Terms of Reference (ToR)
UN Women Liberia Country Portfolio Evaluation 2020-2025

1. Introduction

The evaluation of the Strategic Note (SN) of UN Women Liberia Country Office (2020-2025) is a systematic, independent assessment of the contributions made towards gender equality and women's empowerment in Liberia during this strategic period. This evaluation fulfills accountability requirements, learning needs, and provides actionable recommendations for the next Strategic Note (2026-2030).

2. Purpose and use of the evaluation

The evaluation aims to:

- Support evidence-based learning and decision-making for UN Women Liberia.
- Provide accountability on contributions to gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Document lessons learned and good practices for strategic positioning in the next Strategic Note.

The main users of this Strategic Note evaluation are the personnel of UN Women Liberia and UN Women West and Central Africa Office and at the headquarters, including the Independent Evaluation and Audit Services (IEAS). Secondary users of this evaluation are Development Partners, such as UN agencies and bilateral/multilateral agencies, and civil society. Non-government organizations, and key regional partners would also benefit from understanding the added value and contribution of UN Women to the advancement of women in Liberia.

3. Objectives of the evaluation

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Assess the relevance, coherence, and sustainability of the Liberia Country Office's contributions to national and international gender equality goals.
- Evaluate the organizational efficiency and effectiveness of the office's support.
- Analyze integration of human rights and gender equality principles.
- Formulate actionable recommendations to support strategic positioning in the next SN cycle.

  Specifically, the CPE will be used for:
  - Improved learning and decision-making to support the effectiveness of the work of the Country Office in Liberia.
  - Accountability on UN Women's interventions related to gender equality and women's empowerment.
  - Lessons learned and good practices for future program planning

4. Evaluation Criteria and Key Questions

The evaluation will be guided by the OECD/DAC criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, alongside human rights, gender equality, disability, and inclusion principles. During the inception phase, after consultation with the Country Office and reference groups, the evaluation team will review evaluation questions and further elaborate the sub-questions in the evaluation matrix.

Key Questions:

1. Relevance: How aligned are the interventions with Liberia's national policies and international frameworks?
2. Coherence: To what extent do the interventions complement efforts by other actors?
3. Effectiveness: What results have been achieved, and what factors have influenced these outcomes?
4. Efficiency: How effectively have resources been utilized?
5. Sustainability: Are interventions designed to ensure lasting impact?
6. Human Rights and Gender Equality: How well does the portfolio address the underlying causes of gender inequality?

Evaluation sub-questions of interest are listed in the table below:

Key criteria	Sub-questions
Relevance	- Is the country program aligned with national policies and international human rights standards? - What are UN Women's comparative advantage in this area of work compared to other UN entities and key partners? - Does the choice of program interventions reflect and align with international human rights and gender equality standards? - In case of evolution of the latter, what was the capacity of responsiveness of the program in the face of changes and the emergence of other needs and priorities?
Coherence	- Is there potential duplication of effort? - Do the key interventions create synergies within the UN Women country program and the work of the UN Country Team?
Efficiency	- To what extent does the management structure support efficiency for implementation? - To what extent can the organizational architecture of UN Women (Liberia) provide efficient support for the implementation of the program?
Effectiveness	- Has a results-based management system been implemented? - What are the main factors favoring and hindering the achievement of the results observed? - What is UN Women's contribution to UN coordination on gender equality and women empowerment? - To what extent have gender equality and women empowerment been integrated into joint UN programming, such as the UNSDCF?

Key criteria	Sub-questions
Sustainability and arrangements for exit strategies	- To what extent has the capacity been developed to ensure the sustainability of efforts and achievements? - To what extent has the portfolio made it possible to strengthen implementing partners' technical and operational capacities, thus guaranteeing the sustainability of program results? - Is there national ownership and are there national champions for different parts of the portfolio? - What local accountability and oversight systems have been established?

Human rights and gender equality	- Are the interventions helping to target the underlying causes of gender inequality?
	- Does the portfolio address the root causes of gender inequality?
	- Has the portfolio been implemented in accordance with the principles of human rights and development effectiveness:
	   A. Participation/empowerment
	   B. Inclusion/non-discrimination
	   C. National accountability/transparency
	- Is the choice of interventions most relevant to the situation of women and marginalized groups, including women with disabilities? Which groups does the portfolio reach the most and which are excluded?
	- To what extent did the portfolio change power dynamics between different groups?

5. Strategic Note Evaluation Scope

The evaluation will assess the impact areas and activities carried out within the framework of the Strategic Note 2020-2025. The evaluation period will span from January 01, 2020, to July 30, 2025. While the evaluation will not cover the impact (as defined by the UN Evaluation Group) due to it being too early to assess, it will aim to incorporate data for analyzing high-level results.

The evaluation will focus on the Country Office Strategy Note, and any mention of UN Women's organizational structures and systems outside of the CO (such as regional architecture) should only be made if there is a clear implication for the design and implementation of the strategy. Joint programs and joint programming will be included in the evaluation, considering the specific contribution of UN Women and assessing the associated benefits and costs.

The evaluation may face constraints related to the weather situation in Liberia. In such cases, remote data collection techniques and tools may be necessary. Additionally, cultural aspects that could impact data collection will be carefully analyzed and integrated into the data collection methods and tools.

During the inception phase, the evaluators will further define the scope of the evaluation, particularly concerning stakeholders. A rapid evaluability assessment will be conducted, covering the following aspects at a minimum:
- Evaluation of the relevance, adequacy, and coherence of the theory of change.
- Evaluation of the quality of performance indicators in the DRF and OEEF, along with the accessibility and adequacy of relevant documents and secondary data.

- Review of the evaluation context's relevance.
- Familiarization with accountability and management structures for evaluation.
  Sufficient time should be allocated to test the data collection tools.

6. Country context for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

Liberia has made significant strides in its post-war recovery, characterized by peaceful political transitions and important national policy initiatives. However, the country continues to face numerous challenges in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, which are critical components of its development and peacebuilding processes.

Since 2010, Liberia has shown modest progress in human development, with the Human Development Index moving from 0.406 in 2000 to 0.427 in 2015. However, this is still low compared to the regional average of 0.525, placing Liberia in the 'low human development' category at 177 out of 188 countries. The Gender Development Index stands at 0.789, and the Gender Inequality Index is at 0.649 as of 2015 International Commitments and National Policies.[1]

Liberia is a signatory to several international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which it ratified in 1984. The country has also committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), prioritizing 7 out of the 17 goals, although mainstreaming these goals has been slow. Nationally, the Government of Liberia has implemented several significant policies such as the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) and the Liberia Vision 2030 framework.

Post-war recovery in Liberia has seen major milestones, including the transfer of security responsibilities from the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to the Government of Liberia in 2016, and the conduct of peaceful presidential and legislative elections. The departure of the UN peacekeeping mission in 2018 marked a new phase in Liberia's socio-political transformation.

Liberia has established several legal frameworks to support gender equality and women empowerment. These include the Alien & Nationality Law, Refugee Act, Human Trafficking Act, Inheritance Act, National Commission on Disability Act, and the Children's Act, among others. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) has been pivotal in monitoring and reporting on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and coordinating activities related to women and children with various stakeholders, including UN agencies and NGOs.

Liberia's efforts towards gender equality are also evident in its commitment to international resolutions such as UNSCR 1325, which emphasizes women's participation in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding.

---

[1] Liberia's second phase national action plan on the Women Peace and Security 2019-2023

The establishment of the 1325 working group, including various women's organizations and governmental bodies, underscores the country's dedication to these principles.

The country has also introduced initiatives like the HeForShe campaign, encouraging men to champion gender equality and female empowerment. This campaign highlights the understanding that gender equality benefits everyone and involves everyone in its pursuit.

Liberia's journey towards gender equality and women empowerment is marked by significant international commitments and national policies aimed at improving the socio-economic status of women and ensuring their active participation in all aspects of public and private life. Despite the challenges, the progress in human development indices and the establishment of robust legal and institutional frameworks reflect Liberia's dedication to advancing gender equality and empowering women.

7. Description of the Country Office program

UN Women in Liberia works closely with the Government of Liberia through several line ministries, development partners, civil society organizations, women's groups, and other UN Agencies since 2004. UN Women envisions a country in which society is free of gender-based discrimination, where women and men have equal opportunities, where women and girls are empowered to lead the change that they want to see, and where women's rights are upheld in all efforts to further development, human rights, peace, and security. For this purpose, the implementation of UN Women in Liberia's Strategic Note was embedded in the promotion of women's human rights and gender equality, which are key in sustaining peace and furthering achievements in stability and development.

In order UN Women in Liberia to fulfill its mandate on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and support the government and people of Liberia, the Government of Sweden has agreed to provide non-earmarked support to UN Women Liberia's Strategic Note 2020-2025.

UN Women's Strategic Plan (2022-2025) sets out the global vision to 'Achieve gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls, and the fulfilment of their human rights'. This goal frames UN Women Liberia's work and guides its contributions to Liberia's UNSDCF, and frames CO's program contributions to UN Women's global outcomes and indicators, which are organized in four thematic priority areas ending violence against women and girls; governance and participation in public life; economic empowerment; and peace and security and humanitarian action, and disaster risk reduction.

Four Strategic priorities are identified in the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDCF) 2020-2025, in line with this UN Women Liberia's will work to accomplish:

1. By 2024, the most vulnerable and excluded groups have improved quality of life, with rights-based, gender-sensitive, inclusive, equitable access and utilization of essential social services in an environment free of discrimination and violence, including in humanitarian situations **(UNSDCF Outcome 1).**

2. By 2024, Liberia has diversified, and inclusive economic growth underpinned by investments in sustainable and environmentally friendly agriculture, food security, job creation and improved resilience to climate change and natural disasters **(UNSDCF Outcome 2).**
3. By 2024, women, girls, men, and boys in Liberia experience more sustained peace and inclusive and sustainable growth and development, through strengthened formal and informal institutions providing access to effective and equitable justice and security services, promoting and protecting human rights and strengthening social cohesion and reconciliation **(UNSDCF Outcome 3).**
4. By 2024, people in Liberia, especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged, benefit from strengthened institutions that are more effective, accountable, transparent, inclusive and gender responsive in the delivery of essential services at national and subnational levels **(UNSDCF Outcome 4)**.
5. The capacity of the GoL and key stakeholders to assess progress in implementation of the BPfA and other global normative and policy frameworks strengthened. [2] (Normative mandate)

8. Evaluation design and method

The evaluation will use a mixed approach and will conduct primary data collection using both qualitative and quantitative data and analysis. Explicitly, the evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the evaluation guidelines and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), in particular those which mandate the integration of a human rights perspective and gender equality in the evaluation approach and process.

The evaluation team is expected to reconstruct, validate and identify the strengths and shortcomings of the Program's change theory and its results framework. The team should also identify challenges and gaps in Program implementation for future programmatic improvement. The evaluation products provided by the evaluators will be reviewed and validated by the IEAS peer review mechanism and oversight from IEAS management. The evaluation should be participatory and inclusive. The evaluation will define in the initial phase how the process will ensure stakeholder participation at all stages, with a particular focus on rights holders and their representatives.

The evaluation will take steps to ensure the quality of data, the reliability and validity of data collection tools and methods, and their sensitivity to gender equality and human rights; and data should be checked against other sources (triangulated) to ascertain findings. In this effort, a wide range of data sources should be used, including documents, field information, institutional information systems, financial records, beneficiaries, staff, donors, experts, government officials, community groups, etc.

The methodology will take into account insecurity and comply with the United Nations principle of "Do no harm".

---

[2] The capacity of governments and stakeholders is strengthened to assess progress in implementation of the BPfA, and other global normative and policy frameworks, and SP Output 3: Knowledge on gender perspectives is expanded through provision of substantive inputs and dialogues to global intergovernmental processes.

Purposive sampling will be representative of the main implementing partners. The evaluation team will specify how it will account for the diversity of stakeholders and take steps to ensure the reliability of data collection tools and methods, and their sensitivity to gender equality and human rights.

9. Stakeholder Participation

The Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) is an integral part of the evaluation management structure, established to ensure stakeholder inclusion and quality assurance throughout the evaluation process. Comprising members such as UN Women program staff, national government partners, civil society representatives, development partners/donors, and Country Team representatives, the ERG provides advisory inputs at key stages. These include the design and scoping of the evaluation, identifying information needs, ensuring the quality of the work, and supporting the dissemination of results. The group's engagement ensures a collaborative and inclusive approach to the evaluation.

A stakeholder mapping will be completed by the evaluation team during the inception phase. The evaluators will discuss during the Inception Workshop how the process will ensure stakeholder participation at all stages of the evaluation.

The evaluators are expected to validate findings through engagement with stakeholders at workshops, debriefings, or other forms of interaction. The ERG will play a critical role in ensuring a high-quality, transparent process by providing insights on key questions and approaches, ensuring factual accuracy, and avoiding gaps or misinterpretations. They will also serve as key informants and support the dissemination of findings and recommendations, ensuring their use by UN Women and key partners.

10. Evaluation governance

All UN Women evaluation processes establish mechanisms to ensure high quality evaluation processes and products, as outlined in the UN Women Evaluation Policy and the Manual (in English) . The Evaluation Report will follow the standard outline as set out in the Guide to Strategic Note Evaluations at UN Women while also complying with the UN Writing Manual . The Evaluation Report Quality Assurance Criterion (GERAAS) will be used to ensure quality (See Annex 1). All products are subject to quality assurance review by the peer reviewer, GRE and evaluation management group.

The Strategic Note Evaluation will consist of the following structures (as shown in the figure below):

1. **Oversight:** The Director of the Independent Evaluation and Audit Services (IEAS) oversees all evaluation activities. The Chief of the Independent Evaluation Service (IES) is responsible for the evaluation of related activities. Both will examine key evaluation outputs. Evaluation products, including inception and final reports are cleared by IEAS.

2. **Evaluation Team Leader:** The Regional Evaluation Specialist ensures, on behalf of IES, the quality of work of the evaluation team during the start-up phase, data collection, analysis and report drafting. He handles day-
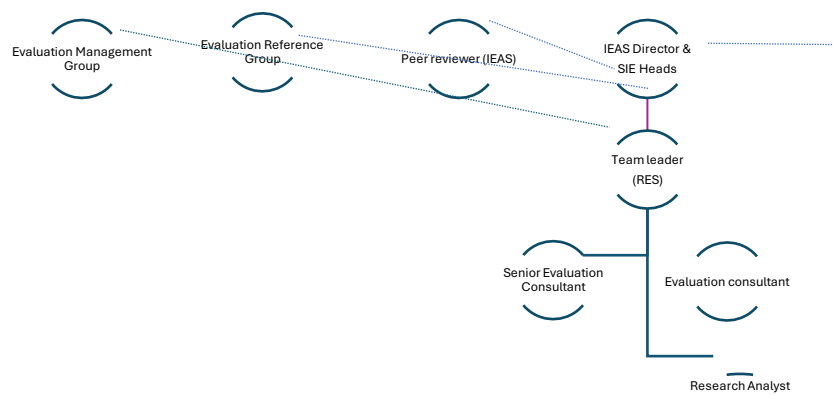
to-day coordination and management, and directs the methodological approach, data collection, analysis and writing.

3. **Evaluators :** Members of the evaluation team will include a senior evaluation consultant responsible for the main analytical tasks, systematization of information and contribution to the analysis and preparation of reports and presentations. A Country Evaluator will provide key contextual and policy analysis, support in-country data collection and take part in data analysis and writing.

4. **The evaluation management group (EMG)** for administrative support and accountability: Regional Director and/or Deputy Director, thematic areas representatives and the Regional Evaluation Specialist (Team Leader).

5. **The Evaluation Reference Group** (described in the section on "Stakeholder participation")

6. **Peer review** for methodological advice and feedback: one or two IES staff members will be involved as peer reviewers of the Strategic Note evaluation.

The Country Office will support the organization of the various meetings planned during the evaluation process (facilitation for data collection, validation, dissemination, etc.). Aspects of the evaluation such as office space, administrative and secretarial support, telecommunications, photocopies of documentation, travel, etc. as well as the design and dissemination of data collection tools will be the responsibility of the team.

Within six weeks of the completion of the evaluation, UN Women Liberia's Evaluation focal point will be responsible for preparing a management response that addresses the findings and recommendations of evaluation, to ensure learning and inform implementation and upload it on GATE.

11. Strategic Note Evaluation Governance Structure

Preparation, review and approval mechanisms of evaluation products	
Evaluation team led by the Regional Evaluation Specialist	- The evaluation team members must be independent, which implies that team members should have no direct conflict of interest and should have full freedom to express their opinion and work impartially while conducting their evaluation. They must not have been directly responsible for the design or overall management of the object of evaluation, nor expect to be in the near future. - The evaluation team prepares all evaluation reports, which should reflect an approach and design mutually agreed during the inception phase. - The evaluation team improves evaluation products according to received feedback and maintains an audit trail of feedback for transparency on changes made. - The evaluation team adheres to UNEG ethical principles and ensures that a gender equality and human rights perspective is considered throughout the evaluation.
IES peer reviewers	- Provide substantive comments on the conceptual and methodological approach and other aspects of the evaluation design - Conduct a preliminary quality assessment of all products and provide feedback for action by the evaluation team
IEAS management	- Quality assurance of key evaluations products and issuance of the final evaluation report
Evaluation Task Manager (Country Office Evaluation Focal Point)	- In preparation for the evaluation, collect and organize the body of program design and reporting documents and financial records of the Regional Office between 2021 and 2024; - Prepares a contact list of all implementing partners and stakeholders as potential participants to evaluation interviews - Consults with partners regarding the evaluation and proposed timeline for data collection to maximize stakeholder participation and ensure a gender-sensitive evaluation - Organizes a debriefing session shortly before the end of data collection to present preliminary findings or information gaps to the evaluation management group - Ensures that stakeholders identified as part of the stakeholder analysis are included, especially the most vulnerable or hard to reach, and provide logistical support as needed by contacting stakeholders and arranging transport. - Manages logistics for the field mission - Initiates evaluation team payments in a timely manner
Members of the Management and Reference groups	- Provide substantive feedback to evaluation products. - As appropriate, participate in meetings and workshops with partners and stakeholders prior to the finalization of reports.
CO Management	Preparation of Management Response

12. Timeline and milestones

The Strategic Note Evaluation will take place from January 2025 to June 2025. An inception report will be prepared in February 2025. A Theory of Change (TOC) workshop and an initial presentation will take place in early March 2025. Data collection should end in the last week of March 2025 with a preliminary findings presentation.

The data analysis will follow, and a draft evaluation report will be ready by the end of April 2025. This early version of the report will be subject to peer reviews and revisions with June 2025 as the target date of its approval.

13. Ethical code of conduct

UN Women has developed a [UN Women Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form](#) for evaluators that must be signed as part of the contracting process, which is based on the [UNEG Ethical Guidelines](#). These documents will be annexed to contracts. All data collected by the team members must be submitted to the evaluation manager in Word, PowerPoint or Excel formats and is the property of UN Women. Proper storage of data is essential for ensuring confidentiality. The UNEG guidelines note the importance of ethical conduct for the following reasons:

1. Responsible use of power: All those engaged in evaluation processes are responsible for upholding the proper conduct of the evaluation.

2. Ensuring credibility: With a fair, impartial and complete assessment, stake- holders are more likely to have faith in the results of an evaluation and to take note of the recommendations.

Responsible use of resources: Ethical conduct in evaluation increases the chances of acceptance by the parties to the evaluation and therefore the likelihood that the investment in the evaluation will result in improved outcomes

The evaluation value added is its impartial and systematic assessment of the programme or intervention. As with the other stages of the evaluation, involvement of stakeholders should not interfere with the impartiality of the evaluation. The evaluation team has the final judgment on the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation report, and the team must be protected from pressures to change information in the report

UN Women has developed a [UN Women Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form](#) for evaluators that must be signed as part of the contracting process, which is based on the [UNEG Ethical Guidelines](#). These documents will be annexed to contracts. All data collected by the team members must be submitted to the evaluation manager in Word, PowerPoint or Excel formats and is the property of UN Women. Proper storage of data is essential for ensuring confidentiality. The UNEG guidelines note the importance of ethical conduct for the following reasons:

-       Responsible use of power: All those engaged in evaluation processes are responsible for upholding the proper conduct of the evaluation.

-       Ensuring credibility: With a fair, impartial and complete assessment, stake- holders are more likely to have faith in the results of an evaluation and to take note of the recommendations.

-       Responsible use of resources: Ethical conduct in evaluation increases the chances of acceptance by the parties to the evaluation and therefore the likelihood that the investment in the evaluation will result in improved outcomes.

    The evaluation value added is its impartial and systematic assessment of the programme or intervention. As with the other stages of the evaluation, involvement of stakeholders should not interfere with the impartiality of the evaluation. The evaluation team has the final judgment on the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation report, and the team must be protected from pressures to change information in the report

14. ANNEXES

Annex 1 UN Women GERAAS evaluation quality assessment checklist

- [Evaluation-GERAAS-guidance-2021-en.pdf (unwomen.org)](#)

Annex 2 UN Women Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form

- [UN Women Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form](#)
- [UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct](#).

Annex 3 UNEG Norms and Standards for evaluation

- http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/2787

Annex 4 Resources for data on gender equality and human rights

- UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) – Universal Human Rights Index: http://uhri.ohchr.org/en
- UN Statistics – Gender Statistics: http://genderstats.org/
- UNDP Human Development Report – Gender Inequality Index: http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii
- World Bank – Gender Equality Data and Statistics: [Global Gender Gap Report 2024 | World Economic Forum (weforum.org)](#)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Social Institutions and Gender Index: http://genderindex.org/
- World Economic Forum – Global Gender Gap Report: http://www.weforum.org/issues/global-gender-gap
- A listing of UN reports, databases and archives relating to gender equality and women's human rights can be found at: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/directory/statistics_and_indicators_60.htm

Annex 5 UN Women Evaluation Manual

[UN-Women-Evaluation-Handbook-2022-en.pdf (unwomen.org)](UN-Women-Evaluation-Handbook-2022-en.pdf)

Annex 6 Gender Equality and Human Rights Data Resources

- The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) – Universal Human Rights Index: https://uhri.ohchr.org/fr/

- UN Statistics – Gender Statistics: http://genderstats.org/

- UNDP Human Development Report – Gender Inequality Index: http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii

- The World Bank – Data and Statistics on Gender Equality: http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/

- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Social Institutions and Gender Equality Index http://genderindex.org/

- The World Economic Forum – Global Gender Gap Report: [Global Gender Gap Report 2024 | World Economic Forum (weforum.org)](weforum.org)

- A list of UN reports, databases and records related to gender equality and women human rights can be found here: [WomenWatch: Directory of UN Resources on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women](WomenWatch)