurrence	Owner (managed by)	Risk contingencies in place or to be put in place
Access to and availability of key stakeholders and secondary data: poor and limited access to implementing partners and stakeholders	High	Medium	UN Women and consultants	Consistent communication with the UN Women team to access missing information. In addition, the consultants will engage with stakeholders/participants that are available
Changes in project management teams with implementing partners (IPs)	High	Low to medium	IPs	Consultations with UN Women, IPs and reference group to maintain assignment expectations and objectives
Rainy season making geographical counties inaccessible	High	Medium	UN Women	UN Women to ensure adequate logistics in place
Natural disasters – COVID-19 and M-pox pandemic	Medium to high	Medium	Government and partners	Collaboration with UN team and public health experts to keep consultants and collaborators informed on COVID-19 measures to minimize delays in evaluation schedule
Upcoming elections activities	Medium to high	Medium	GoL and partners	To the extent possible, the team to work within compressed timeline
Possible electoral violence	Medium to high	Medium	Consultants	Conduct some data collection remotely
Large spatial coverage of interventions	High	Medium	Consultants	Increase the number of days of data collection and conduct some data collection remotely

ANNEX 2: ROLES OF STAKEHOLDERS

WHO	WHAT Role in the programme	WHY Purpose of involvement in the evaluation	PRIORITY Level of importance in the evaluation	WHEN Stage of their involvement in the evaluation	HOW Extent to which they participated
UN Women, UNDP, WFP	The project was implemented by UN Women, UNDP and WFP.	UN Women, UNDP and WFP project team will be engaged during the evaluation in order to assess the programme achievements, implementation challenges and lessons learned.	Their involvement was extremely important for the purpose of assessing the context in which the project was designed and implemented.	UN Women, UNDP and WFP project team will be engaged at all stages of the evaluation.	They will participate in inception meetings, data collection and supervising the evaluation. They will provide input to the evaluation report and will use findings for future interventions.
Rights and Rice Foundation (RRF)	Rights and Rice Foundation (RRF) partnered with UN Women to implement Outputs 1.1, 2.1 and 2.2. Key activities of RRF include rolling out awareness campaigns for women and youth and their rights to participate in semi-formal and informal structures for dispute resolution.	RRF will be included in the evaluation in order to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. The evaluation team will have face-to-face meetings and group discussions with their representatives.	RRF will be actively involved in the evaluation, as they serve as one of the implementing partners of the project.	RRF will be engaged during data collection and will be reviewing the evaluation report, particularly its findings and recommendations.	Stakeholders from RRF will serve as key informant interviewees during data collection.
National Centre for the Coordination of Response Mechanisms (NCCRM)	NCCRM conducted a gender and human resources assessment and training on the early warning mechanisms at county and district levels during the implementation of the project.	NCCRM will be included in the evaluation to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness and sustainability.	NCCRM will be actively involved in the evaluation as they serve as one of the implementing partners of the project.	NCCRM will be engaged during data collection.	Stakeholders from NCCRM will serve as key informant interviewees during data collection.
Liberia Peace Building Office (PBO)	PBO supported the strengthening of the capacities of conflict early warning monitors, multi-stakeholder platforms, community land dispute and management committees, Peace Huts and county peace committees through training on gender mainstreaming, the use of gender-responsive indicators in early warning monitoring, land disputes and how to collect data related to these incidents.	PBO will be included in the evaluation to provide evidence to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The evaluation team will organize a face-to-face meeting and group discussions with their representatives.	PBO will be actively involved in the evaluation, as they were one of the implementing partners for the project.	PBO will be engaged at all the stages of the evaluation.	Stakeholders from PBO will serve as key informant interviewees during data collection.
Institute for Research and Democratic Development (IREDD)	IREDD supported the development of multi-stakeholder platform sustainability plans with	IREDD will be included in the evaluation in order to assess the project relevance,	IREDD's involvement will be extremely important for the purpose of	IREDD will be engaged during data collection.	Stakeholders from IREDD will serve as key informant interviewees during data collection.

	grassroots organizations and partners at the local and sub-national levels.	effectiveness, sustainability and impact. The evaluation team will have face-to-face meetings and group discussions with their representatives.	assessing the context in which the project was designed and implemented.		
Creative Initiatives for Development & Relief	The firm was hired to carry out the boundary harmonization.	Stakeholders from the firm will serve as key informant interviewees during data collection.	CIDRE's inclusion in the evaluation is highly important for the purpose of assessing their perspective on the project implementation.	The firm will be engaged during data collection.	Stakeholders from CIDRE will take part as key informant interviewees.
Contours Limited	The firm produced boundary maps in project counties using global positioning systems.	Stakeholders from the firm will serve as key informant interviewees during data collection.	Contours Limited's inclusion in the evaluation is highly important for the purpose of assessing their perspective on the project implementation.	The firm will be engaged during data collection.	Stakeholders from Contours Limited will take part as key informant interviewees.
Liberia National Rural Women Structure (LNRWS)	In line with its mission, the LNRWS was charged with the responsibility of mobilizing rural women as the umbrella structure of all rural women-based structures at the national, district, county and community levels.	LNRWS will be included in the evaluation in order to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness and sustainability.	LNRWS's involvement will be extremely important for the purpose of assessing the context in which the project was designed and implemented.	LNRWS will be engaged during data collection.	Stakeholders from LNRWS will take part as key informant interviewees.
National Peace Hut Women of Liberia	Peace Hut was charged with the responsibility of mobilizing women from the initiative for the project.	Peace Hut will be included in the evaluation in order to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness and sustainability.	Peace Hut's inclusion in the evaluation is highly important for the purpose of assessing their perspective on the project.	Peace Hut will be engaged during data collection.	Stakeholders from Peace Hut will take part as key informant interviewees.

ANNEX 3: EVALUATION MATRIX

Evaluation criteria	Key question(s)	Indicators for measuring progress	Collection method(s)	Data source	Assumptions
Relevance	Did the project results address the major peacebuilding needs of the target groups and of the country, more broadly?	Evidence that the project objectives address identified rights and needs of the target groups	Document analysis -KIIs and FGDs with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD transcripts	All reports are readily accessible and all State stakeholders are ready and willing to provide needed data
		Evidence of involvement of target state partners in the conceptualization and design process	KIIs with state partners	KII transcripts	All State partners are ready and willing to provide needed data
	How timely and urgent was the project vis-à-vis the sustaining peace context in Liberia and how did it effectively utilize windows of political opportunities?	Evidence that the project was timely and urgent vis-à-vis the sustaining peace context in Liberia	Document analysis of situational analysis/studies undertaken -KIIs and FGDs with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD transcripts	All reports are readily accessible and all State stakeholders are ready and willing to provide needed data
	How suitable for the context is the range of substantive areas in which the project is engaged (i.e. women's rights to land, women's participation in land governance processes, alternative dispute resolution, strengthening government institutions at the national and local levels, enhanced livelihoods for concessions-affected communities)?	Evidence of suitability of the project in the context of substantive areas in which the project is engaged (i.e. women's rights to land, women's participation in land governance processes, alternative dispute resolution, strengthening government institutions at the national and local levels, enhanced livelihoods for concessions-affected communities)	Document analysis of situational analysis/studies undertaken -KIIs and FGDs with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD transcripts	All reports are readily accessible and all State stakeholders are ready and willing to provide needed data
	How does the project reflect and align with Liberia's national plans on gender promotion as well as the PAPD and the UNDAF and to the specific government priorities on land governance and land conflict?	Evidence that the project reflects and aligns with Liberia's national plans on gender promotion as well as the PAPD and the UNDAF and to the specific government priorities on land governance and land conflict	Document analysis of situational analysis/studies undertaken -KIIs with the project team	Project documents, KII and FGD transcripts	All reports are readily accessible and all State stakeholders are ready and willing to provide needed data
Effectiveness	What progress has been made towards the achievement of the expected outcomes and outputs? What results were achieved?	Evidence of progress made towards the achievement of the expected outcomes and outputs	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team -KII with government partners -KII with community leaders -FGD with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD transcripts	All Ips, government partners, project teams and beneficiaries are ready and willing to provide needed data
	What were the major interventions that contributed to the achievement of the outcomes and outputs?	Evidence of major interventions that contributed to the achievement of the outcomes and outputs	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team -KII with government partners -KII with community leaders	Project documents, KII and FGD transcripts	All IPs, government partners, project teams and beneficiaries are ready and willing to provide needed data

			-FGD with project beneficiaries		willing to provide needed data
	To what extent are beneficiaries satisfied with the results?	Evidence that beneficiaries are satisfied with the results	-Document reviews -KII with government partners -KII with community leaders -FGD with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD transcripts	All beneficiaries are ready and willing to provide needed data
	To what extent did the project's theory of change prove realistic and was implemented?	Evidence that the project's theory of change proved realistic and was implemented	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team	Project team, IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	To what extent are the project approaches and strategies innovative? What types of innovative practices have been introduced? What are the unsuccessful innovative practices?	Evidence of innovativeness in the project approaches and strategies	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team	Project team, IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
		Availability of successful innovative practices and unsuccessful innovative practices	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team	Project team, IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	Has the project built synergies with other programmes being implemented at country level by United Nations, international NGOs and the Government of Liberia?	Evidence that the project built synergies with other programmes being implemented at the country level by the United Nations, international NGOs and the Government of Liberia	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team	Project team, IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
Efficiency	Have resources been allocated strategically to achieve project outcomes?	Evidence that resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) have been allocated strategically to achieve the programme outcomes	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team and implementing partners	Project team, IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	Were resources sufficient to enable the achievement of the expected outputs?	Evidence that resources were sufficient to enable the achievement of the expected outputs	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team and implementing partners	Project team, IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	Are the joint project and its components cost-effective? Could activities and outputs have been delivered with fewer resources without comprising project quality?	Evidence that the joint project and its components were cost-effective	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team and implementing partners	Project team, IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
		Evidence of cost-effectiveness of the programme and its components	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team and implementing partners	Project team, IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	Were the project's organizational structure, management and coordination mechanisms effective in terms of project implementation and monitoring? Are there any recommendations for improvement?	Evidence that the project organizational structure, managerial support and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the delivery of the project	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team and implementing partners	Project team, IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data

	Has the joint nature of the project improved efficiency in terms of delivery, including reduced duplication, burdens and transactional costs? If so, what factors have influenced this?	Evidence that the joint nature of the project improved efficiency in terms of delivery, including reduced duplication, burdens and transactional costs	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team and implementing partners	Project team, IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	How were data from monitoring used for management action and decision-making?	Evidence that monitoring data were used for management action and decision-making	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team and implementing partners	Project team, IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	Does the project have effective monitoring mechanisms in place to measure progress towards achievement of results?	Evidence of monitoring reports on programme performance from the beginning of implementation to the end. Availability of indicator performance tracking table	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team and implementing partners	Project team, IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	Have the project's organizational structures, managerial support and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the delivery of the project?	Evidence that the project's organizational structures, managerial support and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the delivery of the project	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team and implementing partners	Project team, IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
Impact	What are the various effects of the project?	Evidence of effects produced, positive and negative, intended or unintended, directly (target groups) and indirectly by the project	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team -KII with government partners -KII with community leaders -FGD with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD transcripts	All IPs, government partners, project teams and beneficiaries are ready and willing to provide needed data
		Evidence of any negative effects of the project on the four cross-cutting issues: gender, human rights, climate and the environment and corruption	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team -KII with government partners -KII with community leaders -FGD with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD transcripts	All IPs, government partners, project teams and beneficiaries are ready and willing to provide needed data
	Has the project identified and addressed the social, environmental and economic effects of the intervention that are longer term?	Evidence that the project identified and addressed social, environmental and economic effects of the intervention that are longer term	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team -KII with government partners -KII with community leaders -FGD with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD transcripts	All IPs, government partners, project teams and beneficiaries are ready and willing to provide needed data
	What indirect, secondary and potential consequences of the intervention were captured?	Evidence of indirect, secondary and potential consequences of the intervention captured	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team -KII with government partners -KII with community leaders -FGD with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD transcripts	All IPs, government partners, project teams and beneficiaries are ready and willing to provide needed data

Sustainability	What is the likelihood that the project results will be of use in the long term? What is the likelihood that the results from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time once the project ends?	Evidence of the likelihood that the project results will be of use in the long term	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team -KII with government partners -KII with community leaders -FGD with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD transcripts	All Ips, government partners, project teams and beneficiaries are ready and willing to provide needed data
	Which components of the project should be carried over into the next phase, and are there any recommendations for their improvement?	Evidence that components of the project should be carried over into the next phase	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team -KII with government partners -KII with community leaders -FGD with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD transcripts	All Ips, government partners, project teams and beneficiaries are ready and willing to provide needed data
	How have partnerships (with governments, United Nations, donors, NGOs, civil society organizations, religious leaders, the media) been established to foster sustainability of results?	Evidence of establishment of partnerships (with governments, United Nations, donors, NGOs, civil society organizations, religious leaders, the media) to foster sustainability of results	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team and implementing partners	Project team, IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	Did the intervention design include an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy (including promoting national/local ownership, use of local capacity, etc.) to support positive changes, including in gender equality and human rights, after the end of the intervention? To what extent were stakeholders involved in the preparation of the strategy?	Evidence that the intervention design includes an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy (including promoting national/local ownership, use of local capacity, etc.) to support positive changes, including in gender equality and human rights after the end of the intervention	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team and implementing partners	Project team, IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
		Evidence that stakeholders were involved in the preparation of the strategy	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team -KII with government partners -KII with community leaders -FGD with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD transcripts	All Ips, government partners, project teams and beneficiaries are ready and willing to provide needed data
Coherence	Has the project built synergies with other programmes being implemented at the country level by United Nations, international NGOs and the Government of Liberia?	Evidence that the project built synergies with other programmes being implemented at country level by the United Nations, international NGOs, and the Government of Liberia	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team and implementing partners	Project team, IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	To what extent has the project's intervention been consistent with interventions of others in the same context?	Evidence that the project's intervention has been consistent with interventions of others in the same context	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team and implementing partners	Project team, IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data
	To what extent is the project complementary to, and harmonized and coordinated with other interventions in this area?	Evidence that the project was complementary to, and harmonized and coordinated with other interventions in this area	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team and implementing partners	Project team, IPs	All IPs and the project team are ready and willing to provide the needed data

Gender equality and human rights (GE&HR)	To what extent have GE&HR considerations been integrated into the project design and implementation? To what extent have GE&HR been reflected in the overall intervention budget?	Evidence that GE&HR considerations have been integrated into the project design and implementation	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team -KII with government partners -KII with community leaders -FGD with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD Transcripts	All IPs government partners, project teams, and beneficiaries are ready and willing to provide needed data
	Were the processes and activities implemented during the intervention free from discrimination to all stakeholders?	Evidence that the processes and activities implemented during the intervention were free from discrimination to all stakeholders	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team -KII with government partners -KII with community leaders -FGD with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD Transcripts	All IPs government partners, project teams, and beneficiaries are ready and willing to provide needed data
	Were there any constraints or facilitators (e.g. political, practical, bureaucratic) in addressing GE&HR issues during implementation? What level of effort was made to overcome these challenges?	Evidence of constraints or facilitators (e.g. political, practical, bureaucratic) in addressing GE&HR issues during implementation	-Document reviews -KIIs with the project team -KII with government partners -KII with community leaders -FGD with project beneficiaries	Project documents, KII and FGD Transcripts	All IPs government partners, project teams, and beneficiaries are ready and willing to provide needed data

ANNEX 4: WORK PLAN

Tasks	Time frame	Responsible party
Desk review and inception meeting	1–20 June 2023	Evaluation Team
Submission of draft inception report to the evaluation reference group	20 June 2023	Evaluation Team
Submission of final inception report	26 June 2023	Evaluation Team
Data collection	2–14 July 2023	Evaluation Team
Analysis and presentation of preliminary findings	24 July 2023	Evaluation Team
Submission of interim evaluation report. Feedback	3 August 2023	Evaluation Team
Submission of final evaluation report	17 August 2023	Evaluation Team

ANNEX 5: OUTLINE OF THE REPORT

This section provides a broad indication of what the outline of the report may include. It is important to note that this is just an outline and the actual outline will be defined by insights and conclusions drawn from the study.

- ✓ Executive Summary
- ✓ Acronyms
- ✓ Introduction
- ✓ Methodology
- ✓ Context analysis
- ✓ Findings (this section will be divided into sub-sections)
 - relevance
 - efficiency
 - effectiveness
 - impact
 - sustainability
 - limitations and challenges
- ✓ Lessons learned
- ✓ Conclusion
- ✓ Recommendations
- ✓ Bibliography
- ✓ Annex 1: Terms of Reference

ANNEX 6: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Project documents reviewed include:

- ✓ Project document – Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation through Strengthening Land Governance and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms in Liberia Proposal
- ✓ UN Women/UNDP, WFP Peacebuilding Fund Project Progress Report, 2020
- ✓ UN Women/UNDP, WFP Peacebuilding Fund Project Progress Report: Narrative Progress Report, January 2020–December 2021
- ✓ Annual Progress Report, 2022
- ✓ Baseline Report, 2020
- ✓ Endline Perception Study Report, 2022
- ✓ Mission Report, May 2021.

Policies, academic literature and other relevant documents reviewed

Relevant policies and other documents that were reviewed and will be further reviewed during the assignment include:

- ✓ Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development – Government of Liberia (2018–2023)
- ✓ “Revised National Gender Policy” – Government of Liberia (2008–2011)
- ✓ “Liberia National Gender Policy” – Government of Liberia (2009)
- ✓ *Report on Women’s Empowerment in Liberia* – National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (2018)
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ANNEX 7: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

In 2018, the Government of Liberia passed the Land Rights Act (LRA). This legislative framework is a milestone in land legislation, paving a passage for more equitable, fair land rights for the citizens of Liberia. Nearly 70 per cent of Liberia's 3.3 million citizens live in rural areas and own their lands collectively according to customary laws. Despite strong customary claims, for the past six decades the Liberian Government claimed all lands as owned by the state and allocated roughly 35–40 per cent of the country to foreign investment without consulting community members. Disputes related to overlapping boundaries, rightful ownership, conflicting claims and land grabbing are the most pronounced among communities as well as between communities and concessionaires. Communities in general are affected by concessions due to a lack of transparency in allocating land to concessions made by the government. Most of the concession contracts are negotiated in Monrovia with little or no consultations, neither are the agreements shared with local communities. In addition, activities undertaken by concession companies, such as production of palm oil and rubber, and extraction of gold, diamonds and iron ore, have severely impacted the environment and its surroundings.

The project builds on several other interventions including the “Strengthening Conflict Prevention through Establishment of Multi-stakeholder Platforms and Improved Alternative Livelihoods in Concessions Areas” which supported the establishment of structures called Multi-stakeholder Platforms (MSPs) to educate communities about their rights and how they can benefit from their lands through concessions; the “Liberia Decentralization Support Programme (LDSP)” that supported the de-concentration of essential services through a concept of establishing County Service Centers (CSCs) where community members can access these services; and “Strengthening Local and Traditional Mechanisms for Peace at Local and National Levels” that supported the establishment of local Early Warning and County Peace Committees structures to mediate and report conflict-related issues.

To address the continued challenges on land governance and related conflict, the UN Peacebuilding Support Office approved a project implemented by UN Women, UNDP and WFP and entitled “*Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation through Strengthening Land Governance and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms*”. The project was funded by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) for a budget of \$4 million over three years. The project has been supporting the implementation of the Land Rights Act (LRA) and Local Government Act (LGA), the latter of which was also passed in 2018 and should fully devolve political, administrative and fiscal authorities to counties over a ten-year period. The joint implementation of the two Acts aims to provide opportunities for empowering rural communities, including women and youth, by allowing them to manage their land and land-based resources to advance their economic growth and development, and thus contributing to a reduction of land-related disputes in conflict-prone counties (Grand Cape Mount, Sinoe, Maryland and Nimba). It is also worth noting that the proposed interventions aim to tackle the major problems identified by the government, development partners and CSOs and respond to the issues identified in the conflict analysis and land-related assessments.

In light of this, UN Women Liberia, the lead agency for the project, is seeking to hire two consultants – an International Lead Evaluation Consultant and a National Evaluation Consultant – to conduct the end-of-project evaluation. The International Evaluation Consultant will lead the evaluation process and decide on planning and distribution of the evaluation workload and tasks. The National Evaluation Consultant will provide requisite support to the International Evaluation Consultant throughout the evaluation process, including support with local access, cultural aspects and logistics.

Description of the joint project

The joint project titled “Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation through Strengthening Land Governance and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms” is funded by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund. The project is being implemented by UNW, UNDP and WFP in Nimba, Grand Cape Mount, Sinoe and Maryland Counties. In these counties, the project is strengthening the capacity of County Land Offices and further linking them with existing land dispute-related structures as well as the new structures created through the passage of LRA, and is supporting the initial steps of formalization of customary land as a measure to prevent disputes relating to customary landowners and users. In addition, several interventions are aimed at strengthening existing semi-formal and informal land dispute resolution mechanisms, such as Multi-stakeholder Platforms, and the new mechanisms established with the LRA, such as CLDMCs, with a view to reducing conflicts in a more transparent, effective and gender and youth responsive manner. The project started in January 2020 and was due to end in January 2023, an implementation period of 36 months. The total budget for the entire project duration is USD 3,996,522.48. A three month No Cost Extension has been sought to finalise some residual activities as well as this evaluation.

At national level the initiative supports the implementation of the 2017 Peacebuilding Plan, which was integrated into the Pillar 3: Sustaining Peace of the government's national development plan – the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD). PAPD also calls for improving socioeconomic human rights by passing and implementing the Land Rights Act to improve land tenure security; developing a regulatory framework for the actualization of the Liberia Land Authority Act; securing access to land by harmonizing of customary and statutory land tenure systems; and strengthening

community land administration and governance framework (ensuring the inclusion of youth, women, and marginalized community members).

Likewise, it is aligned with the 2018 National Gender Policy which clearly calls for supporting women, land tenure and property rights, including advocating for and promoting women's access and control over land/land-based resources, and other forms of property and assets. In addition, there is alignment with the Liberian National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security (2019–2023), which emphasizes the importance of land, inheritance, and property rights for women. Moreover, the proposed intervention has been designed to support the Government of Liberia to implement the LRA and LGA, including the Legal Aid Policy (2019) and the Land Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Policy.

The government has identified land-related issues as critical drivers of conflict as well as the root causes of inter-community divisions. Land disputes at the local level impede development and have the potential to turn into large-scale conflicts. The passage of the Land Rights Act and the Local Government Act has significant peace dividends if successfully implemented. The Local Government Act provides for the decentralization of services and brings government closer to the people thereby reducing the potential of conflicts and addressing some of Liberia's main conflict triggers and grievances. Further to this, the effects of environmental hazards vis-a-vis concessions are more likely to fuel conflicts in addition to already existent land disputes. Dialogue and confidence-building between concessionaires and communities will be an integral part of the proposed project, so that peacebuilding opportunities are not missed.

Key partners and beneficiaries of the project also consulted during project development include communities from targeted counties, Rights and Rice Foundation (RRF), government institutions such as the Liberia Land Authority (LLA), Office of the Legal Advisor to the President (OLA), and the Peacebuilding Office (PBO), the National Bureau of Concessions (NBC), National Centre for Coordination of Response mechanisms (NCCRM), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), concession companies and civil society organizations.

In cognizance of past and ongoing projects in the land sector, the project aims to tackle major problems identified by government and CSO partners and respond to the issues identified through the existing conflict analysis and land-related assessments. The project outcomes respond to two key aspects: the limited capacity of the government to prevent land-related conflicts and aims at strengthening the effectiveness, transparency and inclusiveness of land administrative structures at national and county levels. The second outcome aims at strengthening the existing land disputes resolution mechanisms.

The detailed project document including the results framework can be found as an annex to this TOR.

Project Theory of Change and outcomes/outputs

IF customary governance authorities and communities in targeted counties are aware of the LRA and LGA, existing land disputes resolution mechanisms, concession agreements, and their role as well as have an improved understanding of women's and youth rights to land; IF county land offices, county land boards, and Community Land Development and Management Committees in targeted counties have the capacity, procedures and systems in place to formalize customary land in a way that reflects rights and needs of all community members; IF existing semi-formal land dispute resolution bodies (i.e. MSPs) have the capacity to provide a safe and inclusive platform for communities, government, and concession companies to resolve disputes in a gender and youth responsive manner; IF communities including women and youth in targeted counties have the capacity and skills to participate in formal and informal land dispute mechanisms; IF institutional capacity of LLA/NBC/EPA are strengthened to effectively prevent potential conflict triggers arising from concessionaires (i.e. environmental hazards and limited livelihood opportunities); IF early warning and response mechanism become more sensitive to land disputes; THEN land management will be more effective and inclusive, and land disputes will be better prevented and managed in targeted counties because existing semi-formal and informal land dispute resolution mechanisms; and government land management systems and capacities will be strengthened to reduce land-related conflicts.

The Theory of Change is based on the following assumptions:

- Existence of government commitment to implement the LRA, LGA and the ADR policy at national and sub-national level
- The government is willing to mainstream gender in its policies, rules and procedures
- Concessionaires are willing to deliver their commitments
- Targeted communities are willing to change attitudes towards women, youth and vulnerable group's rights to land
- Stakeholders (government, private sector, CSOs, development partners) are able/willing to coordinate to maximize the impact of their work.

Outcomes and Outputs

Outcome 1. Authorities at national and local levels manage land allocation, registration and licensing processes in a more effective, transparent and inclusive manner, reducing conflict

Output 1.1. Customary governance authorities and communities in targeted counties are aware of the LRA, existing land disputes resolution mechanisms, concession agreements, and their role as well as an improved understanding of women's and youth rights to land

Output 1.2. County land offices and county land boards in targeted counties have the capacity, procedures and systems in place to formalize customary land in a way that reflects rights and needs of all community members

Output 1.3. CLDMCs are established in targeted counties and have the capacity to initiate the formalization and recognition of their land rights

Output 1.4. Early warning and response mechanism is engendered and integrates land dispute-related data

Output 1.5. Institutional capacity of LLA/EPA/NBC/SPRC is strengthened to effectively prevent conflicts driven by the depletion of livelihood opportunities and environmental hazards

Outcome 2. Existing semi-formal and informal land dispute resolution mechanisms are strengthened, more sustainable and able to reduce conflict in a more effective and gender responsive manner

Output 2.1. Existing semi-formal land dispute resolution bodies (CPC, CLDMC, SPRC, Peace Huts, Multi-stakeholder Platform) have strengthened capacity to resolve disputes in a sustainable gender and youth responsive manner

Output 2.2. Communities including women and youth in targeted counties have the capacity and skills to participate in formal and informal land dispute mechanisms

Output 2.3. Coordination between government agencies in charge of implementing the LRA and LGA, development partners and CSOs is strengthened.

Output 2.4. Enhanced Multi-stakeholder Platform capacity to find agreeable solutions, propose alternative livelihoods and address the effects of environmental hazards.

Purpose (and use of the evaluation)

This evaluation is a mandatory component of project management, and the final evaluation report will be submitted to PBSO. As a summative process, the purpose of this evaluation is to examine project progress and results. The evaluation will generate substantial evidence for informed future interventions and best practices. The evaluation will identify key results, challenges, lessons learnt, good practices, conclusions and recommendations that will support future joint programming and foster organizational learning and accountability.

The evaluation findings will be used by relevant stakeholders to:

- Inform and enhance collective capacities of the government at both the national and local levels to support and implement gender responsive land governance processes;
- Enhance capacities of CSOs and communities to participate actively in land management processes;
- Enhance participation of women in leadership and in key decision-making structures and processes especially on land governance;
- Enhance peace building initiatives and social cohesion through the adoption of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms;
- Inform the development of future programming interventions to strengthen the results of this PBF-funded flagship project peacebuilding initiative.

This evaluation should inform the implementation of the Government's Strategic Plan, new strategic documents such as the new United Nations Development Cooperation Framework (UNSCDF) and future programming actions of UN Women, UNDP and WFP, including joint programming actions.

The findings of this evaluation will also be used by the UN to further refine its approaches towards the promotion of the Women Peace and Security agenda and to inform the implementation of strategic documents including the 2020–2024 Strategic Note of UN Women Liberia CO.

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

Intended users

The main evaluation users include UN Women, UNDP and WFP in Liberia, as well as the Peacebuilding Fund and UNCT more broadly. Furthermore, national stakeholders include the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP), Liberia Land Authority (LLA), National Bureau of Concessions (NBC), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Peacebuilding Office (PBO), Office of the legal advisor to the President (OLA), Environment Protection Authority (EPA), National Centre for the Coordination of Response Mechanisms (NCCRM), Rights and Rice foundation (RRF) and other CSOs.

Objectives

The evaluation will be guided by the standard OECD/DAC evaluation criteria and GERAAS criteria list; i.e. a focus on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, coherence, sustainability, and human rights and gender equality.

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

1. Assess the relevance of the intervention, strategy and approach in the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and achievement of women's land rights and the broader peacebuilding needs of Liberia as well as the needs of the targeted communities;
2. Assess the effectiveness of the project implementation, including what outcomes and outputs were achieved and how they contributed to peacebuilding objectives;
3. Assess the efficiency of the project towards the achievement of results, including efficiency of project management, M&E and coordination, timeliness, value for money;
4. Assess the project coherence, including quality of the inter-agency coordination mechanisms that were established at country level, but also coherence with previous relevant interventions and with interventions by other actors;
5. Assess sustainability of the project;
6. Determine whether a human rights approach and gender equality principles are integrated adequately in the project;
7. Assess the overall impact of the project in terms of changing behaviours and attitudes related to land conflict and land management and Women, Peace and Security in this theme;
8. Identify and highlight important lessons learned, best practices and strategies for replication and provide actionable recommendations for the design and implementation of future interventions;
9. Identify and highlight innovative approaches in all aspects of the project;
10. Document and analyse possible weaknesses in order to improve next steps of UN programming in the area of women, peace and security programming and land governance.

Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation will cover the implementation period of the joint project, thus, January 2020 to January 2023 (36 months).

It is intended that as much as possible the evaluation will provide a comprehensive assessment of the joint programme covering all three levels of the programme scope and their interconnections:

- Community level – assessing how the joint programme initiatives, particularly by implementing partners on the ground, have created favourable conditions for women to exercise their rights to land, and led to enhanced participation of women in land governance and decision-making processes, dispute resolution processes, etc.
- County level – analysing achievements of significant impact of the programme on the capacities of county level land administration.
- National level – analysing achievements over the last months of implementation, more specifically what have been the successes, opportunities missed, and constraints encountered.

The project was implemented in four counties, Nimba, Grand Cape Mount, Maryland and Sinoe. The geographic scope of the evaluation will be decided in consultation with the evaluation team during the inception phase. The project targeted four counties, and challenges that might hinder the data collection process at county level is the bad condition of roads during rainy season.

Evaluation design (process and methods)

The evaluation process is divided into six phases:

- 1) Preparation phase
- 2) Inception phase
- 3) Data collection phase
- 4) Data analyses and syntheses phase
- 5) Validation
- 6) Dissemination and Management Response.

The evaluation team (the International and National Consultants) is responsible for phases two, three, four and five while phase one and phase six are the responsibility of the Joint Program Managers, the Deputy Country Representative of UN Women and designated representatives of UNDP and WFP in collaboration with the PBF Secretariat in the Resident Coordinator's Office.

In addition, UN Women is a UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, or UN-SWAP reporting entity, and the consultants will take into consideration that all the evaluation in UN Women are annually assessed against the UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator and its related scorecard. In line with the above-mentioned, the Evaluation Report will be subjected to UN-SWAP quality scoring and must demonstrate evidence of gender integration in the evaluation process and report. The methodology should clearly focus on highlighting gender issues in the implementation of the program. This is one of the elements by which this evaluation report will be scrutinized by a team of external evaluators, using the UN-SWAP criteria. The evaluation performance indicator [[UN SWAP EPI Technical Guidance and Scorecard](#)] is used to appreciate the extent to which the evaluation report satisfies the following criteria:

- GEWE is integrated in the evaluation scope of analysis and evaluation indicators are designed in a way that ensures GEWE-related data will be collected.
- GEWE is integrated in evaluation criteria and evaluation questions are included that specifically address how GEWE has been integrated into the design, planning, implementation of the intervention and the results achieved.
- A gender-responsive methodology, methods and tools, and data analysis techniques are selected.
- Evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations reflect a gender analysis.

A Project Evaluation Reference Group comprising UN Women, UNDP, WFP, PBF Secretariat, PBSO and relevant stakeholders will be established and will review the content and quality of all evaluation deliverables and provide joint comments to the evaluators within 7–10 days of submission and whose comments need to be considered and responded to by the evaluators.

Duties and Responsibilities

The Consultant will undertake the following tasks, duties and responsibilities:

- **Review of Documents:** UN Women will gather and share with the consultants all relevant reports and documents, including the baseline study and the perception survey. The evaluators shall familiarize themselves with the programme through a review of relevant documents, including, but not limited to: Project document, Joint Programme Work Plan, Annual and Semi-annual progress reports, Programme Monitoring reports, Project procurement and financial reports, Minutes of Project Management meetings, Policy briefs, studies and any other technical reports, etc.
- **Key Informant Interviews:** The evaluator shall do a comprehensive stakeholder mapping in the beginning to identify the key informant interviewees. The evaluator shall carry out key informant interviews with major stakeholders. The interviews should be organized in a semi-structured format to include, for instance, focused group discussions; individual interviews; surveys; and/or participatory exercises with the community or individuals. The information from this assessment will be used as a baseline for PAPD and UNSCDF.

- Field visits: During site visits, the evaluator will carry out interviews with the community, making sure that the perspective of the most vulnerable group is included in the consultation. This shall include Focus Group discussions.

The evaluation team should take measures to ensure data quality, reliability and validity of data collection tools and methods and their responsiveness to gender equality and human rights; for example, the limitations of the sample (representativeness) should be stated clearly, and the data should be triangulated (cross-checked against other sources) to help ensure robust results.

The evaluation team is solely responsible for data collection, transcripts or other data analyses and processing work. Usage of online platforms and surveys as a complementary and additional methodology is highly recommended. The evaluation team is expected to manage those platforms and to provide data analyses as defined in the Inception report.

The evaluation team should detail a plan on how protection of subjects and respect for confidentiality will be guaranteed. In addition, the evaluation team should develop a sampling frame (area and population represented, rationale for selection, mechanics of selection, limitations of the sample) and specify how it will address the diversity of stakeholders in the intervention.

The evaluation should be conducted in accordance with UN Women Evaluation Policy, evaluation chapter of the Programme and Operations Manual (POM), the Global Evaluation Report Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS evaluation report quality checklist), the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan Evaluation Performance Indicators (UN-SWAP EP) and UN Women Evaluation handbook. All the documents will be provided by UN Women at the onset of the evaluation.

Competencies

Methodology

The evaluation methodology will be mixed methods, including quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and analytical approaches to account for complexity of gender relations and to ensure participatory and inclusive processes that are culturally appropriate.

The detailed methodology for the evaluation will be developed and presented by the consultants and validated by the Project Evaluation Reference Group at the inception of the evaluation.

Participatory and gender-sensitive evaluation methodologies will support active participation of women and girls, and men and boys benefiting from the project interventions.

Stakeholder participation

The evaluators are expected to discuss during the Inception phase how the process will ensure participation of stakeholders at all stages, with a specific emphasis on rights holders and their representatives. Their participation is crucial at each stage as follows: 1. Design; 2. Consultation of stakeholders; 3. Stakeholders as data collectors; 4. Interpretation; and 5. Reporting, dissemination and usage of data. The list of stakeholders can be found in section III. Furthermore, a stakeholder analysis should be provided in the inception report.

It is important to pay particular attention to the participation of rights holders – in particular rural women. The evaluators are expected to validate findings through engagement with stakeholders at stakeholder workshops, debriefings or other forms of engagement.

Evaluation questions and criteria

The evaluation should be guided but not limited to the evaluation questions listed below. UN Women/UNDP/WFP and the PBF/PBSO could raise any other relevant issues that may emerge during the inception process. Importantly, the evaluator should not individually respond to each question through a separate report section, as this may lead to duplication, but should keep these questions in mind when drafting the analysis under each evaluation criterion.

Relevance: The extent to which the objectives of the Joint Programme are consistent with national evolving peacebuilding needs and priorities of the beneficiaries, partners, and stakeholders, and are aligned with programme country government priorities as well as with UN Women, UNDP and WFP policies and strategies.

- Did the project results address the major peacebuilding needs of the target groups and of the country more broadly?
- How timely and urgent was the project vis-a-vis the sustaining peace context in Liberia and how did it effectively utilize windows of political opportunities?

- How suitable for the context is the range of substantive areas in which the project is engaged (i.e. Women rights to land, Women participation in land governance processes, Alternative dispute resolution, strengthening government institutions at national and local level, Enhanced livelihoods for concessions affected communities)?
- How does the project reflect and align to Liberia's national plans on gender promotion as well as the PAPD and the UNDAF and to the specific government priorities on land governance and land conflict?

Effectiveness: The extent to which the project's objectives were achieved or are expected/likely to be achieved.

- What has been the progress made towards achievement of the expected outcomes and outputs? What results were achieved?
- What were the major interventions that contributed to the achievement of the outcomes and outputs?
- To what extent are beneficiaries satisfied with the results?
- To what extent did the project's Theory of Change prove realistic and was implemented?
- To what extent are the project approaches and strategies innovative? What types of innovative practices have been introduced? What are the unsuccessful innovative practices?
- Has the project built synergies with other programmes being implemented at country level by United Nations, international NGOs and the Government of Liberia?

Efficiency: A measure of how economically resources /inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) were converted to results. It is also a measure of the operational efficiency, i.e. management and timeliness.

- Have resources been allocated strategically to achieve project outcomes?
- Were resources sufficient to enable achievement of the expected outputs?
- Is the joint project and its components cost-effective? Could activities and outputs have been delivered with fewer resources without comprising project quality?
- Were the project's organizational structure, management and coordination mechanisms effective in terms of project implementation and monitoring? Are there any recommendations for improvement?
- Has the joint nature of the project improved efficiency in terms of delivery, including reduced duplication, reduced burdens and transactional costs? If so, what factors have influenced this?
- How was data from monitoring used for management action and decision making?
- Does the project have effective monitoring mechanisms in place to measure progress towards achievement of results?
- Have the project's organizational structures, managerial support and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the delivery of the project?

Sustainability: The likelihood of a continuation of project results after the intervention is completed or the probability of continued long-term benefits.

- What is the likelihood that the project results will be of use in the long term? What is the likelihood that the results from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time once the project ends?
- Which components of the project should be carried over into the next phase, and are there any recommendations for their improvement? Which positive /innovative approaches have been identified if any and how can they be replicated?
- How have partnerships (with governments, UN, donors, NGOs, civil society organizations, religious leaders, the media) been established to foster sustainability of results?
- Did the intervention design include an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy (including promoting national/local ownership, use of local capacity, etc.) to support positive changes, including in Gender Equality and Human Rights after the end of the intervention? To what extent were stakeholders involved in the preparation of the strategy?

Gender Equality and Human Rights (GE&HR)

- To what extent have GE&HR considerations been integrated into the project design and implementation?
- To what extent have GE&HR been reflected in the overall intervention budget?
- Were there any constraints or facilitators (e.g. political, practical, bureaucratic) to addressing GE&HR issues during implementation? What level of effort was made to overcome these challenges?

Were the processes and activities implemented during the intervention free from discrimination to all stakeholders?

Coherence: Includes internal coherence, which addresses the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by the same institution as well as the consistency of the intervention with the relevant international norms and standards to which that institution adheres. External coherence considers the consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context. This includes complementarity, harmonization and co-ordination with others, and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.

- Has the project built synergies with other programmes being implemented at country level by United Nations, international NGOs and the Government of Liberia?
- To what extent has the project's intervention been consistent with interventions of others in the same context?
- To what extent is the project complementary, harmonized and coordinated with other interventions in this area?

Impact: Addresses the ultimate significance and potentially transformative effects of the intervention. It seeks to identify social, environmental and economic effects of the intervention that are longer term or broader in scope than those already captured under the effectiveness criterion.

- Has the project identified and addressed social, environmental and economic effects of the intervention that are longer term?
- What indirect, secondary and potential consequences of the intervention were captured?
- The questions above are a suggestion and could be changed during the inception phase in consultation with members of the Reference Group and UN Agencies. It is expected that the evaluation team will develop an evaluation matrix, which will relate to the above questions, the areas they refer to, the criteria for evaluating them, the indicators and the means of verification. The questions will be revised by a Team of Evaluators during the Inception Phase. All evaluations conducted by UN Women are publicly available on the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation (GATE) system along with their management responses.

Time Frame

- The evaluation is expected to be conducted according to the following time frame:

Tasks	Time frame	Responsible party
<p>Desk review and inception meeting</p> <p>The evaluator will attend a virtual inception meeting where orientation on programme objectives will be offered, as well as on progress made. At this stage of the evaluation, the evaluator will have the chance to speak with UN Women, UNDP and WFP staff, and UN Peacebuilding Fund Secretariat in Liberia as well as with selected stakeholder representatives. The evaluator will be given key programme documents for review and the Terms of Reference of the Evaluation. The inception meeting, desk review of key programme documents (e.g. programme documentation, contracts, agreements, progress reports, monitoring reports, etc.).</p>	<p>Feb. 20–27, 2023</p> <p>7 days</p>	Evaluation Team
<p>Submission of draft Inception Report to the evaluation reference Group</p> <p>The evaluators are expected to discuss during the Inception Workshops how the process will ensure participation of stakeholders at all stages, with a specific emphasis on rights holders and their representatives.</p>	<p>February 28, 2023</p> <p>1 day</p>	Evaluation Team

<p>Submission of Final Inception Report</p> <p>The inception report should capture relevant information such as proposed methods; proposed sources of data; and data collection procedures. The inception report should also include an evaluation matrix, proposed schedule of tasks, activities and deliverables and should also contain background information.</p> <p>The inception report should be approved by the reference Group, UN Women, UNDP and WFP.</p>	<p>March 9, 2023</p> <p>7 days</p>	<p>Evaluation Team</p>
<p>Data collection</p> <p>Data collection will include both in-country, face-to-face and/or virtual (telephone, video conferencing) interviews.</p>	<p>March 9–31, 2023</p> <p>21 days</p>	<p>Evaluation Team</p>
<p>Analysis and presentation of preliminary findings to the Reference Group</p> <p>The evaluator will share preliminary findings and recommendations with the Reference Group at the end of the field visit. Prior to this presentation, the Consultant will share the initial findings and recommendations with the UN Women programme team.</p>	<p>April 3–13, 2023</p> <p>10 days</p>	<p>Evaluation Team</p>
<p>Submission of interim Evaluation Report</p> <p>Report structure should follow UNEG evaluation reporting guidance. The evaluators finalize the draft report. UN Women will review the report as part of quality assurance and will share it with the reference group for their feedback.</p>	<p>April 24, 2023</p> <p>1 day</p>	<p>Evaluation Team</p>
<p>Comments from Evaluation Reference Group and Evaluation Technical Committee</p> <p>The report should be finalized on the basis of feedback from UN Women and the Reference Group. UN Women will present the draft report to stakeholders in a validation meeting facilitated by the National Consultant.</p>	<p>May 3, 2023</p> <p>10 days</p>	<p>Evaluation Team, UN Women Evaluation Manager, Evaluation Reference Group and Evaluation Technical Committee, Peace Building Office Secretariat, PBF</p>
<p>Submission of a Final Evaluation Report</p> <p>The final report will be structured as follows:</p> <p>Contents</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. List of abbreviations and acronyms 2. Executive summary 3. Background and context 4. Evaluation purpose 5. Evaluation objectives and scope 6. Evaluation methodology and limitations 7. Evaluation findings 8. Relevance 9. Efficiency 10. Effectiveness 11. Sustainability 12. Gender, Equity and Human Rights 13. Coherence 14. Impact 	<p>May 31, 2023</p> <p>28 days</p>	<p>Evaluation Team</p>

15. Conclusions 16. Recommendations 17. Lessons learned Annexes 18. Terms of Reference 19. Documents consulted 20. List of institutions interviewed, and sites visited 21. Evaluation tools (questionnaires, interview guides, etc.) 22. Summary matrix of findings, evidence, and recommendations 23. Evaluation brief The final report will be submitted in soft copies. A report is considered “final” when the Evaluation Manager confirms that it is complete and satisfactory in reference to suggestions for improvement.		
Dissemination of Report With recommendations from the evaluation team, UN Women will develop a dissemination and utilization plan following the finalization of the Evaluation Report.	June 6, 2023 20 days	UN Women
Management response	June 16, 2023 10 days	UN Women

I. Expected deliverables

The national and international evaluators will produce the following deliverables:

	Deliverables
1	Final Inception Report. A detailed inception report, including a work plan that will respond to the TOR with clear links between the proposed evaluation approach and evaluation questions.
2	A briefing and report with preliminary findings and PowerPoint Presentation of preliminary findings presented to the Reference Group.
3	Interim Evaluation Report. Report structure should follow UNEG evaluation reporting guidance.
4	PowerPoint Presentation of draft report. A presentation of draft report should be done at a validation workshop facilitated by the National Consultant.
5	Finalized evaluation reports which shows in tracked change mode how the evaluation team has responded to comments on the draft report.

Please see Annex 3 for detailed description of deliverables.

All the deliverables, including annexes, notes and reports should be submitted in writing in English.

Upon receipt of the deliverables and prior to the payment of instalments, the deliverables and related reports and documents will be reviewed and approved by UN Women. UN Women will approve the deliverables when it considers that the deliverables meet quality standards for approval. The period of review is one week after receipt.

Management of evaluation

The evaluation is managed by UN Women through its M&E Specialist and in close collaboration with the PBF Secretariat that has the mandate to coordinate all PBF evaluations in PRF countries where they exist.

An Evaluation Reference Group will be set up to review and validate the draft and final reports submitted by the external consultants. The external consultants will consolidate inputs from the Evaluation Reference Group which will comprise members of relevant government institutions, the agencies and donor (PBSO/PBF Secretariat).

Specific roles and responsibilities for the Evaluation Technical Committee and the Evaluation Reference Group are as follows:

The Evaluation Technical Committee and Evaluation Reference Group will participate in the evaluation process and quality assure the evaluation report on the basis of UNEG standards and norms, [UN SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator](#) and GERAAS meta-evaluation criteria.

To enhance the quality of this evaluation, the Evaluation Technical Committee and Evaluation Reference Group will be asked by the UNW-Liberia M&E Specialist to provide:

1. Feedback to the draft inception and evaluation report;
2. Recommendations on how to improve the quality of the final inception/evaluation report.

The Evaluation Manager (EM) will review feedback and recommendations from ETC and ERG and share with the Evaluation Team leader, who is expected to use them to finalize the inception/evaluation report.

The Evaluation Technical Committee is comprised of the UN Women Evaluation Manager (Liberia), UN Women Regional Evaluation Analyst, LMPTF-PBF Regional Evaluation Specialist, Secretariat M&E Analyst, and Project Focal Points from UNDP and WFP. The Evaluation Technical Committee (ETC) will be chaired by the UN Women Evaluation Manager who will provide approval of the deliverables after clearance by the ETC and in consultation with the Regional Evaluation Specialist, in compliance with UN Women’s Evaluation Policy.

The ETC provides oversight, makes key decisions and quality assurance of evaluation process and deliverables. Specific responsibilities will include the following: ensure oversight of the evaluation methodology, review draft reports; ensure that the deliverables are of good quality; participate in meetings as key informant interviewees; manage the evaluation by requesting progress updates on the implementation of the evaluation workplan, approve deliverables, organize meetings with key stakeholders, and identify strategic opportunities for sharing and learning. ETC substantive inputs are expected throughout the evaluation process.

The Evaluation Reference Group is an integral part of the Evaluation Technical Committee and is established to facilitate the participation of relevant stakeholders in the evaluation process, with a view to increasing the chances that the evaluation results will be used, to enhance quality, clarify roles and responsibilities and prevent real conflict of interest.

The ERG will be composed of individuals from key government line ministries (i.e. MGCSP, MIA through the PBO, NCCRM, LLA, NBC) including representatives from two implementing UN Agencies, Civil Society and a representative from the Peacebuilding Office. The ERG will be engaged throughout the whole evaluation process and will review the draft Inception report and evaluation report. The ERG will be chaired by the Evaluation Manager. The Consultant is expected to integrate comments from the Evaluation Reference Group into the Final Report, with an audit trail of responses. To ensure transparency of the process, in line with the UNEG norms and standards, justification should be provided for any recommendations that the Evaluation team omits.

The evaluation is managed by UN Women LBR Evaluation Manager in consultation with the Evaluation Technical Committee (ETC), Evaluation Reference Group, and External consultants in the following matrix:

Management Structure and Responsibilities		
The roles and responsibilities are arranged in line with the Joint Evaluation modality		
	Partner	Responsibilities
Evaluation Technical Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Women LBR Evaluation Manager (Emebet) • UNW-WCA Evaluation Analyst (Romain) • UNDP • IOM 	Finalizes the TOR; contracts and manages the evaluation team; ensures deadlines and milestones are met; supports data collection activities; consolidates and solicits feedback that will feed into the key deliverables; provides the following lists: key informants in HQ, region offices, and country offices, sub grantees; provides key programme documents, and list of locations for site visits; accountable for its robustness; meticulously reviews all deliverables based on their role in the evaluation, provides substantive comments and approves on the context of the joint programme; ensures the quality and independence of the evaluation are in alignment with UNEG

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PBO Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist (John) 	standards and principles; ensures evaluation questions, findings, and recommendations are in alignment with the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria; endorses the evaluation dissemination process; contributes to the management response; and provides logistical support for mission; provides logistical support for the presentation of the inception report and the final report; participates in meetings on: progress updates on the work plan, preliminary findings briefing, key informant interview, and final report presentation
Evaluation Reference Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Government line ministries ○ Joint Programme Steering Committee ○ Academia ○ Programme participants ○ Development partners ○ Donors ○ UNCT ○ Civil society ○ UN Women 	Plays a key role based on their expertise providing their perspective as an external individual on the way the programme has rolled out; shares views on the feasibility of the recommendations; makes recommendations on the dissemination of the findings of the evaluation; makes recommendations on the implementation of the management response; and participates in meetings as a key informant interviewee
External consultants	Independent National and International Consultant	Carries out the external evaluation; prepares evaluation reports, including the inception report, work plan, bi-weekly progress updates, preliminary results briefing, final report, and holds a dissemination presentation. The independent consultant(s) will report to the Evaluation Manager in Liberia

Required Skills and Experience

Evaluation team composition, skills and experiences

The evaluation team will be comprised of two evaluation experts: the Evaluation Team Leader (International Consultant) and Evaluation Team Member (National Consultant). The Evaluation Team Leader will have the overall evaluation responsibility and accountability for the report writing and data analyses. The independent consultants or team will report to and be managed by UN Women.

Education

Master's Degree in social sciences, monitoring and evaluation, development studies, gender studies, international relations or related fields.

Experience and skills

- Peace and security;
- Proven experience with gender-responsive evaluations is a requirement;
- Fluency in English, with the ability to produce well-written reports demonstrating analytical and communication skills;
- Good mastery of information technology required for organized presentation of information, including quantitative information and graphical presentations, and for organizing information and materials is desirable;
- Experience in evaluating land governance programmes is an added advantage;
- Excellent understanding and commitment to UN Women's mandate;
- Previous experience working with the UN is an asset;
- Experience in West and Central Africa Region and specifically Liberia context is an asset.

Language and other skills

- Proficiency in oral and written English;
- Computer literacy and ability to effectively use the Internet and email;
- Excellent facilitation skills;
- Should have the ability to work with people of different cultural backgrounds irrespective of gender, religion, race, nationality and age.

Ethical code of conduct

The United Nations Evaluations Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system are available at: <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/100>; Norms for evaluation in the UN system: <http://unevaluation.org/document/detail/21> and UNEG Standards for evaluation (updated 2016): <http://unevaluation.org/document/detail/191>.

Annexes:

1. Guidance on the UN Women Global Evaluation Report Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS) is available at: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/evaluation/decentralized-evaluation>
2. UN Women Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form: <http://gate.unwomen.org/>
3. UN Women Independent Evaluation Office: <http://genderevaluation.unwomen.org/en/evaluation-handbook> 18
4. UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system: <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/100>
5. UNEG Norms for Evaluations: <http://unevaluation.org/document/detail/21>
6. UNEG Standards for Evaluation: <http://unevaluation.org/document/detail/22>
7. UN Women Gender Sensitive Evaluation Handbook: <http://genderevaluation.unwomen.org/en/evaluation-handbook>
8. World Economic Forum – Global Gender Gap Report: <http://www.weforum.org/issues/global-gender-gap>.

ANNEX 8: LIST OF PERSONS CONTACTED

Name of institution	Contact person	Position
Liberia Land Authority (LLA)	Julius Kawa	Director, Policy and Planning
Liberia Peacebuilding Office (MIA)	Curtis G. Dabieh	National M&E Officer
Liberia Peacebuilding Office (MIA)	Sheikh S. S. Kamara	EWER Coordinator/Analyst
Liberia Peacebuilding Office (MIA)	William K. Cordor	Project Officer
National Bureau of Concession (NBC)	Wroquah L. Samuels-Kamara	Director, Gender and Social Inclusion
National Bureau of Concession (NBC)	Wilmot Yarsiah	
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Raphael Ngumbu	Laboratory Technician
National Centre for the Coordination of Response Mechanisms (NCCRM)	Roland T. Clarke	National Director
	Sophie Reeves	Deputy Director
VOSEIDA	Samuel Martin	Finance Manager
	Leon Gehyigon	M&E Officer
VOSEIDA	Timothy Kortu	Team Leader
Rights and Rice Foundation	Joseph Ballah	Project Manager
	Marie Blaise	Gender/ADR Facilitator
VOSEIDA	Joseph N. Kamara	Project Manager
Green Gold	Morris Dougba	Executive Director
Environmental Protection Agency	Raphael Ngumbu	Laboratory Technician
National Peace Hut Women of Liberia	Edith Garr	President
Abraham Billy		National Consultant
Mohamed A. Sheriff		National Consultant
CONTOURS Limited	Albert Giah	
Patmillia Doe Paivey		Media & Communication Specialist
UN Women (Lead Agency)	Kofi Ireland	Program Officer
	Ghoma Karloweah	Program Analyst
	Nora Maartensson	
	Yawo Maglo	Operations Manager
UNDP	Robert Dorliea	Programme Analyst
	Samuel Nah	Finance officer
WFP	Micheal Vawah	Programme Associate

	Abubakar Siddique	DCD
WFP	Winifred George	Finance officer
PBF	John Dennis	PBF Secretariat/RCO
Beneficiary	Mr. Gray	
Beneficiary	Foday Sherman	
Beneficiary	Mohammed Jalibah	Member
Multi-stakeholder Platform	Amadu Fahnbulleh	Chairman
VOSEIDA	James Kwia	Field Officer
Liberia Land Authority	Eddie Beangar	County Land Administrator
Beneficiary	Paye Gbatu	ADR Facilitator
CLMDC	Eric Boe-Gen	Town Chief
CLMDC	Maron Kauziah	Chairlady
CLMDC	Edwin Zagbay	Gen. Town Chief
CLMDC	Rhoda Larway	Member
Community Land Management Development Committee	Kofa Monbe	Chairman
Community Land Management Development Committee	S. Teah Doegmah	Member
MSP	Morris Weah	Member
Community Land Management Development Committee	Stinpe Nyemah	Member
Community Land Management Development Committee	Celelia Teah	Member
Community Land Management Development Committee	Celester Jabbah	Member
	MARYLAND STAKEHOLDERS	
MSP	Alexander M. Williams	Chief
MSP	Patrick Walleh	Member

ANNEX 9: COUNTIES VISITED

1. Nimba County Locations

Korsein	Flumpa	Ganta	Yarsonoh	Gbaygblin
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2. Cape Mount Locations

Ballah Town	Koinjah	Gohn	Madina
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ANNEX 10: TOOLS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

LAND GOVERNANCE PROJECT BENEFICIARIES' QUESTIONNAIRE

1.0. Introduction

This survey tool assesses the impact of the Land Governance Project from the beneficiary's perspective. This instrument solicits information to assess the perceptions of beneficiaries on the relevance, effectiveness, and impact of the project. Your information and response to the survey will be held in confidence.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

1. Gender of the Respondents (a) Male (b) Female
2. Age of Respondents
3. Educational qualification of Respondents (a) No formal education (b) Primary (c) Secondary (d) Tertiary

SECTION B: RELEVANCE, EFFECTIVENESS, AND IMPACT OF THE LAND GOVERNANCE PROJECT IN LIBERIA

1. How relevant was the land governance project to the priority needs of the beneficiaries? (a) Very relevant (b) Relevant (c) Not relevant
2. To what extent did the project activities contribute to promoting women and youth participation in informal and semi-formal land dispute resolution structures? (a) Very large extent (b) Large extent (c) Little extent (d) No change (e) Don't know
3. To what extent did the project activities contribute to promoting awareness of the rights of women to own land? (a) Very large extent (b) Large extent (c) Little extent (d) No change (e) Don't know
4. How relevant was the training you received on improving the capacity of the community for early warning monitoring and detecting water pollution? (a) Very relevant (b) Relevant (c) Not relevant
5. To what extent has the land governance project contributed to changing public perception of the rights of women to own land? (a) Very large extent (b) Large extent (c) Little extent (d) No change (e) Don't know
6. To what extent has the land governance project contributed to improving your understanding of existing concession agreements in your community? (a) Very large extent (b) Large extent (c) Little extent (d) No change (e) Don't know
7. Have women and men achieved more equal participation in land dispute resolution structures in your community? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Don't know
8. How would you rate the effectiveness of the project as a mechanism for improving women's participation in land disputes resolution structures in the counties (a) Very effective (b) Effective (c) Not effective (d) Don't know
9. To what extent are the benefits of the project likely to be sustained when the project ends? (a) Very large extent (b) Large extent (c) Little extent (d) No change (e) Don't know
10. What are the changes produced by the project? (a) Increased women and youth participation in land dispute resolution mechanisms (b) Increased peaceful resolution of land conflict (c) Increased access to livelihood opportunities (d) Increased awareness on the right of women to land (e) Strengthened the capacities of land officers in the counties
11. How satisfied are you with the land governance project? (a) Very satisfied (b) Satisfied (c) Not satisfied (d) Don't Know

End of questionnaire. Thank you.

Data Collection Instrument

TOOL A: KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR GOVERNMENT PARTNERS/IPs

The purpose of this assignment is to carry out an endline evaluation for the project “End-term evaluation UN Women/UNDP/WFP Joint Programme **Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation through Strengthening Land Governance and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms**” in Liberia with the aim of understanding the extent to which the project achieved its objectives. The evaluation is to examine project progress and results. The evaluation will generate substantial evidence for informed future interventions and best practices. The evaluation will identify key results, challenges, lessons learnt, good practices, conclusions and recommendations that will support future joint programming and foster organizational learning and accountability.

The findings of this evaluation will also be used by the UN to further refine its approaches towards the promotion of the Women, Peace and Security agenda and to inform the implementation of strategic documents including the 2020–2024 Strategic Note of UN Women Liberia CO.

Section 1: BASIC INFORMATION

County:	Community:
	Respondent information:
Facilitator details:	Date/time:
Name of interviewee: Female: <input type="checkbox"/> Male: <input type="checkbox"/> Age of interviewee:	Duration of interview (in minutes):
Short summary of interviewee’s: A. Organization: B. Position within the organization:	

1. Were the activities relevant to the priority needs of the target groups (women, government agencies and institutions)?
2. How does the project reflect and align to Liberia’s national plans on gender promotion as well as the PAPD and the UNDAF and to the specific government priorities on land governance and land conflict?
3. To what extent has the project made sufficient progress towards its planned objectives and results?
4. What are the areas of greatest/least achievement and reasons for the achievement/non-achievement (identify constraining and enabling factors)?
5. To what extent have early warning and response mechanisms engendered and integrated into land dispute-related data?
6. How did the project contribute to strengthening the capacity of LLA/EPA/NBC/SPRC to effectively prevent conflicts driven by the depletion of livelihood opportunities and environmental hazards?
7. To what extent has the project contributed to building the capacities of county land offices and county land boards to formalize customary land in a way that reflects the rights and needs of all community members?
8. How has the project identified and addressed social, environmental and economic effects of the intervention that are longer term?
9. What indirect, secondary and potential consequences of the intervention were captured?
10. How has the project strengthened the coordination between government agencies in charge of implementing the LRA and LGA, development partners and CSOs?
11. What are the unintended positive or negative results produced by the activities of the project?
12. What changes/interventions would have been made to the project to improve the achievement of the project objectives?
13. What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time if the project were to cease?

14. Which components of the project should be carried over into the next phase, and are there any recommendations for their improvement?
15. How satisfied are you with the results of the project?

Data Collection Instrument

This section presents the tools that will be used for data collection and the actors to be consulted during the review.

TOOL A: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR BENEFICIARIES

Title: Evaluation

The purpose of this assignment is to carry out an endline evaluation for the project “End-term evaluation UN Women/UNDP/WFP Joint Programme **Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation through Strengthening Land Governance and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms**” in Liberia with the aim of understanding the extent to which the project achieved its objectives. The evaluation is to examine project progress and results. The evaluation will generate substantial evidence for informed future interventions and best practices. The evaluation will identify key results, challenges, lessons learned, good practices, conclusions, and recommendations that will support future joint programming and foster organizational learning and accountability.

The findings of this evaluation will also be used by the UN to further refine its approaches towards the promotion of the Women, Peace and Security agenda and to inform the implementation of strategic documents including the 2020–2024 Strategic Note of UN Women Liberia CO.

Section 1: BASIC INFORMATION

County:	Community:
	Respondent information:
Facilitator details:	Date/time:
Name of interviewee: Female: <input type="checkbox"/> Male: <input type="checkbox"/> Age of interviewee:	Duration of interview (in minutes):

1. How did this project results address the major peacebuilding needs in your community?
2. How timely and urgent was the project vis-a-vis sustaining peace in your community?
3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement: The project was relevant to the priority needs of the counties and project beneficiaries?
4. To what extent has the project made sufficient progress towards achieving the objectives of increasing women’s participation in land governance processes and alternative dispute resolution?
5. Have women and men achieved more equal participation in peace and security processes since this project started?
6. Have gender discriminatory attitudes towards women’s participation in land dispute resolution been changed since this project started?
7. What are the changes produced by the project in your community?
8. Have the activities and outputs of the project been delivered in a timely manner?
9. Were the processes and activities implemented during the intervention free from discrimination to all stakeholders?
10. To what extent are beneficiaries satisfied with the results?
11. What are the effects produced, positive and negative, intended or unintended, directly (target groups) and indirectly (larger society)?
12. Have there been any negative effects of the project on the four cross-cutting issues: gender, human rights, climate and the environment and corruption?
13. What is the likelihood that the results from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time once the project ends?

CONSENT FORM – CONFIDENTIAL CONSENT FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION

*This form should be completed by those taking part in the mid-term evaluation of the project
It should be read in their first language.*

I, _____ grant UN Women and partners the permission to share information about the information that is being collected for this purpose. I have reported to them as follows:

I understand that the purpose of sharing information the purpose of the interview is to ascertain the impact (positive and negative) of the UN Women and partners land governance project in Liberia, and to understand the extent to which the project achieves its objectives.

It also focuses on assessing the project’s relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and coherence. It is hoped that this evaluation will provide key lessons for UN Women and partners with an impartial assessment of the result of the project’s intervention.

I understand that releasing the information means that a person from the agency or service ticked below might come and talk with me. I have the right to change my mind about sharing information with the institution or persons listed below.

I agree that the information can be released to the following: (please tick all that apply)

I also grant the agency permission to share some non-identifiable information for reporting. I understand that any information shared for reporting will be anonymous so that it will not be possible for someone to identify me. I understand that shared information will be treated with confidentiality and respect. Yes No

Respondent/Guardian Signature (or thumbprint): _____

Data collector Signature: _____ Date: _____

Data Collection Instrument

This section presents the tools that will be used for data collection and the actors to be consulted during the review.

TOOL A: KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE: STAFF OF UN WOMEN, UNDP, WFP AND IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

Title: Evaluation

The purpose of this assignment is to carry out an endline evaluation for the project “End-term evaluation UN Women/UNDP/WFP Joint Programme **Sustaining Peace and Reconciliation through Strengthening Land Governance and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms**” in Liberia with the aim of understanding the extent to which the project achieved its objectives. The evaluation is to examine project progress and results. The evaluation will generate substantial evidence for informed future interventions and best practices. The evaluation will identify key results, challenges, lessons learnt, good practices, conclusions and recommendations that will support future joint programming and foster organizational learning and accountability.

The findings of this evaluation will also be used by the UN to further refine its approaches towards the promotion of the Women, Peace and Security agenda and to inform the implementation of strategic documents including the 2020–2024 Strategic Note of UN Women Liberia CO.

Section 1: BASIC INFORMATION

County:	Community:
	Respondent information:
Facilitator details:	Date/time:
Name of interviewee: Female: <input type="checkbox"/> Male: <input type="checkbox"/> Age of interviewee:	Duration of interview (in minutes):
Short summary of interviewee's: C. Organization: D. Position within the organization:	

Section 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Relevance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Did the project results address the major peacebuilding needs of the target groups and of the country, more broadly? 2. How timely and urgent was the project vis-a-vis the sustaining peace context in Liberia and how did it effectively utilize windows of political opportunities? 3. How suitable for the context is the range of substantive areas in which the project is engaged (i.e. Women rights to land, Women participation in land governance processes, Alternative dispute resolution, Strengthening government institutions at national and local level, Enhanced livelihoods for concessions affected communities)? 4. How does the project reflect and align to Liberia's national plans on gender promotion as well as the PAPD and the UNDAF and to the specific government priorities on land governance and land conflict?
Efficiency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have resources been allocated strategically to achieve project outcomes? 2. Were resources sufficient to enable achievement of the expected outputs? 3. Is the joint project and its components cost-effective? Could activities and outputs have been delivered with fewer resources without comprising project quality? 4. Were the project's organizational structure, management and coordination mechanisms effective in terms of project implementation and monitoring? Are there any recommendations for improvement? 5. Has the joint nature of the project improved efficiency in terms of delivery, including reduced duplication, reduced burdens and transactional costs? If so, what factors have influenced this? 6. How was data from monitoring used for management action and decision making? 7. Does the project have effective monitoring mechanisms in place to measure progress towards achievement of results? 8. Have the project's organizational structures, managerial support and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the delivery of the project?
Gender Equality & Human Rights?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To what extent have GE&HR considerations been integrated into the project design and implementation? 2. To what extent have GE&HR been reflected in the overall intervention budget? 3. Were there any constraints or facilitators (e.g. political, practical, bureaucratic) to addressing GE&HR issues during implementation? What level of effort was made to overcome these challenges? 4. Were the processes and activities implemented during the intervention free from discrimination to all stakeholders?
Coherence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has the project built synergies with other programmes being implemented at country level by United Nations, international NGOs and the Government of Liberia?

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. To what extent has the project's intervention been consistent with interventions of others in the same context? 3. To what extent is the project complementary, harmonized and coordinated with other interventions in this area?
Effectiveness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What has been the progress made towards achievement of the expected outcomes and outputs? What results were achieved? 2. What were the major interventions that contributed to the achievement of the outcomes and outputs? 3. To what extent are beneficiaries satisfied with the results? 4. To what extent did the project's Theory of Change prove realistic and was implemented? 5. To what extent are the project approaches and strategies innovative? What types of innovative practices have been introduced? What are the unsuccessful innovative practices? 6. Has the project built synergies with other programmes being implemented at country level by United Nations, international NGOs and the Government of Liberia?
Impact	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Has the project identified and addressed social, environmental and economic effects of the intervention that are longer term? 2. What indirect, secondary and potential consequences of the intervention were captured? 3. What are the effects produced, positive and negative, intended or unintended, directly (target groups) and indirectly (larger society)? 4. Have there been any negative effects of the programme on the four cross-cutting issues: gender, human rights, climate and the environment and corruption?
Sustainability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the likelihood that the project results will be of use in the long term? What is the likelihood that the results from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time once the project ends? 2. Which components of the project should be carried over into the next phase, and are there any recommendations for their improvement? Which positive/innovative approaches have been identified if any and how can they be replicated? 3. How have partnerships (with governments, UN, donors, NGOs, civil society organizations, religious leaders, the media) been established to foster sustainability of results? 4. Did the intervention design include an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy (including promoting national/local ownership, use of local capacity, etc.) to support positive changes, including in Gender Equality and Human Rights after the end of the intervention? To what extent were stakeholders involved in the preparation of the strategy?