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DRG Learning, Evaluation, and Research Activity: Mid-Term Performance Evaluation of the Liberia Governance and Economic Management Support Program

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MID-TERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF THE LIBERIA GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT SUPPORT (GEMS) PROGRAM

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ACRONYMS

AAPOR	American Association for Public Opinion Research
AEDE	Agency for Economic Development & Empowerment
AM	Asset Management
AFDB	African Development Bank
ASYCUDA	Automated System for Customs Data
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CLA	Collaboration, Learning and Adaptation
CM/CMC	Change Management / Change Management Committee
COP	Chief of Party
CSA	Civil Service Agency
DDG	Deputy Director General
DFID	Department for International Development
DO	Development Objective
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
FED	Food and Enterprise Development Program
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FORECAST	Focus on Results: Enhancing Capacity Across Sectors in Transition Project
FY	Fiscal Year
GEMAP	Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program
GC	Governance Commission
GEMS	Governance and Economic Management Support Program
GSA	General Services Agency
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GOL	Government of Liberia
HICD	Human and Institutional Capacity Development
HQ	Headquarters
HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resources Management
IBI	International Business Initiatives
IBTCI	International Business & Technical Consultants, Inc.
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IFMIS	Integrated Financial Management Information System
IMCC	Inter-Ministerial Concessions Commission
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRB	Institutional Review Board
IRC	Internal Reform Committee
IT	Information Technology
KII	Key Informant Interview
LEITI	Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
LIPA	Liberia Institute of Public Administration
L-MEP	Liberia Monitoring and Evaluation Program

LRA	Liberia Revenue Authority
LTPC	Liberia Trade Policy and Customs Project
MAC	Ministries, Agencies, and Commissions
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
MLME	Ministry of Lands, Mines & Energy
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MOPT	Ministry of Post and Telecommunications
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MOYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
MPEA	Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NBC	National Bureau of Concessions
NCDS	National Capacity Development Strategy
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NIC	National Investment Commission
NORC	NORC at the University of Chicago
OJT	On the Job Training
PDIA	Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation
PESTEL	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal Analysis
PFM	Public Financial Management
PFMRAF	Public Financial Management Risk Assessment Framework
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PPCC	Public Procurement and Concessions Commission
RFP	Request for Proposals
SOW	Statement of Work
STTA	Short-term Technical Assistance
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USAID/Liberia	USAID Liberia
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement
WB	World Bank

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EVALUATION PURPOSES AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This report presents the findings of the Mid-term Performance Evaluation of the Governance and Economic Management Support (GEMS) Program, a five year program (July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2016) funded by the United States Agency for International Development Mission in Liberia (USAID/Liberia). GEMS is a Cost Plus Fixed Fee (Level of Effort) type contract with a \$44.9 million budget. It is being implemented by International Business Initiatives (IBI).

The purpose of this evaluation is two-fold: (1) to assess the level of progress made toward each of the GEMS Program's five main objectives: (a) improve management systems to conform to international standards of good practices; (b) enhance the institutional capacity of LIPA to provide targeted training that will improve the performance of personnel in key management functions; (c) strengthen the utilization of information communications technologies (ICT) in Government institutions; (d) strengthen the management of natural resource concessions through a modified legal framework and use of oversight tools using ICT; and (e) to establish and utilize a national payment system in line with regional and international standards; and (2) to assess the design and management of the GEMS program in meeting planned results.

Results from this mid-term evaluation are meant to provide guidance to USAID and the GEMS Program to effectively implement the program over the remaining two years of the program.

This evaluation is based on five key questions proposed by USAID/Liberia:

1. How demand-led and 'problem focused' has GEMS been? To what degree is there local ownership, and how can this be improved upon? Are staff of the MACs vested in the changes that GEMS hopes to encourage?
2. Are inputs provided by GEMS contributing to identifiable changes in processes and systems capacity? How effective have advisors been in transferring skills, knowledge, and capacity to Government of Liberia (GOL) staff?
3. What deficiencies currently exist in the implementation of the program's objectives and how can these be remedied?
4. Is the current scale and scope of the program in terms of the number of Ministries, Agencies, and Commissions (MACS) and component areas appropriate to support sustainability? Should certain aspects or components be prioritized or limited?
5. What good practices are emerging from this program? Are there successes that could be replicated for future programs?

Because capacity building plays such an important role in the success of the GEMS Program, and the Liberia Institute of Public Administration (LIPA) is a key player in providing training to the Liberian public sector, this evaluation also addresses a sixth question:

6. Is the GEMS approach to building capacity through training, including developing LIPA as the prime public sector training provider, on target and on track?

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

In July 2011, USAID/Liberia awarded the GEMS contract to IBI. Four months after contract award, and in response to the evolving policy framework introduced by the new Sirleaf Administration, USAID and the GOL entered a period of negotiation to reframe the project to align more closely with the Agenda for Transformation, Liberia Rising Vision 2030, the Public Financial Management Reform Implementation Strategy, and the National Capacity Development Strategy. These negotiations led to Modification I to the contract which was signed by USAID and IBI in early May 2012. The modification changed the terms and conditions of the contract, and, among other things, included a requirement for IBI to use the USAID Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) framework as a guide to accomplishing the objectives of the program.

DESIGN ISSUES

While the GEMS contract modification requires the Contractor to use USAID's HICD framework as a guide to developing sustainable capacity building, that approach did not translate well into a clear roadmap for HICD implementation in Liberia. While the modification includes this requirement, it is not clear that USAID intended GEMS to fully adopt the standard HICD approach, especially with respect to a service delivery focus, since the deliverables and results of the contract (Section F) were not modified to reflect this. Thus, while the modification includes terminology that provides sufficient flexibility to adopt a demand-led and problem-focused approach to improve performance, it did not create contractual incentives to do so since the deliverables and results did not specify that HICD was the means of achieving them.¹ However, with only two years remaining in the contract, an HICD approach could be used to guide GEMS work for the Wave I central government entities (MOF, CSA, PPCC, and GSA) and selected Wave II MACs. The Evaluation Team's recommendations reflect this suggestion.

FINDINGS

We note that a capacity development program often takes years to produce concrete results. It was therefore difficult to determine sustainable results at the mid-point of the program; we expect to see stronger results by program end.

Those interviewed describe GEMS' advisors as competent, experienced, dedicated, and resourceful. Several acknowledge that training (including on-the-job coaching) provided by GEMS staff has contributed to improved knowledge and practices in their respective MACs, and positive changes in their processes. However, the frequency and duration of in situ work of advisors are low and not conducive to sustained progress.

MAC technical staff (direct beneficiaries of GEMS technical assistance and training) expressed appreciation for GEMS support and said it is contributing to improvements within their MACs,

¹ The contract modification states that: "F.5 DELIVERABLES, The Contractor is responsible for the submission of all deliverables in both Section C and Section F". Section C, the Statement of Work includes several references to HICD but these are not presented as deliverables or results.

though they noted some valid negative observations about the frequency and persistence of the GEMS services. Also, there remains a need for GEMS to expand its reach to leadership at the middle and highest levels where program ownership is weak.

The GEMS Program uses an adapted approach to USAID's HICD framework in its implementation of the program, and a standardized scope for delivery of GEMS technical assistance. Because of this, GEMS has missed an opportunity to engage key MACs in a performance improvement partnership that would have (i) improved services while also addressing specific problems that hindered service delivery, and (ii) contributed to the Missions' Collaboration, Learning, and Adaptation goals.

The GEMS program was originally integrated with the GOL through a Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Minister of Finance (MOF) and the Civil Service Agency (CSA), but the Steering Committee is now dormant. Although a technical committee (under the Steering Committee) is active and works closely with GEMS, the lack of a single, engaged MAC responsible for assisting the GEMS program (a "champion" inside Government) reduces GEMS effectiveness, especially as it relates to the sustainability of the reforms being made across the line ministries.

While the GEMS Program has a Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) for the project which includes performance indicators, baseline values, targets, and actual values, there are no corresponding performance indicators within respective MACs developed and tracked to measure the progress and achievements of GEMS objectives within those MACs.

The scale of GEMS is extremely large for a supply-side program in which a central team of technical specialists provide services to numerous clients simultaneously. The scope of the GEMS program is diverse and challenging to manage. Comments raised by technical staff in many MACs indicate that GEMS advisors visit infrequently and at random.

Communications is critical to GEMS' success, especially given its large scale and scope. A near universal complaint lodged by all interviewees during the FGDs and KIIs reflect insufficient communication and collaboration between GEMS and the MACs.

GEMS support to LIPA is broad-based and meaningful. LIPA management acknowledges progress achieved in the substantive areas related to building LIPA's capacity to train. However, LIPA officials and others in Government believe it is time for LIPA to move beyond their own internal capacity building and start testing LIPA's capacity to train.

CONCLUSIONS

GEMS' decision to use an adapted approach to HICD and a standardized scope for delivery of technical assistance and support has led to weak ownership at several MACS.

GEMS has no GOL counterpart entity to which it can turn for guidance and support and from which it will derive added legitimacy. The potential to learn from GEMS and then apply the competence more broadly could be enhanced by encouraging the GOL to assign a single anchor institution or temporary task force.

While GEMS was on the right track during its engagement with Wave I MACS at the central level, most of those central government agencies expressed it would have been preferable for

GEMS to have established a firmer base, developing a uniform and non-contradictory approach to systems and central management services, before attempting to introduce into Wave II institutions systems, which are still in flux.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While conditions in Liberia are such that optimal implementation of HICD is difficult, and there obstacles exist to establishing an anchor GOL institution, we recommend efforts be made to strengthen an institution that is central to support and sustain GEMS development objectives. Having a partner agency within the GOL would help strengthen the sustainability of GEMS' HICD approach and provide legitimacy for the Program. We suggest that GEMS collaborate with the GOL to discuss potential MAC candidates – one for the Wave I MACs and another for the Wave II MACs. Options to consider for the Wave II MACs and National Bureau of Concessions (NBC) include the Governance Commission (GC); key informants within the GC have termed the GEMS program as "very helpful" and "great," being the most responsive and positive informants during the evaluation. A second alternative would be the CSA.

The HICD process takes time to build trust and understanding. We recommend re-engaging with a cluster of central government MACS and using HICD as the basis for assisting them to define specific key performance gaps in the roll out of central services, and then helping to address those needs in a complete and conclusive manner. By using HICD in its traditional form, GEMS has an excellent opportunity to be more focused in its engagement with key decision makers and development partners to improve service delivery and performance for a limited set of objectives.

We recommend GEMS also consider placing personnel directly in the central agencies. Since GEMS activities fall within domains that are supervised or regulated by central agencies and these agencies are few, we believe this is feasible with current GEMS resources. Working together and in concert with a cluster of central agencies will demonstrate a move to further develop the partnership between GEMS and these central agencies. GEMS advisors embedded in the central agencies will strengthen these agencies and lay the foundation for the sustainability of the reforms being made across the line ministries.

We recommend GEMS review and improve the strategy it uses to communicate with MACs. Dissemination of relevant information about the status of reform measures, in terms of content and timeliness, within the institutions and the whole of government should be improved as this will facilitate understanding, cooperation and adoption of reform activities.

To more accurately measure progress, baseline benchmarks or predetermined performance indicators must be in place. We recommend establishing GEMS-institution-specific action plans, indicators, and timelines to effectively monitor and evaluate real changes occurring in the institutions as a result of GEMS's interventions.

Finally, we recommend that GEMS move forward on testing LIPA's actual capacity to train civil servants throughout the remainder of the program.

1.0 EVALUATION PURPOSE AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1.1 EVALUATION PURPOSE

This report presents the findings of the Mid-term Performance Evaluation of the Governance and Economic Management Support (GEMS) Program, a five year program (July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2016) funded by the United States Agency for International Development Mission in Liberia (USAID/Liberia). GEMS is a Cost Plus Fixed Fee (Level of Effort) type contract with a \$44.9 million budget. It is being implemented by International Business Initiatives (IBI).

The purpose of this evaluation is two-fold: (1) to assess the level of progress made toward each of the GEMS Program's five main objectives; and (2) to assess the design and management of the GEMS program in meeting planned results.

Results from this mid-term evaluation are meant to provide guidance to USAID and the GEMS Program to effectively implement the program over the remaining two years of the program.

The Evaluation Team is also challenged to identify lessons learned relative to the development hypothesis and the theory of change underlying the GEMS Program which submits that "institutional reforms are more successful when they foster *problem-driven learning* and the importance of local context for identifying needs and opportunities for change."²

1.2 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This evaluation is based on five key questions proposed by USAID/Liberia:

1. How demand-led and 'problem focused' has GEMS been? To what degree is there local ownership, and how can this be improved upon? Are staff of the Ministries, Agencies, and Commissions (MACs) vested in the changes that GEMS hopes to encourage?
2. Are inputs provided by GEMS contributing to identifiable changes in processes and systems capacity? How effective have advisors been in transferring skills, knowledge, and capacity to Government of Liberia (GOL) staff?
3. What deficiencies currently exist in the implementation of the program's objectives and how can these be remedied?
4. Is the current scale and scope of the program in terms of the number of MACS and component areas appropriate to support sustainability? Should certain aspects or components be prioritized or limited?
5. What good practices are emerging from this program? Are there successes that could be replicated for future programs?

² USAID/Liberia GEMS mid-term evaluation SOW (pg. 4)

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6. Is the GEMS approach to building capacity through training, including developing LIPA as the prime public sector training provider, on target and on track?

2.0 PROGRAM BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 PROGRAM CONTEXT

USAID's contract to implement the GEMS Program was signed with International Business Initiatives (IBI) on June 29, 2011. GEMS is a direct descendant of the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP) which IBI implemented between 2006 and 2010. At the time of the GEMS Request for Proposal (RFP), USAID's prior Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) was drawing to a close. HICD as a specific USAID policy and practice was relatively new and untested, and there was still a predominant emphasis on the GEMAP coverage of capacity building initiatives, but with the requirement that the previous GEMAP approach be applied in a more comprehensive way to "a larger number of Ministries and Agencies."

Under the original GEMS contract, IBI was required to work in five components:

1. Broadened capacity building for Ministries and Agencies;
2. Financial management and information technology (IT) training;
3. ICT policy and management support to GOL;
4. Concessions monitoring and management; and
5. Assistance to the Central Bank of Liberia.

Within months, the GOL halted the implementation of the GEMS Program. Negotiations to revive the program led to substantial and significant revisions to the Statement of Work (SOW), which are reflected in Modification 1 of the GEMS Contract with IBI signed on May 2, 2012. The modification reorganized the project components and aligned them with the new policy framework introduced by the Sirleaf Administration, the country's National Capacity Development Strategy (NCDS), and themes from President Obama's 2012 State of the Union message. USAID's HICD framework, which is not mentioned at all in the original GEMS contract, was now included as a guide for the performance improvement and capacity building approach to be used by IBI. Further, HICD principles such as a holistic approach to institutional development, ownership by the government of the reform process, and use of Liberian technical experts were other important additions, as indicated in the following contract sections:

- "GEMS Contractor explicitly acknowledges the importance of the holistic approach to institutional development to achieve effective economic governance... devising assistance and reform strategies within the larger context of the GOL's development and reform agenda."
- "GEMS will build capacity using a results-oriented approach."

- “GEMS Contractor will build the capacity of counterpart institutions in order to utilize the capacity to... deliver services to Liberians more effectively.”
- “HICD provides a continuous measurement process... and is a systematic approach with a focus on achieving tangible and measurable performance improvement results.”
- “The GEMS Contractor will conduct a diagnostic needs assessment of the institution, including an assessment of its development objectives, performance, staff skills, resources and any ongoing or planned assistance in line with the USAID/HICD methodology.”

Even though the objectives and results included in Modification I are comparable to the original contract, the new scope specifies a demand-driven HICD approach to achieving the results. Here are changes in scope and approach included in the Modification I:

1. A new CDCS for Liberia 2013-2017 that makes HICD the centerpiece of capacity building and recognizes GEMS as its key implementer;³
2. The GEMS Program is effectively de-linked from the outside-in capacity diagnostic approach used by GEMAP and, associated more closely with participatory and country-led capacity building efforts; and
3. GEMS is oriented towards performance improvement tied to development goals as expressed in the overarching principles and themes specified above.

2.2 PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The contractual objectives of the new GEMS program include:

1. Management systems and key organizational functions of participating GOL institutions conform to international good practice standards.
2. The institutional capacity of LIPA is enhanced to provide targeted training that will improve the capacity and performance of GOL personnel responsible for key management functions in GOL institutions. This will enable GOL personnel to execute public sector functions effectively, contributing to boosting revenues, cutting wasteful expenditures, protecting assets, and preventing and detecting fraud and errors. Through USAID-GEMS support, LIPA will also increase capacity and performance in participating non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sector entities. At the end of USAID-GEMS, LIPA will be a self-sustaining institution providing quality instruction and training courses to the GOL and the private sector.
3. GOL institutions are able to use Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) more effectively and efficiently to further Liberia’s development objectives as articulated in the objectives and principles outlined in the National Telecommunications and ICT Policy.

³ The HICD model itself had been more thoroughly tested and adopted per ADS 201 as USAID policy.

4. Management of natural resource concessions is more efficient, effective, and transparent due to a modified legal framework that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of relevant GOL institutions, and the introduction of management and oversight tools utilizing automated ICT-based systems.
5. The GOL is able to establish and utilize a national payment system in line with international and regional standards, and that enables accurate and timely processing and reconciliation of GOL payments to vendors and civil servants, utilizing mobile technologies when feasible.

2.3 PROGRAM DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

Development Hypothesis

GEMS Development Hypothesis assumes that *“the 14 institutions that receive targeted support, technical assistance, and training through GEMS will operate more effective management systems that increase transparency and accountability, reduce wasteful expenditures, and limit opportunities for corruption. These strengthened institutions will provide the foundation for good governance.”*

GEMS’s targeted support will ensure *“effective management systems and procedures that will increase transparency and accountability, reduce wasteful expenditures and limit opportunities for corruption, as well as provide more effective use of public resources.”* The focus is on improved management systems and procedures in four key administrative areas: financial management; procurement; human resource management; and assets management; and two support services: information technology; and monitoring and evaluation. All are aimed at improving service delivery.

Improved service delivery implies that institutions are effective and efficient in achieving their mandates. That is, institutions are effectively conducting functions within their organization that are directly linked to achieving institutional goals.

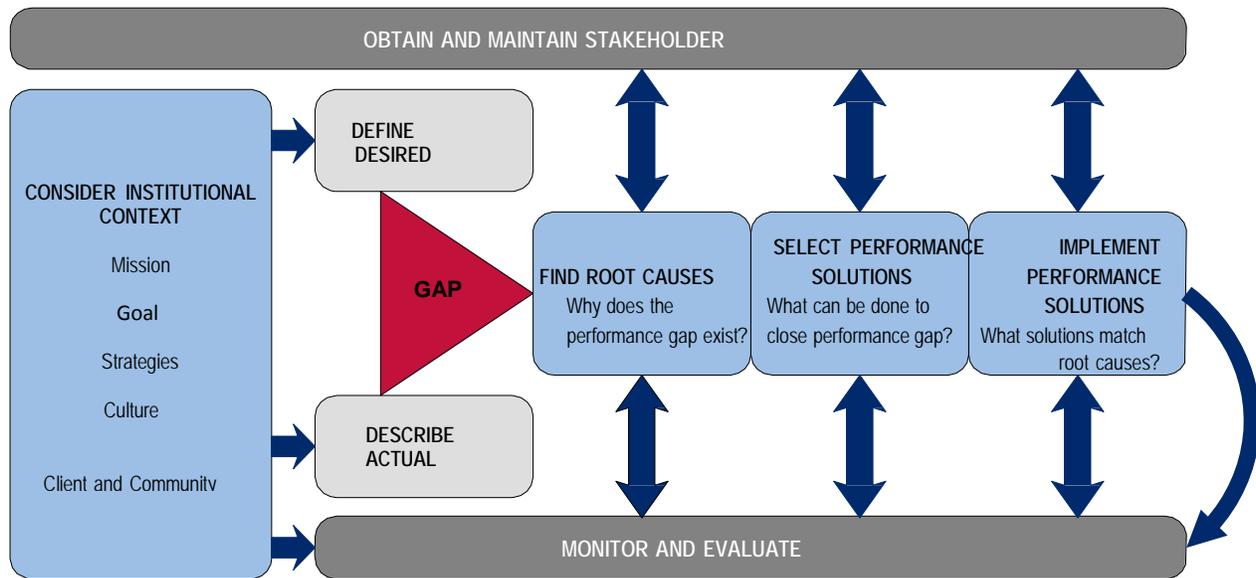
Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) Model

Modification 1 to the GEMS Contract, requires the Contractor to use the USAID HICD framework as a guide to accomplishing the objectives of the GEMS Program. During the Evaluation Team’s meetings with the implementer, IBI indicated that it had adapted a modified HICD model which was approved by USAID/Liberia. GEMS describes this as *a performance improvement program using a performance improvement methodology which modified the HICD approach to adapt to the administrative support area. The GEMS Program considers the challenges and opportunities for improving administrative support services within MACs, but not service delivery problems. Assistance to administration support areas were established in program design. Using the HICD model, GEMS considered the departments of administration to be the institutions.*

Graphic 1 provides an HICD model that seeks to achieve clearly defined development goals emanating from institutional mandates, and addresses problems undermining the achievement of defined goals. Given the orientation, top management should be involved in: determining development goals it wishes to achieve; defining current levels of performance relative to their desired future performance state; identifying the challenges and/or gaps that exist; and defining

the root causes of weak performance, either in the overall context within which it operates and/or institutional environment, which impede the attainment of its goals. Top management then should strategize with assistance provided by interested second parties (i.e., the GEMS advisors), to design and apply appropriate solution packages.

GRAPHIC 1: HICD MODEL



This optimal HICD model is challenging for the GEMS project. In Liberia, the “appropriate solution packages” do not necessarily aim to reach “international best practice standards,” but rather to resolve a set of identified problems within the context of given conditions and circumstances.

While the pre-consulting assessments of each MAC conducted by GEMS were driven by the contract’s focus on administrative functions, resulting solutions packages are nearly identical in both format and content across the 14 targeted institutions, irrespective of size, functions, complexity or orientation; the solutions packages are not tailored for each institution based on a collaborative approach between GEMS and each MAC. Consequently, there is minimal ownership within the MACs of the changes occurring within their institutions, and no holistic integrated package to resolve defined issues.

The solutions packages GEMS is implementing, relative to program objective #1 (management systems and procedures) are administrative support improvement interventions that, while useful in strengthening administrative support functions, do not impact the achievement of service delivery goals and mandates of line ministries as required by an HICD model. This especially applies to the core management institutions (Wave I MACs) whose service delivery mandate is defined as service delivery to the line ministries. Additionally, the focus on particular service delivery goals of line ministries (Wave II MACs) is not clearly communicated as a USAID objective in the contract modification.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND OVERVIEW

International Business Initiatives (IBI)

The GEMS Program is being implemented by IBI under contract with USAID/Liberia. Two subcontractors, Alliance for Global Change and Deloitte, LLC round out the team. IBI liaises with both USAID/Liberia and the GOL, through a Program Steering Committee (PSC) which is headed by the Ministry of Finance. GEMS is a five-year program that began July 1, 2011, and is expected to end on June 30, 2016.

Program Implementation Team

GEMS is managed by a team headed by a Chief of Party, two Deputy Chiefs of Party, one for technical activities and the other for operations, and senior level advisors. GEMS is also comprised of staff whose diverse backgrounds reflect the separate and somewhat independent objectives of the program. There are approximately 33 professional staff, of which 5 are seconded on a permanent basis to MOF (1 person), GC (2 persons) and NBC (1 person). The team is organized into functional areas – known as work streams – aligned with the functions addressed in the each MAC’s Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) further discussed below.

Steering Committee

GEMS has a program Steering Committee originally designed to provide corporate guidance and direction to program activities. The committee, co-chaired by the MOF and CSA, is an inter-agency body comprising representatives of participating institutions and GEMS management. However, the Steering Committee has been largely ineffective and is currently dormant.⁴

Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)

The GEMS Program undertook assessments of Wave I and Wave II institutions. On the basis of findings from those assessments, GEMS entered into an MOU with each institution that outlines the mutually-agreed “solutions package” – interventions to be provided by GEMS. These “solutions packages” include a combination of technical advisory services, human resources training, and the delivery of assorted equipment, accessories and supplies to facilitate program work and improve service delivery and performance within each MAC.

The MOUs also articulate the responsibilities of both GEMS and each institution. The MOU is a signed document between each MAC and the GEMS Program that articulate the agreement between each participating MAC and the GEMS Program. It commences upon signing and terminates once the GEMS Program ends, subject to the availability of funds.

⁴ This outcome is likely the result of a number of factors including placement of the NCDU in another institution, the MPEA, unclear terms of reference for the committee, and broader perceptions of GEMS held by some stakeholders (see Section 4.3).

Change Management Committees

Change Management Committees (CMCs) were established in MACs who signed MOUs early on in the process. According to the GEMS management strategy, CMCs are responsible for driving the reforms validated by the institution and supported by GEMS. They also are charged with carrying out the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) function within the institution.⁵

The CMCs, conceived as linked but subordinate to the MAC's Internal Reform Committees (IRC),⁶ are organized to assist GEMS and the MACs supervise the implementation of solution packages (change processes) as well as manage organizational change.

GEMS Program Focal Point

GEMS has on staff Program Focal Point for each MACs who serves as a coordinator. Internal to each MAC is the Deputy Minister for Administration, where that title exists, who serves as the internal focal point.

Wave I and Wave II Institutions

The GEMS Program has involved two waves of Liberian institutions:

- Wave I institutions (economic governance MACs) are Central Ministry agencies that are either responsible for supervising or regulating specific functions across the whole of government, or are directly aligned as stand-alone implementers of GEMS objectives 2-5.
- Wave II institutions (economic development MACs) include line ministries, agencies, and one state-owned enterprise (the Forestry Development Authority), all of which are implementing solutions packages that encompasses each of the central administrative functions for which central ministries are responsible.

In all, there are seven Wave I institutions and seven Wave II institutions. The Evaluation Team's response to Question 4 below provides more information about each wave.

2.4 ISSUES REGARDING PROJECT MODIFICATION AND DESIGN

While the GEMS contract modification requires the Contractor to use USAID's HICD framework as a guide to developing sustainable capacity building, that approach did not translate well into a clear roadmap for HICD implementation in Liberia. While the modification includes this requirement, it is not clear that USAID intended GEMS to fully adopt the standard HICD approach, especially with respect to a service delivery focus, since the deliverables and

⁵ The CMCs aren't necessarily meeting the expectations of the GEMS management strategy. They tend to focus too much on GEMS specific work rather than organizational change processes in their MACs, and they are not linked to the broader organizational reform initiatives or structures.

⁶ While there seems to be some variation in opinion, the IRCS exist more on paper than in practice. It is possible that GEMS should have focused on strengthening the IRCS and aligning some of their work with the program, rather than creating new bodies.

results of the contract (Section F) were not modified to reflect this. Thus, while the modification includes terminology that provides sufficient flexibility to adopt a demand-led and problem-focused approach to improve performance, it did not create contractual incentives to do so since the deliverables and results did not specify that HICD was the means of achieving them.⁷ However, with only two years remaining in the contract, an HICD approach could be used to guide GEMS work for the Wave I central government entities (MOF, CSA, PPCC, and GSA) and selected Wave II MACs. The Evaluation Team's recommendations reflect this suggestion.

3.0 EVALUATION METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

To gather data required for this evaluation, NORC's Evaluation Team used several techniques which entailed a mix of mutually reinforcing qualitative and quantitative methods that reflect the program logic, research questions being addressed, and indicators. We combined the results of each technique to capture the diversity of opinions and perceptions of beneficiaries and stakeholders about the impact the GEMS Program has had thus far, its strengths and weaknesses, and the degree of satisfaction from participants of the program. The qualitative analysis, which includes key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussions (FGD), provides the local context and represents concrete examples that illustrate in greater detail the quantitative findings. Our approach to selecting the appropriate methodology is based on the USAID Evaluation Policy as well as our experience conducting evaluations in the field.

NORC Evaluation's Team conducted the evaluation in a participatory manner which involved engaging the USAID Mission in Liberia, implementing partner IBI, program beneficiaries, and other stakeholders. A complete list of documents the Evaluation Team reviewed and individuals interviewed is included in Annex VI, Sources of Information.

3.1 EVALUATION MANAGEMENT

Four evaluators (two international and two Liberian) conducted the evaluation with assistance from the Agency for Economic Development and Empowerment (AEDE), a Liberian NGO. AEDE provided all in-country logistical support throughout the entire field period, conducted FGDs and administered the mini-surveys. As a measure to ensure high data quality, NORC provided targeted training to AEDE for FGDs and survey administration and undertook analysis of the data. NORC also provided management support and analysis for the evaluation.

3.2 STUDY DESIGN

Confidentiality

All evaluators and program staff were asked to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to working on the evaluation. Copies of the signed statements are included in Annex VII.

⁷ The contract modification states that: "F.5 DELIVERABLES, The Contractor is responsible for the submission of all deliverables in both Section C and Section F". Section C, the Statement of Work includes several references to HICD but these are not presented as deliverables or results.

Further, as part of the Data Collection Training, the Senior Survey Director included a substantive Confidentiality Training component for AEDE's survey team. Each individual on the data collection team was asked to read aloud together, understand, and sign NORC's Pledge of Confidentiality Compliance before being accepted to work on the program. Signed copies from each field staff are securely filed with NORC, as is required by NORC's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Introduction and Informed Consent

In addition to the Evaluation Team and Survey Administration Team's pledge of confidentiality, each FGD and Survey Questionnaire began with an informative introductory statement that describes to respondents the subject of the survey and some basic details about the confidential and voluntary nature of their participation. For example, the introduction informed respondents about the GEMS Program and the purpose of the survey, the client and evaluators, and a statement that their participation is voluntary, that their responses will remain confidential and used in aggregated summaries only, that they may skip questions they don't feel comfortable answering, and time required to complete the FGD or survey. We provide this information to respondents so that they may give an informed consent to participate, which is consistent with NORC's professional commitment as members of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR). Survey instruments for FGDs and Mini-Survey are included in Annex V.

Questionnaire Development

Following an intense desk review, the Evaluation Team developed a matrix that summarized priority systems (e.g. Financial Management, Human Resources Management, Procurement, Assets Management, and Public Management)⁸ based on the objectives of the evaluation. We then identified which MAC is associated with each priority system and clarified the objectives we wanted to address with each type of respondent (e.g. KII, FGD, and Survey). Each Evaluation Team member was given an assignment to develop questions on specific topics based on his background and expertise. Once the questions were developed, they were then vetted by the entire Evaluation Team and sent to NORC to review the internal logic to ensure that questions are not cognitively difficult, double barreled, culturally insensitive, or include words that may create biased responses. Questions were also analyzed for their ability to link back to key indicators and research questions, and for their contribution to the overall evaluation design.

Draft KIIs, FGDs, and Survey were shared with USAID/Liberia who reviewed and provided recommendations. NORC's Evaluation Team made suggested changes to each instrument based on feedback from USAID.

⁸ NORC merged IT and M&E questions under the heading of public management for the mini-survey.

For the Mini-Survey, the questionnaire went through additional review with ten real respondents during a Pilot Test conducted by AEDE's interviewer team after three days of intense training. The Pilot Test revealed a few additional changes that needed to be made.

3.3 TARGET POPULATION

The target population for KIIs) included individuals at the higher levels of each MAC including Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Assistant Ministers, and High Level Directors who are involved in the GEMS Program. The Evaluation Team met either separately or in groups with 112 individuals whose discussion helped to inform the GEMS Mid-Term Evaluation. A list of those individuals is included in Annex VI, Sources of Information, Section 2.

Institution	Total
Ministry of Education (MOE)	10
Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)	4
Ministry of Health & Social Welfare (MOHSW)	1
Ministry of Post & Telecommunications (MOPT)	5
Ministry of Finance (MOF)	7
Ministry of Lands, Mines, and Energy (MLME)	2
Ministry of Youth & Sports (MOYS)	4
Governance Commission (GC)	4
Central Bank of Liberia (CBL)	4
Civil Service Agency (CSA)	3
Liberia Institute for Public Administration (LIPA)	3
National Investment Commission (NIC)	3
National Bureau of Concessions (NBC)	3
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	2
Forestry Development Authority (FDA)	9
President's Young Professional Program (PYPP)	1
USAID/Liberia	11
International Business Initiatives (IBI)	19
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)	1
African Development Bank (AFDB)	2
Rebuilding Basic Health Services (RBHS)	4
Liberia Teacher Training Program (LTTP)	2
World Bank (WB)	1
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	1
Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA/EU)	1
Liberia Monitoring and Evaluation Program (L-MEP)	1
People, Rules and Organizations Supporting the Protection of Ecosystem Resources (PROSPER)	1
Environmental Protection Agency-EPA	2
Food and Enterprise Development (FED) Program	1
TOTAL	112

The target population for FGDs included civil servants within the GOL at the Officer and Director level and below who are involved in the GEMS Program. The Evaluation Team organized 8 FGDs which included participation of 64 civil servants from the CSA, FDA, GSA, LIPA, MOE, MOF, MoHSW, and PPCC. AEDE conducted 7 FGDs; following NORC's methodology for conducting FGDs, since fewer than 4 participants from the MOF showed up for the FGD, AEDE conducted KIs with the two respondents who showed up. Participants in two of the eight FGDs declined the use of the voice recorder (MoHSW and LIPA), so the evaluation team received summaries of their discussion.

A breakdown by gender and MAC is provided below. Each FGD took approximately 90 minutes to complete.

INSTITUTION	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Civil Service Agency (CSA)		8	8
Forestry Development Authority (FDA)	2	7	9
General Services Agency (GSA)	2	6	8
Liberian Institute of Public Administration (LIPA)		5	5
Ministry of Education (MOE)		8	8
Ministry of Finance (MOF)		2	2
Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW)	3	12	15
Public Procurement and Concession Commission (PPCC)	1	8	9
TOTAL	8	56	64

The target population for the **Mini-survey** conducted as part of the Mid-term Evaluation of the GEMS Program is defined as civil service employees at the Middle Management (process level) or Technical Staff (individual level, e.g. accounting, procurement, asset management) levels within the GOL who were the principal beneficiaries of interventions provided by the GEMS Program. Civil servants from MLME are not part of the target population because MLME did not sign a MOU and very little, GEMS interventions related to management systems were focused on that institution.⁹

INSTITUTION	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Civil Service Agency (CSA)	1	5	6
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	4	13	17
Forestry Development Authority (FDA)	1	8	9
Governance Commission (GC)	0	8	8
General Service Administration (GSA)	3	7	10
Liberian Institute of Public Administration (LIPA)	4	13	17
Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)	7	3	10
Ministry of Education (MOE)	4	9	13
Ministry of Finance (MOF)	1	1	2
Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW)	0	7	7
Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MOPT)	1	6	7

⁹ GEMS interventions were limited to support for the cadaster and revenue collection.

INSTITUTION	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
Ministry of Youth and Sport (MYS)	1	9	10
National Bureau of Concessions (NBC)	0	5	5
National Investment Commission (NIC)	0	10	10
Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC)	1	8	9
TOTAL	28	112	140

3.4 SAMPLING

USAID/Liberia provided NORC with several detailed listings which included current contact information for USAID GEMS Technical Staff on the IBI team; Senior Government Officials and Technical Committee (part of the Steering Committee); and GEMS Client Contacts organized by MAC. So that we would have a sufficient number of participants available to participate in the survey, the NORC Evaluation Team also requested from GEMS a listing with contact information for those who attended workshops or special training provided by GEMS. The GEMS program subsequently provided the Training Attendance Records from the various trainings. All four lists were used extensively to successfully arrange meetings for the KIIs, FGDs, and Mini-Survey.

Sampling was conducted only for the Mini-Survey as follows. We developed a matrix of the maximum number of participants needed for the survey to reach our goal of 120 respondents proportional to each MAC. To ensure sufficient representation from females, we contacted all females in the listing to invite them to participate in the survey. Then, we called every second male participant on the list. Where there was refusal or unavailability, we called the next person on the list until we had the total number of participants we needed from each MAC and the total number for the entire survey.

NORC's goal was to administer the survey to between 80 and 120 respondents within the target population. To ensure we met our minimum, AEDE contacted more than 140 respondents from the listing. Interest in participating in the survey was extremely high, and there were few refusals. In all, 140 respondents from 15 MACs were selected to participate in the survey.

3.5 LIMITATIONS

The Evaluation Team encountered some limitations inherent to the design of this evaluation and during its fieldwork in Liberia. Some of the more relevant limitations are listed below:

- **Biases in data collection methodologies.** To identify key stakeholders and program beneficiaries, the Evaluation Team relied on assistance from USAID and IBI staff.
- **Small sample size for mini-survey.** Due to budget constraints, NORC targeted the mini-survey to administrative and technical staff of the MACs, while feedback from higher level staff were collected via KIIs and FGDs. When asked questions to assess GEMS technical assistance in improving the institutions where they work, survey respondents remarked to interviewers that they could not speak on behalf of their institutions, rather only on behalf of their particular office.

- **Possible inability to attribute results to specific program activities.** There are many factors or variables beyond the GEMS program that may contribute to the results described in this report, given the number of donors active in this field.
- **Liberian culture affecting FGDs.** Given the culture in Liberia, once the most senior person, who often speaks first makes a statement, it is difficult to get the others to talk, especially if he/she is in agreement with what was said. Thus, in most cases, even in a FGD with 10 persons, only 4 or 5 actually provide input; not all FGDs were recorded due to participants declining, thus, in a few instances, we were unable to get recorded comments.
- **Program timeframe.** This kind of program may take many years to produce concrete results. Thus the ability of NORC's evaluation team to determine sustainable results at this early stage was challenging.
- **Time allotted for evaluation.** The Evaluation Team had just three weeks for its fieldwork to assimilate data from KIIs, FGDs, the mini-survey, and program personnel meetings. Given the scale and scope of GEMS, this is a short time period to undertake the evaluation. Consequently, the skill set for ICT and payment work stream under program components 4 and 5 were not included in the Evaluation Team's scope of work.

The above limitations, however, did not prevent the Evaluation Team from gathering the information and data needed to produce findings, conclusions and recommendations for this particular performance evaluation.

4.0 FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 QUESTION 1: How demand-led and 'problem focused' has GEMS been? To what degree is there local ownership, and how can this be improved upon? Are staff of the MACs vested in the changes that GEMS hopes to encourage?

BACKGROUND AND APPROACH TO EVALUATION QUESTION I

The Evaluation Team pursued answers to this multi-dimensional question by reviewing the Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) for 2013-2017 and the GEMS contract documents.¹⁰ The CDCS is aimed at the Development Goal "Strengthened Liberian Institutions Positioned to Drive Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction." To reach this goal the CDCS contains four Development Objectives (DO), the most relevant of which for purposes of the GEMS evaluation is DO1, "More effective, accountable and inclusive governance."

The key provisions of the modified GEMS contract germane to this question include:

- "GEMS Contractor explicitly acknowledges the importance of the holistic approach to institutional development to achieve effective economic governance... devising

¹⁰ USAID, Solicitation, Offer and Award, dated 06/29/2011 and Amendment of Solicitation/Modification of Contract, dated 05/02/2012.

assistance and reform strategies within the larger context of the GOL's development and reform agenda.”

- “GEMS will build capacity using a results-oriented approach.”
- “GEMS Contractor will build the capacity of counterpart institutions in order to utilize the capacity to... deliver services to Liberians more effectively.”
- “HICD provides a continuous measurement process... and is a systematic approach with a focus on achieving tangible and measurable performance improvement results.”
- “The GEMS Contractor will conduct a diagnostic needs assessment of the institution, including an assessment of its development objectives, performance, staff skills, resources and any ongoing or planned assistance in line with the USAID/HICD methodology.”

The clear mandate in the CDCS for a HICD approach which would create momentum for institutional transformation supported by strong and sustained Liberian leadership, and GEMS current contract is considered one key reference point for this evaluation.¹¹

As noted above, the introduction of the HICD methodology for performance improvement represents a significant change between the original GEMS contract and Modification I. HICD, requires a participatory approach in which a MAC is assisted to define its own “desired future state” (i.e. the performance problem) and to create a tailor-made “solutions package” that is jointly implemented and monitored. The intended orientation of the GEMS Program, therefore, is expected to be on performance improvement tied to a MAC-specific development goal and in the process contribute to (i) managing natural resources effectively, (ii) building national wealth, and (iii) promoting equity and youth empowerment.

The centrality of HICD to the implementation of GEMS’ objectives and Evaluation Question I, which emphasizes HICD principles, led the Evaluation Team to offer the following definitions of the evaluation question terms “demand-led,” “problem-focused,” “local ownership,” and “vested in” within the context of the HICD Handbook and USAID Evaluation Policy guidelines:

GEMS efforts are evaluated as demand-led IF activities being implemented are identified and selected by MAC senior management as performance priorities which the MAC and GEMS jointly address and to which both GEMS and the MAC commit time, authority and resources.

GEMS efforts are evaluated as problem focused IF activities being implemented address the root causes of a performance gap, which if addressed and solved by a MAC, improve performance so as to increase the quality and quantity of services provided to “stakeholders and constituents.”

¹¹ This strand of USAID capacity building policy is most recently reflected in the Focus on Results: Enhancing Capacity Across Sectors in Transition (FORECAST) Program, a participant training and human and institutional capacity building program implemented in Liberia from September 2008 to May 2011. The program integrated HICD into its activities to assist organizations focus on their “greatest challenges” and is therefore a previous Liberian example of HICD.

GEMS efforts are evaluated as contributing to local ownership IF all levels in the MAC hierarchy (individual, process, and organization) are actively engaged in a collaborative effort to define the root causes of the performance problem and, through that learning, propose and implement a specific solutions package intended to address the root causes, close the performance gap, and measure the change.

Staff of the MAC's are evaluated as being “vested-in” the changes GEMS hopes to encourage IF:

- a) They have strong reason(s) for wanting change to happen because they will gain from the changes;
- b) They have been “vested-in” (given the right or authority) to implement the changes that GEMS hopes to encourage; and
- c) There is increased likelihood of achieving the change objectives of the MACs and GEMS, because both sides are focused on results and are working together to achieve shared results.

FINDINGS

GEMS uses an “adapted” approach to HICD in their implementation of the program, and a standardized scope for delivery of GEMS technical assistance. In using an adapted version of USAID’s HICD framework, the Evaluation Team believes that GEMS missed an opportunity to engage key MACs in a performance improvement partnership that would have: (i) increased services while also addressing specific problems that hinder service delivery; and (ii) contributed to the Missions' Collaboration, Learning and Adaptation (CLA) goals.¹² This conclusion is based on the following language in Section III.B (b) of Modification I: "After a MAC is selected for participation in the GEMS capacity building program, the GEMS contractor will conduct a diagnostic needs assessment in the institution including an assessment of its development objectives, performance staff skills, resources and any on-going or planned assistance activities by other donors in line with the USAID HICD methodology...The action plan will include clear, measurable benchmarks that signal progress towards completion of technical assistance activities and a transition to systematic M&E as a basic management tool."

¹² An HICD approach is based on the following key steps: (i) reviewing the environment within which the institution operates, collaborating with the institution's leaders to define a future desired performance state, and then assisting an institution to define the root causes of an obstacle(HICD calls this a "performance gap") that is impeding an organization from achieving the desired level of performance (the future performance state) which it believes is needed to service to its stakeholders and constituents; (ii) the joint and agreed definition of the root causes creates the "demand" for a specific set of inputs at the individual (staff), process (systems) or institutional (structure) level (HICD calls this a solutions package) which the institution's leaders commit themselves through an MOU to address the root causes with the technical, and often, financial support of the Contractor, (iii) this joint "ownership" increases the likelihood that the performance gap will be closed and that development goals will be achieved; and (iv) to assure persistent attention to the accomplishment of the solutions package through continuous monitoring of, milestones/benchmarks and performance indicators .

Feedback from respondents participating in FDGs indicates that participants believe GEMS provided a similar menu of inputs across several MACs irrespective of their needs. There is a perception among these MAC middle managers that GEMS follows its own agenda rather than that of the MACs. Here are examples of comments from the FDGs.

Focus Group	Focus Group Comments
GSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>USAID/GEMS come with her own proposals for us to implement... the computers that were brought in, sometimes they just come and say 'we have brought in 5 computers for so and so... sometimes that bureau does not need computers.</i>
FDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>GEMS is going strictly by its mandate, I don't see any change.</i> ▪ <i>Bad practices included leaving out the M&E unit in the discussions and decisions.</i>
MOHSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>GEMS brings a lot of activities that tend to get overlooked. They need to bring lesser activities that they can be accomplish on time.</i>

There is an orientation to resolve economic governance problems at the central services Wave I level (“top-down” approach in the contract), but limited problem orientation at the Wave II line ministries which are involved in economic development (“bottom-up” approach in the contract). Fourteen Wave I (7) and Wave 2 (7) MACs have signed MOUs with GEMS, but only 6 have signed an MOU to undergo an initial assessment similar to what is required in a formal HICD approach. Two Wave I institutions, MOF and CBL, are operating without an MOU with the GEMS program. While an agreement between GEMS and CBL was signed, it does not fulfil the requirements of what is expected of an MOU. Rather, it indicates that the GEMS program is ready to provide assistance to support the institution subject to future discussions.

MOUs signed with the MACs are based on a pre-established GEMS menu of choices and are, therefore, similar and often identical to each other. For Wave I MACs, the MOUs are crafted to address both the institutions administrative requirement and, especially for NBC and GC, their own specific priorities. The MOUs in Wave 2 institutions do not focus on the MAC constituents service delivery goals as an HICD approach is expected to produce. According to many key informants, there is little senior or high level staff involvement in the GEMS assessment activities and, when the MOUs were established, staff overall were not well informed of its contents.¹³

The Evaluation Team believes GEMS has an opportunity to resolve these issues during the remaining period of performance through a combination of approaches: (i) concentration of the four central agencies that are responsible for financial management, procurement, fixed assets and human resources; (ii) working with key officials in these agencies to assure that the systems "fit" together as a cohesive unit; (iii) rolling out this comprehensive package to one or two MACS to test the procedure; and (iv) testing a true HICD approach in a few key MACs.

¹³ The more recent practice of a status matrix enable GEMS and USAID to track input to all MACs. It does not track outputs, or results.

Technical staff within the MACs appreciate GEMS support, but ownership and leadership commitment of senior officials is weak. The technical staff within the MACS – direct beneficiaries of GEMS technical assistance and training – appreciate the support and training provided by GEMS (with some valid negative observations about the frequency and persistence of the GEMS services) and see the GEMS program as contributing to improvements within their institution.

However, to sustain reforms being made by the GEMS Program, there remains a need for GEMS to expand its reach to the higher levels. Based on all sources, including the GEMS contractor's own assessment, the degree of local ownership and leadership at the senior level is weak. Leadership commitment to making changes to achieve "their" desired results (but defined by GEMS) is often lacking. The primary reasons for this seems to be that GEMS approached the different MACS with a pre-established menu of choices that was nearly identical for each MAC, regardless of the particular mandate, size, budget or critical service delivery problem a particular MAC needed to address. Rather than carry out an HICD type of “performance needs assessment” to define the critical performance needs of each MAC, and subsequently craft a tailored technical assistance support package (Solutions Package) for each MAC, GEMS in some of these MACs, built exclusively on the Public Financial Management Risk Assessment Framework (PFMRAF), whose focus on fiduciary risks is different from an HICD approach, which is to define the service delivery goals of each MAC.¹⁴

Mid-level MAC staff show mixed results of being vested in the changes GEMS hopes to encourage. Many of those interviewed stated that the GEMS’ training programs have helped them strengthen their skills and competencies, they appreciate the “personal professional gains” the training offers, and hope to see training continued. In addition, some top managers interviewed admitted to being happy to sign on with the MOUs because GEMS offers both in-kind and technical assistance, such as computers, systems development, and training. However, GEMS technical assistance “solutions packages” are not based on the design of a specific set of interventions for each MAC, tailored to each MAC’s own service delivery goals and needs.¹⁵ This leads one to conclude that staffs of the MACs are “vested in” the changes that GEMS hopes to achieve, but at a more superficial level.

As summarized in Table IA below, results from a mini-survey administered to 140 respondents as part of this evaluation shows that while there is nearly 100% percent awareness of the GEMS program, respondents have varying understanding of the main objectives of the program: (i) Almost 70% of the respondents believe a main objective of GEMS is to restructure their institution, and (ii) some 40% believe that a main objective is to provide the MACs with financial support. At the same time, nearly all respondents indicate (correctly) that they understand GEMS’s main objectives to include developing staff capacity, improving institutional performance, introducing change management in their institution, and developing ICT platforms.

¹⁴ However, the Ministry of Health in Liberia has used the PFMRAF framework to organize donor support and inputs, and considers this framework useful and successful.

¹⁵ Standard solutions packages include equipment and material, manuals, software, etc.

Table 1B, below, show that of those surveyed, on average 67% state they were involved in identifying the desired future state of their institution. Thus, since they participated in defining problems and because they feel the right problems are being addressed, the Evaluation Team takes this to mean they have “a degree of ownership” of the GEMS change objectives, e.g. they are “vested in” the very changes that GEMS hopes to achieve. However, only 58% of survey respondents state there is a process in place for them to discuss emerging MAC-specific problems with GEMS. This response suggests that MAC staff are not necessarily fully “vested in” what is ongoing, because both sides are not (fully) working together to achieve shared results (definition 3).

TABLE 1A, SURVEY RESPONDENTS AWARENESS OF GEMS' PROGRAM'S MAIN OBJECTIVES

INSTITUTION	RESTRUCTURE INSTITUTION	FINANCIAL SUPPORT	DEVELOP STAFF CAPACITY	IMPROVE PERFORMANCE	CHANGE MANAGEMENT	INTRODUCE ICT
Civil Service Agency (CSA)	83.33%	33.33%	100.00%	100.00%	83.33%	66.67%
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	58.82%	23.53%	88.24%	100.00%	88.24%	82.35%
Forestry Development Authority (FDA)	77.78%	66.67%	100.00%	100.00%	66.67%	100.00%
Governance Commission (GC)	75.00%	25.00%	100.00%	100.00%	87.50%	87.50%
General Service Administration (GSA)	70.00%	40.00%	100.00%	100.00%	90.00%	60.00%
Liberian Institute of Public Administration (LIPA)	70.59%	35.29%	100.00%	100.00%	88.24%	82.35%
Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)	60.00%	30.00%	90.00%	100.00%	70.00%	60.00%
Ministry of Education (MOE)	69.23%	23.08%	92.31%	100.00%	100.00%	69.23%
Ministry of Finance (MOF)	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW)	33.33%	66.67%	100.00%	100.00%	66.67%	100.00%
Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MOPT)	100.00%	14.29%	85.71%	100.00%	100.00%	71.43%
Ministry of Youth and Sport (MYS)	90.00%	60.00%	90.00%	100.00%	90.00%	90.00%
National Bureau of Concessions (NBC)	80.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	80.00%	100.00%
National Investment Commission (NIC)	60.00%	50.00%	100.00%	100.00%	60.00%	100.00%
Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC)	50.00%	37.50%	87.50%	100.00%	75.00%	87.50%
TOTAL	68.12%	39.13%	94.20%	100.00%	81.88%	80.43%

TABLE 1B, PERCENT OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS REPORTING BEING VESTED IN GEMS

INSTITUTION	INVOLVED IN IDENTIFYING DESIRED FUTURE STATE	PROCESS IN PLACE TO DISCUSS EMERGING PROBLEMS
Civil Service Agency (CSA)	50.00%	100.00%
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	76.47%	64.71%
Forestry Development Authority (FDA)	44.44%	66.67%
Governance Commission (GC)	75.00%	62.50%
General Service Administration (GSA)	70.00%	60.00%
Liberian Institute of Public Administration (LIPA)	58.82%	29.41%
Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)	60.00%	60.00%
Ministry of Education (MOE)	76.92%	53.85%
Ministry of Finance (MOF)	100.00%	50.00%
Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW)	33.33%	50.00%
Ministry of Post & Telecommunications (MOPT)	71.43%	42.86%
Ministry of Youth and Sport (MYS)	80.00%	60.00%
National Bureau of Concessions (NBC)	40.00%	60.00%
National Investment Commission (NIC)	80.00%	90.00%
Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC)	75.00%	37.50%
TOTAL	66.67%	57.97%

The somewhat mixed results concerning whether or not MAC staff feel vested in GEMS change objectives is further confirmed in comments heard during the FGDs and KIs. The overall finding is that if staff are vested in the change objectives it is directly correlated to the position and level of respondents in the MACS receiving assistance. That is, the Evaluation Team found that technical level staff receiving the capacity building and other assistance are likely to be more vested than senior officials, who are much less engaged in the GEMS process. Following are some examples of discussant statements during FGDs and KIs.

Indicators that MAC staffs are “vested in” GEMS Change Objectives
<p>MOA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Manager X confirmed that MOA and GEMS held detailed meetings to determine needs in administration, assets (warehouse and fleet maintenance and others), HR, IT, procurement, and finance. Meetings were held with all functional staff and focal persons.</i> ▪ <i>We are satisfied that MOA and GEMS objectives are appropriate and that they dovetail with the MOA mandate.</i> ▪ <i>Yes, the Solutions Package is based on our problems.</i> <p>MOE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>We would not have signed the MOU if we did not agree to the content of the MOU.</i> ▪ <i>Definitely yes. The Solutions Packages are based on MOE problems.</i> ▪ <i>We feel senior management is involved in the process of defining the Solutions Packages.</i> ▪ <i>MOE/GEMS process is consultative at leadership levels.</i> ▪ <i>MOE is fully supportive of GEMS and the Minister calls a weekly update on program execution.</i> <p>CSA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>We feel GEMS is addressing our root causes of problems and some of our work habits are changing.</i> ▪ <i>GEMS has understood our context and always pitches in.</i> <p>GSA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Senior managers are working together (with GEMS), even though our approaches are different.</i> <p>PPCC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>We had a number of sessions and a workshop to brainstorm practical examples of things that will enhance our abilities. I think it’s commendable.</i> ▪ <i>We were involved from the onset; ‘in summary, we were involved in the program from the beginning... total involvement at all levels, where technical people interacted with GEMS, creating a synergy in the program.</i> ▪ <i>We are trying to find ways to sustain the GEMS program...we will try as much as possible to sustain the program</i> <p>FDA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>All technical and line managers were invited to discussions (about assessments) with GEMS.</i> <p>LIPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>All interventions (that came from the assessment) were fully supported.</i>

Alternatively, FGD and KII informants at the higher level expressed less vested in GEMS as illustrated in the following statements:

Indicators that MAC staffs are not “vested in” GEMS Change Objectives
<p>GSA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>I say ‘no’ concerning senior management being involved in identifying the future performance levels we want GEMS to focus on with us; we are not, therefore, working specifically with GEMS on mutually-defined performance indicators.</i> ▪ <i>We should work together on a work plan which we can implement and not they (GEMS) coming with a work plan for us to implement.</i> ▪ <i>Number one problem is lack of communication; they don’t communicate when they are coming to implement something for us.</i> ▪ <i>We need work plans and agreement of what need to be done when.</i> <p>PPCC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>I won’t say yes to participating in defining what support was needed because sometimes these discussions happen and we are not aware... USAID/GEMS come in with their own proposal for us to implement.</i> <p>FDA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Focal Person said key members participated in defining GEMS support. But several participants (in the FGD) said they have not seen nor read it [the MOU] to know its contents. GEMS came with their agenda already in hand for what technical assistance and support they would provide.</i> <p>LIPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>"At times GEMS dominates the discussion and does not let LIPA play its own role." General agreement that senior LIPA management are not serious; they do not want the CMC. Work plans for LIPA and for GEMS are not aligned.</i> <p>MOF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Speaking to the MOF, I would say ‘no’ (e.g. leadership is not fully supportive of change being facilitated by GEMS).</i> <p>MoHSW:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Leaders are supportive of change being facilitated. Ministry has opened its arms to the USAID/GEMS program, but it is not tailored properly.</i>

GEMS operations are focused at the base of the organizational pyramid¹⁶ (individual level) rather than at higher organizational or process levels. GEMS interventions have focused primarily on developing conformity with national administrative standards such as control of assets, accounting, personnel management and procurement at the individual worker level (administrative and technical staff), and significantly less focus on assisting local leaders at the organizational or process levels to improve performance and service delivery and help develop sustainable performance improvement systems.

¹⁶ See figure 1 below.

As demonstrated above, the Evaluation Team concludes that results from the mini-survey and the FGDs (which were targeted largely at the administrative and technical staff) show satisfaction with GEMS interventions largely because they represent the primary beneficiaries to date of GEMS assistance. On the other hand, the Evaluation Team’s meetings with key informants (ministerial and high level management staff) show limited involvement and support for the GEMS program, which we suggest should be addressed in the duration of the contract.

The dichotomy of client observations may be a consequence of the mixed messages in the contract modification, which introduced a new process, HICD, but which retains many of the results and deliverables of the original contract.

Efforts to reconcile these two perspectives have not been as smooth as hoped. Figure 1 illustrates an organizational pyramid and the focus of GEMS support. Although the Deputy Ministers for Administration, Deputy Director Generals (DDG) or Directors theoretically have oversight responsibilities of GEMS activities in their respective institutions, many are less informed about GEMS activities occurring in their institution, partly because they seem to have delegated responsibility to someone lower in the hierarchy given the nature of activities involved.

FIGURE 1: ORGANIZATIONAL PYRAMID AND THE FOCUS OF GEMS SUPPORT



The scope and scale of the GEMS Program is ambitious. More on this issue is detailed in Evaluation Question 4.

There is no counterpart Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) within the MACs. More on this issue is detailed in Evaluation Question 3.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The decision to use an "adapted" approach to HICD and a standardized scope for delivery of GEMS technical assistance has led to weak ownership at several MACS.
2. There is demand to resolve economic governance problems at the central services level. However, there is no demand or problem orientation at the level of line ministries which are involved in economic development.
3. Evidence from the KII and FGDs, which represent individuals at the higher levels of the "pyramid," show that the majority of central government are concerned that GEMS has moved too quickly into the line ministries with solutions that are still being modified. Many conclude that it would have been preferable for GEMS to have established a firmer base and helped the Wave I MACs develop a uniform and non-contradictory approach to systems and central management services before attempting to introduce in Wave II institutions systems which are still in flux. In addition, for Wave 2 institutions, GEMS has not yet engaged their clients in a partnership effort to improve their service delivery performance. The Evaluation Team believes GEMS has an opportunity to address both findings in the remaining two years of the contract.
4. MOUs signed with the MACs include standard lists of technical inputs, training courses, and computers to be provided to MACs by the GEMS Program. These inputs were aimed at strengthening administration in Wave I MACs. However, in Wave II MACs, these inputs are not directly related to any specific entity-defined development objective. One indicator that the MOUs are a prescriptive, supply side approach is corroborated by the conformity of goods received by Wave 2 MACs', irrespective of size, complexity or development goal - each received seven (7) laptop computers.
5. Because GEMS has focused largely on technical assistance at the base of the organizational pyramid (Figure 1, above), it has not been able to create or sustain a useful change management process led by MAC leaders. In fact, GEMS' activity, at present, is far removed from the Ministers, the key decision makers, and development leaders. GEMS itself, as a development program, is un-owned, with no single agency of Government committed to its success. The multiple ownership of a Steering Committee has not worked.
6. The Evaluation Team concludes that MAC staff are not equally "vested in" obtaining the planned results of GEMS. While staff at the technical level highly appreciate and value GEMS' inputs and training/coaching, they are at the same time disappointed they receive insufficient assistance on a regular, scheduled and predictable basis. MAC staff at the senior levels (Ministers and Directors General/Deputy Directors General) is considered quite low. Findings from discussions during KII suggest two reasons for this discontentment: (i) staff were not adequately engaged through a participatory HICD approach; and/or (ii) GEMS interventions are at a low level in the hierarchy away from the perceived priorities of senior managers. (GEMS describes the activities as "back office," implying that they were not related to the primary mission of the MAC.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The HICD process takes time to build trust and understanding. The Evaluation Team recommends re-engaging with a cluster of central government MACS and use HICD as the basis for assisting them to define performance gaps in the roll out of central services and then help address these gaps in a complete and conclusive manner. By using the USAID HICD framework in its traditional form, GEMS has an excellent opportunity to engage with key decision makers and development partners to improve service delivery and performance for a single (or two) objectives. There still remains an opportunity for MACs to learn the HICD process and be able to use it on their own to address performance gaps. The Evaluation Team believes this awareness of a tested performance-solving process may be used to promote leadership, and ownership on the Government side as well as contribute to USAID collaboration, learning, and adaptation (CLA).
2. GEMS needs to revise its strategy for working with MAC leaders and develop a plan for working in partnership with teams of MAC technicians, perhaps more closely aligning with the IRCs, as suggested by a senior government official.
3. The GEMS Program lacks a partner agency within the GOL which could help strengthen the sustainability of progress made by GEMS interventions. While we understand the conditions in Liberia are such that optimal implementation of the USAID HICD platform is difficult, the Evaluation Team considered the alternatives and on a very preliminary basis, suggest GEMS collaborate with the GOL to discuss potential MAC candidates, such as the GC. Key informants within the GC have termed the GEMS program as "very helpful" and "great," being the most responsive and positive informants during the evaluation. An alternate candidate could be the CSA. Given the obstacles within the country to establishing an anchor, we recommend that GEMS and USAID strengthen an institution that is central to support and sustain GEMS development objectives. Not having a government counterpart increases the risk of losing momentum on the project and sustaining the progress already made. Investing resources to try to develop a counterpart/anchor (even though the context is not particularly supportive) would be a useful step in reducing that risk.

Another option is to establish a temporary inter-agency task force – one for the Wave I MACs and another for the Wave II MACs – to achieve specific results of a clear action plan, chaired and spearheaded by high-level officials who support GEMS objectives.

4. The Evaluation Team recommends that GEMS works with the GOL to coordinate and reach cohesion/uniformity at the policy, systems, and procedures level among the PPCC, GSA, CSA, and MOF (key Wave I MACs) before rolling out assistance to other MACs.
5. The Change Management Committee (CMC) approach is more appropriate when leaders are involved and real change is implemented. GEMS technical assistance and training services are not "changing" administrative functions. Instead, they are upgrading and standardizing existing central government services. It would be preferable, as stated above, to assign the monitoring of performance of the GEMS/MACs MOUs to the IRCs.
6. Alternatively, GEMS might also consider creating a joint MAC/GEMS program management function (program office) inside each of a limited number of priority MACs with the primary

purpose of improving communication. This unit might also be responsible for designing and implementing a MAC/GEMS-specific work plan tied to a revised MOU created after an HICD-type planning session with MAC senior management. The stewardship of the GEMS/MAC-specific work plans would be MAC staff and management personnel, whose primary responsibility and authority would be to implement, coordinate, monitor and evaluate the MAC/GEMS work plans, with GEMS guidance, as appropriate. The key idea is for MAC personnel to be empowered to spearhead the implementation of the work plans and changes that those plans engender, on behalf of the MAC management, in close collaboration with the GEMS technical assistance teams. At that point, one would be able to affirm that MAC staff are “vested in” the changes and change objectives of the GEMS program. They would also be responsible for the M&E functions, with GEMS technical guidance, as required. (The GEMS 2014 work plan indicates that there will be technical assistance available for strengthening the M&E capacity of the MACS.)

4.2 QUESTION 2: Are inputs provided by GEMS contributing to identifiable changes in processes and systems capacity? How effective have advisors been in transferring skills, knowledge, and capacity to GOL staff?

GEMS has provided substantial inputs to MACs in the form of advisors, trainings and workshops, equipment and material, as well as manuals, software and templates.

The GEMS Program employs expatriate and Liberian advisors who are specialists in various disciplines of interest to the program. This is a good, logical mix. Currently, there are 33 GEMS advisors, almost equally divided between expatriate and local employees, working with 14 MACs with signed MOUs and 2 MACs (MOF and CBL) without signed MOU.¹⁷ Most of GEMS advisors are based at the GEMS Office in Mamba Point from where they interact with the various institutions. A few advisors, especially those at the National Bureau of Concessions (NBC), Governance Commission (GC), and the Ministry of Finance (MOF) are permanently based at the host institutions. The three person LIPA team also may be considered as semi-resident advisors since they are dedicated to that one entity. The Evaluation Team defines the effectiveness in this context by three interlinked factors, namely:

1. Quality of advisors;
2. Processes employed in the transfer of knowledge and skills; and
3. Environment in which the coaching and learning are taking place.

FINDINGS

Overall, GEMS interventions contribute to institutional improvements.

The most practical GEMS contributions under this objective have been the development of Service Desks and the deployment of computers. Computers and servers were delivered to several MACS to assist with their service delivery processes to the public and businesses. GEMS

¹⁷ Table 4.A, Scale of GEMS Program, included under Evaluation Question 4 below, provides a list of each of institution segregated by wave and MAC type.

IT advisor’s approach is to make IT a service-oriented operation in each Ministry; to build within each MAC the capacity for providing IT services; and, at the top, to increase the awareness of the importance and usefulness of IT services as a ministry support function. The IT strategy to date is commendable.

Data from the mini-survey show on average 54.66% of respondents believe that GEMS inputs are contributing to “identifiable institutional improvements.” Since the survey question asked about identifiable institutional improvements and not about changes in *processes and systems capacity*, one cannot easily state whether or not the survey respondents are referring to identifiable changes in processes and systems capacity of the MACs or identifiable changes within their own offices in their respective departments.¹⁸ Table 2A, provides a breakdown.

TABLE 2A, PERCENT OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS REPORTING THAT GEMS INTERVENTIONS PRODUCE OBSERVABLE IMPROVEMENTS

GEMS TA Area	Yes	No	Do not know
Finance	53.62%	21.74%	23.91%
Human Resources	61.59%	13.77%	23.91%
Procurement	68.12%	8.70%	22.46%
Assets	56.52%	20.29%	22.46%
ICT	59.42%	20.29%	19.57%
M&E	39.13%	28.26%	31.88%
Gender	44.20%	28.26%	26.81%
AVERAGE	54.66%	20.19%	24.43%

An average of 20.19% of respondents said “No” and 24.43% said they “Do not know” if there are identifiable institutional changes. Those responding the “Do not know” could mean that traditional, top-down bureaucratic administrations such as the GOL are structured in functional silos, resulting in employees being isolated from what is going on outside of their functional responsibility areas. Another plausible reason for the “Do not know” population of respondents is that GEMS contributes technical assistance inputs specifically to each functional area of each MAC, thus respondents may not be aware of what improvements are occurring outside of their functional responsibility areas.

Among all technical areas receiving assistance, 39.13% responded that they see observable institutional improvements in M&E, confirming similar results discussed under Evaluation Question 1. Overall, considering that the GEMS program is mid-way through its duration, those who responded “Do not know” also confirm the weak communication procedures both within the MAC and between the MAC and GEMS.

The Evaluation Team is able to reach an important conclusion about GEMS’ contributions to identifiable changes in processes and systems capacity from responses to the questions during KIIs and FGDs, as illustrated in responses below.

¹⁸ During the debriefing after the pilot test, many interviewers reported that several of the respondents could not respond on behalf of their institution, but rather their specific office.

Indicators that Inputs provided by GEMS are Contributing to Identifiable Changes in Processes and Systems Capacity

GSA:

- *I'm satisfied in general that GEMS services are solving specific GSA problems.*
- *Changes in finance, building maintenance and codes, and in the assets registry system are all excellent changes coming from GEMS inputs.*
- *GEMS is helping GSA move forward with policy and procedures changes, and that will help make things sustainable; procurement planning and filing systems are a success.*
- *New LAN at GSA, with a server room running with SBS switch and a direct link to IFMIS-MOF, have all given improved systems capacity.*

MOA:

- *Things are on target in general, although too early to talk about identifiable changes... although MOA planning scores GEMS concessions work highly.*

MOE:

- *Training is generally impacting positively, although there are no training impact assessments being done in order to be sure.*
- *Procurement processes and filing systems are streamlined.*
- *Vehicle movement system is a good, replicable system.*

CSA:

- *We (now) get useful reports from Finance.*
- *GEMS has positively impacted HR particularly.*
- *GEMS seems to be helping LIPA improve.*
- *Secure internet and anti-virus software for CSA virus-prone computer system, and ongoing work in financial policy manual development.*

LIPA:

- *GEMS enables us in how well we deliver our training, and give us support in reforming our system.*
- *Procurement system is improved, internal audit and control are now OK, and change by using Quick Book is visible.*
- *We now use new, improved methods of facilitating (training).*

FDA:

- *The mentioned tangible changes in the capacity of FDA to deliver services are: fleet management, through training; finance processes are transparent now and we have a new finance system.*

PPCC:

- *Procurement processes are now transparent.*
- *We believe that our reporting processes have improved.*
- *Introduction of some tools by USAID/GEMS has enhanced Compliance Division's capacity to effectively monitor compliance entities... and to be able to accurately gauge compliance levels of procuring entities.*
- *They [GEMS] work across 17 MACS and this has helped improve records monitoring processes.*
- *Our procurement officers perform well, and our monthly procurement plan hearings is a new process that has improved the whole thing a lot... these are visible, physical changes we see.*
- *Training is well covered by USAID/GEMS. People out there are beginning to see the difference procurement planning processes have improved.*

On balance, those interviewed cite several important changes in their own institution's processes and systems capacity. Positive comments from CSA about LIPA, as well as by LIPA insiders themselves, acknowledge positive changes in LIPA processes and overall training capacity.

Most comments concerning identifiable changes in processes and systems capacities are linked to direct GEMS support delivered through both long-term advisors and STTA.¹⁹ Several persons interviewed acknowledge training (including on-the-job coaching) contributed to improved knowledge and practices in their respective MAC, and positive changes in their processes. However, interviewees could not associate all the visible changes to training, and mentioned there is no process in place for conducting post-training or on-the-job impact assessments, so it is not easy to ascertain how training directly contributes to processes and systems improvements. There are some assessment tools, but they have been slow to operationalize.

M&E systems are not in place and changes cannot be tracked. Evidence shows a lack of adequate, systemic, and systematic M&E by either the MACs or the GEMS Program that capture how (or what) GEMS inputs are directly contributing to changes in processes and improvements in systems capacity within each MAC. More on this issue is detailed in Evaluation Question 3.

Focus Group Comments	
GSA:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>We do not know for sure why we are seeing some changes.</i> ▪ <i>We are not working specifically with GEMS on mutually-defined performance indicators.</i> ▪ <i>GEMS needs to improve in their intervention areas for visible evidence to be indicated.</i>
MOA:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>There is no milestone plan with GEMS, with results statements, so it will be difficult to isolate out GEMS-associated changes, from other factors.</i>
MOE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>GEMS advisors are not in the Ministry on daily basis, so they (and we) cannot observe what's happening.</i> ▪ <i>I do not feel capable of distinguishing GEMS-related changes, versus other causes for positive change (because) there is no detailed MOE/GEMS work plan, with clear activities stated, and with objectives and results statements, so it is not possible to say what changes are GEMS-related.</i>
CSA:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>There is no work plan document that sets out what performance goals GEMS is responsible for.</i> ▪ <i>There is no tracking of training results to know if training is producing change.</i>

¹⁹ Respondents did not generally distinguish between the sources of support. This is common among beneficiaries of USAID programming who frequently believe the Agency is an NGO or part of the UN system.

The quality of GEMS advisors is good. Based on feedback from Liberian government employees during KII and FGDs, as well as the Evaluation Team’s own interactions with GEMS advisors, the Evaluation Team concludes that the quality of advisors working on the GEMS team is good. Government employees describe GEMS advisors as competent, experienced, dedicated and resourceful. Implicitly reflecting the quality of advisors, the MOE’s FGD summary concluded: *“The most important success scored by GEMS is the training and knowledge acquired by the various units.”*

GEMS offers a wide and appropriate variety of knowledge and skills transfer techniques. Processes related to knowledge and skills transfer include on-the-job coaching, workshops, on-the-job joint work efforts, and joint on-site problem-solving. Liberian staff members at the targeted MACs learn not only by listening to workshop lectures, but also by performing on-the-job tasks under the guidance of GEMS advisors. Collectively, these techniques are considered effective ways of transferring knowledge and skills. Implicit of both the quality of advisors and processes, the PPCC FGD concludes: *GEMS has indeed been successful in building capacity and providing equipment and stationery for various units.* The GSA FGD concluded: *The most important successes of GEMS include training and certifications for MIS staff in Microsoft Certified Solution Associate (MCSA)+ and Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL); training in procurement in proper ways of filing which capacitated them to update their 2013 procurement plans and to come up with a report.*

In post-conflict Liberia, most Liberians have come to see workshops as the only, and perhaps best, means of on-the-job human capacity development. However, GEMS approach of supplementing workshops with “on-the-job, hands-on approaches” demonstrates that human capacity building is more than having workshops.

However, the work environment in which knowledge and skills are transferred is challenging and compromises the quality of the technical work provided by GEMS advisors. Key challenges include: unsuitability of some staff for the positions they occupy; shortage of basic working tools such as computers, printers, and accessories; absence of reliable internet, water, and power services; and poor layout of offices. Most public buildings were not designed for offices – rooms are small and natural lighting and ventilation poor. The CSA FGD concluded: *“Challenges noted include the lack of power backup for the IT unit and a noisy environment.”*

Other challenges include Liberian employees’ low motivation and poor working habits, due in part to low salaries and poor working conditions as mentioned above. At times, intermittent, ad hoc demands employees by their supervisors disrupt scheduled interactions with GEMS’ advisors.

The frequency and duration of GEMS’ advisors on-site visits are low. Notwithstanding the quality of GEMS advisors and their input, key informants and discussants commented that the frequency and duration of GEMS advisor’s on-site visits are low and not conducive for sustained progress. In the words of one foreign advisor of a donor funded program: *“Once or twice a week meetings is not sufficient; advisors need to go every day, five days a week.”*

There is also a perception that advisors *represent the interest of central government agencies – MOF, CSA, PPCC, GSA, and MOPT – but have no designated authority to be their ‘agents’.* This seemingly is a misconception since GEMS is working in areas supervised or regulated by these

central agencies. However, although there may be no formal “agency agreements” between the central agencies and GEMS, the Evaluation Team concludes that central agencies are fully aware of, and – with the possible exception of the MOF – are supportive of the GEMS work in line ministries. The Evaluation Team recommends a strategy to remove doubts among line agencies about the legitimacy of the partnership between GEMS and the GOL's central agencies.

CONCLUSIONS

- I. Key informants and discussants cite positive changes in processes and improvements in systems capacity in GEMS and other donor assistance focus areas. Table 2.B, below, shows a range of improvements in key administrative/management systems provided by GEMS and other donor programs. At the low end of this range, 39.13% of respondents see improvement in M&E, and at the high end, 68.12% see improvement in procurement processes. Of those seeing improvement, on average 72.54% said they attribute these improvements to inputs provided by the GEMS project.

TABLE 2.B: POSITIVE CHANGES AND PERCENT ATTRIBUTED TO GEMS

GEMS TA area	Average % of respondents seeing improvement in GEMS and other donor focused areas	Of those seeing improvement in technical areas; average positive changes respondents attribute to GEMS
Finance	53.62%	72.54%
Human Resources	61.59%	
Procurement	68.12%	
Assets	56.52%	
ICT	59.42%	
M&E	39.13%	
Gender	44.20%	
AVERAGE	54.66%	

2. Section III of the GEMS FY 2013 Annual Report describes the year’s achievements in the cross-cutting themes and special programs. Page 59, “Change Management and Measurement Workshops,” explains that follow-on to the workshops will be on-the-job training to finalize the change measurement tools, and tailor them to each specific MAC, so that each MAC can measure and communicate change in an effective and sustainable way. The Evaluation Team concludes from this that GEMS is generally heading in the right direction to address some of the M&E issues raised in both Research Question 2 as well as

in Research Question 1, above.²⁰ However, the Evaluation Team believes the tendency of GEMS to provide uniform, rather than tailored, inputs across the core functional areas of the MACS (expressed also in Work Plan Activities 2 and 4), is not the right approach for creating an M&E function within so many institutions.

3. There are no time-bound, responsibility-based work plans linked to the MOUs with the individual MACs, and progress is not monitored.²¹ MOUs between GEMS and each MAC include no set periods of performance for individual work streams, the absence of which implies no mandate for addressing observed deficiencies in a timely and conclusive manner. GEMS' functional team approach is considered suboptimal since work streams are not coordinated or linked, an observation confirmed by many informants and discussants.
4. As substantiated by comments from informants and discussants from KIs and FGDs, as well as those interviewed from the donor community, the Evaluation Team concludes that GEMS advisors are competent, knowledgeable, and experienced; there is consensus that GEMS advisors are transferring their knowledge and skills effectively. However, in light of challenges within the MACs in terms of preparedness of government employees and their working space, the Evaluation Team suggests GEMS advisors increase substantially the frequency and duration of their in-situ work. Many MAC staff realize they still require more training to become effective. Capacity building in Liberia, out of necessity of circumstances and conditions, will have to encompass sustained engagements, over protracted periods, involving measured performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Change Management (CM) is not merely an M&E function as constructed in the GEMS program. Rather, the concept and practice of change management is the art and capacity of leading an organization through change. CM is, therefore, focused on persons, systems, and institutions as integrated factors that affect performance.

The Evaluation Team recommends separating CM from M&E. That is, develop the GEMS/MAC change management functions into true CM functions, and make M&E function a proper M&E function. The Evaluation Team further suggests revising the present Activity 4, “*support change management committees in the collection, reporting, and use of performance data for program M&E.*” Create in each MAC, a well-designed, well-structured M&E function, as the GEMS FY 2014 work plan shows will be done. A good starting point for creating a proper M&E function could be one of the Evaluation Team’s recommendations for Evaluation Question 1, namely: create a joint MAC/GEMS program management function (office) inside each MAC responsible for designing and implementing a MAC/GEMS-specific work plan, and monitoring and evaluating that work plan.

²⁰ Reference GEMS FY 2014 Annual Work Plan, p. 20: Activity 2: *Develop standardized performance monitoring plans with tools and reporting templates for each management function.* Activity 4: *Support change management committees in the collation, reporting, and use of performance data for program M&E.*

²¹ There are indicators of inputs provided by GEMS to the MACS that are rolled up and provided to USAID.

2. Consider placing GEMS advisors in the central agencies. Since GEMS activities fall within domains supervised or regulated by central agencies and these agencies are few, this is doable. Working together and in concert with a cluster of central agencies would demonstrate the partnership between GEMS and these central agencies. Embedded advisors in the central agencies will expedite the strengthening of these agencies and lay the foundation for the sustainability of the reforms being made across the line ministries.
3. Better understand and navigate Liberia's rugged administrative culture (embedding advisors will help to achieve this). As practiced Liberian-style, the norms of formal bureaucratic behavior are often not followed, and patronage and informal rules prevail. The system values loyalty over performance, informal organizational relationships over formal relationships, and illusory consensus-building over critical thinking, analysis, and competition of ideas. Subordinates rarely challenge the thinking of leaders. Although formal authority structures exist, there are often persons within those institutions with inordinate influences because of family or social ties. Leadership turnover is common and policy/program continuity is not always ensured. To facilitate and/or expedite changes in institutions within the Liberian context, the Evaluation Team suggests GEMS identify, and work with, opinion leaders and advocates and multiple champions of change within the institutions, even though there will be resisters (persons) and blockers (processes) of change institutions.
4. Increase the frequency and duration of advisors visits in line ministries. Higher frequency and longer duration will bring advisors into close proximity with operational problems as they occur, make them more accessible when needed, improve communications, motivate trainees to work harder, and assist advisors strengthen their understanding of the organizational cultures of the institutions, thus facilitating improved capacity development.

4.3 QUESTION 3: What deficiencies currently exist in the implementation of the program's objectives and how can these be remedied?

FINDINGS

GEMS operates from a central office location in Mamba Point from where it plans and carries out performance improvement activities within various government institutions. The Program maintains a pool of advisors organized in thematic teams to implement solution packages aimed at achieving GEMS program objectives. There are teams of specialists, each focused on a specific, administrative support function. There also are teams constructed to improve the institutional capacity of LIPA, and strengthen the management of concessions.

GEMS advisors implement program activities within each institution as defined by the MOU signed between each MAC and GEMS. These MOUs define the responsibilities of GEMS as well as those of the institution. Work programs for each were to be governed by a Steering Committee, which has all but disappeared as a guiding force. Within each MAC, CMCs were developed and were to serve as the driving force behind the GEMS-supported reforms. The Steering Committee, CMCs, and GEMS advisors were expected to work directly with relevant technicians, professionals, and operations staff. A GEMS Program Focal Point Person within each MAC was to serve as liaison with GEMS when implementing the solution packages.

The GEMS Program faces various challenges which, collectively, compromise the sustainability of progress made. These challenges are either inherent in the Liberian context or internal to GEMS:

GEMS has no anchor in Government. There is no institution within the government that has oversight responsibility of the GEMS Program. This might be because the program cuts across several central government ministries and sectors, the GEMS design did not require it, and/or there are challenges at the highest level of government in delegating a single source of coordination and authority. Notwithstanding, for the purpose of corporate accountability, the Evaluation Team believes it is necessary for GEMS to have an institutional anchor within the government to sustain the progress made on the project.

GEMS has no functioning Steering Committee. The Steering Committee responsible for providing guidance and direction for program activities is not functional. It rarely meets and has not demonstrated an ability to provide guidance to GEMS. When meetings are held, key committee members from government institutions are absent and are often represented by junior level staff lacking the status and knowledge to make informed decisions.

Many GEMS CMCs are ineffective. GEMS' CMCs, although organized with specific responsibilities, are, for the most part, inactive and not particularly useful. Most do not meet regularly, and when they do meet, they seem not to discuss anything substantive. These assertions were confirmed by informants and discussants at MOE, FDA, and CSA.

On the contrary, LIPA is one striking example of a CMC that is engaged in the reform process with GEMS. The committee is headed by a director and consists of five permanent members from relevant administrative units. LIPA's CMC meets regularly on the last Thursday of each month and is guided by a procedural manual developed for its use. However, given the leadership of the committee is at the level of a line director, LIPA staff perceive LIPA's top management does not fully support the GEMS CMC process. Possible reasons for this lack of enthusiasm include insufficient sense of ownership of the CMC concept, and/or concern about loss of control for the reform process. Here are some examples of comments expressed during the FGD with LIPA respondents:

- *“Senior management is not serious – they do not want the CMC.”*
- *“To facilitate [the] reform process, it is important to report the success/shortcomings of the CMC – management support is not forthcoming so it is not expected to succeed.”*
- *“The challenge has been the support is not provided to CMC to ensure that things are done. So no meetings are being held as there is no motivation – moral or financial – for them to continue work.”*
- *“The leadership is not prepared for the CMC.”*

GEMS has limited regular status meetings and institutionalized feedback. Until the end of calendar year 2013, there were few MACS who held regular “how are we doing” meetings involving their and GEMS staff. Thus, feedback between GEMS and the MACs about progress of implementation (or the lack thereof) had been inadequate for the operations of a program of this magnitude. In the words of one focus group discussant: *the lack of communication is a hindrance as (staff) are not fully informed of feedback from surveys, for example.*

The value of status meetings has been recently recognized, and means for regular engagement and feedback is now in place in all 14 MACs. However, as stated earlier the status matrix tracks inputs to all MACs, not outcomes and results.

On average, 70% of respondents to the mini-survey answered they were aware of periodic meetings within their institution to discuss GEMS interventions. Of those who said they were aware of these meetings, 9% said they occurred “about once a week,” 31% said “once or twice a month,” 8% said “quarterly,” 17% said there was “no regular schedule,” and 6% said they “don’t know” how frequently these meetings occur.

GEMS does not measure its performance within the MACs. Even though the GEMS program has a PMP with performance indicators, baseline values, targets and actual values, many informants and discussants commented that there are no corresponding performance indicators developed and tracked to measure the progress and achievements of objectives (or lack thereof) within the MACs. They also expressed a lack of good strategic planning concepts, practices and techniques within the GEMS/MACs program areas. As a consequence, empirical evidence showing changes and strengthened systems capacity to which GEMS inputs contributed, versus other donor support, is elusive, which is to be expected of a capacity development program with multiple donors providing assistance.

Here are a few quotes from discussants who participated in FGDs:

Focus Group	Focus Group Comments
MOE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>“GEMS did not define the context of the MOE performance issues.”</i> ▪ <i>“The future MOE performance levels are in the larger context, but not in the GEMS context.”</i> ▪ <i>“There is a lack of flow of information... We need to be updated by USAID/GEMS to understand the changes being made.”</i> ▪ <i>“GEMS needs to do real work plans, with real indicators, so we can work together on those plans.”</i>
CSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>“Upper level officer: unable to respond if CSA senior management was closely involved in the Solutions Package.”</i> ▪ <i>“Well, to the extent that they allowed it and went into agreement, whatever it was – we expected mass support from them. That becomes another question. Like, in our situation – like in many government institutions, it’s difficult to find what we call planning processes and identifying indicators becomes an issue too. So performance is just by maybe in an ad hoc manner because we do not have clear indicators to say what was achieved at a point and what was not achieved, it becomes a problem.”</i>

A key informant at the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunication declined to offer an assessment of the progress under the GEMS program because he had no measurable indicators to rate performance. Discussants at the PPCC recognized the lack of indicators as a factor hindering the successful implementation of GEMS. One discussant summarized: *(One) does not know the key indicators of the GEMS program and therefore cannot say if activities are different from what was agreed (in the MOU).*

GEMS has untimely delivery of inputs. The consensus obtained from MAC informants is that inputs are appropriate and supportive of the administrative functions of institutions. However, these same informants expressed concern about the delivery schedule of some earmarked inputs, such as computers and servers. Delivery is at times slow, sometimes not appearing to occur at all. A frustrated informant at the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) commented: *Let them first bring those computers that were promised long ago before we move to the next stage of this program.*

The Evaluation Team was unable to isolate the exact cause(s) of these delays, though recommends the GEMS Team fully review its procurement process and procedures – from start to finish – examining where the bottlenecks are occurring and revising procedures where it can to streamline the process. This may require working closely with USAID/Liberia and others on moving more quickly on approvals, if required. The Evaluation Team also suggests that GEM keep the MACS fully informed and included in the procurement process – from identifying the type and nature of commodities to be procured to providing realistic delivery schedules of those commodities.

The level of GOL financial commitment to LIPA is low. One of the five key objectives of the GEMS Program is to enhance the institutional capacity of LIPA to improve the performance of personnel in key management functions. This GEMS component is expected to rebuild the capacity of LIPA and to make it the premier training provider for personnel at all levels of the public sector. However, the GOL's financial commitment to LIPA is low, as evidenced by the persistent, low budgetary allocations made to the agency over recent years. For example, the 2014/15 budget is US\$725,000, just sufficient to underwrite salaries of staff and no more. While it is not unusual to have many under-funded government institutions in a poor country such as Liberia, the resource allocations to LIPA may reflect lack of a widespread shared vision of LIPA's role in, and value to, broader public administration improvement efforts achieved through human capacity development of its civil service.

On a related matter, the lack of a standing Board of Directors for LIPA takes away from its independence and ability to steer itself. LIPA requires a board to set policy directions and to assist mobilize funding. The institute cannot be hoisted to being a major player in human capacity development if it is not fully governed and properly managed.

CSA and LIPA lack a shared vision for building capacity in Liberia's civil service. The Evaluation Team believes it is in CSA's interest that civil servants are continuously trained. Accordingly, the CSA should "demand" specific training for the Civil Service based on periodic training needs assessments. LIPA, on the other hand, should position itself to "supply" quality training services. CSA "demands," LIPA "supplies." This reality should engender closer consultations and collaborations between the two institutions.

Discussants during the LIPA FGD confirmed a 'lack of collaboration' between CSA and LIPA as it relates to conducting training. LIPA personnel believe training is their domain and CSA must keep away from administering it. Since GEMS is heavily invested in each entity, GEMS is in an ideal position to broker this long-term arrangement since it is essential to GEMS' contractual deliverables under Objectives 1 and 2.

Top management levels express low level of engagement of GEMS program activities. More on this issue is presented in findings under Evaluation Question I.

Awareness of GEMS activities within the institutions is low. Information on GEMS activities within the institutions is not adequately disseminated. Generally, top management personnel are not fully acquainted with activities and progress being made. Some CMCs have either not seen the MOUs or misunderstood the details of the MOUs that defined responsibilities between the institution and GEMS.

Counterpart personnel lack proper skills and relevant experience. Government institutions also contribute to implementation challenges. Counterpart personnel do not always have the requisite skills, education, and experience required for the job they are doing. An advisor described a situation where a couple of accountants in one institution did not have the basic bookkeeping training, which also speaks to the low entry points for GEMS support.

Working environment within institutions is inadequate: Working conditions at institutions, including the availability of working tools, power, water and internet services and working spaces are often poor. Many institutions are located in private rented facilities that are not ideal for office use. Maintenance is inadequate, often never budgeted. Additionally, work habits of Liberian staffs are poor, especially in terms of reliable availability and tardiness.

Some GEMS interventions need to be improved or dropped altogether. FGDs conducted with 8 MACs specifically asked discussants which GEMS practices they consider need improvement and should not be continued or replicated. Here are some examples of their comments:

GEMS INTERVENTIONS REQUIRING IMPROVEMENT (FEEDBACK FROM FGD)
<p>MOE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>[Too long a] break [between] the training sessions.</i>▪ <i>“A suitable venue for the training.”</i> <p>LIPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>“The manner in which GEMS conducts training without LIPA inputs;</i>▪ <i>“Sub-standard materials [are provided] for refurbished buildings.”</i> <p>MOF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>“There is a lot of support to programs, but there is no proper trickle-down effect to those who should benefit.”</i> <p>CSA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>“Fleet management, which led to downsizing of drivers, is not necessary. It should not continue.”</i> <p>FDA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>“Leaving out [the] M&E unit in the discussions and decisions.”</i>▪ <i>“M&E should be able to track activities....”</i> <p>GSA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>“Lack of communication. They don’t communicate when they are coming to implement or bring something for us. You just see them at your door.”</i>

GEMS INTERVENTIONS REQUIRING IMPROVEMENT (FEEDBACK FROM FGD)

- *“We need work plans and agreement of what needs to be done, when, and inputs made available.”*
- *“Work needs to be done on the sustainability aspect. For example you are going to a workshop and after the workshop there is an abrupt end to it, we need to go back and check whether there is a sustainability plan for following up on workshops for example.”*

MoHSW:

- *“GEMS brings a lot of activities that tend to get overloaded. They need to bring lesser activities that they can accomplish in time.”*

PPCC:

- *“In our initial engagement with GEMS when it came to the introduction of framework contracting in the GOL, [there was] high resistance from the Commission and the Finance Ministry. Another reason being framework contract [MOU] does not necessarily commit Government to anything.” [This may be attributed to the practice of 1/12th budgetary allocations by the MOF.]*

CONCLUSIONS

1. Overall, GEMS has several hurdles to overcome to successfully implement the program and meet its objectives. The lack of an anchor in government is seen as an oversight in program design. Several structural challenges, such as a non-functioning Steering Committee and CMCs, the absence of a Board of Directors at LIPA, and lack of LIPA’s independence (despite its being a precondition for GEMS to meet the requirement of Objective 2) seem beyond its control. Similarly, performance problems like the lack of indicators for measuring and monitoring performance and the untimely deliveries of inputs, also pose an obstacle.
2. On the GOL side, commitment is questionable especially at the top management level. Absenteeism is high and the working environment is generally poor. Budgetary support is scanty, raising concerns of the sustainability of program activities after GEMS. Turnover at the top of the institution is frequent and causes delays on both sides of the program.
3. There are two challenges internal to GEMS implementation that can be rectified by the program team: having regular status and meetings and opportunities for institutional feedback; and working with the MACs to develop annual work plans and regularly updated indicators to measure progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. GEMS must be seen to have a formal working and reporting relationship with the GOL. The point of entry is to ensure the program be 'domiciled' within one of the participating MACS. CSA and the GC are prime candidates to serve as anchor institutions for GEMS.
2. The operational structures and relationships involving the Steering Committee and the CMCs require rethinking and strengthening. This should begin with the re-conception of the CMCs to support the IRCs to include advisory ministers on the Steering Committee and permanent proxies in the event the ministers are not able to attend. We recommend reactivating the Steering Committee in an advisory capacity. CMCs should be made more prominent, with the chair identified by the associated IRC. Training in change management process also should be considered. The CMCs are only as useful as the breadth and depth of the engagement with the IRCs and through them the MACs, arguing yet again for a more structured HICD approach. Successfully managing change depends largely on the ability of the key stakeholders to communicate change. That requires top management to possess the art and skills to be effective managers of sustainable change programs. The GEMS program needs to redefine its CMC component, away from M&E and focused on supporting the IRCs to lead the MACs through a process of demand based change.
3. Reporting relations should be institutionalized. Advisors and their counterparts should have mutual responsibility for producing regular reports on current capacity building activities in their institutions. Joint undertaking of activities and the sharing of information will provide a sense of involvement and ownership by MAC personnel. As perceived owners, public employees should be increasingly motivated to participate in the GEMS program and not regard it as mere donor activity designed to offer solutions.
4. Correspondingly, the GOL, through the Steering Committee, should be involved in the procurement of needed inputs, such as recruitment of advisors and the type of ICT equipment. This level of involvement has implications for a buy-in and for sustainability long after the program is over.
5. Steps should be taken to more closely align LIPA and CSA so that LIPA can become a premier training institution for civil servants in Liberia. The Evaluation Team recommends that GEMS' capacity building for LIPA wind down, and that GEMS start testing LIPA's ability to provide training to civil servants. More on this topic is discussed below under Evaluation Question 6.
6. For M&E to be effective *in each management function*, it is necessary to tailor the M&E to the realities of each management function. Caveat: It is expected that the two retained GEMS M&E experts (Ref. FY 2014 work plan section 3.1.13 *continue provision of two M&E staff for the M&E commission area at the GC to support the Governance Assessment*) are keenly aware that setting in place an M&E framework for an institution (as planned for the overarching Governance Commission (Ref. p.21 of FY 2014 Annual Plan), as well as for carrying out

Activity 2, is a daunting challenge, perhaps even beyond the present technical know-how of many staff and management within the MACs.

Rational for a Separate M&E System²²

Results-based M&E is a powerful public management tool that can be used to help policymakers and decision-makers *track progress* and *demonstrate the impact* of a given program, program, policy, or strategic plan. Results-based M&E differs from traditional implementation-based M&E, in that it moves beyond an emphasis on inputs and outputs, to a greater emphasis on outcomes and impacts.²³

Building and sustaining a results-based M&E systems is not easy. It is best to first be clear what one's resources are and then "tailor-design" an M&E system that fits one's functional reality and which, at the same time, fits into the design aspects of the institutional-level M&E system.²⁴ There has been a great deal of in-depth, highly-professional work done in South Africa in the M&E of public sector performance. One important document is the National Treasury *Framework for Managing Programme Performance Information*, May 2007, available on the Presidency website, which could provide GEMS with a good practice reference in another African country.²⁵

There are also two industry-standard handbooks on creating M&E systems which are solid, good practice references. The UNDP *Handbook* is available on the South African Government Presidency website. Both handbooks are fully-developed, user-friendly "how to" guidelines on setting up and maintaining results-based M&E systems.

²² Excerpt from M&E Generic Guidelines for National Treasury of Government of South Africa, Jonathan Smith, August 21, 2009.

²³ This is essentially an HICD focus, which is discussed fully in Question I of this document

²⁴ The same counsel about resources and tailor-design of performance information systems is stated in National Treasury, *Framework for Managing Programme Performance Information*, (particularly in) sections 5.2 & 5.3-Management Capacity (p. 14). In essence, creating M&E systems and creating "performance information systems" is fundamentally talking about the same thing. In the case of the NT *Framework*.., it is "emphasized that line managers remain responsible for **establishing** and **running** performance information systems within their sections..." and that "performance systems should be integrated within existing management processes and systems". This is interpreted to mean that line managers' M&E systems, while necessarily specific to the characteristics and needs of their functional areas (e.g. tailored to the specifics of their political and functional realities), must dovetail with an existing, overarching NT management M&E system (e.g. an institutional-level, generic M&E system that serves as a type of "single-architecture M&E platform").

²⁵ Ref. the Presidency website for three particularly-pertinent documents: 1) *Policy Framework for the Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System*, November 2007; 2) *Proposal and Implementation Plan for a Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System*, September 2005 (Governance and Administration Chief Directorate, Presidency); 3) *Setting National Goals, Monitoring & Evaluation: Comparison of Approaches Across Selected Countries*, Working Paper No. 2 (Dpt. of Statistical Sciences, University of Cape Town, 2005).

<http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/main.asp?include=learning/framework.html>

4.4 QUESTION 4: Is the current scale and scope of the program in terms of the number of MACS and component areas appropriate to support sustainability? Should certain aspects or components be prioritized or limited?

The Evaluation Team considers "scale" to refer to the number and type of MACs supported by GEMS, while "scope" is evaluated in terms of the number and diversity of program objectives/components and the various elements within each MAC.

Within the larger context of this question, the Evaluation Team also focused on whether GEMS has identified key Wave I and 2 MACs, and if GEMS assistance to those MACs is on target (based on priority needs).

Table 4.A below orients the reader on the Wave I and Wave II MACs supported by the GEMS Program.

TABLE 4.A, SCALE OF THE GEMS PROGRAM

WAVE	MINISTRY	AGENCY	COMMISSION/OTHER
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Finance (MOF)* ▪ Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MOPT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Civil Service Agency (CSA) ▪ General Services Agency (GSA) ▪ National Bureau of Concessions (NBC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC) ▪ Governance Commission (GC) ▪ National Investment Commission (NIC) ▪ Central Bank of Liberia (CBL)* ▪ Liberian Institute of Public Administration (LIPA)**
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ministry of Education (MOE) ▪ Ministry of Health and Social Work (MOHSW) ▪ Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) ▪ Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forestry Development Authority (FDA)***
Number	6	4	6
<p>* Neither the MOF nor CBL have MOUs with the GEMS program. There is an MOU with the CLB, but it doesn't quite fulfill the requirements of what is expected. ** LIPA is a special purpose institute under the Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs. *** FDA is a State Owned Enterprise.</p>			

FINDINGS

The scale of the GEMS program is extremely large. The scale of GEMS is extremely large for a supply-side program in which a central team of technical specialists are providing

services to numerous clients simultaneously. While there are examples of GEMS responding to GOL demands,²⁶ the GEMS/USAID/GOL collaborative decision to scale-up its activities, contained in contract modification I, had significant consequences in terms of the way services are planned and delivered. The application of the HICD model to the diversity of the institutional contexts represented in GEMS objectives, admittedly, is daunting. However, the Evaluation Team believes that the centrality of HICD to the implementation of the GEMS program's objectives is a fundamental requirement for successful program implementation. The evaluation team reiterates its observation that tension exists between a broad scale rollout of program activities in pursuit of contractual results and deliverables and the use of a participatory, open-ended approach such as HICD.

GEMS broad scale approach dilutes its effectiveness. Covering such a large number of government entities necessitated GEMS to standardize the technical assistance services it provides and a uniformity of Solutions Packages derived from the "assessment." While some minor differences are noted in the MOUs, the standardization approach adopted by GEMS is reflected in the institutional assessments and MOUs. The adaptation of the standard HICD approach has not yet produced any demonstrable evidence, except for a few cases,²⁷ that it has helped MACs address specific and endorsed performance problems, since the focus has been on administrative strengthening.

Administrative services (e.g. fixed asset register, procurement plan, or even basic accounting) are basic and repetitive. On a case by case basis they are not very complex solutions. However, because of the scale of operations, a tremendous burden is imposed on both expatriate and local staff hired by GEMS as functional experts to provide assistance. The wide scale of service delivery requirements is too broad for a satisfactory engagement, even for mandated services that involve minimal discretion. The Evaluation Team received many comments through KIIs and FGDs that has led to the conclusion that such a broad scale for GEMS program activities limits the time available for consultants to actually transfer skills through on-site on the job training (OJT).

MACs are not required to produce work plans and assign responsibilities as part of their commitment to GEMS. There are very weak, or in many cases, no accountability mechanisms at the MAC level. For example, no time-bound work plan is linked to the MOU, nor any specific responsibilities (shared or otherwise) identified to assure that progress at closing the performance gap is being monitored. More on this issue is detailed in Evaluation Question 3.

GEMS is well aware of these issues, but places responsibility on the MACs themselves rather than considering that the delivery system itself may be a major part of the problem. GEMS staff asserted that:

²⁶ Some examples include electronic billboard completed for the Ministry of Finance's Open Budget Initiative, the salary survey conducted for MOHSW, accounting instructors provided to LIPA, equipment provided for revenue windows.

²⁷ GEMS has supported the implementation of software tools (setting up QuickBooks and training staff on its use) across all MACs. GEMS also has supported the EPA in its use of Peachtree accounting software.

- *Functionaries in departments and divisions don't make themselves available for OJT;*
- *Government counterparts are reluctant to provide inputs to the GEMS Technical Advisors to enable the best solutions to be developed or finalized; and*
- *Leadership commitment to making the changes to achieve desired results are often lacking.*

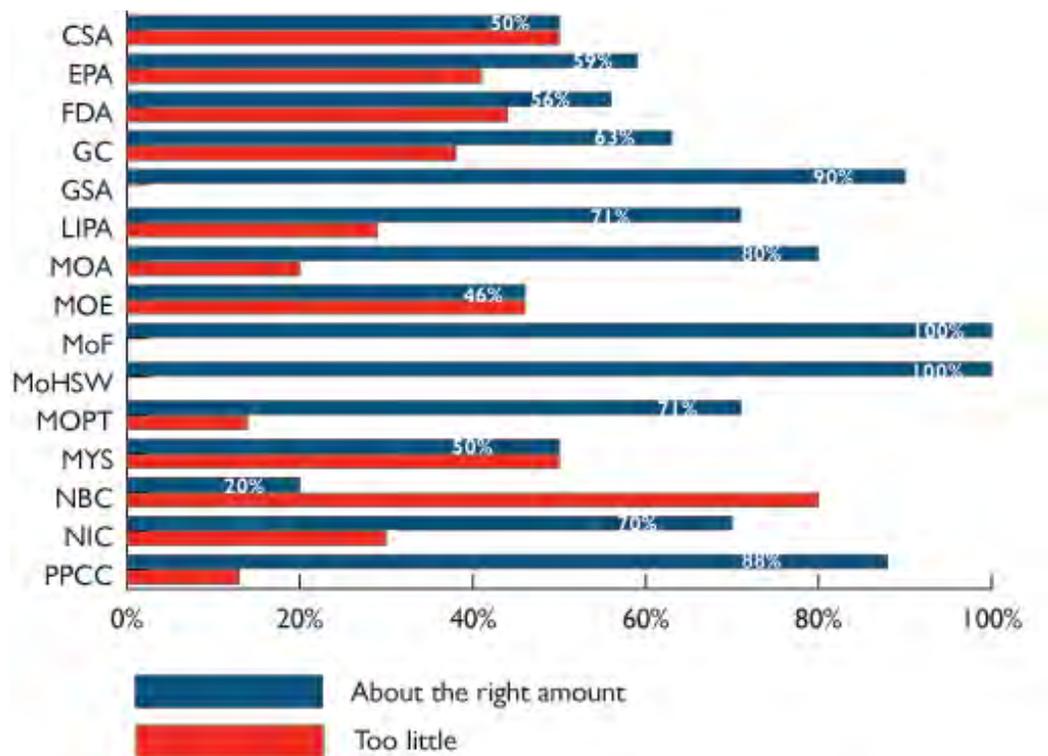
During the course of its evaluation, the GEMS team met twice with the entire GEMS senior management team and then individually with the component team leader and staff from the financial management, procurement, concessions, payments, fixed assets, IT and LIPA technical components (although the M&E component team leader position was vacant attempts to reach the technical staff was unsuccessful). At various times the GEMS staff noted some of their challenges with the MACs, in securing commitment to meeting times, participation and similar issues.

The scope of GEMS activities is diverse. The Evaluation Team also considered the scope of the diverse GEMS program design which is challenging to manage. GEMS five objectives include: (i) management systems, (ii) training by LIPA, (iii) ICT, (iv) concessions management, and (v) payment systems. The last three objectives are carried-over from the original contract. At that time, USAID described the program scope as follows: "USAID/Liberia views the first two components of the program as broad, cross-cutting capacity building initiatives. The other three components are intended to provide technical assistance in several sectors that play a key role in economic governance."

The Evaluation Team found that for each of these latter three objectives, there is a highly skilled professional coordinating all required activities and making significant contributions to economic governance. The team has previously noted that each of these "demonstration programs" could be treated as a separate component, each with its own GOL coordinating MAC. For example, one suggestion is for GEMS to seek ways to more permanently attach the GEMS concessions management activity more closely to the Inter-Ministerial Concessions Committee (IMCC) as recommended in the MOU with the National Bureau of Concessions (NBC). The Evaluation Team recommends that the GEMS advisors work more closely with the Committee during the pre-agreement phase when "getting it right" is essential to subsequent performance and revenue flows. It is also the period when valuation of the assets and protection against fraud and corruption are of the highest priorities.

As shown in Graphic 4.1 below, the mini-survey of technical staff within the GOL – direct beneficiaries of GEMS technical assistance – shows that on average, the majority (66%) feel that the interventions attempted by GEMS is “about the right amount.” The highest percentages for respondents saying “about the right amount” are seen for GSA, MOPT, NIC, and PPCC (all Wave I MACs), and MOA, MOE, MoHSW (Wave II MACs). The largest percent of respondents saying that GEMS interventions are “too little” are from NBC (80%) and CSA (50%). In addition, KILs with MAC staff revealed that while GEMS forms, manuals, training, and other inputs have helped to increase transparency and accountability and streamline systems so that staff are better able to follow regulations, more follow-up is required to ensure that the new forms and procedures are analyzed internally to determine management practices that may need changing.

GRAPHIC 4.1: % SURVEY RESPONDENTS WHO THINK INTERVENTIONS ATTEMPTED BY GEMS ARE “TOO LITTLE” OR “ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT”



Source: GEMS Mid-Term Performance Evaluation Survey Results, June 2014

Communication between GEMS and MACs needs improvement. Communications is critical on the GEMS Program given the large scale and scope of the program. However, communications efforts need strengthening. There is a nearly universal complaint lodged by all interviewees during the FGDs and Klls, that there is insufficient communication and collaboration between GEMS and the MACs: interviewee comments concerning the “lack of collaboration” with the GEMS program; contentious comments concerning Quick Books (which is likely due to poor communications and may have been addressed); and comments about the remoteness of GEMS program office are important perceptions from a wide variety of persons interviewed during this mid-term evaluation that the program should take note of. GEMS is moving into the second half of program duration, which makes it logical, even imperative, for GEMS to change some of its management style, most particularly concerning how they communicate or how they are perceived to not communicate.

The Evaluation Team takes note that neither the MACS themselves, the GEMS Program, nor both GEMS and MACS together, particularly within top GOL levels, have come up with a concerted, well-constructed communications function for this huge change program. In the mid-1990s, the publication “*Improvement Driven Government: Public Service for the 21st Century*,” by Coopers & Lybrand, revealed that 85 percent of business process reengineering program failures (change programs by sheer definition) came about with lack of communications, poor communications and/or insufficient communications. From evidence the Evaluation Team

collected during the Mid-term Evaluation, the GEMS program seems to be facing the communication challenges the Coopers & Lybrand research shows.²⁸

Three of GEMS Program Objectives – ICT policy, Concessions Management and payment systems – are stand-alone activities within GEMS. The Evaluation Team met with GEMS technical advisors working in each of these areas and makes the following observations.

ICT Policy. Objective 3 of the GEMS Program requires GEMS to strengthen the Ministries ability to use ICT to more effectively and efficiently further Liberia’s development objectives as articulated in the objectives and principles outlined in the National Telecommunications and ICT Policy.

The Evaluation Team met with GEMS ICT Advisor and consulted many of the reports produced by the program. Progress has been made towards this objective. For example, GEMS advisors participated in discussions concerning the implementation of the national ICT policy and have lent their expertise where appropriate. According to the latest project reports available at the time of this Evaluation,²⁹ GEMS provided guidance on e-Government; conducted an inventory, assessed the requirements and standards for use of computers, and advised on training needs ("Understanding the current state of ICT within the GOL and advising on the restructuring of the ICT competency in GOL"); and is in the process of preparing a research report on a Government standard for ICT ("A hybrid Enterprise Architecture model comprising Federal Enterprise Architecture (FEA) and The Open Group Architecture Framework (TOGAF) has been selected'). As the policy arm of the GOL, MOPT is implementing the National ICT Policy. GEMS provided support to MOPT in developing, among other things, the e-governance strategy; a Chief ICT Officer regime; and the introduction of an information technology infrastructure library as the chosen IT services management for programs in GOL. Progress also has been made towards the implementation of a National Telecommunications and ICT Policy as well as the Telecommunications Law. The function of the Chief Information Officer (CIO) at the Ministry of Posts & Telecommunication is institutionalized as the lynchpin of a coherent ICT program in government.

While progress has been made in several key ICT areas, fulfilling the expectations of this objective requires focused attention over the next couple of years, as development is still very much in its nascent stage. At this mid-point in the project, the Evaluation Team is concerned that most of the ICT results achieved to date are isolated and not integrated into the overall objective of enhancing institutional capacity to impact development objectives. For example, establishment of a Program Management Office, a vital link to the full implementation of the ICT policy and the transition to e-governance, is still a work in progress. And, resources within the national budget are lacking, which is of concern for ensuring long term sustainability.

²⁸ Communication is #2 on the list of the Top 10 most common change management strategies, based on 700 organizations researched over a 10-year period. Ref: *A Thirst for Change Management-the most Effective Change Management Strategies*”, Prosci Debate Panel, 2005. Debate Panel members: Tim Creasey; Melissa Dutmers; Dr. James Johnson; Adrienne Boyd.

²⁹ (Quarterly Report a/o March 31 and Monthly Status Report for April 2014),

Given the technical nature of this component, for this objective to be accomplished, the Evaluation Team recommends GEMS use the USAID HICD total systems approach within the financial and management constraints of the Liberian context since that would sharpen the focus of assistance.

Concessions Management. Objective 4 is an important activity for Liberia since revenue from concessions will constitute a major source of funding for GOL operations provided the true value of concessions is defined and an assured revenue stream is established. In addition, as recent events in Nimba have demonstrated, it is important to monitor the concessions carefully including the labor standards as well as the social contributions required in these agreements. In simple terms this requires a system where: 1) concessions are valued and defined contractually prior to their submission to the Inter-Ministerial Concessions Committee (IMCC), the period with the greatest risk of financial miscalculation; and 2) mechanisms are in place to enable the NBC to fulfill its concessions management and monitoring role.

GEMS is behind on this component of the project, due to factors outside its control. First, the main MACS involved in managing concessions have all experienced numerous changes in leadership causing setbacks in the normal operations of the institutions. Many top management personnel in these MACs are new, and in some cases, are even new to the sector. Second, the NBC, which should be the lead agency in concessions management, is newly established. The act establishing the bureau was passed in 2011. Given the GOL's budget constraints, full detachment of the bureau from the Ministry of Finance was not finalized until late 2012. Staff appointments were barely complete when the Director General passed in 2013, exacerbating delays in setting up the agency. Finally, the GEMS focus of activities presently under consideration in the relevant MACs is very much administrative – accounting and training. In the context of managing concessions, the core function of enhancing monitoring capabilities has not been addressed.

GEMS technical advisors are addressing some of the deficiencies in the interventions. At the policy level, there is a sense that the relevant legislation establishing entities involved in concessions management adequately address the roles and functions of those institutions. PPCC is involved at the entry level to ensure the process of awarding contracts is transparent and consistent with the PPCC Act. NBC, as the lead agency concessions management, will focus on the monitoring of agreements to ensure compliance by the concessions. It is within this regard that the guidelines have been developed for the conduct of the Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee to enhance the committee's engagement with line ministries in negotiating concessions.

GEMS concedes the nature of intervention in this sector is technical. GEMS is committed to ensuring that activities undertaken with the institutions reflect a shared vision of directly improving their ability to manage concessions. The GEMS team also realizes that this approach is an opportunity for a buy-in by the MACS. Towards this end, GEMS is facilitating the preparation of strategic plans at NBC, which should help restructure the agency and make it operate more along functional lines than by sectors.

Overall, the focus of GEMS intervention in concessions management is to promote PPP initiatives. It is, however, evident that the issues involved in promoting these initiatives are

somewhat technically complex and beyond the scope of the existing agencies. This requires establishing a specialist unit as GEMS has begun to do at NIC. Finally, the adoption by Government of a "modified legal framework" as the condition precedent to more efficient, effective and transparent natural resource concessions is a policy decision that the GOL will need to negotiate with numerous actors whose interests will be greatly disturbed by the attainment of this objective, whenever it might occur.

Payment Systems. GEMS' work in the payment system is focused on (1) mobile money (mMoney) with approaches to expand uses of mobile money to transfer salary payments to GOL employees in remote areas, and (2) CBL payment system by supporting the Department of Revenue (DoR) within the MOF; upgrading of payment system infrastructure; and assisting CBL develop a road map for an automated off-site bank supervision system.

In 2011, prior to the initiation of the GEMS Project, the CBL issued initial guidelines to enable private sector introduction of mMoney services. It was a response to address the GOL's challenges of making salary payments to public sector employees across the country, especially in rural areas, where there are no banks; requiring transportation of cash over long distances on difficult and sometimes impassable roads. In May 2014, the CBL published a comprehensive overhaul of the mMoney Regulations, which included GEMS inputs. GEMS also conducted a cost-benefit analysis for the GOL on introducing mMoney for the purposes of GOL salary payments. Four pilots were carried out to demonstrate 'proof of concept'. In July 2014, the first payments processed through the GOL payroll system (IFMIS) began with approximately 70 MOE teachers in Margibi county. These pilot projects demonstrate success and the potential benefits of a mobile payment system, especially as an alternative or supplement to the GOL's efforts to reduce cash payments and clean the payroll of ghost workers.³⁰

USAID/Liberia is in discussions with LTTP to assess the potential for LTTP to continue working with the MOE to scale up MMoney for MOE payments. USAID is also pursuing other options for continuing to scale up GOL e-payment systems, including pensions and tax payments.

Under the payment system, GEMS has facilitated an interface between the tax automation system (TAS; that processes all revenue) and the automated system for customs data administration (ASYCUDA; that manages the collection of custom revenue). An interface between these systems has enabled the MOF/DoR to reconcile transactions posted to ASYCUDA the same day. Further, the collection of revenues has been enhanced through the establishment of three decentralized revenue collection windows where individuals, institutions and corporate entities can easily pay required government taxes and fees.

CONCLUSIONS

- I. GEMS may have moved too quickly to achieve maximum coverage for the contracted activities and is now spread quite thin. Throughout discussions during KII and FGDs, technical staff in many MACs commented that GEMS advisors visit infrequently and at

³⁰ These mobile money initiatives were undertaken in areas where there are no commercial banks. Interestingly, commercial banks have since entered the market.

random, that there are unrealized promises, and incomplete assistance packages which discourages the MAC from feeling any serious sense of purpose. GEMS needs to prioritize and re-focus on current commitments.

2. Indicators are present, but weak. The evaluators believe USAID should review GEMS' performance measurement and performance indicators more closely. The indicator problem may be summarized as: (i) the contract modification did not contain new Operational Plan indicators; (ii) the CDCS indicator for the relevant DO is tied to the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) which remains a government priority, but there is a lack of consensus within the MOF on the usefulness of the MTEF in light of more basic priorities; (iii) GEMS did not implement HICD, which has a specific requirement for monitoring the implementation of the Solutions Packages; (iv) the MOU's with the MACs also have no agreed progress or performance indicators; and (v) most of the PMP indicators are at the summary and aggregate level. With these limitations, it is difficult to compare current output and performance with any previous condition.
3. The large scale and scope of GEMS has also had negative repercussions on the ability for the MACs to feel ownership of the GEMS initiatives. "Ownership" requires a high level of knowledge about the program "system", new procedures, organizational structure, and work attitudes. Satisfying the need for knowledge requires channels for dialogue with and among all parties of the GEMS program and stakeholders. Exchange of information and communication requirements for GEMS target audience include:
 - "What's in it for me?" – Detailed and correct information about the personal consequences for staff members.
 - Full knowledge about GEMS and the program's purpose, goals and content. (Of the 140 survey respondents, 68 percent of respondents believe one of the main objectives of the GEMS Program is to restructure the MACs; and 40 percent believe a main objective is to provide the MACs with financial support. It is clear that there is not full knowledge among the GEMS customers.)
 - Full knowledge about the implications of new procedures, processes, policies, and norms.
 - Continuous and timely updates about implementation and operational problems.
 - Fast and easily-accessible technical and administrative support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. GEMS needs to realistically examine the aggregate time constraints that impede service delivery and establish a more effective approach. At a minimum, the MOUs signed with each MAC should include a provision requiring the institution to monitor its progress through a joint management team.
2. Avoid responding to new priorities or problems, unless of the highest importance. Instead follow through on prior commitments /promises of inputs and provide fast and easily-accessible technical and administrative support.

3. Create criteria for "graduation" of all MACs based on a realistic time frame and perhaps a renegotiated MOU. The open-ended, life-of-program contract approach should be replaced with monthly milestones and quarterly indicators.
4. GEMS needs a well-constructed communications function to support the GEMS/MACs technical assistance and change process. The aim is to deliver adequate and timely communications to key stakeholders, thus minimizing resistance to the changes and creating stakeholder and user commitment to the goals of the GEMS change objectives.
5. Create and implement a well-strategized, well-constructed team retreat for GEMS, MACs, GOL and stakeholders. Explaining the need and objectives for a team retreat, (e.g. to address issues raised in this Mid-Term Evaluation and jointly reach consensus on solutions for moving forward) is likely to be welcomed by counterparts. The overall goal would be to give the various players in the GEMS program a better sense of being vested in its planned results, e.g. being a team, rather than being GEMS office and the MAC clients, which is the current "us and them" atmosphere.
6. Work on ICT policy, Concessions management, and payment systems could be a separate component under GEMS with their own results and deliverables under direct line authority of MACs who agrees to serve as their anchor.
7. Sustainability of initiatives under current objectives 3, 4, and 5 will depend on their adoption by the GOL, which right now seem to be well into the future.

4.5 QUESTION 5: What good practices are emerging from this program? Are there successes that could be replicated for future programs?

The absence of MAC/GEMS-specific strategic work plans and indicators makes it difficult to compare results of GEMS practices among the many MACs that GEMS is working with. Furthermore, there is no evidence that GEMS took lessons learned from Wave I MACs to alter the manner or type of technical assistance it provides to Wave II entities. More on this issue is detailed in Evaluation Question 3.

Despite the lack of baseline and targeted improvements tracked within the MACs, the Evaluation Team is comfortable acknowledging the following good practices and processes followed by GEMS.

GEMS delivery of training is timely. As of this evaluation USD 271,560, representing approximately 85 percent of the GEMS training budget, has been spent. This represents a good practice in that, for staff to have sufficient time to apply what is learned during training, one should receive such training early on during a program like GEMS. Further, earlier rather than later training inputs allows one to discover during initial training modules, what additional training is required to get staff up to the required levels of on-job performance. Many of those interviewed for this evaluation stated that additional staff training is required in themes where they already received training. The challenge, therefore, is to pick up on this information systematically, so that reliable data is collected that inform GEMS how much more training is required for individuals to become "self-sufficient" on the job.

Overall, key informants and discussants had the following to say regarding GEMS good practices with respect to training and technical inputs:

1. Pertinence and quality of GEMS technical inputs
2. Excellence and pertinence of GEMS advisors
3. Principles, concepts and practices of transparency and good governance
4. Policy framework manuals, documents, processes and procedures, operating norms, rules and regulations.

Survey results confirm the finding that performance based training provided by GEMS in staff's area of expertise is considered by respondents to be very useful. Table 5.A below shows that staff from 5 of the 15 institutions rate the GEMS training to be 100 percent useful or very useful in helping them to do a better job.

TABLE 5.A, SURVEY RESPONDENTS BENEFITTING FROM GEMS TRAINING AND USEFULNESS

INSTITUTION	% RECEIVED PERFORMANCE BASED TRAINING	USEFULNESS
Civil Service Agency (CSA)	100.00%	83.34%
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	64.71%	63.63%
Forestry Development Authority (FDA)	66.67%	100.00%
Governance Commission (GC)	100.00%	100.00%
General Service Administration (GSA)	60.00%	100.00%
Liberian Institute of Public Administration (LIPA)	82.35%	85.71%
Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)	70.00%	42.86%
Ministry of Education (MOE)	61.54%	62.50%
Ministry of Finance (MOF)	0.00%	N/A
Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW)	83.33%	100.00%
Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MOPT)	28.57%	50.00%
Ministry of Youth and Sport (MYS)	80.00%	87.50%
National Bureau of Concessions (NBC)	100.00%	60.00%
National Investment Commission (NIC)	100.00%	100.00%
Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC)	100.00%	75.00%
TOTAL	75.36%	80.77%

GEMS' IT strengthening strategy within MACs is working. The strategic approach to develop computer literacy and computer readiness among staff working within the MACs is excellent. GEMS decided to create an IT platform that supports the functions in which GEMS is providing technical support, especially as it relates to Human Resources Management (HRM), Payroll, and Finance, and to create a server environment in the MACs, improperly named "back office" support for IT, which is safe (e.g. provides a firewall environment) and can be expanded as needed.

Overall, the Evaluation Team rates the GEMS IT strategy and approach as laudable and replicable in public administration environments similar to that of Liberia and even in more sophisticated environments where the critical details of the GEMS IT implementation strategy would be wise to replicate. The GEMS IT strategy includes awareness-building, top-down and bottom-up. At the top, the IT strategy familiarizes top management with what IT can do and the benefits of IT. Similarly, at the bottom, IT strategy creates operational excellence to demonstrate the value of and create new attitudes about IT, particularly as it relates to changing the mind-set that IT personnel are service providers oriented towards resolving customers' IT problems. GEMS has developed IT service desks, and more are planned. Interviewees commented positively on the value of the service desks, so their value is already visible to end users.

Approximately \$441,781 USD of the IT budget for Wave I and Wave II MACS has been expended at the time of this mid-term evaluation. LIPA's Special Program expenditure by the time of this evaluation is \$200,519 USD, and the MOF Electronic Bulletin Board expenditure is \$76,569 USD which describe and track MOF budget and its execution, and to make that information available to the public.³¹

GEMS decision to purchase laptops instead of desktops for the MACs appears to be well received given the reliability of electric power in the country. The GEMS IT advisory function is conscious of the need to protect information on the laptops, as well as to protect the laptops from "property flight." The choice of laptops over desktops ensures better on-job work hours than desktops, which have severely-limited work time available when power fails, which it does regularly. Thus, the return on the investment in laptops seems positive. Two potential risks to employing laptops instead of desktops, however, include: (i) sovereign financial data on a very "movable" asset, and (ii) diversion of assigned computers to the more powerful senior managers irrespective of their operational intent must be monitored. The first can be handled by GEMS, the latter may require a USAID periodic audit of asset use.

Despite the successes noted above, concerns were raised with the Evaluation Team during FGDs and KIs regarding GEMS meeting its IT objectives. For example, there are concerns that most results achieved on IT as of this point in the program are somewhat isolated and not integrated to the overall objective of enhancing institutional capacity to impact development objectives. The training of CIOs has been held but the officers have neither been certificated nor deployed in government institutions. Understandably, the lack of resources under the national budget is a problem.

Concession management activity critical and should be sustained. Although each activity has made contributions to the program, a valuable activity relative to both economic governance and economic development is concessions management. This component is an important activity for Liberia since revenue from concessions, once streamlined, will constitute a major source of funding for government operations.

³¹ USAID-GEMS Annual Report FY 2013, p.116.

Recognizing that defining the boundaries of concessions, if done incorrectly, can lead to unrealized revenue and generate conflict, the GEMS technical leader of the Concessions Team has begun to lobby for World Bank funding to produce a national base map. This is commendable since it addresses an obvious need, but it is unlikely to be achieved during the life of the GEMS Program. In addition, recognizing the need for a comprehensive data base to manage concessions, a Concessions Information Management System (CIMS) has been developed. This is commendable but the Government entities that could benefit from it are LEITI and the IMCC.

The GEMS Concessions Team is also supporting the National Investment Commission (NIC) by developing the standards for public private partnerships (PPP). The consultant conducting this assignment seems very knowledgeable. If the NIC can adopt provisions that do not require legislative approval AND efficiently obtain legislative authority for those that do, the GEMS program would have made a practical, concrete improvement under this objective.

Despite the strengths noted above about concessions, there are areas that need strengthening. For example, the focus of activities presently under consideration in the relevant MACS is still administrative, e.g. accounting and training. In the context of managing concessions, the core function of enhancing monitoring capabilities has met with some serious blockages, which have impeded hoped-for progress in this area. The GEMS FY 2013 Annual Report, p. 30, provide details on those blockages. The Concessions Team has proposed a Concessions Information Management System (CIMS) which has the advantage of, among other things, a workflow monitoring and evaluating component which would support monitoring by prompting reports and other actions.

GEMS concedes the nature of intervention in this sector is technical and is committed to ensuring that activities undertaken with the institutions reflect their shared vision of what they want to be achieved in directly improving their ability to manage concessions. The GEMS team also realizes that this approach is an opportunity for a buy-in by the MACS. Towards this end, GEMS is facilitating the preparation of strategic plans at NBC, which should help restructure the agency and make it operate more along functional lines than by sectors.

Many of GEMS services and practices are considered favorably. It is always important to ask the customer when one wants to know how they are doing. Thus, Question 6 in the KIs asks “*What are the most valuable services being provided by GEMS?*,” and Question 9 in the FGDs asks respondents to comment on “*...what stands out that you would term ‘good practice’, and that you would recommend be continued or replicated for future programs?*”

Many respondents from all three modes of data collection responded positively about the value of GEMS activities/interventions. The following chart provides quotes from FGD respondents about good practices they recommend should be continued or replicated for future programs.

VALUABLE SERVICES AND PRACTICES OF THE GEMS PROGRAM	
CSA:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The IT system which is highly up to standard; best international standards.</i> ▪ <i>Continue having the workshops which are building capacity which has given good results.</i> ▪ <i>...training in financial management systems.</i>
MOE:	

VALUABLE SERVICES AND PRACTICES OF THE GEMS PROGRAM

- *GEMS is developing financial templates and uploading the initial data.*
- *Vehicle fuel consumption logs are now being used and updated regularly.*
- *In Asset management, GEMS is helping with the coding but this process has been hampered by one law which needs to be clarified.*
- *The most important success scored by GEMS was training and knowledge acquired by the various units.*

GSA:

- *One of the things that I think was very important was a workshop entitled 'performance management and employee appraisals' which brought together sectional heads and they were brainstorming how to evaluate people they supervise. You can't evaluate a person behind the person but with the knowledge of the person is very important.*
- *What I think that would be so important is the service desk management the eLiberia is trying to establish. When this is done, it's going to go to every part of the of the government sector not only to GSA. Once the service desk is established here it will be established in all Ministries, Agencies and Commissions and that of course, will help to ease some of the IT problems.*
- *Yes, I think capacity building must continue.*

MoHSW:

- *For the first program, the census and the subsequent database created was an important success.*
- *For procurement, solving our filing issues was essential.*
- *The draft financial management policy puts us on international level; that was successful.*
- *Training for members of procurement staff.*
- *Development of human resource capacity building.*
- *Training of warehouse staff.*
- *USAID/GEMS saw how low our level was and decided to develop it, and... they have stayed to work along with that development.*

LIPA:

- *The most important successes scored by GEMS [include] capacity building, drafting of the Action Plan, institutional support and technical support of GEMS consultants.*

MOF:

- *The system of quarterly reporting is very, very good. It should be continued as it gives an overview of what's done and what you expect to do.*

PPCC:

- *I would say the issue of transparency. When it comes to procurement for the past few years, I think the process has become transparent. Vendors and service providers – even the procurement entities are opening up much more. For the past two years that I have been with the Commission, I observed that procurement entities and vendors including service providers have been exposed to how procurement procedures, how the bidding process is carried out. There could be some gaps but in that same vein, some vendors had complaints and sought redress. The processes are becoming transparent.*
- *Training is another area that we did not cover. USAID/GEMS did well to cover these areas. People out there are beginning to see the difference.*
- *"Record management."*

CONCLUSIONS

1. The good practices identified in GEMS training and ICT functions stand on their own merit. There are also a couple of salient lessons that emerge from the somewhat “loose findings” on GEMS good practice, and from the difficulty to identify most and least effective GEMS assistance.
2. First, to capture data necessary to answer this research question requires GEMS to put into place detailed strategic work plans for each MAC it works with, together with a well-structured and functioning M&E framework designed to capture this kind of comparative information (reference observations made in Evaluation Question 3).
3. The second lesson that emerged during the evaluation is that GEMS’ partial systems capacity strengthening approach is mostly activity-based, and lacks an overarching strategic approach to implementing HICD concepts and practices. This results in the GEMS appearing a bit fragmented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. GEMS should follow HICD concepts and practice. This can be enhanced by creating a GEMS program management function (office) inside each MAC responsible for designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating MAC/GEMS-specific (strategic) work plans. Incorporating the Burke-Litwin framework (see Annex 2) into the overall program conceptual thinking and MAC-specific delivery methodology is also recommended. This will help GEMS overcome some of the weakness mentioned in this question and in questions 1 and 2.
2. At this time, GEMS has no systematic post-training evaluation in place. It is recommended that GEMS review Kirkpatrick’s “4 Steps” approach for evaluating training impact, and select the degree to which their resources will allow them to capture reliable indicators on GEMS on-job training impact. With the information in hand, GEMS will be able to prioritize how they spend the remainder of their training budget over the remaining life of program.
3. Rather than having standardized MOUs for the MACs, modify MOUs to include tailored assistance for each MAC which will help strengthen service delivery capacities.

4.6 QUESTION 6: Is the GEMS approach to building capacity through training, including developing LIPA as the prime public sector training provider, on target and on track?

FINDINGS

GEMS places tremendous focus on training. Although USAID/Liberia recognizes that “training” alone is an incomplete solution to most of the complex challenges facing Liberian institutions which are working with limited resources in difficult and complex environments, training remains a significant component of every MOU between GEMS and participating MACs. These training courses are primarily delivered by the GEMS Program, despite the Program’s objective to develop LIPA as the premier public sector training provider in Liberia. The Evaluation Team believes this decision delays the achievement of the GEMS objectives to have

LIPA be the primary training provider to civil servants in Liberia. As such, we offer specific recommendations for a more sustainable LIPA.

The contract modification reflects a major change in the Scope of Work (SOW) for GEMS assistance to LIPA. In addition to the deliverables and results tied directly to Objective 2, the contract modification, under Section 4.1, Training, added the following terms:

1. Scale-up the scope of LIPA's training programs and build ownership within LIPA.
2. Strengthen LIPA Internally by:
 - a) Developing training needs assessments and training plans;
 - b) Developing a business plan and a communications strategy; and
 - c) Strengthening LIPA's financial management capacity.
3. Build Partnerships and Enhance Relationships.

This broadened SOW reflects the compromises reached in early 2012 to arrive at a contract modification. Apparently, this new SOW for the GEMS Program was not negotiated with LIPA, whose key informants indicate that GEMS “*came to us with what they were going to provide. Other than the training of trainers, everything else was theirs.*”

Clearly, LIPA has a major role to play in developing the capacity of the Liberian civil service to perform its administrative functions and deliver services to constituents and stakeholders. Numerous past efforts to build LIPA's capacity to play this role, starting from 1972 when it commenced operations, have not yet produced the desired result. It was beyond the capacity of this evaluation to determine why this has occurred. Nevertheless, the evaluation team believes that the GEMS program offers an excellent opportunity to “field test” LIPAs competence and capacity and to accelerate its transformation to a self-sustaining training provider.

Lack of “demand-led” assistance affected ownership by LIPA. An MOU, very heavy on GEMS inputs, was signed between GEMS and LIPA in November 2012. This MOU includes 153 inputs from GEMS termed “recommendations.” However, these recommendations are essentially a list of inputs by GEMS such as short-term technical assistance (STTA), training, and commodities. The first step to successful HICD is to assist the top levels of each MAC to define specific performance levels. That should be followed by a jointly-performed performance gap analysis that leads to identifying practical solutions. The MOU indicates that GEMS will “*set clear directions and provide necessary guidance to LIPA on how to proceed with the findings of the performance assessment.*” Ownership is weak to non-existent at LIPA which, considering the large investments being made, creates clear warning signs about the risks to its long-term sustainability.

Key informants at LIPA corroborate this finding with these comments:

- *The GEMS assessment was biased;*
- *This is not a partnership; and*
- *GEMS is not responding to the real needs [of LIPA].*

LIPA’s FGD discussants expressed similar concerns:

- *GEMS dominates the discussion and does not allow LIPA to play its own role;*

- A workshop was held at the P A Steakhouse for the signing of the MOU and ‘that was the only time we knew about it;
- GEMS imposes their schedule on LIPA without LIPA input. As a result, the work plans for LIPA and that for GEMS are not aligned.

To be fair, there are also some positive comments from the LIPA FGD:

- The TOT was very valuable and the adult learning information was much appreciated;
- Technology valued at \$26,020 as of 3/31/2014 was important;
- A gender specialist performed her STTA extremely well and added value.

Since its inception in 1972, LIPA has experienced several challenges. LIPA has survived many presidential administration and, to its credit, was able to sustain its operations even throughout the 14 year conflict, as best it could. It operates on a tight budget. For FY2013, LIPAs budget is \$725,000, barely enough to cover the costs of labor and supplies. While the Evaluation Team is aware of and appreciates that almost all public agencies in Liberia are under-funded, LIPA's underfunding negatively affects the development of capacity across the government. Further complicating this shortfall is that the legally mandated intergovernmental transfers to LIPA of 2% of each MAC's annual budget is not enforced by the MOF.

The assistance package planned for LIPA under the GEMS Program, belies some of the previous observations from USAID development partners. For example, the final evaluation of the GEMAP program states: “The USAID mission had the foresight to push for FINCAB to work collaboratively with LIPA to develop a modularized set of programs which could teach the basics of computers, use of computer software, procurement, internal auditing, etc.” The FORECAST stakeholder assessment observed, “the support to LIPA enabled the institution to organize and manage training events (in M&E and HRM) it had not offered in many years. It even placed LIPA firmly in a position to support the implementation of the National M&E Policy for Liberia as well as strengthen performance management and M&E across the public sector.” The Evaluation Team questions why GEMS inputs (and USAID funding) are being spent on internal matters where LIPA already has been evaluated as competent.

GEMS PMP for LIPA training activities is weak. The GEMS FY2013 Work Plan include the following indicators and planned results for LIPA:

I.2.2.2 Number of training courses developed or revised with USAID-GEMS support	3
I.2.2.3 Number of LIPA service delivery areas with corresponding M&E system	1
I.2.1.1 Number of new trainings offered in response to clients' needs	4

The Evaluation Team considers these results minimal, especially in comparison to the number of training courses that GEMS proposes to deliver itself without LIPA participation, a finding corroborated both by two key informants at LIPA as well as by the five focus group discussants from LIPA.

CONCLUSIONS

- I. Modification I to the GEMS contract requires GEMS to scale up LIPAs training capacity and strengthen LIPA internally so as to reach the planned objective and also achieve the contract results. The Evaluation Team notices a mismatch between planned results (per

Section F.5 of the contract) and the activities being implemented under Objective 2. For example, the expected results and deliverables for Objective 2 of the contract modification are the same as the results and deliverables listed on page 13 of the original contract despite the significant changes contained in the modification. The evaluation team believes that LIPA should be "put to work" as the main training delivery resource of the GEMS program. This will help to ensure sustainability of GEMS interventions in the long run.

2. Despite numerous clear warning signs of LIPA's lack of commitment and program ownership (e.g., letters to the file, failure to maintain appointments, which reflect a lack of partnership, barring GEMS staff from participating in training conducted by the Kenya School of Government, and others) GEMS has continued to contribute additional LTTA and STTA time pursuing a course of action that LIPA believes will not strengthen its role as a training provider for topics such as FINCAB or procurement.

3. . RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Evaluation Team recommends that GEMS test LIPA's capacity to train civil servants throughout the remainder of the GEMS contract. Rather than continuing to build LIPA's capacity, an organization now entering its 42 year of operation, we recommend that GEMS move forward with having LIPA conduct trainings, either through a subcontract or via a specific allocation of grant funding. This would allow GEMS to prove the hypothesis..." at the end of GEMS, LIPA will be a self-sustaining institution providing quality instruction and training courses to the GOL..."
2. According to the Final Evaluation of GEMAP, LIPA had done excellent work under the FINCAB program. The World Bank's procurement expert also believes that LIPA has conducted very successful and professional procurement training. Despite these positive reference, the current "outside in" approach to capacity building does not provide an opportunity for LIPA to demonstrate or conclusively test its capacity as a training provider.
3. LIPA should be offered the opportunity to provide all training programs identified in the MOUs with the 14 targeted institutions. LIPA should prepare a budget estimate to implement these courses, and submit it to GEMS and USAID to consider. USAID and GEMS should consider reallocating program funds within the GEMS contract ceiling.
4. At the same time, the Evaluation Team recommends that the budget to conduct the training program be shared with the GOL. If GEMS and USAID decide to move forward on recommendation 3 above, USAID would be in a good position to have discussions with the GOL about increasing the federal appropriation for LIPA over the next two fiscal years. As required by Liberian law, the MOF should automatically allocate 2% of the post-appropriation budgets of all MACs to a special training fund established in the budget placed under the control of CSA. It is an important policy requirement to make the allocation "post" appropriation so that there is no imaginary transfers on paper that do not actually increase the funds available for LIPA. This basic funding principle will need to be negotiated at the highest levels of Government. Both the CSA and the GC are natural allies of LIPA. These advocates need to align themselves behind this idea and enable LIPA to prove its vision and the mission is more than words on paper.

5.0 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE USAID PROGRAMMING

As USAID requested in its SOW for the Mid-Term Evaluation of the GEMS Program, the "evaluation should provide recommendations for improving program implementation and management, as well as for altering program design if current activities are not contributing to the accomplishment of program results." Further, during the Evaluation Team's in-briefing, USAID asked the Evaluation Team to think about "what isn't working well, what can be done for the rest of the program, and how to help USAID think about designing next programs."

Toward that end, NORC's Evaluation Team offers the following suggestions to both improve program implementation and guide future designs:

- 1. Assure that future USAID project/programs are under the direct "line" of supervision of a single GOL entity which is deeply vested in its outputs and outcomes and whose leaders will devote time, energy, and resources to its effective management and success.**

The Evaluation Team observes that it is unusual to see a program of the magnitude of GEMS without any institutional anchor in the Government. The Steering Committee approach has proven to be ineffective and is now dormant. Reviving it as an apex management structure for GEMS is not recommended, although it could be reactivated in some advisory capacity, as suggested earlier in this report. The GEMS Contractor has worked hard to fill this management void by working closely with the technical committee (which was established under the Steering Committee).

A key recommendation of the evaluation team is that GEMS build on the work that it has already started and serve as a technical resource to facilitate the integration of the four central management services (finance, human resources, procurement and asset management) into a coherent set of services with consistent policies and regulations. We suggest that USAID negotiate with one of the Wave I MACs to serve as the anchor institution or play a prominent role as GEMS counterpart for all Wave I economic governance institutions. Should USAID follow this recommendation, it should be clear that this decision would place greater emphasis on Objective I than on the other four objectives.

For future USAID projects/programs considering incorporating a Steering Committee approach as the management structure for project supervision, guidance and leadership, lessons learned from the GEMS Program should be instructive. A Steering Committee may be a useful advisory or review mechanism, but is a weak mechanism to provide program oversight and coordination.

- 2. USAID's standard HICD framework addresses performance problems, creates demand for services to close the gap, fosters ownership and increases vesting by the organizations being assisted. HICD is flexible but, at a minimum, should be based on a specific institutional context and a request by the organization's leaders to achieve a mandated performance objective.**

Modification I to the GEMS contract, which requires the GEMS' Contractor to use the USAID HICD framework as a guide to roll out a systems strengthening approach in Liberia posed an

additional challenge to an already diverse and overly ambitious scope of work.

The underlying values represented in the August 2011 HICD Handbook have great potential, especially for post-conflict, under-resourced government entities such as those that exist in Liberia. Although HCD/HICD has been a USAID priority since 2004, the 2011 version of the Handbook created the basis for a step-by-step approach that integrated HICD with the Agency's experiences with strategic planning. HICD is still evolving, and there are many possible interpretations but, at a minimum, there must be:

- An assessment of the context (external and internal) within which the institution is performing so as to gear solutions for achieving the desired future state to base realities. The "institutional context assessment" (similar to the environmental scan conducted in strategic planning to identify the contextual factors such as political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal: PESTEL) also allows the assessor to consider the possible "opportunities and threats" posed by previous assessments such as the PFMRAF and also to calculate the specific impacts of national policies and studies, such as the NCDS and the CSRS. All of these contextual factors are used to target the most appropriate performance improvement solution package;
- Organization-defined performance improvement that will enable it to progress toward a development goal;
- A realistic, affordable (cost sharing is a key demonstration of "buy-in"), and attainable solutions package; and,
- A continuous monitoring program that it administers and relies upon to make course corrections in the implementation of the solutions packages.

The Evaluation Team found none of these factors in the GEMS adaptation of HICD. However, the purpose of the evaluation is NOT to evaluate the HICD model selected, but rather to determine if the GEMS HICD approach could be seen as a causal factor for a "demand-driven," "problem-based," and "leadership oriented" program. That perspective is the basis of our findings, conclusions and recommendations.

From that point of view, the Evaluation Team believes that the HICD adaptation was aimed at promoting conformity with uniform GOL standards in accounting, human resources, procurement and fixed asset recording (which are themselves still very much in flux at the central government level) and will not directly produce the desired performance improvement.

The Evaluation Team observes that few GOL officials have any idea about HICD and whether it is - or is not - being implemented according to the HICD Handbook or ADS 201 policy guidelines. USAID could accept the status quo and limit the use of HICD during the last two years of the GEMS program to: (i) develop a roll out strategy for the coordinated systems strengthening approach that will occur AFTER integration has been developed; and, (ii) provide a possible demonstration approach for the basic HICD model in one of the "instrumental" MACs identified below.

3. Progressively add a Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) approach to the HICD methodology.

Using the standard methodology for HICD does not rule out using "best fit" approaches within that framework that increase the possibility of resolving performance problems. Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) is such an approach, which has great potential simply because it reflects the way that individuals resolve their problems. The need for a locally owned approach that uses indigenous, non-traditional means to find solutions that actually work is based on extensive research by Harvard University Assistant Professor Matt Andrews and colleagues at the Center for International Development. Their findings document the failure of "international best/good practice" approaches to bring about satisfactory change in performance. As a result, they recommend a less rigid approach that gives maximum scope to local actors to "muddle" toward solutions that fit the local context.

PDIA fits nicely inside a traditional HICD model since the commitment from the top leaders to solve a problem (HICD) will empower lower level actors to use a PDIA approach to strive for solutions that enrich their working environment and improve processes while improving organizational performance and, thereby, increasing services. However, HICD and PDIA are linked at the "I" and not at the "H". This is an important principle. Otherwise, many of the benefits of the combined processes might be captured internally instead of being directly channeled to stakeholders and beneficiaries.

4. Programs/projects should focus on a fewer number of activities.

One of the evaluation findings is that the GEMS program is spread too thin and as a consequence of the scale of its operations, many intended beneficiaries in Wave II MACs (i.e., technical level personnel) feel they are not benefitting from the advisors' coaching. With focus on so many MACS, there is insufficient quality time to cover the large demand.

In addition, the Evaluation Team observed that the GEMS Program, which initiated activities with key central government organizations (MOF, CSA, GSA, PPCC) and some other entities (NBC, NIC, CBL) extended their outreach before they had fully developed the capacity of those entities to pursue their intended role. The Evaluation Team recommends for GEMS and for future USAID programs to engage with the central agencies and reconcile with these MACs, their capacity issues, including roll out, monitoring and assistance, once and for all. The Evaluation Team understands this is a long-term process. One of the challenges to this approach will be to navigate the governance space that is constantly being crowded by other donors.

One of the added challenges which USAID will be expected to address is how to apply the same principle of "anchoring," to the stand-alone components of Objectives 3, 4 and 5 – i.e., ICT policy, concessions management, and payment systems. As noted previously, each of these components is unique. Each could have been a separate project with its own management structure.³² GEMS management and professional staff should be commended for initiating activity and for producing useful reports and recommendations.

³² The Evaluation Team was informed that activities under Objective 5 are expected to be completed in August 2014,

In the short run, USAID/Liberia may want to consider creating a few spin-offs, each under a separate GOL entity, but all under the IBI umbrella. If that is not possible, USAID/Liberia may want to look objectively at the scale and possible impact of these three activities and simply set a termination date for each of them, as has been done for the down-scaled and targeted payments activity. GEMS management has performed with commendable skill to try to hold the center of the GEMS program while also addressing these separate activities.

Although each activity has made contributions to the project, the most valuable activity relative to both economic governance and economic development is the concessions management activity, which we believe needs to be sustained. In this case, the Evaluation Team recommends creating this activity as a separate component with a separate GOL counterpart, so that the GOL can be provided with expert advice about granting concessions based on ex-ante economic and financial analysis. In addition, the Evaluation Team believes that the focus on base maps as a pre-condition for effective and coordinated granting of concessions requires more intensive attention.

For future USAID projects in Liberia, the "focus and concentrate" principle should be revived. Basic management skills are in short supply and there are political economy factors which also require some consideration. In light of resource constraints that are structural, scaling projects to what is logically sustainable should be the priority.

5. Use an HICD approach (even a separate project, perhaps) to build the capacity of "instrumental" organizations whose performance contributes to the development and financial stability of other Government MACs.

The Evaluation Team notes that several MACs play an instrumental role in achieving GEMS objectives, but their capacity to exercise their role is not being employed. The Evaluation Team includes this as a recommendation for LIPA. If adopted, this course of action will accelerate progress toward planned results as specified in Sections C and F of the contract modification. We also want to suggest a broader role for the Governance Commission. Currently it is greatly challenged to put policy into practice. For future programming purposes greater attention could be devoted to closing this gap.

Similarly, work on natural resources concessions include both several key stewardship entities (MOA, MLME, FDA) as well as numerous other instrumental agencies such as IMCC, NBC, LEITI and LRA. This will involve extensive collaboration. Such an effort could be a candidate for a cross-cutting HICD initiative provided that USAID defines a sector goal and an assistance objective that links these agencies together as the means to achieve performance.

6. Consider using a Special Activities Fund as a contract mechanism

Since USAID may employ HICD as a standard capacity building methodology – supplemented by a PDIA approach to encourage locally owned solutions – the Evaluation Team suggests that USAID look at contracting mechanisms that provide maximum flexibility for funding Solutions Packages. One such mechanism is a Special Activities Fund (SAF) that can be used as a stand-by facility, with a specific allocation within the program budget to fund program activities. A SAF may be a better contracting option than an LOE type contract when USAID recognizes the need to provide unallocated resources to address an open-ended procedure such as HICD.

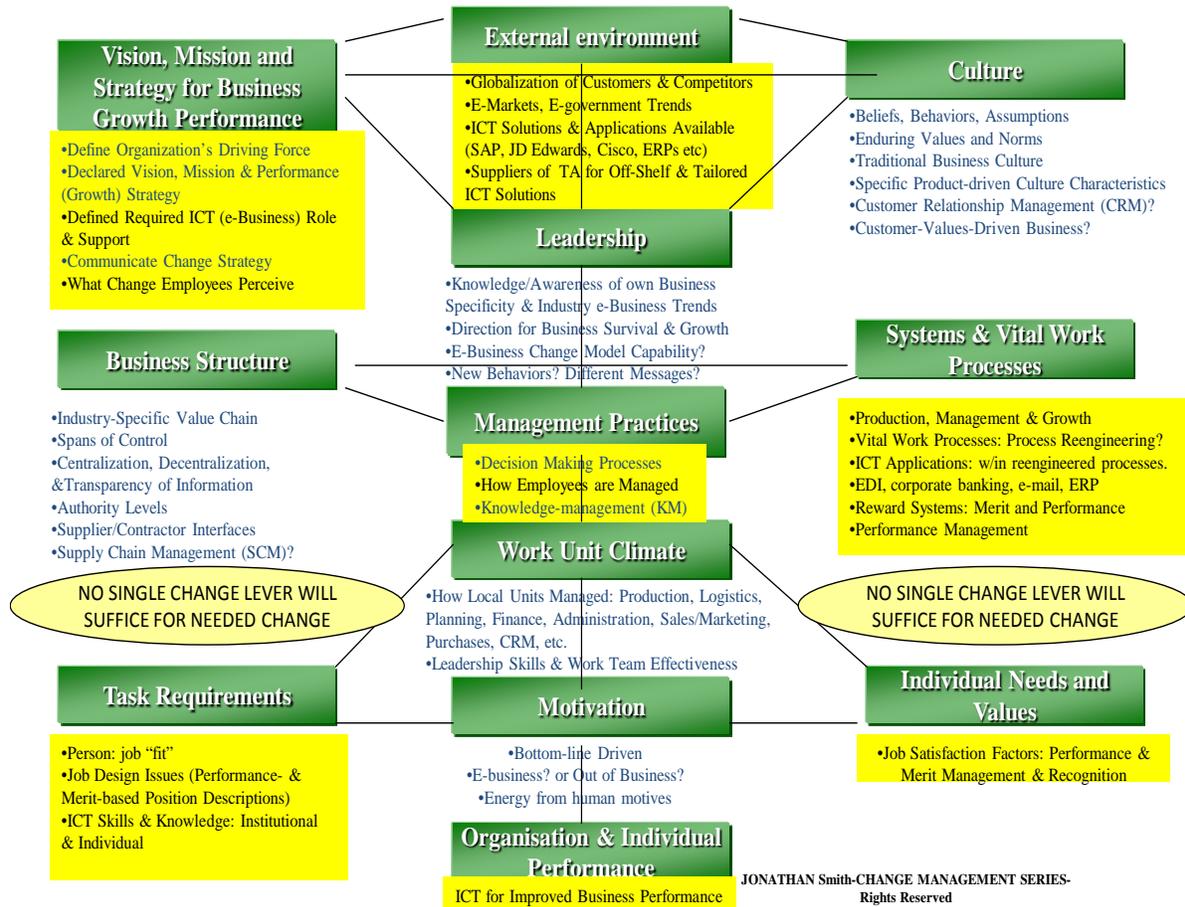
ANNEXES

ANNEX I: TOTAL SYSTEMS

ANNEX I: TOTAL SYSTEMS APPROACH

Together, the two tables of target audience “satisfaction indicators” imply a good, general GEMS practice which may be replicated in other programs. Specifically, that GEMS has taken an incipient step towards practicing a “total systems” approach to institutional capacity strengthening, by focusing on four vital trans-functional support processes which, if not working effectively, can compromise the ability of the institution to deliver (thus the term “vital”). This can be appreciated in the following graphic. The yellow highlights are where there are GEMS interventions.

An Analytical Framework for Integrated Change



ANNEX II: THE BURKES-LITWIN MODEL

ANNEX 2. THE BURKE-LITWIN MODEL

When an organization faces a problem, the search is most always for a solution, regardless of the cause of the problem, even assuming the cause can be said to exist. In many instances, it is not possible to do anything about the cause of the problem and the focus must be on realizing resolution (the ‘end’) through some means or agency not immediately connected to the area where the problem is manifested. In these instances, the Burke Litwin model (below) is of great value because its approach includes looking for the institution’s performance gap in delivering their mandated goods and services. Gaps are generally identified as follows:

- Something’s gone wrong
- Raised expectations: “nothing’s wrong, but our aspirations have changed.”³³
- Double whammy: results deteriorate and expectations are raised at the same time
- It never did work right: a “Day One” problem

The above gaps have two qualities in common: a history and an existing system. The Burke Litwin model, in particular, is useful in keeping the big picture in view while assessing such gaps, particularly because the model obliges one to be specific about any single institution being assessed.

A further type of performance gap concerns “the basic engineering problem.” The distinguishing characteristics are that there is neither a history nor an existing system to troubleshoot or diagnose. The goal here is to design, build, install, operate, and maintain a new system that will produce the desired results for a specific institutional performance delivery need. The Burke Litwin framework of organizational interdependencies again is useful in taking into account the interdependencies, regardless of what the basic engineering strategic solution will be.

In all instances, strategic performance improvement goals stays the same: close the gap between where you are and where you need to be. When engineering a solution, the search is not for the cause of the problem but for the factors that, if changed in certain ways, would produce the desired end. This search is made more efficient and effective if it is carried out by systematically examining the structure of the situation in which the problem may be said to be “embedded.” Searching systematically through the structure of the problem for the factors to change to achieve the end is the essence of the goal-oriented approach to problem solving (Goal Directed Program Management), which throws light on the different change levers to be used and where they are used, ensure means to hold those accountable for results follow the values and behaviors suggested in the codes.

This critical aspect did not appear in the GEMS MOUs with MACS. Instead of different change levers to use according to the differences in each MAC, the GEMS program’s technical assistance Solutions Packs ended up being the same across the board.

The Burke Litwin framework provides an excellent systems overview for drawing attention to the obvious: namely, that in realizing an end, account has to be taken of the complex

³³ Rajat Gupta, McKinsey & Company

interrelationship of organizational dependencies that exists. In the case of GEMS, that would constitute 17 different sets of considerations. The Burke Litwin model (see figure below) illustrates this point by showing that the change lever for bringing about change in one area is not isolated within that one area where the end is to be realized. And, by logical extension, it underscores the point that a one-size-fits-all approach is a flawed approach if the goal is to address specific performance gap problems in specific institutions.

The Burke Litwin model is used frequently for strategic planning exercises involving problem-resolution. This could be useful for implementing the recommendation in Question 1, namely to create a joint MAC/GEMS program management function (office) inside each MAC, responsible for the design and implementation of a MAC/GEMS-specific work plan, aimed at the very specific characteristics and performance needs of each MAC.

CAVEAT: strategic planning is an excellent work method for grounding one in reality. Many interviewees expressed concerns about the insufficient funding levels of their institutions, which could cause a problem for GEMS programs sustainability. Were the GEMS program to begin to work tightly with the MACs in the context of the aforementioned joint program management function, then GEMS advisors could be an important support in helping the MACs construct well-designed strategic GEMS/MAC work plans, using solid concepts and practices in strategic planning. In addition, to acquaint the MACs in the art and practices of activities based costing; results-based budgeting and other approaches which discipline one in making plans within one's budget constraints and realities. *That* kind of strategic planning skill would become a durable, transferable skill across government.

THE 7 KEYS TO SUCCESS: BURKE-LITWIN MODEL

Work & Schedule: Manage work and deliverables so that acceptance by the parties is predictable

- Program plan is up to standard
- Deadlines are met
- Work proceeds in line with plan
- Parties are updated on status of work
- Actuals vs. budget are tracked

Team: Manage staff and infrastructure to ensure high performance

- Required competence and capacity is in place
- Constant dialogue between program manager and team
- Adequate program facilities in place
- Normal working hours
- Team works efficiently
- Personal development is ensured
- Key people stay with the program

Scope: Control scope so that it is realistic. Scope is clear and mutually understood.

- Client signs contract
- Deliveries are within scope. No more, no less, and share-managed

Stakeholders: Manage client and stakeholder relationships to ensure ongoing commitment. Stakeholders are known

- Their interests and influence are identified
- Stakeholders are pleased with the work
- Their change over time is monitored
- Stakeholders are available

Business Benefits: Identify, quantity, deliver, monitor and review benefits

- Value proposition is on target
- Optimal solutions can be found
- Parties have confidence in GOL
- Client gains ownership
- GOL can measure and highlight specific results

Risks: Identify, assess, plan mitigating, actions, and control risk

- Team is aware of potential risks
- Assistance team and client notify when work progress is threatened
- Actions taken to reduce risk are closely monitored
- Risk and issue management processes are established and followed

Delivery Organization Benefits: Manage across the keys

- Knowledge is harvested and leveraged
- Actuals are in line with budget
- Favorable client citations are established
- New program potential is communicated

ANNEX III: SCOPE OF WORK

**Mid-Term Evaluation
Governance and Economic Management Support Program (GEMS)
STATEMENT OF WORK**

Name of Activity to be Evaluated: Governance and Economic Management Support Program (GEMS)

Implementer: International Business Initiatives (IBI)

Award Number: AID-669-C-00-11-00050

Contract Value: \$44,902,679.00

Period of Performance: July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2016

Period to be covered by this Mid-Term Evaluation: July 1, 2011 to December 31, 2013

INTRODUCTION

GEMS is a five-year technical assistance program designed to improve performance of targeted Government of Liberia (GOL) Ministries, Agencies, and Commissions (MACs) in economic governance. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess progress toward the program's expected results and provide guidance for the effective implementation of the program over the remaining period. This evaluation will also inform the design of future USAID governance programs.

BACKGROUND

GEMS was awarded in July 2011 and followed the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP) of which USAID/Liberia was a major partner. The GEMAP agreement provided support to a total of eleven GOL institutions, of which USAID provided assistance to seven.³⁴ GEMAP embedded high-level advisors in target institutions who wielded co-signatory authority; established a partnership structure between GOL and the international community; assessed policies, procedures, laws, regulations and organizational efficiency; identified and instituted operational and management controls; used information technology to enhance processes and transparency; and built capacity and professionalism through interactions between advisors and staff. GEMAP made progress increasing revenues and decreasing opportunities for corruption as a result of financial management and other systems put in place by advisors. GEMAP ended in June 2010 when Liberia reached the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) completion point.

³⁴ The Delegation of the European Union assisted the General Auditing Commission, and the World Bank assisted the Public Procurement and Concessions Commission as well as the Cash Management Committee of the Ministry of Finance. The IMF sponsored the Central Bank of Liberia. USAID-funded GEMAP support included four state-owned enterprises (National Port Authority, Roberts International Airport, Forestry Development Authority, and Liberia Petroleum Refining Company), the Department of the Budget, the General Services Agency, and the Ministry of Lands, Mines, and Energy.

Despite the progress made in GEMAP institutions, challenges in economic governance remained throughout GOL institutions. Securing Liberia's revenue base, ensuring improved budgeting and expenditure management, improving procurement practices and granting of concessions, establishing effective processes to control corruption, and cross-cutting capacity building were all identified as outstanding issues and were included in the subsequent GEMS Program.

Four months subsequent to the contract award in July 2011, and in response to the evolving policy framework introduced by the new Sirleaf Administration, USAID and the GOL entered a period of negotiation to reframe the program to align more closely with the Agenda for Transformation, Liberia Rising Vision 2030, the Public Financial Reform Implementation Strategy, and the National Capacity Development Strategy. During this period, implementation focused on more informal processes of relationship building, a strategic shift towards interacting with those GOL institutions that expressed a continued willingness to engage, and movement towards supporting internal foundational efforts to develop methodologies and tools necessary to support the formulation of appropriate technical approaches given the operating environment at that time.

The contract was modified in March 2012, and GEMS was official launched in April 2012. The modification entailed a more explicit focus on capacity development using USAID's Human and Institutional Capacity Development Framework, which is consistent with the National Capacity Development Strategy in its holistic approach focusing on human and institutional performance improvement and an enabling environment. The modification also reorganized the program components and aligned them with the new policy framework, while maintaining the broad program objectives and results framework.

New Program Themes:

- 1) Managing national resources effectively
- 2) Building national wealth
- 3) Promoting equity and youth

Cross-Cutting Elements:

- 4) Training
- 5) Information and Communication Technology
- 6) Gender

In collaboration with the GOL GEMS Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Ministry of Finance and the Civil Service Agency, GEMS selected targeted Ministries, Agencies, and Commissions (MACs) to participate in the program, based on GOL priorities and potential impacts of technical assistance. GEMS works with fifteen Ministries, Agencies, and Commissions to improve key management systems and functions, focusing on financial management, human resource management, procurement, asset management, and concessions management. In addition, capacity development assistance is provided to the Liberian Institute for Public Administration to revitalize civil service training, the use of information technology at

the GOL to increase efficiency and lay the groundwork for the GOL's e-government objectives, and to the Central Bank of Liberia to support the development of the national payment system.

GEMS has adopted a phased approach. Wave I institutions are cross cutting central management agencies with authority for determining the policies, procedures and processes in support areas: financial management, human resource management, procurement, asset management, information and communication technology, civil service training, concessions management, and national payment systems.³⁵ Wave II institutions are line ministries, where the focus is to build the capacity of these counterpart institutions to be compliant with Gold established guidance and accelerate their ability to implement service delivery.³⁶ The scope and level of assistance to each MAC is determined following assessments undertaken by the USAID-GEMS team of subject-matter experts, and in consultations with the participating MAC, and USAID/Liberia.

The GEMS Program has five objectives:

Objective 1: Management systems and key organizational functions of participating GOL institutions conform with international good practice standards.

Objective 2: The institutional capacity of LIPA is enhanced to provide targeted training that will improve the capacity and performance of GOL personnel responsible for key management functions in GOL institutions. This will enable GOL personnel to execute public sector functions effectively, contributing to boosting revenues, cutting wasteful expenditures, protecting assets, and preventing and detecting fraud and errors. Through USAID-GEMS support, LIPA will also increase capacity and performance in participating non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sector entities. At the end of USAID-GEMS, LIPA will be a self-sustaining institution providing quality instruction and training courses to the GOL and the private sector.

Objective 3: GOL institutions are able to use Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) more effectively and efficiently to further Liberia's development objectives as articulated in the objectives and principles outlined in the National Telecommunications and ICT Policy.

Objective 4: Management of natural resource concessions is more efficient, effective, and transparent due to a modified legal framework that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of relevant GOL institutions, and the introduction of management and oversight tools utilizing automated ICT-based systems.

Objective 5: The GOL is able to establish and utilize a national payment system in line with international and regional standards, and that enables accurate and timely processing and

³⁵ Civil Service Agency, Governance Commission, General Services Agency, Liberia Institute for Public Administration, National Bureau of Concessions, National Investment Commission, Central Bank of Liberia, and the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications.

³⁶ Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Forestry Development Authority, and the Environmental Protection Agency. Discussions with the Ministry of Land, Mines, and Energy are still in process

reconciliation of GOL payments to vendors and civil servants, utilizing mobile technologies when feasible.

GEMS Development Hypothesis: The 17 institutions that receive targeted infrastructure support, technical assistance, and training through GEMS will operate with more effective management systems that increase transparency and accountability; reduce wasteful expenditures; and limit opportunities for corruption. These strengthened institutions will provide the foundation for good governance, more effective use of public resources, and improved service delivery. See Results Framework in Annex I.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The overall purpose of the evaluation is twofold:

- 1) Assess the level of progress towards GEMS' five main objectives.
- 2) Assess design and management of the GEMS' program in meeting results.

The evaluation should provide recommendations for improving program implementation and management, as well as for altering program design if current activities are not contributing to the accomplishment of program results.

In light of recent thinking that emphasizes that institutional reforms are more successful when they foster 'problem-driven learning' and the importance of local context for identifying needs and opportunities for change, the evaluation should consider the implications for the development hypothesis and the theory of change underlying the program.³⁷ Any lessons and areas for improvement in the overall program approach and the development hypothesis should be identified.

The audience of the evaluation report will be the USAID/Liberia Mission, specifically the Democracy and Governance team, the Implementing Partner, and the GEMS Steering Committee. USAID will use the report to make changes to its current strategy of providing support to the central level and to share lessons learned with other stakeholders and IBI will learn about strengths and weaknesses and adjust programs accordingly.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

It is expected that the assessment team will bring their own creative approach to the design of the field evaluation questions that will guide the assessment. However, at the end of the process, the mid-term evaluation report should include an evaluation of the program objectives on the following key questions, prioritized by order of importance:

1. How demand-led and 'problem focused' has GEMS been? To what degree is there local ownership and how can this be improved upon?

³⁷ See, for example, Matt Andrews, *The Limits of Institutional Reform in Development: Changing Rules for Realistic Solutions*, Cambridge University Press, 2013.

2. Are inputs provided by GEMS contributing to identifiable changes in processes and systems capacity in its focus areas? How effective have advisors been in transferring skills, knowledge, and capacity to GOL staff?
3. What deficiencies currently exist in implementation of the program's objectives and how can these be remedied?
4. Is the current scale and scope of the program in terms of the number of MACs and component areas appropriate to support sustainability? Should certain aspects or components be prioritized or limited?
5. What are the good practices emerging from this program? Are there successes that could be replicated for future programs?

The evaluation does not have to be limited to the questions provided here. The evaluation should be structured to address the degree to which program activities implemented to date have met anticipated time-frames, and the responsiveness of the program to uncertainties and risks. It should make specific recommendations for the remainder of the program, including possible modifications.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS METHODS

Evaluators will submit an evaluation design to measure performance of the GEMS program. The Design should include evaluation methodology and procedures for analyzing data gathered, as well methodological strengths and limitations. Stakeholders familiar with the GEMS program include the leadership and technical staff of partner MACs; USAID Health, Education, and Economic Growth technical staff working with targeted MACs under other USAID programs; and other donors working in public sector reform in Liberia (SIDA, the World Bank, the EU, and the AfDB).

In order to ensure the maximum value for learning and use, a description of the proposed assessment methodology should include, at a minimum:

1. Study design (e.g., cross-sectional descriptive studies, quantitative and qualitative retrospective comparisons, etc.) and plans for data analysis
2. Methods of data collection (e.g., qualitative interview guides, key personnel interviews, unobtrusive or observational methods, quantitative survey questionnaires, secondary data analysis), how such tools will be developed and with whom, and the scope and time line for data collection, and key characteristics of data collection instruments (e.g., sample questions or an outline of interview guide topics)
3. Measures and plans undertaken in order to ensure protection and confidentiality during data collection

The program evaluators should consider a range of possible methods and approaches to collecting and analyzing the information required to evaluate likely causal connections between activities and outcomes, and make programmatic recommendations.

USAID anticipates a collaborative participatory assessment with GEMS; the evaluation team will hold consultations with GEMS/IBI throughout the evaluation process including an initial in-brief upon arrival in Liberia as well as debrief at the end of the fieldwork.

PROGRAM INFORMATION SOURCES

The team may find it useful to consult a broad range of background documents apart from program documents provided by USAID/Liberia. These may include documents that relate to Government public sector reform strategies or other donor programs working on similar issues. Additionally, USAID will provide the evaluation team with a package of briefing materials including:

- Program Scope of Work and Modifications (Approved by USAID)
- Performance Management Plan (PMP)
- Quarterly and Annual Reports
- Data Quality Assessment Report
- Organizational Assessments completed of all participating ministries
- Memorandum of Understanding between GEMS and participating ministries
- All materials produced by GEMS including GOL policies, manuals, training plans and activities.
- USAID Human and Institutional Capacity Development Framework
- GOL Public Financial Management Reform Strategy
- National Capacity Development Strategy
- Aide Memoire: Review Mission of the Integrated Public Financial Management Reform Program, December 2013.

The evaluation team may request other relevant documents as available.

EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION, INDEPENDENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

The Team Leader is required to have demonstrated expertise in public sector reform. All members of the evaluation team should have Sub-Saharan African experience and capacity development in fragile states.

- **Team Leader:** The Team Leader will be an expert in management systems and organizational development in the public sector with an understanding of good practice in areas such as public financial management, human resources, procurement, asset management, information, communications, and technology (ICT), and monitoring and evaluation.
- **Economic Governance Specialist:** The Economic Governance specialist will have experience in public financial management and procurement, and public sector management of natural resources and concessions.
- **Human Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) Specialist:** The HICD specialist should be an expert in capacity development and training activities in developing countries with expertise in public administration training and institutes.
- **Liberian Public Sector Context Specialist:** The consultant will have experience and knowledge about public sector reform in Liberia. Experience in one of GEMS' focal

areas preferred. S/he will work closely with the international consultants and assist them during evaluation.

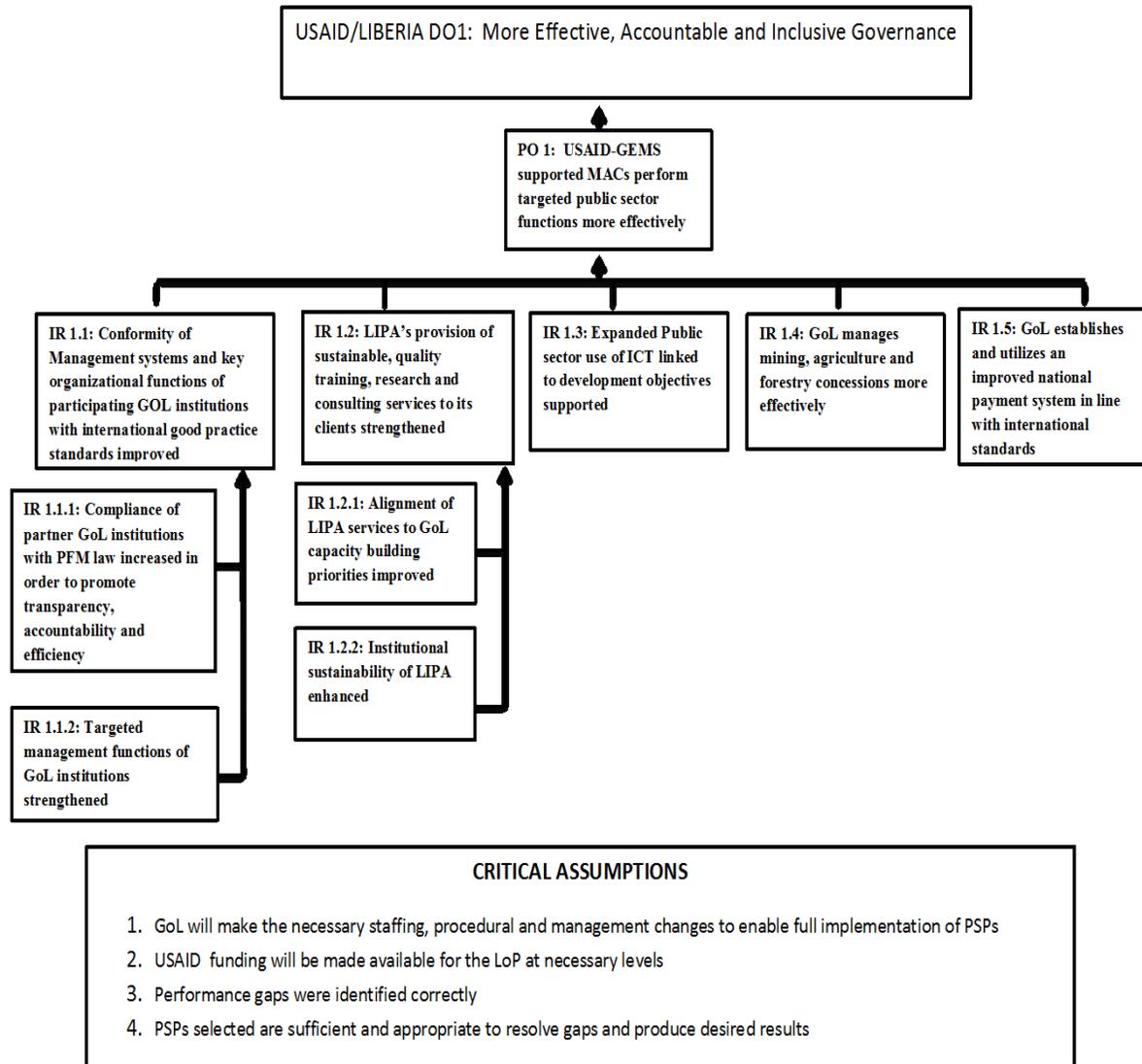
- **Logistics Assistant:** The Logistics Assistant will be responsible for scheduling meetings and interviews for the evaluation team along with logistical, administrative, and clerical support throughout the evaluation.

DELIVERABLES

- a. **Design:** A proposed design must be submitted to the COR within two weeks of the tasking. The design should include the (i.) overall design strategy for the evaluation, (ii.) the data collection and methodology (iv.) list of evaluation team members, and (v.) team work schedule.
- b. **Oral Briefings (In-brief and Out-brief):** The evaluation team will meet with USAID/Liberia upon arrival in Monrovia. The team will also provide an oral briefing of its findings and recommendations to USAID/Liberia prior to departure from Liberia.
- c. **Field Work:** Field work for the evaluation is estimated to take approximately 4 weeks
- d. **Draft Evaluation Report:** The written report shall include the evaluation's methodology, any limitations of the methodology, and an overview of the preliminary analysis, findings, and recommendations. The report must include:
 - A description of the evaluation purpose and the evaluation questions addressed in the report
 - Information on how the independence of the evaluation team was protected and identification of any objectivity and potential conflict of interest addressed.
 - A description of the data collection and analysis methods (including the sampling and/or selection criteria used).
 - Data analysis and findings (including acknowledgement and disclosure of any data limitations) specifically related to the evaluation questions outlined above and:
 - An assessment of any differential program outcomes and anticipated impacts on males and females
 - Statements of differences (if any) regarding significant unresolved difference of opinion by funders, implementers, and/or members of the evaluation team
- e. **Second Draft of Evaluation Report:** A second draft report will be submitted electronically to the COR within one week (or 6 working days) after receiving comments from USAID on the first draft. This draft and the final report should include a brief (e.g., three-page) executive summary and body of *between 30 and 40 pages*. USAID will have one week or 5 working days to submit its comments on the second draft report. The following annexes will also be included in the submission:
 - A copy of this SOW

- Data collection instruments
 - Sources, sites, sampling frame, individual/focus group interviews, etc., included in data collection
 - Disclosure of conflicts of interest forms for all evaluation team members, either attesting to a lack of conflict of interest or describing existing conflict of interest
- f. **Final Evaluation Report:** The contractor will have five working days to submit the final evaluation report electronically to the COR after receipt of USAID's comments on the second draft. Upon USAID final approval and guidance the final Evaluation Report will be uploaded to the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) at <http://dec.usaid.gov/default.htm>.

Annex I: GEMS Results Framework



ANNEX IV: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

GEMS MID-TERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION – LIBERIA (JUNE 2014)

(MID-TERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION - SURVEY)

INTRODUCTION AND CONSENT

Hello and thank you for meeting with me. My name is **[INTERVIEWER NAME]**. I am from the Agency for Economic Development and Empowerment (AEDE), a Liberian research company with an office in Monrovia.

USAID is currently funding the Governance and Economic Management Support (GEMS) program in Liberia and has requested NORC at the University of Chicago (a nonprofit research organization in the United States) to evaluate this program. The objective of the GEMS Program is to strengthen institutional capacities of selected government ministries, agencies and autonomous commissions to enable them to perform their functions more effectively and efficiently and improve service delivery to constituents and stakeholders.

AEDE has been hired by NORC to conduct this survey. The information you provide will help us understand how effective the GEMS Program has been in achieving its objectives and how the program can be improved. We have developed questions to gather data in support of the evaluation. You were selected to represent your institution as a respondent to these questions. We kindly ask your participation in providing relevant information to assist the researchers to accurately evaluate the program.

We encourage you to answer as many questions as you can. Feel free to express your views openly and honestly. If you feel uncomfortable answering a particular question for any reason, you are welcome to skip it and continue with the survey. This survey interview should take approximately 20 minutes of your time.

All of your responses to this survey will be kept **strictly confidential**. This means your name will not be associated with any of the information you provide in this interview. Your views will be used in a statistical summary along with the views of other respondents from many government institutions taking the same survey.

If you have any questions about the survey, you may contact **Annie Demen by telephone at AEDE at 0886571375**.

[INTERVIEWER: GIVE ANNIE'S BUSINESS CARD TO RESPONDENT, IF AVAILABLE]

Do you wish to participate in this survey?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

[INTERVIEWER: IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS "NO", EMPLOY YOUR GAINING COOPERATION SKILLS LEARNED DURING TRAINING.]

May we start the interview now?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

[INTERVIEWER: IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS "NO" AGAIN, SKIP TO THE END AND THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME.]

TIME START INTERVIEW: |__|__| : |__|__|

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION (Q1.1)

1.1 Which Ministry, Agency, or Commission do you currently work?

[INTERVIEWER: GIVE SHOW CARD TO RESPONDENT]

[INTERVIEWER: CODE ONLY ONE RESPONSE]

- Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) (1)
- Civil Service Agency (CSA) (2)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (3)
- Forestry Development Authority (FDA) (4)
- General Service Administration (GSA) (5)
- Governance Commission (GC) (6)
- Liberian Institute of Public Administration (LIPA) (7)
- Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) (8)
- Ministry of Education (MOE) (9)
- Ministry of Finance (MOF) (10)
- Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) (11)
- Ministry of Land, Mines, and Energy (MLME) (12)
- Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MOPT) (13)
- Ministry of Youth and Sport (MYS) (14)
- National Bureau of Concessions (NBC) (15)
- National Investment Commission (NIC) (16)
- Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC) (17)
- None of the above (18)
- Other (please specify)
- _____ (n+1)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

1.2 What is your position at this institution? _____ (Q1.2)

- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

Which technical area do you work in at this institution? (Q1.3)
[INTERVIEWER: GIVE CARD TO RESPONDENT AND RECORD]

- Financial Management (1)
- Human Resources (2)
- Public Procurement (3)
- Asset Management (4)
- Information and Communication Technology (5)
- Monitoring and Evaluation (6)
- Fleet Management (7)
- Change Management (8)
- Mobile Money (9)
- None of the above (10)
- Other (please specify)
- _____ (n+1)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

1.3 Would you please provide the spelling of your name? _____ (Q1.4)

- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

1.4 Are you aware of the GEMS program assistance to your institution? (Q1.5)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

[INTERVIEWER: IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS “NO”, SKIP TO THE END AND THANK THEM FOR THEIR TIME.]

1.6 What do you understand to be the main objective(s) of the GEMS program in your institution? Please answer either “Yes,” “No,” or “Don’t Know” to the following objectives. (Q1.6)

	YES (1)	NO (2)	N/A (-7)	Don't know (-8)	Refused (-9)
To restructure the institution? (6A)					
To provide budgetary support to the institution? (6B)					
To prepare a development plan for the institution? (6C)					
To develop staff capacity within the institution? (6D)					
To improve the performance of the institution? (6E)					
To introduce change management in the institution? (6F)					
To develop the Information and Communication Technology (IC) platform in the institution? (6G)					
To develop a results focus in the institution? (6H)					
Other (specify): (6I)					

SECTION 2: RELEVANCE OF GEMS INTERVENTIONS

2.1 Were you involved in identifying the desired future state of your institution? (Q2.1)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

[IF NO, SKIP TO Q2.4.]

2.2 [IF YES] Did you help to identify problems that prevent your institution from achieving that desired future state? (Q2.2)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

2.3 [IF YES] Do you agree that the problems identified were the correct ones? (Q2.3)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

2.4 Do you think GEMS assistance is adequately addressing the problems identified in your institution so that employees are better able to perform their jobs? (Q2.4)

- Inadequately (1)
- Somewhat adequately (2)
- Adequately (3)
- Exceeded expectations (4)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

SECTION 3: EFFECTIVENESS OF GEMS INTERVENTIONS

3.1 In your opinion, which area(s) within your institution shows improvement? Please answer either “Yes,” “No,” “Not Applicable,” or “Don’t Know” to the following objectives. (Q3.1)

	YES (1)	NO (2)	N/A (-7)	Don't know (-8)	Refused (-9)
a. Financial Management (Q3.1A)					
b. Human Resources Management (Q3.1B)					
c. Public Procurement (Q3.1C)					
d. Asset Management (Q3.1D)					
e. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (Q3.1E)					
f. Monitoring and Evaluation (Q3.1F)					
g. Gender focus (Q3.1G)					
h. Others (Please specify) (Q3.1H)					

3.2 Generally speaking, of the [NUMBER OF CHANGES MARKED YES IN Q3.1 ABOVE], positive changes occurring in your institution you identified above, how many would you say are a direct result of the GEMS program interventions? (Q3.2)

[INTERVIEWER, DO NOT READ THESE RESPONSE OPTIONS. NUMBER WILL DEPEND ON RESPONDENT'S ANSWER TO 3.1 ABOVE.]

- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

SECTION 4: DEFICIENCIES IN GEMS IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 In your opinion, how well do GEMS interventions respond to problems identified by your institution? (Q4.1)

- Inadequately (1)
- Somewhat adequately (2)
- Adequately (3)
- Exceeded expectations (4)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

4.2 How would you rate the following characteristics of GEMS assistance in the technical area in which you work? Please answer either "Very High," "High," "Medium," "Low," "Very Low," or "Don't Know" to the following characteristics. (Q4.2)

	Very Highly (1)	High (2)	Medium (3)	Low (4)	Very Low (5)	Refused (-9)	DK (-8)	N/A (-7)
a. Relevance (Q4.2A)								
b. Quality (Q4.2B)								
c. Effectiveness (Q4.2C)								
d. Comprehensiveness (Q4.2D)								

4.3 Are you aware of any periodic meetings within your institution to discuss GEMS interventions? (Q4.3)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

[IF NO, SKIP TO Q5.1.]

4.4 [IF YES] Do you participate in these meetings? (Q4.4)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

4.5 How frequently do these meetings occur? (Q4.5)

- About once a week (1)
- Once or twice a month (2)
- Quarterly (3)
- Annually (4)
- No regular schedule (5)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

SECTION 5: SCALE AND SCOPE OF GEMS INTERVENTIONS

5.1 Given your experience in this institution, do you think the interventions attempted by GEMS are too much, too little, or just about right? (Q5.1)

- Too much (1)
- Too little (2)
- About the right amount (3)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

5.2 In your opinion is there a process in place for you to discuss emerging problems in your institution with GEMS? (Q5.2)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

SECTION 6: GENERAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING

6.1 In your opinion, is the assistance provided by the GEMS program to your institution helping you to do a better job? (Q6.1)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

6.2 Have you received any performance-based training provided by the GEMS program in your area of technical expertise? (Q6.2)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

[IF NO, SKIP TO Q6.4.]

6.3 On a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is not very useful and 5 is very useful), how useful has this training been in helping you to do a better job? (Q6.3)

- 1 – not very useful
- 2 – barely useful
- 3 – somewhat useful
- 4 – useful
- 5 – very useful
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

6.4 Has LIPA provided any performance based training in your institution in your area of expertise? (Q6.4)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

[IF NO, SKIP TO Q6.6.]

6.5 On a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is not very useful and 5 is very useful) how useful has the LIPA training been in helping you to do a better job? (Q.5)

- 1 – not very useful
- 2 – barely useful
- 3 – somewhat useful
- 4 – useful
- 5 – very useful
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

Financial Management Questions

6.6 Since 2012 when the GEMS program started, do you believe the technical assistance provided by GEMS has enabled your institution to develop more effective financial management systems? (Q6.6)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

6.7 Does your institution have the necessary technology (hardware and software) to operate the new financial management system? (Q6.7)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

Human Resource Questions

6.8 Have the Government of Liberia's new human resources rules and procedures (e.g. Standing Orders, Manuals, etc.) been employed in your institution? (Q6.8)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

[IF NO, SKIP TO Q6.11.]

6.9 [IF YES] Are they being followed in your institution? (Q6.9)

- Yes (1)

- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

[IF NO, SKIP TO Q6.11.]

6.10 [IF YES] Do you believe that this has resulted in better effectiveness and efficiency of Human Resource management in your institution? (Q6.10)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

6.11 Since 2012, when the GEMS program started working with your institution, have there been any changes in the workplace related to gender sensitivity and gender equality? (Q6.11)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

Procurement Questions

6.12 Do procurements in your institution comply with the standard policies and procedures established by the Public Procurement Concessions Commission (PPCC)? (Q6.12)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

6.13 In your opinion, have standardized procurement procedures in your institution decreased opportunity for corruption? (Q6.13)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

Asset Management

6.14 Are you aware of the new fleet management policies and procedures in your institution? (Q6.14)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

[IF NO, SKIP TO Q6.16.]

6.15 [IF YES] Are you aware of any cost reduction as a result of this new fleet management policies and procedures? (Q6.15)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

6.16 Has the GEMS program provided your department or unit with information technology (e.g., computers, software, printers, routers)? (Q6.16)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

[IF NO, SKIP TO Q6.19.]

6.17 [IF YES] Has this information technology helped the department or unit to improve performance (e.g., greater efficiency, more timely reports)? (Q6.17)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

6.18 Have you been trained to use the information technology? (Q6.18)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

6.19 Has the GEMS program provided your department with communication technology (e.g., telephones, e-mail, network for file sharing)? (Q6.19)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

[IF NO, SKIP TO Q6.21]

6.20 [IF YES] Have these communication technologies helped the department or unit to improve performance (e.g., greater efficiency, more timely reports)? (Q6.20)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

6.21 Have you been trained on the use of these communication technologies? (Q6.21)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

[IF NO, SKIP TO Q6.23]

6.22 [IF YES] Based on the Information and Communication Technology training provided to you and the new skills you have learned, are you able to do your job more effectively? (Q6.22)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

[IF YES, SKIP TO Q6.24.]

6.23 If no technology has been provided, has the lack of these been an impediment to performance? (Q6.23)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

Monitoring and Evaluation

6.24 Do you believe your supervisor recognizes the contribution you are making to the delivery of services? (Q6.24)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

6.25 Based on your gender (*male OR female*) do you believe that there are double standards in how your work is evaluated? (Q6.25)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Refused (-9)
- Don't Know (-8)
- Not Applicable (-7)

Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this survey. We very much value your insights and opinions. You have been most helpful.

TIME END INTERVIEW: |__|__| : |__|__|

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

CIVIL SERVICE AGENCY

INTRODUCTION

(Note: Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the group discussion).

Hello, I am _____. My colleague is _____. We are from the Agency for Economic Development and Empowerment (AEDE) a Liberian research company with an office in Monrovia.

USAID is currently funding the Governance and Economic Management Support (GEMS) program in Liberia and has requested NORC at the University of Chicago (a US nonprofit research organization) to evaluate this program. The objective of the GEMS Program is to strengthen institutional capacities of selected government ministries, agencies and autonomous commissions to enable them to perform their functions more effectively and efficiently and improve service delivery to constituents and stakeholders.

AEDE has been hired by NORC to conduct this and other focus group discussions. The information you provide will help us understand how effective GEMS has been in achieving its objectives and how the program can be improved.

CONFIDENTIALITY

(Note: Assure all members of their confidentiality)

We value receiving your input through participation in our focus group today. None of your comments will be attributed to you in any reports to USAID and participation in the focus group is voluntary. Although we ask everyone in the group to respect everyone's privacy and confidentiality and not to identify anyone in the group or repeat what is said during the group discussion, please remember that other participants in the group may accidentally disclose what has been said. You can choose not to answer any questions or end your participation in the focus group at any time. Since it is difficult to capture all that is said by everyone in a group discussion, we would like to digitally record this discussion, and seek your permission to do so. Again, we assure **strict confidentiality** for each of you.

INSTRUCTION

(Note: Turn on the recorder and say: "For the record we would like to confirm again that we have your consent to record the discussion." Wait to get everyone's response. Ask if there are any concerns at this point)

In our discussion today I would like to ask some questions regarding the GEMS program: If technical assistance has been on target, its effectiveness, current deficiencies, and good practices. Please note that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers in this discussion. We would like everyone to share their experience and give feedback, either positive or negative, and to be specific and provide examples when possible to support your observations. If you have any questions about this program after the discussion today, please contact the Program Manager, Renee Hendley, at 1-301-634-9489 or email her at Hendley-Renee@norc.org. This contact information is also provided in the white board/flip chart in this room.

- 1. Ice breaker: First, I would like to go around the group and have each of you briefly describe your job responsibilities within the organization and your interaction with the GEMS program.**

Demand-led and problem focused nature of GEMS support; Degree of local ownership; Effectiveness.

- a. Do you know what technical assistance activities and/or support is being provided by the GEMS program to your institution? If yes, please share your knowledge with the group.

b. Is there a change management committee in your organization? If yes, please tell us what you know about it. What they do (their mandate), how often they meet, how active they are, etc.

2. In your opinion are the performance challenges and technical needs the GEMS program is addressing at CSA appropriate? Please explain your reasoning.

a. To your knowledge did key members of your organization participate in defining what support was needed to address performance gaps?

3. Do you feel that the leadership in your organization is fully supportive of the change being facilitated by GEMS? To what extent do you think they have ownership of GEMS support?

a. How is the leadership approaching this change in the management process? Are they consultative in developing policies? Are actions coordinated with other stakeholders?

4. What are the positive (visible or tangible) changes that have been made in the capacity of the CSA to deliver services? (Make a list of the positive changes as gathered from the group...get as many persons to respond).

a. What are the direct contributions of the GEMS program to these positive changes? (*Probe to determine specific contributions of GEMS as opposed to other factors, as much as possible*)

GEMS implementation

5. Are there any GEMS services or inputs that are different from what was agreed; any positive or negative differences; For example, are there delays in GEMS assistance or it is provided in a timely manner? (List areas and specific types of differences. Probe to get both positive or negative changes)

a. Do you feel that these differences are enhancing or hindering the ability of CSA to achieve its own objectives?

b. Do you think there are any internal or external challenges (either at CSA or in the GOL) that are negatively impacting the ability of CSA to achieve its objectives? Please explain. (*If appropriate and not clear, probe to understand causes of the internal or external challenges*).

c. What do you believe could be done to remedy the challenges you have identified? (*Probe for specific recommendations to attend problems and address issues*)

Scale/scope (# of MACS/Component areas); Streamlining Areas/Components advisability

6. Do you believe the changes taking place in CSA and across the civil service on account of GEMS can be sustained once the program ends? (Probe to see if the changes will be sustainable. Try to get interviewees to give clear explanations concerning what conditions must exist for changes to be sustainable)

7. What do you think have been the most important successes of the GEMS program to date?

8. If USAID funding levels were to be reduced, what do you think should be the critical, priority technical assistance interventions that should be continued under new, limited technical assistance funding?

Good practices emerging from program (Implicitly also practices to avoid in future programs); Successes that could be replicated in future programs.

9. In your mind, based on what have you observed from the GEMS program, what stands out that you would term as “good practice,” and that you would recommend be continued or

replicated for future programs? This can be any element related to their initial assessment, approach, technical assistance, advisors, training, dissemination practice, etc.:

10. What have you observed from the GEMS program that you would term as “bad practice” that should not be continued or be replicated for future programs?

Closing

11. Finally, is there anything relative to the GEMS program and its activities within the CSA that has caught your attention that we may not have covered and which you would like to comment on? Please do so now remembering our solemn promise of your confidentiality.

Thank you so much for your time!

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Ministry of Education (MOE)

INTRODUCTION

(Note: Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the group discussion).

Hello, I am _____. My colleague is _____. We are from the Agency for Economic Development and Empowerment (AEDE) a Liberian research company with an office in Monrovia.

USAID is currently funding the Governance and Economic Management Support (GEMS) program in Liberia and has requested NORC at the University of Chicago (a US nonprofit research organization) to evaluate this program. The objective of the GEMS Program is to strengthen institutional capacities of selected government ministries, agencies and autonomous commissions to enable them to perform their functions more effectively and efficiently and improve service delivery to constituents and stakeholders.

AEDE has been hired by NORC to conduct this and other focus group discussions. The information you provide will help us understand how effective GEMS has been in achieving its objectives and how the program can be improved.

CONFIDENTIALITY

(Note: Assure all members of their confidentiality)

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In our discussion today I would like to ask some questions regarding the GEMS program: If technical assistance has been on target, its effectiveness, current deficiencies, and good practices. Please note that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers in this discussion. We would like everyone to share their experience and give feedback, either positive or negative, and to be specific and provide examples when possible to support your observations. If you have any questions about this program after the discussion today, please contact the Program Manager, Renee Hendley, at 1-301-634-9489 or email her at Hendley-Renee@norc.org. This contact information is also provided in the white board/flip chart in this room.

- 1. Ice breaker: First, I would like to go around the group and have each of you briefly describe your job responsibilities within the organization and your interaction with the GEMS program.**

Demand-led and problem focused nature of GEMS support; Degree of local ownership; Effectiveness.

- a. Do you know what technical assistance activities and/or support is being provided by the GEMS program to your institution? If yes, please share your knowledge with the group.

b. Is there a change management committee in your organization? If yes, please tell us what you know about it. What they do (their mandate), how often they meet, how active they are, etc.

2. In your opinion are the performance challenges and technical needs the GEMS program is addressing at MOE appropriate? Please explain your reasoning.

a. To your knowledge did key members of your organization participate in defining what support was needed to address performance gaps?

3. Do you feel that the leadership in your organization is fully supportive of the change being facilitated by GEMS? To what extent do you think they have ownership of GEMS support?

a. How is the leadership approaching this change in the management process? Are they consultative in developing policies? Are actions coordinated with other stakeholders?

4. What are the positive (visible or tangible) changes that have been made in the capacity of the MOE to deliver services? (Make a list of the positive changes as gathered from the group...get as many persons to respond).

a. What are the direct contributions of the GEMS program to these positive changes? (*Probe to determine specific contributions of GEMS as opposed to other factors, as much as possible*)

GEMS implementation

5. Are there any GEMS services or inputs that are different from what was agreed; any positive or negative differences; For example, are there delays in GEMS assistance or it is provided in a timely manner? (List areas and specific types of differences. Probe to get both positive or negative changes)

a. Do you feel that these differences are enhancing or hindering the ability of MOE to achieve its own objectives?

b. Do you think there are any internal or external challenges (either at MOE or in the GOL) that are negatively impacting the ability of MOE to achieve its objectives? Please explain. (*If appropriate and not clear, probe to understand causes of the internal or external challenges*).

c. What do you believe could be done to remedy the challenges you have identified? (*Probe for specific recommendations to attend problems and address issues*)

Scale/scope (# of MACS/Component areas); Streamlining Areas/Components advisability

6. Do you believe the changes taking place in MOE on account of GEMS can be sustained once the program ends? (Probe to see if the changes will be sustainable. Try to get interviewees to give clear explanations concerning what conditions must exist for changes to be sustainable)

7. What do you think have been the most important successes of the GEMS program to date?

8. If USAID funding levels were to be reduced, what do you think should be the critical, priority technical assistance interventions that should be continued under new, limited technical assistance funding?

Good practices emerging from program (Implicitly also practices to avoid in future programs); Successes that could be replicated in future programs.

9. In your mind, based on what have you observed from the GEMS program, what stands out that you would term as “good practice,” and that you would recommend be continued or replicated for future programs? This can be any element related to their initial assessment, approach, technical assistance, advisors, training, dissemination practice, etc.:

10. What have you observed from the GEMS program that you would term as “bad practice” that should not be continued or be replicated for future programs?

Closing

11. Finally, is there anything relative to the GEMS program and its activities within the MOE that has caught your attention that we may not have covered and which you would like to comment on? Please do so now remembering our solemn promise of your confidentiality.

Thank you so much for your time!

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Forestry Development Authority (FDA)

INTRODUCTION

(Note: Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the group discussion).

Hello, I am _____. My colleague is _____. We are from the Agency for Economic Development and Empowerment (AEDE) a Liberian research company with an office in Monrovia.

USAID is currently funding the Governance and Economic Management Support (GEMS) program in Liberia and has requested NORC at the University of Chicago (a US nonprofit research organization) to evaluate this program. The objective of the GEMS Program is to strengthen institutional capacities of selected government ministries, agencies and autonomous commissions to enable them to perform their functions more effectively and efficiently and improve service delivery to constituents and stakeholders.

AEDE has been hired by NORC to conduct this and other focus group discussions. The information you provide will help us understand how effective GEMS has been in achieving its objectives and how the program can be improved.

CONFIDENTIALITY

(Note: Assure all members of their confidentiality)

We value receiving your input through participation in our focus group today. None of your comments will be attributed to you in any reports to USAID and participation in the focus group is voluntary. Although we ask everyone in the group to respect everyone's privacy and confidentiality and not to identify anyone in the group or repeat what is said during the group discussion, please remember that other participants in the group may accidentally disclose what has been said. You can choose not to answer any questions or end your participation in the focus group at any time. Since it is difficult to capture all that is said by everyone in a group discussion, we would like to digitally record this discussion, and seek your permission to do so. Again, we assure **strict confidentiality** for each of you.

INSTRUCTION

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In our discussion today I would like to ask some questions regarding the GEMS program: If technical assistance has been on target, its effectiveness, current deficiencies, and good practices. Please note that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers in this discussion. We would like everyone to share their experience and give feedback, either positive or negative, and to be specific and provide examples when possible to support your observations. If you have any questions about this program after the discussion today, please contact the Program Manager, Renee Hendley, at 1-301-634-9489 or email her at Hendley-Renee@norc.org. This contact information is also provided in the white board/flip chart in this room.

- 1. Ice breaker: First, I would like to go around the group and have each of you briefly describe your job responsibilities within the organization and your interaction with the GEMS program.**

Demand-led and problem focused nature of GEMS support; Degree of local ownership; Effectiveness.

a. Do you know what technical assistance activities and/or support is being provided by the GEMS program to your institution? If yes, please share your knowledge with the group.

b. Is there a change management committee in your organization? If yes, please tell us what you know about it. What they do (their mandate), how often they meet, how active they are, etc.

2. In your opinion are the performance challenges and technical needs the GEMS program is addressing at FDA appropriate? Please explain your reasoning.

a. To your knowledge did key members of your organization participate in defining what support was needed to address performance gaps?

3. Do you feel that the leadership in your organization is fully supportive of the change being facilitated by GEMS? To what extent do you think they have ownership of GEMS support?

a. How is the leadership approaching this change in the management process? Are they consultative in developing policies? Are actions coordinated with other stakeholders?

4. What are the positive (visible or tangible) changes that have been made in the capacity of the FDA to deliver services? (Make a list of the positive changes as gathered from the group...get as many persons to respond).

a. What are the direct contributions of the GEMS program to these positive changes? (*Probe to determine specific contributions of GEMS as opposed to other factors, as much as possible*)

GEMS implementation

5. Are there any GEMS services or inputs that are different from what was agreed; any positive or negative differences; For example, are there delays in GEMS assistance or it is provided in a timely manner? (List areas and specific types of differences. Probe to get both positive or negative changes)

a. Do you feel that these differences are enhancing or hindering the ability of FDA to achieve its own objectives?

b. Do you think there are any internal or external challenges (either at FDA or in the GOL) that are negatively impacting the ability of FDA to achieve its objectives? Please explain. (*If appropriate and not clear, probe to understand causes of the internal or external challenges*).

c. What do you believe could be done to remedy the challenges you have identified? (*Probe for specific recommendations to attend problems and address issues*)

Scale/scope (# of MACS/Component areas); Streamlining Areas/Components advisability

6. Do you believe the changes taking place in FDA on account of GEMS can be sustained once the program ends? (Probe to see if the changes will be sustainable. Try to get interviewees to give clear explanations concerning what conditions must exist for changes to be sustainable)

7. What do you think have been the most important successes of the GEMS program to date?

8. If USAID funding levels were to be reduced, what do you think should be the critical, priority technical assistance interventions that should be continued under new, limited technical assistance funding?

Good practices emerging from program (Implicitly also practices to avoid in future programs); Successes that could be replicated in future programs.

9. In your mind, based on what have you observed from the GEMS program, what stands out that you would term as “good practice,” and that you would recommend be continued or replicated for future programs? This can be any element related to their initial assessment, approach, technical assistance, advisors, training, dissemination practice, etc.:
10. What have you observed from the GEMS program that you would term as “bad practice” that should not be continued or be replicated for future programs?

Closing

11. Finally, is there anything relative to the GEMS program and its activities within the FDA that has caught your attention that we may not have covered and which you would like to comment on? Please do so now remembering our solemn promise of your confidentiality.

Thank you so much for your time!

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

General Services Agency (GSA)

INTRODUCTION

(Note: Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the group discussion).

Hello, I am _____. My colleague is _____. We are from the Agency for Economic Development and Empowerment (AEDE) a Liberian research company with an office in Monrovia.

USAID is currently funding the Governance and Economic Management Support (GEMS) program in Liberia and has requested NORC at the University of Chicago (a US nonprofit research organization) to evaluate this program. The objective of the GEMS Program is to strengthen institutional capacities of selected government ministries, agencies and autonomous commissions to enable them to perform their functions more effectively and efficiently and improve service delivery to constituents and stakeholders.

AEDE has been hired by NORC to conduct this and other focus group discussions. The information you provide will help us understand how effective GEMS has been in achieving its objectives and how the program can be improved.

CONFIDENTIALITY

(Note: Assure all members of their confidentiality)

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In our discussion today I would like to ask some questions regarding the GEMS program: If technical assistance has been on target, its effectiveness, current deficiencies, and good practices. Please note that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers in this discussion. We would like everyone to share their experience and give feedback, either positive or negative, and to be specific and provide examples when possible to support your observations. If you have any questions about this program after the discussion today, please contact the Program Manager, Renee Hendley, at 1-301-634-9489 or email her at Hendley-Renee@norc.org. This contact information is also provided in the white board/flip chart in this room.

- 1. Ice breaker: First, I would like to go around the group and have each of you briefly describe your job responsibilities within the organization and your interaction with the GEMS program.**

Demand-led and problem focused nature of GEMS support; Degree of local ownership; Effectiveness.

- 2. In your opinion are the performance challenges and technical needs the GEMS program is addressing at GSA appropriate? Please explain your reasoning.**

- a. To your knowledge did key members of your organization participate in defining what support was needed to address performance gaps?
3. **Do you feel that the leadership in your organization is fully supportive of the change being facilitated by GEMS? Do you think they need to have greater ownership of the GEMS support?**
 - a. How is the leadership approaching this change in the management process? Are they consultative in developing policies? Are actions coordinated with other stakeholders?
4. **What are the positive (visible or tangible) changes that have been made in the capacity of the GSA to deliver services? (Make a list of the positive changes as gathered from the group...get as many persons to respond).**
 - a. What are the direct contributions of the GEMS program to these positive changes? (Probe to determine specific contributions of GEMS as opposed to other factors, as much as possible)

GEMS implementation

5. **Are there any GEMS services or inputs that are different from what was agreed; any positive or negative differences; For example, are there delays in GEMS assistance or it is provided in a timely manner? (List areas and specific types of differences. Probe to get both positive or negative changes)**
 - a. Do you feel that these differences are enhancing or hindering the ability of GSA to achieve the basic program objectives?
 - b. Do you think there are any internal or external challenges (either at GSA or in the GOL) that are negatively impacting the ability of GSA to achieve the basic program objectives? Please explain. (If appropriate and not clear, probe to understand causes of the internal or external challenges).
 - c. What do you believe could be done to remedy the challenges you have identified? (Probe for specific recommendations to attend problems and address issues)

Scale/scope (# of MACS/Component areas); Streamlining Areas/Components advisability

6. **Do you believe the changes taking place in GSA on account of GEMS can be sustained once the program ends? (Probe to see if the changes will be sustainable. Try to get interviewees to give clear explanations concerning what conditions must exist for changes to be sustainable)**
7. **What do you think have been the most important successes of the GEMS program to date?**
8. **If USAID funding levels were to be reduced, what do you think should be the critical, priority technical assistance interventions that should be continued under new, limited technical assistance funding?**

Good practices emerging from program (Implicitly also practices to avoid in future programs); Successes that could be replicated in future programs.

9. **In your mind, based on what have you observed from the GEMS program, what stands out that you would term as “good practice,” and that you would recommend be continued or replicated for future programs? This can be any element related to their initial assessment, approach, technical assistance, advisors, training, dissemination practice, etc.:**
10. **What have you observed from the GEMS program that you would term as “bad practice” that should not be continued or be replicated for future programs?**

Closing

11. Finally, is there anything relative to the GEMS program and its activities within the GSA that has caught your attention that we may not have covered and which you would like to comment on? Please do so now remembering our solemn promise of your confidentiality.

Thank you so much for your time!

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE Ministry of Health (MOH)

INTRODUCTION

(Note: Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the group discussion).

Hello, I am _____. My colleague is _____. We are from the Agency for Economic Development and Empowerment (AEDE) a Liberian research company with an office in Monrovia.

USAID is currently funding the Governance and Economic Management Support (GEMS) program in Liberia and has requested NORC at the University of Chicago (a US nonprofit research organization) to evaluate this program. The objective of the GEMS Program is to strengthen institutional capacities of selected government ministries, agencies and autonomous commissions to enable them to perform their functions more effectively and efficiently and improve service delivery to constituents and stakeholders.

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CONFIDENTIALITY

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1. **Ice breaker: First, I would like to go around the group and have each of you briefly describe your job responsibilities within the organization and your interaction with the GEMS program.**

Demand-led and problem focused nature of GEMS support; Degree of local ownership; Effectiveness

1a. Do you know what technical assistance activities and/or support is being provided by the GEMS program to your institution? If yes, please share your knowledge with the group.

1b. Is there a change management committee in your organization? If yes, please tell us what you know about it. What they do (their mandate), how often they meet, how active they are, etc.

2. In your opinion are the performance challenges and technical needs the GEMS program is addressing at MOH appropriate? Please explain your reasoning.

a. To your knowledge did key members of your organization participate in defining what support was needed to address performance gaps?

3. Do you feel that the leadership in your organization is fully supportive of the change being facilitated by GEMS? To what extent do you think they have ownership of GEMS support?

a. How is the leadership approaching this change in the management process? Are they consultative in developing policies? Are actions coordinated with other stakeholders?

4. What are the positive (visible or tangible) changes that have been made in the capacity of the MOH to deliver services? (Make a list of the positive changes as gathered from the group...get as many persons to respond).

a. What are the direct contributions of the GEMS program to these positive changes? (Probe to determine specific contributions of GEMS as opposed to other factors, as much as possible)

GEMS implementation

5. Are there any GEMS services or inputs that are different from what was agreed; any positive or negative differences; For example, are there delays in GEMS assistance or it is provided in a timely manner? (List areas and specific types of differences. Probe to get both positive or negative changes)

a. Do you feel that these differences are enhancing or hindering the ability of MOH to achieve its own objectives?

b. Do you think there are any internal or external challenges (either at MOH or in the GOL) that are negatively impacting the ability of MOH to achieve its objectives? Please explain. (If appropriate and not clear, probe to understand causes of the internal or external challenges).

c. What do you believe could be done to remedy the challenges you have identified? (Probe for specific recommendations to attend problems and address issues)

Scale/scope (# of MACS/Component areas); Streamlining Areas/Components advisability

6. Do you believe the changes taking place in MOH on account of GEMS can be sustained once the program ends? (Probe to see if the changes will be sustainable. Try to get interviewees to give clear explanations concerning what conditions must exist for changes to be sustainable)

7. What do you think have been the most important successes of the GEMS program to date?

8. If USAID funding levels were to be reduced, what do you think should be the critical, priority technical assistance interventions that should be continued under new, limited technical assistance funding?

Good practices emerging from program (Implicitly also practices to avoid in future programs); Successes that could be replicated in future programs.

9. In your mind, based on what have you observed from the GEMS program, what stands out that you would term as “good practice,” and that you would recommend be continued or replicated for future programs? This can be any element related to their initial assessment, approach, technical assistance, advisors, training, dissemination practice, etc.:
10. What have you observed from the GEMS program that you would term as “bad practice” that should not be continued or be replicated for future programs?

Closing

11. Finally, is there anything relative to the GEMS program and its activities within the MOH that has caught your attention that we may not have covered and which you would like to comment on? Please do so now remembering our solemn promise of your confidentiality.

Thank you so much for your time!

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Liberian Institute of Public Administration (LIPA)

INTRODUCTION

(Note: Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the group discussion).

Hello, I am _____. My colleague is _____. We are from the Agency for Economic Development and Empowerment (AEDE) a Liberian research company with an office in Monrovia.

USAID is currently funding the Governance and Economic Management Support (GEMS) program in Liberia and has requested NORC at the University of Chicago (a US nonprofit research organization) to evaluate this program. The objective of the GEMS Program is to strengthen institutional capacities of selected government ministries, agencies and autonomous commissions to enable them to perform their functions more effectively and efficiently and improve service delivery to constituents and stakeholders.

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CONFIDENTIALITY

(Note: Assure all members of their confidentiality)

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INSTRUCTION

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- 1. Ice breaker: First, I would like to go around the group and have each of you briefly describe your job responsibilities within the organization and your interaction with the GEMS program.**

Demand-led and problem focused nature of GEMS support; Degree of local ownership; Effectiveness.

a. Do you know what technical assistance activities and/or support is being provided by the GEMS program to your institution? If yes, please share your knowledge with the group.

b. Is there a change management committee in your organization? If yes, please tell us what you know about it. What they do (their mandate), how often they meet, how active they are, etc.

2. In your opinion are the performance challenges and technical needs the GEMS program is addressing at LIPA appropriate? Please explain your reasoning.

a. To your knowledge did key members of your organization participate in defining what support was needed to address performance gaps?

3. Do you feel that the leadership in your organization is fully supportive of the change being facilitated by GEMS? To what extent do you think they have ownership of GEMS support?

a. How is the leadership approaching this change in the management process? Are they consultative in developing policies? Are actions coordinated with other stakeholders?

4. What are the positive (visible or tangible) changes that have been made in the capacity of the LIPA to deliver services? (Make a list of the positive changes as gathered from the group...get as many persons to respond).

a. What are the direct contributions of the GEMS program to these positive changes? *(Probe to determine specific contributions of GEMS as opposed to other factors, as much as possible)*

GEMS implementation

5. Are there any GEMS services or inputs that are different from what was agreed; any positive or negative differences; For example, are there delays in GEMS assistance or it is provided in a timely manner? (List areas and specific types of differences. Probe to get both positive or negative changes)

a. Do you feel that these differences are enhancing or hindering the ability of LIPA to achieve its own objectives?

b. Do you think there are any internal or external challenges (either at LIPA or in the GOL) that are negatively impacting the ability of LIPA to achieve its objectives? Please explain. *(If appropriate and not clear, probe to understand causes of the internal or external challenges).*

c. What do you believe could be done to remedy the challenges you have identified? *(Probe for specific recommendations to attend problems and address issues)*

Scale/scope (# of MACS/Component areas); Streamlining Areas/Components advisability

6. Do you believe the changes taking place in LIPA on account of GEMS can be sustained once the program ends? (Probe to see if the changes will be sustainable. Try to get interviewees to give clear explanations concerning what conditions must exist for changes to be sustainable)

7. What do you think have been the most important successes of the GEMS program to date?

8. If USAID funding levels were to be reduced, what do you think should be the critical, priority technical assistance interventions that should be continued under new, limited technical assistance funding?

Good practices emerging from program (Implicitly also practices to avoid in future programs); Successes that could be replicated in future programs.

9. In your mind, based on what have you observed from the GEMS program, what stands out that you would term as “good practice,” and that you would recommend be continued or replicated for future programs? This can be any element related to their initial assessment, approach, technical assistance, advisors, training, dissemination practice, etc.:
10. What have you observed from the GEMS program that you would term as “bad practice” that should not be continued or be replicated for future programs?

Closing

11. Finally, is there anything relative to the GEMS program and its activities within the LIPA that has caught your attention that we may not have covered and which you would like to comment on? Please do so now remembering our solemn promise of your confidentiality.

Thank you so much for your time!

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Ministry of Finance (MOF)

INTRODUCTION

(Note: Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the group discussion).

Hello, I am _____. My colleague is _____. We are from the Agency for Economic Development and Empowerment (AEDE) a Liberian research company with an office in Monrovia.

USAID is currently funding the Governance and Economic Management Support (GEMS) program in Liberia and has requested NORC at the University of Chicago (a US nonprofit research organization) to evaluate this program. The objective of the GEMS Program is to strengthen institutional capacities of selected government ministries, agencies and autonomous commissions to enable them to perform their functions more effectively and efficiently and improve service delivery to constituents and stakeholders.

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CONFIDENTIALITY

(Note: Assure all members of their confidentiality)

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INSTRUCTION

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- 1. Ice breaker: First, I would like to go around the group and have each of you briefly describe your job responsibilities within the organization and your interaction with the GEMS program.**

Demand-led and problem focused nature of GEMS support; Degree of local ownership; Effectiveness.

a. Do you know what technical assistance activities and/or support is being provided by the GEMS program to your institution? If yes, please share your knowledge with the group.

b. Is there a change management committee in your organization? If yes, please tell us what you know about it. What they do (their mandate), how often they meet, how active they are, etc.

2. In your opinion are the performance challenges and technical needs the GEMS program is addressing at MOF appropriate? Please explain your reasoning.

a. To your knowledge did key members of your organization participate in defining what support was needed to address performance gaps?

3. Do you feel that the leadership in your organization is fully supportive of the change being facilitated by GEMS? To what extent do you think they have ownership of GEMS support?

a. How is the leadership approaching this change in the management process? Are they consultative in developing policies? Are actions coordinated with other stakeholders?

4. What are the positive (visible or tangible) changes that have been made in the capacity of the MOF to deliver services? (Make a list of the positive changes as gathered from the group...get as many persons to respond).

a. What are the direct contributions of the GEMS program to these positive changes? (*Probe to determine specific contributions of GEMS as opposed to other factors, as much as possible*)

GEMS implementation

5. Are there any GEMS services or inputs that are different from what was agreed; any positive or negative differences; For example, are there delays in GEMS assistance or it is provided in a timely manner? (List areas and specific types of differences. Probe to get both positive or negative changes)

a. Do you feel that these differences are enhancing or hindering the ability of MOF to achieve its own objectives?

b. Do you think there are any internal or external challenges (either at MOF or in the GOL) that are negatively impacting the ability of MOF to achieve its objectives? Please explain. (*If appropriate and not clear, probe to understand causes of the internal or external challenges*).

c. What do you believe could be done to remedy the challenges you have identified? (*Probe for specific recommendations to attend problems and address issues*)

Scale/scope (# of MACS/Component areas); Streamlining Areas/Components advisability

6. Do you believe the changes taking place in MOF on account of GEMS can be sustained once the program ends? (Probe to see if the changes will be sustainable. Try to get interviewees to give clear explanations concerning what conditions must exist for changes to be sustainable)

7. What do you think have been the most important successes of the GEMS program to date?

8. If USAID funding levels were to be reduced, what do you think should be the critical, priority technical assistance interventions that should be continued under new, limited technical assistance funding?

Good practices emerging from program (Implicitly also practices to avoid in future programs); Successes that could be replicated in future programs.

9. In your mind, based on what have you observed from the GEMS program, what stands out that you would term as “good practice,” and that you would recommend be continued or replicated for future programs? This can be any element related to their initial assessment, approach, technical assistance, advisors, training, dissemination practice, etc.:
10. What have you observed from the GEMS program that you would term as “bad practice” that should not be continued or be replicated for future programs?

Closing

11. Finally, is there anything relative to the GEMS program and its activities within the MOF that has caught your attention that we may not have covered and which you would like to comment on? Please do so now remembering our solemn promise of your confidentiality.

Thank you so much for your time!

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Public Procurement Concessions Commission

INTRODUCTION

(Note: Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the group discussion).

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USAID is currently funding the Governance and Economic Management Support (GEMS) program in Liberia and has requested NORC at the University of Chicago (a US nonprofit research organization) to evaluate this program. The objective of the GEMS Program is to strengthen institutional capacities of selected government ministries, agencies and autonomous commissions to enable them to perform their functions more effectively and efficiently and improve service delivery to constituents and stakeholders.

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CONFIDENTIALITY

(Note: Assure all members of their confidentiality)

We value receiving your input through participation in our focus group today. None of your comments will be attributed to you in any reports to USAID and participation in the focus group is voluntary. Although we ask everyone in the group to respect everyone's privacy and confidentiality and not to identify anyone in the group or repeat what is said during the group discussion, please remember that other participants in the group may accidentally disclose what has been said. You can choose not to answer any questions or end your participation in the focus group at any time. Since it is difficult to capture all that is said by everyone in a group discussion, we would like to digitally record this discussion, and seek your permission to do so. Again, we assure **strict confidentiality** for each of you.

INSTRUCTION

(Note: Turn on the recorder and say: "For the record we would like to confirm again that we have your consent to record the discussion." Wait to get everyone's response. Ask if there are any concerns at this point)

In our discussion today I would like to ask some questions regarding the GEMS program: If technical assistance has been on target, its effectiveness, current deficiencies, and good practices. Please note that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers in this discussion. We would like everyone to share their experience and give feedback, either positive or negative, and to be specific and provide examples when possible to support your observations. If you have any questions about this program after the discussion today, please contact the Program Manager, Renee Hendley, at 1-301-634-9489 or email her at Hendley-Renee@norc.org. This contact information is also provided in the white board/flip chart in this room.

1. **Ice breaker: First, I would like to go around the group and have each of you briefly describe your job responsibilities within the organization and your interaction with the GEMS program.**

Demand-led and problem focused nature of GEMS support; Degree of local ownership; Effectiveness.

2. **In your opinion are the performance challenges and technical needs the GEMS program is addressing at PPCC appropriate? Please explain your reasoning.**

a. To your knowledge did key members of your organization participate in defining what support was needed to address performance gaps?

3. Do you feel that the leadership in your organization is fully supportive of the change being facilitated by GEMS? Do you think they need to have greater ownership of the GEMS support?

a. How is the leadership approaching this change in the management process? Are they consultative in developing policies? Are actions coordinated with other stakeholders?

4. What are the positive (visible or tangible) changes that have been made in the capacity of the PPCC to deliver services? (Make a list of the positive changes as gathered from the group...get as many persons to respond).

a. What are the direct contributions of the GEMS program to these positive changes? (*Probe to determine specific contributions of GEMS as opposed to other factors, as much as possible*)

GEMS implementation

5. Are there any GEMS services or inputs that are different from what was agreed; any positive or negative differences; For example, are there delays in GEMS assistance or it is provided in a timely manner? (List areas and specific types of differences. Probe to get both positive or negative changes)

a. Do you feel that these differences are enhancing or hindering the ability of PPCC to achieve the basic program objectives?

b. Do you think there are any internal or external challenges (either at PPCC or in the GOL) that are negatively impacting the ability of PPCC to achieve the basic program objectives? Please explain. (*If appropriate and not clear, probe to understand causes of the internal or external challenges*).

c. What do you believe could be done to remedy the challenges you have identified? (*Probe for specific recommendations to attend problems and address issues*)

Scale/scope (# of MACS/Component areas); Streamlining Areas/Components advisability

6. Do you believe the changes taking place in PPCC on account of GEMS can be sustained once the program ends? (Probe to see if the changes will be sustainable. Try to get interviewees to give clear explanations concerning what conditions must exist for changes to be sustainable)

7. What do you think have been the most important successes of the GEMS program to date?

8. If USAID funding levels were to be reduced, what do you think should be the critical, priority technical assistance interventions that should be continued under new, limited technical assistance funding?

Good practices emerging from program (Implicitly also practices to avoid in future programs); Successes that could be replicated in future programs.

9. In your mind, based on what have you observed from the GEMS program, what stands out that you would term as “good practice,” and that you would recommend be continued or replicated for future programs? This can be any element related to their initial assessment, approach, technical assistance, advisors, training, dissemination practice, etc.:

10. What have you observed from the GEMS program that you would term as “bad practice” that should not be continued or be replicated for future programs?

Closing

11. Finally, is there anything relative to the GEMS program and its activities within the PPCC that has caught your attention that we may not have covered and which you would like to comment on? Please do so now remembering our solemn promise of your confidentiality.

Thank you so much for your time!

ANNEX V: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

1. DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

USAID

Liberia Governance and Economic Support Program (GEMS) 06/29/2011
USAID, ADS Chapter 203, "Assessing and Learning," 2012
USAID, Country Development Cooperation Strategy (2013-2017)
USAID, Evaluation Policy, "Learning from Experience," January 2011
USAID, Final Evaluation Report, "Focus on Results: Enhancing Capacity Across Sectors in Transition"
USAID, Final Evaluation Report, "Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program, GEMAP," Liberia
USAID, Final Evaluation Report, "Liberia Trade Policy and Customs Program," 2013
USAID, FORECAST Liberia, 2011
USAID, How-to-Note, "Evaluation Statements of Work," February 2013
USAID, How-to-Note, "Preparing Evaluation Reports," November 2012
USAID, Human and Institutional Capacity Development Handbook, 2010
USAID, Office of Acquisition and Assistance, Amendment of Solicitation/Modification of Contract
USAID, Office of Acquisition and Assistance, Solicitation, Offer and Award, Contract 669-C-00-11-00050
USAID, Technical Note, "Conducting Mixed Method Evaluations," June 2013

Governance and Economic Management Support (GEMS) Program

USAID-GEMS, All Program IT Costs to Date, June 24, 2014
USAID-GEMS, Annual Report 2013
USAID-GEMS, Annual Work Plan, October 01, 2012-September 30, 2013 (for FY13)
USAID-GEMS, Annual Work Plan, October 01, 2013-September 30, 2014 (for FY14)
USAID-GEMS, ATM/POS Switch Assessment & Development: Findings & Recommendations; (STTA to the CB System Unit) April 2013
USAID-GEMS, Capacity Assessment, Civil Service Agency
USAID-GEMS, Capacity Assessment, Governance Commission
USAID-GEMS, Formal & OJT Training Activities: June 24, 2014. Excel Sheet on all GEMS training events & costs
USAID-GEMS, Human Resources Challenges February 2014 (paper)
USAID-GEMS, Memorandum Of Understanding, Ministry of Youth and Sports
USAID-GEMS, Memorandum of Understanding, Forestry Development Authority
USAID-GEMS, Memorandum of Understanding, Governance Commission
USAID-GEMS, Memorandum Of Understanding, Liberia Institute for Public Administration
USAID-GEMS, Memorandum Of Understanding, Ministry of Education

USAID-GEMS, Memorandum of Understanding, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
USAID-GEMS, Memorandum of Understanding, National Bureau of Concessions
USAID-GEMS, Monthly Status Report, April 2014
USAID-GEMS, Performance Management Plan; December 2013
USAID-GEMS, Performance Management Plan; September 2013
USAID-GEMS, Program Achievements, July 2012-June 2013
USAID-GEMS, Program Annual Progress Report (October 1, 2011 – September 30, 2012)
USAID-GEMS, Program Annual Progress Report (October 1, 2012 – September 30, 2013)
USAID-GEMS, Program Performance Management Plan December 2013
USAID-GEMS, Public-Private Partnerships in Liberia; Relevant Recints for Developing PPP Guidelines, and Relat
Capacity; Michael Ororoe, March 2014
USAID-GEMS, Quarterly Progress Report, October – December 2013, (FY14, Q1)
USAID-GEMS, Quarterly Progress Report, March 31 2014
USAID-GEMS, Renewal & Transformation: Strategy for Enhancing the Delivery of LIPA Library Services; Sept 2
USAID-GEMS, Road Map to Develop the National Concessions Cadastre for Liberia, April 2013
USAID-GEMS, Steering Committee Meeting (various)
USAID-GEMS, Terms of Reference (TORs) for USAID-GEMS Committees; January 2013
USAID-GEMS, USAID-GEMS Overview, Presentation to Steering Committee, 2012
USAID-GEMS, Performance Management Plan; September 2012
USAID-GEMS, Technical Committee Workshop (November 7-8, 2012) Report

Documents from the Government of Liberia

_____Agenda for Transformation
Civil Service Reform Strategy (2008 – 2011) Implementation Evaluation Report
Governance Commission, Annual Governance Report- 2013
Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI) 4th Annual Report , 2012
Liberia Institute for Public Administration, "The Public Administrator", March 2014
Liberia Institute for Public Administration, Course Brochure, 2014
Liberian National Capacity Development Strategy
Ministry of Finance, "Public Financial Management Reforms" Newsletter, 2014
Ministry of Finance, National Budget Summary 2014
Ministry of Health & Social Welfare, Health Pay Survey Report, September 2012
Ministry of Planning & Economic Affairs: Liberia National Capacity Development Strategy
Ministry of Posts & Telecommunication; Summary on the Chief Information Officer (CIO)/E-Government Prog
June 2014

Other

Andrews, M, "Limits of Institutional Reform in Development", Cambridge, 2013

Andrews, M. and Bategeka, L, "Overcoming the limits of institutional reform in Uganda", Working Papers, Center for International Development at Harvard University, 2013

Andrews, M., Pritchett, L., Woolcock, M. , Escaping Capability Traps through Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation, Working Paper 299, Harvard Center for International Development, 2012

Civil Service Reform Strategy (2008 – 2011): An Assessment of Implementation; Willie Belleh, August 2013

Forecast Evaluation Report

Implementation Support and Review Mission - (June 9 -19, 2014), Aide Memoire No. 3 (joint implementation support mission): World Bank (WB), African Development Bank (AfDB), Sweden/Swedish

International Development Corporation Agency (Sida) and United States Agency for International Development

Liberia Integrated Public Financial Management Reform Program (IPFMRP). June 9-19, 2014

International Monetary Fund, External Assessment ,Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability, 2012

Liberia: Integrated Public Financial Management Reform Program (IPFMRP) –PI27319. Third

State & Peace Building Fund; Strengthening Governance in Liberia

The World Bank, "Steps for Designing a Results-Focused Capacity development Strategy", 2011

UNDP, "Practice Note: Capacity Assessment"

2. INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED THROUGH KIIS

INSTITUTION	PERSON	TITLE
GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA		
Ministry of Education	Etmonia Tarpeh	Minister
	Ramses Kumbuyah	Deputy Minister/Administration
	Kalipha Bility	Deputy Minister/Planning
	James F. Andrews	Assist Minister/Fiscal & Personnel
	Augustine V. Kimber	Assist Minister/Administration
	S. Othello Hodges, Jr.	Director, Human Resources
	Eric Karn	Acting Procurement Officer
	Patrick O. Davies	Transport Director
	Rush Mayah Fayiah	Finance Officer
	Albert Coleman	Senior Policy Advisor
Ministry of Agriculture	Dr. Florence Chenoweth	Minister
	Dr. Charles McClain	Deputy Minister-Planning & Development
	Dr. Sizi Subah	Deputy Minister-Technical Services
	Seklau Elizabeth Wiles	Deputy Minister-Administration
Ministry of Health & Social Welfare	William Martin	Special Assistant to Minister
Ministry of Post & Telecommunications	Fredrick Norkeh	Minister
	Joe Bando	Assistant Minister, Chair Change Management Committee
	Nicholas Johnson	Assistant to the Minister
	Sekou Kromah	Chief Information Officer
	James Soulenteh	IT Assistant
Ministry of Finance	Augustine M. Zayzay, Jr.	Assistant Minister, Expenditures & Debt Management
	Graham Prentice	Budget Advisor (ODI)
	Tanneh Brunson	Budget Policy Advisor
	Bernard Jappah	PFM Reforms Coordinator, Program Manager IPFMRP

INSTITUTION	PERSON	TITLE
	Joseph Fahnbulleh	IPFMRP
	Sheikh Swaray	Change Management Specialist
	Sam Saybge-Ju Hodge	Capacity Building Officer
Ministry of Lands, Mines & Energy	Stephen M. Dorbor	Deputy Minister, Planning & HRM
	Jenkins Atuanya	Deputy Minister, Administration
Ministry of Youth & Sports	Dorothy Smith	Assistant Minister
	Willie Dweh	Special Assistant to the Minister
	Rodney Wilson	Procurement Director
	Henry Freeman	Human Resource Director
Governance Commission	Amos Sawyer	Chairman
	E. Othello Gongor	Commissioner
	Catherine Karmo	Acting Head of Administration
	McNeil Wilson	M & E Advisor, Program Manager MERP
Central Bank of Liberia	Charles E. Sirleaf	Deputy Governor for Operations
	Boima S. Kamara	Deputy Governor for Economic Policy
	James Wilfred	Payment Systems Unit
	Michael Ogun	Deputy Manager, Bank Supervision
Civil Service Agency	George Werner	Director General
	Othello Weh	Deputy Director General, Administration
	Puchu Leona Bernard	Deputy Director General, HRM
Liberia Institute for Public Administration (LIPA)	Richard Panton	Deputy Director General
	Harris F Tarnue	Deputy Director General
	P. EmMyerson Harris	Deputy Director General
National Investment Commission	Michael Wotorson	Chairman
	Melvin Sheriff	Director of Concessions & PPP
	Grisper Garteh	Director of Finance & Administration
National Bureau of Concession	Ciata Bishop	Director General
	Dickson Yarsiah	Deputy Director General
	Drayton Hinneh	Advisor
Environmental	Nathaniel Blama	Chief Technical Advisor

INSTITUTION	PERSON	TITLE
Protection Agency	Elijah Whapoe	Director for Administration, Chair Change Management Committee
Forestry Development Authority	Harrison Karnwea	Managing Director
	Simulu Kamara	Focal Person (GEMS/MCC)
	Debbie Moulton	Acting HR Manager
	Lawrence Yohn	IT Specialist
	Whynn G. Bryant, Jr.	Assistant Procurement Officer
	Moses Biah	Audit Supervisor
	Edward Borbor	Accountant (Finance Dept)
	Isaac Kipi	Comptroller
	Ernest Massaquoi	Manager, General Services
President's Young Professional Program	Hh Zaizay	Program Director
USAID/GEMS		
USAID/Liberia	Nina Bowen	Team Leader, Democracy, Rights and Governance Office
	John Ellis	Director, Program Office
	Joseph Hirsch	Leader, Economic Growth Team (Agric)
	Roosevelt Tulay	Democracy, Rights and Governance Office
	Katherine Kuoh	Democracy, Rights and Governance Office
	Roy Johannson	Democracy, Rights and Governance Office
	Daniel Kamara	Financial Management
	Beth Gaddis	Leader, Health Team
	Sophie Kpawon	Health Team
	Jennifer Talbot	Economic Growth Office
	Shawna Hirsch	Environment, Natural Resources and Energy
GEMS/IBI	Victoria Cooper Enchia	Chief of Party
	Mary Hogan	Deputy Chief of Party
	Michael Hartwell	Advisor, Financial Management

INSTITUTION	PERSON	TITLE
	Gloria Dennis	Financial Management Specialist
	Florence Fahnbulleh-Harris	Financial Management Specialist
	Beenwell Banda	Lead Human Resource Advisor
	Thierno Kane	Training Advisor
	Ara Voker Chea	Training Specialist
	Felipe Tejeda	Senior Partner, Associates for Global Change
	Nicholas Leach	Asset/Fleet Management Advisor
	Selwon Dickson	Asset Management Specialist
	Jerome Anderson	Concessions Advisor
	John Sloyka	Payments Advisor
	Angela Jappah	Mobile Money Specialist
	Tsri Apronti	Procurement Advisor
	Michael Oraro	Concessions & PPP Advisor
	Donald Wheeler	International Development Consultants
	James Gbarbea	Mining Advisor
	Wellington Jah	Finance & Economic Analysis Specialist
	Anthony Waddell	ICT Specialist
DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS		
GIZ	Mark Mattner	Program Manager
AdfB	Mose Mabe-Koofhethile	Procurement Advisor
	Patrick Hettinger	Economist
Rebuilding Basic Health Services (RBHS)	Rose Macauley	Chief of Party
	Marion Subah	Program Director
	Judith Oki	Capacity Building Specialist
	Zaira Alfonso	Administrative Director
Liberia Teacher Training Program (LTTP)	Michael V. Blundell	Chief of Party
	Walter Philips	Senior Advisor, Policy Planning
World Bank	Winter Chinamale	Senior Procurement Specialist

INSTITUTION	PERSON	TITLE
International Monetary Fund – IMF	Kubai Khasiani	Resident Fiscal Advisor
Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA/EU)	John Casey	Team Leader
Liberia Monitoring and Evaluation Program (L-MEP)	Mark T. Bassie	HICD Specialist
PROSPER	Paul Meadows	Deputy Chief of Party
Environmental Protection Agency-EPA	Nat Blama	Deputy Director
	Elijah Whapoe	Director of Administration
Food and Enterprise Development (FED) Program	Agnes Luz	Chief of Party

ANNEX VI: SUPPLEMENTAL CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENTS

NORC SUPPLEMENTAL CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

NORC Statement of Professional Ethics

NORC's mission as a social science research center is to collect data on the attitudes and behavior of people and organizations, and to analyze and report on these data.

NORC undertakes significant scientific research - the results of which are made widely available in scholarly books and articles, university classrooms, to funding agencies (both governmental and non-governmental) and the media. As a not-for-profit research center, affiliated with the University of Chicago, NORC performs its mission according to these values:

- We value the integrity, professional standards, job satisfaction, and safety of our interviewers and staff.
- We value each respondent's right to privacy, to decide voluntarily whether to participate in our research, and to be informed about the purposes, scope, and importance of that involvement.
- We value the researcher's right to gather a complete and accurate picture of social realities through data collection from a systematically selected sample of respondents, with appropriate intensive follow-up of non-participants to insure valid findings, using the services of our carefully trained interviewing staff.
- We value our public's confidence in our management of human and financial resources so as to produce high quality work, on schedule, at an appropriate cost.

These values imply obligations. It is NORC's intent and policy to (a) protect the rights, privacy and confidence of its respondents; (b) to maintain the confidentiality of its documents; and (c) to safeguard all internal methods, processes, and procedures not generally known in the field of data collection and analysis. Any breach of the Agreement (Statement of NORC Professional Ethics) may result in severance of the relationship with NORC and/or the pursuit of legal action. The professional activities of each NORC staff member, interviewer, and visitor to secure areas of research activity are directed and regulated by the following policies:

- The only permissible role for people directly involved with NORC data collection is that of professional researcher. Therefore, the total confidentiality of individuals and organizations from which information is collected must always be assured. Information learned about individuals or establishments in the course of research, either in locating attempts, interviewing, data abstraction from secondary sources, or incidentally, must be restricted to project personnel and appropriate others, and used strictly for research purposes.

More specifically, a condition of employment and/or affiliation, for all employees, researchers and contractors requires that:

- Interviewers must interview respondents in situations which do not compromise respondents' privacy, and store survey documents where access by unauthorized people is prevented. They never interview people they know personally, except with prior research project approval. Interviewers must not discuss the respondents, their families or the organizations respondents may represent, with non-project staff or with project staff for non-project-related reasons. An exception may occur in attempts to locate respondents when strictly limited information (such as respondent name and the general purpose of the contact) may sometimes be disclosed.

- Interviewers may do nothing that would bias respondent answers. This includes making statements that would lead respondents to change their answer, implying criticism or support for respondent's attitudes or behavior, or inventing or distorting respondent answers. They may not lie to respondents or use practices or methods which abuse, coerce, or humiliate them. They must deal humanely with respondents' requests for help and assistance, but follow project guidelines about referrals to appropriate resources. They must not offer personal assistance or direct aid.
- Project office staff must treat all information linked to identifiable respondents as privileged information, unless respondents or their organization waives confidentiality for specified uses. This restriction applies to all communications from and about respondents, their relatives, and their organizations. Completed research documents that identify respondents or organizations are kept only in areas with limited access. When such documents are being handled and used, they are never left unattended and are locked away when not in immediate use. Access to survey data must be limited to appropriate personnel who have signed this statement.
- Corporate Documents such as data tapes, printouts, photocopies and any other documents with respondent names or other identifying information must be stored, used in a manner for which they were intended, and disposed of in a secure manner both in the field and in the central office. This restriction and commitment to confidentiality also applies to completed questionnaires, proposals, MIS and staff labor reports, the use, disclosure or reference to individual salary information, and any other memos or documents generally considered to be "confidential" or specifically labeled as such.

Contractors who process information with respondent identifiers, such as for data entry, must abide by these same restrictions and secure signatures to the accompanying pledge and compliance with this statement.

Sponsoring agencies are never provided with respondent names or other identifying data unless specifically authorized by respondents or incorporated in the contract. Data and other results of the research are presented only in summarized form without any names or other identifying information. Every effort will also be made to prevent deductive discovery. Where appropriate, specific waivers are obtained to protect confidentiality of respondents under existing legal regulations. In studies where a respondent's identity and activities may be of interest to law enforcement agencies and waivers from subpoena cannot be obtained, further measures may be taken to remove data from the jurisdiction of U.S. authorities.

No one given approved access to privileged information may use this information for personal gain or for any non-research purpose.

Privileged information includes confidential information concerning NORC business and personnel as well as information about individual respondents. Personnel information may not be used for any purpose not directly job-related.

NORC PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AGREEMENT

All Subcontractor personnel with access to data collected under this Subcontract must read the accompanying statement and sign this agreement as a condition of working under this Subcontract. The Subcontractor will provide signed copies of completed NORC Professional

Ethics Agreements for all Subcontractor personnel with access to data collected under this Subcontract.

I have carefully read the accompanying NORC Statement of Professional Ethics and fully understand that its obligations apply to me and are a condition of access to data collected under this Subcontract.

I will abide by NORC's standards of professional ethics as described in this statement. In addition to the possibility of legal action being pursued, I am also aware that failure to abide by the standards will result in disciplinary actions, including denial of further access to data and participation in the work of this Subcontract.

I understand that the accompanying statement and this agreement, relative to the confidentiality of NORC's respondents, its corporate documents and its internal processes/procedures, are applicable both during and after my participation in the work of this Subcontract.

PRINT NAME: WILLIE BELLEH

SIGNATURE:



DATE: MAY 7, 2014

Please keep the accompanying statements for your records and return this pledge.

NORC PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AGREEMENT

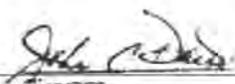
All Subcontractor personnel with access to data collected under this Subcontract must read the accompanying statement and sign this agreement as a condition of working under this Subcontract. The Subcontractor will provide signed copies of completed NORC Professional Ethics Agreements for all Subcontractor personnel with access to data collected under this Subcontract.

I have carefully read the accompanying NORC Statement of Professional Ethics and fully understand that its obligations apply to me and are a condition of access to data collected under this Subcontract.

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I understand that the accompanying statement and this agreement, relative to the confidentiality of NORC's respondents, its corporate documents and its internal processes/procedures, are applicable both during and after my participation in the work of this Subcontract.

PRINT NAME John C Dalton

SIGNATURE 

DATE 5/5/2014

Please keep the accompanying statements for your records and return this pledge.

JCD

NORC PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AGREEMENT

All Subcontractor personnel with access to data collected under this Subcontract must read the accompanying statement and sign this agreement as a condition of working under this Subcontract. The Subcontractor will provide signed copies of completed NORC Professional Ethics Agreements for all Subcontractor personnel with access to data collected under this Subcontract.

I have carefully read the accompanying NORC Statement of Professional Ethics and fully understand that its obligations apply to me and are a condition of access to data collected under this Subcontract.

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I understand that the accompanying statement and this agreement, relative to the confidentiality of NORC's respondents, its corporate documents and its internal processes/procedures, are applicable both during and after my participation in the work of this Subcontract.

PRINT NAME Jonathan Smith

SIGNATURE JMSK

DATE May 13, 2014

Please keep the accompanying statements for your records and return this pledge.

NORC PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AGREEMENT

All Subcontractor personnel with access to data collected under this Subcontract must read the accompanying statement and sign this agreement as a condition of working under this Subcontract. The Subcontractor will provide signed copies of completed NORC Professional Ethics Agreements for all Subcontractor personnel with access to data collected under this Subcontract.

I have carefully read the accompanying NORC Statement of Professional Ethics and fully understand that its obligations apply to me and are a condition of access to data collected under this Subcontract.

I will abide by NORC's standards of professional ethics as described in this statement. In addition to the possibility of legal action being pursued, I am also aware that failure to abide by the standards will result in disciplinary actions, including denial of further access to data and participation in the work of this Subcontract.

I understand that the accompanying statement and this agreement, relative to the confidentiality of NORC's respondents, its corporate documents and its internal processes/procedures, are applicable both during and after my participation in the work of this Subcontract.

PRINT NAME G. Penu SUBAH

SIGNATURE 

DATE 7 May 2014

Please keep the accompanying statements for your records and return this pledge.

U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20523