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USAID/LIBERIA GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT SUPPORT (USAID–GEMS) PROJECT

FINAL REPORT: JULY 2011–JUNE 2016



JUNE 2016

This report is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this report were prepared by IBI International under contract number 669-C-00-11-00050. The views expressed herein are the sole responsibility of IBI International and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

Cover Photo: Dr. Amos Sawyer (left) and USAID-GEMS Chief of Party Vicki Cooper (right) speak about the important role of the Governance Commission at the USAID-GEMS End-of-Project Symposium in June 2016

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ACRONYMS

ACH	Automated Clearing House
AfDB	African Development Bank
AER	Annual Economic Review
AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
AM	Asset management
ASYCUDA	Automated System for Customs Data
ATSWA	Accounting Technician Scheme of West Africa
BOC	Bureau of Concessions
CAG	Comptroller and Accountant General
CBL	Central Bank of Liberia
CCN	Cooperating Country National
CDP	Capacity Development Plan
CFMA	Community Forestry Management Agreement
CIMS	Concessions Information Management System
CIO	Chief Information Officer
CMA	Central Management Agency
CMC	Change Management Committee
CMM	Change Management and Measurement
COP	Chief of Party
CSA	Civil Service Agency
DBDP	Department of Budget and Development Planning
DDG	Deputy Director General
DEO	District Education Officer
DG	Director General
DOB	Department of Budget
DOR	Department of Revenue
DR	Disaster Recovery
EMT	Economic Management Team
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESD	Employment Services Directorate
EVD	Ebola viral disease
FDA	Forestry Development Authority

FEA	Federal Enterprise Architecture
FM	Financial management
FMPPs	Financial Management Policies and Procedures Manuals
FY	Fiscal year
GC	Governance Commission
GEMAP	Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program
GOL	Government of Liberia
GSA	General Services Agency
HICD	Human & Institutional Capacity Development, USAID
HR	Human resources
HRM	Human Resources Management
ICAG	Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana
ICT	Information and communication technology
IFMIS	Integrated Financial Management Information System
IGRs	Internally generated revenues
IMCC	Inter-Ministerial Concessions Commission
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
IRC	CSA Internal Reform Committee
ISP	Internet service provider
IT	Information technology
ITIL	Information Technology Infrastructure Library
ITSM	IT Services Management
IXP	Internet Exchange Point
LAN	Local Area Network
LATP	Liberia Accountancy Training Program
LICPA	Liberian Institute of Certified Public Accountants
LIMPAC	Liberia Macroeconomic Analysis Centre
LIPA	Liberia Institute of Public Administration
LISGIS	Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services
LRA	Liberia Revenue Authority
LTA	Liberia Telecommunications Authority
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MAC	Ministry, agency, and commission

MBRS	Merit Based Recruitment System
MCSA	Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate
MDA	Mineral development agreement
MFAU	Macro Fiscal Analysis Unit
MFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
MFR	Management and Functional Reviews
MLME	Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy
MNO	Mobile Network Operator
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
MOE	Ministry of Education
MFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
MOHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MOPT	Ministry of Post and Telecommunications
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPW	Ministry of Public Works
MSD	Management Services Directorate
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
MYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
NBC	National Bureau of Concessions
NCC	National Concessions Cadastre
NEC	National Elections Commission
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NIC	National Investment Commission
NREN	National Research and Education Network
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OJT	On-the-job training
OGI	Open Government Initiative
PFM	Public financial management
PFMRCU	Public Financial Management Reforms Coordinating Unit
PM	Performance Management
PMO	Project Management Office
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PMS	Performance Management System

PPCC	Public Procurement and Concessions Commission
PPP	Public-private partnership
PSMP	Public Sector Modernization Project
PYP	Presidential Young Professionals
PYPP	President's Young Professionals Program
SDC	Service Delivery Charter
SLA	Service level agreement
STTA	Short-term technical assistance
TAS	Tax Automation System
TOR	Terms of reference
TOT	Training of trainers
UBA	United Bank of Africa
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USAID-GEMS	USAID Governance and Economic Management Support Project
WHO	World Health Organization

I. INTRODUCTION

This report covers the activities and project operations of the United States Agency for International Development Governance and Economic Management Support (USAID-GEMS) project from July 1, 2011, through July 30, 2016, and constitutes the project's Final Report. Implementing partner IBI International guided the work based on annual work plans that were approved by USAID and the Government of Liberia (GOL) partners. Progress was tracked in the performance management plan (PMP).

The overarching objective of USAID-GEMS is anchored by USAID/Liberia Development Objective 1: "More effective, accountable, and inclusive governance." The project objective was to "support Ministries, Agencies and Commissions (MACs) perform targeted public sector functions more effectively" through results-focused assistance.

USAID-GEMS provided technical assistance to improve performance through strengthening public human and institutional capacity and utilizing in-depth assessments and performance improvement methodologies. By working within the framework of the National Capacity Development Strategy (NCDS), collaborating with the Governance Commission (GC), coordinating with international partners involved in public sector reform, and effectively collaborating with selected GOL MACs, USAID-GEMS developed and conducted an economic governance capacity building program to achieve the following objectives:

Objective 1: Management systems and key organizational functions—financial and human resources management, procurement, and assets management—of participating GOL institutions conform to international good practice standards.

Objective 2: The institutional capacity of the Liberia Institute of Public Administration (LIPA) is enhanced to provide targeted training that will improve the capacity and performance of GOL personnel responsible for key management functions.

Objective 3: GOL institutions are able to use information and communication technology (ICT) more effectively and efficiently to further Liberia's development objectives as articulated in the National Telecommunications and ICT Policy.

Objective 4: Management of natural resource concessions is more efficient, effective, and transparent through clarified roles and responsibilities of relevant GOL institutions and the introduction of management and oversight tools utilizing automated ICT-based systems.

Objective 5: GOL supports and utilizes expanded electronic banking mechanisms with accurate and timely processing and reconciliation of GOL payments and receipts to and from vendors, businesses, civil servants, and the public, utilizing mobile technologies where feasible.

The institutions supported and the areas of capacity building support were the following:

	INSTITUTION	FM & EM	AM	PM	HRM	IT/ICT	M&E	TRG	CM	PMTS
1	Civil Service Agency	X	X	X	X ²	X				
2	General Services Agency	X	X ²	X	X	X				
3	Public Procurement and Concessions Commission	X	X	X ²	X	X				
4	Liberia Institute of Public Administration	X	X	X	X	X	X	X ²		
5	Ministry of Post and Telecommunications	X	X	X	X	X ²				
6	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning	X ²								X
7	Governance Commission	X	X	X	X	X	X ²			
8	National Bureau of Concessions	X	X	X	X	X	X		X ²	
9	National Investment Commission	X	X	X	X	X			X	
10	Forestry Development Authority	X	X	X	X	X			X	
11	Environmental Protection Agency	X	X	X	X	X			X	
12	Ministry of Agriculture	X	X	X	X	X			X	
13	Ministry of Youth and Sports	X	X	X	X	X				
14	Ministry of Education	X	X	X						
15	Ministry of Health	X								
16	Central Bank of Liberia									X ²
17	Liberia Revenue Authority									X ²

Note: X² means support provided to core functions in that area. FM & EM = Financial and Economic Management, AM = Assets Management, PM = Procurement Management, HRM = Human Resource Management, IT/ICT = Information Technology/Information & Communications Technology, M&E = Monitoring and Evaluation, TRG = Training, CM = Concessions Management, and PMTS = Payment Systems.

THE CONTEXT

In January 2006, a democratically elected government began the process of rebuilding a country and people severely impacted by a devastating civil war. The process of rebuilding governmental systems included support from a group of donor partners—among them USAID—to establish sound fiscal and budgetary management within seven Government of Liberia (GOL) institutions under the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP). A key feature of the project was to embed advisors in the targeted institutions to assist the GOL in curbing unauthorized expenditures and agreements while setting the stage for establishing proper financial management procedures. Over four years the GEMAP project achieved not only its original objective but also others identified over the course of the project, and laid the foundation for Liberia's qualification for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative.

In 2010, as GEMAP was preparing to close and the overall progress made in financial management was being reviewed, two findings influenced USAID's decision to design a successor economic governance project. First, despite the political will articulated by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's administration and the progress in GEMAP institutions, major economic governance challenges remained across the GOL, primarily due to a lack of human and institutional capacity to institutionalize and sustain the policy-driven initiatives the GOL had introduced to improve public sector governance. Among these was an inability to align organizational structures and resources with institutional mandates and an inability to effectively establish, implement, and sustain streamlined management and administrative systems to enable them to deliver their mandates effectively.

Second, the 2010 GOL National Capacity Development Strategy established that the civil service did not have enough people with the requisite skills, competencies, and work culture to deliver responsive, effective and efficient services to Liberians. Most current civil servants had stayed in Liberia and survived the conflict. They were not only traumatized but also lacked the supervision they needed to fully understand their job responsibilities and impact. Furthermore, they were placed in positions for which they were not trained or qualified by faction leaders who had allocated MACs among themselves during the peace process, jeopardizing the GOL's ability to deliver on its mandate.

The GOL's commitment to reform its public administration systems was demonstrated by the passage of two laws: (1) the Public Procurement and Concessions Act, enacted in 2005 and amended in 2010; and (2) the Public Financial Management Act, enacted in 2009, with related regulations adopted implemented in 2010. The PFM Law became the focus of Liberia's efforts at ensuring transparency and accountability in PFM. The ability to implement these reforms depended to a large extent on civil servants who had survived the conflict.

USAID designed the GEMS project to definitively align the NCDS with GEMAP and build on the progress it had made. Its overarching goal would be to equip Liberian leaders and institutions so that they can efficiently and effectively manage the affairs of the state. This would be done by investing in the knowledge, skills, and productivity of individuals, building strong institutions to drive and sustain reform, and promoting values and norms that foster social cohesion and equity. Capacity development thus became an integral part of the fabric of Liberia's national vision and development agenda of Liberia.

THE USAID-GEMS APPROACH

USAID-GEMS used a modified version of the USAID Human & Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) framework to focus on administrative functions within MACs to deliver project results. This

approach had four phases, all based on cross-cutting requirements of obtaining and maintaining stakeholder agreement, remaining flexible, and integrating change management processes.

Obtain and Maintain Stakeholder Agreement

Though genuine stakeholder agreement was considered critical to success, how to obtain it differed for each MAC, and doing so often required months—for one it took years. It was necessary to identify key stakeholders; their interest and impact on the project elements; consideration of technical staff (regardless of seniority within the organization) as key stakeholders; recognition of changes in “agreements” during the project; continuous sharing of information on activities, successes, challenges, and outcomes; and staying focused on building a relationship of trust with technical staff.

Four Phases

The four phases that enabled USAID-GEMS to achieve its objectives in 17 GOL institutions were to

1. Assess to establish baseline and gaps,
2. Design roadmaps that lead to solution formulation,
3. Implement solutions that close gaps, and
4. Sustain the performance improvements.

Assessments for the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP), the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA), and the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) were conducted to identify areas where the project could offer assistance. The assessment teams used tools developed by the technical advisors that established baseline performance in terms of the Public Financial Management Act and the Public Procurement and Concessions Act, the GOL’s established standards in these areas. For assets management, human resource management, and information and communications technology, the comparison was made with international good practice standards because the GOL standard had not been established. The legal instruments that supported each institution were used in considering institutional performance. In each case assessments included analysis of the institutional context, visioning sessions with senior management, entity and department structure, staffing, work relationships and culture, and the institutional work environment.

Gaps between actual and desired performance were analyzed to determine, to the extent possible, their root causes as they related to three areas:

1. Human Capacity (skills, experience, and the knowledge invested in individuals)
 - a. Capacity of staff to perform the functions required
 - b. Capacity of internal and external influencers and users of outputs
2. Institutional Capacity (capacity to deliver institutional mandates, such as processes and systems, technology, equipment, and internal management structures)
 - a. Performance effectiveness (doing the right things) and efficiency (doing the right things right)
 - b. Internal and external institutional capacity

3. Enabling Environment (factors that facilitate development of capacity: policies, procedures manuals, legal and regulatory environment, norms and values).
 - a. Internal and external influences

The assessments led to the **design** of roadmaps to assist in the identification of solutions to close the gaps in the human, institutional, and enabling environment, such as setting performance targets, ensuring that stakeholders agreed with the assessment, and signing a Memorandum of Understanding to solidify the relationship between the entity and the project.

The design was followed by **implementation** of the agreed solutions. This involved project staff engaging with MAC leaders and technical partners to ensure that everyone knew what to expect, drafting institutional work plans to enable the MACs to monitor performance, identifying focal points within GEMS and MACs for ease of communications, setting weekly on-the-job training (OJT) schedules with technical partners and honoring the schedule, setting up formal training schedules as required, providing equipment and tools to enable performance improvements, and—very important—setting, and as needed, revising policies, regulations, manuals, and handbooks for technical staff to retain as guides for the future. The hallmark of implementation was the use of OJT, learning by doing, which enabled the technical partners to improve their performance with regular guidance and support. This enhanced self-confidence and performance in all areas.

The final step was to **sustain** performance improvements by monitoring and evaluating (M&E) changes in terms of the baseline and the performance improvement targets. Solutions were revised based on M&E findings, OJT was reduced as capacity increased, and then the MAC was graduated when its performance met all checklist items. Support then transitioned to an as-needed basis, and the technical team encouraged staff of graduated MACs to support their colleagues in other MACs to improve performance. Internal and external stakeholders were surveyed to verify improvements and performance improvements were continuously assessed and modified as needed to sustain gains.

USAID-GEMS PMP INDICATORS: RESULTS

USAID-GEMS M&E incorporated four elements:

1. Drafting and review of the Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP),
2. Data validation using customized tools,
3. The Performance Indicator Database System for quarterly and annual reporting, and
4. Data Quality Assessments (DQAs) undertaken by a USAID M&E contractor.

The project PMP was revised three times, in 2011, 2012, and 2014, each time with the approval of USAID/Liberia. In May 2014, USAID's Liberia Monitoring and Evaluation Project conducted a DQA for GEMS and determined that the 55 PMP indicators were far too many. In September 2014, USAID-GEMS embarked on a significant review of its PMP. In consultation with USAID/Liberia, the PMP was reduced to 33 indicators, each with data collection/validation tools. The frequency of data collection varied for different indicators: 14 were collected quarterly, 11 semi-annually, 6 annually, and 2 every two years.

In March 2015 and September 2015 USAID-GEMS conducted a comprehensive data validation exercise for the new indicators using structured tools, and it was confirmed, that the majority of data previously

reported were correct. Through its M&E contractor, USAID conducted the second DQA in June 2015 and determined that

- Data on each indicator was highly visible in the project’s quarterly report.
- Use of the performance data tables in the quarterly report makes the data more accessible.
- More regular internal data verification exercises and stronger mechanisms for detecting data errors were recommended.
- Also recommended was more coordination between the M&E unit and relevant program staff; data are reviewed with the different advisors every quarter.
- All recommendations for improving data quality from the last DQA had been implemented.

The USAID-GEMS M&E system thus produced valid and reliable quarterly and annual data for decision making and met USAID reporting requirements.

Nearly all indicators for measuring achievement of the project results registered significant improvements (statistically where applicable) from the 2011/12 baseline value to June 2016 values. In comparison with PMP targets, 25% were exceeded, another 47% were met, 11% were significantly met, and 7% were fairly met; there were 2% of targets that had poor performance and 8% were not met.

It can be concluded that 90% of USAID-GEMS targets agreed upon with USAID were substantially met. This implies that USAID-GEMS interventions have helped the targeted MACs to perform the targeted public service functions more effectively.

Table 1: PMP Targets Achieved by USAID-GEMS, Number and Percent				
% of the Target Met	No. of Targets	% of Targets	Cumulative	Performance Interpretation
over 120%	24	25%	25%	Targets exceeded
80%-120%	45	47%	72%	Targets met
67% <80%	10	11%	83%	Targets significantly met
50%<67%	7	7%	90%	Targets fairly met
30%<50%	2	2%	92%	Targets poorly met
less 30%	8	8%		Targets not met
All targets set	96	100%		

Of the eight targets that were not met, several were related to the building management and maintenance component of assets management. Approval and implementation of these were delayed because the General Services Agency (GSA) was one of the lead entities in the response to Ebola Viral Disease, which was its priority for a considerable time. Following the EVD they placed more emphasis on other components of improved assets management.

USAID-GEMS PROJECT RESULTS BY OBJECTIVE

Objective I: GOL Management Systems

The focus of Objective I was to build the capacity of management systems and key organizational functions of participating GOL institutions to conform either to national standards defined in laws, regulations, and guidelines or to international good practice standards. USAID-GEMS support targeted financial management, human resource management, procurement management, and assets management.

USAID-GEMS considered its support for implementing reforms in PFM, human resource management, procurement management, and assets management as one system that was critical to effective PFM reform. The effective implementation of these management systems by the central management agencies (CMAs) responsible—the MFDP, the Civil Service Agency (CSA), the Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC), and the GSA—are all inextricably linked to Liberia’s PFM performance.

The CSA is responsible for recruiting and managing civil servants, a category which represented 49% of Liberia’s FY 15/16 recurrent budget. The PPCC is responsible for regulating public procurement and maximizing its economy and efficiency to obtain the best value for public expenditures. Goods, services, and other items represented 46% of the FY15/16 recurrent budget, and along with millions in the Public Sector Investment Budget these costs are expended through procurement processes. The GSA is responsible for monitoring and managing all fixed and movable government assets, as well as leases. Although capitalized when purchased, vehicles, equipment, buildings, furniture, fixtures, generators, etc. are critical for government operations. An assets registry and inventory information are necessary for both disposal and budgeting for replacement, management, and maintenance. Effective and efficient processes and procedures related to the mandates of these institutions are directly correlated to the government’s ability to manage public finances.

Financial Management

The Public Financial Management (PFM) Act of Liberia was passed in 2009. It provides the framework for budget preparation, approval, and execution; borrowing and public debt; government guarantees, and aid management. The related regulations were drafted in 2010, and law and regulations were published for use in July 2011. The plan and processes to implement Liberia’s first financial management reform began at the same time as the GEMS project.

GEMS drafted Financial Management Policies and Procedures Manuals (FPPM) and they were approved by senior management of fourteen MACS. The FPPMs comply with the PFM Law and Regulations, the PPCC Act, and the generic Financial Management Manual issued by the Chartered Accounts, Ghana. The manuals cover the legal, institutional, and systems frameworks for financial management, simplifying the various functions and procedures.

Accuracy and completeness of financial reporting improved through the use of Comprehensive Financial Reporting templates. Among the MACs that produced their FY2014/2015 annual financial statements using the new template were the PPCC, LIPA, GC, the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MOPT), the National Bureau of Concessions (NBC), and CSA. All GOL MACs will use the new template for quarterly financial reporting for their FY 2015/2016 comprehensive annual financial reports, further improving transparency and accountability for all government financial resources.

More timely financial reporting enables the GOL to make better-informed decisions. The PFM Law requires timely financial reporting, and by March 2016, 11 MACSs had prepared and submitted their most recent quarterly report on time. Provision and use of accounting software was what enabled timely submission of financial reports.

The budgets drafted by USAID-GEMS partner MACs cover all sources and uses of funds. The Department of Budget and Development Planning (DBDP) adopted the use of essential Budget Summary Tables for budget documentation to enhance transparency and the comparability of the GOL budget to other countries. Within the MFDP, LIPA, the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS), the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW), the Ministry of Education (MOE), and the Ministry of Public Works (MPW), the skills of staff in budget costing and performance-based budgeting have been enhanced so that they can become trainers for other MACs. This will improve the quality medium-term expenditure frameworks (MTEFs) in future budgets. The CSA is responsible for human resource (HR) management in the Civil Service, but GOL institutions lacked CSA guidance on HR policies, procedures, job descriptions, job competences, grading structure, and job classifications for effective recruiting and performance management systems. They undertook no HR planning and very little merit-based recruitment. Without a strong and competent GOL agency to manage GOL human resources, MACs were free to do whatever they considered appropriate in managing civil servants.

Human Resources

Staff at CSA and key MACS have now drafted more than 3,500 robust job descriptions for 32 institutions. Job descriptions are being issued to all professional staff, with copies in their personnel files. The job descriptions are used for performance planning and evaluation, and civil servants have a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities. At the CSA, the job descriptions were evaluated and each job incorporated into the CSA Grading Structure. This has enabled processes to begin standardizing pay for all jobs.

Improved competencies of CSA and MAC HR Directors. CSA employees have enhanced capacity in all key HR areas and have organized and delivered training to other institutions on HR planning, the Performance Management System, and drafting job descriptions. HR directors in USAID-GEMS-targeted MACS are demonstrating their skills in these systems and processes.

The CSA Internal Reform Committee (IRC) ensures an inclusive reform process. CSA has streamlined and reinforced its work processes by, for instance, instituting a more inclusive and efficient decision-making process, a more formal approach to regular meetings, and a formal monitoring and reporting system.

CSA is using guiding documents to direct its reform. The CSA assessment identified 87 capacity gaps and the associated causes; 37 solutions were made priorities for immediate implementation. The CSA 2015-18 Strategic Plan highlights five major areas of focus based on CSA's mandates. A Service Delivery Charter outlines the quality standards for provision of CSA services and the rights and responsibilities of CSA's stakeholders. A three-year Capacity Development Plan (CDP) was created to build staff capacity to implement the strategic plan and improve performance. The assessment revealed that on average only 55% of CSA employees have the qualifications, skills, and competencies required for the job they are expected to perform. Priority capacity- building interventions and a first-year annual training action plan are now being applied.

CSA has begun to implement the Performance Management System (PMS) it drafted. The goal of the PMS is to establish a high-performance culture within the civil service that will improve effectiveness and results, build employee capacity, and enhance communication and information-sharing between employees and supervisors. Understanding of the PMS and training was demonstrated by the HR directors of CSA, GSA, MYS, LIPA, MOA, and several other non-GEMS-supported MACs, through facilitated in-house PMS trainings for their supervisors. About 14 MACs have successfully piloted PMS, including all nine that were supported by USAID-GEMS. A *Performance Management Policy Manual* was published to guide HR practitioners and supervisors in how to apply the PMS.

GOL MACs have improved their management of employee records. The manual records system was standardized and enhanced for all MACs and, within eight, an electronic human resource management system (HRMS) for managing employee records management was installed. The file-tracking matrix resulted in an increased collection and filing of key documents for each employee. However, completeness of employee records is still a problem for most MACs, particularly ministries.

CSA has a comprehensive *Human Resources Policy Manual for the Civil Service CSA*. GOL institutions and staff are now aware of the terms, conditions, and requirements of employment as civil servants.

CSA now has a process for migrating staff to their positions on the grading structure. The process was piloted in MYS to establish whether the CSA and MACs were ready to move employees to the new grading structure based on the job classification exercise. The pilot revealed major problems that could indicate the situation across the GOL. Most staff files contained no evidence that they had taken and passed the Civil Service Examination that certifies an employee as a bona fide civil servant. Based on this eligibility requirement, of the 165 employees on the MYS personnel and payroll listing of the MYS, with 165 employees, the pilot found that only 1 qualified as a civil. Also problematic were inaccuracies in personnel listing, discrepancies in the titles of the same job holders in different records, seven different civil service salary, records on general allowances not available from the MAC, and weak staff capacity in the CSA Employment Services Directorate. Clearly, CSA would have to make fundamental decisions before and during any migration exercise. A work chart, *Process for Migration of Jobs*, was therefore drafted to assist CSA in the next steps for improving HR management and putting in place the Medium-Term Pay Strategy.

Assets Management

The GSA is responsible for all GOL assets and property management; it formulates and applies policies, systems, processes, and procedures so that it can manage assets with accountability, transparency, and integrity. The institutional assessments revealed that the GSA and MACs were operating without any structured systems, processes, or and procedures for managing assets and property. There was no centralized leadership and most MACs had no internal guidelines. Both individual and institutional capacity to deliver assets and property management effectively were limited.

Asset management (AM) staff in the MACs and GSA monitors are now trained and performing the required duties. Previously assets and property management staff were generally marginalized, unguided, untrained, and unmotivated. Weekly on-the-job training (OJT) throughout the project has increased individual capacity. For instance, both vehicle and generator preventive maintenance have improved, and there are fewer equipment failures.

Targeted MACs have assets registers and are maintaining vehicles. As an example of their improved capacity, the GSA AM monitors in USAID-GEMS-targeted MACs have helped the MAC AM staff to initiate and maintain asset registers. MACs are now managing their fleets to GSA standards. About 90% of the project-targeted MACs have updated assets registers and all are maintaining at least 50% of their vehicles to GSA-approved standards, using vehicle maintenance schedules. Improved maintenance extends useful vehicle life. GSA AM monitors have begun to apply their training outside the targeted MACs to support others in creating assets registers and inventories.

GSA AM operations have been restructured. An Assets Management Department has been created and **given** specific functions and a new director was appointed. Intensive training for GSA monitors followed; they are now expected to bring AM data return spreadsheets to the GSA monthly for analysis. A new Assets Disposal Unit has in place necessary processes and tools to dispose of assets. A comprehensive GOL *asset management operations and disposal manual* has been drafted and GSA is coordinating creation of the National Disposal Committee.

GSA now has processes and tools for managing all AM disciplines. There are tools and templates for AM data collection, coding, and storage. There are spreadsheet templates for asset registers, inventory, fleet, and other relevant forms and documentation for use in the different AM categories.

GSA and asset monitors now have technology tools. GSA has a national digital AM system that enables them to effectively perform their role in having a central assets register of GOL assets and properties. The software utilizes the IFMIS platform within the MFDP and can be integrated with it. Computers have been provided to the GSA for rolling out the system and it has been piloted at GSA, LIPA, MOPT, GC, and MYS.

GSA has specific policies and procedures manuals to guide management of assets and property management. Fleet Management Policy, Asset Management, and Equipment Maintenance Guidelines, GOL property disposal guidelines, and real estate management and maintenance guidelines have been distributed. Published AM procedures now cover ‘cradle to grave’ asset management: procurement, use, and disposal. GSA AM monitors are trained to give MACs day-to-day guidance and support in all areas of assets management.

Procurement Management

The PPCC is the regulator responsible for ensuring transparency, competitiveness, and compliance with the PPCA. Although the PPCA was enacted in 2006 and amended in 2010, neither the PPCC nor the MACs had a thorough understanding of the Act’s requirements or how they should be applied in practice. The PPCC had no processes or procedures for undertaking its regulatory functions; procurement practitioners had inadequate planning and documentation and no procedural guidance, and procurement committees and end users were not aware of their roles in the procurement process.

Procurement planning and implementation has improved across the GOL, especially the capacity of the PPCC. Mandatory procurement planning workshops were introduced before the annual procurement plan hearings and the quality improved to the extent that PPCC no longer requires the annual clinic. Procurement plans are streamlined, practical, understood by practitioners, and used by the MACs as the guide for annual procurements.

The *Handbook for Procurement Practitioners* enables continuous improvement. The handbook, which provides guidance on all procurement-related matters, is used as a desktop guide.

Framework contracting has made procurements more efficient. Framework contracting not only makes purchases of common goods and services more efficient, it also enables continuity of service when the national budget has not been approved.

The PPCC and MACs now have available tools for assessing procurement management systems. The PPCC has procurement compliance monitoring tools that enable it to assess the transparency, accountability, and competitiveness of procurement systems.

Better documentation has made procurement transactions more accountable and auditable. A procurement documentation review and analysis system is now used to assess each file against the set of documents necessary to make a file complete. Of USAID-GEMS-targeted MACs in 2013, only one met the required 80% on quality of documentation but by 2016 eight had. Procurement practitioners as well as internal auditors can use the tool for self-assessments.

Use of correct procurement methods has improved. Correct methods assure transparency, competitiveness, and value for money.

A Procurement Perception Survey in 2013 established a procurement quality of service and perception baseline for PPCC clients, and a follow-up survey was done in 2016. The objective was to use perception as a proxy for how the quality and integrity of procurement are seen to have improved as corruption was minimized.

In 2013, only 21% of clients saw the procurement system as corruption-free. By 2016, 56% of all clients (excluding media) saw it as corruption-free. Because USAID-GEMS was the only initiative providing continuous, focused support to public procurement during this period, it is reasonable to conclude that project interventions significantly contributed to the 35% improvement in perceptions that the system was corruption-free.

Objective 2: Institutional Capacity of LIPA Enhanced

The expected outcome of support to LIPA was defined as “The institutional capacity of LIPA is enhanced to provide targeted training that will improve the capacity and performance of GOL personnel responsible for key management functions.”

LIPA is the responsible for training and advisory services to build all civil service capacity in Liberia. USAID has actively supported LIPA since its inception in the early 1970s. The USAID-GEMS project was designed with a requirement to work closely with LIPA to help it build capacity in the civil service and identify and implement the short-, medium-, and long-term priorities that would be most useful in achieving LIPA’s own objectives.

During the Liberian Civil War LIPA collapsed. From 1990 to 1995 there was no training, no staff, and all operations ceased. Library collections were looted; only three books were left. After the war the Board of Directors was not reconstituted. During the post-war transitional arrangements, the LIPA Act was set aside, and by 1995 the governance structure of LIPA had changed.

Once the project began, LIPA’s enrollment more than tripled. In 2011/12 when project assistance began there were only 206 students; by the end of the first year of USAID-GEMS, assistance enrollment more than tripled.

LIPA is generating more revenue internally. LIPA's Enterprise Fund is derived from fees and other payments charged for LIPA courses, consultancies, and other products and services. The growth in LIPA revenue has been steady and closely tracks the number of trainees enrolled.

LIPA's research and consultancy unit is now moving forward on mandated functions. LIPA drafted 12 new business proposals between January and December 2015 using the capability statement, proposal development, and costing guidelines provided with USAID-GEMS assistance. There is no evidence that LIPA ever submitted proposals in the past.

LIPA has improved its ability to be a self-sustaining institution providing quality instruction and training courses to the GOL and the private sector. All LIPA trainers apply strategies that make teaching more effective with adult learners. Preparation of LIPA's Training Calendar, course brochures, and other pre-training preparations is more timely, making training management more effective. Program review and development of course modules and syllabi are more professionally done, thus enhancing delivery and record-keeping. The LIPA Library can now more effectively support teaching, learning, research, and consultancy for internal and external stakeholders because of better materials, equipment, and structure. The Board of Directors is performing its oversight and guidance role. An active Academic Board is taking responsibility for enrollment management, exam administration, and scheduling of courses.

LIPA has improved facilities, equipment, and technology to enhance training. LIPA's facilities and training environment—offices, classrooms, and restrooms—have been renovated. It now has 56 computers with software; 4 each of servers, scanners, and network printers; 5 LCD projectors for classrooms; and 2 giant copiers. A battery bank enables continued training when public power is not available.

LIPA has demonstrated its ability to institutionalize certification training. The Liberia Accounting Training Program (LATP) was piloted for one year; its objective is to improve the skills and competence of accounting staff in the public sector of Liberia through attainment of professional qualifications as Chartered Accountants. In Phase I, 4 candidates passed the Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana (ICAG) Level 4 Exams to become Chartered Accountants, and 6 passed all Level 3 exams. The confidence and desire of students to pursue professional accounting has been growing and, through March 2016, another 9 candidates had passed. The total number of candidates who passed the international qualification examinations in Liberia is now 13.

LIPA courses are now better-designed. Adult Learning techniques have been integrated into courses and curriculum development, and 28 courses have been reviewed and improved. LIPA instructors have enhanced their competencies in curriculum design, modules and materials development, and application of modern training techniques and methodologies aligned with Liberian needs.

LIPA has an organization-wide program monitoring and evaluation system. Its program results framework promotes heightened quality assurance capacity and provides information for reporting and decision making at all levels.

LIPA's Strategic Sustainability Plan is a clear road map for institutional sustainability. The shared vision and strategy have helped LIPA to improve policy direction and governance and the new deputy directors general and new work plans are aligned to the strategy.

The LIPA Story: Building Capacity to Build Capacity: Understanding the historical context of LIPA has helped make it possible to identify the causes of some current challenges. Although documents on LIPA history were not available, other credible historical documents and interviews were the basis for *The LIPA Story*. Written by the senior training advisor, *The LIPA Story* sets out the history and context of the institution and summarizes the support from USAID-GEMS and its recommendations.

Objective 3: GOL Institutions Using ICT More Effectively

This objective is to enable GOL institutions to use ICT more effectively and efficiently to further Liberia's development objectives as articulated in the National Telecommunications and ICT Policy.

Effective implementation of the policy within MAC operations enhances the efficiency of support provided to administrative areas in project Objective 1 as well as service delivery across government. The MOPT is responsible for implementing the policy.

For the first time within the GOL a “mini” shared service center infrastructure platform for MOPT is now deployed at the Data Centre of the Liberia Telecommunications Authority (LTA). The platform allows GOL to provision a suite of initial government-to-government e-Services, to improve health, reduce redundancy, and increased the robustness of MAC ICT platforms and administrative support systems, while providing extra capacity for other services as GOL identifies the needs. Other shared services, providing cost savings and improved capability for all institutions, make it possible for MACs to easily improve websites and e-Services and to make their own computer-based systems more robust and disaster-prepared. The operational efficiencies of some targeted MACs have been further augmented through the commissioning of systems to automate exams at CSA, maintain an electronic library at LIPA, and improve the web-presence at the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the MOPT.

An e-Government Strategy enables the government to use ICTs to improve the performance of public entities and help them achieve their objectives. The strategy reinforces the concept that the GOL can use ICT more effectively to provide improved services when all government entities are guided by a clear e-Government strategy that provides a common plan and a common set of methods. The strategy crystallizes the policy vision into objectives, presents priority e-Government initiatives and projects, identifies targets and milestones to facilitate control of performance, and raises accountability by clearly defining the responsibilities of key stakeholders. The Chief Information Officer (CIO) Program, e-Government, and related strategies respond to MOPT's vision of “Harnessing the potential of ICT to bring the Government closer to the people through effective governance, improved service delivery and socioeconomic growth.” A Communication Strategy helps the GOL to encourage adoption of the e-Government Strategy and helps stakeholders to understand their roles and responsibilities in participating.

The National Enterprise Architecture and Interoperability Framework functions as the detailed blueprint for all ICT in government. These will improve standardization and increase interoperability between MACs and synergies with accompanying cost savings and efficiencies. It was endorsed in FY14 but piloting was postponed due to the EVD epidemic.

Liberia's Open Budget Initiative is demonstrated through the electronic billboard. The billboard, situated on the grounds of the MFDP, is intended to demonstrate that GOL is willing to be transparent in its management of public funds. Integrated into the MFDP computer network, it gives the ministry a flexible new channel for communicating with an audience of citizens who may wish to

understand and track government progress but may be hampered by low levels of literacy and numeracy, and little access to newspapers or the Internet.

IT Service Desks are operating in 13 MACs. Expanded support to MAC IT units has demonstrated to their management that IT unit performance, and recognition of their value, could be improved by introducing into them a service orientation. The CSA osTicket Service Desk installation, for instance, was extended to support operational service incidence reporting for mobile money payments to civil servants.

Eight IT technical staff, two of them women, are Microsoft certified. Formal, OJT, and off-site training were provided to IT technical staff continuously to encourage self-sufficiency while ensuring that the USAID-GEMS-supported IT platforms continue to provide a good quality of service to the MACs. Thirty IT staff from 13 MACs were given a foundational and intermediate understanding and practice of system and network administration with modules on components of Microsoft Server, Cisco, and Cyberoam. Eight passed the external examination and received the Microsoft certification.

ICT platforms and components improve efficiency at 16 MACs. To ensure that MACs had the necessary technical environment to safely and securely perform administrative support functions effectively, such as financial management, procurement, human resources, assets and fleet management, and M&E, the project provided computers, software, and servers. For LIPA, NBC, GSA, CSA, and MFDP, the project also supported the operational functions.

Technology infrastructure of servers, computers, peripherals, network connectors, software, and other special items was provided to 16 institutions to improve work efficiency. A total of 353 computers were provided, with licensed software installed. The 40 Chrome Book computers provided to the CSA allow candidates to sit for the CSA exams remotely. CSA now has the platform on which on-line testing will be situated. This online eService is based on the widely used Moodle free and open source learning platform, which is installed on the CSA institutional server.

Battery banks are now installed at LIPA, the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) and MOPT to ensure business continuity and operations for the core ICT platform during power outages. These battery banks sustain operations not only through short fluctuations in power supply, such as during generator switch-overs, but for multi-hour periods when power is severely disrupted.

ICT Infrastructure for the Liberian Revenue Authority (LRA): USAID-GEMS provided ICT infrastructure to the LRA for 15 decentralized revenue collection windows, some of them new. They received 33 computers, 28 printers, 6 microwaves, and other furniture and equipment to make the windows functional.

Objective 4: Management of Natural Resource Concessions

The expected outcome from this objective is that management of natural resource concessions will be made more efficient, effective, and transparent by introducing management and oversight tools, such as automated ICT-based systems.

Comprehensive management and monitoring of natural resource concessions are vitally important in Liberia because the sector's jobs and revenues have a direct impact on the ability of the government to achieve its development objectives. The NBC, the primary institution supported, is responsible for the M&E of natural resource concessions.

The NBC Act was passed in September 2011 with the encouragement of donor partners who saw a need to effectively monitor the performance of natural resource concessions. Other USAID programs had previously supported the concession-related entities of the FDA, the MOA, and the Ministry of Lands, Mining, and Energy (MLME). USAID considered the NBC to have an important mandate.

Clarity in the mandates for concession-related entities has improved, although much must still be done to ensure their acceptance. The institutions with responsibility for specific elements of concessions were expanded without a related modification in all other legal frameworks. The Governance Commission now facilitates the continuing dialogue among all relevant entities to agree on modifications to legal instruments, and operating understandings until modifications are effected, to achieve harmonization in the sector. This requires a consistent, concerted effort because of entrenched positions within the institutions.

The NBC is fully operational. Before it existed, because no entity had comprehensive responsibility for monitoring concessions, the new bureau faced resistance from other institutions in the sector that did not consider its mandate to be either valid or useful. The dialogue on roles and responsibilities changed this perspective considerably.

NBC has an institutional strategic plan to guide its operational plans and activities. The strategic plan has a clear vision and mission, an organization structure that responds to the mandate, job descriptions, and an implementation plan.

The GOL has approved a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Policy to facilitate responses to the government's infrastructure requirements. The PPP Policy and related guidelines constitute the framework in which the private sector would provide a public service that is fundamentally a government responsibility. The challenge of conflicting legal instruments, roles, and responsibilities has impacted the NBC's ability to enforce the PPP policy.

Concessionaire reporting to the NBC now uses standardized templates. The NBC has four templates for reporting concession activity as required in contract agreements for mining, forestry, oil palm, and rubber. They are in fillable pdf format and can be retrieved from the NBC website.

The Roadmap for a National Concessions Cadastre (NCC) sets out the requirements for an automated system. The need for a national concessions cadastre was identified by the GOL and donors in documents and reports related to natural resources concessions and land issues. The primary need expressed was to alleviate the issuance of over-lapping concession licenses. Because the user requirements demanded a more robust system, the system capabilities were expanded and termed the Concessions Information Management System (CIMS). The CIMS design incorporated not only the NCC but also additional functionality, such as document and workflow management, and the capability to store and process tabular data from concessionaire reports. Phase I involved design and implementation of a prototype system to support basic concession-related functions in NBC, MOA, FDA, EPA and MLME (if desired).

The NBC has now officially launched the CIMS. Since the system was turned over to the NBC, the executive director has taken full responsibility as systems administrator for its use and future success. Three President's Young Professionals were trained over two years, are super users, and for sustainability have been absorbed as employees in the NBC, MOA, and FDA. EPA and MLME staff have been trained in its use and given user access. CIMS users can now easily input and find concessions data

and generate reports from it in various formats. Among the benefits of CIMS to the Government of Liberia are that it

- Enables full compliance with relevant GOL statutory and policy mandates.
- Simplifies required concession planning activities and the review of concession applications.
- Supports environmental and social impact analysis and environmental protection.
- Provides a resource for more effective monitoring of concessions and ensuring compliance with GOL laws and concession agreement terms.
- Allows access to concession-related information by GOL MACs, concessionaires, local officials, and the general public, which promotes transparency and data-sharing.

The Liberia National Concessions Portal is now a public document.

(<http://portals.flexicadastre.com/liberia/>). This portal is a major accomplishment for Liberia and provides unprecedented transparency on concessions. The portal provides a map view, concessionaire information, dates of agreements, and concessions area for each forestry, rubber, oil palm, oil and gas, and mining concession in the country.

Objective 5: Utilizing a National Payment System

This objective was to enable the GOL to support and utilize expanded electronic banking mechanisms with accurate and timely processing and reconciliation of GOL payments and receipts to and from vendors, businesses, civil servants, and the public, using mobile technologies where feasible.

The national payment system supports targeted efforts in areas that would improve the speed and accuracy of payment processes using technology. There were two streams of support: (1) national payment systems with the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) and MFDP Department of Revenue (subsequently Liberia Revenue Authority) and (2) mobile money for salary payments to civil servants.

ATM/POS services increase the security of the financial system by improving the infrastructure for payments. USAID-GEMS, on behalf of the CBL, provided the initial coordination with commercial banks on the setting document for the Automated Clearing House (ACH). The setting document standardizes data submissions from the commercial banks to allow for a uniform structure for account numbers.

Off-site bank supervision software mitigates the risk of systemic failure in the banking system. USAID-GEMS completed the roadmap for automated off-site bank supervision software, which was used for management of the procurement and installation process. The software facilitates the submission, surveillance, and analysis of the returns from financial institutions, which the CBL had been managing largely through a manual process.

Mobile money regulations pave the way for expansion of services. The CBL Board of Governors approved a National Mobile Money Strategy and Mobile Money Regulations drafted by USAID-GEMS. This provided the legal framework for network operators to justify investment and the necessary protection for mMoney users.

Revenue collection was enhanced and reconciliation problems resolved through the ASYCUDA / TAS Interface. USAID-GEMS facilitated the installation of an interface between the Tax

Automation System (TAS) and the Automated System for Customs Data Administration (ASYCUDA) at the MFDP then-Department of Revenue. The interface makes it possible to reconcile transactions posted to ASYCUDA the same day, which in turn allows daily upload of all revenue transactions from TAS into IFMIS.

Decentralized revenue windows make tax payments easier. Taxpayers can now pay their taxes through 15 new or enhanced decentralized revenue windows. The Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA), previously the MFDP/Department of Revenue, wanted to take tax collection closer to citizens and identified six existing windows that required additional equipment and nine new locations for complete furnishing and equipment.

The GOL has authorized use of mobile money for salary payments to rural teachers. The CSA and the MOE considered that mobile money would be helpful for rural employees but they did not understand the requirements for implementation and the MFDP was resistant to the approach. However, four pilots established that the use of mobile money creates fiscal space, is efficient and transparent, and saves time and money for both teachers and the government. The success of these pilots encouraged USAID to design a new project, mStar, specifically to support the GOL as it rolls out mobile money for salary payments and other e-payment opportunities.

Results of Special Projects

Senior Economic Advisor to Minister of Finance and Development Planning: In 2012 the Minister of Finance requested that GEMS provide the Ministry with a senior economic advisor to offer strategic advice. The advisor had three primary responsibilities: (1) reporting on the economy, (2) acting as technical backup to the economic management team, and (3) mentoring and coaching of economists.

The MFDP Annual Economic Review is a statutory document. The Annual Economic Review was initiated by the senior economic advisor in 2012 and has since been institutionalized within the MFDP. AERs were produced for each year from 2012 through 2015. The AER is a comprehensive analysis of the global, regional, and domestic outlook on the performance of the economy. It is mainly concerned with (1) the real sector—agriculture and fisheries, forestry, mining and commerce, and industry; 2) the social services sector—the activities of institutions providing basic social services, such as health and sanitation, education, electricity generation and distribution, water and sewage, transportation, and priority government projects; (3) the fiscal sector—operations of the central government; (4) the monetary sector—changes in interest and inflation rates and other monetary developments; and (5) the external sector—the country's trade performance and changes in the balance of payments.

The Liberia Macroeconomic Analysis Centre (LIMPAC) has been revitalized. The economic advisor proposed and the MFDP agreed to reopen and restructure LIMPAC. Its primary objective is to conduct objective and independent research and analysis of public policy issues in order to advise policy makers. It is expected that after a year or two of incubation at the MFDP, LIMPAC will to be hived off as a semi-autonomous policy research think tank.

President's Young Professional Program (PYPP)

This program was established in 2009 to support Liberia's efforts to build a strong and responsive workforce, present leadership opportunities for young professionals through training for Liberian youth, and to increase government capacity for efficient service delivery. The program offers a two-year internship within the civil service in areas of need identified by individual MACs. The participation of

USAID-GEMS in the program in FY2013 aligned the president's theme of equity and youth empowerment with the project's objective of improving financial management. This was achieved by providing 20 PYPs to the Department of Budget/MFDP to support the MTEF budget and execution process and 3 to concessions- related entities to manage the Concessions Information Management System.

Extraordinary Events

The Ebola virus disease (EVD) epidemic that began in FY14 Quarter 3 intensified in FY15. In an effort to reduce person-to-person contacts, the GOL categorized all employees as essential or nonessential and nonessential employees were mandated to stay at home as of the end of July 2014. A State of Emergency was declared in August 2014 and a curfew imposed. The heads and some key administrative staff of USAID-GEMS MACs were assigned to the National Ebola Task Force and were involved in the response for a substantial amount of their time. Decision making and follow-on activities for USAID-GEMS-supported issues were near the bottom of their list of priorities. The GOL restricted all expenditures on goods and services to ensure that resources were available for the Ebola response.

Within institutions supported by USAID-GEMS, most administrative support staff were considered essential and continued to work, but direct interaction was reduced and they were frequently not available. It was not until September 3, 2015, that the World Health Organization, for the third time, declared that Liberia was Ebola-free.

Five of the 34 technical staff members chose to leave the project or did not return after the crisis. Two others, scheduled to leave at the end of FY14, departed early, and the return for several staff on leave was delayed because no flights were available. All other staff remained in Liberia and worked throughout the crisis. The USAID-GEMS office and staff complied with MOHSW and WHO protocols: all heeded the messages, changed their behavior, and remained safe during the EVD.

The Asset Management Advisor, a professional logistician, supported both the GSA and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) for four months in various aspects of the emergency operational vehicle plan, collecting data and assisting in drafting funding proposals. The Assets Specialist was seconded to the MOHSW for four months to assist with assets and fleet management and with training.

The ICT Advisor provided on-the-ground assistance and facilitation with the USAID/Nethope Ebola ICT Assessment Report, focusing on three areas: Infrastructure, software systems, and mobile money. USAID-GEMS was the lead author of the software systems component and second author of the infrastructure component of the report and disseminated the report findings to GOL and International responder stakeholders. It also helped the GOL ICT sector to draw up a current and authoritative schedule of ICT priorities, considering the demands of the EVD emergency, with which to guide and harmonize improvement initiatives. USAID-GEMS participated in the Ebola Task Force ICT Infrastructure team and the Ebola Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC).

The USAID-GEMS ICT Advisor was a key participant, and joint author, in the USAID-Nethope Engineering Assessment for Liberia Broadband improvements, including policy, backbone, and last-mile analysis.

Serious coordination and harmonization difficulties confronted responders to the emergency, many of whom had little or no prior exposure to Liberia. USAID-GEMS helped address this by using its

knowledge of the local context to facilitate the work of international technology service providers fielded to provide solutions for the Ebola response.

When the EVD crisis began, the USAID-GEMS project was at a critical stage in implementation and in building sustainability. The crisis seriously impacted the outcomes related to

- building management solutions,
- sustainability of CIMS before project closure,
- the ability to support two cycles of performance evaluations,
- the more extensive roll-out of comprehensive financial reporting templates,
- the full implementation of framework contracting, and
- piloting of compliance tools. Piloting of the National Enterprise Architecture to a functional area of the LRA was curtailed mid-project.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The recommendations and lessons are presented in two parts, those that had a common theme and those that are function- or objective-specific.

Common Lessons and Recommendations

The provision of user manuals that document processes and procedures for all technical areas of support has empowered practitioners and increased their confidence in the performance of their duties. The manuals enable them to regularly refresh their knowledge, train new staff, and provide authoritative guidance to new political appointees on government standards and practices.

USAID-GEMS supported 14 institutions, including the CMAs responsible for administrative support areas. The GOL has more than 90 MACs. Although policies, processes, procedures, and systems are in place in the CMAs, they are under-resourced in their ability to implement. This places at significant risk sustainability in existing MACs and the ability to replicate performance improvements in other MACs without continuing technical support.

Patience, persistence, and perseverance matter in dealing with the public sector. MAC staff noted that the OJT / learning by doing approach was extremely useful as their capacity to perform the various functions noticeably improved. However, when project advisors and specialists began the OJT staff avoided them for months. Because the advisors persisted, the MAC staff eventually made themselves available to learn new approaches to delivering their work.

Ownership by senior leaders of the systems, processes, and procedures and a relationship of trust are critical for implementation and sustainability. Building ownership goes to finding the actual root cause of a problem; leaders will only own a solution if they fully recognize the problem. This process takes an enormous amount of consultant time and willingness to persist.

Understanding the background is also vital. Review of the current situation in institutions and across functions and objectives requires time to identify the background to the challenges presented. The background can provide guidance as to the viability of any solution being crafted. At GSA, for example, it was important to understand the reason GSA was not involved in vehicle registrations, operations, and

maintenance, before beginning to try to solve the problem of the agency's lack of involvement. It still took several years to adequately convince all the stakeholders of GSA's mandated responsibilities to be involved in assets management, write up procedures for GSA to perform their duties, and train all parties in GSA and the MACs to deliver them before MACs started to appreciate their necessity.

USAID projects must be flexible enough to recognize new substantive solutions to challenges that are identified during the project. For example, introducing mobile money for salary payments was not an intention of the project; it evolved in response to a request from the CBL and an opportunity to support the CSA and the MOE. This major addition, and the huge success of USAID in encouraging the use of mobile technologies, would not have been possible if the project had been required to remain within the originally conceived payment systems design.

In transformational change reform initiatives, it must be acceptable to build the foundations and proof of concept for others to continue with the details, because these could take decades to implement and be beyond the scope of a single project.

Functional Area and Objective Lessons and Recommendations

Finance

GOL institutions continue to require technical assistance with using the Comprehensive Financial Reporting Template, and MAC senior managers require training to understand how to use financial data in decision making.

Enhanced and consistent support to the DBDP on building skills within the MACS in costing and program and performance budgeting responsibilities, and continued assistance is also required across the GOL with institutions that have related, like the PPCC, GSA and CSA, if the full benefits of an MTEF budget and execution are to be realized.

Bank reconciliations are required at least monthly to generate reliable and accurate financial reports. The CBL and commercial banks often charge for periodic statements; this is a disincentive for GOL institutions to undertake bank reconciliations even though they are required by the PFM Act. It might be useful for MFDP to inquire into the possibility of waiving these fees.

Human Resources

The CSA has, for the first time, begun a comprehensive institutional reform even as it is required to lead cross-cutting civil service reform. Continued technical support to the CSA is required to sustain the gains, expand its capacity, and allow it to make the required internal changes that will enable it to deliver in the future. The enthusiasm and commitment the CSA has demonstrated for the various project HR initiatives significantly enhance the prospects for sustainability. Beyond enthusiasm, however, the ability to actually sustain the reforms with the staff and resources available is very slim.

A comprehensive implementation plan has been drafted to guide the CSA in implementing its strategic plan. However, during a recent workshop with CSA leadership to draw up the annual work plan for 2016, it became apparent that a significant number of directorates have made little progress in applying the strategy six months after it began. There are persistent capacity gaps within the CSA in some cases on how to translate the plans into action, and in others based on resource limitations and additions to the workload.

Despite local and international trainings, OJT, institutional changes, and an enabling environment, CSA staff still have capacity limitations. CSA competency assessment revealed that on average only 55% of the employees have the qualifications, skills, and competencies required for the job they hold. In one key directorate only 33% of the staff had the requisite requirements and in one, none did. This will continue to limit the ability to the CSA to undertake internal reforms, support reforms across the civil service and sustain improvements in human and institutional capacity. In the MACs, the situation is similar. Many HR directors lack the technical competencies and confidence to drive HR processes within their institutions. As a result, whether these processes can be sustained without continuing hands-on technical assistance is doubtful.

CSA has shown its commitment and gone through all the necessary steps to introduce and institutionalize the Performance Management System across the Government of Liberia. However, beyond the GEMS-assisted MACs and the ministries participating in the Public Sector Modernization Project (PSMP), little progress has been made in the MACs. Enhanced technical assistance is required.

A deliberate effort was made to train CSA on drafting and assuring the quality of job descriptions and subsequently on undertaking job evaluations. However, the majority of the CSA staff engaged in for these exercises were not staff of the Employment Services Directorate (ESD), which has primary responsibility for job descriptions. The capacity of ESD employees was far below what was required for the exercises. This places at risk the sustainability of a core function within the CSA because the right skills are not in the right place.

Asset Management

The national digitized assets management software was installed toward the end of the project. While the MFDP and GSA have a well-qualified project management team to ensure ongoing roll out, they will require further assistance to enable full implementation of the AM software at the GSA and in the MACs. It will be necessary to ensure that GSA AM monitors fully understand their role in ensuring that information sent from the MACs to the central data base is accurate.

Procurement

The PPCC has improved its capacity to perform its statutory role as regulator of procurement processes, as well as supporting the MACs and the private sector in understanding the requirements of public procurement. It is severely under-resourced and cannot sustain the momentum to improve transparency and accountability nationwide without additional support.

The sustainability of procurement reforms requires commitment at the highest levels of central government and the MACs. Although the PPCC is enthusiastic, it needs to enhance the knowledge and capacity of more of its staff, secure funding for outreach and oversight operations, and be supported by intensive technical assistance for continued focus.

LIPA

LIPA management and staff have committed themselves to carry out the action plans to achieve the strategic objectives planned over the five-year period. If management carries through with its agenda, the result will be a stronger LIPA with a bright future. However, strategic plans are useful only to the extent that they are diligently implemented. The long-term sustainability of LIPA requires capable leadership that will take ownership of the organization's capacity-building agenda. Internal governance structures must continue to be strengthened and staff must perform their roles diligently.

An active and capable Board of Directors is critical to LIPA sustainability.

ICT

The GOL ICT Policy places MOPT at the heart of its ambitions, but given its limited resources and capacity, MOPT will find it difficult to meet its obligations. The centralized competencies as visualized by the ICT Policy and e-Government strategy as the CIO Program and PMO/e-Liberia office, are at the very core of the government's ambitions to use ICT to achieve its development objectives. However, these centralized competencies are not staffed or resourced in the budget or elsewhere, which is a significant threat to sustainability

While recognizing the grave impact of Ebola on Liberia, the emergency did create new opportunities for the use and advancement of ICT. International attention and substantial goodwill was focused on Ebola-affected countries, with resources mobilized and a wide variety of initiatives put in place. These not only addressed the emergency and its causes and results, but also were designed to minimize future recurrences and help make the country more resilient to future shocks. The shortage of quality ICT-enabled data and voice services outside of Monrovia was widely noted and acknowledged as an aggravating factor in surveillance and management of the disease.

Other ICT-related constraints that affected the ability of Liberia and the international responder community to anticipate, manage, and eliminate the EVD and future threats were the lack of adequate ICT skills in the workforce, the difficulty of harmonizing and coordinating activities across government silos, the lack of reliable and affordable foundational ICT infrastructure to support initiatives, and the expense and scarcity of Internet access where it was required.

The acknowledgement of the central role of ICT in emergency prevention and management and the recognition of the country's ICT deficiencies have encouraged a tighter focus on the critical need to build up national ICT capacity. This focus became manifest across a range of initiatives during the recovery phase of relief efforts. It is vitally important that the MOPT and donor partners maintain the momentum related to resolving these challenges.

IT Sustainability

Sustainability was a key consideration in the design and choice of all solutions, especially the selection of ICT infrastructure and software systems. The ICT platforms and components provisioned at the MACs consist of mainstream, well-understood technologies that are familiar to the Liberian technology community.

Licensing and recurrent fees have been accommodated. Licenses for the server and workstation platforms are perpetual and fully current. Where perpetual licenses were not available, the systems are licensed through the term of the project and possibly beyond.

The supply of reliable and safe power to the MACs is a critical challenge. Continuity of power is necessary to meet the required operating periods for computer systems. Moreover, the quality of power needs to be within established bounds, or the ICT platform is at risk of damage.

Success in establishing the fundamental framework for implementing ICT policy and facilitating a community of practice at all levels of government gave USAID the opportunity to design a new project to support e-Government in Liberia. This offers the best prospect for sustainability.

MOPT capacity, lack of competent CIOs, and government ICT policy places MOPT at the heart of GOL ICT ambitions. Resource and capacity constraints make it difficult for MOPT to meet its obligations. The centralized competencies visualized by the ICT Policy and e-Government strategy as being within the CIO Program and the PMO/e-Liberia office, are not staffed or resourced in the budget or elsewhere, which clearly jeopardizes sustainability.

MOPT should be encouraged to present the e-Government strategy to GOL for adoption at Cabinet level and advocate for initiation and resourcing of the CIO Program to provide the necessary guidance and direction to MACs on how to plan for and utilize the IT strategic resource. Development partners should also be encouraged to participate in resourcing these ambitions.

Internet service for MACs is inadequate. Providing Internet service to a MACs is very expensive in Liberia (t about \$700-\$1000/Mbit/Month. The GOL should consider using its central buying power, its own resources in Libtelco, and GOL shares in the Cable Company of Liberia to make preferential pricing available to its MACs.

Concessions Management

The sustainability of CIMS depends mainly on how well GOL personnel understand how to operate the system and how willing MAC leaders are to work together to achieve the common goal. Understanding has been substantially achieved; however, cooperation remains a continuing challenge. Having a system champion within the NBC who understands and can require compliance from concessionaires and collaboration from colleagues will be critical.

The technical sustainability of the system was part of the plan to recruit and train PYPs in various ICT and concession management tools and techniques, such as geographic information systems, business process analysis and modeling, FlexiCadastre, concession agreement analysis, and work ethics. They are now super users and CIMS administrators in these MACs and are capable of ensuring operational sustainability as well as providing support to others who may need to understand systems features or become users.

As a cloud-based system, CIMS requires that all MACs have a stable Internet connection; It is now necessary for the MACs to allocate the resources necessary to cover Internets cost. Advancing the earlier recommendation for preferential Internet pricing to MACs from Libtelco and Cable Company of Liberia would mitigate this challenge considerably.

The MLME does not use the system. MLME has decided to abandon the CIMS in favor of another system. While MLME staff have been trained in CIMS and provided user access, there is no official agreement to update the system or demonstrated willingness to regularly share information to enable NBC to update the system. This is a major challenge: inability to have comprehensive data will limit the effectiveness of the CIMS.

In the circumstances, it is strongly recommended that

- The Governance Commission be encouraged to continue the facilitation of dialogue on roles in concessions and work with the Law Reform Commission on changes required in legal instruments.
- NBC include CIMS hosting and maintenance costs in its annual budget as a high priority and advocate with the Legislature for approval.

- USAID continue to provide support and interest until the system and its outputs are fully institutionalized. Integrating the use of the system and supporting the subsequent phases, which include land, into the design of the land projects of USAID or other donors would offer the best approach for sustainability.

II. PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

The USAID Governance and Economic Management Support Project (USAID-GEMS) objective to support designated MACs in performing targeted public sector functions more effectively was established in support of the achievement of USAID’s Development Objective “more effective, accountable and inclusive governance.” This was to be achieved through support to 17 government ministries, agencies, and commissions (MACs). The project’s five objectives, though different in technical focus, all related to improving public financial management (PFM).

OBJECTIVE I: GOL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Management systems and key organizational functions of participating GOL institutions conform to national standards defined in laws, regulations, and guidelines or international good practice standards.

This section presents the strategic results, sustainability, outstanding challenges, recommendations and lessons learned from USAID-GEMS support for financial management, human resource management, procurement management, assets management, and monitoring and evaluation. The intermediate result outcome guiding support in this objective was improved conformity to international good practice standards of management systems and key organizational functions of participating GOL institutions.

The Central Management Agencies (CMAs) responsible for these systems are the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP), the Civil Service Agency (CSA), the Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC), and the General Services Agency (GSA). They are all inextricably linked to Liberia’s management of the public finances.

INSTITUTIONS SUPPORTED	
1	Civil Service Agency
2	General Services Agency
3	Public Procurement & Concessions Commission
4	Liberia Institute of Public Administration
5	Ministry of Post and Telecommunications
6	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
7	Governance Commission
8	National Bureau of Concessions
9	National Investment Commission
10	Forestry Development Authority
11	Environmental Protection Agency
12	Ministry of Agriculture
13	Ministry of Youth and Sports
14	Ministry of Education
15	Ministry of Health

Financial Management

The Public Financial Management (PFM) Act of Liberia was passed in 2009. It provides the framework for budget preparation, approval, and execution; borrowing, public debt, and government guarantees, and aid management. PFM regulations were drafted in 2010, and the law and regulations were published for use in July 2011. The plan and processes to implement Liberia's first financial management reform began at the same time as the GEMS project.

Although the GOL required that all MACs immediately comply with the PFM Act, staffing and financial resources were insufficient to assist them at the desired pace. The PFM Act required timely financial reporting to the MFDP but the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) initiative was only beginning, and most accounting records were maintained manually. Moreover, the first budget using the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) was introduced in Liberia's FY 12/13 budget year.

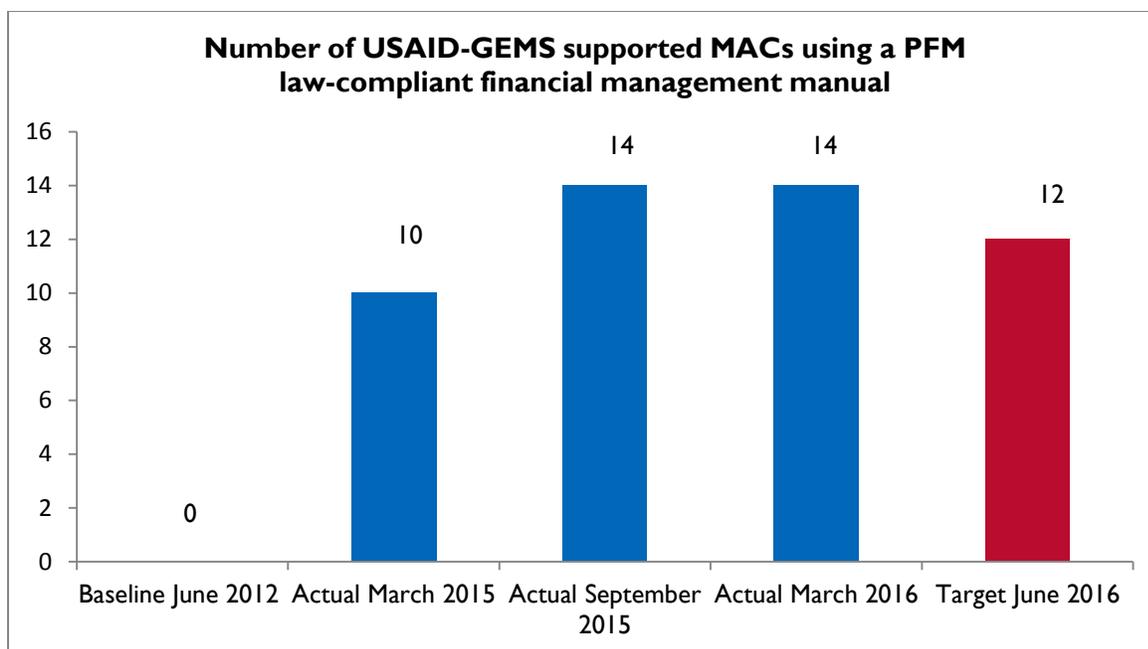
Over the course of the project the USAID-GEMS Financial Management (FM) Team, comprised of five subject matter experts, was assisted by eight short-term experts who provided technical assistance. The team supported targeted MACs to improve their compliance with the PFM Law in accounting, reporting, MTEF budgeting; cash and bank management; and internal control systems. During the project support was provided to 15 MACS, one of them the MFDP.

Preliminary institutional analyses exposed deep human and institutional capacity gaps in financial management. Senior MAC managers were unfamiliar with regulatory requirements and their designated roles, and the majority of the finance staff lacked competence in basic accounting and reporting processes, use of accounting software tools, knowledge of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), MTEF budgeting and use of Microsoft Excel to create spreadsheets. During the project these gaps were reduced using both formal and on-the-job (OJT) training—learning by doing—which resulted in demonstrated improvements in work outcomes.

Effective partnerships with the MFDP, as the CMA responsible for GOL finances, accounting, and reporting, enhanced implementation of the PFM reforms within the Comptroller and Accountant General's (CAG) Office, the Department of Budget and Development Planning (DBDP), and the USAID-GEMS supported-MACs and across the government.

Financial Management Policies and Procedures Manuals (FPPM) were drafted and approved by senior management of 14 MACS. The need for institution-specific manuals was essential to adequately carry out control activities, leading to an effective system of internal controls. Initial assessment of MACS revealed that none had such manuals and their lack was a recurring audit concern. GOLs efforts underway to draft a general FM manual aligned to the PFM Act and regulations were completed only in July 2013.

Financial Comptrollers and accounting staff participated in drafting the FPPMs and in many instances presented the document to their management for approval. Although 12 MACs were targeted, in fact 14 were provided with these institution-specific manuals.



The FPPMs comply not only with the PFM Law and regulations but also with the Public Procurement and Concessions (PPCC) Act and the generic *Financial Management Manual* issued by the CAG, which resulted from collaboration with its consultant. The manuals cover the legal, institutional, and systems frameworks for financial management, simplifying the various functions and procedures. They help staff and others to understand the systems, processes, and procedures for processing financial transactions and managing funds and are a good reference for easy grasp of what action to take when managing funds.

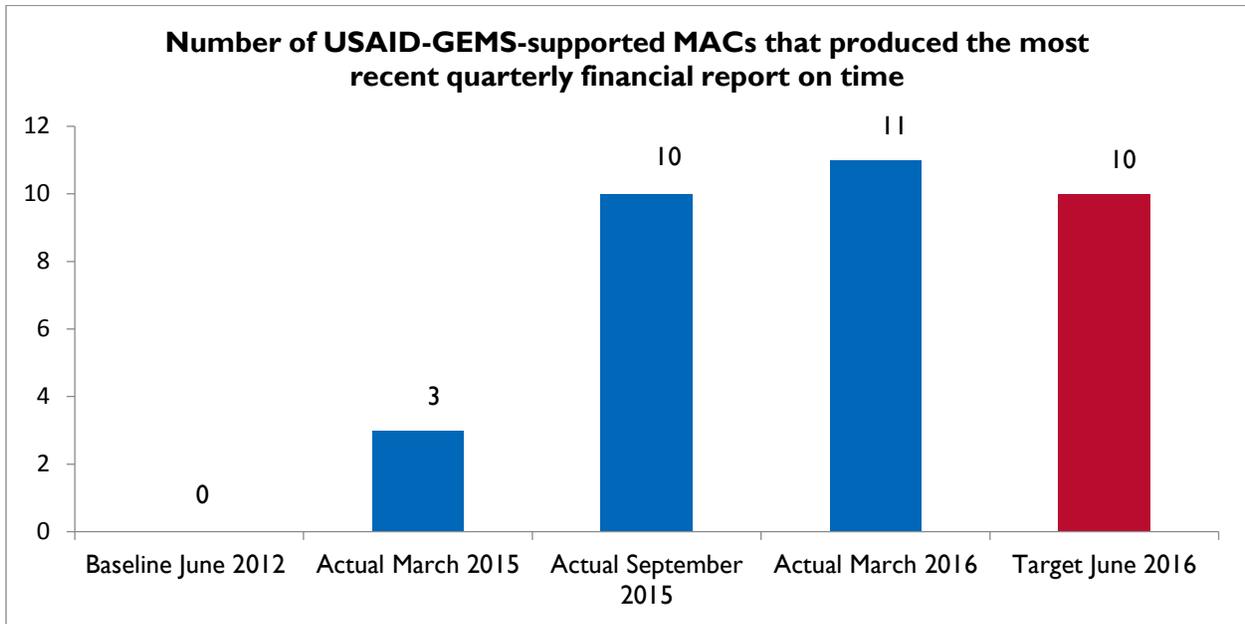
Accuracy and completeness of financial reporting improved through the use of Comprehensive Financial Reporting templates. Collaboration with the CAG Office enabled GOL MACs to prepare and submit quarterly and annual financial reports that were more accurate, complete, and compliant with the PFM Legal Framework and the cash basis IPSAS standard adopted by the government. Financial reporting templates and supporting tools, along with procedures to facilitate regular and timely comprehensive financial reporting, were developed and integrated into the regular reporting regime of the CAG Office.

These tools enable MACs to regularly report financial transactions and accounts data to the CAG that were not captured in the IFMIS or reflected in the GOL's consolidated financial statements, such as information on donor-funded projects, fees collected by MACs as internally generated revenues (IGRs) by MACs, and CAG advances or transfers to autonomous agencies.

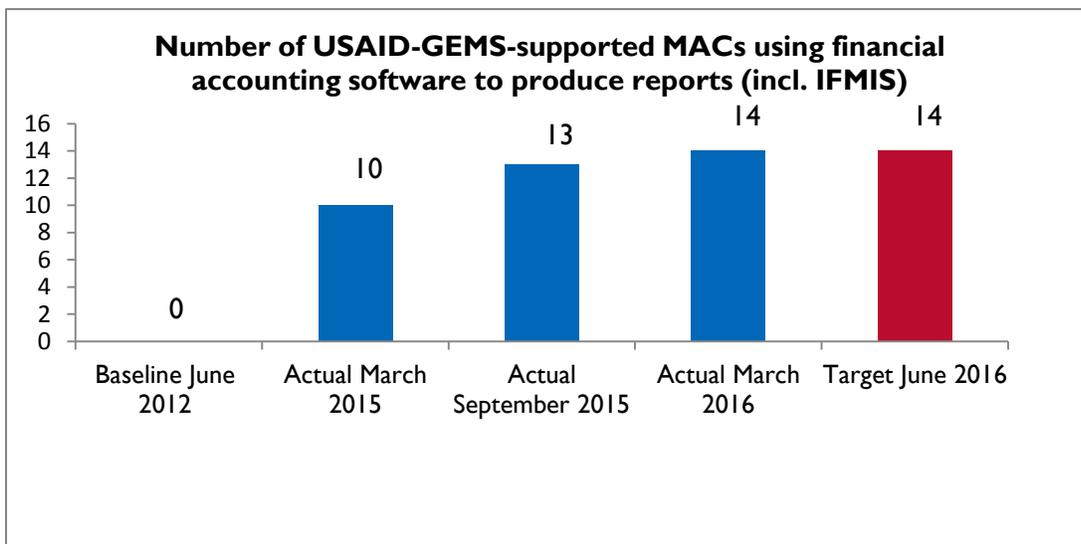
Among the MACs that used the new template to produce their FY2014/2015 annual financial statements were the PPCC, LIPA, GC, MOPT, NBC, and CSA. All GOL MACs will use the new template for quarterly financial reporting for FY 2015/2016 comprehensive annual financial reports. These will enhance transparency and accountability for all GOL financial resources.

More timely financial reporting enables the GOL to make informed decisions. Timely financial reporting is required by the PFM Law. The initial assessment of targeted MACs revealed that none had submitted quarterly financial reports on time. Three—the GC, PPCC, and LIPA—now have in

place a monthly management reporting template that enables them to provide information for improved institutional financial management. By March 2016, 11 institutions had prepared and submitted their most recent quarterly report on time.



The provision and use of accounting software was the key for timely submission of financial reports. The software also increased the accuracy of information, since most accounts had been prepared with manual systems, and has made it easier to perform audits. When the project began, none of the targeted MACs were using accounting software. Now all targeted institutions do so to prepare required financial reports.



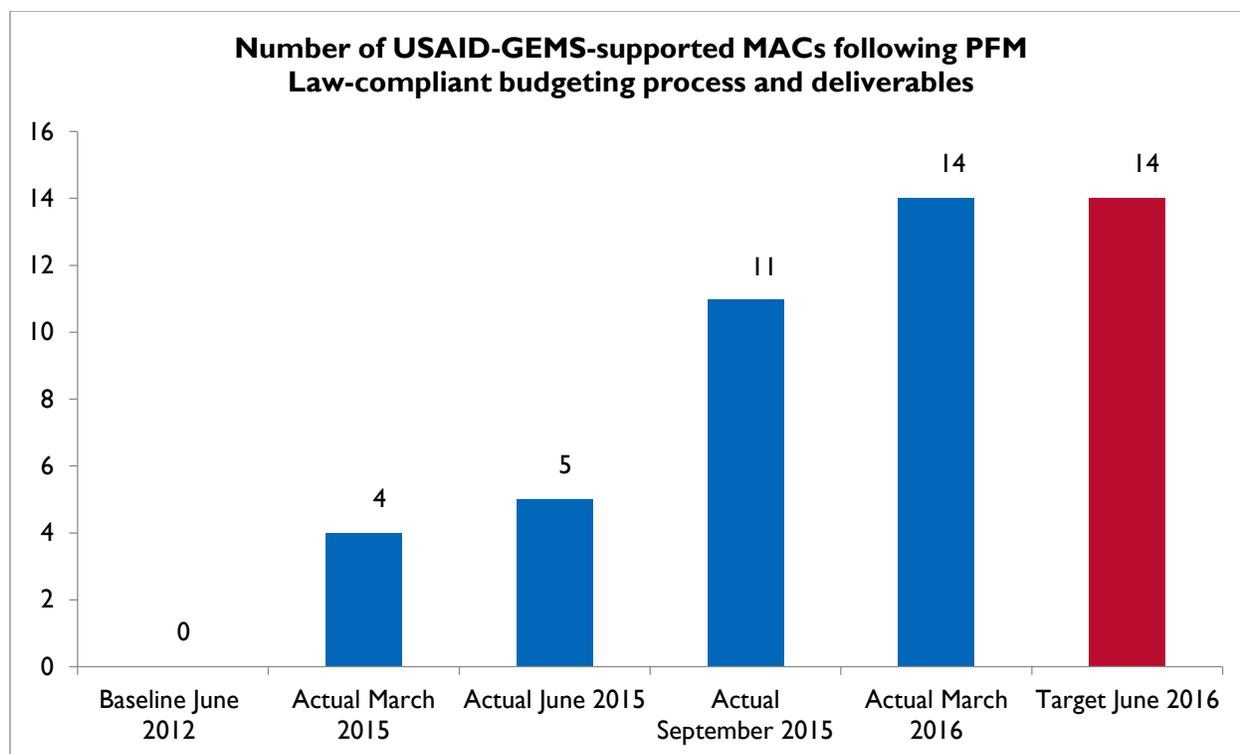
USAID-GEMS partner MACs now create budgets that incorporate all sources and uses of funds. Their managers now understand and participate in the process of formulating institutional and sector objectives and linking them to the budgeting process. Staff in finance departments have built up their technical skills to create the more complex elements of MTEF budgets.

The project supported two distinct budget processes—formulating an annual budget for the upcoming year, and controlling and reporting on spending against that budget—at both the MFDP and the institutional level. The GOL’s long-term goal of implementing MTEF budgeting required creation of a three-year rolling budget and including all sources and uses of funds that reflect GOL budgetary allocations, fees collected by the MAC, and donor funding. The MTEF concept includes a process to improve the connection between setting long-term strategic goals, in the Liberia case the Agenda for Transformation, and sector objectives. There are MACs in each of eleven sectors within the GOL and their strategic objectives support the larger sector goals.

The MFDP now has tools to create budgets that incorporate all sources of funds, and staff has the capacity to use these tools.

The DBDP now uses essential budget summary tables for budget documentation to enhance the transparency and comparability of the budget of the GOL with other countries. The skills of staff within the MFDP, LIPA, MYS, MOHSW, MOE, and MPW have been enhanced in budget costing and performance based budgeting so that they can now become trainers for the other MACs. This will improve the quality of future MTEF budgets.

Twenty young professionals in finance, economics and accounting were posted to the DBDP over a three-year period to enhance their ability to develop budgets and monitor their execution. These young people were recruited through the President’s Young Professional Program and integrated into the MFDP after their structured internship program ended. They helped sector MACs to understand the process and develop their budgets, and also enabled the MFDP to effectively automate budget preparation so that the budget can be completed within the designated time frame for submission to the National Legislature.



The other element of budgeting—controlling payments against the budget—is a complex process that requires the use of accounting software to check payment requests for budget availability before approval. USAID-GEMS partner MACs now use transitional accounting software that includes budget data, enabling payments to be checked before they are approved to ensure the budget is available. They can now produce timely reports with accurate budget vs. actual data for management and the MFDP. Understanding and use of the FPPMs have enhanced the GOL's ability to ensure that procedures to control budget execution are in place, understood by all stakeholders, and enforced. The project's provision of IT hardware and software has enabled accounting staff to make major improvements in their work environment and performance.

The Internal Audit Agency now has operational and procedural guidelines for internal auditors. The Internal Audit Agency (previously the Internal Audit Secretariat) was established in 2011 to support government efforts to enhance internal controls. MAC internal auditors would provide initial support for sustainability of the improved systems, processes, and procedures established with USAID-GEMS support.

Key internal audit framework documents to assist with application of the GOL's Internal Audit Strategy are

- Procedures for the Set-up and the Effective Functioning of the GOL Internal Audit Departments
- Code of Conduct and Ethics
- Internal Audit Manual
- Operational Procedural Manual.

All are used by the Internal Audit Strategy in its work with the MACs.

Capacity Development and Financial Management

The FM results were achieved by focusing on building the human and institutional capacity required to improve performance and where possible addressing the enabling environment.

Human Capacity Building: Senior management and staff of targeted MACs received formal training and advisors worked with technical staff in structured weekly OJT over the course of the project to support the change in work processes and procedures. Trainings focused on:

Practical application of the PFM Law and related regulations in the performance of specific tasks.

- How to use accounting software tools to enhance the use of IFMIS and interim accounting software packages for accounting and reporting. For the many who were unfamiliar with accounting software, the ability to prepare financial reports was significantly improved. As demonstration 10 MACs completed their most recent quarterly report using accounting software compared to none when the project began.
- General accounting concepts, particularly the stages of the accounting cycles, were introduced at each MAC. That staff now have a clearer understanding of these concepts is demonstrated by the quality of the financial reports now being produced.
- The comprehensive annual financial reporting templates are now being used for quarterly and annual reporting, which now incorporates all sources of revenue from GOL, donors as well as IGRs. Training in advanced Microsoft Excel skills enabled effective use of the tools.
- Understanding of MTEF concepts and principles is now part of the Liberian MTEF manual for the DBDP.
- Budget costing and program- and performance-based budgeting was introduced to a core team from the MFDP and MACs. The team now has a structure and implementation plan to enable them to improve the quality of budget preparation.
- The *Financial Policies and Procedures Manual for Senior Management* sets out requirements for MACs, in a few pilot MACs there was training in how to use monthly financial statements for decision making.

Institutional Capacity Building

Institutional capacity and performance improvement covers those processes, systems, technology, equipment that strengthen the capacity of the finance department to deliver its mandate. Among the components:

- Enhanced Excel templates were created to account for transactions that could not be directly posted in the IFMIS, enabling more complete records.
- Templates for accounting, reporting, and cash and bank management were produced:
 - a. Cash-basis IPSAS-compliant comprehensive financial reporting template
 - b. Template for journaling and reviewing financial transactions before posting into the accounting system

- c. Bank ledgers and bank reconciliation templates for better cash management and timely and accurate bank reconciliation, as required by the PFM Law.
 - d. Cash flow forecasting template for the MFDP Cash Management and Financial Approval Unit for both United States and Liberian dollars.
 - e. Budget execution and the budget performance reporting template to enable MACs to effectively monitor their budgets and produce monthly budget performance reports for management.
- Interim accounting software was provided to MACs that had limited or no access to IFMIS as a transition to automated accounting and to remove the use of Excel spreadsheets or manual hand-written ledgers in accounting for IGRs and transfers. All targeted are now using accounting software for accounting and reporting.
 - Finance departments were provided with a server, computers, software, and peripherals to protect GOL financial data and reduce dependence on personal computers. Fireproof safes were provided as needed to secure funds, checkbooks, and documents.
 - The CAG Financial Reporting Unit was provided with computers to enhance analysis and integration of financial reports.

Enabling Environment

The enabling environment covered policies, procedure manuals, the legal and regulatory environment, and the norms and values for FM performance within the MACs and through the CAG Office. The PFM Law and the general *Procedures Manual* set out the national cross-cutting requirements for financial management.

The following desktop manuals prepared by USAID-GEMS were provided to the MACs and used in training to heighten sustainability.

- A QuickBooks step-by-step user manual enabled MAC users of the software to refer to the manual as a refresher when needed or to use it to train other staff.
- The institution-specific FMMPs written for 14 MACs comply with the PFM Act of 2009, the PFM regulations of 2009, the PPCA of 2005, the *Financial Management Manual* issued by the CAG, and the cash basis IPSAS adopted by the government.

The manuals set out procedures for maintaining accounts, cash and bank management, budgeting, procurement, assets management, financial reporting and auditing, and all other administrative procedures necessary for compliance with applicable GOL regulations. They are useful guides for Finance Divisions, Internal Audit Units, Internal Audit Committees, and Budget Committees. They can also be used as a guide to manage projects and other programs and in orienting new staff.

Key Documents and Tools Developed

The project drafted these and provided them to the CAG Department, the DBDP, and MACs

DOCUMENT	USE	BENEFIT
<i>Financial Management Policies and Procedures Manual</i>	Procedures to follow for accounting, recording, financial management, and reporting of all revenues and expenditures for the institution.	The MAC has a comprehensive and practical guide that incorporates effective internal controls necessary for the management of MAC funds and for ensuring conformity of financial reporting with the cash-basis IPSAS, PFM Law, PFM regulations and the PPCC Act and regulations.
Agency-specific Chart of Accounts	Coding of transactions to be entered in the financial management system	The MACs now have in place an agency-specific chart adapted from the overarching GOL Chart of accounts that can be used as a guide to code transactions specific to each MAC.
Review of Liberia Budget Documentation	Clear explanations of Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) budgeting and program-based budgeting.	Reviews the MTEF budget preparation process, and what may inhibit smooth implementation of the process and affect the quality of budget documentation.
Budget Profile Table	Enables a snapshot of the entire budget presentation.	Assists the legislature as it reviews the budget summary at a glance to see how any budget deficit is being financed and how any budget surplus is being treated.
QuickBooks accounting software	Complement the use of the government's IFMIS financial management system.	MACs are able to record their financial transactions in software rather than using a manual ledger or Excel spreadsheets. The MACs can also now use software to produce their financial reports.
<i>QuickBooks Step-by-Step User Manual</i>	Train MAC first-time QuickBooks users and serve as a quick reference guide.	MACs have a tool to ascertain the sustainability of the QuickBooks software, and to refer to when they have technical problems.
Comprehensive IPSAS-Compliant Financial Statements Template	Used by the CAG to produce the comprehensive consolidated financial reports of the GOL.	The CAG Office can now consolidate all sources of funds reported by MACs in a single report.
Comprehensive IPSAS-Compliant Monthly Financial Reporting Template	Used by MAC managers to understand the financial performance and financial position of a MAC.	MACs can now produce monthly financial reports for management.

DOCUMENT	USE	BENEFIT
Comprehensive IPSAS-Compliant Quarterly Financial Reporting Template	Used by a MAC to produce financial reports that incorporate all sources of funds.	MACs can now produce quarterly financial reports that cover all sources of funds for submission to the CAG Office as required by the PFM Law.
Comprehensive IPSAS-Compliant Annual Financial Reporting Template	Used by a MAC to produce financial reports that cover all sources of funds.	MACs can now produce annual financial reports that cover all sources of funds for submission to the CAG Office as required by the PFM Law.
Cash Flow Forecasting Template	Used by the MFDP Cash Management and Financial Approval Unit to forecast cash flow.	The Cash Management and Financial Approval Unit now has a template for forecasting flows of both United States and Liberian Dollars as they relate to tax revenues, non-tax revenues, external assistance, and related projected spending
Classification of the Functional of Government Template	Prepare the GOL budget summary table as it relates to the functional elements of the GOL.	To assist the DBDP of the MFDP in classifying the Function of Government budget summary table, which will make it possible to compare the GOL budget with those of other governments.
Bank Reconciliation Template	Prepare timely bank reconciliations so as to ensure reliable and accurate financial reports.	The MACs have a tool to prepare their monthly bank reconciliation and to them to effectively manage various bank accounts.
Bank Account Ledger Template	Record transactions pertaining to MAC bank accounts.	MACs using IFMIS need the ledger template to help them manage bank accounts until they acquire software or the functionalities are provided in IFMIS.
Purchase Requisition Form	Request goods or services	Gives MACs the ability to formally request goods or services.
Local Purchase Order Form	Order goods or services from vendors.	Benefits MACs that are not using IFMIS to create purchase orders.
Goods Received Note Form	Record goods that MACs have ordered.	Gives MACs the ability to compare goods ordered with goods received.
Goods Issue Note Form	Record the issuance of goods from the warehouse or stores.	Gives MACs the ability to account for goods issued from the warehouse or stores.

DOCUMENT	USE	BENEFIT
Payment Voucher Form	Used for creation of a check to make a payment.	MACs that are not making payments through IFMIS now have the ability to generate a voucher to make a payment to a supplier of goods or services.
Petty Cash Voucher	Used to request a petty cash payment.	A requester of petty cash within the MACs is on record, which provides information about the requester, the department, and the approval of petty cash.
Petty Cash Composition Report Template	Used for compiling petty cash updates.	The custodian uses this form to periodically assess how much petty cash is on hand, outstanding vouchers, etc. in order to request a petty cash replenishment.
Surprise Cash Count (USD, LRD) Template	Used to perform surprise cash counts.	Staff performing the surprise cash count can now break down cash on hand into the various denomination and analyze outstanding vouchers.
General Journal Voucher Template	Used to journal transactions before they are posted.	Makes it possible to review and approve transactions before they are posted in the financial management system.
Deposit Journal Voucher Template	Used to journal deposits before they are posted.	Makes it possible to compare deposit transactions with validated deposit slips and review and approve them before they are posted in the financial management system.
Budget Performance Report Template	Used to monitor MAC budget transactions.	Give MACs the ability to produce a monthly report that provides information relative to allocations, annual budget, actual expenditures, and outstanding commitments. Also provides a status report on MAC performance by comparing actual expenditures and commitments to what is budgeted for the period.

Sustainability

The learning-by-doing approach enabled MAC staff to demonstrate their ability to perform the required tasks throughout the project period. The provision of templates, manuals, and computer hardware and software made it possible to refresh knowledge when needed. MACs are at different levels of sustainability in relation to improvements attained. At the completion of the project, only the reforms in the Governance Commission could be considered absolutely sustainable.

The financial management policies and procedures manuals, step-by-step QuickBooks manuals, and other training tools will definitely enhance the sustainability of the performance improvements in the USAID-GEMS–targeted MACS, as suggested by the following achievements:

- Finance staff in targeted MACs have the expertise to use accounting software effectively, as they are demonstrating by using it in preparing monthly, quarterly, and annual reports.
- Staff are following their PFM Law-compliant manuals to process accounting transactions and are producing timely financial reports using the cash basis IPSAS adopted. They have been trained in how to use the manuals as a reference in resolving future technical issues.
- The MACs now have business processes relating to accounting standards and policies; budgeting and planning; cash and bank management; petty cash and impress; and revenues and expenditures as required by the PFM Law, its related regulations, and the PPCA. These are all embedded in the FMPP manuals provided to 14 MACs. The manuals also provide guidance relative to their primary users, how the manual should be updated, the function and structure of the finance division within a MAC, and the accounting and reporting system. They also summarize the roles and responsibilities of a MAC finance division.
- Either an IT infrastructure that is facilitated an integrated financial management system or accounting and reporting software is are being used to process financial transactions and produce timely and accurate financial reports.
- The MACs also have in place IPSAS-compliant comprehensive financial reporting templates, which they are using consistently to produce monthly, quarterly, and annual financial reports and a template to produce timely and accurate bank reconciliations.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

GOL institutions continue to require technical assistance with implementing the Comprehensive Financial Reporting Templates. The CAG Office rolled out these very important IPSAS-compliant financial reporting templates late in the project. Some MACs are picking up fast but others are just beginning to understand how to use the template. CAG staff who were trained to assist the MACs in using the template, will continue to require support and encouragement if usage is to expand.

Enhanced and consistent support to DBDP will be necessary on building skills within the MACS in costing and program and performance budgeting. Though the MTEF was introduced in 2011, application of MTEF principles and concepts is still a new phenomenon that has only now started to gain momentum. For the full benefits of a MTEF budget and execution to be realized, continued assistance will be necessary throughout the GOL, especially for institutions which have related responsibilities, like the PPCC, GSA, and CSA,.

The MFDP should be encouraged to recruit and retain experienced, professionally qualified accountants within the CAG Office. This will heighten the quality and credibility of GOL accounts and motivate government accountants to acquire professional qualifications. The existence of these professionals in the public sector will help greatly to guide financial reporting toward enhanced transparency and accountability.

Patience, persistence, and perseverance matter in dealing with the public sector. For the first three years of the project there was considerable difficulty in effectively engaging the CAG Office, whose

involvement was critical. It is responsible for all financial accounting and reporting within the government and its support was essential to effectively achieving the objective of PFM reforms in the MACs, improving transparency and accountability, and enabling informed decision making. Recognizing that the CAG Office was unwilling to engage, the project continued to keep it informed of progress in the MACs and requested guidance in all areas of GOL financial management. This opened up an opportunity to collaborate later in the project, when they were ready, having seen some of the outcomes being achieved and the direct benefit to the CAG. Building trust takes time, particularly when it relates to government finances, and although it would have been better if a closer relationship with the CAG Office could have begun earlier, some progress was made.

MAC senior managers need training to understand how to use financial data for decision making. The project focus was on improving FM performance in reporting, accountability, and transparency; however, senior managers in most MACS were requesting information not for making financial decisions but only for reporting as required to the MFDP. For improvements in financial performance to be sustained it was necessary to create a need in senior MAC management for the information, which required that they be trained and provided with information on what to request and how to use it.

As MAC financial management improved, it revealed weaknesses in upstream and downstream institutions with which MACs relate. Bank reconciliations are required at least monthly to generate reliable and accurate financial reports. The Central Bank of Liberia and commercial banks often charge for periodic statements and they may not be readily available. Additionally, irregularities in bank systems and transactions have been identified in the reconciliation process.

Providing practitioners with user manuals and documenting processes and procedures has empowered them and increased their confidence in how they are performing their duties. They now have an approved document that can support or refute a process or procedure put forward by others, within or outside the department, which reinforces internal controls.

Proficiency in the use of MS Excel is key to support and improve on financial reporting practices in the public sector. More training in advanced MS Excel is therefore encouraged.

Human Resources

The Civil Service Agency (CSA) is responsible for managing resources in the civil service. The institutional assessment of CSA and the MACs exposed major human and institutional capacity gaps in HR management. At the individual level, these gaps significantly affected the ability of the CSA to execute its mandate adequately and at the institutional level the ability to function effectively in managing the government's HR needs. Civil servants represent at least 49% of the recurrent cost in the national budget. The ability to put in place effective and efficient HR systems, processes, and procedures is directly correlated with the government's ability to manage public finances.

Without a strong and competent CMA to manage government human resource, MACs were free to do whatever they considered appropriate. Guidance from the CSA was not adequate in terms of HR policies, procedures, job descriptions, job competences, grading structure, job classifications for effective recruiting, and performance management systems. MACs undertook no HR planning and recruitment was rarely merit-based. USAID-GEMS support to CSA enhanced its capacity to manage government human resources, and the ability of the MACs to comply with established policies and procedures. Combined solution packages, consisting of equipment, technical assistance, and capacity building, resulted in improvements within both the CSA and the targeted MACs.

The HR Advisory team, comprised of four subject matter experts, over the course of the project was assisted by 10 short-term experts who provided technical assistance. The team supported the CSA as it drafted and implemented strategies and plans to improve its internal performance and guidelines and procedures for managing, monitoring, and appraising civil servants. During the term of the project, it provided support for various periods to 12 MACs, one of them being the CSA.

Human Capacity Building

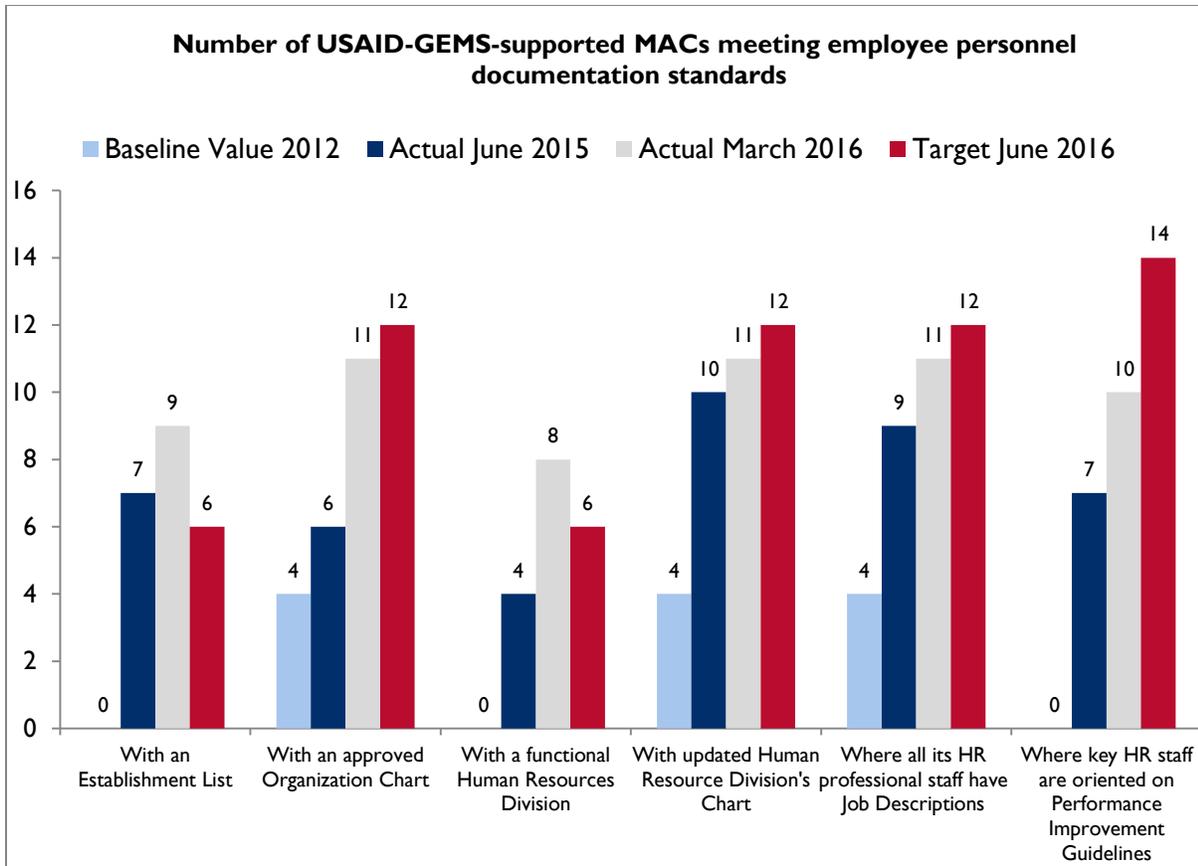
Building human capacity consists of enhancing the skills, experience, and knowledge of individuals to improve their work performance. Fundamental to the effectiveness of the project was the use of both formal training and OJT (learning by doing) along with training of trainers (TOT) to enable CSA and HR Directors to roll out initiatives within and across.

Staff at CSA and key MACS have formulated more than 3,500 robust job descriptions for 32 institutions. CSA is responsible for implementing the Medium Term Pay Policy, which sets performance-based pay as one of the bases for equity. Job descriptions are fundamental to performance management. The initial assessment revealed that, where job descriptions did exist, CSA did not require that they use a standardized format that allowed them to incorporate key elements into recruitment processes, job grading, performance management, and other HR functions. USAID-GEMs helped CSA to formulate a standard format for job descriptions and provided TOT for HR directors and assistants on writing job descriptions. The training introduced them to the approved CSA format and enhanced their capacity to write job descriptions that meet the requirements for job classification and other HR processes.

A core team of 10 CSA staff were trained to review and edit MAC job descriptions, working closely with the USAID-GEMs HR team. A total of 32 MACs (some of which were not GEMs-assisted) completed the job descriptions for their institutions, and the Internal Reform Committee (IRC) has validated those of 27. Job descriptions are now issued to all professional staff, with copies in personnel files. They are used for performance planning and evaluation, and civil servants have a clearer understanding of their responsibilities. At the CSA, a core team used them for the job evaluation that graded all positions within the civil service.

A three-year capacity building plan is guiding the CSA as it builds staff competency. A comprehensive HR competency assessment of all CSA personnel identified current capacity levels and gaps and highlighted employee performance issues and training needs. The assessment revealed that on average only 55% of the employees have the necessary qualifications, skills, and competencies required for their jobs. In one key directorate only 33% of the staff has the requisite qualifications and in one, none do. The CSA three-year plan details training and other initiatives to improve staff competency and performance.

There have been appreciable improvements in the competencies of CSA and MAC HR directors and their assistants and in their understanding of HR systems and processes, although some capacity challenges persist. The institutional assessments determined that some HR directors were unable to adequately carry out the full range of their HR functions. Therefore, GEMs drafted manuals and processes and formal training was given in HR planning, performance management systems, standing orders for the civil service, job descriptions, and job grading.



CSA employees now have enhanced capacity in these areas and have organized and delivered training to other institutions on HR planning, the performance management system, and drafting job descriptions. HR directors in USAID-GEMS-targeted MACs are now demonstrating their new skills. *The Performance Management Policy Manual* reinforces the formal training and outlines clear policies on training and development of all civil servants, thus enhancing the prospects of a sustainable training and development culture emerging within the civil service.

GSA HR Competency and Training Needs Assessments provide guidance on fundamental challenges affecting performance. A comprehensive HR competency and training needs assessment was undertaken for all GSA employees to identify capacity gaps and training needs and a strategy was drawn to enhance their capacity. The assessment involved employee self-assessment and structured interviews with over 300 GSA employees. The main gaps identified were weaknesses in technical skills related to asset management and equipment operation, which are core to the GSA mandate. GSA leaders appear to be committed to implementing the project recommendations for resolving competency and training issues.

Institutional Capacity Building

Institutional capacity and performance improvement covered the processes, systems, technology, and equipment that reinforce the capacity of the CSA and MAC HR departments to deliver on their mandate.

In FY15, USAID issued a contract modification for IBI International to expand support to the CSA. The objective was to strengthen the agency's capacity to deliver better services to civil servants and to champion HR reforms across ministries, agencies, and commissions.

A comprehensive institutional performance assessment was undertaken with significant involvement from CSA at all levels internally and from stakeholders, it included a detailed one-on-one HR competency assessment for all CSA positions. The assessment report identified 87 capacity gaps and the associated causes. A package of solutions to close the gaps was identified and 37 solutions were given priority for immediate implementation.

The reactivated CSA Change Management/Internal Reform Committee (IRC) ensures that reform will be inclusive, with the functional directors responsible for reforms in their areas of responsibility. To assist the CSA in implementing the performance assessment recommendations, the project encouraged the CSA to establish a structure to track the progress of reforms. Suggestion boxes were placed throughout the CSA, the CSA website was restructured, and a dedicated e-mail address was established for the IRC to encourage general staff participation in the reform process. An IRC Work Plan and a comprehensive Work Plan Monitoring Framework were drawn up, and change management training was conducted to acquaint directors with their roles in the change process. More than 40 weekly IRC meetings have been held to manage the change processes within the CSA.

CSA has streamlined and reinforced its work processes, instituting a more inclusive and efficient decision making process, a more formal approach to regular meetings, and a formal monitoring and reporting system. It has also improved internal and external communication by implementing its Communication Strategy and using technology to enhance internal communication.

CSA is using key documents to guide its reform. CSA and IRC senior managers actively participated in drawing up the Three-year Strategic Plan, the Service Delivery Charter, and the CDP.

- **The CSA 2015–18 Strategic Plan** highlights five major areas of focus based on CSA's mandates: (1) human resource management, to ensure that the right people and the right skills are available to enhance service; (2) administration and coordination of CSA interventions, for more effective internal coordination; (3) compensation and pensions, to harmonize civil service salary, benefit, and pension schemes; (4) modernization of the civil service, to consistently ensure that the civil service responds to changes and provides modern tools for effective and efficient service delivery; and 5) enhancing CSA outreach and decentralization of its services.
- **CSA Service Delivery Charter:** The results of the institutional performance assessment and the business requirements in the 3-year strategic plan were the basis for the development of a CSA Service Delivery Charter (SDC). The SDC outlines the quality standards with which CSA would provide its services, and the rights and responsibilities of CSA's stakeholders. The CSA officially launched the SDC with an Open Accountability Day (OAD), heralding the beginning of a culture of transparency and accountability of the CSA.

To implement the SDC, the CSA has strengthened the customer orientation of its departments, with departments producing brochures, CDs and other media to educate the public on services provided. The CSA has also taken steps to enhance the ambience and customer-friendliness of its facilities.

- **Capacity Development Plan:** In collaboration with CSA, the project created the three-year CDP to build staff capacity to implement the CSA strategic plan and improve performance. The CDP was preceded by a training needs assessment conducted internally by CSA and by the outcomes of the HR competency assessment, which accompanied the CSA institutional performance assessment. CSA has identified priority capacity building interventions for each directorate and set up annual training action plan for the first year of CDP.

CSA now has the tools and capacity to undertake HR planning for the civil service. The CSA had no formal system for making HR forecasts, staff planning internally, or for managing the human resources of the Government of Liberia. During the program instruments for data collection, such as the establishment list, nominal list, and wastage list, were created and CSA staff trained on how to use them for data collection and analysis. A HR planning committee was established within the CSA and a template designed for MAC HR directors to present reports during the planning committee hearings. GEMS conducted formal training, OJT, and coaching sessions at the CSA and the MACs to build their capacity for HR forecasting and planning. Staff in CSA and MAC HR directors now have a clearer understanding of their vision and mandate and of established positions within MACs, and of how to identify HR surpluses in certain positions, inaccurate representation of certain positions in personnel listings, and the presence of ghost workers in MAC personnel listings.

CSA is using ICT to heighten efficiency. The project provided computer hardware and software to key administrative support areas, and a server to back up information. Computers were also provided to the Employment Services Directorate to facilitate drawing up job descriptions and job evaluation and grading, and the CSA testing center was automated so that civil service examinations can be taken and graded more smoothly and efficiently.

CSA is now in a better position to implement the systems for merit-based recruitment, performance management, and employee records documentation.

- **The CSA has to approve any merit-based recruitment and selection process.** The project worked with CSA to formulate a Merit-Based Recruitment and Selection system (MBRS) and draft the associated handbook. However, minimal work was done on getting the system up and running because so many other activities were underway with the CSA and MACs. HR Directors of MACs were given training, coaching, and mentoring on how to institutionalize an MBR; the coaching and mentoring focused on publication of vacancies, testing of candidates, and reference checking. A major barrier to institutionalizing MBRS in MACs is that MAC leaders appear to lack the political will for a transparent merit-based process.
- **CSA has developed and begun to put in place a Performance Management System (PMS).** The institutional assessment of CSA identified a draft policy on performance review and evaluation that was as yet incomplete. The project worked with CSA to implement PMS across the Government of Liberia. The CSA introduced the system to improve the work culture and performance of civil servants in line with GOL strategic goals and public expectations. The PMS goal is to establish a high-performance culture within the civil service in order to improve effectiveness and results, build employee capacity, and enhance communication and information-sharing between employees and supervisors.

The CSA piloted the PMS, holding awareness and training sessions in over 25 MACs. Trainings were also held, externally and within institutions, to build the capacity of deputy ministers for

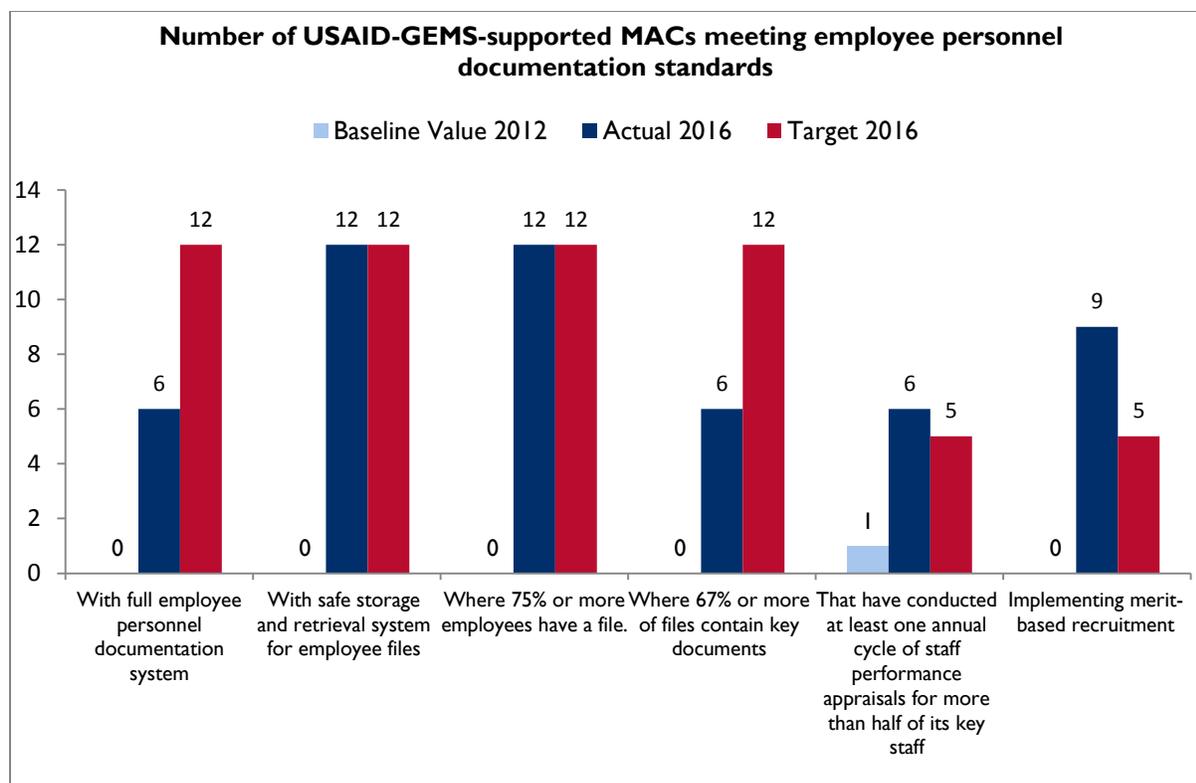
administration, deputy directors general for administration, human resource directors, and supervisors to implement the system within their MACs. A TOT session was jointly facilitated by CSA, LIPA, and USAID-GEMS to enhance the capacity of HR directors to replicate such trainings within their institutions. Understanding of the PMS and training was demonstrated by the HR directors of CSA, GSA, MYS, LIPA, MOA, and several other non-GEMS-supported MACs that organized and facilitated in-house PMS trainings for their supervisors. About 14 MACs have successfully piloted the system, including all nine USAID-GEMS-supported MACs. It is expected that more than twice that number will complete the process in FY16.

A *Performance Management Policy Manual* was written to guide HR practitioners and supervisors in the implementing the PMS. The manual was developed with a CSA Working Group through a participatory process that included stakeholder consultations, working sessions, and a validation workshop. The Cabinet endorsed the final policy manual.

- **GOL MACs have improved their management of employee records.** The institutional assessments revealed that there were no standardized systems for MAC management of employee records. The manual records system was therefore standardized and enhanced for all MACs, and within eight, the project provided a Human Resource Management System (HRMS) for electronic employee records management.

All USAID-GEMS-targeted MACs were provided with filing cabinets and an updated employee file checklist for tracking whether documentation was complete. Regular OJT supported HR staff as they updated employee files and used the tools provided. The MACs adopted the one-employee, one-file approach to managing employee records. The tracking matrix provided a snapshot of the proportion of employee files with required documentation and it also enabled HR directors to easily identify employees for whom documents were missing and follow up. Personnel files were periodically reviewed to assess the status of documents in file and train staff on regular updating of files. The file-tracking matrix resulted in increased collection and filing of key documents for each employee. It also highlighted gaps within the recruitment processes, because a large number of files did not have documents relating to the Civil Service examination, employment letters, and reference checks. Completeness of employee records continues to be a problem for most MACs, particularly ministries.

Simple HRMS software was provided and staff trained on its use, with regular weekly support. The software was installed in USAID-GEMS-supported GSA, MYS, PPCC, FDA, MOPT, LIPA, NBC, MOA, and GC. Although some MACs experienced challenges with network connections and security concerns, most readily uploaded employee information and scanned in documents. The HRMS is particularly useful for easy access to employee information and for generating management reports for decision-making.



Although there has been significant progress in employee personnel documentation within the USAID-GEMS-supported MACS, the other MACs have made little or no progress, which undermines the ability of the government to manage the civil service effectively.

The CSA and PPCC organizational structures of CSA and PPCC are better aligned with their institutional mandates. Because some MACs lacked a current organizational chart (revised within the previous three years), reporting lines and communication channels were blurred, which affected the organization of work and thus the productivity of the institutions. GEMS worked with the PPCC to review its organizational chart to better align departments with the requirements of the PPCC Act, and to prepare for a future decentralized structure. For CSA, a new organizational chart was proposed to align its structure with activities to move forward the new 3-year strategy.

For HR departmental charts, the project HR advisory team first helped MACs to define key performance indicators for their HR units. GSA, CSA, PPCC, MOA, NBC, FDA, GC, and LIPA and began and some completed review of the organizational charts of their HR units to ensure greater alignment with their mandates. This has helped improve the definition of their role and their ability to execute their core businesses.

Enabling Environment

The enabling environment in the CSA and the MACs covers policies, procedures manuals, laws and regulations, and the norms and values with which HR is managed to facilitate the development of capacity.

All the jobs identified by 32 institutions have been classified into the GOL Grading Structure. The institutional assessment of the CSA and MACs found gross disparities in the

administration of salaries, and allowances were allotted on a discretionary basis that lacked fairness and transparency. To establish a basis for regularizing the situation, job descriptions were developed for more than 3,500 jobs; these were evaluated and each job graded into the CSA Grading Structure. This has launched the processes necessary to begin standardizing pay for all jobs.

The project drew up instruments for the exercise and several pilot sessions held to pretest the tools. Over more than two months, CSA and HR directors of several key MACS participated in several working sessions to understand the process, grade the positions, and undertake quality assurance, and moderation of the results. The job evaluation and grading will enhance the fundamentals of pay, establish internal equity within the civil service, and promote external competition for civil service positions.

CSA has a comprehensive *Human Resources Policy Manual for the Civil Service*. The review of fundamental HR management documents at CSA identified a draft *HR Policy Manual*. Institutions within the civil service lacked policy authority to enforce HR decisions and CSA had not definitively established and disseminated any. Some USAID-GEMS-targeted MACs had in place their own HR policies to better manage HR, but most were either incomplete, inadequate, or not being enforced. The *Human Resource Policy Manual* was finalized by the project with a team from CSA and disseminated to all GOL institutions that employed civil servants. GOL institutions and staff are now aware of the terms, conditions, and requirements of employment as civil servants. For those with staff not classified as civil servants and those that may have had atypical HR arrangements, institutional HR Handbooks were drafted that aligned with the CSA Standing Orders and HR Policy.

CSA has a process for migrating staff to their positions on the grading structure. The next step the implementation of the GOL Medium Term Pay Strategy is migrating employees to the grading structure utilizing the grades developed in the job classification exercise. The MYS was used as a pilot to establish the CSA and MAC readiness and to develop a process which could be used by the CSA for this exercise. Employee migration to a new grade structure is a major undertaking in any country and Liberia is not different.

The in-depth review of MYS readiness for migration revealed that major challenges exist which could be considered an indication of what prevails across the GOL. One of the many serious challenges is that of incomplete records. USAID-GEMS worked extensively with the MACs to build their capacity and encourage them to update the Personnel Records. This intervention significantly improved employee documentation; however, this is one of the areas we noted that continued to be problematic. Within the MYS, employee records and files are incomplete and they lack key documents required for the migration exercise. While some of the documents are available, a majority of the staff do not have any evidence of undertaking and passing the Civil Service Examination. It is the passing of the Civil Service Examination and three other criteria which certifies an employee as a bona fide Civil Servant. The eligibility requirement of civil service examination excludes a large number of employees from the migration exercise. From a review of files, the personnel and payroll listing of the MYS with 165 employees only 1 qualifies as a bona fide Civil Servant.

The other challenges include inaccuracies in in personnel listing, discrepancies in titles of job holders (different titles in personnel listing, payroll and PANs for the same employee), an incomplete salary scale, seven different of salary charts in use for the Civil Service, limitations in enforcement of the CSA policy on general allowance, implementation differences with client on grades allotted to some positions, records on general allowances not available from the MAC, staff capacity at CSA Employment Services Directorate of CSA extremely weak and some jobs were not included in the Job Description catalogues

but are in the personnel listing. These challenges require fundamental decisions to be made by the CSA before and during any migration exercise.

Based on the findings from MYS a work chart for the “Process for Migration of Jobs’ was developed to assist CSA in the next steps towards improving Human Resource Management in the Civil Service and implementing the Medium Term Pay Strategy.

Key Documents and Tools

Key documents and tools developed and provided to the CSA and MACs to assist them in carrying out their HR management functions.

	Document	Use	Benefit
Policy Manuals and Documents	CSA Standing Orders	Establish regulations for all civil servants.	Civil servants understand the regulations governing the civil service.
	<i>CSA HR Policy Manual</i>	Stipulates policy provisions for HR administration across the civil service.	Civil servants understand the policies governing their rights, entitlements, and obligations.
	<i>CSA Merit-based Recruitment Manual</i>	Stipulates policies for merit-based recruitment of civil servants.	Civil servants will be recruited in a transparent and merit-based process.
	<i>CSA PMS Policy Manual</i>	Stipulates policy provisions for institutionalizing the Performance Management System across MACs.	MACs can establish a high-performance culture that is merit-based.
	CSA Institutional Performance Assessment Report	Highlights CSA performance gaps for improvement.	The CSA has acted on the findings to improve its performance.
	CSA 3-Year Strategic Plan	Outlines the strategic direction of the CSA for the next three years.	The CSA has a clear roadmap to follow in achieving its mandate.
	CSA Service Delivery Charter	Outlines the standards governing how the CSA will provide services to its customers.	The CSA can improve on its service delivery .
	CSA Capacity-Building Plan	Outlines capacity- building interventions for CSA for the next three years.	CSA is now implementing the capacity-building interventions for its staff.
	Job Descriptions for 32 MACs	Provide information on the functions and personnel specification for positions in MACs.	Civil servants now know their roles, and recruitment and other HR processes are based on accurate information about position profiles.
Employee handbooks/ <i>HR Policy Manuals</i> for MYS, GSA, NBC, and GC.	Provide user-friendly interpretation of HR policy provisions for employees.	Civil servants understand the policies governing administration of their rights, entitlements, and obligations.	

	Document	Use	Benefit
Templates and Tools	Employee File Checklist	Lists the standard documents in an employee file.	Standardized employee files have the requisite documentation for HR processes.
	Civil Service Position Establishment Lists for 24 MACs	Outlines the positions approved by institution.	HR decision making is enhanced and personnel costs are reduced.
	Employee Document Completion Tracking Tool	Used to ensure that employee documents on file are complete.	Complete employee files help establish the one-employee, one-file system.
	PMS Completion Tracking by Staff and Department	Used to track that each employee has completed PMS processes.	Ensures higher completion rates for PMS processes.

Sustainability

The enthusiasm and commitment demonstrated by the CSA for the various HR initiatives significantly enhance the prospects for sustainability. Beyond enthusiasm, however, their ability to actually sustain them with the staff and resources available remains very slim. Limited CSA and MAC staff capacity and what appears to be minimal political will to implement certain merit-based systems and processes are serious threats to full implementation and sustainability. Some areas of major sustainability issues are these:

1. **The Internal Reform Committee (IRC):** To enhance the sustainability of ongoing reforms, both at the CSA and in MACs, it is important that the IRCs take an active leadership role in spearheading reforms within each institution. For the CSA itself, USAID-GEMS dedicated a long term advisor to support reactivation of the IRC to serve more effectively as the Change Management committee and institutional memory for sustaining the processes beyond project termination. Coaching and mentoring were provided to reinforce their capacity of the committees to perform their functions; the objective was to use CSA as an example for other MACS. However, although the achievements of the CSA’s IRC over the past year have been considerable, it is questionable whether the leadership will be able to sustain the momentum without continued assistance. For instance, when the USAID-GEMS CSA Advisor took a break in December, the weekly IRC meetings were not convened until he returned. Moreover, attendance at each weekly meeting has significantly dwindled as enthusiasm evaporated, and plans of the Director-General for the CSA IRC to assist other MACs to reactivate their IRCs and replicate the CSA gains have not materialized.
2. **The CSA Three-Year Strategic Plan:** The CSA’s strategic plan is a valuable roadmap for the next three years of operations. Its development was a holistic and thorough process that incorporated all current and future deliverables expected from the CSA based on the national strategic plan and current donor-funded projects (PSMP, CSRD, and USAID-GEMS). A comprehensive plan was also drafted to guide the CSA in implementing the strategy. However, during a recent workshop with CSA leadership to draw up the annual work plan for 2016, it became apparent that six months after it was launched a significant number of directorates have made little progress with applying the strategy. There are persistent capacity gaps within the CSA, in some cases based on how to translate the plans into action in some cases, and in others on resource limitations and additional workload.

3. **Human Capacity:** Within the CSA, staff capacity is still limited, despite local and international trainings, OJT, institutional changes, and a more enabling environment. The CSA competency assessment revealed that on average only 55% of the employees have the qualifications, skills, and competencies required for their jobs. In one key directorate only 33% of the staff had the necessary qualifications, and in one, none did. This will continue to limit the ability to the CSA to undertake internal reforms, support reforms across the civil service, and sustain the improvements made in human and institutional capacity. At the MAC level, the situation is similar. Many of the HR directors lack both the technical competence and the confidence to drive the HR processes within their institutions. As a result, whether these processes are sustainable without continuing hands-on technical assistance is doubtful.
4. **The Performance Management System (PMS):** The CSA has shown its commitment and taken all the necessary steps to introduce and institutionalize the PMS across the Government of Liberia. However, beyond the GEMS-assisted MACs and the ministries participating in the Public Sector Modernization Project (PSMP), there has been little progress in the MACs. The moderate progress made with GEMS and PSMP-focused MACs was a result of intensive donor-funded technical support and capacity-building effort in each MAC. The Management Services Directorate (MSD), which in charge of this function, is grossly understaffed for giving effective support to implementing PMS across the entire civil service. In addition, MSD skills and technical understanding of PMS are limited. There is an urgent need to reinforce the MSD to ensure that it has the right number of staff and adequate technical skills to effectively institute the PMS across MACs. It takes three annual cycles to effectively institutionalize a PMS. The CSA is currently on its first cycle past the pilot and, although willing, it is ill-equipped to effectively drive the system without internal reforms.
5. **Job Descriptions and Job Evaluation:** A determined effort has been made to train CSA on development and quality assurance of job descriptions and subsequently job evaluation. Considerable capacity has been built within the CSA to carry the process forward. However, most of the CSA staff used for these exercises were not working in the Employment Services Directorate (ESD), which has primary responsibility for job descriptions. The capacity of ESD employees were far below what the exercises required. Thus CSA has the, capacity to carry the process forward, but with few exceptions not within the responsible unit. HR directors of several MACs were used during the process to champion job description exercises in their own institutions, thereby retaining institutional memory of the processes.
6. **Human Resource Planning:** A Human Resource Planning (HRP) Committee was established within the CSA and instruments for HRP Hearings designed and tested over nine months. Though a standard practice globally, HRP as a concept was new to Liberia. Within the CSA, only the director-general has acquired the requisite skills to manage the process. The new deputy director-general for HR Policy requires support for her to better be able to organize and manage the hearings within the CSA. The directorate responsible for HRP, the ESD, has the severe capacity limitations already mentioned. Although basic capacity has been built for all MAC HR directors, it requires enhancement. The primary challenge at the MACs is the appearance of a lack of political will among MAC leaders to adhere to the process.

The confusion of authority between the CSA and MFDP to approve staffing levels threatens sustainability of human resource planning for the Civil Service. There are instances where CSA

approves staffing levels for MACs and MFDP refuses to approve funds to facilitate the implementation of the approved staffing levels. This is, therefore, a serious challenge to the integrity of the process. There has been no staff promotions within the CSA framework in 10 years, significantly diminishing morale and motivation.

Lessons Learned

Among the several lessons learned during project HR interventions were these:

1. **Ownership by senior leaders of the HR systems and processes is critical for implementation and sustainability.** While the CSA leadership enthusiastically embraced the ongoing reforms, responses from other institutions varied. Without the involvement and commitment of senior leaders, the sustainability of new HR processes will be jeopardized. Typically, supervisors consider HR processes to be an encumbrance on their regular tasks and often resist participation and therefore implementation. It is necessary for institutional leadership to spearhead the process and ensure that employees see it as an organizational, not just an HR, initiative. Leadership buy-in has not been evident in most of the MACs. As a result, PMS progress in MACs has been much slower than expected.
2. **HRM is the responsibility of everyone, not just the HR Department alone.** It is become evident that the success of HR initiatives depends on the involvement of all levels of leadership. Initially, some supervisors thought that the HR directors should write job descriptions and performance plans for all staff; Some HR directors had already begun to draw up job descriptions for other units. However, the quality and appropriateness of some of the descriptions were questionable. In fact, team involvement was required for quality documents that were relevant to the institutions.
3. **Levels of Capacity Building:** The magnitude of change required to implement the HR initiatives demanded a considerable amount of time from leaders and senior staff in both the CSA and the MACs to learn about HR systems and processes. Trainings were initially focused on enhancing the capacity of the heads of departments to spearhead activities in their units. However, as the new systems, processes, and procedures were put in place, it became increasingly evident that there was little or no competence below the senior staff to deliver them, although lower levels of staff in the units had been trained.

Recommendations

The CSA has, for the first time, begun a comprehensive institutional reform even as it is being required to lead cross-cutting reform across the civil service. Continued technical support to the CSA will be necessary to sustain the gains, expand capacity, and allow the agency to make the required internal changes that will enable them to deliver in the future.

ASSET MANAGEMENT

The GSA is responsible for managing both property and other assets; it must draft and implement policies, systems, processes, and procedures which enable it to manage GOL's assets with accountability, transparency, and integrity. The institutional assessments revealed that the GSA and MACs were operating without any structured systems, processes, or procedures for managing assets and property. There was no centralized leadership related to assets management and most MACs had

no internal guidelines. At both the individual and institutional levels there was only very limited capacity to manage assets and property effectively.

Although capitalized when purchased, vehicles, equipment, buildings, furniture, fixtures, generators, etc. are critical for government operations. Assets registry and inventory information is necessary for disposal and budgeting for management, maintenance, and replacement. The effective and efficient application of asset and property management policies, processes and procedures is directly correlated to the government's ability to manage public finances.

The USAID-GEMS Assets Management Team consisted of three subject matter experts and specialist; over the course of the project the team was assisted by four short-term technical assistance experts. It provided support to 14 MACs, including the GSA, for various periods.

Human Capacity Building

MAC asset management staff and GSA monitors have been trained and are performing the required duties. Assets and property management staff had generally been marginalized and were unguided, untrained, and unmotivated. The lack of interest, of MAC management in these staff, whose skills are primarily vocational, was reflected in their maintenance of assets and property. Structured training began with an Introduction to Asset Management that targeted all levels (senior, middle, and junior) of civil service personnel. The purpose was to raise awareness within government of the need for asset management, its importance and the benefits to government.

Senior managers were coached to understand and use information from their asset management teams. These trainings began the transformation of attitudes toward asset management in government. Several MACs are now considering 'ring fencing' maintenance budgets for vehicles and equipment.

Twelve training modules were created specifically for asset management disciplines. In collaboration with the GSA, guidelines and procedures were designed for all asset management disciplines. From established procedures, the 12 technical training modules were drawn to improve the knowledge and ability of staff in their specific technical areas. To complement this approach, the GSA AM monitors were given awareness training across all technical areas so that they could assist their specific MAC as questions or unexpected problems may arise.

All GSA AM Monitors (previously titled Coordinators) posted to MACs and main offices were trained both formally and through OJT in all asset management disciplines. The GSA Asset Management Director has improved capacity to manage the AM Monitors and to use the Fleet, Generator, Assets, Building, and Disposals Training Guides for continuous learning.

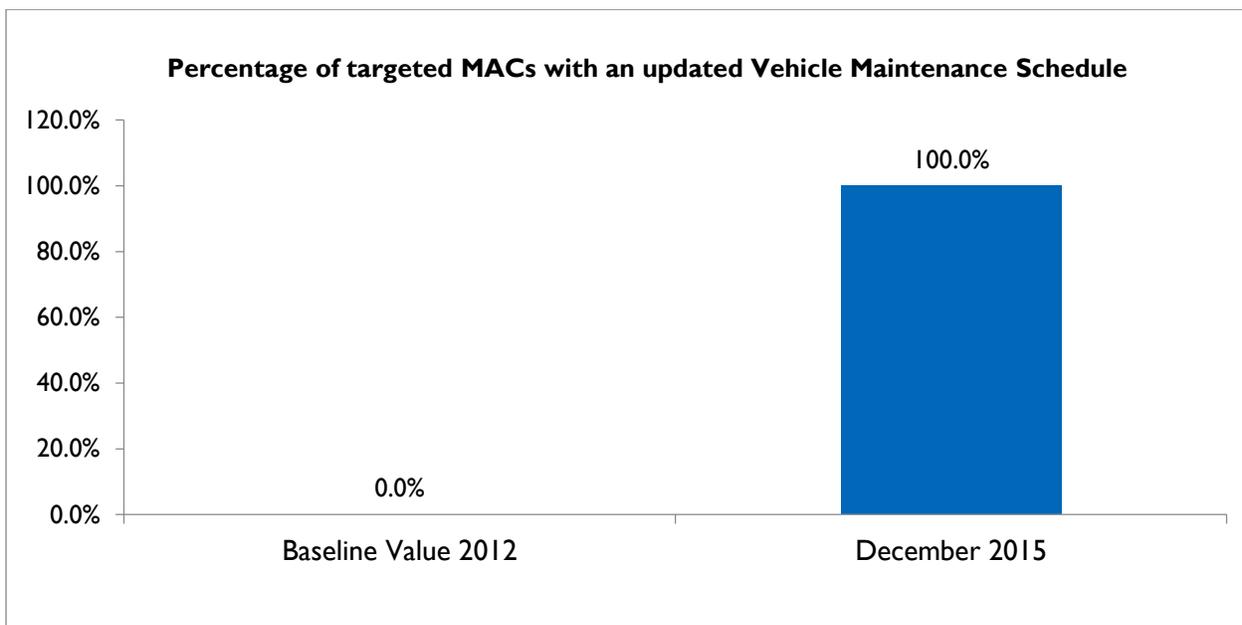
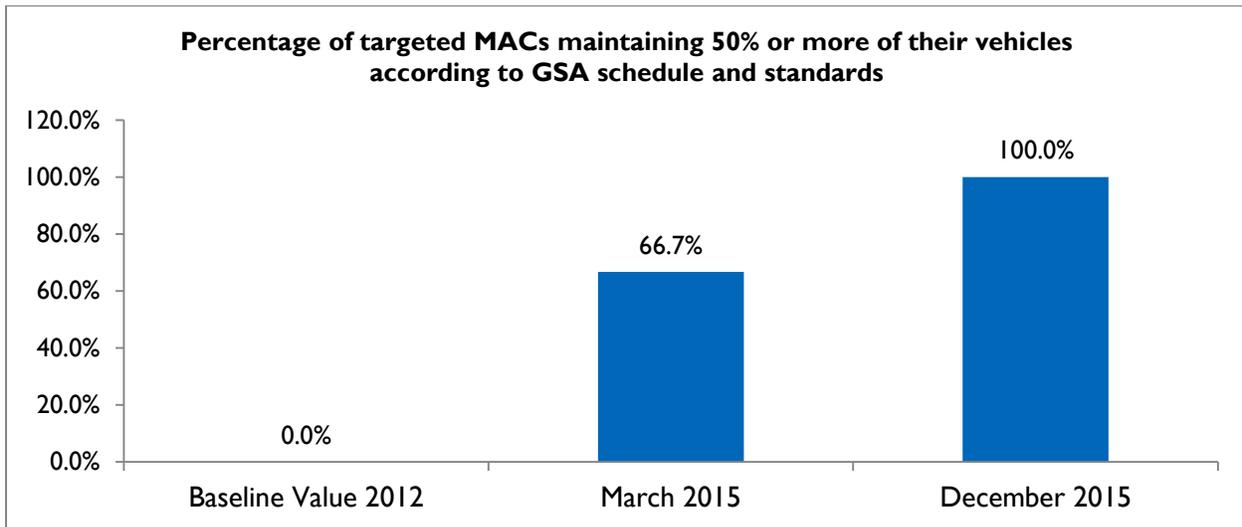
Weekly OJT, small group and individual, over the life of the project has increased individual capacity. Vehicle and generator preventive maintenance has improved and there are fewer equipment failures, leading to effective assets management in the supported MACs and more efficient government.

The improved GSA and MAC capacity has enabled the GSA to position itself as the central management agency responsible for GOL assets and property management by setting standards, maintaining comprehensive records, monitoring, and supervision.

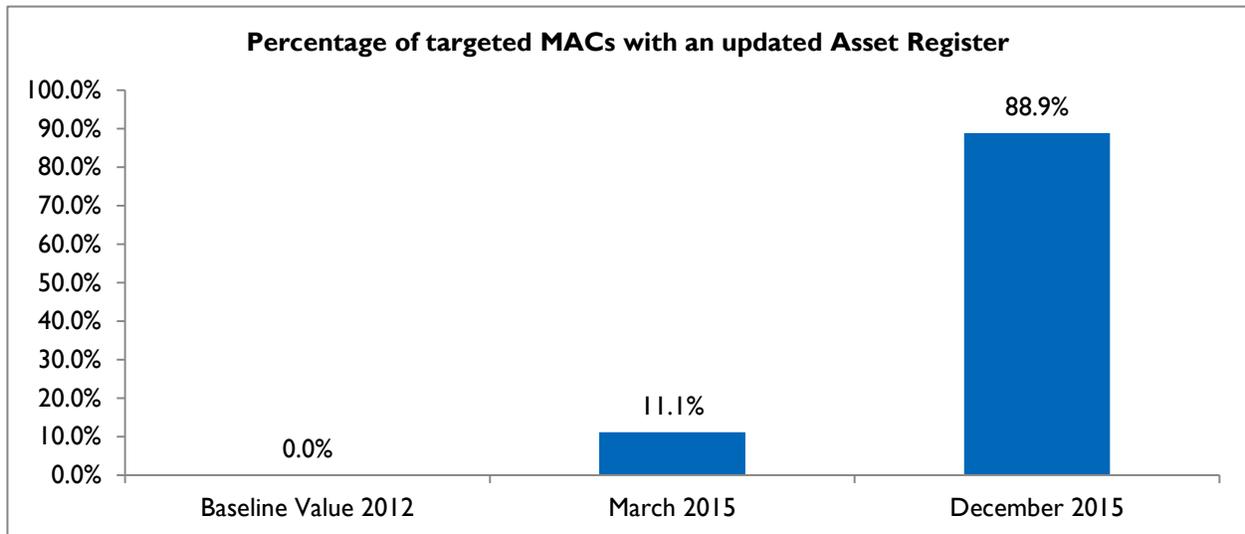
Targeted MACS have asset registers and are maintaining vehicles. In demonstration of their improved capacity the GSA AM Monitors in the USAID-GEMS–targeted MACs have helped the MAC AM staff to inaugurate and maintain asset registers. They are managing their fleets to GSA standards by

instituting vehicle preventive maintenance programs, and some have begun to work on asset disposal inventories.

About 90% of the USAID-GEMS–targeted MACs have updated assets registers, and all maintain at least 50% of their vehicles to GSA-approved standards, using vehicle maintenance schedules. Better vehicle maintenance not only increases useful life; it also reduces both maintenance costs and the likelihood of major repairs that would take the vehicle out of service



GSA AM Monitors have begun to apply their training outside the USAID-GEMS–targeted MACs, supporting others in creating asset registers and inventories. GSA has also embarked on a major initiative to establish asset registers across all GOL MACs. These registers enable the GOL to recognize what it has, where it is located, its value and condition, and when it should be replaced to assure effective delivery of service.



The achievement in developing human capacity in supported MACs has brought about strong recognition of assets management and has enabled the MAC asset management staff to keep their equipment operable, with improvement in both the morale and the performance of AM staff.

Institutional Capacity Building

GSA AM operations have been restructured to more effectively regulate and monitor the use and maintenance of GOL fixed and movable assets. The GSA assessment revealed a lack of processes to guide internal operations and the services provided to MACs. Where processes may have existed, they were ad hoc and changed with individuals. Although open and operating, GSA could not fulfill its mandate as the Government's asset and property management agency.

- **Assets Management Department created.** Although the GSA's Quality Control Department had two directors, neither understood the role of the department, nor did they perform any tasks that might be expected of such a department. Visits to MACs were infrequent, and there were no approved regularized processes for a Quality Control Department.

The department was renamed the Asset Management Department and given specific functions and a new single director was appointed. Intensive training for GSA monitors followed, with an expectation that they would bring AM data return spreadsheets to the GSA monthly for analysis.

- **Assets Disposal Unit established.** GSA has been given responsibility for disposal of all GOL assets, regardless of source, unless otherwise specified in a separate agreement. The GSA had no processes, guidelines, or procedures for performing this function in a standardized, transparent manner. The new GSA Assets Disposal Unit now has the necessary processes and tools to dispose of assets efficiently. The project drafted a *comprehensive GOL Asset Management Operations and Disposal Manual* and GSA is coordinating creation of the National Disposal Committee to ensure oversight, transparency, and accountability, as required by the AM Disposal Guidelines.

GSA has processes and tools for guiding all asset management disciplines. The assessment revealed that there were few, if any, documents relating to the processes and procedures required for managing assets and property. Where documents existed, they were outdated and not utilized. There

was no comprehensive compilation of GOL assets, their location or condition; nor was there a way to obtain that kind of information.

GSA now has processes that align with the procedures developed in all asset management disciplines. There are tools and templates for collecting, coding, and storing asset management data. There are spreadsheet templates for assets register, inventory, fleet, and other forms and documentation for use in different categories of asset management.

Implementation of processes and procedures with leadership from GSA has encouraged MACs without asset management departments to establish them or recruit staff dedicated to asset management. The GSA asset management director and the GSA AM monitors have started to extend the processes and procedures across government.

GSA and asset monitors have technology tools to work with. Previously MAC staff involved in fleet and asset management did not have operating technology with which to perform their required functions. To enhance work efficiency, a computer with the necessary software and spreadsheet templates was provided to the assets and fleet staff at each MAC and GSA.

GSA has a digitized national asset management system that enables it to effectively perform its role by having a central register of GOL assets and properties. The software uses the IFMIS platform within the MFDP and can be integrated with it. Computers have been provided to the GSA to roll out the system, which has been piloted at GSA, LIPA, MOPT, GC, and MYS.

Enabling Environment

The policies and procedures required to guide assets and property management processes enable the GSA to deliver its mandate.

GSA has policies and procedures manuals to guide asset and property management. The fleet and equipment data-gathering exercise revealed that the GOL had thousands of movable assets with no policy guidance on how to use, manage, maintain, or dispose of them. There were no procedures for any function.

- **Fleet Management:** The program drew up a fleet policy that the Cabinet approved that allocated government vehicles to one of three categories: operational fleet, donated fleet, and devolved fleet. The GOL is implementing the processes for the operational and donated fleets. Implementing the devolved fleet, which requires that the GOL dispose of all vehicles that are not for pre-approved operational purposes, has been placed on hold.
- **Asset Management and Equipment Maintenance Guidelines:** This is a comprehensive guide for practitioners that details procedures for operating and maintaining GOL assets and equipment.
- **GOL Property Disposal Guidelines:** These are procedures for disposing of GOL assets, such as computers.
- **Real Estate Management and Maintenance Guidelines:** This spells out procedures for what must be done and by whom.

The GSA has now published and distributed AM procedures that cover “cradle to grave” asset management: procurement, use, and disposal. GSA AM monitors are trained to offer the MACs day-to-day guidance and support in all areas of asset management. Senior managers in the MACs understand

the importance of protecting AM budgets for preventive maintenance and repair of vehicles and equipment.

Sustainability

The approach to asset management was developed in multiple layers. Senior managers now understand the importance of protecting their MAC assets and their impact on operational efficiency and the need to demand regular reports that enable them to make strategic management and budgetary decisions. They understand that their role is driving the process. Middle managers are taking ownership of the process and understand what information they need from subordinates to capture AM data and make sure that equipment is regularly maintained as the manufacturers direct. They also understand the importance of collating and producing monthly AM reports, not only for their own management purposes but also to allow senior managers to make decisions about replacement and deployment.

The GSA and its AM monitors are trained to support the MACs and provide coordination with the GSA. The GSA also understands its role in providing high-level information to government on asset management.

The GSA and some MACs were actively involved in formulating all the procedural manuals and guidelines. This resulted in a high level of ownership and general agreement with the purpose of and steps required for the various procedures. The MACs are now managing their assets day to day with minimal support, their equipment is being maintained, and the benefits in terms of improved efficiency are noticed and appreciated.

Involvement in formulating and demonstrating use of processes and procedures increases sustainability. However, where financial resources are required for printing forms, visits to institutions, maintenance, the internet, etc., sustainability will be threatened. And should senior management or GSA cease to require that the procedures be followed, sustainability will be completely undermined.

GEMS transferred all training materials for asset and property management and maintenance to LIPA as a part of the sustainability approach, but unfortunately LIPA does not have the necessary subject matter instructors to deliver the training. Without them, it is likely that use of the procedures will be limited to those who were reached by this project.

Lessons Learned

Understand the background. In the early phases, project staff made inquiries and observations about the reasons the previous attempts to introduce AM systems had failed, the points below were identified as areas of concern.

In previous approaches to centralized asset management GSA was expected to take responsibility for collecting all AM data, which took the form of an audit. There was no procedural guidance to MACs about operation and maintenance of equipment and day-to-day monitoring, management, and responsibility. As the centralized procurement process was been devolved from the GSA to individual MACs, the MACs had become responsible for formulating their own budgets. Without any other guidance the MACs concluded that they were responsible for registration, correct operation, maintenance, replacement, and disposal of their own assets. The result was that GSA was left completely out of that loop but still had responsibility for AM monitoring and regulation.

It was important to understand why GSA was not a part of vehicle registration, operation, and maintenance before beginning to try to solve the problem. It took several years to convince all the

stakeholders of GSA's mandated responsibility, draw up procedures for GSA to perform them, and train all parties in GSA and the MACs to deliver them before MACs started to appreciate their necessity.

Minds can be changed with evidence. It was established that the only way to convince senior managers of the usefulness of an asset management department or dedicated staff was to demonstrate this. Support was provided to everyone from drivers to middle management to produce AM data and follow the preventive maintenance recommendations. Once achieved, the AM data, which contained useful information for management decision making, was presented to senior management. In every case this presentation created genuine surprise because of the amount of work and particularly the information on fleet and equipment details within the institution. Those at the top took more interest in asset and fleet management procedures, which helped to increase interest in protecting the equipment maintenance budget and made possible timely preventive maintenance practices.

Collaborate with GOL partners. An AM manual was found that had been developed by past consultants, but GSA did not acknowledge its existence because I had no involvement in its development and it was not relevant to the Liberian context. The lesson for GEMS was that to achieve agreement across government, all stakeholders had to be involved and contribute to the process, even if it was time-consuming. All procedural manuals and guidelines were put together in full collaboration with GSA and MAC senior and middle managers. Ownership and consensus were achieved and these will have a good impact for future sustainability.

First things first. A major lesson learned in the assets management area was that high-level standards can only be achieved by first ensuring that the basics are in place. Liberia did not have agreed AM processes and procedures, so putting these in place became the priority.

Recommendations and Outstanding Challenges

The national digitized AM software was installed toward the end of the project. While the MFDP and GSA have a well-qualified project management team to ensure full roll-out, they will require continuing assistance to enable full implementation of the software at the GSA and in the MACs. It will also be necessary to ensure that the GSA AM monitors fully understand their role in ensuring that information coming from the MACs to the central database is accurate. Like any other system, this one will only be as good as the data entered into it.

Of the more than 90 ministries, agencies, and commissions, USAID-GEMS assisted only 14. The GSA AM director needs expanded technical assistance to build the capacity of all GSA AM monitors across the GOL. In particular, the systems and processes for asset, fleet, and real estate management and property disposal need to be rolled out to the other MACs. There have been challenges and delays in the roll-out of operational and fleet management procedures, mainly due to the Ebola crisis. It is critical that momentum in this area is sustained to protect GOL assets and reduce repair costs.

While embracing the changes, the GSA itself was slow to implement many of them due to management changes. Structured and centralized disposals, part of the GSA mandate, did not begin until 2015 and most MACs are still not familiar with the process and procedures. There is significant work to be done to train GSA staff and help them to dispose of assets properly, recover any scrap value, and minimize nontransparent disposals by MACs.

With an estimated 1,600 GOL building, full implementation of the Real Estate Management and Maintenance Guidelines across the GOL is necessary.

Key Documents and Tools Developed

Document	Use	Benefit
Asset Management Operations Manual	Reference guide for MACs and GSA	Regularizes processes for the sustainability of GOL AM systems.
Asset Management Introductory Workshop	Familiarize civil servants with the concept and importance of asset management.	Improve the understanding of AM by managers as well as operatives so all know exactly what is required of them; and mainstream asset management.
Property Disposal Guidelines	A reference for GSA and the MACs.	Offer a regularized, structured approach to disposal of GOL property,
Disposal training presentations	A training tool for the GSA Assets Disposal Unit, National Disposal Committee, and MAC disposal officers.	Introduction to processes and procedures for the disposal of property.
Disposals Inventory Spreadsheet.	For MACs to use in the disposal process to provide accurate information to the GSA.	GSA can accurately identify GOL property that requires disposal.
Building Management Guidelines	Reference for GSA and the MACs.	Offer a regularized, structured approach and set minimum standards for acquisition of GOL buildings and lease requirements.
Building Management Training	For the GSA Property Bureau	Organized and regularized approach to building management, standardized leases, and acquisition procedures.
Building Maintenance Guidelines	Reference GSA and the MACs	A structured approach to regularize building maintenance practices.
Building Maintenance Training	For GSA and MACs, an Introduction to building maintenance schedules and continuous preventive maintenance.	Better, cleaner working environment; ability to formulate a maintenance budget and reduce expensive repair costs.
Buildings Register Spreadsheet	Central register of all buildings.	Enable the Property Bureau to monitor each building and record data on preventive maintenance.
Asset Management, Data Collection and Maintenance Guide	Reference for GSA and the MACs.	Structured approach to data collection.
AM Training I. Defining and Classifying Assets	Training tool for AM operatives.	Introduction to processes and procedures.

Document	Use	Benefit
AM Training 2. Collecting and Recording Assets Data	A training tool for AM operatives.	Introduction to processes and procedures.
AM Training 3. Developing and Managing Asset Registers.	A training tool for AM operatives.	Introduction to processes and procedures.
AM Training 4. Coding Assets and Locating Serial Numbers	A training tool for AM operatives.	Introduction to processes and procedures.
AM Training 5. Creating Reports from Asset Registers	A training tool for AM operatives.	Introduction to processes and procedures.
GOL Fleet Management Policy document.	Policy guidance for developing procedures or the operational, donor, and devolved fleets.	Articulates government intent for management of vehicles.
Fleet, Generator, Motorcycle Maintenance and Management Guidelines (Manual)	Reference for GSA and the MACs.	Regularized, structured approach.
Fleet Training 1. Vehicle Preventive Maintenance	A training tool for AM operatives.	Introduction to processes and procedures.
Fleet Training 2. Vehicle Management Record- keeping Tools	A training tool for AM operatives.	Introduction to processes and procedures.
Fleet Training 3. Generator Preventive Maintenance	A training tool for AM operatives.	Introduction to processes and procedures.
Fleet Training 4. Generator Management Record- keeping Tools	A training tool for AM operatives.	Introduction to processes and procedures.
Fleet Training 5. Motorcycle Preventive Maintenance	A training tool for AM operatives.	Introduction to processes and procedures.
Fleet Training 6. Motorcycle Management Record keeping Tools	A training tool for AM operatives.	Introduction to processes and procedures.
National Fleet Register spreadsheet	Store data and description of each GOL vehicle.	Monitor correct operation and preventive maintenance or replacement.
National Generator Register spreadsheet	Store data and description of each GOL generator.	Monitor correct operation and preventive maintenance or replacement.
National Motorcycle Register spreadsheet	Store data and description of each GOL motorcycle.	Monitor correct operation and preventive maintenance or replacement.
Institutional Fleet Register spreadsheet	Store data and description of each GOL vehicle.	Monitor correct operation and preventive maintenance or replacement.
Institutional Generator, Vehicle, and Motorcycle Register spreadsheets	Store data and description of each GOL vehicle.	Assist with MAC internal management of fleets and equipment.

Document	Use	Benefit
Various Inventory spreadsheets	Internal use in the MACs	Enable MACs that do not have software to better organize themselves on a departmental basis and learn to prioritize certain assets.

PROCUREMENT MANAGEMENT

The Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC) is responsible for ensuring transparency, competitiveness, and compliance with the PPCA. The institutional assessments revealed that neither the PPCC nor the MACs had a thorough understanding of the requirements of the PPCA, which was enacted in 2006 and amended in 2010. The PPCC had no processes or procedures for undertaking its regulatory functions; procurement practitioners had inadequate planning and documentation and no procedural guidance; and Procurement Committees and end users were not aware of their roles in the procurement process.

The National Budget allocates 42% of its recurrent spending to goods, services, and other items. (This excludes the Public Sector Investment Budget.) All of it is expended through a procurement process. Fair, transparent, and competitive procurement processes, along with procurement and cash plans coordinated with the MFDP, are directly correlated with the government's ability to manage public finances.

The USAID-GEMS Procurement Management Team consisted of two professionals, a subject matter expert, and a specialist; over the course of the project it was assisted by five short-term experts who provided technical assistance. The objective was to enhance the PPCC's capacity as a regulator and improve the ability of MAC procurement practitioners to undertake and document public procurements in compliance with the PPCA. Support was provided to 14 MACs, including the GSA, for various periods.

PPCC as Regulator

Procurement planning and implementation has improved across the GOL as PPCC capacity was enhanced. In public procurement, procurement plans are the main driving force. It was determined that MAC procurement plans were prepared because they were mandated by the PPCC and were set aside after PPCC approval. Mandatory procurement planning workshops were therefore introduced before the annual procurement plan hearings. The workshops offered GOL procurement practitioners and the PPCC the opportunity to review areas where practitioners had common challenges, introduce new concepts, and share issues affecting plan preparation and execution. Schedules were set for MAC submission and approval of procurement plans, thereby establishing service standards. As a result of these clinics, the PPCC rejected fewer procurement plans and because plan quality has improved, the PPCC no longer requires the annual clinic. Procurement plans are now streamlined, practical, understood by practitioners, and used in the MACs as the guide for annual procurements.

The Handbook for Procurement Practitioners makes possible continuous improvement. The handbook, which provides guidance on all procurement-related matters, is used as a desktop guide. It contains information on specialized procurements for Works, ICT, Health, and Education. Although the PPCC has approved the handbook, it has not released it to practitioners for use.

New Procurement Concepts Introduced

Framework Contracting

Framework contracting has made procurements of commonly used, goods and services more efficient and allowed the GOL to have continuity of service when the national budget has not yet been approved.

Fundamental challenges for effectively implementing the PPCC Act at MACs were their failure to adhere to procurement plans, ad hoc procurement (often blamed on delays in the budget process), late release of funds, and outdated procurement manuals. Use by procuring entities of the Request for Quotations (RFQ) method for 90% of their procurements presented an opportunity to take advantage of a new concept that was allowable under the PPCA.

The PPCC Act anticipated possible shortcomings in procurement practice and provided under Clause 53. “Request for Quotations; Alternative for Small Scale Purchases” that

The Commission may by regulation establish procedures whereby Procuring Entities may make repetitive purchases of goods or services described in clauses (a) and (c) of subsection (1) of this Section from a list of prequalified bidders without the necessity of utilizing the request for quotations method for each purchase. The regulations must provide for regular updating of the list in a manner that gives new bidders fair opportunity to join the list and must limit the use of outdated lists.

The introduction of framework contracting

1. Eliminates the temptation to divide procurement orders into parts or lower the value of a procurement order to avoid application of a specific method of procurement.
2. Avoids repeated purchase of similar items in small, uneconomic quantities that result in increased transaction costs for procurement management, poor value for money, and failure to use procurement best practices.
3. Eliminates bulk deliveries that require holding large inventories, the possibility of supplies expiring, leading to waste and possible pollution, and unnecessary expenditure of entire annual budgets.
4. Offers procuring entities control over the drawdown of quantities required to meet their immediate requirements.

Consolidating these requirements into framework contracts has enabled procuring entities to save time, primarily, on processing procurements and get better prices through larger-volume contracts.

Considering that the realities—slow budget approval process, delays in finalizing entity procurement plans, delays in release of funds to entities, and the practice of giving entities 1/12 of the previous year’s spending until budget approval—are not likely to be resolved soon, the use of framework contracting enables government operations to continue in a transparent manner.

Procurement of Nonconsulting Services

Introduction of the nonconsulting services procurement method for technical services has resolved a major gap in procurement practice that was not covered by the PPCA. MACs can now readily contract for services like maintenance, transport, security, or catering.

These two concepts have been integrated into the *Handbook for Procurement Practitioners* and PPCC has begun to revise the relevant regulations. The PPCC has demonstrated its competence in these areas by delivering training sessions around the country for procurement practitioners.

Although the PPCC will implement these concepts in earnest starting in July 2016, MOA and FDA are on record as having started to do so after the formal training and OJT provided by USAID-GEMS. These two MACs located outside central Monrovia noted that the use of framework contracts has reduced almost daily trips to central Monrovia to collect pro-forma invoices, process them in the office, and return to deliver purchase orders. They have also engaged service providers, especially for maintenance of vehicles and generators, using nonconsulting services procurement. They plan to move on to incorporate routine maintenance schedules in the FY2016/17 contracts.

The PPCC and the MACs are now using procurement management systems assessment tools are now used by PPCC and MACS. The PPCC has Procurement Compliance Monitoring tools that allows it to assess the transparency, accountability, and competitiveness of procurement systems. The tools are an expansion of the procurement documentation review and analysis system tools USAID-GEMS advisors used with the MACs, which are well understood by both the PPCC and the MACs. The PPCC Compliance Unit has scheduled compliance reviews using the tools in its FY16/17 work plan. These will facilitate procurement system audits and are expected to improve over time.

Support to MACS

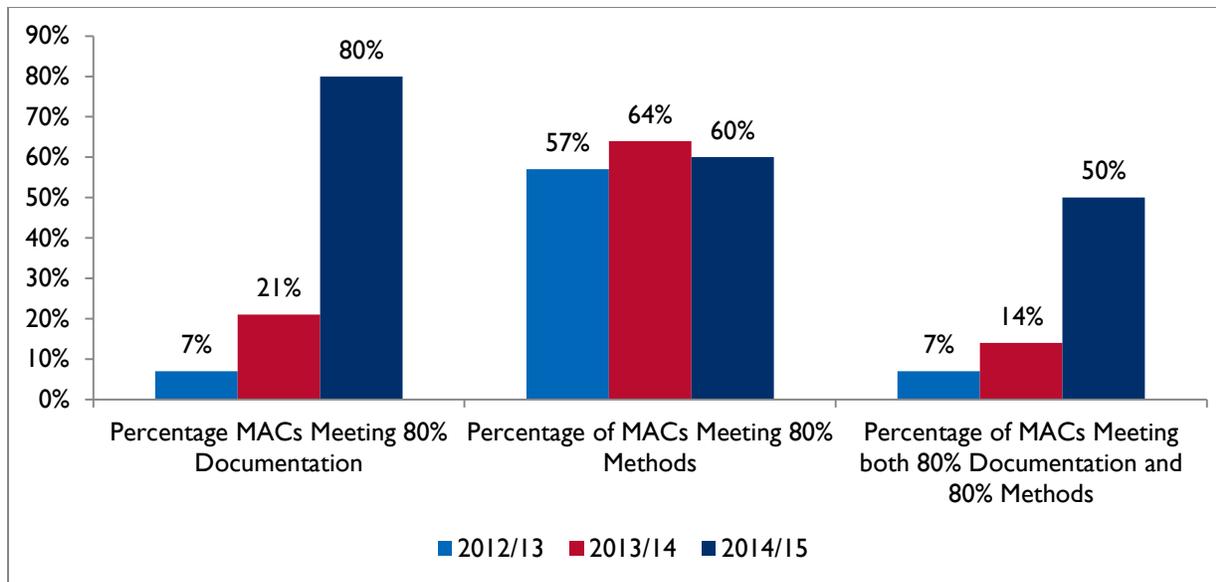
Procurement committees and end users are performing their roles in the procurement process with enhanced capacity for oversight. MAC procurement committees had not been performing their responsibilities to ensure proper procurement management, and many were not even aware of those responsibilities. Procurement committee meetings were not documented, bids were evaluated haphazardly, and reports were often not signed by bid evaluation panel members. The project trained procurement committee members and end users in each MAC on their roles and responsibilities and provided continuing guidance throughout the project period.

With a target of 80% for sampled procurement committee meetings having minutes on file and meetings composed of the requisite legal quorum, the end review revealed a result of 100%. The project also set a target of 80% of sampled evaluations being signed by all members of the evaluation panels, and the result was 78%, or 7 of the 9 MACs.

End-user departments that had complained of being left out of the procurement process now contribute more effectively to procurement planning, specification and terms of reference writing, bid evaluation and assessing the performance of service providers.

Better documentation has increased accountability for and auditability of procurement transactions. One measure used to demonstrate whether results were being achieved in the procurement area is the number of MACs that follow the prescribed procedures. This was determined by assessing the quality of documentation and adherence to agreed procurement methods.

The 2013 baseline to assess the quality of documentation in the USAID-GEMS–targeted MACs showed that only one (7.1%) of MACs met the required 80% on quality of documentation. Intensive OJT was provided through weekly visits to each MAC over the life of the project. The team assisted the MACs in structuring contract documentation and properly filing all supporting documents; MACS were provided with folders and filing cabinets to improve efficiency. The figure presents the outcome of the assessments on procurement documentation and the use of correct procurement methods over the life of the project:



A procurement documentation review and analysis system was created and used to assess each file against the set of documents required to make a file complete. Eight MACS are meeting the 80% documentation standard. They can now use the system for self-assessments as well as for assessing their internal auditors.

The creation of acceptable filing systems was facilitated by the provision of filing cabinets, computers, and scanners.

The use of correct procurement methods has notably improved. Correct procurement methods assure transparency, competitiveness, and value for money.

The institutional assessments revealed that, although plans based on acceptable procurement methods had been prepared, they were largely ignored at the time of contracting. An assessment of MAC use of correct procurement methods in FY2012/13 found that 57.14% met the minimum requirement on use of approved methods. The validation assessment for FY2013/14 procurement showed a slight improvement to 64% but in FY2014/15 that fell back to 60%. Thus, though some improvements have been made in the use of correct methods, they are not consistent.

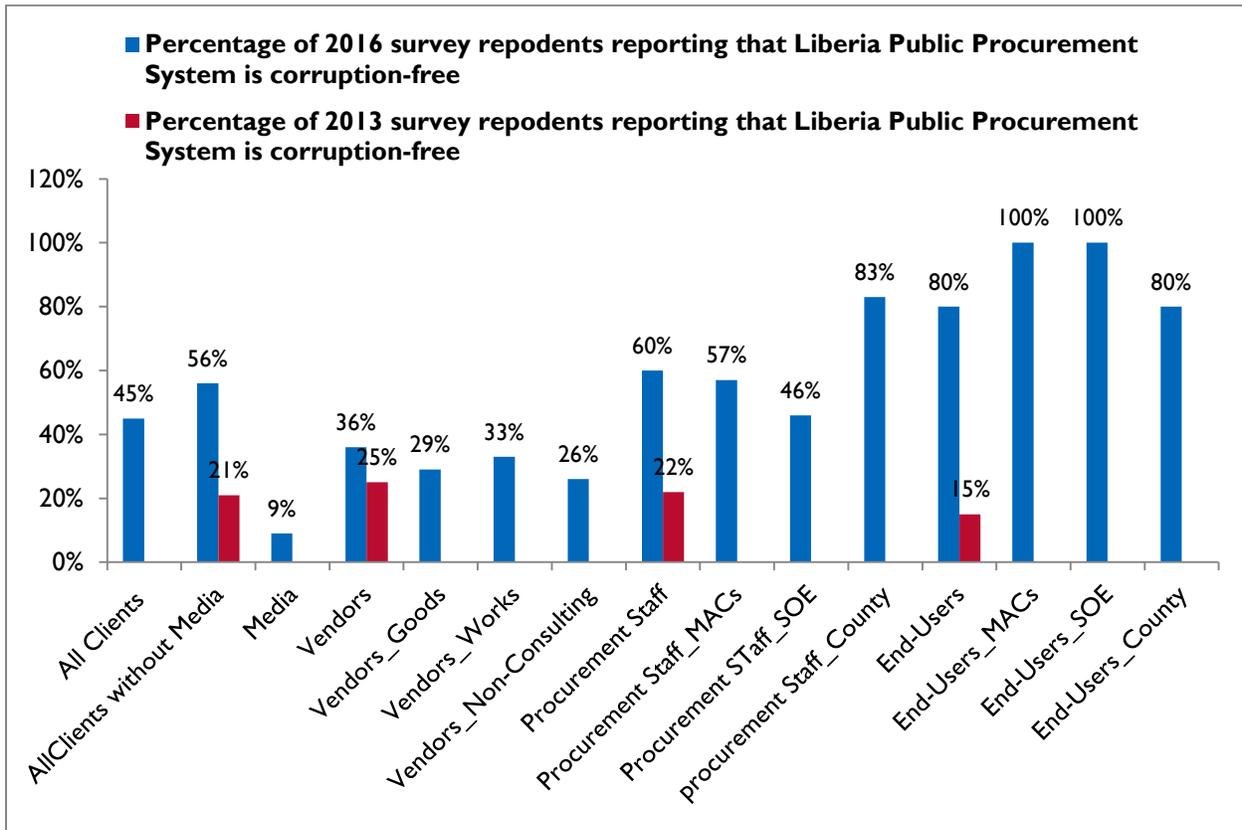
Procurement Client Perception Survey

A Procurement Perception Survey was conducted in 2013 to establish a procurement quality of service and the perception baseline for PPCC clients, with a follow-up survey in 2016. Respondents were the procurement staff, end-users at procuring entities, contractors, suppliers, and service providers of selected MACs.

A core indicator was percentage of the respondents that “agree” or “strongly agree” that the GOL Procurement System is “relatively corruption free.” The objective was to use perception as a proxy for how the quality and integrity of procurement are seen to have improved as measured by minimized corruption.

Findings—The next figure reflects the findings of the 2013 and 2016 procurement perception surveys. In 2013, about one in five respondents (21%) saw the procurement system as corruption free, which included 25% of vendors, 15% of end-users, and 22% of procurement staff considered the procurement

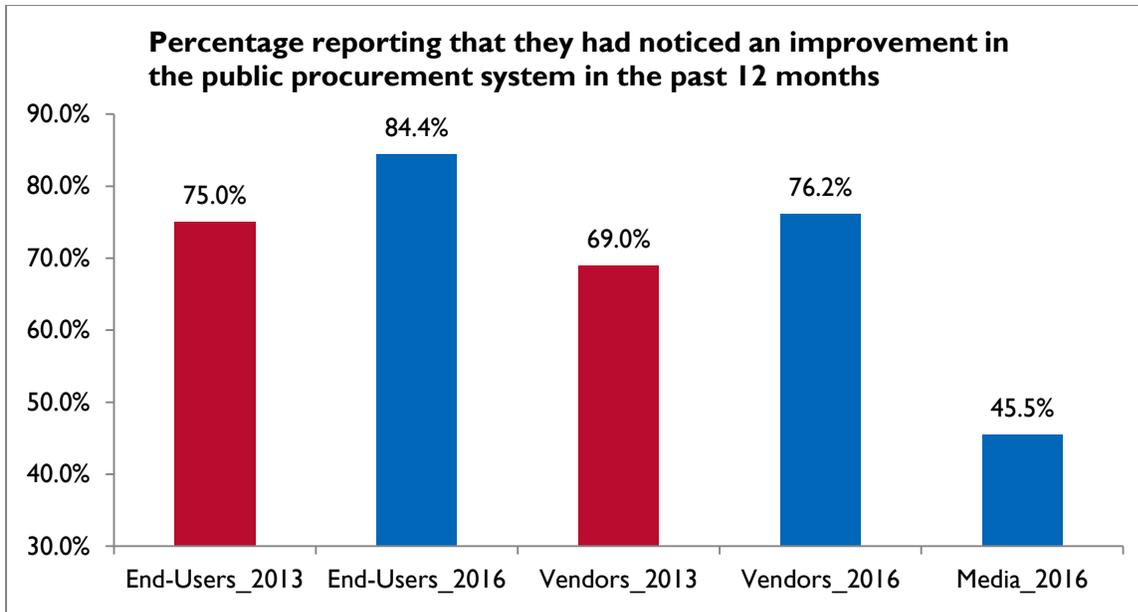
system to be corruption free. In 2016, 56% of all respondents (excluding media) saw the system as corruption free, among them 36% of vendors, 80% of end-users, and 60% of procurement staff. Since USAID-GEMS was the only initiative providing continuous, focused support to public procurement during this period, it is reasonable to conclude that project interventions made a significantly contribution to the change in the perception that procurement was corruption free from 21% in 2013 to 56% in 2016.



The proportion of 2016 survey respondents reporting that the procurement system is “corruption-free” is clearly related to how close a respondent is to actual procurement actions. The further the client is from the influence of, or to information about, a procurement activity, the lower the perception that the public procurement system is corruption-free. As generators of procurement actions, the end-users are the closest, and their perception of corruption-freedom is very high at 80%, followed by procurement staff at 60%, then vendors at 36%, and furthest the media at 9.1%. From one client type to the next along the spectrum, the difference in perception is statistically significant throughout.

A significant aspect of perceptions of corruption that is attributable to the amount of information available to a procurement client. Beyond the availability of information, the majority of respondents of all types do not consider the public procurement system as corruption-free. Less than half, 44.5% (including media) rated it as “corruption-free” in 2016.

The key for procurement reforms, however, is whether the system is seen to be improving. Between 2013 and 2016 both end users and vendors reported noticing improvements.



Because the media was not surveyed in 2013, no comparison is available.

Sustainability and Outstanding Challenges

The PPCC has improved its capacity to perform its statutory role as regulator of procurement processes, as well as supporting the MACs and the private sector in understanding the requirements for public procurement. The commission is severely under-resourced and cannot sustain the transparency and accountability momentum nationwide without additional support. Although USAID-GEMS assisted 14 MACs, there are more than 80 that require focused attention.

The sustainability of procurement reforms requires commitment at the highest levels of central government and within the MACs. This will require a long-term concerted effort: procurement practitioners may or may not do the right thing, but with effective leaders who understand the requirements and enforces them, they will be compelled to do so. Practitioners trained in procurement in the Financial Management Training Program may have a good general understanding of government procurement requirements, but they must work within institutions. Although they are civil servants, they essentially work at the will and pleasure of the Minister. They can be removed easily if they disagree with the leadership on procurement practices.

Recommendations and Lessons Learned

If the PPCC can sustain the gains achieved in the 14 MACs and not only enhance them but also expand the improvements to other entities, procurement practice in Liberia will move to a new level. Although the PPCC is enthusiastic, it needs to build up the knowledge and capacity of more of its staff, secure funding for its outreach and oversight operations, and receive intensive technical assistance.

Key Documents and Tools Provided

DOCUMENT	USE	BENEFIT
Procurement Client Perception Survey: Baseline Survey Report, 2013	Give the PPCC insight into stakeholder perception of procurement practice.	Noting the areas of concern, the PPCC can draw up action plans to improve on its oversight and capacity-building responsibilities.
Procurement Client Perception Survey: Validation Survey Report, 2016	Give the PPCC insight into how stakeholder perceptions of procurement practice have changed since 2013.	Noting the areas of concern, the PPCC can draw up action plans to further improve on its oversight and capacity-building responsibilities.
PPCC-PRO Common Use Report_2014 06 06	Reference for MACS on contract pricing (to be updated by the PPCC as required)	Gives management a fair idea of market prices, thereby minimizing incidence of contract price inflation and collusion.
PPCC-PRO Common Use Report User Guide	Reference for MACS on contract pricing (to be updated by the PPCC as required)	Gives management a fair idea of market prices, thereby minimizing incidences of contract price inflation and collusion.
PPCC <i>Procurement Handbook</i> : Drawn from the eight area-specific manuals on procurement of Goods, Works, Consulting Services, Non-consulting Services; Educational, Health and IT requirements, and Framework Contracting.	Reference and training material for procurement practitioners.	Guides in procuring GOL necessities in conformity with the provisions of the PPCA and its regulations.
Guide for Assessing Compliance Level of Procuring Entities with the 2010 PPCA & its Regulations	Provides a methodology for evaluating procurement structures, transactions, and records.	Facilitates a consistent approach of assessing the compliance of procuring entities (MACS) with the requirements of the 2010 Act and its accompanying regulations so as to objectively gauge the quality and effectiveness of the procurement system, determine strengths and weaknesses, and contribute to the drafting of a capacity development plan to address the weaknesses identified.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation within the MACs was not originally considered by the USAID-GEMS project. However, GC, NBC and LIPA were given M&E support to further their unique mandates.

Over the course of the project the M&E area consisted of four subject matter experts and a specialist and were supported by four short-term experts who provided technical assistance.

Governance Commission

The project supported the GC's M&E mandate by providing two embedded local M&E specialists. This Commission area is responsible for planning and implementing governance assessments. The skills of the two project-supported staff proved critical when the inaugural Governance Assessment on Health and Education was planned, executed, and presented.

National Bureau of Concessions

The NBC is required to monitor contractor compliance with obligations set out in agreements for natural resource concessions. With project support NBC now has Concessions Reporting Templates for mining, rubber, oil palms, and forestry. Concessionaires use these to report on the various components of their operations, which makes it possible for the NBC to gather and analyze the data for reporting and any necessary action.

Liberia Institute of Public Administration

LIPA now has a comprehensive results framework that captures current intended results and the goals for the future. It also now has Performance and Impact Indicators that allow it to direct staff work to achieve the desired results. It now has the tools to monitor progress regularly and a template to be incorporated into annual reports.

Documents and Tools Developed

Document	Use	Benefit
LIPA Client Perception Report, 2013	Improving training quality.	Increased utilization of LIPA services and products.
LIPA Client Perception Report, 2016	Improving training quality.	Increased utilization of LIPA services and products.

Sustainability and Recommendations

The MACs have minimal M&E capacity and senior managers do not recognize how useful such performance management systems are. This is obvious from the lack of national M&E structures to monitor such plans as the Agenda for Transformation. M&E is critical to the data gathering, analysis, and change that is required to deliver on development objectives. For future projects, to promote M&E advocacy and technical support it will be necessary to have dedicated public sector M&E advisors in addition to internal project M&E staff.

The perception and quality surveys undertaken with PPCC and LIPA created significant interest in the type of information they generated, which provides guidance for improvement. Staff of both institutions were involved, but limited resources make it difficult for either of them to undertake such initiatives. Repetition of these surveys is recommended for at least one more round to enable them to become institutionalized. In future, and when electrical power and the Internet are within the reach of most respondents, the use of inexpensive website-based continuous survey-monkey tools could also be supported.

OBJECTIVE 2: INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF LIPA ENHANCED

The institutional capacity of LIPA is enhanced to provide targeted training that will improve the capacity and performance of GOL personnel responsible for key management functions.

LIPA is the GOL institution responsible for training and advisory services to build civil service capacity in Liberia. The significant emphasis that the GOL places on building civil service capacity placed LIPA at the center of the USAID-GEMS capacity-building initiatives. USAID actively supported LIPA from its inception in the early 1970s, and the USAID-GEMS Project was required to work closely with LIPA to build up its institutional capacity to develop civil service capacity and to identify and work toward meeting the short-, medium-, and long-term priorities that would be most useful in achieving LIPA's institutional objectives.

This section discusses the context, strategic results, sustainability, outstanding challenges, recommendations, and lessons learned from USAID-GEMS support to LIPA. The intermediate result outcome guiding support in this objective was a LIPA strengthened in providing its clients with sustainable, quality training, research, and consulting services.

The USAID-GEMS LIPA Team consisted of three subject matter experts and a specialist for the first three years and one subject matter expert for the final two years. Over the course of the project they were assisted by 22 short-term experts who provided technical assistants.

Context

The Liberia Institute of Public Administration (LIPA), originally known as the Institute of Public Administration, was established by an Act of the Liberia Legislature in 1969. Before the Institute could commence operations, in 1972 the act was replaced by a revised law. The new Institute was to be “primarily concerned with improving the administrative performance and professional capabilities of the Government public service through training of personnel, research in problems of public administration and consultation in public administration with the purpose of developing, for maximum utilization, the potential sources of talent of the manpower in the country” (LIPA Act, 1972.) The act also expanded on the role of LIPA as the main capacity-building institution in Liberia. Liberia's Management Development Institute was thus created, following the trend in other African countries.

From 1972 to 1978, USAID provided over \$3 million in grant funds to LIPA. A formal technical cooperative agreement was signed between the GOL and the Institute of Public Administration of New York (IPA/NY). Some of the USAID technical assistance funded three Liberian college graduates to pursue master's degrees in public administration in the U.S.; these returned to Liberia to form LIPA's operational. A total of 28 Liberians were trained in the U.S., Ghana, and Nigeria through the USAID/GOL technical assistance program for LIPA and other government agencies. By the end of the cooperative agreement, LIPA was fully established, staffed, equipped, and made operational.

Civil War and post-war: However, during the Liberian Civil War the Institute collapsed. From 1990 through 1995 there was no training, no staff, and no operations. The library collections were looted, leaving behind only three books. The post-war period was very difficult for LIPA: Because the Board of Directors was not reconstituted, and in its absence, appointment of the Director General and other senior management positions were political nominations by the President of Liberia. Although LIPA did make substantial progress in building its academic programs during the post-war reconstruction, there were fundamental governance and structural problems that were to haunt LIPA in the future. From its beginning in 1972 until 1989, the structure of LIPA had been based on the LIPA Act. During the post-war transitional arrangements in the larger society, the LIPA Act was set aside, and by 1995 LIPA's governance structure had changed.

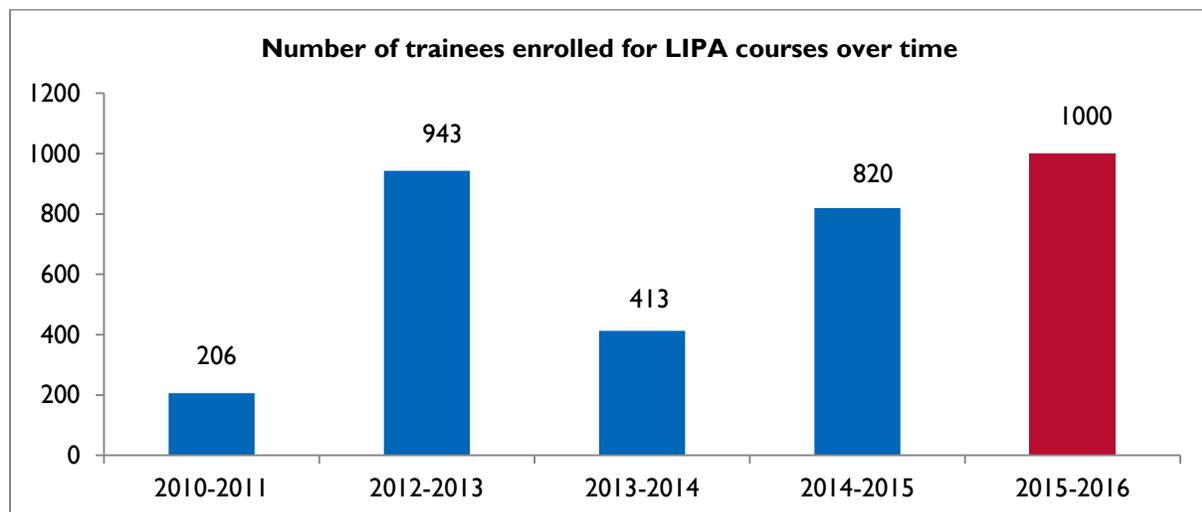
Institutional Challenges: Three events in FY14/15 significantly impacted the progress of LIPA and the USAID-GEMS team toward achieving LIPA’s annual goals.

1. **EBOLA**—The national State of Emergency prompted by the Ebola virus disease (EVD) epidemic led to the suspension of training and other activities at LIPA through the third quarter of FY15. The two USAID-GEMS expatriate advisors chose not to return to Liberia. With the epidemic escalating, and considering mid-term recommendations, project work with LIPA was narrowed modified to one expatriate advisor coaching and mentoring senior leadership.
2. **SENIOR MANAGEMENT**—The President of Liberia suspended the three deputy directors general (DDGs) as the EVD epidemic was ending and preparation to reopen classes was beginning. Their reinstatement after two months deepened the management crisis and created significant uncertainty, severely affecting operations. Advertisement of the positions thereafter aggravated the situation. The work of the Academic Board and the Executive Management Committee was stalled, critical decisions could not be made, and project support for coaching and mentoring leadership became extremely difficult.
3. **GOVERNANCE**—A strong and capable LIPA Board of Directors had been needed for many years to provide policy direction and control of the Institute. In September 2015, the President of Liberia appointed a Board of Directors for LIPA that then recommended appointment of the three new DDGs. By March 2016 the new senior management team had begun operational planning, marketing new courses, and making management decisions on policies and staffing to improve morale and the quality of training and the growth of the Institute.

LIPA & USAID-GEMS

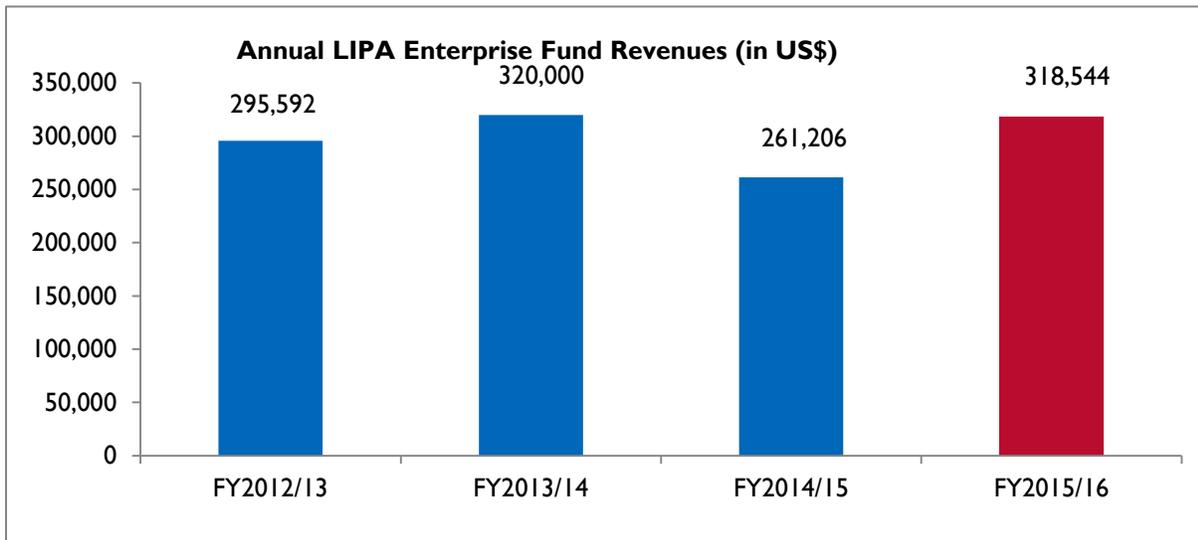
LIPA Training Enrollment

LIPA’s enrollment more than tripled during the project period. In 2011/12 when assistance began, enrollment was only 206 students. With the support of three dedicated GEMS professionals, in one year enrollment more than tripled. Although the EVD epidemic had a devastating impact, enrollments have been rising again. In the first of the three waves of 2016 trainings, 313 were trained and projected enrollment by December 2016 is estimated at about 1,000 trainees. (Enrollment works on a January–December calendar year).



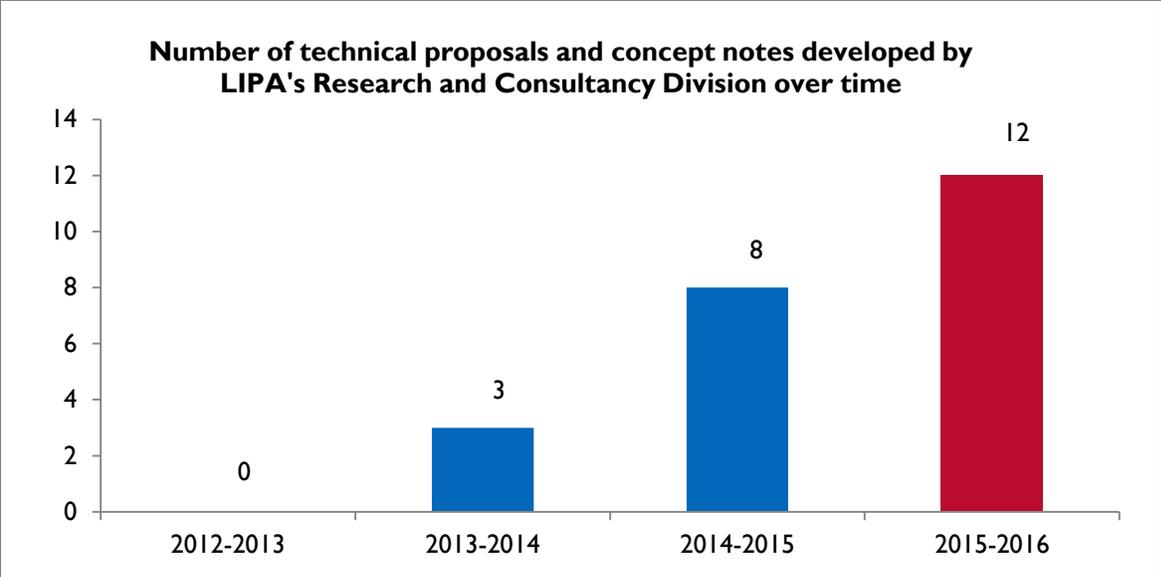
Enterprise Fund Revenues

LIPA’s internally generated revenues are going up. LIPA’s Enterprise Fund is derived from the fees and other payments charged for LIPA courses, consultancies, and other products and services. The steady growth in LIPA revenues has been closely related to the trends in number of trainees enrolled. The effects of the EVD can be seen in the drop in revenues in FY2014/15 when fewer trainees enrolled. By June 30, 2016, the projected revenues are estimated below, using projected number of trainees for 2016. (Revenues are based on a July – June fiscal year.)



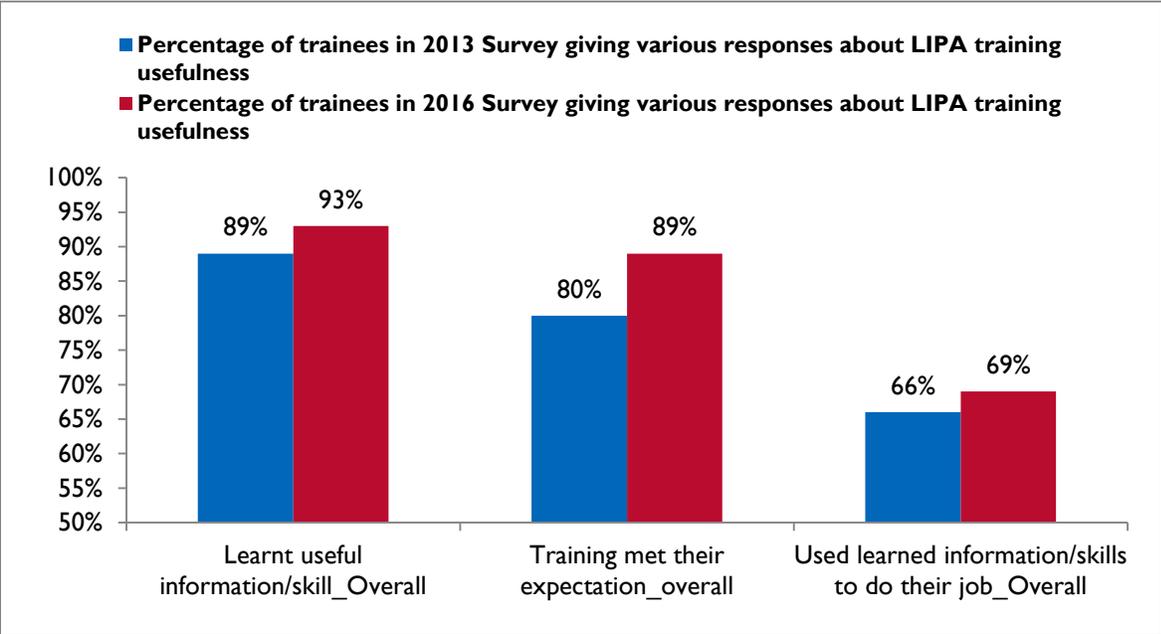
New Business Proposals

LIPA’s research and consultancy unit are now fulfilling mandated functions. The Research and Consultancy unit had not been fully operational since the institution’s inception. There was no evidence of any research or proposal writing, although this was central to the institution’s mandate. With project support LIPA completed 12 new business proposals between January and December 2016 based on the capability statement, proposal development, and costing guidelines provided through USAID-GEMS assistance. The GEMS Senior Training Advisor’s coaching of staff in identifying opportunities and proposal writing resulted in significant improvement in the proposals submitted.



Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction surveys reveal improvement. Surveys were conducted in 2013 and 2016. In the 2013 survey, 89% of respondents reported learning useful information, 80% reported that training met expectations, and 66% reported using training to do their jobs. In the 2016 survey, 93% of those interviewed reported they learned useful information, 89% that training met their expectation, and 69% that they used what they learned to do their jobs—a clear improvement in all three indicators over the previous survey. (Since many LIPA students take courses to improve skills for future employment in new areas, those reporting use of training in their jobs is lower than might otherwise be expected.)



LIPA has improved its ability to be a self-sustaining institution providing quality instruction and training courses to the GOL and the private sector.

Four- and-a-half years of the project working collaboratively with LIPA has had the following results:

- All LIPA trainers now use adult learning strategies that promote teaching effectiveness with adult learners.
- LIPA's Training Calendar, course brochures, and other pre-training preparations are timelier, leading to effective training management.
- Program review and development of course modules and syllabi are more professionally done, thus enhancing delivery and record keeping.
- The quality of teaching, learning, and service delivery has improved, supported by the improvements in facilities and equipment.
- The LIPA Library can now more effectively support teaching, learning, research, and consultancy to internal and external stakeholders because of improved materials, equipment, and structure.
- LIPA's program-supported M&E system will help senior management better assess the impact of training on work performance, the quality of courses, client satisfaction, and ultimate achievement of LIPA targeted results.
- Administrative support now reflects improved management of resources, both human and financial, and of LIPA's important assets. LIPA's own procurement systems are fully compliant with the PPCC's regulations. Its ICT services have improved, and its website and electronic communications systems are functional.
- Leadership and direction now comes from a strategy shared openly that unites all departments and staff under a common mandate.
- The Board of Directors is performing its oversight and guidance role.
- An active Academic Board is demonstrating responsibility for enrollment management, exam administration, and course scheduling.
- The Senior Management Team now meets regularly, communicates openly and works collaboratively.

To enhance training LIPA has improved its facilities, equipment, and technology.

LIPA's facilities and training environment—offices, classrooms, and restrooms—have been renovated, and LIPA now has available 56 computers with software; four each of servers, scanners, and network printers; five LCD projectors for classrooms; and two giant copiers. A battery bank enables continued training when publicly provided power is not available.

LIPA has demonstrated its ability to institutionalize certification training by holding examinations and preparatory classes to help prepare participants for certification examinations.

Accounting Training: The project supported a one-year pilot of the Liberia Accounting Training Program (LATP) that enabled LIPA and the Liberian Institute of Certified Public Accountants (LICPA) to work together to improve the accounting and financial skills particularly of public officials. The objective of the LATP was to build up the skills and competence of accounting staff in Liberia's public sector so that they can attain professional qualifications as Chartered Accountants.

Through teaching and tutorial support, in Phase I of the LATP, 4 candidates passed the ICAG (Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana) Level 4 Exams to become Chartered Accountants, and 6 passed all Level 3 exams. These results showed that the LATP pilot was successful and established the case for dedicated professional accountants to train students in accounting and specifically for the examinations. It also proved that Liberians could train and pass the qualifying examinations in Liberia.

The LICPA continues to organize locally run training programs and has maintained its partnerships although its resources to continue the program are limited. Student confidence and desire to pursue professional accounting has increased; through March 2016, another 9 candidates passed the Level 4 exams. As a result, 13 Liberians have met the international qualification standards.

Thus in Phase I of the LATP program:

- LICPA's professional training raised the institute's membership from 20 in 2012 to 58 in 2015.
- The foundation for Phase 2 of the program showed increases in registration of more than 200% for the Accounting Technicians Scheme of West Africa (ATSWA) 1 training, 167% for ATSWA 2, and 33% for ATSWA 3. Registration for the ICAG part 3 exam also saw about 86% growth.
- On average about 50% of the registrants in ATSWA are women, and three women are now preparing for the Part 4 professional qualification examination.
- Fifteen local instructors benefit from coaching and tutoring from the technical assistance of USAID-GEMS short-term experts. The local instructors are now themselves training.

LIPA is now able to undertake periodic and systematic capacity (training) needs assessments for the civil service as a whole.

LIPA staff have gained skills in carrying out assessments of capacity development needs and surveys of customer perceptions to help inform course development and design. They can now

- Gather data and review all relevant documentation.
- Interview leaders of institutions with a stake in public sector capacity development.
- Establish the current state or baseline performance.
- Determine the desired state as required by the appropriate authority or best practice.
- Assess the performance gap and opportunities for improvement.

- Draw up recommendations and identify assistance areas based on a MAC's capacity-building and performance-improvement needs and priorities.

LIPA now has better designs for courses. Adult learning techniques are integrated into LIPA's courses, as is integral adult learning and curriculum development. LIPA has reviewed and improved 28 courses, and LIPA instructors have improved their competencies in training (curriculum) design, modules and materials development, and the application of modern training techniques and methodologies suitable for and aligned with Liberian needs.

LIPA has newly designed training modules and materials in

- Business development
- Gender mainstreaming
- Career paths development
- Writing proposals and marketing
- Curriculum development
- Adult learning
- Basic and advanced TOTs.

LIPA has an organization-wide program monitoring and evaluation system. A LIPA-wide program Results Framework is enhancing quality assurance capacity and provides information for reporting and decision making at all levels. Senior staff understand the results framework and have performance indicators for monitoring progress.

LIPA now uses the Kirkpatrick standardized training evaluation tools at 4 levels that offer information for continuous improvement. LIPA staff participated in the gathering and analysis client satisfaction survey data and now have the methodology, baseline data, and approach to utilize the results of these surveys to inform future course design and revision.

LIPA staff are using their skills in analyzing training costs for budgeting and marketing purposes. LIPA's Strategic Sustainability Plan (SSP) and Business and Marketing Plans offer staff guidance in aligning departmental and individual work plans. LIPA researchers and consultants are applying the skills learned to respond to requests for proposals and undertake consultancy assignments.

LIPA's library is equipped to meet the needs of instructors, researchers, course participants, and the public, as the LIPA Act of 1972 requires. Library improvements include:

- All holdings re-catalogued to the Library of Congress system,
- A Library Information Brochure
- Expanded reading materials, including training and research resources.
- A computer for library management and 6 Chrome Book terminals for library users
- A high-volume copy machine

- Internet hook up
- e-Library materials
- Survey forms for users
- Facilitate the development of library resources
- Staff trained in library management
- Library systems and processes manual

LIPA's Strategic Sustainability Plan provides a clear road map for institutional sustainability. A shared vision and strategy has helped LIPA to improve policy direction and governance, with the new DDGs and new work plans aligned to the strategy.

LIPA staff work more collaboratively in a series of teams at the senior management and departmental levels and prepare work plans that more forward the LIPA strategy and its operational work plan.

LIPA's Internal Reform Committee actively advises senior management on changes and reforms. LIPA now has a mechanism for driving institutional reform, including issues relating to strategic planning and management, coordination, M&E, communication and quality assurance.

LIPA's Academic Board exercises its oversight responsibility. LIPA's Academic Board, which did not exist previously, has now begun to exercise its oversight responsibility for managing enrollment, administering exams, and scheduling courses.

The LIPA Story: Building Capacity to Build Capacity. Understanding the historical context of LIPA helped to identify the sources of some of the existing problems. However, documents on LIPAs history were not available, other credible historical documents and interviews were the basis of crafting *The LIPA Story*, which was written by the GEMS Senior Training Advisor; it provides the history and context, a summation of support from USAID-GEMS and recommendations.

Sustainability and Recommendations

LIPA's training programs have expanded with the addition of new and revised market-driven courses to generate revenue and adoption of adult teaching methodologies to increase their appeal to senior and middle-level employees in government and the private sector. The continuous alignment of LIPA courses to GOL capacity-building priorities is designed to bring more public employees into LIPA courses. In the immediate future, there will be a closer alliance between LIPA and GOL agencies. The support base of LIPA will widen as there are more LIPA alumni in the public sector.

The Research and Consultancy Unit made far more substantial gains in FY15/16 than in all the previous years. This is an indication that the TOT programs provided to the consultants and the business development strategies to create a vibrant self-sustaining Consultancy Unit are working. The expectation is that from this point on the Consultancy Unit will need a robust agenda to carry the gains forward into the future.

Management and staff of LIPA, supported by USAID-GEMS, in 2013 prepared a five-year rolling Strategic Sustainability Plan. The Strategic Plan provides direction to guide management decisions and actions and thereby achieve growth and financial sustainability. Implementation of the Strategic Plan is underway, though slowly; it is supported by a business plan, action plans, and a marketing strategy.

LIPA management and staff have fully committed to carrying out the action plans to achieve the strategic objectives within the five-year period. If management follows through with this agenda, the result will be a stronger LIPA with a bright future. Below are some of the actions that the Institute has committed to undertake:

- Provide strong leadership to build institutional capacity to attain world class standards for building public and private capacity.
- Embark on aggressive generation and mobilization of financial resources.
- Review the current mandate of the LIPA Act to ensure that it is consistent with the macroeconomic environment.
- Enhance implementation of management systems and procedures.
- Acquire its own premises and state-of-the-art facilities.
- Acquire additional state-of-the-art ICT infrastructure to support program delivery.

Strategic plans are useful only to the extent that they are diligently followed. LIPA is encouraged to take ownership and drive the new initiatives, recognizing the fact that leadership commitment and employees buy-in are critical to success.

Governance and leadership are also critical to success in any organization, and LIPA is no exception. Management has taken the necessary steps to establish or strengthen internal governance structures. The Academic Board, Executive Management Committee, and Academic and Management Subcommittees are beginning to operate and learn how to perform their roles effectively. These structures are making definite contributions to the institutional governance process. The long-term sustainability of LIPA requires capable leaders who will take ownership of the organization’s capacity-building agenda. Internal governance structures must continue to be reinforced and perform their roles diligently.

An active and capable Board of Directors is critical to LIPA sustainability. With the appointment of the board, the Institute’s governance system is now fully established.

Closely related to the governance issue is the LIPA management structure and the need for reorganization. The Strategic Plan considered restructuring for “LIPA to operate as a statutory corporation (or state-owned enterprise) with administrative and financial autonomy.” While consistent with the LIPA Act, the goal of administrative and financial autonomy has never been high on LIPA’s agenda, although the Act so requires. If LIPA sustains the gains it has made over the past four years, its goal of becoming a self-sustaining autonomous institution is likely to be achieved.

Key Documents and Tools

Description	Benefit
Renewal and Transformation: Strategy for Enhancing Delivery of LIPA Library Services	Provided guidance on how to improve LIPA’s Library Services.
Accountancy Certification Training Progress Report	Provided an update on the LICPA-LIPA training.

Description	Benefit
Capacity Development Needs Assessment: A Pilot for 5 GOL MACs	Provided an overview of how to carry out a needs assessment and data on performance improvement areas for 5 MACs
LIPA Client Satisfaction Survey Report	Provided a baseline of data for client satisfaction at LIPA.
DG's Vision for LIPA	Provided input into the organizational strategy planning process.
Report on costs of LIPA courses.	Provided data on how to cost training programs at LIPA.
Report on options for re-organizing and restructuring LIPA	Provided ideas for LIPA to consider in restructuring in alignment with the SSP.
Policy framework document proposing adoption of competency and outcomes-based training and certification system at LIPA	Provided guidance on competency-based training models.
LIPA Marketing Strategy	Provided a strategy for marketing
LIPA Communication Plan	Provided a plan for organizational marketing communications
LIPA Gender Mainstreaming Course Modules	Provided a draft Gender Mainstreaming course
LIPA Competency Based Certification System	Provided guidance on competency-based training models.
LIPA Phase I Performance Report on Accountancy Certification Program	Provided an update on LICPA-LIPA Training.
LIPA Strategic Sustainability Plan for 2014-2018	Provided an organizational strategy for LIPA.
Review of LIPA Vision and Mission	Provided guidance for the development of an organizational strategy.
LIPA Brand Strategy	Provided recommendations for rebranding.
LIPA Curriculum Development Skills Assessment Report	Provided an overview of how to improve the curriculum development process at LIPA.
Advanced TOT Approaches	Provided materials on teaching adults, and beginning and advanced TOT materials.
<i>LIPA Library Operational Manual</i>	Provided guidance on how to improve LIPA's Library Services.
Gender Mainstreaming Consultancy Consolidated Deliverables	Provided a draft Gender Mainstreaming course.
LIPA Library Survey Instrument	Provided guidance for how to improve LIPA's Library Services.
LIPA Business Plan	Provided a plan for business development.
LIPA Capability Statement	Provided a summary of LIPA's skills to use in new business proposals.
LIPA Trainer's Competencies Checklist	Provided guidance on competency-based training models.

Description	Benefit
LIPA Library Performance Evaluation Database	Provided guidance on for how to improve LIPA's Library Services
LIPA Pre- & Post- Course Checklists	Provided methods and techniques to improve training
LIPA Course Planning Form	
LIPA Trainer's Competencies Evaluation Checklist	
LIPA Facilitator Biographical Information Form	
LIPA Course Status Report	
LIPA Curriculum Development Workshop Final Report	Provided the tools, workshop materials, and background for improving LIPA's curriculum development skills.
<i>The LIPA Story: Building Capacity to Build Capacity</i>	Provides a historical overview of LIPA, the USAID-GEMS intervention, and LIPA's restructuring plan and suggestions for sustainability.

OBJECTIVE 3: GOL INSTITUTIONS USING ICT MORE EFFECTIVELY

GOL institutions are able to use ICT more effectively and efficiently to further Liberia’s development objectives as articulated in the National Telecommunications and ICT Policy.

Implementing the GOL’s National Telecommunications and ICT policy within MAC operations enhances the efficiency of the support provided to administrative areas in the project’s Objective 1 as well as service delivery across government. The MOPT is the institution responsible for implementing the policy.

Over the course of the project the USAID-GEMS IT/ICT Team consisted of three subject matter experts and specialists and was assisted by 19 short-term experts delivering technical assistance.

This section details the strategic results, sustainability, outstanding challenges, recommendations and lessons learned from USAID-GEMS support. The intermediate result outcome guiding support in this objective was expanded public sector use of ICT linked to development objectives.

Institutions Using ICT More Effectively—Working with the Center

ICT Policy

MOPT was the primary partner institution in support efforts to implement the National ICT Policy. Policies, strategies, and procedures were developed by the project in full collaboration with the MOPT.

An e-Government Strategy makes it possible for the GOL to use ICTs to improve the performance of public sector organizations and to achieve GOL objectives. The strategy reinforces the thesis that the GOL can use ICT more effectively to improve services when all government entities are guided by a clear e-Government strategy that has a common plan and a common set of methods.

The e-Government strategy aligns with the GOL's objective of delivering services to all Liberians, irrespective of location, economic status, education, or ICT ability. Continuing from the progress made through the National Telecommunication and ICT Policy (2007) in improving the access of citizens and businesses to, and interaction with, government services, the new strategy sets out to achieve this policy vision through a citizen-centric approach that places government services closer to citizens most effectively and efficiently. The e-Government strategy, its various iterations developed with significant stakeholder engagement, has been accepted and endorsed by MOPT and shared with the MACs through their IT practitioners. The strategy

- Crystallizes the policy vision into objectives.
- Presents priority e-Government initiatives and projects.
- Identifies targets and milestones to facilitate performance control.
- Heightens accountability by clearly defining the responsibilities of key stakeholders.

The e-Government Communications Strategy enables the MOPT to diffuse knowledge of the strategy to stakeholders, gain their buy-in and support, and help participants to understand their roles and responsibilities.

The *ICT Handbook* provides guidance, for anyone using GOL ICT infrastructure on what is considered acceptable and unacceptable use. The project drafted the handbook in collaboration with the MOPT/CIO Office, and reading it will become a prerequisite for anyone wishing to use GOL equipment. Once extensive stakeholder engagement with GOL MACs was completed, the MOPT formally adopted the handbook and distributed it to MACs.

The *National Enterprise Architecture and Interoperability Framework* constitutes the detailed overarching blueprint for all government ICT. A hybrid Enterprise Architecture model combining Federal Enterprise Architecture (FEA) and The Open Group Architecture Framework was selected for Liberia. The Enterprise Architecture reference models, Enterprise Architecture Action plan, Enterprise Architecture governance model, strategy and guides for e-Gov implementation were established with MOPT, along with an inter-operability framework.

These will improve standardization, increase interoperability between MACs, and provide synergies from the common framework, with e accompanying cost savings and efficiencies. These were endorsed in FY14, although piloting was postponed due to the EVD epidemic.

ICT Infrastructure—“Mini” Shared Services Center

The first GOL “mini” shared service center infrastructure platform for MOPT is now deployed at the LTA Data Centre. The platform allows GOL to provision a suite of initial government-to-government e-Services, enabling improved health, reduced redundancy, and increased robustness of MAC ICT platforms and administrative support systems; it also can provide extra capacity for other services as GOL identifies new needs. The center is available on the government network, provisioned by Libtelco, allowing for unmetered access from all MACs on the same network, or via internet access from any authorized site.

The *Chief ICT Officer (CIO) Program* has been designed and is ready to go into operation. GOL policy is to establish such a program, among other goals, to provide technical leadership to GOL MACs for improving efficient and effective use of ICT and to further the development and achievement

of the Agenda for Transformation and Vision 2031. The CIOs positioned in MACs are critical to effective deployment of the CIO Program. MOPT has approved and has ready

- The role and scope of the CIO position, with CSA approval of classification and salary structure.
- The CIO Training Course, the goal of which is to equip CIOs with the skills and knowledge they need to provide ICT leadership, both technical and operational, within the MACs and thereby support the GOL in its efforts to better acquire and utilize ICT. The certified, 2-phase course has been piloted, and with the GOL decision to situate the course at LIPA, its staff were trained to administer and teach the course

A *Web Development Toolkit* is available to assist MACs as they draw up improvement plans for their institutions in accordance with GOL standards and targets. As part of both the e-Government Strategy and the Open Government Partnership, GOL has stated its commitment to improving the service offerings and presence of MACs on the Internet, giving citizens improved access to services, sharing more information, and promoting accountability and transparency. The toolkit was piloted at FDA, MOPT, and EPA, which all have a more effective web presence.

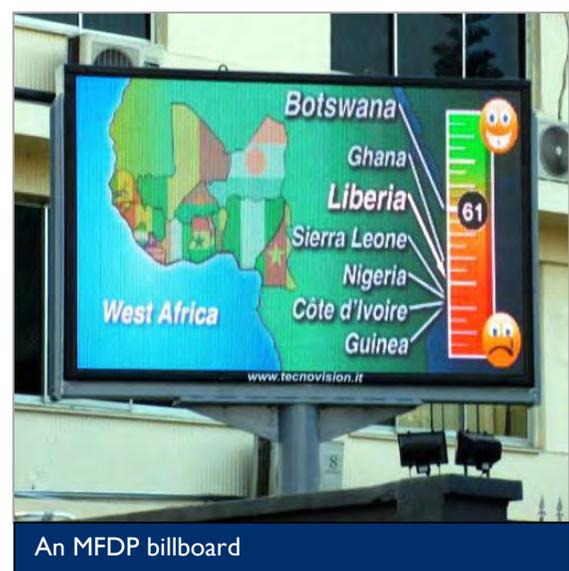
A Centralized Web Platform was commissioned and deployed at the Shared Service Centre, giving MACs an easy and nontechnical way to have high-quality, accessible web-sites that conform to GOL standards.

International Internet quality, availability and pricing have improved. Commissioning of the ACE undersea fiber-optic cable in 2011 resulted in the costs to end users plunging from \$7,000/Mb to less than \$1,000/Mb.

USAID-GEMS has cooperated in a number of studies to improve the distribution of this abundant Internet supply, contributing to the World Bank WARCIP studies on developing a national Internet backbone as well as the divestiture of GOL shares in the Cable Consortium of Liberia.

Liberia's Open Budget Initiative is demonstrated through the electronic billboard. H.E. Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia, launched the electronic billboard at the MFDP to enable the public to understand what government collects and how the funds are used.

The billboard is a reflection of the GOL's willingness to be transparent in its management of public funds. The electronic billboard, which is integrated into the MFDP computer network, provides a flexible new channel for MFDP to communicate with an audience of citizens, who may be interested in understanding and tracking government progress, but may be held back by low levels of literacy and numeracy and little access to newspapers or the Internet. The intention of the MFDP is to offer these citizens, in a manner that can be easily understood, a view of the government's financial plans, in terms of budgets, revenues, and expenditure, and then to track transparently the actual progress against those targets.



The MFDP has:

1. “Open Budget” materials as pilots for continuous information-sharing.
2. A desk study of the pathways of peer and related countries towards more open government. This desk study has been published in an accessible style on an on-line website in the hope that it will help government and civil society actors to better understand the ambitions, challenges, and rewards of moving to greater transparency and openness.
3. Been engaging civil society organizations as partners in the Open Budget initiatives.
4. A dedicated “Open Budget” content development team, integrated with the MFDP Communications department and IT Unit.
5. Trained systems technicians in maintenance and operation of the billboard.

ICT Sustainability

GOL policy places MOPT at the heart of its ICT ambitions, but given its limited resources and capacity, it will be difficult for to meet its obligations. The centralized competencies as visualized by the ICT Policy and e-Government strategy—the CIO Program and the PMO/e-Liberia office—are at the core of government ambitions to use ICTs to achieve Liberia’s development objectives. The CIO Program will significantly improve governance, knowledge, planning, and stewardship of ICT initiatives across government, and the PMO/e-Liberia office will offer the technical capability to execute plans and deliver e-services.

However, these centralized competencies are not staffed or resourced in the budget, or anywhere else, which jeopardizes sustainability. Without reforms the fragmented and silo-based approach will become increasingly fragile, inefficient, wasteful, and difficult to reform as the number, extent, and complexity of ICT systems grow over time. It is recommended that the GOL resource these competencies and encourage development partners to do so.

MOPT has begun to demonstrate its commitment to the ownership of all requirements for full implementation of the e-Government strategy and has confirmed its willingness to advocate within the Executive and Legislature for increased resources. It will be critical to deepen technical capacity within the MOPT at all levels to ensure that improvements are sustained when resources are available.

Success in laying the fundamental framework for implementing ICT policy and facilitating the community of practice at all levels of Government has given USAID the opportunity to design a new project to support e-Government in Liberia. This offers the best prospect for sustainability.

Working with the MACS to Use ICT More Effectively

USAID-GEMS worked closely with the functional and IT staff of 12 MACs to implement elements of the ICT policy that aligned with assistance to their administrative support areas.

IT Service Management

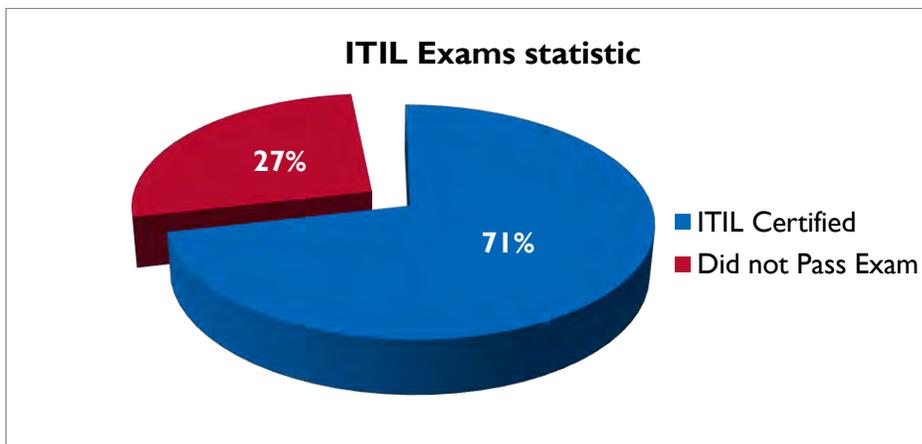
IT Service Desks are now operating in 13 MACs. Expanded support to MAC IT units demonstrated to management that the performance of IT units, and recognition of their value, could be improved by introducing into them a service orientation. The Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) methodology for the IT Services Management (ITSM) framework was preferred. ITSM

offers the GOL a way to manage a collection of IT services that will ensure that those services are aligned to, and actively support MAC needs.

Foundational ITIL was given to 63 GOL IT technologists, 45 of whom were awarded international certification. The comprehensive ITIL framework was piloted with trained IT technologists in the 13 USAID-GEMS–targeted MACs. The Service Desk software provided tools for IT Unit clients and agents to register and track IT service issues, build a knowledge-base of incident management processes, and report to management on the demands on and activities of the IT Unit. The free, open-source OS-Ticket software application was selected for the pilot deployments and IT staff were given the requisite technical training for installation and support of the application and its use within the organization.

The CSA osTicket Service Desk installation was extended to support operational service incidence reporting for Mobile Money payments to civil servants.

ITIL Foundation Exams Success Rate



The MACs now have IT incident management guidelines to ensure that incidents and service requests are correctly handled and aligned with the ITSM framework.

Capacity Development for MAC IT Units

Eight IT technical staff, two of them women, are now Microsoft-certified. USAID-GEMS supported continuous formal, on-the-job, and off-site support training to IT technical staff to encourage self-sufficiency while ensuring that the USAID-GEMS–supported IT platforms continued to provide good quality service to the MACs. Structured training was initially provided by the vendors that supplied and installed ICT platforms and components. Subsequent classroom-based technical systems and network administration training was provided at a local technology school for at least one IT staff in each smaller MAC and more in the larger MACs. The three-month intensive and integrated IT training improved the analytical skills and troubleshooting abilities of the IT staff. In all, 30 staff from 13 MACs received foundational and intermediary understanding and practice of system and network administration with modules on components of their platforms, Microsoft Server, Cisco, and Cyberoam, 25 passed internal exams, and 8 passed the external examination and earned Microsoft certification.

Community of Practice for GOL IT Technologists

The IT Technologist Community of Practice has improved IT-related performance. The institutional assessments of IT technologists in the MACs found both the IT units and their staff to be

very isolated and under-resourced. They typically occupied a very humble position in the institutional hierarchy and were given little encouragement by senior leadership, were poorly compensated, and were given few opportunities to improve their skills. They also had little direction, not only from MAC management but also from the MOPT; there were few guiding national policies and strategies.

The formulation of a Community of Practice required MOPT to convene regular gatherings of MAC IT technologists into a collective forum where

- IT initiatives within and across MACs were presented
- members were encouraged to openly share their experiences and tell how these initiatives were experienced in their institutions
- problems and challenges were exposed to the group, and the group reflected on ideas and strategies to address the issues
- MAC success stories and failures were shared
- members were given social space and encouraged to get to know each other and to mingle and build personal and professional relationships

The benefits of these peer-to-peer practices are these:

- Technologists start to build a sense of community, realizing that they are not alone and that there are many others similar to themselves isolated across government.
- An opportunity is created for these individuals to organize themselves for greater benefit.
- Individuals and units can learn from other MACs how they have succeeded and how they have failed and build among themselves a vision and strategy about how to succeed when resources are short.
- Skills and competence in specialist areas are identified across institutions, and an informal network cuts across bureaucratic hierarchy, creating ways to draw on distributed competencies to help solve local problems.

The Community of Practice is a very low-cost and sustainable way to encourage improved capability.

In a special event this group of ICT practitioners participated in a workshop with Steve VanRoekel, USAID's chief innovation officer, to share ideas and experiences on how e-Government and IT could be used to improve GOL performance and service delivery, notably in the Ebola response. Mr. VanRoekel held a separate workshop with and the executives and MAC leadership.

Improvements to GOL ICT Infrastructure Platform

ICT platforms and components improve efficiency at 15 MACs. Institutional assessments found that IT equipment in the administrative support areas of most MACs belonged to employees. The risk to GOL confidential information was significant. To ensure that MACs had the necessary technical environment to safely and securely perform effective administrative support functions, such as financial management, procurement, human resources, asset and fleet management, and M&E, the project provided computers, software, and servers. For LIPA, GSA, CSA, and MFDP, it also supported their operational functions.

The ICT platforms at LIPA were augmented with the deployment of ICT infrastructure and tools. These support their operational requirements by providing a computer lab; laptops and software for trainers and consultants; workstations and infrastructure for the library; projectors, printers, and storage cabinets; and an extension of the local area network to integrate these components with their ICT platform.

Battery banks are now installed at LIPA, MOA and MOPT to ensure business continuity and operations for the core ICT platform during power outages. These battery banks sustain operations not only through short fluctuations in power supply, such as during generator switch-overs, but also for multi-hour periods when power is severely disrupted. USAID provided IBI with a grant-in-kind of 71 laptops that had been used in the Ebola response. These were distributed to 11 MACs supported by USAID-GEMS.

USAID-GEMS Support for ICT Infrastructure

Technology infrastructure of servers, computers, peripherals, network connectors, software, and other special items was provided to 16 institution, as shown.

*Pre-existing server upgraded and enhanced

Infrastructure	GSA	CSA	NIC	LIPA	GC	NBC	PPCC	MOPT	FDA	MoA	MOHSW	MYS	EPA	MoE	MFDP	LRA Windows	MoPT MSSC
CORE																	
Server	3	1*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1*	1*	1	1	1			1
Server operating system	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1				1
Desktop computer with standard MS Office license	8	3	6	6	7	9	6			7		2				33	
Laptop computer with standard MS Office license	61	20	1	40		8	6	11	19	2	3	7	8		28		
Chrome Book computer		40		12													
UTM / firewall	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1				1
NETWORK																	
Managed switch	1		2	4	1	4	1	2	1	2		1	1			1	1
Patch panel/ cabinet	1		1	3	1	3	1	1	1	4		1	1			1	1
Network drop	10	10	46	80	10	70	10		20	82		10	15			10	
Access point		10	6	4		4			5			3					
USB wireless card			10														

Infrastructure	GSA	CSA	NIC	LIPA	GC	NBC	PPCC	MOPT	FDA	MoA	MOHSW	MYS	EPA	MoE	MFDP	LRA Windows	MoPT MSSC
PERIPHERALS																	
Network printer	1	1	2	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			4	
Enterprise printer				2												5	
3-in-1 printer	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			19	
Enterprise scanner				1						1				1			2
Server UPS	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1			38	1
Surge protector	1	1	1	16	1	4	1	1	1	4		1	1			8	1

SPECIAL																	
Inverter / battery bank				1				1		1							
Electronic Billboard															1		
AVR International															1		1
Projector				4													
Giant copier	1			2	1												3
5 KVA generator																	2
FAN																	12
Wave IP microwave radio																	6

SOFTWARE																	
Anti-Virus license	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1		1	1				
MS Office				40													
MS Visio & MS Project				4													
VM license																	5
Adobe Suite				4													
osTicket Service Desk tool	1	1		1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1		
Cyberoam license	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1	1	1	1				
Orange HR software	1			1		1	1	1	1	1		1	1				
MS SQL server	2																

Infrastructure	GSA	CSA	NIC	LIPA	GC	NBC	PPCC	MOPT	FDA	MoA	MOHSW	MYS	EPA	MoE	MFDP	LRA Windows	MoPT MSSC
TRAINING																	
ITIL Foundation	3	3	3	2	2	1	2	5	4	2	3	1	1	2	4		
Cisco CCNA	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	6	3	1	1	1	2				
Microsoft MCP	3	3	2	2	2	1	2	6	3	1	1	1	2				
Cyberoam CCNSP	3	3	2	2	2	1	2	6	3	1	1	1	2				

* License renewed

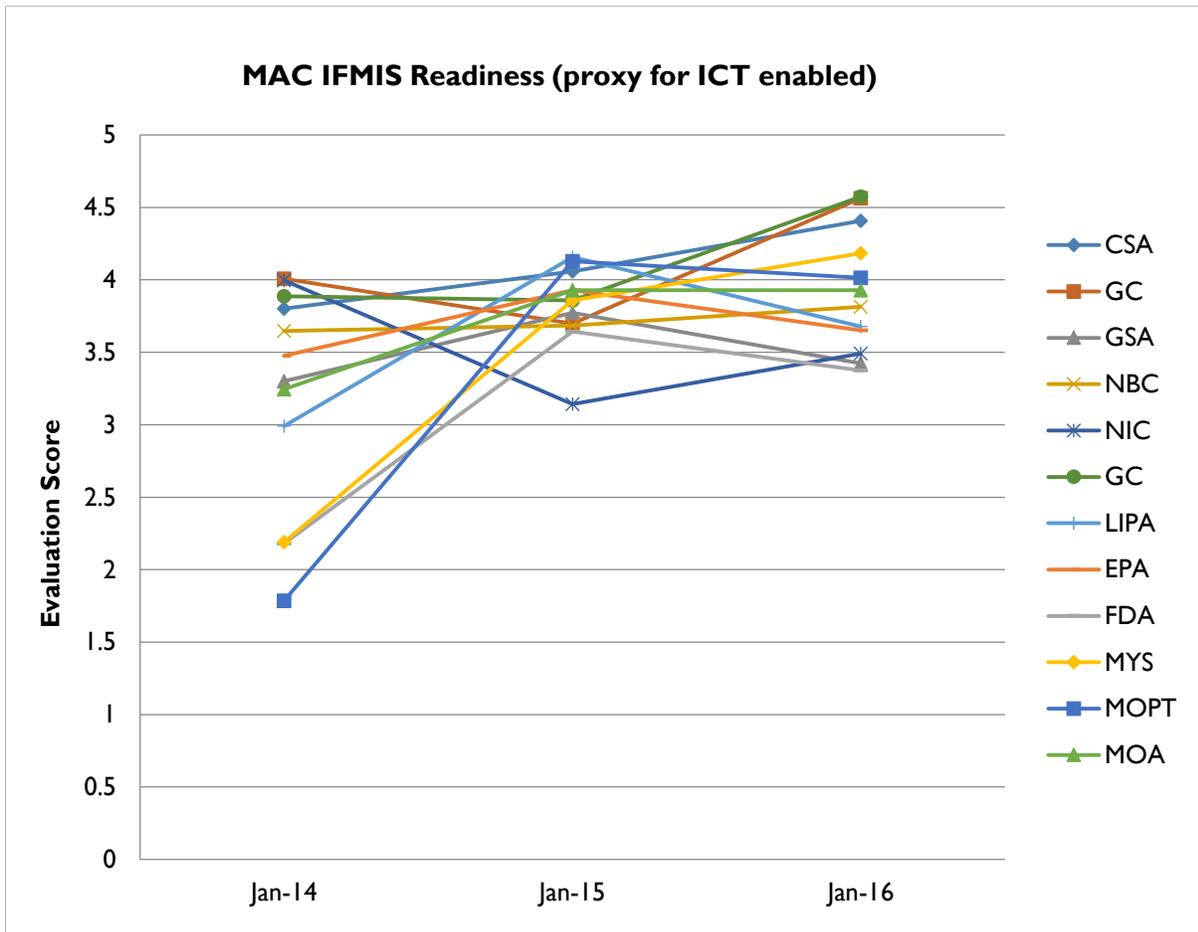
** Existing server upgraded

A service-level agreement (SLA) provides second-tier technical support to the MACs that received USAID-GEMS-supported ICT platforms. The SLA gives MACs access to more advanced technical support when required; IT staff in the institutions has been trained to provide the first tier of technical support. The support arrangement situates MOPT at the center, providing it with both a collective and entity-based view of demand for and supply of technical services, information which it requires to assume more of the responsibilities of its central ICT management mandate.

The health of the ICT platforms in the MACs was assessed regularly. One assessment was to establish their "IFMIS readiness," which determined whether they were ready for the GOL Integrated Financial Management System to be deployed on their platform. The evaluation assesses whether IT policies are adequate, staff have the access they need to the financial management platform, the network is secured from threats, a disaster recovery system is operational, collaboration systems are in place, the institution has capacity to support the platform, and also has the necessary governance structures. A score above 3.5 would typically be considered good.

The latest assessment shows that MACs are sustaining and improving the health of their platforms. NIC, which was initially provided with fixed wired cabling to support administrative support and operational functions, moved its offices several times. It has been supported with wireless connectivity to provide local inter-connectivity.

ICT Platforms Sustained in Good Health



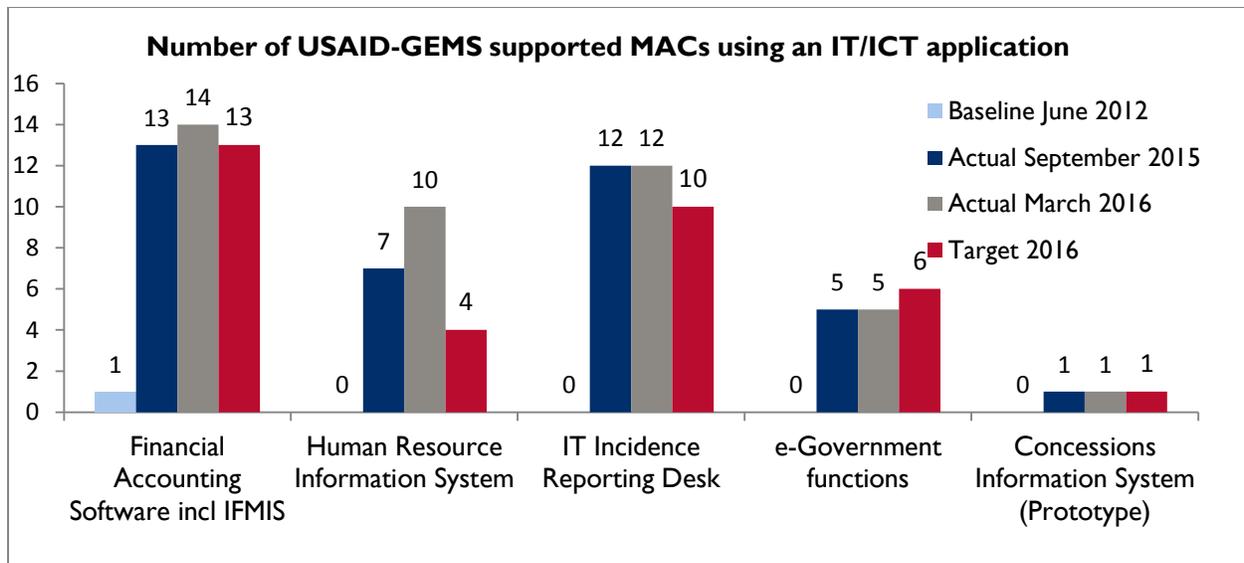
ICT Infrastructure of the Liberian Revenue Authority (LRA)

USAID-GEMS provided ICT infrastructure to the LRA for 15 new and existing decentralized revenue collection windows. They received 33 computers, 28 printers, 6 microwaves, and other furniture and equipment to make the windows functional. The ICT team within the LRA has the skills necessary to support and maintain the equipment.

Support to Other USAID-GEMS Functional Areas

The USAID-GEMS IT hardware and software team assisted the GOL with the design, implementation, and support of ICT infrastructure and solutions. Typically, this included providing a safe and secure ICT platform for administrative support functions and providing other USAID-GEMS objective areas with technical assistance on the use of ICT to create efficiencies.

In 2012 very few if any MAC had these essential systems to enhance the quality and efficiency of their work delivery. The newfound ability of MACs to utilize financial accounting software has meant that their statutory reports to MFDP are now more comprehensive, accurate, and timely. USAID-GEMS has met the PMP targets set for provision of these services to the MACs.



Financial Management

The technical support of the project IT team ensured that the QuickBooks interim accounting software installations in the MACs were continuously available. Support and solutions were provided wherever persistent power outages undermined service and for MACs that changed premises with no provision for a LAN to continue server-based systems.

Human Resources

The “Orange” HR Management System was provided as an interim application within selected MACs in response to their immediate requirements pending the IFMIS HRMIS solution rolled-out. The free and open source system was available at eight MACs—NBC, LIPA, GSA, MYS, MOPT, PPCC, FDA, and EPA.

At the request of CSA, the project undertook a comprehensive IT functional assessment was undertaken to ensure that its ICT equipment and staff could support the core functions of the institution. Recommendations for improvements were provided for the consideration of CSA and donor partners.

Since inception, CSA examinations had been hand-written. The 40 Chromebook computers CSA received will allow candidates to sit for the exams using technology. The computers will complement the upgrade of actual examination content and will soon enable on-line testing now that CSA has the platform for it. This online eService is based on the widely used and supported Moodle free and open source learning platform, which is installed on the CSA server. CSA capacity is being built on the new platform, with technical staff, exam administrators and train-the-trainers to support the solution. CSA has contracted a consultant to develop exam content and take responsibility for content maintenance. To protect the equipment, the CSA examination room now has enhanced security features, wiring, and connectivity.

Concessions Management

The project IT team recommended that the four concessions-related MACs (NBC, MOA, FDA, and EPA) be provided with dedicated Internet capacity to ensure that each has full access to the online Concessions Information Management System (CIMS) so that each can perform its role efficiently. The solutions deployed, which are integrated into the USAID-GEMS-supported ICT platforms, allows for the

concessions-related competencies within the MACs to comfortably perform their duties without having to compete with others for Internet access.

Sustainability

Sustainability was a major consideration in the design and choice of all solutions but particularly the selection of ICT Infrastructure and software systems. The ICT platforms and components provisioned at the MACs are mainstream, well-understood technologies that are familiar to the Liberian technology community. The platforms are based on technology that is not only dominant in Liberia but also proven and highly regarded internationally. This ensures that the clients enjoy the greatest possible capacity and capability to provide sales, installation, configuration, maintenance, administration, training, and support services. This environment also encourages staff to invest in these technologies not only for the immediate gain but also because familiarity with them it increases their value to the larger market. All systems meet GOL technical guidelines. Beneficiaries participated in all specification and design choices.

Infrastructure choices comprise good quality international brand names, and the investments are protected by credible extended warranties. Events have occasionally necessitated calling on these warranties, and the suppliers have made good in all cases.

Licensing and recurrent fees have been accommodated. Licenses for the server and workstation platforms are perpetual and fully current. Where perpetual licenses are not available, the systems are licensed through the term of the project and possibly beyond. The software applications that support HR administration functions and the IT Service Desk platform are free and open source, and the application supporting financial management has a perpetual license. Should any recurrent licenses expire and not be renewed, the systems will continue to operate legally and with full functionality except that security and maintenance updates would be discontinued.

The project's provision of hardware and software solutions has built capacity in the MACs to ensure that they have the necessary know-how to administer, manage, and support the systems provided. The systems and network administrators from all the MACs have had formal classroom training in those technologies. Technical and operational staff whenever any application or peripheral system was introduced. USAID-GEMS technical staff has been hands-on with introduction of all new and improved systems, working with vendors and staff to ensure that the necessary knowledge is transferred.

These preparations provide beneficiary MACs with good capacity to sustain their systems themselves. When they are confronted with problems they are not able to solve, additional external support has been provided: USAID-GEMS technical staff has provided remote and on-site technical support as needed, and SLAs have been operationalized for two local ICT professional services companies to provide 2nd-tier technical support to the MACs for the solutions provided by USAID-GEMS.

USAID-GEMS and MOPT have been hosting a Community of Practice for GOL ICT Practitioners, holding regular meetings and encouraging peer-to-peer knowledge-sharing and networking between ICT professionals across MACs. This is a good foundation for sustainability.

An external system to oversee and monitor MAC-based solutions is important. The CIO Office of the MOPT, which is tasked with responsibility for M&E of GOL ICT systems, has agreed to take over monitoring of the USAID-GEMS ICT initiatives. The CIO office is building its capacity to perform this function, and CIO personnel have been exposed to the monitoring tools, and encouraged to shadow the USAID-GEMS monitoring activities.

Power Supply to MACs

The supply of reliable and safe power to the MACs is a critical issue. Continuity of power is necessary to meet the required operating periods for computer systems. Also if the quality of power is not within established bounds, the ICT platform is at risk of damage. At the start of the USAID-GEMS program, it was agreed with the MACs that they would be responsible for providing suitable power, but this has not always been possible.

The project provided modest-sized battery banks to LIPA, MOPT, and MOA to ensure continuity of service for their core IT systems during power outages. Depending on demand, these battery banks can provide service for up to six hours. MAC staff have been educated on the importance of ensuring clean power and providing quality protection devices to shelter ICT infrastructure from surges and poor-quality power. All Wave 2 MACs received workstations that were specified as laptops, which provide a few hours of service continuity during outages.

Recommendations and Lessons Learned

Staff Retention

Staff at GOL IT units are poorly paid and motivated compared to the private sector and opportunities outside of Liberia. When newly trained skilled staff leave due to poor work conditions, that undermines the capacity development of the institution.

GOL is encouraged to further professionalize the IT function within government and to put in place the plans for a CIO Program. A credible career path will be an incentive to stay for junior staff.

Service Management Orientation

IT Service Desks were fully deployed in all the USAID-GEMS–supported MACs, but many MACs have been slow to use this new ITIL-based automated system effectively. Without centralized interest and MOPT oversight of this competency in the MACs, a more thorough and complete take-up of IT service management is unlikely to be successful.

Additional awareness campaigns and workshops have improved effective service desk adoption at some MACs. Another effective approach has been convincing top MAC managers to serve as champions to facilitate buy-in to the process. This approach is working well in LIPA, MYS, and GC, where managers are all encouraging their staff to start using the new system. This has encouraged MOPT/CIO to continue engaging leadership in adopting the new tools that will bring improved efficiencies and staff satisfaction

MOPT Capacity/Lack of CIO Competency

Government policy places MOPT at the heart of its ICT ambitions, but given its resource and capacity constraints, MOPT will find it difficult to meet its obligations. The centralized competencies visualized by the ICT Policy and e-Government strategy and expressed in the CIO Program and PMO/e-Liberia office, are not staffed or resourced in the budget or elsewhere. This is a serious risk for sustainability.

MOPT is encouraged to present GOL adoption of the e-Government strategy at a Cabinet level and advocate for the resourcing and launch of the CIO Program, which will provide the necessary guidance and direction to MACs on how to plan for and utilize the IT strategic resource. Development partners should also be encouraged to help fund these ambitions.

Internet

Internet service to MACs is inadequate.

Because providing Internet to the MACs is very expensive in Liberia (about \$700-\$1000/Mbit/Month), affordability is a challenge. The GOL should consider using its central buying power, and its own resources in Libtelco and GOL shares in the Cable Company of Liberia, to make preferential pricing available to its MACs.

KEY DOCUMENTS AND TOOLS PROVIDED

Document/Tool	Use	Benefit
<i>GOL ICT Handbook</i>	Provides guidelines on appropriate and inappropriate use of computers; ensures effective use of computer assets by all GOL staff, consultants, and guests.	Reduces risks associated with abuse of IT resources and online threats; provides a measure for compliance.
Civil Service Exam software application and supporting training materials	Allows prospective civil service employees to take the exams on-line.	Future employees are able to take exams quickly conveniently and safely. The application has features to reduce the risk that exams are copied and shared beforehand. Results are received immediately. An audit trail of results over time for each exam is maintained
Procedures for Maintenance of Battery Banks	Provides guideline on good practice, routine checks, and maintenance procedures for MAC maintenance officers, asset management officers, and IT staff.	Ensures that backup battery power supply attains optimum life span.
Protocols for physically securing institutional laptops	Guides MACs on how to ensure that laptops are secured from physical threat.	MACs are able to ensure their institutional laptops are secured, reducing the risk of theft and other risks.
Information System Security Plan (ISSP) Template	Provides MACs with a guide to evaluate, implement, and document security protocols for all components of information systems.	Improves the protection of IT resources. Most information systems have some level of sensitivity, and protection is part of good management practice.

Document/Tool	Use	Benefit
IT Assessment Template	Provides guidelines and checklists on assessing the status of MAC IT platforms.	Heightens the effectiveness of oversight and M&E; helps give early warning of faults and quality management, and improves sustainability.
Governance and content development guidelines for the Electronic Billboard	Guides MFDP e-Billboard content developers and governance team in ensuring that content is relevant, current, and approved for public consumption.	Improves the ability of MFDP to publish relevant and authorized information in a manner that is digestible by the target audience.
Systems Administration guidelines for the Electronic Billboard	For IT staff who are responsible for maintaining the billboard and for uploading and managing the billboard, provides guidelines for the use, management, and maintenance of e-Billboard hardware and software.	MFDP will be able to administer and maintain the e-Billboard resource itself, ensuring cost-effective continuity of service.
e-Government Strategy	Provides strategic direction for identification and implementation of ICT initiatives to improve GOL performance.	Ensures greater coordination and alignment of ICT initiatives with GOL development objectives and priorities, improving effectiveness and efficiency, and allowing GOL to do more with less.
National Enterprise Architecture & Interoperability Framework	Provides a blueprint and standards to orient and structure government operations and guides to strategize and plan for improvements.	GOL is able to improve its operations while achieving greater coherence and efficiencies within and across business areas.
e-Government Web Development Strategy	Helps MACs to strategize improvements to their institutional web-sites in accordance with government-side standards and objectives	Improved service delivery by government, with services being delivered more immediately, remotely from delivery points, and at lower cost. Improved communications between government and the communities it serves

Document/Tool	Use	Benefit
e-Government Web Development Strategy	Helps MACs to strategize improvements to their institutional websites in accordance with government standards and objectives.	Improves government service delivery: services are delivered more promptly, remotely from delivery points, and at lower cost. Improves communications between government and the communities it serves.
e-Government Web Development Toolkit	Sets out desirable standards and objectives and guidance on available tools, to allow MACs to design and put in place improvements to their online presence.	Gives MACs and developers certainty and guidance on planning and implementing improvements to online service offerings.
e-Government Communications Strategy	Provides supporting arguments and materials to guide MOPT and constituents to build awareness of the e-Government strategy, and to help diverse stakeholders to fulfil their responsibilities.	Enhances understanding of, participation in, and support for government plans to improve its performance through effective use of ICT.
Centralized Web Platform (software)	Allows MACs to easily and inexpensively develop and maintain institutional websites that conform to national standards; improves awareness, transparency, dissemination of information, and service delivery. Encourages interaction. Improved security environment from online threats	Reduces costs and barriers to entry of offering online services. Encourages conformance to national standards. Improves security and control over applications and data
Service Desk Implementation In MACs (osTicket Software)	Software tools and associated training and resource materials support effective MAC IT service provision.	Enhances the authority of MAC IT units, and makes them more effective and efficient. Enhances transparency.

Document/Tool	Use	Benefit
HRMIS Software and Manual	Software tools and resource materials support MACs in effective administration of the HR function.	Improves administrative capacity and control of the MAC HR function.
QuickBooks software and manuals	Software tools and resource materials support MACs in effective administration of the accounting function.	Improves administrative capacity and control of the MAC accounting function.
Chief Information Officer Training Program design and development reports, program syllabus and coursework, textbooks and supporting materials	Provides the course content for the official certified 2-part CIO Training course. The MOPT CIO Council is custodian of the course. LIPA provides the training.	Certified CIOs will be appropriately skilled to perform their duties
Recommendations on the governance and use of cellphone call data records	Recommendations and supporting documents on GOL policy to encourage the safe sharing of authorized personal cellphone records. For use by the telecommunications regulator (LTA), and MOPT policy makers.	Improves understanding and insight into societal patterns and dynamics that could inform the design of policy interventions while assuring confidentiality of citizen data.

OBJECTIVE 4: MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCE CONCESSIONS

Management of natural resource concessions is more efficient, effective, and transparent through the introduction of management and oversight tools, including utilization of automated ICT-based systems.

The comprehensive management and monitoring of natural resource concessions are vitally important in Liberia because employment in this sector has a direct impact on the government’s ability to achieve its development objectives. The primary institution supported, the National Bureau of Concessions, is responsible for the M&E of natural resource concessions. The objective of the project in assisting the NBC was to reinforce its institutional and programmatic structures and processes. The other concessions-related entities supported were the National Investment Commission, in its role as chair of the Inter-Ministerial Concessions Committee (IMCC) that approves concession agreements, the DA, the MOA, and the EPA. The MLME determined that it did not want to be a beneficiary of project assistance.

The intermediate result outcome guiding support in this area was more effective GOL management of mining, agriculture, and forestry concessions.

The concessions advisory area consisted of three subject matter experts and specialists, who were supported over the project period by 11 short-term experts who provided technical assistance.

This section presents the context, strategic results, sustainability, outstanding challenges, recommendations, and lessons learned from USAID-GEMS support to the natural resource concessions area.

Context

The NBC Act was enacted in September 2011, with the encouragement of donor partners who saw a need to monitor the performance of natural resource concessions more effectively. USAID supported concession-related entities FDA, MOA and MLME under other programs and considered the NBC to have an important mandate. USAID-GEMS assistance to the NBC as an institution was designed to support its becoming fully established as an institution and enhance its ability to execute its mandate.

The NBC expanded on the mandate of the Bureau of Concessions (BOC) within the MFD, which had primary responsibility for supporting concessions negotiations and monitoring revenues. All BOC staff transitioned to the NBC. The NBC began operations during a fiscal year with no budget or staff to perform its mandate. The donor community, which had high expectations for the NBC, wanted quick results in terms of effective and efficient governance for concessions. For its first year of existence the NBC operated out of borrowed space in hotel restaurants but staff from the BOC remained at their old location in the MFD.

Early in the second year of NBC operations, there was a management challenge with the untimely death of the Director General and a one-year delay in appointing a successor. At the Bureau's request, USAID-GEMS embedded two local professionals in the NBC to assist with mining and economic analysis.

Concession Roles and Responsibilities

The mandated role of concession-related entities has become clearer, although much remains to be done to ensure their acceptance. The institutions with responsibility for specific elements of concession awards were expanded without a related modification in any other legal frameworks. The Public Procurement and Concessions Commission regulates the process for awarding natural resource concessions, the EPA regulates concessionaire compliance with environmental regulations, and the NBC is responsible for M&E of concessionaire compliance with concession agreements.

The processes and procedures of older entities did not respond to the requirements of these new institutions; nor did they understand their responsibilities. This created institutional conflicts within the GOL, inefficiencies for concessionaires, and delays in moving forward the government's concessions-related development agenda.

USAID-GEMS convened several sessions to promote dialogue among concessions-related entities about their differing roles, and it appears that some progress has been made in changing minds and attitudes about the roles and responsibilities of the new entities. To achieve harmonization in the sector, the GC now facilitates a continuing dialogue between all relevant entities to agree on required modifications to laws and operating understandings and ensure that the modifications are effected. This requires a consistent and concerted effort as often the institutions have entrenched positions.

Building Institutions to Monitor Concessions

The NBC is now fully operational. Before the NBC was established, no entity had comprehensive responsibility for monitoring concessions; as a result the new bureau met with resistance from other institutions who did not consider its mandate valid or useful. The dialogue on roles and responsibilities has changed this perspective considerably.

NBC has established its ability to undertake economic analysis and advise on existing as well as new concessions. As all staff from the BOC were transferred to the NBC on inception, the bureau had to deal with many staffing problems. The project deployment of a professional mining specialist and a finance and economic analyst enabled the NBC to support structured concessions M&E. The mining specialist has allowed the NBC to do technical reviews of mining concessions that were not previously possible outside the MLME. The finance and economic analyst, who has responsibility for the review and analysis of proposed tenders, provided an analysis of the fee structure imposed by Liberian law on the forestry sector that was instrumental in revision of the fee regime to make forestry concessions more economically viable. Such analyses are expected to put the GOL in a better position when concession contracts are negotiated.

NBC has a strategic plan to guide its operational plans and activities. The strategic plan has a clear vision and mission, supported by an organization structure that responds to the mandate, job descriptions, and an implementation plan. The ability to effectively monitor concessions depends heavily on there being an operable institution with effective processes, procedures, and tools.

Building Institutions to Grant Concessions

The NIC is responsible for attracting foreign direct investment. It also chairs the Inter-Ministerial Concessions Committee, which is responsible for reviewing, negotiating, and granting natural resource concessions.

The GOL has an approved PPP policy to facilitate responses to the government's infrastructure requirements. The PPP policy and its related guidelines provide the framework in which the private sector can provide a public service that is fundamentally the responsibility of government.

The Agenda for Transformation, Liberia's plan for development through 2030, cites the lack of reliable infrastructure—roads, electricity, water, telecommunications, and sewer systems—as a binding constraint on Liberia's development. The PPP policy, which the project and the NIC drafted, outlines the government's objectives and intent related to use of private sector funding to expand infrastructure. Guidelines provide the necessary procedures for effecting the policy.

The challenge of conflicting laws affecting roles and responsibilities has reduced the ability of the NIC to implement the PPP policy.

The Inter-Ministerial Concessions Committee now has operational guidelines. The IMCC was created by the Public Procurement and Concessions Act of 2005 as the umbrella committee, with representatives from concerned MACs, for the granting of natural resource concessions. The project prepared operating guidelines based on existing laws to help Ministers to execute their duties most effectively.

Automated Tools to Streamline Concessions Management

Concessionaire reporting to the NBC has improved with the use of standardized reporting templates. Previously concessionaire reports to various GOL entities were not in hard copy, not

standardized, and difficult to integrate and compare. The NBC now has four templates for reporting results of concession activity that are required in contract agreements for mining, forestry, palm oil, and rubber. These templates, in writable PDF format, can be retrieved from the NBC website. This has significantly eased the reporting burden on concessionaires. The NBC has the necessary software to analyze and draw reports from the information submitted.

Roadmap for an automated National Concessions Cadastre.

The need for a national concessions cadastre (NCC) was established by the GOL and donors in documents and reports related to natural resources concessions and land issues. The primary concern was to minimize the issuance of over-lapping concessions. USAID-GEMS assisted NBC as it conducted several studies to determine the user requirements for an NCC, prepare a conceptual systems design and an implementation plan, generate cost estimates and prepare specifications for mapping, which was to be a central feature of the system.

In the course of the studies, it was determined that the user requirements demanded a more robust system than the NCC. The system capabilities were expanded into what became known as the Concessions Information Management System (CIMS). The CIMS design incorporated the NCC but added other functions, such as document and workflow management and the capability to store and process tabular data from reports submitted by concessionaires. The full specifications for getting the CIMS operational calls for four phases over six years if resources are made available. Phase I of the CIMS system involved design and implementation of a prototype system to support basic concession-related functions in NBC, MOA, FDA, EPA, and, if it desires, MLME.

CIMS offers the GOL the following significant benefits:

- Enables full compliance with key GOL statutory and policy mandates.
- Provides data resources and information technology tools that concession-related entities can use to carry out their work efficiently and effectively.
- Simplifies required concession-planning activities and review of concession applications.
- Provides information and tools for evaluating geographic conflicts between concession areas and for resolving questions of land rights associated with existing or proposed concession areas.
- Supports environmental and social impact analysis and environmental protection generally.
- Provides a resource for more effective monitoring of concessions and ensuring compliance with GOL laws and all the terms of concession agreements.
- Opens up access to concession-related information for MACs, concessionaires, local officials, and the general public to promote transparency and data-sharing.
- Streamlines the concessions review and approval process.

Concessions Information Management System (CIMS)

After transfer from the project, NBC officially launched the CIMS on September 17, 2015, and as systems administrator the executive director has taken full responsibility for its future use and success. After two years of training, for sustainability three President's Young Professionals are now

super users and have been absorbed as employees in the NBC, MOA, and FDA, EPA and MLME staff have been trained in CMIS use and given user access.

CIMS users can now easily input and find concessions data and generate reports in a variety of formats. The system database is “in the cloud,” meaning that any GOL MAC with an Internet connection and login credentials can access the system. The NBC, MOA, FDA, EPA, and MLME can all input their own concession-related data, view maps of concession areas, manage concessions-related workflow, and store concession-related documents. The system is also sufficiently flexible that it can support functions beyond concessions. For example, the FDA now uses CIMS to manage its Community Forestry Management Agreements (CFMAs) and EPA uses it to manage the permits it issues.

CIMS operators have scanned and uploaded many concessions-related documents. The system already manages 520 documents and document-scanning continues in all MACs. Electronic copies of these documents are now available to all authorized users, eliminating the risk of original documents being lost or damaged.

Planning for new concession areas (especially CFMAs in the forest sector, where many applications are being submitted to FDA) is being done more effectively in the CIMS to avoid overlaps of new with active concessions, protected areas, and proposed protected areas. A CIMS operator who captures the coordinates for a new concession application automatically clips out any overlapping area and in case of partial overlaps proposes the remaining area or for full overlaps simply rejects the application. The CIMS also highlights existing overlaps, which are brought to the attention of decision makers for action.

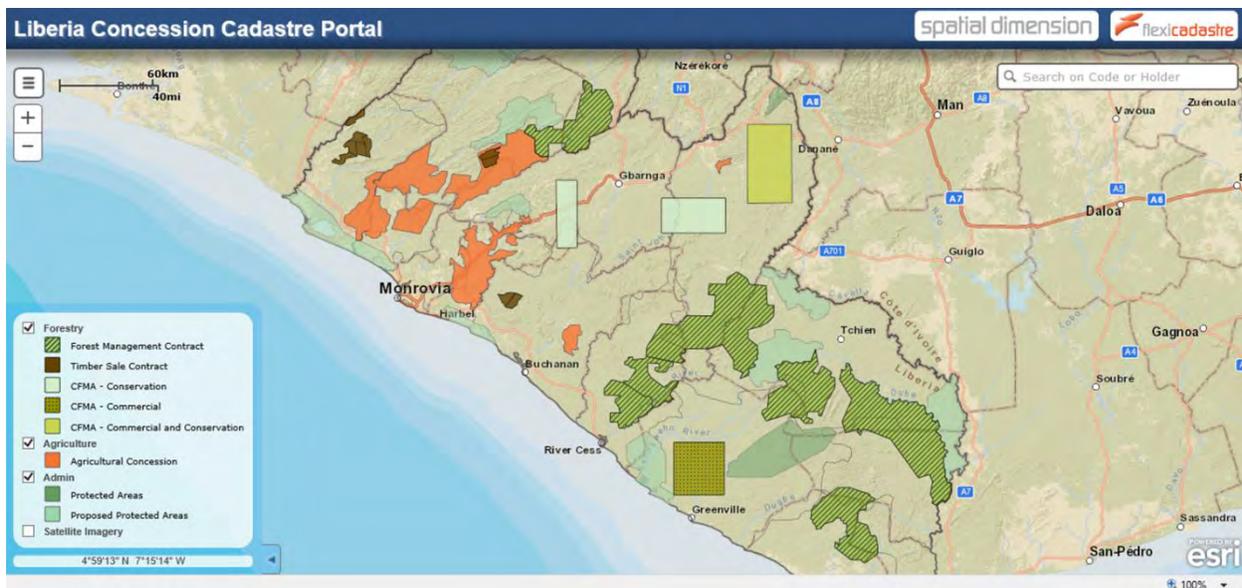
Production-sharing agreements in oil and gas concessions and PPP agreements have been added to the system so that the NBC can monitor these concessions. The National Oil Company of Liberia is not yet a CIMS user.

Significant efforts were made to encourage the MLME, which is using a different mining cadastre system (MCAS), to share data regularly with NBC basis and eventually become a CIMS user. MLME has recently provided some data for active mineral development agreements (MDAs) and mining exploration licenses. The MDAs were configured in the CIMS like other concessions, but exploration licenses were added only as a map layer in the GIS component of the system.

MLME has recently agreed to manage the MDAs in the CIMS as there are only 10 MDAs. This will guarantee the availability of accurate mining concession data to all users. MLME will continue to manage its mining licenses as well as the MDAs in MCAS.

Liberia National Concessions Portal

The Liberia National Concessions Portal is a collaboration of NBC and Spatial Dimension (<http://portals.flexicadastre.com/liberia/>). This public map portal, a major accomplishment for Liberia, offers unprecedented transparency on concessions. The portal provides a map view, concessionaire information, dates of agreements, and concessions area for Liberia’s forestry, rubber, palm oil, oil and gas, and mining concessions. It helps promote transparency in Liberia's concession sectors, improve the monitoring of concessions by the GOL and the public, provide accurate information to current and new investors, and should eventually attract serious investors.



Sustainability and Challenges

The sustainability of CIMS depends mainly on how well GOL personnel operating the system understand it and how willing MAC leaders are to work together to achieve the common goal. The former has been substantially achieved; however, the latter is a continuing challenge. It is critical that there be a system champion within the NBC who understands and can require compliance from concessionaires and collaboration from colleagues.

The technical sustainability of the system was planned with the recruitment and training of PYPs in various ICT and concession management tools and techniques, including GIS, business process analysis and modeling, FlexiCadastre, concession agreement analysis, and work ethics. Their training began in the CIMS design phase and continued through implementation to the support phase. They played a major role in the getting the CIMS operating by reviewing the concession agreements and summarizing the obligations, gathering data from the MACs, and entering data into the CIMS. They are MAC super users and CIMS administrators and are capable not only of ensuring operational sustainability but also of providing support to others who may need to understand systems features or become users. Other MAC staff were also trained to become CIMS operators based on their roles.

The NBC has established a CIMS Community of Practice to build relationships among users and create an environment where they can learn from each other while sharing new features and common issues. This group is also being used to enhance the collaboration between concession-related entities, discuss the responsibilities of each entity in the management of concessions in the CIMS, and encourage them work together as a team to sustain the system.

To operate well, CIMS requires reliable electricity and access to the Internet. The NBC and MOA have had continuing problems with power, during working hours, preventing CIMS users from accessing the system. Although a battery bank was provided to the MOA, when outages last more than six hours, the battery bank is not effective.

As a cloud-based system, CIMS requires that all MACs have a stable Internet connection. Through June 2016 USAID-GEMS provided enhanced Internet connections to NBC, FDA, MOA, and EPA to enable the system to clearly demonstrate its usefulness. It is now necessary for the MACs to allocate the

necessary resources to cover the cost of Internet use of the CIMS. Advancing the recommendation under Objective 3 for preferential Internet pricing to MACs from Libtelco and Cable Company of Liberia would mitigate this challenge considerably.

CIMS hosting and maintenance fees will require funding in the NBC recurrent budget.

The MLME has decided to abandon the CIMS in favor of another system. While its staff have been trained in CIMS and provided user access, there has been no official agreement to update the system and no willingness demonstrated to regularly share information to enable NBC to keep the system current. This is a major limitation on CMIS effectiveness.

Recommendations and Lessons Learned

Given the various challenges, it is highly recommended that

- The Governance Commission be encouraged to continue facilitating the dialogue on roles in concessions and facilitate with the Law Reform Commission any changes required in legal instruments.
- NBC includes CIMS hosting and maintenance costs in its annual budget as a high priority and advocates with the legislature for approval.
- NBC hosts regular meetings with the CIMS administrators in each MAC, including MLME, and quarterly meetings with all CIMS users to discuss any problems and share experiences.
- Each MAC with CIMS include the costs for power supply and Internet in the annual budget as a high priority and advocate for lower Internet charges with Libtelco and Cable Company of Liberia.
- Concessions-granting entities advocate with donors to support development of a nationwide base map. Since the most recent base map is from 1968, it has limited usefulness for concessions, and without an accurate map MACs cannot efficiently manage natural resource concessions. Specifications have been drawn up that can be used to move this process forward. Once the map is integrated into the CIMS, it can be used across the GOL to manage not only concessions but all activities that can be geo-referenced. The pressure must continue until the map has been prepared.
- Continued technical assistance and interest are needed from USAID until the system and the information it provides are fully institutionalized. Integrating the use of the system and supporting subsequent phases, which include land, into the design of the land projects of USAID or other donors would provide the best insurance for sustainability

Key Documents and Tools Developed

Document	Use	Benefit
NBC Strategic Plan, 2014-2017	Help operationalize the mandate by identifying key strategies and targets.	As its first strategic plan, it has helped NBC to learn and articulate its program of action.
NIC Public Private Partnership (PPP) Policy 2014	Help guide the leveraging of resources to finance capital-intensive investments.	Gives investors confidence in the intention of government for use of private funds for development and enhances the ability of government to accelerate infrastructure projects.

Document	Use	Benefit
Concessionaires Reporting Templates	Enables structured, standardized comprehensive reporting in electronic reporting by concessionaires to NBC and other MACs with respect to obligations in their agreements,	Enhances both ease of reporting for concessionaires and analysis and reporting by NBC.
CIMS user manual	Train new users and improve the skills of current users in operation of the CIMS.	Facilitates users' training and improves their understanding of the CIMS.
Workflow diagrams	Automate concession management processes in the CIMS and train users.	Improve users' understanding of concessions management business processes.
CIMS Skills Analysis Report	Assess skills in use of and reporting from the CIMS.	Identify skill gaps and make recommendations to improve them through practice and training.
Next step in CIMS implementation after USAID-GEMS	Guide NBC in expanding the CIMS.	Plan the addition of new applications to the CIMS.

OBJECTIVE 5: UTILIZING A NATIONAL PAYMENT SYSTEM

GOL supports and utilizes expanded electronic banking mechanisms with accurate and timely processing and reconciliation of GOL payments and receipts to and from vendors, businesses, civil servants, and the public, utilizing mobile technologies where feasible.

Support for the national payment system targeted areas that would improve the speed and accuracy of payment processes using technology. There were two streams of support: (1) national payment systems with the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) and the MFD Department of Revenue (subsequently the LRA), and (2) mobile money for paying the salaries of civil servants.

The Payments Advisory team consisted of four subject matter experts and specialists and was supported by 5 short-term who provided technical assistance over the project period. This objective was successfully completed in December 2014, with USAID designing a mobile money project, mStar, which built on the achievements of GEMS. The intermediate result outcome that guided support was the GOL's establishment and utilization of an improved national payment system in line with international standards.

Payment Systems

For the CBL support from USAID-GEMS was not typical because it usually receives support from the IMF and the World Bank. However, the central bank asked that USAID-GEMS assist in addressing problems in three areas:

1. There was no interoperability between banks for ATM / POS services.
2. CBL lacked resources to evaluate and develop specifications for off-site bank supervision software.
3. It wished to understand how to use mobile money for financial inclusion.

Support to the Central Bank of Liberia

ATM/POS Services: The security of the financial system has been heightened by improving the payments infrastructure. USAID-GEMS provided the initial coordination, on behalf of the CBL, with commercial banks for the setting document for the Automated Clearing House (ACH). The setting document standardizes the data submissions from the commercial banks to allow for a uniform account number structure.

The use of electronic fund transfers between bank and non-bank institutions has increased and is easier as a result of the ATM/POS SWITCH assessment, which guided CBL's procurement of the appropriate equipment. The SWITCH increases access to interbank payments and services by allowing interoperability between banks for ATM / POS services. The specifications included those required for mobile money on the system.

Off-Site Bank Supervision Software: The possibility of systemic failure of the banking system has been mitigated. USAID-GEMS completed the roadmap for the automated off-site bank supervision software that was used for managing the procurement and installation process. The software facilitates submission, surveillance, and analysis of the returns from financial institutions, which CBL had been managing largely through a manual process. This process raised both business and operational challenges to the effective functioning of the Regulation and Supervision Department; the results were a labor-intensive process and delays in processing and tracking of submissions and generating timely management information, and sometimes inaccurate reports by the department. This situation posed a serious risk to effective regulation and supervision of the financial system.

The USAID-GEMS payment advisor provided project management support to the CBL over a twelve-month period for its disaster recovery site, which was completed and the infrastructure installed.

Mobile Money for Financial Inclusion: The CBL had drawn up mobile money guidelines as a mechanism to support its financial inclusion objectives, but it had no strategy or plans for implementing its use. USAID-GEMS helped to modify the guidelines to allow mobile network operators (MNOs) to lead and thereby enabling market-focused MNOs to drive mobile money expansion, which provided comfort to CBL on financial transactions.

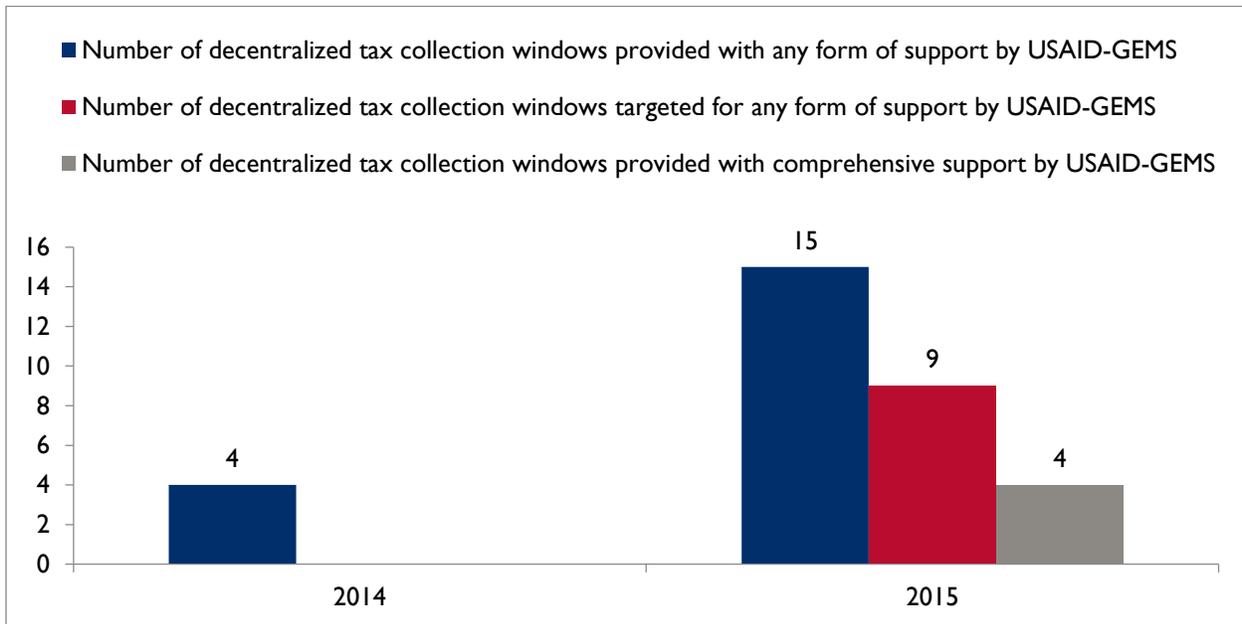
The CBL Board of Governors approved the National Mobile Money Strategy and Mobile Money Regulations drafted by USAID-GEMS. This provided the legal framework for network operators to justify investment and was a necessary protection for mMoney users.

Support to the MFDP and LRA

ASYCUDA / TAS Interface: Revenue collection has been enhanced and reconciliation problems resolved through a new software interface. USAID-GEMS facilitated the installation of an interface between the Tax Automation System (TAS) and the Automated System for Customs Data Administration (ASYCUDA) at the MFDP (then the Department of Revenue). Previously, MFDP/DOR was not able to reconcile transactions posted in ASYCUDA; taxpayer's identification numbers were not in all systems; and data had to be entered at least three times before finally being posted into IFMIS. The interface makes it possible to reconcile transactions posted to ASYCUDA the same day, thereby allowing the upload of all revenue transactions from TAS into IFMIS daily.

Decentralized Revenue Windows: Taxpayers can now pay taxes more easily through 15 new or enhanced decentralized revenue windows. The LRA, previously the MFDP/Department of Revenue wanted to take tax collection closer to citizens and identified 6 existing windows that required

additional equipment and 9 new locations for complete furnishing and equipment. The initial plan was to assist only new locations; LRA determined that the priority was to make existing windows more effective and open only new windows that were strategically located. Some revenue windows were opened in standalone locations, which required generators and much other equipment for effective operations.



A survey of the decentralized windows revealed that taxpayers who used them primarily made small size-payments. The amount of tax collected from two of the USAID-GEMS-supported decentralized windows, Temple of Justice (TOJ) and Ministry of Lands, Mines & Energy (MLME), was about US\$390,000 in FY14/15.

The main initial impact of decentralized windows has been to decongest the MFDP and to reduce the time it takes for taxpayers to make small payments. According to survey respondents, the time taken to pay a tax at a decentralized windows was reduced by about half compared to paying at the MFDP's central office. At the TOJ there was a 59% reduction, and at the MLME a 40% reduction. The LRA has plans to do more to promote the decentralized windows to increase the amount of tax paid through them.

Mobile Money: The GOL has approved using mobile money for salary payments to rural teachers. The CSA and MOE though mobile money would be helpful for rural employees but did not understand what was necessary to make that possible, and the MFDP was resistant to the approach.

For MFDP, CSA, and MACS unfamiliar with mMoney benefits, a cost-benefit- analysis determined that it could potentially create fiscal space of \$5.9 million to \$22.5 million a year if GOL employees outside Montserrado County were to be paid through mobile money instead of checks or cash, which had to be transported by road and air. To further establish proof of concept, pilots established that the use of mobile money not only creates fiscal space because of its efficiency and transparency but also enhances financial inclusion.

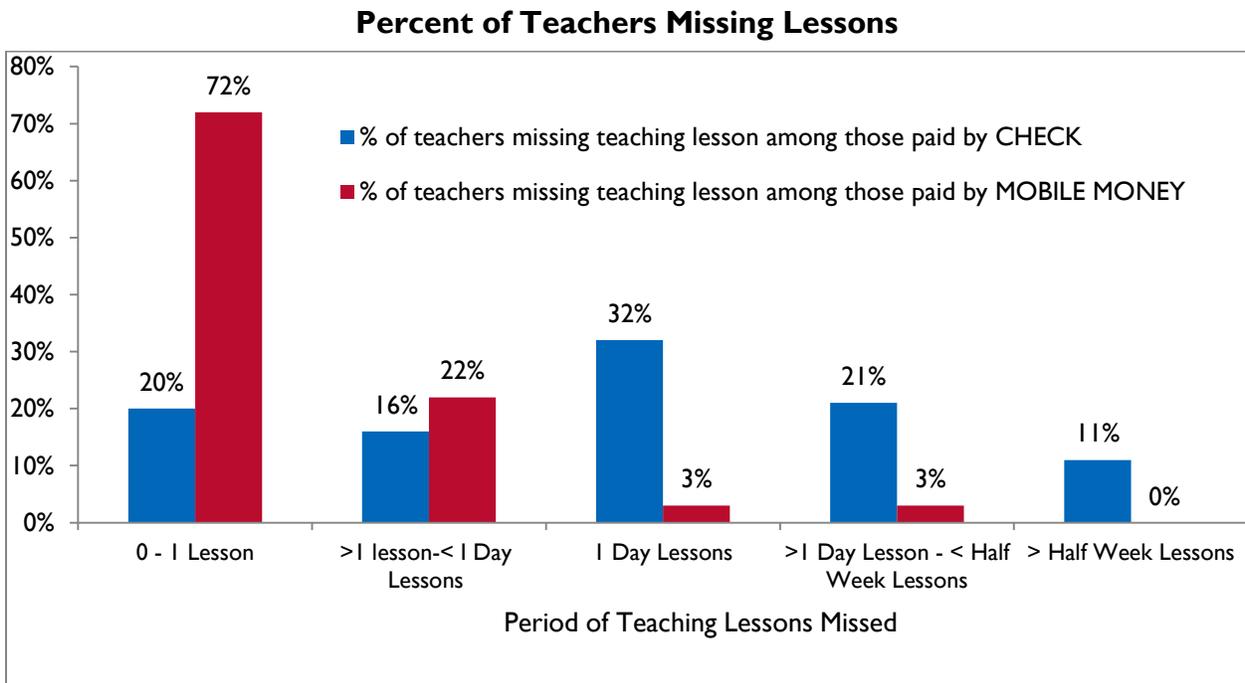
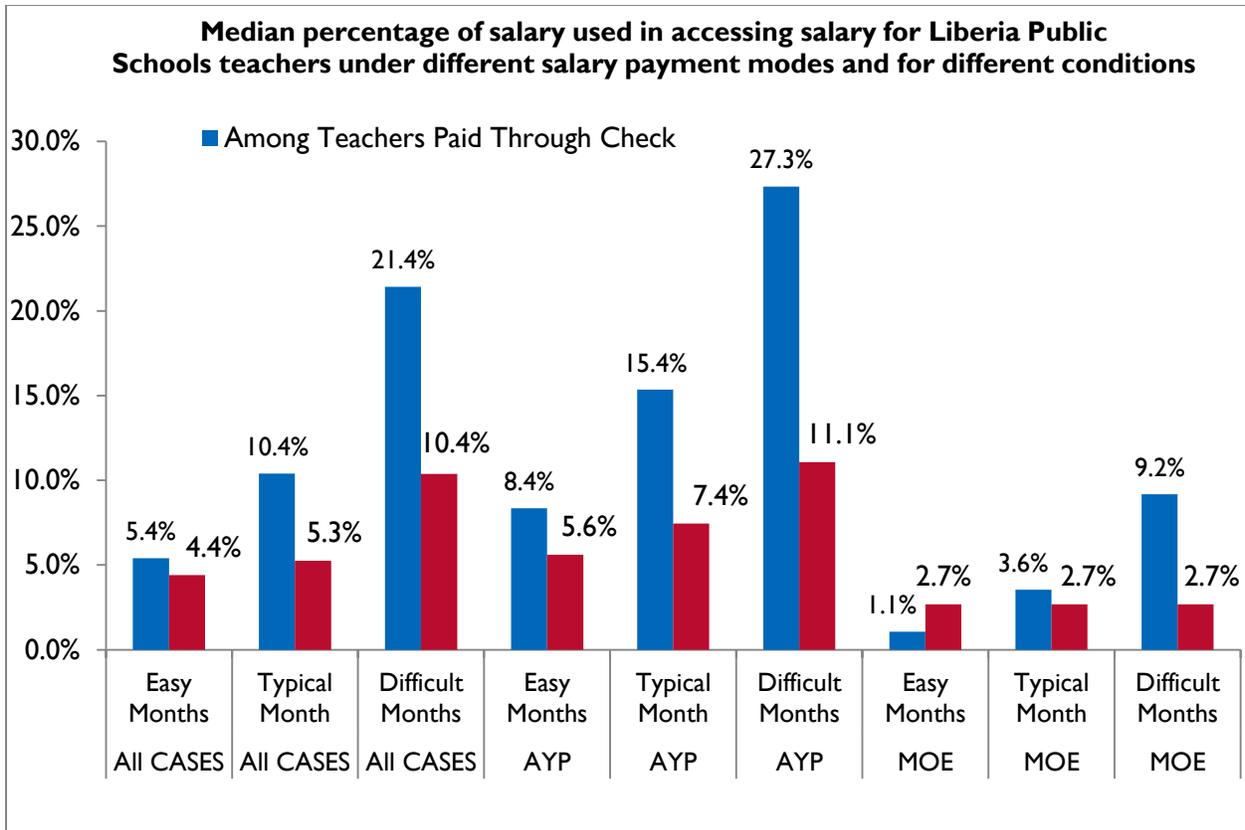
USAID-GEMS supported four pilots that further demonstrated the proof of concept of mobile money. The Liberia Youth Empowerment Program pilot saved GOL \$98,000 in 10 months. The Advancing Youth Program began an mMoney pilot in 2013 but continued and expanded it, with savings to the program and the teachers. The President's Back to School program paid 5,000 young people efficiently in one week, without disturbance at minimal cost to GOL. The Ministry of Gender made cash transfer payments to 900 vulnerable beneficiaries with no bank accounts in Bomi and Maryland Counties using mobile money so that they did not have to travel to receive funds.

Before USAID-GEMS interventions, mobile money was not a GOL salary payment option. Teachers in rural areas identified for the initial roll-out of mobile money can now select it within CSA and MFDP systems as a payment type. Consequently, MFDP and CSA drafted processes for paying salaries using mMoney that are packaged in the *Mobile Money Handbook*. The foundations are in place for expanding mMoney salary payments.

The success of these pilots as a proof of concept encouraged USAID to design a new project, mStar, specifically to support the GOL to roll out mobile money for salary payments.

In FY15 a rapid assessment survey of teachers paid through mobile money revealed that the savings to recipients of receiving mobile money rather than checks was 5.1% of their salary; information from respondents established that the typical cost of accessing their pay through checks was 10.4% of salary, compared to 5.3% when salary was channeled through mobile money.

It was also noted that 80% of respondents receiving check payments missed more than one compared to only 28% among those paid through mobile money. While 64% of those paid through check spent one day or more of teaching away in order to collect salaries, that was true of only 6% of those paid through mobile money. Further, among those paid through check, 11% spent more than half a week of lesson time away collecting salaries but none of those paid through mobile money spent that much time away.



Lessons Learned

USAID projects must be flexible enough to allow for substantive solutions to challenges that are identified during the project. The introduction of mobile money for salary payments was not intended

for the project, it evolved in response to a request from the CBL and an implementation opportunity for support to the CSA and MOE. This major addition—a huge success for USAID in encouraging the use of mobile technologies—would not have been possible if GEMS had been required to remain within the original design of the payment systems function. The work stream required designing the systems and processes, creating awareness at every level, and advocating even with those who requested the assistance and the private sector participants. As no one in the GOL understood the concepts or their implications, patience, persistence and time were all necessary to move forward with the pilots, large or small, and share results.

In transformational change reform initiatives, it must be acceptable to build the foundations and proof of concept for others to continue with the detail, because those aspects could take decades to implement. One project would not be able to do everything.

Key Documents and Tools

Document	Use	Benefit
ATM/POS Switch Assessment	Used to solicit suppliers of SWITCH software.	Provided specific requirements in a format that could be used to guide purchase.
National Mobile Money Strategy	Used as a guide for managing and monitoring mMoney activities.	Enables the CBL to have a clear idea of what is expected and requirements for implementing mobile money for financial inclusion.
Mobile Money Regulations	Established the regulatory framework for financial and nonfinancial institutions and MNO involved in mobile money activities.	Gives the CBL and customers confidence that moving funds using mobile money is safe and MNOs have legal justification for necessary investments.
Roadmap for automated off-site bank supervision software	Provide guidance on the software requirements.	Enables the CBL to ensure that all necessary actions are taken in procuring and using the software.
Mobile Money Cost Benefit Analysis	Understand the various cost elements related to salary payments by check, bank transfer, and mobile money.	Enables decisions on the least-cost, most-effective method of paying government employees taking into account all factors.
<i>CBL Mobile Money Handbook</i>	Guide and regulate use of mobile money as a payment option.	Used by MACs that may want to pay their employees using mobile money.
Mobile Money Teachers Salary Savings Report	Demonstrate the benefits of using mobile money for paying salaries.	Quantify the cost-effectiveness of mobile money use. Also, demonstrate that telephones may be an effective survey method in Liberia.
Decentralized Windows Rapid Assessment Report	Bout the benefits and challenges of decentralized tax payment windows.	Source of information for LRA interventions to increase utilization of the windows.

III. ACHIEVEMENTS IN CROSS-CUTTING THEMES AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

ECONOMIC ADVISORY SUPPORT TO MFDP

In 2012 the Minister of Finance asked USAID that GEMS provide the Ministry with a senior economic advisor to provide strategic advice to the Minister's office. The advisor supported three main areas: (1) reports on the economy, (2) technical backup to the economic management team, and (3) mentoring and coaching of economists.

Direct Advisory Support to the Minister of Finance

Advisory support to the Minister of Finance was primarily demand-driven. However, briefings were provided on topical local, regional, and international issues to ensure that the Minister was fully prepared for any meetings or conversations on impacts to the local economy. He was regularly provided with talking points and summary discussion papers for participation in international and regional conferences and seminars, especially during IMF and key donor meetings.

Presentations are drafted regularly for the Minister to present to Cabinet on global and regional economic developments and outlooks and on the fiscal performance of the domestic economy.

The Minister also chairs the technical Economic Management Team (EMT) meetings. The EMT is responsible for both deliberating and guiding the policy agenda and ensuring that the National Development Plans—the Agenda for Transformation—are implemented. The membership comprises representatives of the Ministries of Finance, Commerce, Agriculture, Minerals and Mines, Public Works, and the Ministry of State.

To guide the EMT, MFDP economists often prepare several reports, with the participation and support of the Economic Advisor. Examples are

- **“The Potential Impact of the Ebola Epidemic on the Economy”** in terms of economic growth, domestic revenue mobilization, social welfare, inflation, and food prices.
- The post-Ebola **“Economic Stabilization and Recovery Plan (ESRP) for Liberia,”** set out policies and strategies to stabilize and stimulate the economy in response to the EVD shock. The ESRP is intended to highlight those areas of investments that have the greatest potential to bring about economic stabilization and recovery in the shortest time possible while at the same time creating jobs and other economic opportunities for Liberians.
- Several other **“Policy Briefs”** and **“Technical Notes”** on topical issues.

Reports on the Economy

Publication of the *Annual Economic Review* was initiated by the senior economic advisor in 2012 and has since been institutionalized within the MFDP as a statutory document. Four AERs have been produced, one for each year from 2012 through 2015. The AER is a comprehensive analysis of the global, regional, and domestic economic performance outlook. The AER gives priority to

- I. The **real sector**—agriculture and fisheries, forestry, mining and commerce, and industry

2. The **social services sector**—the activities of institutions providing basic social services, such as health and sanitation, education, electricity generation and distribution, water and sewage, transportation, and priority government projects
3. The **fiscal sector**—the central government operations
4. The **monetary sector**—changes in interest and inflation rates as well as other monetary developments
5. The **external sector**—the country’s trade performance and changes in the balance of payments.

The senior economic advisor regularly edited Quarterly Fiscal Outturn Reports, which analyze budget performance in terms of revenue mobilization and expenditures. He also edited Quarterly Public Debt Management Reports, which analyze government borrowings (from domestic and external sources) and debt servicing, and provide a loan-by-loan analysis of the stock of debt outstanding (including disbursements and debt service payments for the period reviewed). He also reviewed and edited Liberia's *MDG 2014 Report*, which evaluated the country’s progress made and the challenges it in achieving the MDGs.

Technical Backup to the Economic Management Team

The EMT is responsible for guiding Liberia’s policy agenda and ensuring that the National Development Plans are brought to fruition. The MFDP often prepares reports to guide the EMT. In addition to the reports noted above, the senior economic advisor

- Reviewed and prepared an executive summary for “The Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda: Addis Ababa Action Plan.”. This is a universal agenda to be driven by five big transformative shifts:
 - Move from ‘reducing’ to ‘ending’ extreme poverty, in all its forms: inclusive (human rights, basic economic opportunities).
 - Put sustainable development at the core: integrate the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainability.
 - 1) Transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth.
 - 2) Build peace and effective, open and accountable institutions for all.
 - 3) Forge a new global partnership: toward a new spirit of solidarity, cooperation, and mutual accountability.

Mentoring and Coaching of Economists

One of the primary functions of the senior economic advisor was to mentor and coach the economists in the MFDP to undertake policy-relevant research and write analytical reports on topical economic issues. This promotes evidence-based policy formulation and decision making at the Ministry. The senior economic advisor

- Conducted retooling workshops on Research Proposal Writing and Research Techniques for the economists in the MFDP Department of Economic Management.
- Developed “Guidelines to Research Proposal Writing” and “Research Techniques” as reference materials for Ministry economists.
- Participated as a resource person in the bi-weekly policy research seminars during which the Ministry economists in the Department of Economic Management presented policy research proposals, work-in-progress, and final research reports.



Research Seminar Series with MFDP Economists

- Instituted the Departmental Seminar Series that serves as the forum where economists present and discuss their work-in-progress and final reports. During the seminars, the presenters receive comments and suggestions from their colleagues to help them improve on their work. The final output is then used to prepare policy briefs for the Minister and the Economic Management Team.

The Liberia Macroeconomic Policy Analysis Centre (LIMPAC)

The economic advisor proposed and the MFDP agreed to revitalize and restructure the Liberia Macroeconomic Analysis Centre (LIMPAC). LIMPAC has been re-established and a core staff recruited. It is expected that after a year or two of incubation at the MFDP, LIMPAC will be spun off as a semi-autonomous Policy Research Think Tank. LIMPAC’s objectives are to

- Conduct objective and independent research and analyze public policy issues with the goal of providing advice to policy makers.
- Provide advisory and technical services on public policy issues to the government, government agencies, and other stakeholders.
- Collect and analyze data on public policy and disseminate its research findings to a wide range of stakeholders through workshops and conferences, internal seminars, research publications, policy briefs, newsletters, and *Annual Economic Reviews*.
- Develop and maintain research resources and databases on public policy and related issues, and make these available to the government, the private sector, and academic institutions.
- Undertake commissioned public policy studies and analyses for the government and clients from the private sector.
- Undertake capacity-building activities for government and the private sector.
- Serve as a point of contact and encourage exchange of views between the government, the private sector, and civil society.
- Offer internship programs for young economists in the areas of hands-on policy research and policy analyses.

Sustainability

The sustainability of the support provided by the senior economic advisor has been established in the MFDP and the momentum for the reports on the economy and continuous independent policy research has been enhanced by

- “Guidelines for Research Proposal Writing” and “Research Techniques” as reference material for economists
- The Research Seminar Series, which is now standard practice for the MFDP
- The concept that research is part of the work of an economist
- Champions within the MFDP who advocate for evidence-based policy advisory support
- Establishment of LIMPAC.

Outstanding Challenges

Mentoring economists who undertake economic analyses and research to inform policy making is a continuous process and requires a committed person to sustain it. At the moment the new Directors in the Economic Management Department where the economists are employed are still on a learning curve and not yet fully prepared to take on the mentoring workload. They were appointed less than a year ago when the new MFDP became operational in 2015 and the Ministry entered a recruitment and restructuring program.

There has also been a change in MFDP leadership and it is not certain if the new leaders will be interested in empirical economic analyses and the production of regular reports on the economy for decision making and information.

Recommendations

To sustain an evidence-based policy-making culture at MFDP, the Ministry should provide the necessary resources and fully staff the reconstituted LIMPAC as a Liberian think tank. LIMPAC is expected to create and build up the institutional capacity of the MFDP and government particularly in formulating economic and social policies and macrofiscal analyses and management. LIMPAC should also take the responsibility of preparing reports on the performance of the economy, including the regular quarterly and annual economic reviews currently done by the Economic Management Department.

THE PRESIDENT’S YOUNG PROFESSIONALS PROGRAM

Liberia’s 14-year civil war ravaged the country’s human resources. Educational institutions were unable to provide training and continuing education, and thousands of the country’s most skilled professionals fled for safety. Liberia’s leaders are now determined to create the skilled, motivated, and effective civil service that is necessary for improved governance.

With the end of hostilities in 2003, USAID stepped in to support the government’s multi-tiered approach to rebuilding Liberia’s human resources. In addition to technical assistance and training programs targeting the most pressing needs, the longer-term effort includes investments in rebuilding the Civil Service Training Institute and supporting the recruitment of Liberia’s brightest youth into public service via the highly competitive President’s Young Professionals Program (PYPP).

Description of the Program

The President's Young Professional Program was established in 2009 to support Liberia's effort to build a strong and responsive workforce, open up leadership opportunities, train Liberian youth, and expand GOL capacity for efficient service delivery. The program offers a two-year internship within the civil service in areas of need as identified by the MACs. The USAID-GEMS participation in the PYPP in FY2013 aligned the President's theme of equity and youth empowerment to the project objective of improving financial management. This was achieved by subsidizing 20 PYPs in the Department of Budget/MFDP to support the MTEF budget and execution process and 3 PYPs in concessions-related entities to manage the Concessions Information Management System.

PYP Classes IV and V

USAID-GEMS supported two PYP classes, IV in 2013 and V in 2014. A robust screening and selection process included group interviews, presentations, mock situations, and written tests to assess skills in communication, negotiations, creativity, problem-solving, and listening, among others. In Class IV, each of the 14 PYPs selected, 5 women and 9 men, had a bachelor's degree in business management, economics, or accounting. All 14 were placed in the MFDP Department of Budget (DBDP), where they were trained in the processes necessary for drawing up the national budget in the MTEF format. During the first year, two left to pursue higher education and a third for personal reasons.

PYPP Class V had 11 members, 4 women and 7 men. Of these, 7 were posted to the MFDP Department of the Budget and the other four to the USAID-GEMS office for training in software for the CMIS. The PYPs assigned to the CIMS underwent a seven-week intensive training program to build basic ICT, GIS and business process analysis skills before their assignment to the MOA, FDA, and NBC to support IT-related concessions management.

When Class V joined the DBDP, the PYPs in Class IV were reassigned to positions with more responsibility, among them positions in the Budget Policy and Development Unit, the Office of the Deputy Minister, Pillar Managers, the Open Budget Initiative, and specific MACs. A few members of Class IV participated in the Budget Working Group, and others were involved in the finalization of the budget document, including the Citizens' Guide to the Budget. Three became budget directors, at MFDP, MLME, and GSA. Other PYPs were serving as MAC budget analysts.

DBDP conducted an internal review to assess the performance of the PYPs and the program. From the questionnaires and interviews with supervisors, mentors, and the Deputy Minister for Budget & Expenditure, it was concluded that

- PYPs were very dedicated to the budget process and were willing to work on weekends and holidays, which meant they were working over 40 hours a week during budget season.
- Their sharing responsibility, from budget preparation to finalization, made it possible to meet deadlines.
- They have the DBDP's full confidence and can work independently at MACs linked with the IFMIS system.

PYP Class V included two young women who are among the four PYPs attached to USAID-GEMS and pursuing careers in ICT. These women have been prepared to support concessions management ICT initiatives and trained on concessions, GIS, and mapping. The other 18 members of PYP Classes IV and V

included six females stationed at the DBDP. One of them, Sarah M. Johnson of Class IV, was selected as one of President Obama's Young African Leaders Initiative Fellows.

PYPs at the MFDP have been actively involved with budget preparation and analysis, conducting trainings and workshops across the country on the Open Budget Initiative (OBI), consolidating the Education Sector Budget, and advising MACs on various projects highlighted by the GOL. PYPs have conducted trainings on the National Project System for the Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs, the NIC, the Ministries of Labor and Public Works, the Land Commission, and the National Council for Chiefs and Elders. They have all been absorbed into the MFDP. The concessions PYPs have been absorbed into the MOA, FDA, and NBC.

The objective of providing PYPs to the DBDP and concessions-related MACs was to enhance their ability to effectively develop and disseminate the MTEF budget and successfully run a Concessions Information Management System. This goal was fully achieved.

Sustainability and Challenges

In FY2015, the PYPP established a transition advisory committee to oversee and advise on the transition from being managed by John Snow Inc. As of FY2016, it was incorporated as autonomous entity, thereby guaranteeing that it will maintain its operation while continuing to place PYPs with the GOL through the CSA.

This transition leaves room for a future PPP should the program deem it necessary to guarantee its sustainability.

Recommendations and Lessons Learned

The main observation during the GEMS sponsorship of the program was that all PYPs had attended university in Liberia and given the opportunity, requisite training, and genuine mentoring, young Liberians can perform beyond expectation and deliver on the job in the Civil Service.

For more information contact www.ibi-usa.com

USAID/Liberia Governance and Economic Management Support (USAID-GEMS)

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