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IMPROVED ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER IN LIBERIA ACTIVITY

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT, FISCAL YEAR 2023, QUARTER I

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QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT, FISCAL YEAR 2023, QUARTER I

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ACRONYMS

AGILE	Analytics, Gender, Inclusion, Learning, and Evaluation
AMELP	Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan
CLA	Collaboration, Learning, and Adapting
CO	Contracting Officer
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CWC	Community WASH Committee
CWT	County WASH Team
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
FY	Fiscal Year
EMMP	Environmental Monitoring and Mitigation Plan
GESI	Gender, Equity, and Social Inclusion
GOL	Government of Liberia
GUC	Grants Under Contract
HO	Winrock Home Office
IT	Information Technology
LGIs	Local Government Institutions
LWSC	Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation
LTTA	Long-Term Technical Assistance
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MIS	Management Information System
MOH	Ministry of Health
MPW	Ministry of Public Works
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NWRSB	National Water Resources and Sanitation Board
NWASHC	National WASH Commission
NPHIL	National Public Health Institute of Liberia
PIRS	Performance Indicator Reference Sheets
PPPs	Public-Private Partnerships
Q	Quarter
QASP	Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan
RFP	Request for Proposal
SA	Situational Analysis
SBC	Social Behavior Change Communication
TBD	To be determined
TOR	Terms of Reference
TWG	Thematic Working Group
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WQAP	Water Quality Assurance Plan
WSP	Water Service Provider

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Launched by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Improved Access to Safe Drinking Water in Liberia Activity formally began implementation on November 1, 2022. During its first quarter, the Activity mobilized staff, submitted key initial deliverables, signed on subcontractor WaterAid, and conducted a series of local stakeholder engagement meetings to introduce the project and gather input for activity design.

To support a rapid start-up, the Activity onboarded four Key Personnel during Quarter I (Q1), including Chief of Party (COP) Doris Kaberia, Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) /Operations Baraki Zeslasie Birru, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Director Abraham Clay, and DCOP/Technical Elmos Glay. In addition to the Key Personnel, the Activity fielded Home Office (HO) staff Victoria Lin and Kate Hartman to facilitate operational start-up and initial recruitment activities. Start-Up Consultant Patrick Yattoh worked with the Key Personnel and HO staff to coordinate on-the-ground start-up activities. With support from the HO, the team identified an office space and signed the lease; assessed vendors for various procurements, including furniture and Information Technology (IT) equipment; conducted interviews for long-term local staff positions; and executed a housing survey.

The COP led a series of stakeholder engagement meetings during her first month in-country to inform the initial deliverables, most notably the Year I Annual Work Plan. The COP, MEL Director, and two WaterAid colleagues visited Margibi County to meet with key local stakeholders. Participants, including the Superintendent, City Mayor, Ministry of Public Works (MPW), Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation (LWSC), County WASH Team (CWT), Community WASH Committees (CWC), and a Village Chief, discussed challenges, existing gaps, and priorities. During the visit, the team consulted the rural Montserrado paramount chief and CWC representatives at Tondee community. Further meetings with the National WASH Commission (NWASHC), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), MPW, Legislature Representatives, and other USAID-funded activities in Liberia provided further information and context to inform Year I activity design. These engagements were an essential first step to understanding the operating environment, introducing the project, and collaborating with key stakeholders.

These stakeholder engagements fed into the submission of the Year I Annual Work Plan as well as the Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (AMELP). The Activity also timely submitted other required Q1 deliverables, including the Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP), Year I Procurement Plan, Mobilization Plan, and Branding and Marking Plan.

A. OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

During the quarter, the team consulted with NWASHC, MIA, MPW, LWSC, and the county authorities (Annex 5) to review significant challenges in the water sector governance, including weakened public institutions with insufficient regulatory framework, chronically low and erratic investment and public financing, and the lack of a mechanism for financially self-sustaining water service delivery systems. Although the Local Government Act (LGA) has mandated the LGIs to take full responsibility for water service delivery, county authorities' capacity challenges remain a significant limitation. Capacity challenges include planning, funding constraints, and insufficient technical expertise at the sub-national (county and district) level. Consequently, an overreliance on donors and NGOs for most water service delivery systems is common in the target counties. Only a limited



Figure 1. COP Doris Kaberia visiting water points in Margibi during a field visit to discuss potential gaps, opportunities, and areas of collaboration. Photo Credit: Winrock International

number of communities in the target counties pay for water use and maintenance, which compounds the governance and capacity-related challenges. Similarly, low behavior uptake and user demand, and the belief that water should be free to all citizens cause non-payment for water and systems maintenance or repair. Initial consultation with USAID and LWSC during the quarter reviewed that USAID’s previous investments in the three major water treatment plants in Robertsport, Sanniquellie, and Voinjama are also facing management, operational, and financial sustainability challenges. The Activity also learned that LWSC is currently planning to transition the management and operation of the above treatment plants from Pump and Tank to a new operator, tentatively scheduled for September 2023. In the meantime, effective March 2023, LWSC will take full responsibility for managing and operating the three treatment plants.

2. OVERVIEW

A. AUTHORIZATION

To support the Government of Liberia (GOL) in improving the delivery of good quality, reliable, and safe water services to urban, peri-urban, and rural populations in alignment with the established GOL frameworks, USAID/Liberia awarded the five-year (November 2022 – October 2027) \$17.9 million cost-plus-fixed-fee contract #72066923C00001 Improved Access to Safe Drinking Water in Liberia Activity to Winrock International, in partnership with WaterAid and FEI Consulting.

B. ACTIVITY GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The Activity aims to move Liberians in Montserrado and Margibi Counties to a basic level of water services by strengthening water sector governance, creating scalable models for equitable water service delivery, and promoting and adopting key water use behaviors among the target households. Winrock and its partners will collaborate with Liberian government institutions at the national, county, and local levels to implement a vision where all Liberians access, use, and demand safe, sustainable water services. The Activity will also collaborate with the private sector and civil society to address challenges preventing Liberia from achieving its goal of providing sustainable water for all.

The Activity has 3 key objectives:

- Local government institutions effectively plan, budget, and oversee water service delivery.
- Equitable and inclusive water service delivery improved and expanded.
- Uptake and maintenance of key water use behaviors among households increased.

This quarterly report describes the Improved Access to Safe Drinking Water in Liberia Activity’s progress from November 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022 (Quarter 1, Fiscal Year 2023).

3. PROGRESS AND RESULTS

The focus of Q1 has been on operational start-up. The Activity began laying the groundwork for its foundational and technical activities through stakeholder consultations and planning activities; however, most of the progress achieved this quarter is covered under Cross-Cutting Activities and Management and Administration.

A. FOUNDATIONAL ACTIVITIES

In addition to the consultations initiated with local and national stakeholders, the Activity started the collection and desk review of reports and studies from other projects during Q1, a prerequisite for the

baseline assessments that will be conducted under Foundational Activity 1. The documents reviewed include: Decentralization of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Services in Liberia, WASH service delivery Case Studies, Water Point Survey 2017, USAID LMWP-II final report, Liberia WASH BAT (LEPDA), Liberia Local Government Act 2018, USAID Rural water technical brief, Liberia FY23 Draft National Budget, etc.

B. OBJECTIVE 1: LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS EFFECTIVELY PLAN, BUDGET, AND OVERSEE WATER SERVICE DELIVERY

Activities under this objective will begin in Quarter 2.

C. OBJECTIVE 2: EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE WATER SERVICE DELIVERY IMPROVED AND EXPANDED

Activities under this objective will begin in Quarter 3.

D. OBJECTIVE 3: UPTAKE AND MAINTENANCE OF KEY WATER USE BEHAVIORS AMONG HOUSEHOLDS INCREASED

Activities under this objective will begin in Quarter 2.

E. CROSS-CUTTING ACTIVITIES

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The MEL Director led the development of the AMELP and QASP with support from the HO Analytics, Gender, Inclusion, Learning, and Evaluation (AGILE) Unit, both of which were submitted to USAID on December 30, 2022. The MEL Director also initiated consultations with the USAID DELTA project to explore the possibility of generating maps for target counties with relevant water points and demographic information. Planning for the baseline assessment and GESI Analysis also began this quarter.

LEARNING AND ADAPTATION

None

COLLABORATION

The Activity embraces the principle of Collaboration, Learning, and Adopting in planning and implementing activities scheduled for Year 1. During the reporting period, the project collaborated with key national and county level institutions to ensure that the activities are locally led, locally managed, and driven. Right from the onset, the COP, DCOP/Technical, and MEL Director led discussions on potential collaboration with national-level institutions (NWASHC CEO, MPW Deputy Minister, MIA Deputy Minister in Charge urban affairs, Assistant Minister of community services, LWSC Operations Director) and county level officials including Superintendent and City Mayor among others. During these discussions, participants mapped critical areas of collaboration and learning on which the project will build next quarter to foster a Liberia-led, county-owned learning process.



Figure 2. COP Doris Kaberia and DCOP Technical Elmos Gray participated in a CSO Budget Advocacy Meeting with law makers to discuss the status, importance, and opportunities to invest in WASH. Photo Credit: Winrock International

During the reporting period, the Activity engaged other USAID-funded projects working in WASH and governance sectors. It held consultation meetings with the COP, DCOP, and Governance lead of the USAID Countywide Sanitation Activity to discuss and map out areas of complementarities and synergies. This initial consultation identified fundamental geographical and thematic overlaps between the two projects. During the next reporting period, the project team will collaborate with the USAID Countywide Sanitation Activity to develop common approaches for governance and private sector-led interventions, particularly in Montserrado county, where the two projects overlap. This will help improve efficiencies and reduce

duplication of efforts.

Similarly, the Activity linked with USAID Liberia Economic Policy Dialogue Activity (LEPDA) and reviewed governance documents developed by LEPDA to ensure synergies and complementarities on policy and governance-related activities, especially regarding supporting NWASHC policy and regulatory framework priorities. The Activity also initiated discussions with the USAID-funded DELTA monitoring team to review the AMELP and help with GIS-related maps for the target counties. The project team will further build on these relationships and consultations with DELTA and LEPDA next quarter. The Activity will also collaborate with other USAID-funded projects and partners such as Breakthrough Action, B360, and other WASH sector partners, including WASH Consortium members, UNICEF, Catholic Relief Services, and other donor-funded projects (e.g., World Bank). This will ensure that best practices are widely adopted within the water sector in Liberia.

SUSTAINABILITY

In Q1, the Activity laid the foundation for sustainability by initiating collaboration and consultations with key local stakeholders. To fulfill the commitment to enhancing the sustainability of water service delivery, the initial discussions with national and county-level officials emphasized the need to promote a common agenda among WASH sector actors to address critical challenges using a structured form of collaboration. Key priority areas identified include addressing systemic issues in water sector governance, supporting the WSP to respond to external shocks, and creating linkages between national- and county-level institutions to develop and implement sub-national frameworks that support sustainable water supply, including promoting private sector-led service delivery models.

The project's focus on system strengthening will not only support the national and local government to create a framework that

No one partner can do it alone

"We all need each other to succeed, no single partner can claim to have all the resources (financial and human) to solve all the challenges in the water sector. For sustainable water service delivery to happen in Margibi county, we need all partners to play their role and collaborate with others in execution of their mandate. We can't continue doing the same business and expect different result" said Honorary Jerry Vannie, Margibi County Superintendent during consultations with the project team (December 2022).

clarifies institutional roles and mandates but also focus on a phased capacity building approach that puts local systems at the center of implementation.

As the Activity develops the sustainability plan next quarter, stakeholder consultations to define a shared vision and priorities for gender equity, youth engagement, and private sector engagement in water service delivery will remain among the top priorities.

GRANTS UNDER CONTRACT

The development of the Grants Under Contract Manual, due by January 30, 2023, was started this quarter.

ANNEX I. DATA TABLES

Not applicable in Q1

ANNEX 2. DELIVERABLES SCHEDULE

Deliverable	Status	Date
Mobilization Plan	Approved	December 8
Branding and Marking Plan	Approved	December 20
Year 1 Annual Work Plan	Submitted	December 30
Year 1 Procurement Plan	Submitted	December 30
AMELP	Submitted	December 30
QASP	Submitted	December 30
Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan	Under preparation	Due January 30
Water Quality Assurance Plan	Under preparation	Due January 30
Draft Construction Quality Control Plan	Under preparation	Due January 30
Draft Bill of Quantities	Not started	Due February 28
Sustainability Plan	Not started	Due April 30
Q1 Performance Report	Submitted	January 13
Q2 Performance Report	Not started	Due April 15
Q3 Performance Report	Not started	Due July 15
Q4 Performance Report	Not started	(Due October 15)
Q1 Financial Report	Under preparation	Due January 30
Q2 Financial Report	Not started	Due April 30
Q3 Financial Report	Not started	Due July 30
Q4 Financial Report	Not started	(Due October 30)
Q1 Accrual Report	Submitted	December 14
Q2 Accrual Report	Not started	Due April 15
Q3 Accrual Report	Not started	Due July 15
Q4 Accrual Report	Not started	(Due October 15)
Annual Performance Report	Not started	(Due October 15)

ANNEX 3. SUCCESS STORIES

Not applicable in Q1

ANNEX 4. PLANNED PUBLIC EVENTS

Event	Anticipated Date	Participants	Press Involvement (Yes/No)	USAID Representation (Yes/No)	Additional Information
Activity Launch Event	On/around March 22	National- and county-level senior representatives; USAID; Winrock, WaterAid, and FEI; representatives from private sector, CSOs, women's groups; legislators and other WASH sector actors	Yes	Yes	Intended to be linked with World Water Day Exploring options of joint-event with PSI The participation of FEI will be contingent on clarity on the work in the 3 secondary cities.

ANNEX 5. STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED DURING THE QUARTER

This annex contains personally identifiable information and has been redacted.