



# LIBERIA ACCOUNTABILITY AND VOICE INITIATIVE

**SUMMARY ACTIVITY REPORT  
YEAR I FIRST QUARTER  
November-December 2015**

# **LIBERIA ACCOUNTABILITY AND VOICE INITIATIVE (LAVI)**

**QUARTER ONE REPORT  
NOVEMBER 25-DECEMBER 31, 2015**

<b>Program Title:</b>	<b>Liberia Accountability and Voice Initiative (LAVI)</b>
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## ACRONYMS

AC	Advisory Council
AMEP	Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CLA	Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting
Comprac	Community of Practice
COP	Chief of Party
COR	USAID Contracting Officer's Representative
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAI	Development Alternatives Inc.
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DRG	Democracy, Rights, and Governance
FDA	Forestry Development Agency
FLY	Federation of Liberian Youth
FY16	Fiscal Year 2016
GOL	Government of Liberia
GUC	Grants under Contract
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IREDD	Institute for Research and Democratic Development
KM	Knowledge Management
LAVI	USAID/Liberia Accountability and Voice Initiative
LEITI	Liberia Extractive Industries Transitional Initiative
LMDP	Liberia Media Development Program
LSA	USAID/Liberia Strategic Analysis project
ME&L	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MLME	Ministry of Lands Mines and Energy
NARDA	New African Research and Development Agency
NCSC	National Civil Society County
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PPR	Performance Plan and Report
PUL	Press Union of Liberia
RF	Results Framework
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance

TAMIS            Technical Administrative Management Information System  
USAID            United States Agency for International Development  
WIPNET          Women in Peace Building Network  
WONGOSOL      Women NGO Secretariat of Liberia

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On November 25, 2015, USAID contracted Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI) to implement the USAID/Liberia Accountability and Voice Initiative (LAVI). LAVI is a five-year activity designed to strengthen multi-stakeholders partnership to advocate for and monitor policy and accountability reforms. LAVI will contribute to the overall goal of USAID/Liberia's civil society and media interventions, which is to increase the influence of citizens and media in the governance of public goods and services. The program also supports Development Objective I in USAID Liberia's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS): more effective, accountable, and inclusive governance.

Four key objectives underscore the goal of LAVI:

- Increased horizontal and vertical linkages among actors engaged in similar issues;
- Increased organizational capacity of targeted CSOs to participate in issue-based reforms;
- On-going capacity development services available on local market; and
- Learning and methodologies shared and applied by other development actors.

This report covers the first 35 days of the contract. Ten days following the award of LAVI, Senior Project Manager Milica Panic mobilized to Liberia to attend the post-award conference held at USAID/Liberia and to initiate start-up activities. Start-Up Specialist Aaron Sheldon also joined the senior project manager to provide administrative, logistical, and recruitment support. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (ME&L) Director James Whawhen began work on December 10, 2015. During her first weeks on the ground, the LAVI senior project manager also held a kick-off meeting with all proposed Liberian staff. The overall goal of the meeting was to present LAVI's goals and objectives to the team and to solicit their inputs for the annual work plan. The meeting also created an opportunity to discuss the Mission's expectations on the project and some of the challenges it will need to deal with in the upcoming months.

In an effort to commence project activities immediately, DAI identified an office space for LAVI in December 2015. Arrangements to secure the office commenced within weeks and will be finalized in January 2016.

In December, the LAVI team held introductory meetings with 15 international non-governmental organizations, government institutions and civil society organizations working in the area of Natural Resource Management (NRM) and concessions. NRM and concessions will be the first thematic window for LAVI identified by USAID. The meetings were intended to introduce LAVI and to understand the activities that were implemented by the organizations to identify opportunities for synergies and to prevent duplication of efforts.

During the first quarter of project implementation, LAVI began drafting its annual work plan and ME&L plan. The team reviewed USAID's Democracy, Rights and Governance (DRG) results framework and Performance Plan and Report (PPR) indicators to select appropriate indicators for the project.

In Quarter Two, DAI will move swiftly to establish its office space to facilitate operations; finalize its recruitment process to fill all key positions; design manuals and protocols for the smooth running of the program; finalize its work plan and ME&L plan to be used as guides for project implementation and management; and increase its outreach to engage a broader spectrum of the Liberian CSO community.

## **KEY PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS**

LAVI's project achievements are reported under each result as per the program results framework. The report is based on accomplishments of each activity implemented under each result. It details the achievement under each result, and the challenges and methods used to resolve those challenges, if any. For activities that are not completed or implemented, the report includes follow-up action for the outstanding activity, detailed with a specific time line, responsible person, and approach for implementing the activity.

### **A. RESULT I: Horizontal and Vertical Linkages among Actors Engaged in Similar Issues Strengthened**

During the first month of the start-up period, LAVI held meetings with key actors and will continue to do so during Quarter Two to expand outreach efforts and to assess existing horizontal and vertical linkages.

#### ***Outreach meetings with International/Local Organizations and Government of Liberia Institutions***

From December 11-31, LAVI held meetings with 15 organizations. These organizations included three international NGOs, two GoL institutions and 10 CSOs (see Annex I for details). The meetings afforded LAVI the opportunity to gather first hand information from the INGOs, CSOs and GoL institutions on their current activities. In particular, the meeting with the two GoL institutions revealed the need to provide capacity building support in monitoring and evaluation.

LAVI also discussed opportunities for collaboration with the organizations during the meetings. For example, at the conclusion of the meeting with Internews, implementer of the USAID Liberia Media Development Program (LMDP), both Internews and DAI underscored the need for the LMDP to collaborate with LAVI, as activities implemented by the two projects complement each other and could yield greater impact if synergies are built. The collaboration between the two projects would allow LAVI's partners to use the LMDP community radio partners to broadcast their advocacy on issues of accountability. The LMDP platform would serve as the media to let voices of the local communities to be heard.

#### ***Issues Related to Management of Social Development Funds***

One of the issues which was consistently raised during the meetings with the CSOs was the management of the social development funds. Most of the CSOs listed the situation as the most pressing issue currently confronting CSOs and the local communities within the NRM sector, which USAID has identified as the first area of focus for LAVI activities. According to the CSOs, the shift in the management of these social development funds from the executive branch of government to the legislature is affecting the implementation of projects. The CSOs agree that while the legislature should continue to play its oversight role in the expenditure of the social development funds, it should not directly manage the funds.

### **B. RESULT II: Organizational Capacity of Targeted CSOs to Participate in Issue-Based Reforms Increased**

LAVI did not implement any specific activity under Result II in this period, but held meetings with key stakeholders to identify challenges confronting civil society in Liberia.

#### ***Identifying Capacity Gaps in CSOs***

Generally, the meetings with the CSOs highlighted the capacity challenges CSOs encounter in Liberia. The following is a short list of some of the key challenges listed by the CSOs:

- There are always funding gaps due to short term interventions by donor partners
- CSOs have not developed a strategy for engagement
- CSOs lack expertise in specific thematic areas
- CSOs lack capacity in research, M&E, and dissemination
- CSOs have not been able to develop simplified versions of reports that local communities understand
- Horizontal learning among CSOs is weak, and needs to be encouraged and promoted
- There is a need for a repository of knowledge to continue to share information and best practices
- CSOs aren't located or established in the communities where they work; in most instances, they are based in Monrovia, implement activities in the counties, and return to Monrovia
- Some CSOs are not inclusive of local community members

Behind all of these capacity challenges is the confrontational posture many CSOs continue to take in engaging the government, which they attribute to damaging experiences with previous governments. This situation has created a standoff between CSOs and state actors.

### **C. RESULT III: Development of Ongoing Capacity Development Services in the Local Market Promoted**

LAVI held meetings with key stakeholders to identify capacity strengths and weaknesses in CSOs in Liberia. LAVI also held meetings to begin to identify potential capacity development services in Liberia.

### **D. RESULT IV: Learning and Methodologies Shared and Applied by Other Development Actors**

LAVI drafted the ME&L plan which will pave the way for the development of learning methodologies for the LAVI project. Once the ME&L plan is approved, LAVI will meet with the USAID/CLA Advisor as required to discuss a knowledge management and learning agenda that will help facilitate and guide LAVI's KM activities.

## **PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION**

Two weeks following the award of the contract, DAI initiated a number of start-up activities. These activities were intended to focus on achieving the smooth operational and programmatic start-up of LAVI. The following activities were implemented during the inception period:

### **A. Program Start-Up**

During the inception period of November 25 through December 31, DAI/LAVI identified a permanent office space to be used as LAVI office in Monrovia. The start-up team led by the senior project manager Milica Panic held a kick-off meeting and work planning review session with LAVI's Liberian staff to enable the staff gain a shared understanding of LAVI's overall goals, expectations and challenges, as well as to identify the specific priority work plan activities for the first ten months of project implementation. The meeting also allowed the staff to discuss and create a coordinated approach to effectively engage project stakeholder, and finally to highlight individual staff responsibilities and associated levels of effort for the

first annual work plan. LAVI's Liberian staff who attended the meeting along with Milica Panic and Aaron Sheldon are as follows:

- James Whawhen, ME&L Director
- Kemo Sheriff, Finance and Administrative Manager
- Sahr Nouwah, Coalition and Advocacy Officer
- Trokon Tarr, Communications and Outreach Specialist
- Dominic Kweme, Organizational Development Specialist
- Mark Bassie, M&E Specialist

At the end of the meeting, the team agreed on a common understanding of LAVI's overall vision and first year priorities. LAVI staff provided feedback on the first annual work plan draft and discussed the timeline for each activity. The team was also able to discuss a common stakeholder engagement strategy. Staff roles and responsibilities were clarified, and the timeline for staff full time employment was released.

The first monthly briefing with USAID was held on Dec 21.

## **B. Drafting of FY 2016 Annual Workplan and ME&L Plan**

As per LAVI's contract, DAI was required to submit LAVI's draft annual workplan and ME&L plan deliverables 45 days after contract award. To meet this deadline, DAI began drafting the annual work plan and ME&L plan in December 2015. Based on inputs from staff during the kick-off meeting, the team discussed specific activities that were targeted to be implemented during the course of Year One. As part of developing the ME&L plan, the LAVI team prepared a development hypothesis for the LAVI activity, a critical assumptions monitoring framework, performance indicators reference sheets and ME&L Task Schedule. The team also reviewed the baseline data and targets that were included the technical proposal. LAVI will finalize the work plan and draft ME&L plan following USAID's review and comments.

## **C. Administrative and Operations Management**

Senior Project Manager Milica Panic mobilized to Liberia within 10 days of contract award. The operational start-up team also included Start-Up Specialist Aaron Sheldon to provide administrative, logistical, and recruitment support. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (ME&L) Director, James Whawhen began working as an independent consultant on December 10, 2015 and will begin full-time on January 5, 2016. The post-award conference held on December 10, 2015 allowed DAI and USAID to discuss the vision for LAVI as well as contractual requirements and expectations.

In December, program staff identified permanent office space and worked to establish the LAVI office in Monrovia to serve as the base of operations. Additionally, local employment contracts were drafted and sent to local lawyer for approval. The Senior Program Manager also met with all personnel listed in proposal and discussed employment with LAVI. Procurement of all IT equipment was initiated for expected delivery to Liberia in the second quarter.

## **PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR QUARTER TWO**

In Quarter Two, LAVI will continue to implement its start-up activities, including:

## **Outreach**

- Identify candidates and nomination criteria for the Project Advisory Council, and support its formation and hold a kick-off meeting
- Host meetings and events to share program information and support partners to establish linkages

## **Technical Training and Analysis**

- Implement Network Analysis, Depth of Partnership tool, and 'Do No Harm' Analysis
- Conduct a Political Economy Analysis for the NRM/concessions theme
- Prepare a theory of change and actor analysis for NRM theme

## **Deliverables**

- Develop the *Branding Implementation and Marking Plan* and submit to USAID for approval
- Tailor DAI's comprehensive *Grants Manual* and submit to USAID for approval
- Submit Weekly Bullets to COR
- Hold USAID Monthly Briefs
- Submit Quarterly Financial and Accruals Reports

## **Human Resources, Operations, and Finance**

- Update DAI's *Field Operations Manual*
- Establish *Technical and Administrative Management Information System (TAMIS)*
- Customize DAI's *Field Accounting System (FAS)*
- Develop Human Resources guidelines, recruitment and compliance checklists, and interviewing and testing templates to support fair and competitive recruitment and personnel management
- Finalize all program staff recruitment (including mobilizing the Chief of Party and Capacity Development Director)
- Establish annual performance objective setting and evaluation cycle for program staff
- Complete procurement, delivery, and installation of all ICT equipment
- Conduct orientation for all LAVI project staff to use TAMIS, FAS, and other systems, and training on the fundamentals of DAI and USAID policies, including a comprehensive ethics training

LAVI will continue to engage with stakeholders and partners from the INGO community, trade unions, universities and the private sector. The meetings will be intended to expand LAVI's poll of partners and create more awareness of the program.

### **A. Key Upcoming Events**

- LAVI will hold a stakeholders meeting in the first month of Quarter Two to present LAVI's goals and objectives to the stakeholders. The meeting will also discuss ways to collaborate and strengthen partnerships among all stakeholders including CSOs, GoL institutions, private sector, INGOs, trade unions and universities.
- The first Advisory Council meeting will be held in the the second month of Quarter Two

## ANNEX I

### Meetings with Local Organizations and GoL Institutions-December 2015

No.	Local Organizations/GoL Institutions	Contact Person	Position	Phone #
1.	Internews	Paul James-Allen	Deputy Chief of Party	
2.	Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy (MLME)	Fred Johnson	Director	
3.	Forestry Development Authority (FDA)	Darlington Tuagben	Deputy Managing Director for Operations	
4.	Women in Peace-building Network (WIPNET)	Cecelia Danuweli		
5.	Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY)	Augustine S.M. Tamba	President	
6.	SMART Liberia	Ahmed Sirleaf	Executive Director	
7.	New African Research and Development Agency (NARDA)	Lancedell Matthews	Executive Director	
8.	National Civil Society Council (NCSC)	Josephine Greaves	President	
9.	Women NGO Secretariat (WONGOSOL)	Marpue M. Speare	Executive Director	
10.	Liberia Extractive Industries Transitional Initiative (LEITI)	Konah D. Karmoh Myer W. Saye, Sr.	Head of Secretariat Deputy Head of Secretariat	
11.	Institute for Research and Democratic Development (IREDD)	Harold M. Aidoo	Executive Director	
12.	Accountability Lab	Blair Glencorse Lawrence Yealue	Executive Director	
13.	Trust Africa	Kanio Bai Gbala	Program Specialist	
14.	Press Union of Liberia (PUL)	Abdullai Kamara	President	