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IMPROVED ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER IN LIBERIA ACTIVITY FY2023 Annual Report

NOVEMBER 1, 2022 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

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Contract Number: 72066923C00001

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ACRONYMS

AGILE	Analytics, Gender, Inclusion, Learning, and Evaluation
AMELP	Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan
BOQ	Bill of Quantity
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
DELTA	USAID Data Evaluation and Technical Assistance
EMMP	Environmental Monitoring and Mitigation Plan
FY	Fiscal Year
GESI	Gender, Equity, and Social Inclusion
GOL	Government of Liberia
GUC	Grants Under Contract
HO	Winrock Home Office
IDIQ	Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity
IP	Implementing Partner
IT	Information Technology
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LEGIS	Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geoinformation services
LEPDA	Liberia Economic Policy Dialogue Activity
LGIs	Local Government Institutions
LTTA	Long-Term Technical Assistance
LWSC	Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation
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
NPHIL	National Public Health Institute of Liberia
NWASHC	National WASH Commission

NWRSB	National Water Resources and Sanitation Board
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
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
STTA	Short term Technical Assistance
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

1. PROGRAM OVERVIEW/SUMMARY

Program Name:	Improved Access To Safe Drinking Water In Liberia Activity
Activity Start Date And End Date:	November 1, 2022 to October 31, 2027
Name of Prime Implementing Partner:	Winrock International
Contract/Agreement] Number:	72066923C00001
Name of Subcontractors/Subawardees:	FEI Consulting and WaterAid
Major Counterpart Organizations:	Local Government Institutions (LGIs) in Margibi and Rural Montserrado Counties, MIA, NWASHC, MPW
Geographic Coverage (cities and or countries):	Rural Montserrado and Margibi Counties in Liberia, three Water Treatment Plants in Robertsport, Voinjama, and Sanniquellie
Reporting Period:	July 01 to September 30, 2023

2. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION/INTRODUCTION

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 three 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.

Table 1: Summary of Results to Date (selected standard indicators for FY23)

See Annex A for a complete list of indicators and results.

Standard Indicators	Baseline FY 2023	Annual Target	Q1 FY23	Q2 FY23	Q3 FY23	Q4 FY23	Annual Performance Achieved to the End of Reporting Period (%)	On Target Y/N
<i>HL.8.3-3: Number of water and sanitation sector institutions strengthened to manage water resources or improve water supply and sanitation services as a result of U.S. Government (USG) assistance</i>	2022	3	0	0	0	0	0	N
<i>HL.8.4-1: Value of new funding mobilized to the water and sanitation sectors as a result of USG assistance</i>	2022	0	0	0	0	0	0	Y
<i>CBLD-9: Percent of USG assisted organizations with improved performance</i>	2022	0	0	0	0	0	0	Y
<i>HL.8.1-1: Number of people gaining access to basic drinking water service as a result of USG assistance</i>	2022	0	0	0	0	0	0	Y
<i>HL.8.1-3: Number of people receiving improved service quality from an existing basic or safely managed drinking water service as a result of USG assistance</i>	2022	2,500	0	0	0	0	0	N

Note: The Results Performance Column depicts the level of achievement expressed as a percentage of Actual versus Planned.

3. ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

A. PROGRESS NARRATIVE

In Year 1, the Improved Access to Safe Drinking Water in Liberia Activity accomplished key milestones, including office setup, staff recruitment and onboarding, and the official launch in Monrovia. Foundational assessments were conducted to inform the project's design and interventions. The Activity formed the Activity Advisory Committee (AAC) with key representatives and held three successful meetings. The Activity submitted all contract deliverables on time, completed foundational activities, and worked collaboratively with national and local government institutions (LGIs) to lay the groundwork for sustainability.

Several assessments were conducted, including the baseline, community diagnostics, and formative research. The Activity identified four intervention communities. The Activity built crucial relationships with stakeholders and provided technical support for transitioning water treatment plants to private operators. As a result of Year 1 engagement, three WASH institutions were strengthened, two policies improved, and Community WASH Committees (CWCs) were established, with 48% of elected members being women.

The Activity worked on creating tailored water service models, engaging the private sector and LGIs to develop sustainable approaches. This collaboration led to four models identified for Year 2. The Local Government Act (LGA) 2018 was successfully rolled out, increasing awareness of decentralized service delivery, especially in water provision at the county level. With guidance from the AAC and stakeholder engagement, Year 2's foundation has been set for future progress.

B. IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

FOUNDATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Foundational Activity 1: Conduct Baseline Assessments

Household Survey

The Activity conducted a baseline household survey in rural Montserrado and Margibi Counties to establish baseline values for key performance indicators. The survey team used a door-to-door approach and surveyed 780 households across seven districts in both counties. The survey aimed to set the foundation for measuring progress and validating indicator targets.



Institutional Capacity Assessment

The Activity worked with LGIs to co-design the ICA assessment tool, conducting a baseline assessment to identify capacity gaps and establish benchmarks. The Activity developed a Local Government Institutions Capacity Assessment Tool (LGIT) by combining and adapting the USAID Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) with Winrock International Sustainable Water Partnership Assessment Process and Tool. The assessment revealed a



lack of well-managed institutions for subnational water service delivery in both counties, making it challenging for the LGIs to coordinate various tasks, including operationalizing the delivery of water services. The ICA findings will be used to inform capacity improvement plans.

Community Diagnostic

The Activity conducted a Community Diagnostic to gain insights into the characteristics of targeted communities. It provided contextual, demographic, and socio-economic information, defined population

sizes, and involved community leaders in identifying local challenges and root causes in 28 communities, with populations ranging from 500 to over 2,400 individuals per community. The findings will guide the selection of 14 communities for Activity implementation in both counties.

Sector-wide institutional and socio-economic analysis

The sector-wide analysis included desk reviews and consultation meetings with NASHC, MOPW, LWSC, and MIA at the national level and LGIs at the local level. The goal was to identify existing policy and regulatory frameworks and priorities for addressing sector policy gaps. Additional work is ongoing to complement the insufficient initial analysis to support decision-making and prioritize institutional development.

Foundational Activity 2: Selection of Intervention Sites

In collaboration with LGIs, the Activity conducted a joint assessment of 15 potential communities in Rural Montserrat and Margibi counties. Four communities were selected for phase one intervention: Dolo's Town, Baypolu, Yarnwuelle, and Gate 15-Sarah Johnson Quarter. A subsequent assessment on August 3-5, 2023 identified communities for phase two intervention: Unification Town, Siaffa Town, Worhn Town in Margibi, Morris Farm, and Jah Tondo Town in Montserrat. The Activity will finalize the selection of the remaining five phase two communities in Year 2 Q1 jointly with the LGIs in the targeted counties.

Foundational Activity 3: Design a Funded Incentive Strategy

In Year 1, the Activity developed a Grants Under Contract (GUC) Manual, outlining operational and administrative guidelines for providing grants to NGOs, CSOs, and WSPs. USAID reviewed this manual. An Annual Program Statement (APS) was designed to attract a wide range of applicants interested and capable of implementing activities contributing to improved access to safe drinking water, covering the Activity's three objectives. The APS will be published once the GUC Manual is approved (expected early Q1 FY24) and a detailed schedule for its operationalization is created.

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

Sub-Objective 1.1: Local leadership structures and institutional arrangements for water service delivery are established and /or improved.

Task 1.1.1: Build the case for LGI-managed PPPs for Water Services

Stakeholders Engagement on Sub-National WASH Regulatory Frameworks

In Year 1, the Activity engaged in consultative meetings with USAID partner projects, including the Liberia Economic Policy Dialogue Activity (LEPDA), to gather detailed information on their WASH private sector study. The consultation engagement included sessions with the Countywide Sanitation Activity (CWSA), NASHC, MIA, and potential private sector actors. The findings, particularly regarding access to finance for small businesses in the sector, piqued the interest of private sector actors. These consultations confirmed the absence of clear sub-national frameworks to support Local Government Institutions (LGIs) in water service delivery through public-private partnerships (PPPs). An extensive review of national-level sector policies revealed that counties were mandated to establish specific administrative departments, which remained unestablished as of Year 1. Consequently, the Activity prioritized assisting counties in creating these critical technical departments in its Year 2 work plan. Once established, the Department of Public Works and Utilities will collaborate with the Department of Community Enterprise Development Agency¹ to promote private sector investments in the water sector, including community-based enterprises.

To reinforce these findings, the Activity conducted a Sector-Wide Analysis, which confirmed the absence of specialized sub-national institutions responsible for supporting LGIs in managing PPPs for water service delivery at the county level. Currently, all sector institutions are at the national level, with their staff either seconded to or functioning at the county level under the direct supervision of their respective national principals. Therefore, there is a need for senior county officials in Montserrado and Margibi Counties to draft a flexible framework adapted to their context to bridge this gap.

Consultative Engagement with the LGIs at the County-Level

To identify the appropriate sub-national (county) department or local government institution responsible for water service planning, budgeting, and oversight, the Activity engaged in stakeholder consultative meetings with the Development Superintendents of Montserrado and Margibi Counties. These discussions clarified that the County WASH Team (CWT) and the Project Management Team or Committee (PMU/PMC) are not designated units for county-level planning, budgeting, and oversight of PPPs in water service delivery.

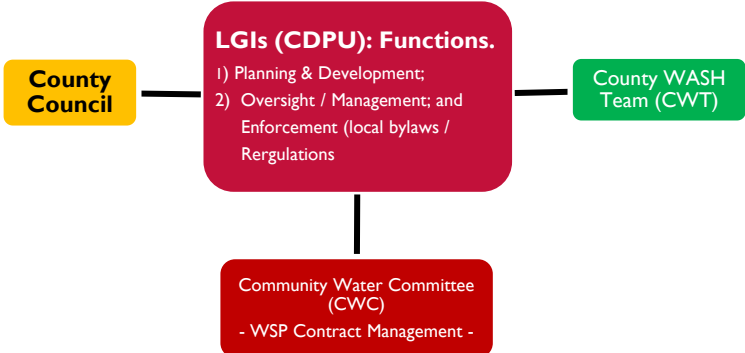


Figure 1: The local leadership and institutional framework to regulate and manage water service delivery.

Participants acknowledged that the CWT primarily serves to coordinate the WASH sector at the county level, while the Local Government Act of 2018 (Charter 5.1) stipulates that development planning in Liberia should originate at the clan/district level, culminating at the county level under the County Development Planning Unit (CDPU). According to this arrangement, the CDPU within the county is responsible for planning and budgeting, with final approval resting with the county councils.

¹ LGA Chapter 2.14F on **Establishment of County Administrative Departments**, upon coming into force of the act, each county may gradually establish administrative departments to implement devolved and delegated function depending upon individual county needs, capabilities and local financial resources to sustain institutions such as; i) Department of planning, revenue and Budget ii) Department of Land, Environment and Natural Resource Management, iii) Department of administration and personnel iv) Department of Public Works and Utilities V) Department of health and social warfare Vi department of Agriculture and commerce, department of Education and sports, viii) Department of Information, Culture and Tourism ix) Community Enterprise Development Agency

Implementation of the plan falls under the jurisdiction of the county superintendent and other county technicians.

The Activity intends to collaborate with county leadership (county administration), the CDPU (subnational water service oversight), the CWT (GOL's WASH coordination body), and the CWC (community-level water service oversight) as lead institutions. As the Government Decentralization Act is in its early operational stages, the Activity will initially work with the CDPU and adjust its approach per any subsequent institutional framework modifications.

Conduct Visioning Workshops

In Year 1, the Activity engaged private sector actors from Southern Africa and Kenya to learn about their water service delivery models. They held virtual workshops with WaterAid Mozambique and FundiFix Kenya. WaterAid in Mozambique faced challenges with free water expectations and infrastructure vandalism but succeeded by setting tariffs based on regulations and community input. Local governments in Mozambique lack the capacity to support and monitor private operators. In Kenya, FundiFix manages maintenance services for water infrastructure and operates Management Contracts for piped schemes. They handle various aspects of water service delivery, reporting to local governments and donors. These engagements laid the foundation for LGIs in Liberia to design context-specific water service delivery models. The Activity plans to continue collaborating with these actors in Year 2.

Task 1.1.2: Develop sub-national framework for water service delivery.

Activity Advisory Committee (AAC) Planning

In Year 1, an Activity Advisory Committee (AAC) was established to provide guidance and advocate for policy improvements. The AAC includes members from national-level counterparts, county officials, major CSOs, and private sector representatives. The membership included the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME), MIA, NWASHC, MPW, MOH, NPHL, LWSC, private sector representatives, CSO representatives, and county leadership from Montserrado and Margibi. The NWASHC CEO serves as the chair, with co-chairs from MIA and local government representatives in Margibi and Montserrado Counties. The committee chair's tenure is one year, with the option of rotating afterward. The Activity Chief of Party is the AAC secretary, and the committee meets quarterly. The AAC identified the absence of sub-national water policies to support LGIs in county-level water service delivery.

Participatory Workshops to Draft a Sub-National Water Service Delivery Framework

The Activity collaborated with Margibi and Montserrado County Officials to conduct one consultative workshop in each county. Participants included senior-level leadership and technical teams, such as superintendents, city mayors, and county administrators. National-level representatives from MIA, MOPW, and NWASHC also joined the discussions. The Activity facilitated the workshops, drafted the agenda in consultation with the LGIs, provided venue logistics, and supported County Superintendents in capturing action points. Workshop outcomes formed a working draft of sub-national framework issues to be refined by the SWT technical committees in each county.

The Activity analyzed policies to inform the working draft, contributing to developing a framework for water service delivery in Margibi and Montserrado Counties. This framework will align with strengthened policies and regulations through the Activity's ongoing capacity-building and improvement efforts.

Sub-Objective 1.2: Policies and Regulations for water service delivery are improved, implemented, and enforced

Task 1.2.1: Support the application of policy frameworks

Detailed mapping of stakeholders, including existing CWCs, CWT and WSPs

In Year 1, the Activity established four CWCs in selected water system locations, with an average of 40% women representation in each. Awareness sessions were conducted to explain CWCs' roles, responsibilities, and bylaws, followed by community and LGI-led leadership induction after elections.

The Activity examined WSPs in Montserrado County (Peace Island Community water system) and Margibi County, Kakata (Benville Water System). Two partners constructed these systems, which were handed over to communities for PPP-based operation and management. Although initially successful, the Peace Island Water System's PPP is currently non-operational. On the other hand, the Benville water system, constructed by the Catholic Relief Service (CRS) in collaboration with Liberia Water and Sewage Corporation (LWSC), seems to function effectively under the Kakata City Mayor's supervision.

Identification Of Policy and Regulatory Gaps, Areas of Policy Overlap At The County And National Level

The Activity's consultative meetings with LGIs revealed a lack of specialized policies and regulatory frameworks for water service delivery in rural Montserrado and Margibi Counties. National-level policy leads enforce policies, causing an overlap in policy implementation. The Nwashc draft Regulatory Framework was reviewed and adapted during this period to suit rural water regulation. The draft is currently under review by Nwashc's Policy Unit Team (PUT) and will later be shared with LGIs for further input and approval.

Support Nwashc in the development of terms of reference for CWT and CWC

The Activity helped LGIs draft CWCs TOR, which LGIs and Nwashc PUT approved. CWCs received initial orientation. The County WASH Team's TOR was reviewed and shared with Nwashc PUT for feedback. Collaborating with stakeholders, the Activity identified policy gaps and overlaps stemming from sector frameworks designed for national-level implementation. The Activity also mapped CWCs, CWTs, and WSPs in targeted counties. No functional CWCs were found, but each county had one CWT for monthly sector coordination. Two WSPs (Benville and Peace Island water operators) were identified, with LEDPA offering additional information and four key recommendations for strengthening private sector actors in water service delivery.

Task 1.2.2: Strengthen County level monitoring and enforcement

The Activity recruited and co-located two staff within Margibi and Montserrado LGIs. The co-located staff supported the LGIs in reactivating the WASH technical working group meeting at the county level. The Activity conducted an institutional capacity assessment to better understand the capacity gaps within the county (see Foundational Activity 1).

Task 1.2.3: Train CWCs in policies and regulations

During Year 1, the Activity, in consultation with stakeholders and LGIs, drafted CWCs' selection criteria, guidelines, constitution, and bylaws. CWCs were established in four communities (Sarah Johnson Quarter, 15th Gate, Montserrado County, Dolo's Town, Baypolu, and Yarnwullie in Margibi County) with 12 members each and 40% women in leadership roles. The CWCs democratically elected their leaders following group bylaws. The Activity supported the Local Government Act of 2018 rollout in the two targeted counties, raising awareness of decentralized government functions, including water service delivery. The County Development Planning Unit (CDPU) was identified, and Year 2 will involve mentoring the CDPU in planning, budgeting, and funding sources as per the LGA 2018.

Collaborating with MIA at national and local levels, the Activity also worked closely with the Governance Commission on decentralization efforts.

Sub-Objective 1.3: Improved Institutional Capacity and Coordination Around Planning, Budgeting, and Monitoring Water Service

Task 1.3.1: Build the capacity of national ministries to support LGIs

During this period, no formal capacity building was conducted for national ministries to support LGIs in county-level water service delivery. However, the Activity mentored the Director of Urban Service at the Department of Urban Affairs in MIA, the Public Procurement and Concession Commission (PPPC), the Ministry of Public Works, and LWSC county staff in leading procurement for mini utility operators in three USAID water treatment plants in Robertsport, Sanniquellie, and Voinjama. The national and county-level staff received procurement training facilitated by FEI in the counties.

The Activity also participated in the Annual Joint Sector Review (JSR) organized by NASHC in Monrovia. The Activity's report is currently under stakeholder review, and once finalized, it will be assessed for any guidance relevant to implementation in the two targeted counties.

Task 1.3.2: Build county capacity

Support the WASH coordinator to institutionalize Monthly WASH technical meetings.

In Year 1, the Activity helped reinstate monthly WASH coordinator and EHT meetings in Montserrado and Margibi Counties, with room for improvement. Seven WASH coordination meetings were organized (3 in Margibi and 4 in Montserrado), and the activity provided technical support, including drafting agendas, recording meeting minutes, and sending out invitations. The Activity collaborated with LGIs and NASHC to create institutional scorecards and MIS systems for LGIs to monitor water access and system functionality. Notably, these monitoring systems were absent at both national and sub-national levels. In Year 2, the Activity plans to develop these monitoring tools in collaboration with stakeholders.

The Activity also worked on defining roles and responsibilities for the County WASH Team (CWT) in Year 1, involving the Assistant Minister for Community Services at MOPW. Although the proposed roles and responsibilities were shared with NASHC for review, feedback is pending. In Year 2, the Activity aims to engage NASHC to gain their professional input on the CWT roles and responsibilities.

Furthermore, the Activity conducted a comprehensive Institutional Capacity Assessment (ICA) in Year 1 under Foundational Activity 1, sharing the findings with LGIs in both counties. In Year 2, the Activity will review and validate these findings with LGIs, incorporating their input to identify capacity gaps. This information will shape the development of Capacity Development Plans.

Despite challenges such as COVID-19 restrictions and competing national priorities, the Activity successfully rekindled monthly county WASH coordination meetings in both targeted counties.

Task 1.3.3: Develop and strengthen the capacity of CWCs to monitor and regulate the water services

Mapping of existing CWCs

As stated earlier, the Activity mapped four CWCs in four communities, the first intervention communities for the Activity. The CWCs in those communities have been established and commissioned by the community LGIs.

Create awareness of the bylaws of the CWCs

In the first phase, the Activity established four Community Water Committees (CWCs) in pilot communities, engaging with local government authorities throughout the process. These committees were initiated to improve oversight of water service delivery in Margibi and Montserrado Counties.

Democratic elections were held for CWC leadership, and draft constitutions and bylaws were shared with Local Government Institutions (LGIs) for review and approval.

Upon discovering the absence of pre-existing CWCs in these communities, it was clear that capacity building was necessary for these newly formed CWCs to oversee water service contracts effectively. An Institutional Capacity Assessment (ICA) identified the need for such capacity building, which would be implemented in Year 2.

The guidelines focused on establishing professional CWCs for contract management between communities and private operators, differentiating from previous INGO-established committees primarily responsible for hygiene promotion. Orientation sessions on CWC bylaws were conducted in the pilot communities, receiving positive feedback from local authorities, who suggested further awareness through local radio stations. In Year 1, the Activity established and laid the foundation for these CWCs' enhanced performance and accountability in water service management.

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

Sub-Objective 2.1: Professional and financially resilient water service delivery models adopted

Task 2.1.1: Design pay-for-use water services in target communities and towns

Mapping of WSPs/private sector actors in Margibi and rural Montserrado

The Activity conducted a collaborative mapping of WSPs working with LGIs in the two target counties, categorized by their roles (water production, distribution, drilling, construction, and parts supply). The results revealed 87 WSPs operating in mineral water production and distribution, with 2.3% dealing in bottled mineral water and 97.7% in sachet mineral water. Other mapped WSPs included five drilling and water facility construction groups, one company manufacturing and distributing water service products, nine suppliers of water service materials, and one supplier of solar energy materials.

LEPDA reports on private sector engagement showed that many water production and distribution groups operate on a small scale, primarily funded by family or friends. However, a few have the necessary expertise and have successfully secured external financing from banks.

Private sector roundtable discussions

Multiple private sector engagement meetings were organized to communicate the Activity's PPP vision, fostering collaboration between LGIs in rural Montserrado and Margibi counties and the private sector to oversee water supply systems in specific communities. The initial meeting was a joint private sector roundtable discussion with PSI on February 28, 2023, which addressed the current challenges and opportunities for private sector investment in the water sector. Key issues discussed included the absence of regulatory and policy frameworks supporting private sector involvement, limited viable business case options in rural areas, and insufficient financial opportunities for private sector ventures. Subsequent meetings further enhanced the Activity's understanding of the challenges and risks hindering private sector participation in the water sector. However, the private sector was willing to collaborate with the Activity and LGIs to realize the PPP vision.

Concurrently, the Activity engaged with LGIs in both counties to explore water service delivery models that would sustainably provide safe and affordable drinking water to rural communities through a PPP approach. This approach received significant support from LGIs, who noted that many rural communities in Liberia were already paying for water services, and with proper awareness campaigns supported by LGIs, resistance to these initiatives would likely be minimal. With strong engagement from LGIs and the private sector, the Activity conducted two virtual exchange visits to WaterAid Mozambique and FundiFix Kenya to learn from their successful experiences with PPP models. Extensive desk reviews

and consultations with USAID and Winrock International Home Office led to the identification of four water supply service delivery models to pilot in Year 2: 1) Community-led, 2) Delegated, 3) PPP Led, and 4) Private (Design, Build, Operate or Design, Build, Transfer).



Private Sector Engagement Meeting. Photo Credit. Winrock International

Analysis of the Existing Systems

The Activity assessed two water systems to learn about their service delivery management models. These two systems represent the country's most viable water supply schemes operating under professional PPP models. The *Peace Island Water System* utilizes the 4Ps (Public, Private, and People Partnership), a tripartite partnership between the LSWC, the Peace Island Community represented by the

Project Management Committee (PMC), and a Community-Based Enterprise (CBE) where they are responsible for managing the water supply system and local government authorities provide administrative monitoring and support supervision. The *Benville Community Water System (Kakata Water System)* follows the Community Managed service delivery model where community leadership offers oversight, and committees are established and trained in various areas, including business and financial management, customer service, and maintenance. Local government authorities, including the City Mayor and LWSC, offer oversight and technical support.

Selection of water service delivery model for pilots

In Year 1, the Activity conducted research and held engagement meetings with national and county-level stakeholders and communities on the vision of a PPP approach to water service delivery. After sufficient consultations with both the private sector, LGIs, and the communities, along with knowledge sharing from WaterAid-Mozambique and FundFix-Kenya, the Activity concluded that the three named service delivery models (community-based, PPP, and individual/entrepreneur) are best suited to be piloted given the nature and context of the intervention communities.

1. **Professionalized Community-based Management (PCBM):** LGIs and donors invest in water point construction and rehabilitation, expecting the community's existing managers to handle operations, maintenance, repairs, and revenue collection through water user tariffs. The model formalizes these managers into a Professionalized Community-based Management (PCBM) entity, which delegates certain maintenance tasks to professional service providers through performance-based contracts while ensuring efficient daily system operations. LGIs maintain strategic control and oversight through management contracts with the PCBM.
2. **Public-Private Partnership (PPP):** The PPP approach delegates water supply scheme management to private operators under the authority of local governments. Management contracts outline service areas, service standards, tariffs, performance indicators, reporting, and maintenance responsibilities. LGIs in Margibi and Montserrado counties collaborate with private businesses and communities to strategically establish and manage water points.

Individual/Entrepreneur Management Model: This community-driven water infrastructure model targets local entrepreneurs within communities. These are businessmen/women who are

key community members, engaged in meaningful trade, and desire to diversify their businesses and have the capacity to operate the water systems. Local professionalized service providers under a performance-based contract handle certain maintenance services. The entrepreneurs collect revenue/tariff and ensure daily operations. LGIs oversee and sign performance-based contracts. CWCs monitor the entrepreneur's performance and report to LGIs.

Drawing from learnings from other countries during the virtual exchange visit, the proposed models, when piloted, can potentially improve water service management in the intervention communities in rural Montserrat and Margibi counties. The Activity will build a case for adoption by the national government to be used in other parts of the country.

To **Task 2.1.2: Implement service provision improvement and management model**

Recruitment of A&E Firm to conduct detailed feasibility and engineering study

The Activity hired an architecture and engineering (A&E) firm, Alliance Consulting Engineers, Planners Surveyors Inc (ACEPSI), to conduct the detailed feasibility/engineering studies hydraulics calculation and produce the technical drawings, specifications, and BOQs (costing inclusive).



The Activity held a kick-off meeting with ACEPSI on August 22, 2023. On August 28, 2023, an introductory meeting with local authorities was held to discuss the planned feasibility studies. The A&E firm outlined their preliminary activities within the intervention towns and requested full cooperation from the local authorities as the feasibility studies are being conducted.

Construction Works - Preparation

In Year 1, the A&E firm conducted feasibility studies for four phase one intervention communities. They have completed population census, topographic maps, technical assessments, and geotechnical investigations. The planned geophysical investigation and full engineering designs and Quantities (BOQs) will be completed within the first quarter of Year 2. The draft feasibility studies and basis of design reports are complete, allowing the preliminary engineering design to begin after approval. The A&E firm will also assist in preparing bid/tender documents, introducing quality control measures, and overseeing construction activities for the proposed water supply systems.

Sub-Objective 2.2: Water service providers can manage water services

Task 2.2.1: Build county capacity to monitor and backstop CWCs and WSPs

No activities were conducted for this task.

Task 2.2.2: Build private sector service provision capacity

No activities were conducted for this task.

Task 2.2.3: Provide capacity-building services to LWSC's local team, LGIs, and WSPs in Robertsport, Sanniquellie, and Voinjama.

The Activity supported the GOL by reviewing the concept note for the water treatment plant transition from Pump and Tank to LWSC. The concept note maintained two key objectives for the three plants: to keep the system running after Pump and Tank's departure and to find three local firms/operators to operate and manage the treatment plants. A key outcome of the meeting was drafting and finalizing the transition plan and roadmap for procuring private sector operators. The Activity participated in the procurement meetings to recruit new private operators for the Robertsport, Sanniquellie, and Voinjama

plants. LSC, county authorities, and LWSC agreed upon timelines, ending with a handover of the plants. Additionally, the Activity participated in the turnover event in Voinjima, where the joint transition agreement was formally signed between LWSC, LSC, and County Authorities. The event was part of the formal handing over process of the three treatment plants to LWSC.

In collaboration with MIA, the Activity provided technical assistance on the strategies and capacities for the bid evaluation and training for the procurement committees on bid handling, evaluation, and selection of a winner for each of the three water systems. In preparation for the planned bid evaluation and training, the contract management committee ToR, bid evaluation guidelines, scoring methods, schedule, and attendance sheet were shared with the LGIs through MIA. The Activity supported MIA in planning the bid opening and evaluations and the virtual training for the procurement committee and LGI in the three counties. The training, bid opening, and evaluation are all completed, and three private operators have been selected to manage the water treatment plant in each of the three cities. The Activity is working with MIA and LWSC to finalize the due diligence preparations. The due diligence review checklist has been discussed with officials from LWSC and MIA, and review participants from the two institutions are being identified by the two government institutions. The due diligence will be completed early in Year 2, followed by contracting the selected WSP if approved.

SUB-OBJECTIVE 2.3: WATER SERVICE PROVIDERS INCENTIVIZED TO EXTEND INCLUSIVE SERVICES TO POOR AND MARGINALIZED HOUSEHOLDS

Task 2.3.1: Engage at national level to establish policies responsive to barriers to water access for poor households

No activities were conducted for this task.

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

Sub-Objective 3.1: Social norms around the use of basic water services created and uptake of clean drinking water increased

Task 3.1.1: Conduct formative research on water use behaviors

In Year 1, the Activity hired the Melvin and Joel (M&J) Group to conduct formative research on social behavior change (SBC) to understand water use behavior, barriers to safe drinking water, payment for water, community power dynamics, and effective communication channels. These inputs will inform the SBC messaging/campaigns. M&J conducted a desk review and submitted an inception report, including the research methodology, approaches, tools, and data collection, analysis, and reporting plan.

A three-day data collection training was conducted for enumerators before deployment to the community. The training covered research methods, consent, community entry, team building, and research tools to ensure that enumerators understood the data collection method and tools. The Activity ensures consultation with WASH partners throughout the implementation of the formation research.

After the formative research, key partners and stakeholders had a validation meeting to ensure the report was context-specific and high-quality. The validation helped identify gaps in the report and link the findings to other studies conducted. Representatives from Breakthrough Action, County-Wide Sanitation Activity (CWSA), LGIs, the Ministry of Health, National WASH Commission, NPHIL, CSO, and the Ministry of Public Works attended. The Activity will share the report with USAID early in Year 2.

Task 3.1.2: Implement SBC and marketing activities with partners through an adaptive, learning-by-doing approach

The Activity developed the scope of work for the social and behavior change strategy and plans that will guide the co-creation workshop implementation in Year 2. The workshop will support the design of key social and behavior change messages and a campaign on water use behavior, barriers to access safe drinking water, payment for water, community power dynamics, and effective communication channels.

Sub-Objective 3.2: Financial, Social, And Physical Barriers to The Use of Basic Water Services Are Removed

Task 3.2.1: Develop approaches for inclusive local investment decisions

In parallel with establishing CWCs, the Activity also conducted a mapping exercise in four communities: Baypolu, 15 Gate Sarah Johnson Quarter, Yarnwuelle, and Dolo's Town. The mapping exercise aimed to identify existing and functional Village Saving Loan Associations (VSLAs) in the community could serve as a starting point for Objective 2. WaterAid identified and mapped a total of 14 VSLAs. WaterAid will complete the detailed mapping in Year 2.

Task 3.2.2: Assist CWCs and WSPs to monitor and address barriers

No activity implemented this year.

Task 3.2.3: Implement advocacy campaigns

No activity implemented this year.

Sub-Objective 3.3: Participation of Women and Other Marginalized Groups In Decision Making Related To Water Access And Management Strengthened

Task 3.3.1: Understand decision-making systems and address barriers to women and marginalized groups' participation

GESI Analysis

In Year 1, the Activity conducted a GESI analysis, using secondary and primary data gathered through key informant interviews (KII) led by the Senior GESI Adviser from Winrock Home Office and supported by the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Director. Key findings include the need for GESI mapping, emphasizing women's and girls' roles beyond beneficiaries and engaging men as agents of change. Addressing discriminatory norms, promoting participatory approaches, integrating gender considerations into training, and collaborating with community leaders were identified as critical strategies. Consideration was given to factors like meeting location, timing, and structure.

Develop a roadmap for documenting community norms and laws

In Year 1, the Activity visited three target communities to document social norms and laws. They engaged in focus group discussions and meetings with local groups and county WASH representatives to understand decision-making pathways and social norms impacting women and marginalized groups. The findings from this participatory approach in rural Montserrado and Margibi counties include:

- Men and women disapprove of certain behaviors but continue them privately due to fear of punishment or exclusion. Harmful norms, (e.g., male coercion of women) need to be challenged.
- Social norms related to various aspects like marriage, health, education, and finance influence women's decision-making and acceptance of decisions made by men.
- Marginalized groups often feel undervalued and unheard in community meetings, leading to their avoidance of participation.
- Most communities rely on oral laws for water management, with limited female representation in decision-making.

- Various beliefs, behaviors, attitudes, and assumptions impact norms and practices that hinder women's involvement in water management.

To Task 3.3.2: Form partnerships with pro-women organizations to identify pathways to improve the participation of women and marginalized groups.

In Year 1, the Activity conducted a field visit in Montserrado and Margibi counties to identify and verify potential pro-women organizations to work with and facilitated discussions to identify organizations that will enhance women's participation and explore potential partnerships. The Activity visited ten pro-women organizations and organized meetings with representatives from their executive teams, program, finance, and communication departments. The Activity completed the engagement checklists in person and over the phone. Using the data collected from the checklists, the team analyzed the key organizational issues, focusing on strengths and weaknesses.

The same ten pro-women organizations from Montserrado and Margibi counties convened for a consultative meeting. The goal was to evaluate their organizational performance, offer preliminary findings from the formative research, and highlight their strengths and weaknesses. The meeting's objectives were to create partnerships, share project information, and discuss specific activities.

The Activity also developed a complaint mechanism and feedback loop to guide and manage water service complaints and ensure that feedback is provided to end-users addressing their complaints. This tool will be used as a communication channel between the communities, water service providers, and local government institutions to share complaints, provide feedback, raise concerns, or make requests for improvement in water service delivery.

C. MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING UPDATE

In Year 1, the Activity held separate meetings with DELTA to review and discuss the key contents of the AMELP as the Activity team revised the document. The AMELP explains how the Activity will measure its performance, achieve its objectives, and contribute to USAID/Liberia's DO4. The Activity completed the development of the AMELP and QASP with support from the HO AGILE Unit, both of which were submitted and approved by USAID. The Activity also developed data collection tools for each indicator. It worked with the home office AGILE team to design a Management Information System (MIS) that incorporates using KoboCollect for data collection, MS Access for data cleaning, SQL Server for data management, and PowerBI for data visualization.

The Activity also worked with USAID to create a Development Information Solution (DIS) account and upload all indicators data into the system. The Activity completed the household survey and institutional capacity assessment baseline data collection.

The Activity held a three-day Pause & Reflect workshop with the overall objectives of reflecting on changes in the context, validating approaches to programmatic goals, identifying opportunities for effective implementation, reviewing progress toward expected results, identifying success factors that contributed to the achievement of the outcomes or barriers that slowed progress, and documenting lessons learned and proposals for strategic adaptations of the Activity.

D. INTEGRATION OF CROSSCUTTING ISSUES

GENDER EQUALITY AND FEMALE EMPOWERMENT

The Activity aligns with USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, working towards equal opportunities for men and women in development. This includes active female participation in selecting CWC members, engaging them in local government act implementation, and partnering with women-led organizations. Women and marginalized groups were engaged through community meetings

and consultations with women's rights CSOs. Ten women's rights organizations in Montserrado and Margibi held a consultative meeting to assess their performance, share formative research findings, and explore partnerships for project implementation.

Before this meeting, a field engagement visit in Montserrado and Margibi counties identified pro-women organizations and discussed ways to enhance women's participation in the Activity, fostering potential partnerships. Various discussions and meetings were conducted with local groups, including the county WASH team, to map decision-making pathways, assess leadership beliefs, and address social norms affecting women and marginalized groups' participation.

To promote gender integration, the CWC composition was adjusted to include 40% women. Currently, there are four CWCs established in Baypolu, Sarah Johnson quarter, Dolo's town, and Yarnwullie town, with 23 women and 25 men represented. Ten women hold key leadership roles within these committees. Furthermore, during the rollout of the LGA in Montserrado and Margibi, 24 women actively participated in local government institutions.

SUSTAINABILITY MECHANISMS

The Activity established the foundation for long-term sustainability through collaborations and consultations with local stakeholders. Discussions with national and county-level officials emphasized the need for structured cooperation between WASH sector actors to address key challenges. These priorities include addressing governance issues, building resilience in WSPs, and creating linkages between national and county institutions for sustainable water supply, including private sector-led models. Stakeholder consultations in Year 2 will shape the priorities for gender equity, youth engagement, and private sector involvement in water service delivery.

The Activity will employ several concurrent approaches to ensure the interventions' long-term sustainability. These approaches include the following:

- Identifying and motivating champions: Early identification of change agents, whether national or local, to drive the Activity's initiatives forward.
- Engaging the private sector in water service delivery: Develop private-sector partnerships to incentivize increased investment and involvement in water service delivery.
- Increasing Women's Participation: Engage pro-women organizations to amplify women's voices, empowering women as water users and entrepreneurs to enhance their water access and management decision-making.
- Civic Leadership: Ensuring interventions are culturally acceptable and locally funded. Community-led SBC and social marketing campaigns will mobilize local leaders, youth champions, CWTs, and CWCs to promote safe water habits and payment for water services.
- Institutionalizing accountability for sustainability: Making sustainability a shared responsibility. The Activity mainstreams, tracks, and evaluates approaches to ensure sustainability.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

The EMMP was developed in FY23, and approved on August 16th, 2023 by USAID. The Environmental Social Impact Assessment in the four selected communities will be prepared and submitted by the A&E firm after the final engineering designs are completed in FY24. The report will include an assessment of the proposed water supply system's environmental and social consequences (positive/negative). It will also provide a proposed prevention and mitigation action plan.

4. MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

5. CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

6. LESSONS LEARNED

The private sector actors meeting with USAID and the Activity team on Feb 8, 2023, and subsequent individual meetings with some private sector actors, showed the private sector's interest in the water sector. It highlighted the potential for an ongoing PPP in the sector and possible collaborations to improve access to safe drinking water. The meeting laid the groundwork for public-private partnerships (PPP) and discussed key challenges/barriers that include regulatory and policy frameworks that support private sector engagement in the water sector, limited/inadequate viable business case options in rural settings, limited/unavailability of concrete information on willingness and ability to pay in the rural areas, and limited access to finance to support private sector venture to the water sector.

The Activity was initially targeted to prioritize work in communities of 2,500 people and above. However, the household baseline survey uncovered that most of the communities that do not have access to basic water are smaller communities with a population of less than 1,000 people. With this lesson learned, the Activity must redesign approaches that can apply to smaller communities to ensure access to safe drinking water for all.

7. SUCCESS STORY

Increase Local Government Capacity in Procurement Management for Water Service

In Year 1, with support from sub-contractor FEI, the Activity provided capacity coaching to three county administrations (Grand Cape Mount, Nimba, and Lofa Counties). In collaboration with Monrovia's Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), the Activity drafted a Request for Proposals (RFPs) for the county authorities to recruit private operators for each location. The draft RFP was submitted to the counties for review and feedback. Through the review process, the Activity provided technical support such as developing a review meeting schedule for each location, recording minutes, and guiding the discussions. During the review of the draft RFP at separate locations, times, and dates, each county administration made special capacity-building support for executing the RFP at the county level. The three counties' Procurement Committees lacked skills to manage procurement for water service providers and, therefore, needed the Activity to provide capacity-building mentoring to perform the task successfully.

Each of the three counties has been assigned one Procurement Director hired by the Public Procurement Concession Commission (PPCC). At separate engagements with the County Procurement Directors, they informed our team that they have largely been involved in the Procurement of Goods and Services in the counties and have not handled the Water Service Providers (WSP) procurement.

The Procurement Committees have capacity gaps that need to be graded before they can manage or lead on the procurement for private operators. The gaps include more detailed information on the technical and financial evaluation of the proposals submitted by the potential bidders.

Pre-bid preparatory interactions with potential bidders were organized and executed on-site at each water treatment plant. Winrock and FEI jointly provided the procedure leading to submitting and evaluating bids proposals that potential private firms will submit. At the water treatment plants, those basic technical components in the RFP were explained to the three Procurement Committees.

This was followed by in-person mentoring with materials shared with the Procurement committees. The materials were tailored after their request. The coaching/mentoring focused on: Basic Committee Rules and Procedures; Evaluation Roles and Responsibilities; Evaluation Process and Key Considerations for Evaluation; and Evaluation table.

The Activity conducted two-day capacity building in each county for the Procurement Committees based on the capacity gaps jointly identified by the Local Government Institutions (LGIs) in those counties. The sessions were successful for the committees whose capacity was enhanced to perform/evaluate the two proposals (financial and technical) that tenders submitted.

After the coaching, the committees at separate locations applied the skills acquired from the capacity building. Each of the Procurement Committees invited both bidders and the public to witness the opening of the proposals. The public and firms participating in the bidding expressed their full confidence in the process. One of them even went further into Voinjama, Lofa County, to say that this was the first time such transparency in the bidding exercise in the county had happened.

With this, the Procurement Committees in the three cities evaluated the proposals and selected one winner in each of the cities. The process went without complaint; winners and losers expressed thanks and appreciation for participating in such a transparent and credible bidding exercise. Credit goes to the County Superintendents who requested this exercise.

8. PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER, INCLUDING UPCOMING EVENTS

Component	Key Priorities
Objective 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a visioning workshop to discuss lessons learned from the exchange visit that will guide the discussion on the process/roadmap for development of sub-national frameworks for PPPs.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support the development of policy briefs and regulatory guidelines for decentralized water service delivery for use by CWCs. ● Support the WASH technical working group meeting to discuss findings from the monitoring conducted across the counties. ● Strengthen MIA capacity to lead and coordinate the decentralization process for water service delivery in collaboration with NASHC. ● Develop the capacity development plan and scorecard to guide the implementation of capacity development activities. ● Facilitate the capacity development intervention for LGIs by providing training, mentorship, and coaching. ● Provide technical support to the WASH technical working group meeting for sector-wide coordination and learning across partners.
Objective 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Finalize Feasibility/Engineering Studies; design water supply systems (including shop drawings, and cost estimates) and share with USAID for approval. ● Analyze existing water infrastructure and design water service improvement plan for existing water system in communities. ● Provide technical support to the LGIs to finalize contracts with private operators in the three cities to operate and manage the water treatment plants (WTPs). ● Implement GUC activities to enhance water service quality and coverage. ● Develop systematic regulations, monitoring & enforcement framework and processes to promote inclusive service delivery for women/marginalized groups. ● Jointly design and implement strategies that are responsive to address localized water access barriers with LGIs. ● Build capacity of the LGIs to perform regulatory functions at sub-national level.
Objective 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organize core- creation and design workshop to design SBC campaigns messages. ● Develop SBC strategy plan and SBC messages to drive sustainability of the water system within the communities. ● Finalize GUC for CSO to implement the SBC activities within the communities. ● Incorporate water safety management into bylaw and local laws. ● Identify and map decision-making pathway in the water sector at the county and community level. ● Develop and implement roadmap for documenting community norms and laws to guide activities implementation. ● Identify pro-women organizations to create awareness on participation of women and marginalized groups in decision-making and promote payment for water. ● Implement monthly WASH Hour on the radio and implement community awareness activities. ● Create awareness about complaint mechanisms and feedback loop pathways on issues related to water services, women, and the vulnerable population.

9. HOW IMPLEMENTING PARTNER HAS ADDRESSED COR COMMENTS FROM THE LAST QUARTERLY OR SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT

There are no outstanding COR comments from the last quarterly report.

ANNEX A. PROGRESS SUMMARY

Indicator progress - USAID Standard Indicators and Project Custom Indicators

[Strategic Objective]											
Indicator	Data Source	Baseline data		FY 2023		Quarterly Status – FY 2023				Annual Performance Achieved to Date (in %)	Comment(s)
		Year	Value	Annual Cumulative Planned target	Annual Cumulative Actual	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4		
Goal: Improved access to, use of, and sustainability of basic drinking water services in target counties											
W1: Percent of targeted population with access to basic water services in target counties	Survey	2022	77%	77%	0	0	0	0	0	56%	The data reported as "Annual Performance Achieved to Date" for W1 and W2 presents the current situation/finding from the Household baseline survey report in Margibi and Montserrado. This will serve as a benchmark to measure progress toward year 2 achievement.
W2: Percent of households using basic water services	Survey	2022	69%	69%	0	0	0	0	0	44%	
W3: Percent of cost recovered for target WSPs	WSP records	2022	0%	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0%	
W15: Collection-to-Operational Expenses (OpEx) Ratio for target WSPs	WSP records	2022	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Intermediate Result 1: Local government institutions to effectively plan, budget, and oversee water service delivery											

HL.8.3-3: Number of water and sanitation sector institutions strengthened to manage water resources or improve water supply and sanitation services as a result of U.S. Government (USG) assistance	OCA Scorecard, and records of improvement plan	2022	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	
W4: Number of policies and regulations for water service delivery developed or improved and implemented	Local and national government, civil society, and private sector records	2022	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	
HL.8.4-1: Value of new funding mobilized to the water and sanitation sectors as a result of USG assistance	Funders, and secondary sources such as internal Activity documentation, public and private sector financial records, media reports, and other sources.	2022	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
CBLD-9: Percent of USG-assisted organizations with improved performance	Organizational Capacity Assessment; records of improvement plan	2022	0%	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0%	
W5: Percent of planning, budgeting, and service oversight targets set in the performance improvement plan of CWTs that is achieved	Organizational Capacity Assessment Scorecard and records of improvement plan	2022	0%	5%	0	0	0	0	0	0%	
W6: Percent of County budget allocated to water services and infrastructure by LGIs in the targeted counties	Local government records and documentation	2022	0%	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0%	
W7: Percent of WSPs and CWCs that report receiving adequate monitoring support from the CWT	WSPs and CWCs Report	2022	0%	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0%	
Intermediate Result 2: Equitable and inclusive water service delivery improved and expanded											
HL.8.1-1: Number of people gaining access to basic drinking water service as a result of USG assistance	Construction report, Utility records and CWC, WSP Data, and surveys of households	2022	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
HL.8.1-3: Number of people receiving improved service quality from an existing basic or safely managed drinking water service as a result of USG assistance	Utility records, Survey, and WSP Data	2022	0	2,500	0	0	0	0	0	0	

W8: Percent of users who are female or from marginalized groups reporting year-round reliable access to basic services	Water users in targeted communities.	2022	0%	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0%	
W9: Percent of water users reporting year-round reliable access to basic water services, with a downtime of water systems of less than 30 days	Water users in targeted communities	2022	33%	33%	0	0	0	0	0	31%	The data (31%) reported presents the current situation/finding from the Household baseline survey conducted in Margibi and Montserrado. This will serve as a benchmark to measure progress toward year 2 achievement.
W10: Number of WSPs assisted with technical, business capacity, or access to finance	Activity records	2022	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
W11: Number of PPPs established for water services provision	WSP and Activity records	2022	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Intermediate Result 3: Uptake and maintenance of key water use behaviors among households increased											
W12: Percent of targeted population reporting paying regularly for basic water services	Targeted population	2022	13%	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	
W13: Percent of members of CWCs involved in decision-making related to water access and management who are women or from other marginalized groups	Attendance records	2022	0%	10%	0	0	0	0	0	48%	
W14: Percent of water users' concerns and feedback recorded through participation mechanisms (town halls, coordination meetings, consultation panels) that are acted upon by the LGI, CWC, or WSP	Compliant form, public records and meeting registers	2022	0%	10%	0	0	0	0	0	0%	

ANNEX B. FY2023 INDICATORS DEVIATION NARRATIVE

NARRATIVE, EXPLAINING THE REASONS AND JUSTIFICATIONS FOR THE DEVIATION FROM THE TARGETS SET IN YEAR 1

Indicator	FY2023 Target (Year 1)	FY2023 Actual (Year 1)	Narrative, explaining the Reasons and Justifications for the Deviation from the targets set in year 1
<i>W1: Percent of targeted population with access to basic water services in target counties</i>	77%	56%	<p>The target for this indicator was set based on the baseline target assumption of 77% from the proposal stage and with the understanding that in Year 1, the activity will not have provided basic water services in the targeted communities. To ensure that the activity validates the current population with access to basic water in Margibi and Rural Montserrado counties considering the population's growth, to establish a more up-to-date baseline value, and to provide information on the state of access to basic water in year 1 before construction. A household survey was conducted, and it was established that the population with access to basic water service in Margibi and rural Montserrado accounted for 56% before construction.</p> <p>To be able to make progress on the indicator, the activity has hired an architecture and engineering firm to support the development of technical designs and bill of Quantities before procurement of construction firms that will be engaged to construct water facilities in communities in Margibi and Rural Montserrado. Phase 1 of the construction is focused on 4 intervention communities (3 in Margibi and 1 in Montserrado). The communities in Margibi are: Dolo's Town, Baypolu Town, and Yarnwuellie Town. In Montserrado, the community is 15th Gate (Sarah Johnson Town).</p>
<i>W2: Percent of households using basic water services</i>	69%	44%	<p>Similar to Indicator W1, the target for this indicator was set based on the baseline target assumption of 69% from the proposal stage and with the understanding that in Year 1, the activity will not have provided basic water services in the targeted communities. A household survey was conducted, and it was established that the households using basic water service in Margibi and rural Montserrado accounted for 44%.</p>
<i>HL.8.3-3: Number of water and sanitation sector institutions strengthened to manage water resources or improve water supply and sanitation</i>	3	3	<p>The target that was set for this indicator was achieved and will be reported in the FY2023 annual report. In FY2023Q4, the activity strengthened the LGIs in Cape Mount, Nimba, and Lofa counties on procurement management and implementation by working with the national and county governments to establish a procurement management committee that was responsible for conducting the procurement of water service providers (private operators) to manage the operation of the three water treatment plants (WTP).</p> <p>The procurement committee was provided with the technical training in procurement that enabled them to manage and complete the procurement process, which led to the selection of three private sectors, one in each county, to manage the operation of the WTP in Robertsport, Sanniquellie, and Voinjama. The selection process is at final stages whereby a due diligence is being undertaken for the winner of the bid. The contract is also being drafted.</p>

<p><i>services as a result of U.S. Government (USG) assistance</i></p>			
<p>W4: <i>Number of policies and regulations for water service delivery developed or improved and implemented</i></p>	<p>5</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>The target for this indicator was set with the expectation that the activities would improve the Water Supply and Sanitation Policy, the Integrated Water Resource Management Policy, the Draft WASH Regulation Policy, the WASH Compact Policy, and to develop the CWC Constitution and Guidelines. In Year 1, the activities completed reviewing the Water Supply and Sanitation Policy, the Integrated Water Resource Management Policy, the Draft WASH Regulation Policy, and the WASH Compact Policy. These policies were reviewed with a focus on identifying gaps. Gaps were identified in the policies, recommendations were made to fill the gaps, and they were submitted to the CEO of the National WASH Commission (NWASHC). Several follow-up engagements have been done with the CEO to address the gaps in those policies to ensure they are applicable for use at the sub-national level, but no formal commitment has been obtained from NWASHC to address the identified gaps.</p> <p>In year 1, the activity also supported the LGIs in developing a zero draft of the CWC Constitution and guidelines to govern the activities of the CWCs at the community level, pending final review and approval from the LGIs. Once the review and approval are done, the CWC Constitution and guidelines will be counted under this indicator in year 2.</p>
<p>W5: <i>Percent of planning, budgeting, and service oversight targets set in the performance improvement plan of CWTs that is achieved</i></p>	<p>5%</p>	<p>0%</p>	<p>The assumption for setting the target for this indicator was that the CWT would lead planning, budgeting, and oversight at the county level, which is not applicable. The structure that is responsible for planning, budgeting, and service oversight, as proposed in the Local Government Act 2018, has not been institutionalized at the county level. However, after several engagements with the Deputy Minister for Research and Planning at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Minister Olayee Collins, the Minister has agreed to institutionalize the structure at the county level. The structure, as proposed in the Local Government Act Chapter 5, Sections 5.1, 5.4, and 5.5, will be established at the county level, district level, and chiefdom level. Plans are underway to set up the structures at various levels and provide the first training for the members in Montserrado and Margibi counties. The activity will update the PIRS for this indicator to reflect the structure that is responsible for planning, budgeting, and service oversight. The activity did not complete the development of the LGI Capacity improvement plan as a result there are no data for this indicator in year 1.</p> <p>The activity is currently working with the LGIs to jointly develop the capacity improvement plan and result from the implementation will be counted under this indicator in year 2.</p>

<p>HL.8.1-3: Number of people receiving improved service quality from an existing basic or safely managed drinking water service as a result of USG assistance</p>	<p>2,500</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>The target for this indicator was set assuming that the activity would provide technical support to the Water Service Provider (WSP) that manage the 3 water facilities in Robertsport, Sanniquellie, and Voinjama cities and that the activity would conduct some quick-win interventions in year 1 (ex. improved tariff collection and management, improved reliability of supply). The initial target of 2,500 assumed the contracting of one or several WSPs would occur in FY23, and that the Activity would start working with the existing or new WSP(s). However, since Pump and Tank handed over the facilities to the LWSC early this year, in 2023, the focus of the Activity has shifted to supporting the contracting process of the new private service providers instead of supporting the WSP capacity to deliver water services. The Activity did not engage with Pump & Tank prior to the end of their contract (February 2023), and is tasked to provide assistance to the private WSPs for the management of the utilities, not to LWSC directly, so the technical assistance has been delayed until the transition is effective and the WSPs contracted (expected in FY24). While the Activity supported the LGIs and LWSC in this process, and advocated for the resolution of issues (payment of staffs, repairs of leaks) that allowed the water to continue flowing in the cities, no technical assistance work was provided that can directly be accounted as the improving the ongoing service. The signature of contracts with the WSPs is the responsibility of the Government of Liberia and is beyond the control of the Activity, leading to the deviation in the proposed target for FY23.</p> <p>Similarly, in Margibi and Montserrado, the activity has not provided support improving existing water facilities or services in its intervention communities during FY23. To ensure progress on this indicator, the activity is working with the national and subnational governments to fast track the procurement and hiring of a new WSP that will manage the water facilities in the 3 cities, and also effectively work with the selected architecture and engineering firm to construct water facilities in communities in Margibi and Rural Montserrado.</p>
<p>W9: Percent of water users reporting year-round reliable access to basic water services, with a downtime of water systems of less than 30 days</p>	<p>33%</p>	<p>31%</p>	<p>Same as indicator W1 and W2, the target for this indicator was set based on the baseline target assumption of 33% from the proposal stage and with the understanding that in Year 1, the activity will not have provided basic water services in the targeted communities. To ensure that the activity validates the current population as it relates to downtime of water systems of less than 30 days in Margibi and Rural Montserrado counties and to establish a more up-to-date baseline value in year 1 before construction. A household survey was conducted, and it was established that the percentage of water users reporting year-round reliable access to basic water services, with a downtime of water systems of less than 30 days in Margibi and rural Montserrado accounted for 31% before construction.</p>
<p>W13: Percent of members of CWCs involved in decision-making related to water access and management who are</p>	<p>10%</p>	<p>48%</p>	<p>The target for this indicator was set at 10%, assuming that there will be low interest among women in participating in water management leadership positions at the early stage of the activity intervention.</p> <p>The activity provided support to the LGIs to establish CWCs in the 4 communities of Phase 1 intervention. Elections were conducted, and the membership of the CWCs consisted of 52% males and 48% females that are currently involved in decision-making related to water access and management within their community. The activity is providing mentorship and coaching to the 4 CWCs to build their capacity and increase the quality of their decision-making and their skills to manage the water service in their communities.</p>

<p>women or from other marginalized groups</p>			
<p>W14: Percent of water users' concerns and feedback recorded through participation mechanisms (town halls, coordination meetings, consultation panels) that are acted upon by the LGI, CWC, or WSP</p>	<p>10%</p>	<p>0%</p>	<p>The target for this indicator was set at 10%, assuming that the activity will establish complaint and feedback mechanisms for water users within the communities.</p> <p>The complaint and feedback mechanisms pathway has been developed by the activity, with a plan to start working with the LGIs and CWCs to pilot the complaint and feedback mechanisms approach early in Year 2. This activity was not achievable in year 1 due to the delay in the construction of the water system and delay in setting up the CWCs, which play a major role in the feedback mechanism pathway.</p>

ANNEX G. ACTIVITY LAUNCH EVENT

The USAID Improved Access to Safe Drinking Water in Liberia Activity was launched on Wednesday, May 17, 2023, at a well-attended event held in the Sinkor Palace Hotel in Monrovia. Ambassador Michael A. McCarthy, the United States Ambassador to Liberia, served as the Chief Guest at the well-attended event. It was attended by prominent government officials, including Deputy Minister Pauletta C.C. Wie, Chief Executive Officer of the NASHC, and representatives from various WASH-related organizations, both government and non-government. Also in attendance were heads or representatives from the World Bank, Africa Development Bank, some



Group photo of high-level guests at the end of the Launch of the USAID Improved Access to Safe Drinking Water in Liberia Activity. Photo: Winrock International

UN agencies, the private sector, the WASH Media Network, county officials, and community leaders. Still, the occasion was graced by US Embassy officials, USAID Liberia, Washington (Jeff Goldberg) officials, and Winrock International's Associate Vice President for Agriculture and WASH, Mr. Aaron Sundsmo, who were part of the guests.

Ambassador McCarthy highlighted the significance of safe drinking water and sanitation, sharing insights from his Peace Corps volunteer experience. He emphasized sustainability and praised the Activity's focus on working with local governments. While acknowledging the progress made in expanding access to safe drinking water, he also noted challenges related to government capacity and citizen responsibilities in supporting services.

The Activity will focus on safe water access and sustainability. It will work with people at the community level to co-create the solutions and design and implement water service models based on their needs and community size. It will strengthen the capacity of local communities to advocate for their needs. The Activity will also empower local government and other levels of government to provide tangible results. It will seek to implement innovative models and engage the private sector because private enterprises can deliver quality services and create demand for water services.

The Ambassador stated that he was convinced this would be possible due to the resilience of the Liberian people and what they can do when empowered. On a recent trip to Southeast Liberia, he saw Liberian youth volunteering at the county service centers without pay, County Health Workers walking long distances, and businesses persevering with unreliable electricity. Large tracts of land were cultivated by people using their bare hands and cutlasses to grow cassava, rice, and other crops. This assured him that Liberians can accomplish great things with the right support to unleash their full potential. We must continue to design smart activities that engage Liberian communities and cultivate their agency. The government must give communities support and national budget allocation because if they are provided essential services – water, healthcare, education – they can improve their lives, villages, and communities. With this support, the Liberian people are capable of anything.