



LIBERIA MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROGRAM (L-MEP)

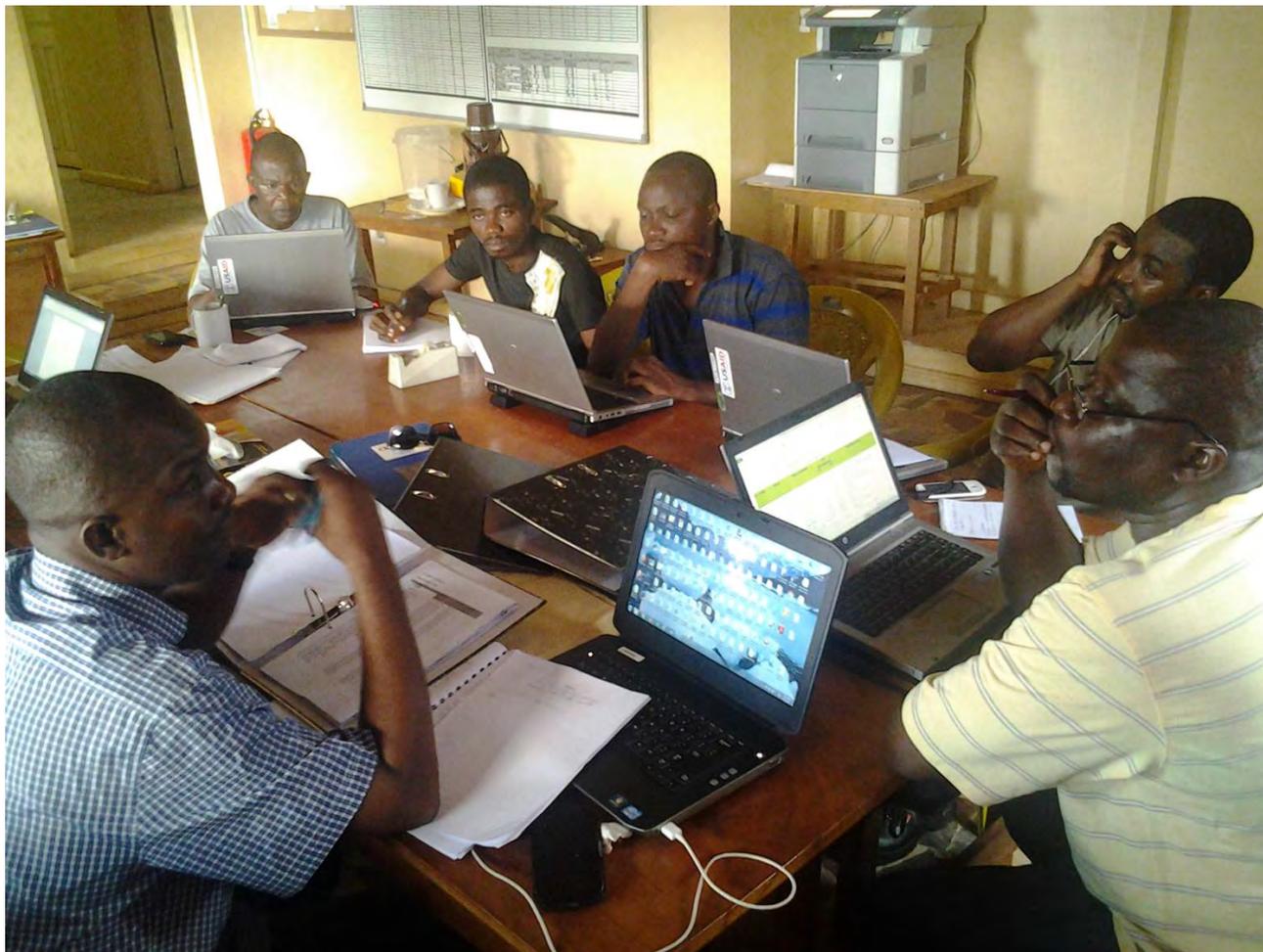
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FINAL PROGRESS REPORT AUGUST 27, 2010–NOVEMBER 27, 2015



Liberia Monitoring and Evaluation Program (L-MEP)
Final Progress Report
August 27, 2010–November 27, 2015



Data Quality Assessment on the Food and Enterprise Development (FED) Program in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADS	Automated Directives System
AEDE	Agency for Economic Development and Empowerment
AO	Assistance Objective
AOR	Agreement Officer Representative
AYP	Advancing Youth Project
BSEML	Building Sustainable Elections Management in Liberia
BTG	Beyond The Grid Program
CDCS	Country Development Cooperative Strategy
CDSC	County Development Steering Committee
CEHLS	Center for Excellence in Health and Life Sciences
CESLY	Core Education Skills for Liberian Youth
CLA	Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer Representative
CSH	Collaborative Support for Health
CSML	Civil Society and Media Leadership
CSS	Customer Satisfaction Survey
DAI	Development Alternatives Incorporated
DARU	Data Analysis, Reporting, and Use
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DO	Development Objective
DOC	Development Outreach and Communications Specialist
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
DRG	Democracy, Rights and Governance
EHELD	Enhancing Higher Education for Liberia’s Development
EQUAL	Education Quality and Access in Liberia
ERRP	Ebola Recovery and Resilience Program
ES3R	Engineering Services for Roads, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction
FED	Food and Enterprise Development
FFP	Food for Peace
FtF	Feed the Future
GEMS	Governance and Economic Management Support Program
GIS	Geographic Information System
GOAL PLUS	Girls’ Opportunities to Access Learning PLUS
GoL	Government of Liberia
HICD	Human and Institutional Capacity Development
IBBSS	Integrated Bio-Behavioral Surveillance Survey
IBEX	Investing for Business Expansion
IFES	International Foundation for Elections Systems
IP	Implementing Partner
IR	Intermediate Result

I-WASH	Improved -Water Sanitation and Hygiene
KMS	Knowledge Management Specialist
LAUNCH	Liberia Agricultural, Upgrading, Nutrition and Child Health Program
LCRP	Land Conflict Resolution Project
LDA	Liberia Development Alliance
LEA	Liberia Evaluation Association
LEPT	Liberia: Elections and Political Transition
LESSP	Liberia Energy Sector Support Program
LIPA	Liberian Institute of Public Administration
L-MEP	Liberia Monitoring and Evaluation Program
LMWP	Liberia Municipal Water Project
LPAC	Liberia Legal Professional Development and Anti-Corruption Program
LPIS	Liberia Land Policy and Institutional Support Project
LRA	Liberia Revenue Authority
LRCFP	Land Rights and Community Forestry Program
LSA	Liberia Strategic Analysis
LTPC	Liberia Trade Policy and Customs Project
LTPP	Liberia Teacher Training Program
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MACs	Ministries, Agencies, and Commissions
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
ME&L	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
MfR	Managing for Results
OM	Operations Manager
PACS	Partnership for Advancing Community-Based Services
PIDS	Performance Indicators Database System
PIRS	Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PPR	Performance and Plan Report
PROSPER	Peoples, Rules, and Organizations Supporting the Protection of Ecosystem Resources Program
RBHS	Rebuilding Basic Health Services
RFC	Regional Field Coordinator
RTTI	Rural Teacher Training Institute
SBA	Subah-Belleh Associates
SHOPS II	Smallholders Oil Palm Support Program II
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SMI	Sustainable Market Place Initiative
SOW	Statement of Work
STTA	Short-term Technical Assistance
TMG/HQ	The Mitchell Group, Inc./Headquarters
TOT	Training of Trainers

VSAT Very Small Aperture Terminal
WMS Web Mapping System

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mitchell Group, Inc. (TMG) is pleased to submit to USAID/Liberia our Final Progress and Financial Report for the Liberia Monitoring and Evaluation Program (L-MEP), covering the period from August 27, 2010–November 27, 2015.

On August 27, 2010, TMG entered into a five-year contractual agreement with USAID/Liberia (Contract #669-C-10-00-00181-00) for L-MEP to provide comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) support services to the USAID/Liberia Sector Teams, their Implementing Partners (IPs), and the Government of Liberia (GoL) in compliance with the Automated Directives System (ADS) and other Agency guidance on performance management. On April 19, 2012, the L-MEP contract was formally modified to include the monitoring and evaluation of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Threshold Program consisting of three projects: the Girls' Opportunity to Access Learning (GOAL) Project (November 2010 to September 2013); the Land Policy and Institutional Support (LPIS) Project (September 2010 to March 2013); and the Liberia Trade Policy and Customs (LTPC) Project (June 2011 to August, 2013).

Finally, the L-MEP contract was amended through a no-cost extension from August 28, 2015–November 27, 2015 for L-MEP to provide monitoring support to the Economic Growth Food for Peace Office by monitoring its post-Ebola response initiatives in eight counties. The extension also covered Performance Indicators Database System/Web Mapping System (PIDS/WMS) maintenance, and preparations for annual reporting activities such as the strategic portfolio review and Performance and Plan Report (PPR).

L-MEP has completed 63 months of project implementation with all activities outlined in the L-MEP contract implemented and performance management systems firmly in place, as follows:

- 1) All full-time field technical and administrative staff positions were filled and functional throughout the life of the project. The plan to transition L-MEP to a full Liberian management team was finalized ahead of schedule and successfully implemented.
- 2) Comprehensive M&E (MfR), Environmental Compliance, Evaluation Planning and Management, and Data Quality Assessment (DQA) training programs were conducted across the country, specifically in Montserrado, Bong, Nimba, Lofa and Grand Bassa counties.
- 3) An Integrated Performance Indicator Database System (PIDS) and Web Mapping System (WMS) was developed and fully integrated into the Mission-wide M&E System. L-MEP produced maps for USAID/Liberia, other USG agencies, and IPs through its stand-alone Geographic Information System (GIS).
- 4) Fifty Four (54) DQAs were conducted for indicators across the four Development Objective (DO) teams.
- 5) Twenty One (21) major assessments/evaluations were conducted for approximately 15 USAID and MCC projects/programs.
- 6) Partnerships to implement L-MEP were established with the GoL and six Liberian private sector development organizations.

During implementation, L-MEP established networks with USAID/Liberia IPs and Government of Liberia (GoL) Institutions and collaborated with local partners to implement specific activities, ranging from holding gender-responsive M&E training to conducting evaluations and special studies for USAID/Liberia. In an effort to enhance coordination and communication with USAID/Liberia IPs, L-MEP conducted regular semiannual Chiefs of Party (COP) meetings with IPs to discuss relevant performance management issues and topics that were germane to building stronger and more effective M&E systems.

Despite a few challenges during implementation, overall, L-MEP was successful because the team was able to implement the key objectives for which the program was designed. Furthermore, although the program design did not include an activity to evaluate L-MEP itself, a customer satisfaction survey which targeted the USAID/Liberia Program Office, Agreement Officer Representatives (AORs), Contracting Officer Representatives (CORs), IPs, COPs, and M&E Specialists revealed that L-MEP was successful, and that the program met their technical needs.

To strengthen the M&E system that was developed under L-MEP, it is recommended, however, that the LSA Project build upon the achievements of L-MEP, and increase capacity development activities for USAID/Liberia, its IPs, local partners, and relevant GoL institutions. Collaboration with USAID/Liberia's AORs and CORs should be enhanced to improve coordination between LSA and USAID/Liberia. Technical team meetings that were intended to be held between USAID/Liberia's Technical/Sector Teams and L-MEP were never held due to the busy schedule of the Technical Teams. USAID/Liberia should consider holding similar meetings under the LSA.

Data entry into PIDS is ongoing at an appropriate pace. AORs and CORs, however, should continue to make it mandatory for IPs to enter their data on time. AORs and CORs should have a better understanding of their role in data verification. Failure to enter project data on time and a lack of high-quality data will render PIDS useless. Finally, USAID/Liberia should continue to build local capacity in M&E to ensure that USAID/Liberia's intervention in this sector is sustained.

II. INTRODUCTION

On August 27, 2010, USAID/Liberia awarded a five-year contract to The Mitchell Group, Inc. (TMG) to design and implement comprehensive performance measurement, planning, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and reporting systems to measure USAID/Liberia's performance in achieving its Assistance Objectives (AOs) and Intermediate Results (IRs) as laid out in the Country Development Cooperation Strategy and other planning and reporting documents. TMG was required to build a performance management system that would include existing programs and new activities that were under design.

The performance measurement and reporting system would enable USAID/Liberia to fulfill its performance monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and dissemination requirements as mandated in the Automated Directives System (ADS) and other Agency guidance.

L-MEP was designed specifically to cover six broader components as follows:

Component One: Performance Monitoring and Results Reporting

Under Component One, L-MEP was required to review the Mission's existing performance indicators and Performance Management Plan (PMP) and construct a monitoring methodology and evaluation system. As required by the Mission, the new system would coordinate data gathering, analysis, and dissemination by USAID/Liberia programs and IPs to prevent duplication and promote synergy.

Additionally, L-MEP was required to conduct data quality assessments (DQAs) to verify the reliability, accuracy, timeliness, precision, and integrity of all performance indicator data per ADS 203 requirements and standards. In an effort to synchronize the data collection, analysis, and reporting process across the Mission and its IPs, L-MEP was mandated to develop and establish a Mission-wide Performance Indicator Database System (PIDS) "for providing multiple types of program information, for documenting progress and impact of all activities supported and managed by USAID/Liberia." The database would be used to "conduct performance-driven reviews to assess whether partners/teams are failing to meet, meeting, or exceeding their targets in order to take corrective actions." L-MEP was also requested to develop, manage, and maintain a mapping database/tool, which would be compatible with any existing national database system. Specifically, it was required that the database align with the GoL's spatial data infrastructure (also supported by USAID). The mapping program would provide a spatial analysis and graphical representation of where all USAID/Liberia programs were being implemented across the country.

Under this component, L-MEP would contribute data for the Semi-annual Portfolio Reviews and help Mission Management, Agreement Officer Representatives (AORs), and Contracting Officer Representatives (CORs) flag implementation issues and instances where targets were not being met on schedule. Finally, under Component One, L-MEP was required to collate information from the PIDS for the USAID/Liberia Development Outreach and Communications Specialist to facilitate the preparation of program results information. L-MEP, however, was not responsible for "drafting narratives for press releases, stories, brochures, or fact sheets."

Component Two: Performance Management Plan (PMP) Development and Update

Under Component Two of the L-MEP contract, L-MEP was required to develop a framework to assist USAID/Liberia and implementing partners to adhere to ADS guidelines regarding

performance monitoring. These activities include regular review and revision of the Mission's PMP; developing and regularly updating a Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS) for each indicator; and monitoring compliance with ADS 203–Assessing and Learning. The framework to be developed by L-MEP would allow the alignment of the IPs' M&E plans with the Mission-wide PMP. Under this component, L-MEP would provide annual advice to technical teams and IPs on Assistance Objectives and Results Frameworks. This process would align with the semi-annual portfolio review process to reflect changes in strategy, targets, and/or activities considering the baselines and targets for AOs, IRs, the Performance and Plan Report, and IP activities. It was critical that L-MEP assist teams and partners to establish realistic, meaningful, and achievable targets for activities, objectives, and results.

Component Three: Field Monitoring and Data Collection

The third component of the L-MEP contract required that L-MEP conduct field visits to all USAID/Liberia-funded project sites on a regular basis to monitor data collection, progress, and impact of USAID/Liberia-supported activities. These activities would be implemented in collaboration with AORs/CORs and their IPs. Under this component, L-MEP was required to determine the feasibility and cost/benefit of stationing its own staff up-country to ensure that L-MEP had easy and timely access to project locations. This component was also intended to allow L-MEP staff to spend significant time at activity sites to adequately monitor USAID/Liberia programs across Liberia.

Component Four: Capacity Building

Under Component Four, L-MEP would build and enhance the capacity of USAID/Liberia staff and IP staff with respect to USAID/Liberia's performance management requirements. Specifically, L-MEP was required to provide two or more M&E capacity building workshops on an annual basis for USAID/Liberia and IPs. The training would focus on M&E principles and practices, ensuring the use of common definitions, comparable methods of data collection, and compatible reporting formats. L-MEP was also required to make all efforts to build the capacity of local Liberian firms to be able to conduct DQAs.

L-MEP was also expected to train USAID/Liberia staff to enter data into the PIDS/WMS database and to use mapping tools for monitoring, assessing, and reporting.

Component Five: Evaluation Assistance

Under Component Five, L-MEP was required to formalize the process for reviewing and improving M&E systems, both internal and those of IPs, to meet the needs of USAID/Liberia and comply with ADS Guidance (ADS 200 series, especially ADS 203–Assessing and Learning). Additionally, L-MEP was required to assist the Mission in developing annual evaluation plans and schedules, draft and review scopes of work for evaluations as requested, identify mechanisms and/or teams to conduct evaluations, and second L-MEP staff to participate in evaluations. L-MEP was also required to recommend methods to ensure the effective dissemination and use of evaluation findings.

Component Six: Implementation Partnerships with Liberians and/or Local Organizations

Finally, under Component Six, L-MEP was expected to build implementation partnerships with Liberians and Liberian organizations as a way of building capacity while implementing the program. This component was intended to build local capacity in the implementation of L-MEP activities.

Over the five years of project implementation, L-MEP developed a participatory and learning-based approach to implementing the L-MEP contract. While L-MEP was guided by the contract, it collaborated with USAID/Liberia, its IPs, local organizations, and GoL Institutions to implement every component of the contract. To facilitate this process, L-MEP held regular meetings with all stakeholders to develop practical approaches to implementing project activities. L-MEP engaged its clients during training workshops, at COP meetings, and during TMG/HQ annual monitoring visits. Based on feedback from stakeholders, L-MEP developed its annual workplans aligned with the contract components. This approach allowed the smooth implementation of L-MEP ensuring that every key element of the contract was implemented as required. Annual workplans and budgets were developed based on lessons learned and best practices identified in the previous year. L-MEP's achievements over the past five years are outlined in the following sections per L-MEP's key components.

III. L-MEP RESULTS FRAMEWORK

To ensure an effective reporting framework, L-MEP developed its Results Framework, which is centered on various objectives derived from the six key program components defined by USAID/Liberia in L-MEP's contract. They include (1) Performance Monitoring and Results Reporting; (2) Performance Management Plan Development and Update; (3) Performance Management Field Support (which was originally called Field Monitoring); (4) Capacity Building; (5) Evaluation Assistance; and (6) Established and Strengthened Professional Implementation Partnerships with Liberians and/or local organizations. A seventh component, (7) Monitoring and Evaluation of the MCC Threshold Programs, was created in 2012 after TMG entered into an agreement with USAID/Liberia to provide M&E support to the MCC Threshold . L-MEP successfully completed its support to the MCC Threshold Programs in 2014.

In 2013, USAID/Liberia requested that L-MEP provide capacity building support to the Liberia Development Alliance (LDA), currently the M&E Unit of the Division of Development Planning at the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. This created a special section within the L-MEP Results Framework.

Finally, L-MEP received a no-cost extension (August 28–November 27, 2015) to conduct field monitoring on USAID's Economic Growth Food for Peace activities in eight counties across Liberia.

The Results Framework and actions required to achieve the stated results are outlined below:

Component One: Performance Monitoring and Results Reporting

▪ Result 1: Mission Overall M&E System Supported

Action 1.1: Provide Recommendations and Technical Support for Data Gathering, Analysis, Utilization, and Dissemination of All USAID/Liberia-Supported Activities

Action 1.2: Conduct DQAs on Current Project Portfolio and Make Recommendations to Improve Data Collection and Quality

Action 1.3: Manage and Maintain Data Entry into PIDS

Action 1.4: Help IPs Enter Data into PIDS

Action 1.5: Collate IP Data for the USAID/Liberia DOCS

Action 1.6: Monitor and Track Annual Guidance in Administration Priorities and Initiatives Coming from USAID's Central Bureaus, State Department Offices and Other USG Entities to Advise DO Teams

▪ **Result 2: Information Management Supported**

Action 2.1: The L-MEP Website Regularly Updated

Action 2.2: Continue to Enhance the PIDS

Action 2.3: Continue to Maintain GIS-based Web-Mapping System (GIS/WMS)

Component Two: Performance Management Plan and M&E Plan Development and Update

▪ **Result 3: Mission PMP and IPs M&E Plans Updated and Coordinated**

Action 3.1: Review/Update IP M&E Plans and Make Recommendations

Action 3.2: Continue to Assist Mission to Finalize New PMP for CDCS

Action 3.3: Assist the Mission Technical Teams to Finalize Team PMPs and New IPs to Develop M&E Plans

Component Three: Performance Management Field Support

▪ **Result 4: Performance Management Field Support Provided**

Action 4.1: Verify Selected Food for Peace Activities and Conduct Post Distribution Monitoring for Cash Transfer under the Ebola Recovery and Resilience Program (ERRP)

Component Four: Capacity Building

▪ **Result 5: Capacity of the L-MEP, USAID, IP Staff and Local Partners to Undertake M&E Improved**

Action 5.1: Provide on an Annual Basis Two or More M&E Capacity Building Workshops for Staff of USAID/Liberia and IP staff to Improve Performance Management

Action 5.2: Train USAID/Liberia and IP Staff on How to Enter Data into the PIDS, Manage and Maintain the PIDS for Monitoring, Assessing, and Reporting.

Action 5.3: Continue to Build the Capacity of L-MEP Staff in Performance Management and Administrative Functions

Component Five: Evaluation Assistance

▪ **Result 6: Evaluations Supported (subject to the availability of funds)**

Action 6.1: Support Mission in Developing Evaluation Schedules and SOW

Action 6.2: Support Mission teams and IPs to Conduct Special Studies

Action 6.3: Collaborate with USAID/Liberia CLA and DOC to Develop and Track Actionable Recommendations and Findings from Evaluations and Special Studies

Action 6.4: Collaborate with USAID/Liberia CLA and DOC to Plan Appropriate Programs to Disseminate Evaluations/Special Studies Findings through Workshops, Seminars, Briefing Papers, USAID/Liberia and L-MEP's Websites and the PIDS

Action 6.5: Hold Event to Celebrate 2015 Year of Evaluation

Action 6.6: Identify New Ways to Increase the Participation of Local Partners in Evaluation Process

Action 6.7: Complete L-MEP Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS)

Component Six: Implementation Partnerships with Liberians and/or Local Organizations

▪ Result 7: Implementation Partnerships with Liberians and/or Local Organizations Established

Action 7.1: Initiate Actions to Expand Pool of Local Partners

Action 7.2: Continue to Train and Mentor Local Partners' Staff to Strengthen their Internal M&E Systems and Develop their Capacity to Implement Selected L-MEP Activities. All Partners will Participate in Training Planned for 2015 as Outlined in Result 5.

▪ Result 8: The M&E Unit of the Department of Budget and Development Planning M&E Activities Supported.

Action 8.1: Deliver M&E Training of Trainers (TOT) Workshop

Action 8.2: Deliver Refresher Managing for Result/Results-based M&E Training

Action 8.3: Provide L-MEP Staff to Support LDA Follow-on Trainings

▪ Result 9: L-MEP Efficiently Managed

Action 9.1: L-MEP Maintains Team Approach to Project Management

Action 9.2: Prepare Required Reports

▪ Result 10: Submit L-MEP Demobilization Plan

Action 10.1: Prepare and Submit Demobilization/Close-out Plan

IV. ACHIEVEMENT OF STRATEGIC RESULTS

L-MEP's overall success and achievements can be attributed to its management and implementation strategy and guiding principles outlined below. The following are the key components and guiding principles that led to the successful implementation of L-MEP.

Knowledge Management

Knowledge Management (KM) became a critical component of L-MEP during the five years of program implementation. The Performance Indicators Database (PIDS) was integrated with the Web Mapping System (WMS) in 2012. Data certified by AORs and CORs in the PIDS was automatically uploaded into the WMS to allow USAID/Liberia and IPs to spatially view project activities as well as perform queries and data analysis for decision making. The process of uploading data to the WMS begins with IPs entering their data into PIDS. Once the data have been entered by the IPs and subsequently certified by the AORs and CORs, the data are uploaded to the WMS. The quality control measure adopted here was intended to ensure that data uploaded to the WMS met the approval of the IPs, AORs, and CORs.

Over the life of the project, L-MEP developed new enhancements to the PIDS and WMS, making them more flexible and adaptable to meet the specific needs of USAID/Liberia and IPs. New features and functionalities for data entry and for generating reports were developed and tested by IPs. For example, In addition to viewing multiple projects on a single screen, PIDS now includes a functionality that allows entry of multiple data on a single screen. Initially, data were entered into PIDS one indicator at a time on a single screen, which made the data entry process cumbersome. However, since the enhancement was made, data entry can be done for as many indicators as possible on a single screen. The same applies to the data certification process. Initially, AORs and CORs were able to certify one indicator at a time on a single screen. Since the enhancement was made, AORs and CORs are able to certify not only several indicators on a single screen, but they can also certify data for multiple IPs on a single screen at the same time.

Multiple options were also developed for performance achievement analysis. However, the request in Year Four to develop multiple disaggregations was not implemented because L-MEP was not authorized to proceed with enhancements to the PIDS in Year Four.

For a large, complex program like L-MEP, KM serves as the unifying and cross-cutting component. Given the many specialty units within L-MEP—both thematic and technological as they align with USAID's Development Objectives (DOs)—the purpose of KM was to ensure that vigorous and continuing communication occurred across the operational areas of the M&E sectors and the data provided in the PIDS/WMS.

Guiding Principles

The overall activities of L-MEP were guided by two operating principles:

1) Be Responsive to the Diverse Needs of USAID/Liberia DO Teams and Implementing Partners

The technical assistance, training, and support required by the four Mission Teams and other USG agencies are diverse. L-MEP's activities were designed to be responsive to these diverse needs. During the life of the project, L-MEP worked closely with USAID/Liberia and IPs to identify their needs and jointly develop solutions and strategies to respond to those needs. The dynamic nature of project activities cannot be overstated as this is the only way to ensure that the

diverse requirements of the Mission can be adequately addressed. All of L-MEP's workplans reflected a process-oriented approach to achieving results that focused on improved communications/coordination, and the establishment of structures that enabled a flexible support to program activities.

2) Establish and Build Local Liberian Capacity to Provide Performance Monitoring, Evaluation, and Management Services

An essential operating principle of L-MEP, established at the inception of the project and continued throughout its duration, was to build the capacity of a cadre of Liberian experts to help administer the work of the project during and after the end of the L-MEP. As a result, L-MEP carefully selected and mentored a team of experts in performance management and evaluative research. L-MEP also worked closely with its local partners to deliver quality performance management support, evaluation, and related training. All of L-MEP's activities were intended to support the professional growth and empowerment of the Liberian team and Liberian partners.

The capacity building workshops conducted over the years provided the L-MEP monitoring and evaluation specialists with key skills in performance management. External consultants provided step-down Managing for Results (MfR) and other training programs to key stakeholders, including USAID/Liberia, the GoL, and IPs. L-MEP also expanded its team of local professionals by recruiting and training two interns. The interns underwent intensive hands-on training to provide them the skills to implement M&E activities consistent with L-MEP's current M&E work load. L-MEP staff also participated in regional and international training workshops to improve their skills in specific areas.

L-MEP introduced a suite of M&E courses in Year Five to institutionalize training capacity among the local partners and GoL counterparts. These trainings emphasized and focused on training of trainers to help participants transfer knowledge and skills from L-MEP to a broader group of individuals within their own organizations.

Partnerships with Liberian Institutions

Over the life of the project, L-MEP made concerted efforts to develop a partnership with the Liberian Institute of Public Administration (LIPA), to assist it in building its capacity to provide quality M&E training to Liberians, Liberian organizations, and GoL Institutions. Some LIPA staff attended L-MEP's MfR trainings. L-MEP also worked closely with the GoL M&E Unit to build its capacity to effectively manage the GoL's performance management system. L-MEP's support to the M&E Unit included development of training materials and training facilitation. L-MEP conducted an M&E TOT workshop and a refresher MfR Training for the M&E Unit in Year Five.

Collaboration with Implementing Partners

L-MEP initiated a semi-annual USAID/Liberia Implementing Partners Chiefs of Party meeting that was popular among the IPs over the life of the contract. The seventh and eighth COPs meetings/forums were held in Year Four. The COPs meetings helped increase collaboration and communication among IPs and L-MEP. A final COPs meeting was held in Year Five to discuss pertinent issues related to performance management and how L-MEP's local partners could continue to provide ongoing support to IPs after the end of the L-MEP. Additionally, the final meeting provided an opportunity for the Mission's Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA)

Advisor to disseminate other Mission-wide information on the CLA Agenda.

Customer Satisfaction

In an effort to gather more feedback on L-MEP’s performance over the last four years of project implementation, L-MEP conducted a Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) in Year Five. The survey findings revealed that L-MEP’s stakeholders were satisfied with the quality and effectiveness of the delivery of L-MEP’s services. All of the respondents (100%) “strongly agree or agree” that L-MEP responds to calls for assistance in a timely manner and follows up on recommendations.

Regarding the quality of L-MEP services, 96 percent of the respondents rated the Performance Indicator Database System/Web Mapping System (PIDS/WMS) “highly satisfactory/satisfactory.” Additionally, 90 percent of the respondents rated L-MEP trainings “highly satisfactory/satisfactory;” 87 percent rated L-MEP Data Quality Assessments (DQA) “highly satisfactory/satisfactory;” and 85 percent rated L-MEP Performance Management Plan (PMP)/M&E Plan Development Assistance “highly satisfactory/satisfactory.”

Over the life of the project, L-MEP activities were structured into “Results” and “Actions.” The “Results” captured the key activities under each component at the outcome level. At the next lower level, “Actions” were designed to identify specific activities at the output level that would lead to the outcomes. The ultimate goal of L-MEP was to develop a performance management system that would measure USAID/Liberia’s progress toward its development objectives.

During the five years of implementation, L-MEP was able to achieve its goals and objectives. Using a learning-based approach, L-MEP constantly reviewed its actions and results to ensure that they aligned with the Mission’s performance management development needs and trends. The results achieved over the duration of the project are categorized under each key component below.

Component One: Performance Monitoring and Results Reporting

Under Component One, L-MEP was required to assess USAID/Liberia’s performance management system, and develop a system that would enable the Mission to assess its performance against its development objectives. Key elements of this goal included the development of a performance database system that would allow the collection, storage, and analysis of data for decision making. Through this process, implementing partners would upload their data based on their reporting frequencies while Mission teams would review and perform different types of analysis to determine whether IPs were achieving, exceeding, or not meeting their targets. To achieve this goal, L-MEP developed a user-friendly Performance Indicators Database System (PIDS). Initially, IPs had difficulty entering data into PIDS while concurrently reporting data in their quarterly reports. This situation affected the timely entry of data into PIDS.

Over the life of the project, L-MEP worked with 46 projects/activities across all USAID/Liberia sectors to input project information, including results frameworks, indicators, baselines, targets, and actual achievement data. L-MEP also used the PIDS to upload score sheets for indicators assessed during DQAs and to support the Mission in generating IP performance data reports for use during portfolio reviews and the PPR. Since the development of the PIDS, several enhancements were made to make the system more useful to the Mission and its IPs. The PIDS created an opportunity for IPs, their DO teams, AORs, and CORs to review and discuss

performance issues via a single platform. Since 2011, PIDS utilization has increased and has supported semi-annual and annual portfolio review activities as well as PPR preparation.

The PIDS is flexible, easy to use, and provides a database for data storage, analysis, and reporting. The system can be enhanced to produce complex analysis based on USAID/Liberia’s needs. The PIDS was developed to align with USAID’s reporting system. The PIDS also contains an integrated WMS that presents spatial analysis of data generated from PIDS. Once the data in PIDS are certified by the respective AORs and CORs, the data are uploaded to the WMS.

In Year Five, L-MEP worked with USAID/Liberia’s AORs, CORs, and IPs to create accounts for new users in PIDS and provide training on how to review and certify data. AORs and CORs were specifically trained on how to certify their project data in PIDS. L-MEP also provided support to USAID/Liberia during its annual portfolio review and PPR process by reviewing sector team PPR indicators in PIDS. The review of the indicators was intended to confirm the DQA dates, codes, and titles of indicators. In some cases, the indicator codes used by IPs were different from the standard indicator codes and titles. L-MEP reviewed the list of indicators for the Democracy, Rights, and Governance; Health; Education; and Economic Growth sectors. L-MEP compiled the list of indicators with responses to the specific comments and submitted it to USAID/Liberia.

As noted above, L-MEP fully integrated the WMS with the PIDS. The WMS is a web-based interactive system that shows a spatial location of USAID program and project activities across Liberia. It is also a standalone GIS system that provides opportunities to track and map USAID/Liberia projects for easy visualization of where the projects are and what is occurring at each site. L-MEP uploaded information on the geographic locations of the various USAID/Liberia projects in PIDS. These projects cut across the four USAID/Liberia sectors at all levels: county, district, and site/community. This has made it possible for USAID/Liberia and IPs to view the specific site locations of the various projects across the entire country where USAID/Liberia is working. As a result of the WMS, USAID/Liberia can now visualize activity locations across the country and also know the actual activities being implemented in the counties. The WMS further helps IPs identify projects that are co-located in the same county and districts.

Using the standalone GIS system, L-MEP generated different types of maps for USAID/Liberia, IPs, and other USG programs throughout the life of the project. The various types of maps produced were used for different reasons including activity identification and visualization; activity implementation planning; Ebola response planning; and election observation. L-MEP produced a total of 513 maps over the life of the project. In 2015, L-MEP produced 131 maps, which constitutes 50 percent of the total maps produced in Year Four. The table below illustrates the breakdown of maps produced per year and by category over the life of the project. The highest number of maps was produced in 2014 subsequent to the outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease in Liberia.

Table One: L-MEP Maps Produced from 2011-2015

Category of Map Produced per year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Activity Identification and Visualization Map	12	36	12	21	98	179

Category of Map Produced per year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Activity Implementation Planning Map	9	52	0	21	22	104
Ebola Response Planning Map	0	0	0	104	8	112
Elections Observation Planning Map	0	0	0	114	3	117
Total	21	88	12	260	131	512

Under Component One, L-MEP completed DQAs on all indicators reported to USAID/Liberia by 54 projects across the four USAID/Liberia Sectors (Democracy, Rights, and Governance; Economic Growth; Health; and Education) during the life of the project. Fourteen of these DQAs were conducted in FY 2015. During the DQAs, L-MEP applied a participatory method that involved each project’s AORs/CORs and M&E unit. Each project’s data management and reporting system and the quality of data reported to USAID through these systems were assessed. Data quality was assessed against the five data quality standards. At the end of each DQA, a presentation was made to the project AOR/COR and IP and a full report was completed and submitted to USAID/Liberia through the project’s AOR/COR. Once the DQA report was approved by the AOR/COR, the score sheet for each indicator was uploaded to the PIDS. Some of the DQA reports were not approved in a timely manner, which, in turn, affected the timely uploading of the DQA score sheets to PIDS.



L-MEP Education M&E Specialist/Advancing Youth Project (AYP) COP, Ms Denise Clarke, and AOR, Ms. Mardea Nyumah during AYP DQA in Grand Bassa County

The L-MEP DQA approach improved the data management and reporting systems of the various projects and increased the knowledge of project staff on their indicators, and the approaches or techniques required to ensure that data collected and reported to USAID/Liberia meet quality standards. For example, before the first L-MEP DQA exercise began in 2011, project staff were gathering data but did not know the list of project indicators or the definitions of the indicators for which they were collecting data. Moreover, most of the projects did not have clearly defined data collection instruments, and

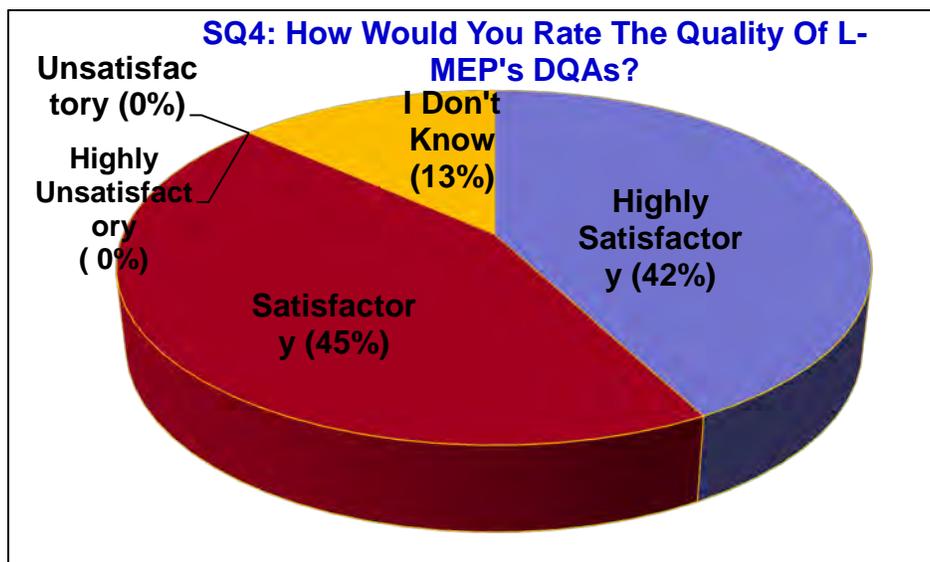
some did not have qualified staff to guide the data collection processes. Additionally, some IPs did not have M&E Plans or PMPs (at that time). As a result of the L-MEP DQA findings and recommendations, all of the projects began to identify staff with M&E responsibilities, disseminate indicator definitions to all project staff, and adapt a more holistic approach to developing data collection instruments. IPs also improved their data collection, storage, and

analysis processes as a result of the DQAs.

Table Two: Breakdown of DQAs Conducted by L-MEP per Year and per Sector

Sector	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Democracy, Rights & Governance	5	3	0	3	2	13
Economic Growth	3	4	2	3	6	18
Health	1	7	1	2	1	12
Education	3	2	0	1	5	11
Total	12	16	3	9	14	54

In an effort to gauge the impact of L-MEP’s interventions on project activities, L-MEP conducted a Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) in 2015. The L-MEP CSS revealed that 87 percent of the respondents were “highly satisfied/satisfied” with the quality of DQAs conducted by L-MEP. The chart below shows the distribution of responses provided by the respondents.



Component Two: Performance Management Plan Development and Update

Under Component Two, L-MEP was required to help USAID/Liberia and IPs comply with the USAID ADS guidelines on performance monitoring by regularly reviewing and revising PMPs. Throughout the life of the project, L-MEP assisted the IPs in developing and or revising 79 PMPs/M&E Plans across all four USAID DO Teams. Specifically, L-MEP guided the IPs in the development and updating of their Results Statements and Frameworks; defining and refining indicators; and developing PIRS for each indicator in compliance with ADS 203. L-MEP also guided the IPs in gathering baseline data and setting annual targets for their indicators.

In 2011, during the implementation of the first sets of DQAs, it was observed that not all IPs had M&E Plans/PMPs. Some IPs reported data based on indicators that were assigned them by USAID/Liberia. Additionally, several IPs were not aware of the other components of an M&E plan, including the PIRS, targets, and baseline information. As a result of the gap, L-MEP

developed an M&E Plan/PMP Guide for IPs, which was produced in two formats. A detailed version was developed primarily for the IP M&E Specialists so that they could use it to guide them in developing the M&E Plans/PMPs. The second format, an abridged version, was intended for COPs to use them to understand the M&E Plan/PMP development process. L-MEP realized that it was important for COPs to be involved in the M&E Plan/PMP development process.

As a result of the assistance provided by L-MEP in developing M&E Plans/PMPs, the IP M&E Plan/PMP development process became highly participatory. L-MEP ensured that all involved understood what was expected of them during project implementation. For example, the support in developing the PIRS helped the IPs understand how to provide detailed operational definitions for all project indicators, which supported the data collection process by providing clarity on the type of information required for a particular indicator. Table Three, below, shows the number of PMP/M&E plans developed/updated with L-MEP technical assistance from 2011 to 2015. In 2015, L-MEP reviewed and developed the highest number of M&E Plans/PMPs for new activities awarded in 2015 including the Collaborative Support for Health Program (CSH); Partnership for Advancing Community Based-Services (PACS); Liberia Elections and Political Transition Program (LEPT); Liberia Legal Professional Development and Anti-Corruption Program (LPAC); and Smallholders Oil Palm Support Program (SHOPS II). L-MEP provided support to IPs of these programs in developing their M&E Plans/PMPs. First of all, L-MEP held a meeting with each IP to explain the M&E Plan/PMP development process. L-MEP then provided tips to the IPs on how to select their targets, set their baselines, and complete their PIRS.

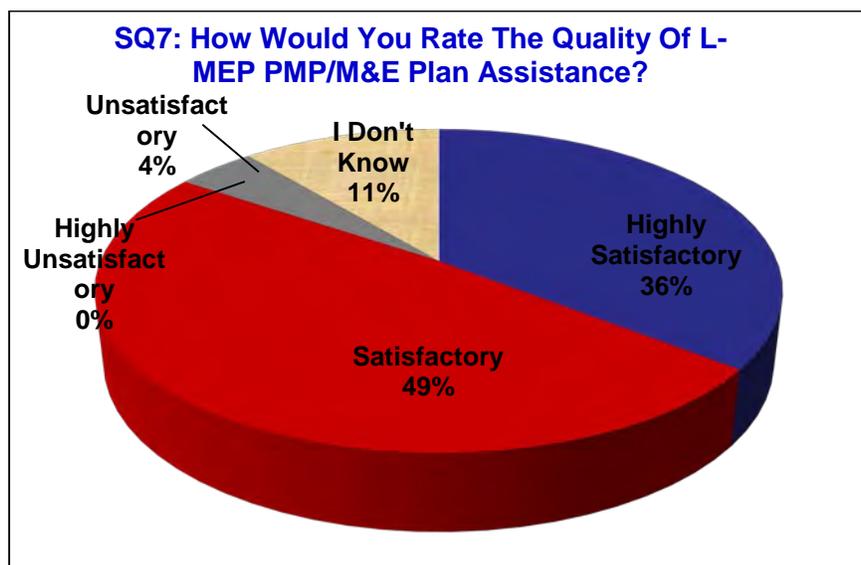
In 2015, L-MEP also reviewed the M&E Plans of projects for which DQAs were conducted. During the desk review for the DQAs, L-MEP reviewed the M&E Plans to determine whether the IPs' results frameworks clearly defined their project design and whether the indicators were necessary and sufficient to measure the results. L-MEP also reviewed the M&E Plans to determine whether the indicators were properly defined and whether the targets were realistic. Following each review, L-MEP provided verbal and written recommendations to the IPs on how to update their M&E Plans. L-MEP also followed up with the IPs to ensure that the recommendations were considered and that the changes were included in the updated version of the M&E plans once approved by their respective AORs/CORs. The support L-MEP provided to the IPs helped improve the quality of their M&E plans when they are compared to the 2011 versions before L-MEP interventions. At that time, some IPs' M&E Plans/PMPs lacked the basic information required of an M&E Plan. For example, in 2011 when the first wave of DQAs was being conducted, L-MEP observed that IPs had M&E Plans/PMPs that contained one page with information on the description of the project. These descriptions, for some IPs, represented the entirety of their M&E Plans. However, based on the technical support provided to IPs and the M&E template developed by L-MEP, IPs began to improve the quality of their M&E plans. The Managing for Results (MfR) trainings were also helpful in building the capacity of the IPs to properly construct their results framework, identify appropriate indicators, and set accurate targets.

Table Three: Breakdown of PMP/M&E Plan Reviewed by L-MEP by Year & Sector

Sector	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Democracy, Rights & Governance	5	3	2	3	3	16

Sector	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Economic Growth	4	4	3	6	10	27
Health	7	4	3	2	3	19
Education	3	2	3	3	6	17
Total	19	13	11	14	22	79

The L-MEP CSS conducted in 2015 revealed the level of satisfaction of USAID and IP staff with the quality of assistance L-MEP provided in reviewing, developing, and updating IP M&E plans. The survey revealed that three out of four respondents (75%) agreed that L-MEP’s M&E assistance was “satisfactory or highly satisfactory.”



Component Three: Field Monitoring and Data Collection

With the exception of extensive Food for Peace (FFP) site verification and post-distribution monitoring of cash transfers and agriculture input vouchers covering eight counties, L-MEP did not conduct field monitoring as initially required in the L-MEP contract. This is because USAID/Liberia amended the L-MEP contract to remove field monitoring as a contractual requirement. The Field Monitoring Component was subsequently changed to Performance Management Field Support, which was to be conducted based on specific requests from USAID/Liberia.

L-MEP conducted one joint field monitoring visit to the Peoples, Rules, and Organizations Supporting the Protection of Ecosystem Resources Program (PROSPER) project sites following the project’s DQA. The joint field monitoring visit was conducted with USAID/Liberia PROSPER’s Alternate COR, Darlington Tuagben; PROSPER’s M&E Specialist, Darlington Vangehn; and L-MEP Staff: Yourfee Kamara and Eudisia Gonlepa. The joint field monitoring visit was intended to verify whether PROSPER had implemented the recommendations of the DQA report. When the Field Monitoring Component of L-MEP was changed to Performance Management Field Support, it was intended to allow USAID and IPs to request that L-MEP provide field support when needed. Such support could include monitoring the implementation

of DQA recommendations or reviewing data instruments in the field among others. Under Performance Management Field Support, L-MEP supported the projects, when requested, to address data management gaps identified in the field during DQAs. Table Four, below, shows the list of projects that were supported under this component.

Table Four: Performance Management Field Support Provided Per Sector, IP, and Year

Sector	Implementing Partner	Type of Support	Fiscal Year
Education	EHELD	Observing their Summer school activities and providing recommendations	2012
	LTPP	DQA Recommendation follow up	2012
	AYP	DQA Recommendation follow up	2012
Economic Growth	LESSP	DQA Recommendation follow up	2012
	SHOPS	DQA Recommendation follow up	2012
	PROSPER	DQA Recommendation follow up	2014

As a result of these field monitoring activities, the IPs were able to address gaps that were identified in their data management processes during DQAs. The exercise also improved the M&E capacities of sub-partners who were reporting data to the IPs.

Component Four: Capacity Building

L-MEP’s capacity building initiatives were among the most successful components over the life of the project. The contract required that L-MEP conduct at least two monitoring visits each year. However, due to the lack of M&E capacity and the increased demand for M&E services, L-MEP capacity building efforts doubled each year. Initially, the MfR trainings were conducted in Monrovia; however, due to the demand for L-MEP services outside of Monrovia, three MfR trainings were conducted in Gbarnga, Bong County; one in Nimba County; and another one in Lofa County. These trainings provided the opportunity for IP field M&E staff to participate in the MfR trainings. Another reason that drove the decentralization of the MfR training was the DQA finding that IP field staff lacked basic M&E training. In building an effective M&E system, it was important that field staff (who are directly involved with field activities) be aware of the knowledge and skills required to collect quality data. In addition to the MfR training conducted in various counties, some IPs and GoL Institutions requested tailor-made MfR trainings. For example, L-MEP conducted a specific MfR training for the Food and Enterprise Development Program (FED), and for the National AIDS Commission (NAC).

The L-MEP capacity building approach involved planning training activities based on demand and gaps identified through the DQAs. Once the training need was identified, L-MEP included the training activities in the annual workplan. At the beginning of the fiscal year, L-MEP disseminated the training schedule to all IPs. The training schedule included the title of the training, the duration, and date of the training. The training venue was usually determined based on the availability of space, convenience, and cost. Where the date of the training conflicted with other events, L-MEP informed the IPs and scheduled a new date. L-MEP provided updated information, including the venue, approximately one month before each training. Once the IPs had been informed about the training, L-MEP would send out reminders one week before the

training. IPs were given deadlines to nominate participants for the training. The nomination of participants in advance helped L-MEP make the necessary logistical plans in terms of space, food, and number of training manuals.

During all of L-MEP’s training programs, L-MEP provided meals for its participants, training modules, and a certificate at the end of the training. At the beginning of each training, L-MEP allowed the participants to sit for a pre-test. The pre-test allowed L-MEP to determine the M&E knowledge level of each participant. At the end of the training, the same test was administered as a post-test. Participants’ knowledge gained was measured by subtracting the pre-test score from the post test. Participants who earned less than 70 percent were awarded certificates of participation, while participants who scored 70 percent and above were awarded certificates of achievement. Overall, the performance of participants during the MfR trainings was average. This was because of the different levels of participants who attended L-MEP trainings. On a few occasions, there were participants who performed very well due to their prior M&E knowledge and skills.

At the end of every MfR training, L-MEP requested that participants evaluate each training. The evaluations followed these criteria:

- Organization and planning
- Facilitators and presentation
- Content of course (topics)
- Training materials (workbook, annexes) and logistics (availability)
- Duration and timing: time management
- Meals and other services provided
- Venue of the workshop

Participants were asked to rate L-MEP’s performance across these criteria. Overall, scores from the participants rated L-MEP high on organization and planning of the training workshops as well as facilitators and presentation. In some cases, especially outside of Monrovia, rating on meals and venue varied. Table Five shows the breakdown of L-MEP trainings through the five years of project implementation.

Table Five: Breakdown of Trainings Conducted by L-MEP per Year (2011-2015)

Categories of Trainings Conducted	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Managing for Results Training (USAID & IPs and GoL Staff)	88	89	70	73	89	409
PIDS/ GIS/WMS/GPS Training	83	0	57	12	21	173
DQA Training	20	0	35	0	0	55
Environmental Compliance Training	45	0	0	0	0	45
Evaluation Planning and Management Training	0	30	0	0	0	30

Categories of Trainings Conducted	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Success Story Training	0	0	25	0	32	57
Total	236	119	187	85	142	769

In 2015, L-MEP conducted three different trainings: Managing for Results, PIDS/WMS, and a Success Story Training conducted in collaboration with the USAID Development Outreach Coordinator team. A total of 142 participants were trained in Year Five. The MfR training was conducted for USAID IP and GoL staff. The USAID IP MfR training covered training in DQA implementation and M&E Plan development. L-MEP conducted the MfR Refresher Training for the M&E Unit of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning and other GoL Institutions. L-MEP also co-facilitated a one-day Results-based Management training organized by the

Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP). The co-facilitation of the training was part of the arrangement with the Ministry that L-MEP would co-facilitate trainings with MFDP to provide technical guidance and support.



Participant makes presentation at a group exercise during the Refresher Managing for Results Training, 2015

L-MEP capacity building activities resulted in significant improvements in performance management capacity for USAID/Liberia staff, IPs, GoL Institutions, and L-MEP’s local partners who attended the training. For example, the quality of M&E related documents including M&E Plans/PMPs, data collection

instruments, and data management procedures prepared by IP M&E staff were very poor during the early stages of the L-MEP Project. This was evidenced by the fact that some IPs presented a one- or two-page document as their M&E Plan/PMP. Considering that every M&E plan should contain a results framework, a development hypothesis, a summary performance data table, PIRS, and an M&E task schedule, it is difficult (if not impossible) to construct a complete, compliant M&E Plan in one or two pages. Today, the M&E staff of every USAID/Liberia project that participated in L-MEP’s MfR training is able to independently develop M&E Plans that meet USAID standards, including the ADS guidelines. Additionally, L-MEP capacity building exercises also improved M&E capacity for GoL line Ministries and Agencies across the country. For example, the GoL now has a pool of M&E trainers who benefited from the L-MEP M&E training of trainers’ course.

Component Five: Evaluations Assistance

Under Component Five, Evaluations Assistance, L-MEP was required to provide support to

USAID/Liberia to conduct evaluations and special studies. The support includes assisting the Mission in developing an annual evaluation plan and schedule; drafting and reviewing scopes of work for evaluations; identifying mechanisms and/or teams to conduct evaluations; and, where applicable, second L-MEP staff to participate as team members of selected evaluations. L-MEP was also required to ensure the wide dissemination of evaluation results through workshops, seminars, briefing papers, and the USAID/Liberia website. Specifically, L-MEP supported the Mission in drafting and reviewing evaluation scopes of work, and directly implemented nine evaluations. The table below shows the list of evaluations conducted by L-MEP over the life of the project.

Table Six: Evaluations/Assessments Conducted by L-MEP Over the Life of the Project (2011-2013)

No.	Project Title	Sector	Evaluation Type	Year	DEC Status
1	Focus On Results: Enhancing Capacity Across Sectors in Transition (FORECAST)	Education	Study (Stakeholder Assessment)	2011	Posted
2	Core Education Skills for Liberian Youth (CESLY)	Education	Performance (Final)	2011	Posted
3	Civil Society and Media Leadership (CSML)	Democracy and Governance	Performance (Mid-term)	2012	Posted
4	Liberia: Strengthening Legislative and Election Processes	Democracy and Governance	Performance (Final)	2013	Posted
5	Strengthening Citizen's Participation in Government: Access to Justice and Information	Democracy and Governance	Performance (Final)	2013	Posted
6	Building Sustainable Elections Management in Liberia (BSEML)	Democracy and Governance	Performance (Final)	2013	Posted
7	Liberia Teacher Training Program (LTTP)	Education	Performance (Mid-term)	2013	Posted
8	Liberia Trade Policy and Customs (LTPC)	MCC	Performance (Final)	2013	Posted
9	Excellence in Higher Education for Liberia Development (EHELD)	Education	Performance Evaluation (Mid-term)	2014	Posted

Following the drafting and review of the SOW for each evaluation and approval by USAID/Liberia, L-MEP hired qualified, competent, local short term technical assistance (STTA). For all the evaluations, L-MEP provided logistical support by securing accommodations

for the consultants, providing vehicles, and pre-arranging meetings on behalf of the teams. L-MEP seconded its staff to participate in some of the evaluations. For example, Mark Bassie, L-MEP's M&E Specialist for Education, was part of the team to conduct the Focus on Results: Enhancing Capacity across Sectors in Transition (FORECAST) Project. Mr. Bassie also participated in the CESLY, and LTTP evaluations. Barward Johnson, L-MEP's Deputy Chief of Party and M&E Specialist for Democracy, Rights, and Governance (DRG) participated in all of the DRG evaluations as well. The participation of L-MEP staff helped to provide local context for the evaluations. At the same time, L-MEP staff learned different approaches to evaluations from the STTA that were part of the teams. At the conclusion of each evaluation, following approval of the final report, L-MEP produced hard copies of the evaluation report and shared it with key stakeholders in addition to disseminating soft copies of the report. In the case of the EHELD evaluation, L-MEP produced briefers for easy reading of the evaluation findings and recommendations. As part of its dissemination efforts, L-MEP also produced copies of the executive summaries of its evaluations and disseminated them during COP meetings. This level of dissemination provided the IPs with access to evaluations that were conducted outside of their sector of intervention. Finally, once the evaluation report was approved by USAID/Liberia, L-MEP posted the final reports to the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC). The evaluation findings provided information for program design and for decision making. For example, based on the findings of the final evaluation of the Liberia: Strengthening Legislative and Election Processes, USAID/Liberia suspended support to the Liberian legislature.

In the implementation of these evaluations, L-MEP experienced some challenges. Initially, USAID/Liberia did not develop a schedule for implementing evaluations; therefore, it was a challenge for L-MEP to hire qualified local and international consultants in a short period of time. Secondly, even with adequate time, it was quite difficult to secure the services of competent local consultants for evaluations due to the lack of capacity in specific knowledge areas. Moreover, the cadre of professional evaluators in Liberia is limited; therefore, it is often difficult to hire qualified evaluators.

Component Six: Implementation Partnerships with Liberians and/or Local Organizations

This component of the L-MEP contract required that L-MEP establish implementation partnerships with individual Liberians, local Liberian firms, and/or local NGOs to facilitate the implementation of L-MEP activities. The aim of this component was to address M&E capacity gaps in Liberia by building local capacity through partnership. Over the life of the project, L-MEP established implementation partnerships with ten local Liberian firms. Of the ten partners, L-MEP awarded contracts to four Liberian firms to implement specific activities under the L-MEP project: DEN-L, UL-PIRE, AEDE, and Subah-Belleh Associates (SBA). Additionally, L-MEP worked with several Liberian consultants to conduct special studies under the L-MEP project. In addition to awarding contracts to the Liberian firms and individuals, L-MEP also involved these partners in all of its capacity buildings activities, including the MfR training course; Environmental Compliance Training; Evaluation Planning and Management course; and the Data Quality Assessment and Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Development training workshop. As a result of L-MEP engagements with these partners, their capacities in performance management, and that of conducting special studies, improved to some extent. These partners now understand USAID procedures in project implementation, as well as performance management. However, despite these accomplishments, L-MEP encountered challenges in working with its local partners. First, the local partners had poor business practices.

In one instance, a report was delayed for more than six months. Another problem was the dearth in research capacity among the local partners. Due to the limited number of competent staff to carry out specific tasks and the number of projects they took upon themselves due to the financial benefits, some local partners struggled to manage multiple projects or studies with limited staff in terms of number and capacity. This situation led to delays in submitting reports on time. The LSA project should continue the capacity building effort begun under L-MEP to help local partners address some of these issues and challenges.

V. CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

L-MEP encountered some challenges over the life of the project. The following are some of the key challenges faced by the program over the five-year period grouped under each component area:

A. Performance Monitoring and Results Reporting

L-MEP officially launched the PIDS in 2011 and began to provide training to USAID/Liberia and IP staff to use the system. Initially, some IPs did not use the PIDS, insisting that their contract with USAID/Liberia did not formally/contractually require them to use PIDS. In other cases, the IPs preferred that USAID/Liberia (rather than L-MEP) give them direct instructions to enter their data in PIDS, since they were already reporting the data in their quarterly reports. Due to this situation, data entry in PIDS only began to improve in Year Three when compared to Years One and Two. Since IPs were reluctant to enter their targets into PIDS at that time, it was impossible to perform overall achievement analysis to determine whether or not the IPs were meeting, exceeding, or underachieving their targets. Another challenge was that some IPs were entering their targets at the end of the year instead of the beginning of the year. Even though IPs began to show significant improvement in entering their data in PIDS in Year Three, some were not entering their data on time. This situation delayed the AORs/CORs in certifying their data. Timely data entry in PIDS remained a challenge throughout the project since IPs were more accustomed to reporting their data in their quarterly reports. PIDS was only useful when the IPs entered data into the system in a timely manner. Entering targets into the PIDS at the end of the year contravenes the effectiveness of performance management.

Some data quality assessments that were submitted to AORs and CORs were never reviewed or approved. In some cases, L-MEP did not receive feedback from some AORs and CORs. The situation delayed L-MEP from uploading DQA score sheets into PIDS.

B. Performance Management Plan (PMP) Development and Update

During the first and second years of L-MEP, there were challenges in developing PMPs (now M&E Plans) for IPs because the USAID/Liberia Country Development Cooperative Strategy (CDCS) had not been completed and approved. Therefore, L-MEP could not proceed with providing technical support to developing the Mission PMP and helping the IPs align their PMPs with the new CDCS. This situation remained the same for years 2011 and 2012. When the CDCS was approved in 2013, L-MEP provided technical support to the Mission to develop the CDCS PMP. Because there was no acceptable Mission PMP at that time, IPs did not know what standard to use to develop their M&E Plan/PMP. L-MEP, therefore, designed an M&E Guide, and submitted it to USAID/Liberia L-MEP COR for approval. After the M&E Plan Guide was approved, L-MEP disseminated it to all IPs.

Also, in Year Two, the first set of DQAs conducted revealed inconsistencies in the types and quality of PMPs/M&E Plans that were developed by the IPs. This situation made it difficult to review and track IPs targets, baseline information, and actual data. Most of the IPs' data were not arranged in an orderly manner, which would have eased assessment.

C. Field Monitoring and Data Collection

With the exception of Food for Peace (FFP) infrastructure verification and post-distribution monitoring of cash transfer and agriculture input vouchers conducted at the end of the project, L-

MEP did not conduct as many field monitoring activities as initially required in the contract SOW. Under the contract, L-MEP was “required to conduct field visits to all USAID-funded project sites on a regular basis to monitor data collection, progress, and impact of USAID-supported activities.” However, USAID/Liberia amended the L-MEP contract to remove Field Monitoring as a contractual requirement; instead requiring L-MEP to make Field Management visits upon specific requests from USAID/Liberia. Had the Field Monitoring requirement not been eliminated, L-MEP’s expanded field monitoring strategy would have allowed L-MEP to visit each IP’s project activities at least twice a year. As a final result, L-MEP resorted to conducting DQAs only, based on the availability of data.

D. Capacity Building

Performance of training participants during the Managing for Results trainings over the period varied significantly. This is because the level of understanding of the MfR concepts and applications varied considerably among participants. This situation reduced the number of participants who received certificates of achievement (those who scored 70 percent or above on the post-test) over the period of performance.

Another challenge under capacity building was the unavailability of USAID/Liberia staff to attend L-MEP trainings. The USAID/Liberia staff who attended all of L-MEP’s activities equaled less than 10 percent of the total number of persons trained by L-MEP.

E. Evaluation Assistance

Initially, there were challenges where evaluations were not planned during the annual workplan development period. At that time, the Mission requested evaluations as the need arose. This led to the implementation of four major evaluations in 2013 which were not initially planned for or included in the Year Three Workplan.

Financial commitment for some of the studies requested by USAID/Liberia was difficult to manage. For example, in the case of the IBBSS Study, a budget had been developed and a contract signed with the consultant by the Ministry of Health when L-MEP was requested to fund only part of the budget including the payment of the consultant’s wages. At that stage, it was difficult to renegotiate the consultant’s wages and remain compliant with USAID regulations. Secondly, working with staff from the Ministry of Health to finalize the IBBSS report was another challenge. The relevant persons responsible to review the report were either not available or they provided their inputs/comments late. Since L-MEP was not the author of the report, it was difficult to proceed with printing and distributing the final report without gathering feedback from all the relevant persons from the Ministry of Health.

Identifying and selecting local capacity for evaluation and special studies remained a challenge throughout the life of the project.

F. Implementation Partnerships with Liberians and/or Local Organizations

Collaborating with local partners posed a number of challenges as some of the partners had limited technical and administrative capacity to independently manage special studies and evaluations. The shortage of staff for some of the partners further exacerbated the situation and delayed the completion of some of the MCC studies for which the local partners were contracted.

VI. RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS

- CORs/AORs should require that their IPs enter data into the PIDS on time per the PIDS Annual Data Entry Schedule. If this requirement cannot be included in the project SOW, the AORs and CORs should ensure that the IPs understand that it is mandatory and not optional for them to enter data into PIDS.
- AORs and CORs should review DQA reports and provide feedback. The feedback will help L-MEP make the necessary changes based on the feedback, finalize the report, and upload the DQA score sheets in PIDS. In the absence of feedback from the AORs and CORs, it becomes quite difficult to proceed with finalizing the DQA process.
- USAID/Liberia should maintain a standard template for its processes, especially for developing, updating, or reviewing IP M&E Plans. This makes it easier and requires less time if there is an established system, format, and process to use. The M&E Plan Guide developed by L-MEP can be regularly updated to meet the current standards and used as the measure for review, updating, and developing M&E Plans.
- USAID/Liberia should utilize the services of the project to conduct field monitoring to ensure adequate oversight of project and program activities. Field monitoring is the foundation for establishing an effective and efficient M&E system. In the absence of a rigorous field monitoring strategy, it will be impossible to determine what works best and what does not work. Considering USAID/Liberia's portfolio of interventions across the country, it is not possible for USAID/Liberia to adequately monitor all of its activities through its AORs and CORs.
- Partners implementing local capacity development initiatives in M&E should design M&E trainings for different levels of participants. This will allow participants to increase their knowledge in M&E by completing one level prior to attaining the next level.
- USAID/Liberia should encourage its AORs and CORs to participate in M&E and Learning or all performance management trainings provided by a program designed to support performance management. This is important because the IPs and their AORs and CORs will understand the same concepts and theories associated with performance management.
- USAID/Liberia should ensure that evaluations to be implemented should be planned in advance and included in the annual project work plan. This will allow the project to make preparations in advance for implementing the evaluation.
- USAID/Liberia should ensure that future programs designed to build local capacity should include initiatives to focus more on developing technical skills and capacities in evaluation through academic or other public institutions. These programs should include national M&E institutions that have the capacity to provide technical support in this area.
- USAID/Liberia IPs working with local firms and partners with the aim of building capacity should first ensure that they conduct a comprehensive technical and administrative assessment of their capacities prior to contract award. This way, it will be possible to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the firm prior to engaging them to

implement a specific project.

VII. BEST PRACTICES

- Standardization of the IP M&E template was instituted by L-MEP to help the Mission establish a consistent process for developing and reviewing M&E plans. This helped to ensure that IPs achieved all the requirements of the ADS 203 with reference to developing their M&E plans. It also helped L-MEP and AORs/CORs follow established guidelines for reviewing M&E plans.
- While L-MEP did not conduct field monitoring and data collection activities per USAID/Liberia directives, the DQA methodology that L-MEP employed is a best practice because it is a comprehensive approach that enabled L-MEP to completely assess the M&E system of the IPs.
- Following the series of M&E trainings, L-MEP observed that there was a significant difference in participants' performance based on results from the post-training assessments. Subsequently, L-MEP developed a suite of Managing for Results training courses that took into consideration the training participants' different levels of understanding and experience in M&E. The training packages were designed for different levels of participants, and delivered sequentially so that participants will graduate from a lower level training course before taking a higher level course.

VIII. CONTRACTOR ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTRACT WORK COMPLETED

The L-MEP contract was implemented for 63 months. With the available resources, L-MEP implemented program activities in coordination with its CORs and based on regular feedback from its clients, including USAID. Every year, L-MEP implemented activities that were aligned with the contract components and included approaches that were modified to meet client needs.

- Generally, the program was successful. As the first USAID/Liberia-funded program designed to directly provide support to the Program Office, there was a lot of coordination required to collaborate with AORs and CORs and to understand the dynamics of USAID program implementation. Considering the challenges that existed in data collection, storage, analysis, and reporting at the time the L-MEP contract was designed and awarded, and taking stock five years later, the evidence is clear that L-MEP's achievements have been remarkable. Effective M&E systems should be developed incrementally. This is because it requires technical skills, equipment, and processes to implement an effective M&E system.
- L-MEP achieved all key deliverables that were outlined in the contract. For example, PIDS was developed, launched, and utilized. Data Quality Assessments were conducted, and data uploaded into PIDS in addition to the regular data that were reported by IPs over

time. PIDS was designed to align with USAID’s performance management cycle and system. In addition to serving as a storage facility, PIDS also provided the platform for interaction between IPs and USAID/Liberia’s AORs and CORs.

- L-MEP did help to build the M&E capacity of USAID/Liberia and IP staff despite the fact that some USAID AORs and CORs did not take full advantage of the trainings offered under L-MEP. Standards for developing, reviewing, and updating M&E plans were designed and disseminated to all IPs. Though the USAID/Liberia CDCS PMP was not finalized during implementation of L-MEP, the results framework within the PMP served as the basis for the design of new projects that were built within PIDS.
- L-MEP succeeded in conducting several very important evaluations for USAID/Liberia. Special Studies under the MCC Threshold Program served to determine whether the three Threshold Programs were achieving their intended goals and objectives. The signing of the MCC Compact Agreement between the US Government and the Government of Liberia can partly be attributed to the monitoring support provided by L-MEP to the MCC Threshold Programs which allowed the programs to meet their targets.
- Working with local partners and Liberian professionals shed light on the level of support required to build local capacity in performance management.

IX. SUCCESS STORIES

A. L-MEP Strengthened the Mission’s Performance Management Systems by Enhancing IPs M&E Capacity

Building effective M&E systems for IPs helped to improve USAID/Liberia’s performance management system. For example, L-MEP was highly successful in establishing data collection, storage, and reporting systems for IPs that met acceptable standards for reporting data to USAID consistent with the the five quality standards outlined in the ADS 203. L-MEP’s approach to building effective performance management systems among IPs enhanced the IP capacity to collect and report data. At the beginning of the DQA process in Year Two, L-MEP observed that most IPs lacked complete M&E plans, clear data collection procedures, and proper filing and organization of data. They had little or no technical capacity to manage data or capacity to perform routine achievement analysis. All of these challenges negatively affected the quality of data that was being reported.

However, after two years of collaboration on the development of a standard M&E Plan Guide; regular M&E trainings; collaborative DQA assessments; mentoring and coaching of IP staff; and encouraging IPs to enter data into the PIDS on time, a system is gradually taking root that will eventually help the IPs effectively track their project performance and effectively report quality data to USAID/Liberia. Even though the ultimate success of L-MEP’s intervention may not be visible now, the transformation that has occurred among IPs is worth noting. The IPs M&E Specialists are now to a large extent cognizant of USAID’s performance management requirements, especially the ADS 203.

L-MEP’s success in this direction has been commended by some COPs and IP staff. Also, feedback gathered during the Customer Satisfaction Survey documents the positive achievements

and success stories of L-MEP during the five years of project implementation. For example, during the 5th COP meeting held at L-MEP on January 25, 2013, some IPs openly expressed gratitude for L-MEP’s unwavering support in helping to build effective M&E systems among USAID/Liberia’s IPs. Specifically, IPs expressed that the DQA process helped them to transform their M&E systems. Some COPs said that initially they were resistant to L-MEP’s approach to developing a vibrant M&E system. However, following the full implementation of the DQA process, they began to sense the immediate changes the DQA brought to their projects.

Other comments from the Customer Satisfaction Survey include the following:

“L-MEP virtually developed my M&E knowledge through their workshops, mentoring and field visits. Important to all was the friendly manner all of these activities were done.”

“L-MEP conducts these DQAs with due diligence. It is objective and at the same time learning experience. It is participatory at all levels.”

B. Maps Produced by L-MEP Significantly Aided the Fight against Ebola

The maps helped the various USG agencies involved in the Ebola fight to adequately plan and implement their Ebola response interventions. The usefulness of the maps can be measured by the increased demand during FY 2014. L-MEP also received positive feedback from some USG agencies for whom maps were produced. The maps also helped USAID/Liberia and IPs in the planning and implementation of their projects and activities before and after the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak.

C. L-MEP’s Transition to a Full Liberian Team Helped Strengthened Local Capacity

As part of L-MEP contract design, L-MEP was expected to transition to a full Liberian team in the fourth year of the program. However, following the earlier departure of the former L-MEP COP, Ms. Randal Joy Thompson, L-MEP transitioned to a Liberian team. While the L-MEP Knowledge Management Specialist, Dr. Michael Richards was still on the program, his role was limited to Knowledge Management activities and not direct project management. The administrative and technical management of L-MEP was executed by the Liberian team, which structured itself into a senior management team. From December 2012 through November 27, 2015, the Liberian team managed the full implementation of the L-MEP contract. Feedback gathered during the COP meetings and from the CSS showed that AORs and CORs (22% of respondents) and COPs (11% of respondents), and IP M&E Specialists (48% of respondents) were satisfied with L-MEP’s performance over the life of the project.

X. L-MEP MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND PROCESSES

Project Management Overview

L-MEP was implemented through three levels of staffing:

1. The L-MEP program was led by the TMG home office support staff, including the Project Manager, Jenkins Cooper; Financial Manager, Abimbola Fasosin; and Logistics/Administrative Coordinator, Walidah Willoughby;
2. Initially, the L-MEP Resident Technical Team was led by its expatriate Chief of Party, Randal Joy Thompson. However, following the resignation of Ms. Thompson, Mr. James

Whawhen, former Deputy Chief of Party, was promoted to the position of Chief of Party. Barward Johnson, M&E Specialist for Democracy and Governance was elevated to the position of Deputy Chief of Party at that time. Three other technical staff members were responsible for performance monitoring and evaluation activities; a resident Administrative Team led by Operations Manager, Fredical Mulbah; and an Information and Communication Team led by the Knowledge Management Specialist, Mulbah Reed who succeeded the second expatriate on the team, Dr. Michael Richards.

3. Upon demand, sector-specific U.S.-based M&E Advisors provided specialized technical assistance and assisted each L-MEP staff with their M&E responsibilities. Two subcontractors, Hennice Inc. and Stone Environmental, Inc., continued to assist with the enhancement of the PIDS/WMS. Four of the seven Liberian partners, AEDE, SBA, DEN-L, and UL-PIRE assisted, where applicable, with evaluations, special studies, and gender-responsive training. International and regional consultants provided short-term technical assistance as needed. However, due to the drawdown on special studies and evaluations, NARDA, The Khana Group, and DAH Consulting did not collaborate with L-MEP in implementing specific activities. Representatives from NARDA and The Khana Group, however, attended L-MEP training programs.

Personnel Requirements

L-MEP maintained the same number of staff and in-country contractors to operate until L-MEP transitioned to a full Liberian team. Due to the transitioning process, significant modifications were made to staff job descriptions consistent with L-MEP's "Local Capacity Building/Transition Strategy" of Years Three and Four, which supported the promotion of the Deputy COP, James Whawhen to the position of COP (officially/formally in July, 2013), as well as the promotion of other Liberian staff to key positions within L-MEP. The promotion of Mr. Whawhen reduced the number of expatriate positions to one at the beginning of Year Four, thereby creating additional work demands, not only on Mr. Whawhen as COP, but also for the entire Liberian L-MEP staff. Additionally, following the departure of Dr. Michael Richards, KM Specialist (the last remaining expatriate advisor), in Quarter Two of Year Four, Mr. Mulbah Reed, who was assigned as Alternate KM Specialist, assumed full responsibilities of the KM position in Quarter Three of Year Four.

In Year Four, due to the increase in demand from IPs and GoL institutions for L-MEP's services, technical team members in the Gbarnga Office were assigned additional roles and responsibilities as well. L-MEP recruited two interns in an effort to increase Liberia's pool of M&E professionals and at the same time create extra hands to support L-MEP's M&E activities. To improve performance among its local staff, L-MEP established a Compliance Team responsible for monitoring L-MEP's compliance to its SOW, annual workplan, and other technical requirements. The Gbarnga Office was asked to lead L-MEP's compliance efforts. The Gbarnga team applied different approaches to monitoring L-MEP's SOW, annual workplan and other technical requirements by regularly sending out weekly and monthly automated reminders.

In addition to being assigned additional roles, the Gbarnga Office was further strengthened to serve as a resource center for the IPs, their sub-partners, and GoL workers. USAID staff also used the L-MEP Regional Field office for stop-over and other M&E needs. The office was equipped with Internet facilities to allow the IPs to populate field data into the PIDS and assess other electronic performance management information. The field office also provided adequate

space for reading, meetings, and mini-workshops, and was regularly used by some IPs to conduct mini-trainings. Consultants involved with L-MEP's evaluations and special studies used the field office to conduct research for field-based information that was not available in Monrovia.

Sub-Contracting Activities

L-MEP maintained its sub-contract with two US-based firms: Hennice, Inc. and Stone Environmental, to improve and maintain the PIDS and WMS operations.

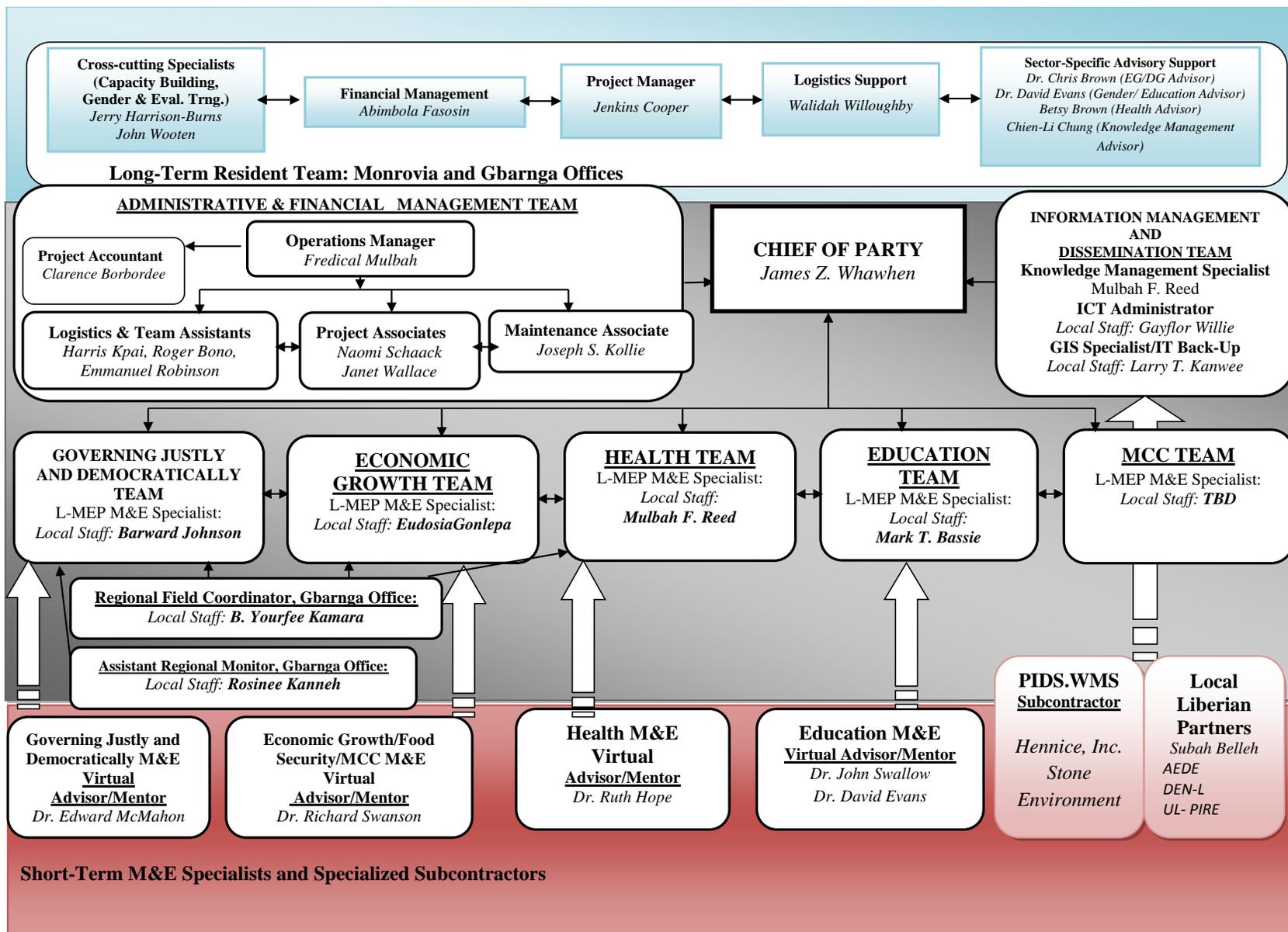
Financial/Operations Management

Financial management oversight was a major priority under the L-MEP contract both at the home office and field operations levels. TMG/HQ maintained control and oversight over project expenditures in line with the contract budget and established policies, procedures, and internal controls. TMG/HQ, with the support of L-MEP's COP and Operations Manager, provided financial management and internal control oversight of the L-MEP Financial Management System and ensured that project expenditures were allowable, allocable, and managed in line with the project budget. Project expenditures were clearly and accurately reported with time and source documents and receipts attached for all purchases and procurements. Key Financial Management tasks included the following:

- The L-MEP Monrovia and Gbarnga Office operations managed efficiently and cost-effectively;
- The L-MEP project local operating budget managed efficiently;
- Regular review and update of project office internal controls;
- Monthly conference calls with L-MEP FM staff to review issues, progress, and updates;
- Review of local operating expenditures and source financial documents by TMG/HQ;
- Quarterly review of L-MEP project fixed assets;
- Quarterly pipeline analysis conducted;
- TMG/HQ mid-year and annual monitoring visits;
- Regular review of vehicle policy and regulations; and
- Preparation and submission of monthly vouchers to USAID/Liberia.

XI. ANNEXES:

Annex 1: L-MEP Management and Organizational Structure/Framework



Annex 2: Final Financial Summary

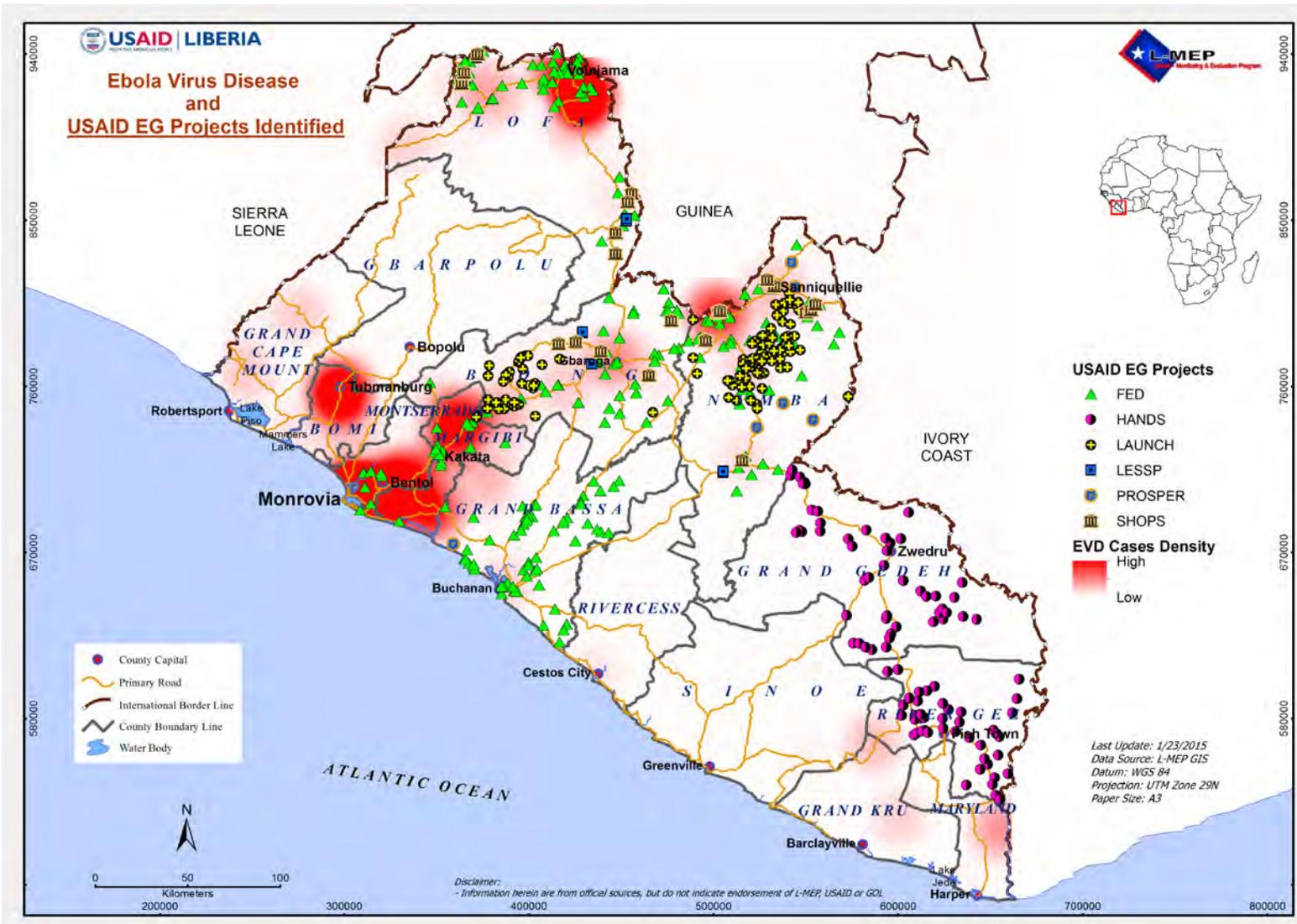
FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The Mitchell Group, Inc.
USAID/Liberia Monitoring and Evaluation Program (L-MEP)
Final Financial Summary, August 2010 – November 2015

COST ELEMENT	Incurred (August 2010- November 2015)	Total Budget	Contract Remaining
Direct Labor	2,476,307	2,572,069	95,762
Non-Labor Costs	4,412,946	4,492,092	79,146
Indirect Costs (Fringe, Overhead & G&A)	1,809,537	1,951,421	141,884
Fixed Fee	347,752	359,806	12,054
Evaluation & Special Studies	950,047	1,024,057	74,010
TOTAL	9,996,589	10,399,445	400,611

PROJECT SUMMARY INFORMATION	
ORGANIZATION NAME:	The Mitchell Group, Inc.
CONTRACT NUMBER:	669-C-10-00-00181
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:	\$10,399,445
STARTING DATE:	September 2010
ENDING DATE:	September 2015
TOTAL EXPENDITURE FOR PROJECT: (August 27, 2010 – November 27, 2015)	\$9,996,589
Total Obligated Amount (As of November 27, 2015)	\$10,399,445

Annex 3: Ebola Virus Disease and USAID EG Project Map



Annex 4: Feed the Future Focus Counties Map



Annex 5: Map of USAID/Liberia Projects Locations at Site Level

