UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

ANNEX I - Description of the Action

Promoting a More Inclusive and Accountable Democracy in Liberia

01 January 2023 – 31 December 2026

Contributing Outcome (UNSDCF/CPD, RPD or GPD):
UNSDCF (Liberia) 2020-2024 Pillar 3 Sustaining the Peace; 4 Governance and Transparency
Liberia's Strategic Road map for National Healing and Peacebuilding 2013-2030
Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) 2018-2023
Sustainable development Goal No.5 & 16
Africa's blueprint Agenda 2063 Goals 11, 12, 13, 17 & 18

ACRONYMS

ABIC	Angie Brooks International Centre
AU	African Union
BOC	Board of Commissioners
BPPS	Bureau for Policy and Programme Support
BRIDGE	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections
BVR	Biometric Voter Registration
EAD	Electoral Assistance Division
ECA	Electoral Cycle approach
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CFM	Citizen Feedback Mechanism
CO	Country Office
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
COPWIL.	Coalition of Political Party Women in Liberia
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
CVE	Civic and Voter Education
D4D	Digital for Development
DCC	Donor Coordination Committee
DI	Democracy International
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality
DPPA	Department of Peacebuilding and Political Affairs
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDR	Electoral Dispute Resolution
EFM.	Elections Follow up Mission
EPD	European Partnership for Development
EMB	Electoral Management Body
EOM	Election Observation Mission
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
EU	European Union
EWER	Early Warning and Response
EWRM.	Early Warning and Response Mechanism
FeJAL	Female Journalist Association
FLY	Federation for Liberian Youth
FPI	Flagship Programme Initiatives
HOR	House of Representatives
HQ	Headquarters
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IGP	Inclusive Governance Portfolio
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
INHRC	Independent Human Rights Commission
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPCC	Inter-Party Consultative Committeee
IUNV	International United Nations Volunteers
LAVI	Liberia - Accountability and Voice Initiative
LESP	Liberia Electoral Support Project
LERN	Liberia Early-Warning and Response Network

LIPA	Liberian Institute for Public Administration
LMP	Legislative Modernization Plan
LNOB	Leave No-One Behind
LPAC	Local Project Appraisal Committee
LMPTF	Liberia Multi-Partner Trust Fund
LNP	Liberia National Police
LVL	Local Voices of Liberia
MACs	Ministries, Agencies and Commissions
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
MGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MIP	Multi-Indicative Programme
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MOYS	Ministry of Youth and Sport
NAM	Needs Assessment Mission
NAO	National Authorizing Officer
NAS	Network Access Storage
NCCRM	National Center for Coordination of the Response Mechanism
NIR	National Identification Registry
NSCE.	National Steering Committee on Elections
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NEC	National Elections Commission
NIMD	Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
NIR	National Identification Registry
PAPD	Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development
PIPP.	Promoting Inclusive Political Participation
PBO	Peace-Building Office
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SES	Social and Environmental Screening
SSC/TrC	South-south and Triangular Cooperation
PUNO	Participating UN Organizations
PWD	Persons living with disabilities
TED	Team Europe Democracy
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TOT	Training of Trainers
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMIL	UN Mission in Liberia
UNFPA	UN Population Fund
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNWOMEN	United Nations Women
UNSDCF	UN Sustainable Development and Cooperation Framework
VAWIE-P	Violence Against Women in Elections and Politics
WSR	Women Situation Room

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I.   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project seeks to support the Government of Liberia to strengthen the quality of democratic governance. To this end the project aims at promoting a more inclusive, participatory, and accountable democracy in Liberia. The project responds to the challenges that face democratic governance in the country including weak institutions, underrepresentation of youth and women in political processes, electoral system challenges, and marginalisation of vulnerable groups. The project also seeks to address some of the challenges that have led to weak legislative oversight and secretariat function.

This project is complementary to and builds on existing frameworks and plans of action such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063, the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) 2018–2023, UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025, UNDP Country Programme Document for the Republic of Liberia (2020-2024), UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2020-2024 for Liberia and relevant partners' strategic instruments and policy documents such as the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2020-2024) and European Union (EU) Gender Action Plan III. The project ties with Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) of the EU, aiming to improve the conditions for a peaceful and unified society as a base for sustainable development. Outcomes of this project are therefore in line with national needs and priorities, as well as development partners'policies, and seek to support the government to deliver on its obligations to its citizens.

The implementation of the project is delivered adopting a human rights-based approach that leaves no one behind. To achieve its expected results the project builds in a necessary flexbility to adapt to unforeseen circumstances that may arise during the period 2023-2026 and coordinate with the EU and other partners to employ a multi-stakeholder multi-faceted approach to break down silos and ensure collaboration, coordination, synergy, and coherence across programmes and across Government and UN agencies. This is based on the recognition that UNDP is not able to attain the outcomes outlined in this project without collaborating and working with other relevant partners.

This project will be implemented within 48 months and incorporates the ongoing Liberia Electoral Support Project (LESP) 2020 – 2024, which was co-created and signed together with the Liberian government, the National Elections Commission (NEC) and is currently supported by Sweden and Ireland. The LESP retains its existing objectives, developed in line with the 2019 UN Needs Assessment Mission (NAM), taking into consideration 2017 EU Election Observation Mission's (EOM) and 2021 EU Election Follow-up Mission (EFM) recommendations. The LESP post-election activities, specifically targeting capacity building and electoral reforms, that were not implemented after the 2020 Special Senatorial Elections amidst the lack of resources are re-programmed into the post-electoral period following the 2023 polls. Effectively, the LESP interventions will run untill December 2026.

This new overarching project, incorporating LESP and adding two additional components to support enhanced participation of women, youth, and marginalised groups in political processes and increased legislative oversight, continues to be funded and supported by the EU, Ireland, Sweden, and UNDP and conducted through a Direct Implementation Modality (DIM).[1] Its basket fund arrangements keep the Project open for possible other partners to step in and support its overall goal of **promoting a more inclusive and accountable democracy in Liberia**.

The following three interrelated and interdependent outcome areas, with their related Intended results, have been identified:

Outcome 1. Enhanced electoral cycle and sustenance of peace
Output 1.1. Strengthened inclusion and transparency of the electoral process
Output 1.2. Enhanced institutional capacity and accountability of NEC and electoral stakeholders
Output 1.3. Strengthened conflict prevention and mitigation mechanisms supporting peaceful conduct of elections

Outcome 2. Enhanced participation and inclusion of women and marginalized groups in political processes
Output 2.1. Enhanced opportunities of political and civic engagement for youth and women
Output 2.2. Strengthened inter-party collaboration and policy-based connections between parties, their MLs (Members of Legislature) and voters

Outcome 3. Increased state accountability (through increased legislative oversight)
Output 3.1. Improved capacity of the Secretariat in legislative oversight, including on budget analysis and cooperation with civic actors

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[1] See the detailed description of the DIM in Chapter V – Project Management.

Output 3.2. Increased capacity of CSOs and the media in furtherance of the oversight functions of the Legislature.

Stakeholders and Partnerships: Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) - The National Authorizing Office (NAO) is a key partner of the Project. MFDP is a member of the Project Board, a body responsible for the strategic direction of the Project. The Outcome 1 of this Project is implemented jointly with the National Elections Commission (NEC), and activities under Outcomes 2 and 3 will be equally closely coordinated with the NEC.

The Project builds on existing partnerships on the ground. UN agencies leverage on the capacities and comparative advantages of existing projects and interventions to promote integrated electoral assistance and support under the Governance portfolio and this project. The project will also use the comparative advantage of UN Women in advancing women political participation. With the support of Sweden and Ireland, this project also benefits from the **Team Europe Approach.** European Partnership for Development (EPD) member, the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) is responsible for delivering some activities and results under Outcomes 2 and 3 based on their comparative advantage in empowering actors from traditionally marginalized groups to established politicians to play role in political life and work for a common good of their country. UN Women and NIMD are engaged as responsible parties as described in a detail in *Chapter V – Project Management.*

Amongst the local organizations, the Project benefits from local comparative advantage and knowledge of Liberia Peacebuilding Office (PBO) to deliver Early Warning and Response (EWER) component to address the issue of electoral violence[2]. Angie Brooks International Center (ABIC) will complement these efforts with the establishment of Women Situation Room (WSR) for 2023 elections. Building on previous EU intervention, the Project supports Liberian Civil Society Organization (CSO) Local Voices of Liberia (LVL) to advance iVerify tool to mitigate mis/dis-information and hate speech.[3] Liberia Institute of Public Administration (LIPA) and LNBA are engaged to support long-term capacity development[4]. Lastly, Integrity Watch is engaged to strengthen the Liberia's campaign finance framework and civil society oversight. The project also work closely with civil society organizations and other national institutions in Liberia.

While above-mentioned organizations, amongst others, are directly involved in the Project implementation, Liberian people are the ultimate beneficiaries of the Project. More Inclusive and Accountable Democracy that will be achieved through project's interventions will increase Liberians' opportunities and access to goods and services offered by the state.

II.   CONTEXT

2.1.   Preparation of the project and key approaches

Following a request for electoral assistance from the National Elections Commission (NEC) of Liberia, dated 21 May 2019, the Electoral Needs Assessment Mission (NAM)[5] was deployed to Monrovia (9-19 July 2019) and met with a wide range of interlocutors. The aims of the NAM, led by the UN Electoral Assistance Division (EAD) of the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), were, inter alia, to assess the request for assistance by the NEC ahead of the October 2020 special senatorial and 2023 presidential and legislative elections and provide recommendations with regard to possible electoral assistance the UN can provide to the NEC and various stakeholders.

The UN has a long history of providing electoral assistance to Liberia, with the last UNDP-led project that ended in early 2020. UN electoral assistance for the period of 2014 - 2020 was in the form of technical assistance and support through a UNDP managed project funded by the EU (FED 2015/367-723), Sweden, Ireland and Canada which focused on improving the electoral institutions, processes and laws, mainstreaming gender through specific support to women's participation in political and electoral processes, and enhancing conflict prevention[6].

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[2] See UNDP. Early Warning and Response Assessment Report. September 2021.
[3] See UNDP. Support to Tackle Disinformation and Hate Speech in Liberia. October 2021. UNDP and Local Voices of Liberia. Engagement Meeting Report, Introduction to the iVerify Mechanism to tackle mis-disinformation and hate speech (February 2022).
[4] See UNDP Liberian and Joint Task Force for Electoral Assistance Project Expansion Note (May/June 2021).
[5] UN Electoral Needs Assessment Mission Report, Liberia 9 – 19 July 2019 (Leg. No 11.300 date August 2019.
[6] Support to 2015 – 2018 Liberia Electoral Cycle (extended till 2020), Project ID 0090207; June 2015 – May 2020.

Based on the NAM recommendations, the final evaluation of the previous electoral assistance Project,[7] 2017 recommendations of the EU EOM[8], and above-mentioned national priorities, UNDP co-created through a consultative dialogue with national and international partners, the 2020 – 2024 Liberia Electoral Support Project (LESP). Subsequently, building on the LESP and the lesson's learned from the 2020 mid-term Senatorial Election,[9] and in line with the Governance portfolio, the UNDP Country Office (CO) sought to expand on the then project outputs to include a number of areas, in particular relating to legislative support and support to political parties while mainstreaming capacity building, gender, disability and youth. To achieve the objective, the CO sought advisory support from UNDP Brussels and the EC-UNDP Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance (JTF). The mission consulted with key government institutions and other stakeholders including implementing and development partners and civil society organizations to inform the final project document. Beyond the areas mentioned above, the evaluation further considered digitalization and strengthening the ability of Liberian counterparts in embracing technology, where useful, advisable, and feasible. Lastly, it looked into areas of support already identified in the project document – in particular the Early Warning System and the work around disinformation - and evaluated the proposed activities against the lessons learned exercise.

UNDP continued building on the above documents and engagement, and in 2022 in collaboration with UN Women, Netherlands Institute for Multi-Party Democracy (NIMD), an independent consultant to help design the final framework for this action was recruited leading to the first draft, which was then fine-tuned in close consultation with all the stakeholders and development partners, including the EU.

Considering the above, the overall goal of the project ***Promoting a more inclusive and transparent democracy in Liberia*** seeks to apply novel approaches to mark a qualitative difference and further progression in electoral assistance in Liberia while embarking on the fourth consecutive cycle of electoral support. This cycle is marked by further increased national ownership as well as continued progress towards peaceful, credible, inclusive and transparent electoral and democratic process. The overreaching strategy of the Project is therefore based on a workplan established along broader conceptual areas/outputs of: inclusion, transparency, integrity, capacity, and programming for peace, whereas individual actions targeting diverse and expanded electoral stakeholder group aim to enhance and supplement the technical electoral assistance with broader targets, working towards a more conducive electoral environment and better democratic governance. This thematic as well as multi-stakeholder approach offers a more holistic response to observations and recommendations by stakeholders and partners, including election observation missions, as well as to equip NEC to build capacity of other stakeholders in the electoral process.

The main objective of this Project is to support Liberia in its achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. Understanding that SDGs are interlinked and cannot be fully realized independently, SDG 16 creates a sound basis for overall progress in the implementation of Agenda 2030 given its concentration on strengthening key pre-conditions for sustainable development.

This Project also highlights that SDG 16 cannot operate in silo, as targets set in other SDGs are intrinsically linked to advances in strengthening institutions, promoting meaningful and inclusive participation and increasing access to justice. Hence, the term SDG 16+ has been adopted to underline the Project's broad focus recognising targeted effort towards the realization of SDG 16, but acknowledging the interlinked nature of SDG goals including, SDGs 5, 10 and 17. Progress on SDG 16 and 5 will affect outcomes in the area of youth, women and persons with disabilities as it works towards meaningful participation and ensuring accountability, including gender responsive remedies for rights violations.

In particular, the proposed approach based on broader areas of inclusion, integrity, transparency, capacity and programming for peace is aimed to reinforce the synergies with the objectives of SDG 16. The approach focuses on improving:
• ***Inclusion***: In line with SDG 16, target 7, to "ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels" and B "Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development" as well as SDG 5 and 10 to end discrimination and promote equality.
• ***Transparency***: In line with SDG target 6 to "effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels", and target 10 to "Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements".

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[7] UNDP. "Summative Evaluation: Support to 2015 – 2018 Liberian Electoral Cycle,"Monrovia, Liberia, August 2020.
[8] "Republic of Liberia, European Union Election Observation Mission Final Report, General Elections 2017," March 2018.
[9] NEC (UNDP). "Compendium of Lessons Learnt from the 2020 Special Senatorial Elections and Constitutional Referendum." 4 March – 6 April 2021.

• **Integrity:** In line with SDG 16 target 6, "effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels".
• **Capacity**: In line with SDG 16 target to "strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime".
• **Programming for peace**: In line with SDG 16 target 1 "significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere".

All the above pillars are cross-cutting and permeat throughout the project. Furthermore, the project aims to strengthen coordination of peacebuilding, governance and election processes with a focus on greater participation of women, youth, and vulnerable groups (**Inclusion pillar of the project**). The effective inclusion of women, youth, as well as vulnerable and marginalized groups require their full participation in all community structures and governance processes. These include, amongst others, the Early Warning and Response Mechanism (EWRM) led by the Liberia Peace-Building Office, to ensure effective awareness, prevention, detection, and response to Violence Against Women in Elections and Politics (VAWIE-P), and NEC consultation platforms which are critical to meaningful, participatory, transparent, and peaceful electoral processes. Inter-Party Consultative Committee (IPCC) is well established to promote accountability and electoral integrity among political parties, contributing to peace and stability. Regular dialogue, with traditional leaders, CSOs, and communities is critical for attitudinal change regarding women participation. Government structures are instrumental to translate successes into the laws, towards sustainable peace and stability of Liberia. The many CSOs in Liberia working on civil and political rights of women help to raise awareness with women and advocate for their political participation through policy reforms and capacity building of the women; however, strengthened internal coordination of these CSOs, development partners, and line Ministries would contribute more- specifically to women's political empowerment. Participation of citizens in decision-making also requires an increased legislative oversight.

The Inclusion pillar of this project is complemented by the USD 2-million Peacbuilding Fund (PBF) Project (October 2021 – December 2023) titled Promoting Inclusive Political Participation (PIPP) and implemented jointly by UN Women and UNDP. It seeks to achieve a more effective prevention and response to Violence Against Women in Elections and Politics (VAWiE-P) through building a peaceful and enabling environment for women's increase participation. The upcoming 2023 General Elections are the next benchmark, and that makes this project time sensitive and catalytic in fostering joint efforts to address conflict-related issues to enhance women's participation in these elections.

The **Capacity pillar of the project** targets _capacity strengthening_ of national stakeholders through training and the development of institutional knowledge and human capacities in a sustainable and long-term manner. It is informed by the _Organizational and Institutional Assessment Report_ commissioned by the NEC and supported by UNDP in January 2022, the Lessons Learnt from 2020 elections, as well as NEC Strategic Plan Review, which took place throughout 2023. Equally, the Evaluation of the 2015-2020 Support to Electoral Cycle Project indicates that traditional training measures provided to single national institutions, such as Electoral Management Bodies, have often not been sufficient to strengthen capacities in a sustainable and long-term way. This might be due to human capital flight or a lack of knowledge management and long-term engagement with national institutions and stakeholders to follow-up on training. At the same time, initiatives that centralize capacity building in a single training centre/institution have been identified as best practices which could be leveraged in this endeavor to strengthen the capacities in a multi-stakeholder project. Sustainable capacity strengthening is thereby envisioned through the strengthening of the Liberian Institute for Public Administration (LIPA) as a permanent training and capacity development facility, directed at national and subnational public servants and relevant electoral stakeholders. Furthermore, the capacity strategy builds on the principle of peer support and sharing of knowledge and experiences amongst regional and global educational institutions and parliaments, as the project will seek collaborations to develop high quality course curricula that can be contextualized to the target audience and needs.

In line with the programming for _peace_ approach, this project is aligned with the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy, which encourages an integrated approach to external conflicts and crises. The EU's integrated approach addresses all policy dimensions of conflict by bringing together a multi-dimensional, multi-phased, multi-lateral and multi-level approach. This approach works towards prevention, peacebuilding, crisis response and stabilisation to contribute to sustainable peace. The project seeks solutions relating to the prevention of electoral and political violence and to support stakeholders in formulating conflict sensitive strategies. Monitoring and Early Response (EWER) are key to guaranteeing accurate and publicly accessible information to inform response and mitigation strategies. The assessment conducted by UNDP LESP in 2021 demonstrated that the current EWER mechanism included too many actors with unclearly defined responsibilities. Furthermore, analytical capacity of the EWER system and rapid response components remain weak. This project will continue engaging various stakeholders and collaborate with partners to strengthen the mechanism throughout and following the 2023 elections.

The Programming for peace component is complemented by the USD 3-million UN PBF Project implemented jointly by UNDP, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the UN Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (July 2022 – June 2024). The Peaceful Electoral Environment project aims at fostering peaceful electoral environment through support to electoral, justice, security and human rights institutions, as well as existing peace infrastructures at national and community levels to avoid disaffectation by voters and increase greater political participation through awareness and capacity building, thereby reducing the risk of potential violence. It extensively focuses on engaging political leaders and line followers and supporters, strengthening policy reforms and existing Early Warning and Response (EWER) mechanisms, including through mainstreaming human rights, gender, and youth-based approaches.

Digital technologies and environmental sustainability: In line with the EU Digital for Development (D4D) Strategy and the UNDP Digital Strategy 2022-2025, digital technologies are mainstreamed throughout the implementation of the Action. Acknowledging the potential risks of digital technology, as well as the lack of basic infrastructure in Liberia in certain instances to drive digital technology, this Project offers support to stakeholders on a case-by-case basis to harness the transformative power of digital solutions for a more inclusive and equitable utilisation of resources and towards greater ***transparency and integrity.*** In addition, this project seeks to strengthen sustainable planning and budgeting in all its components, which goes hand-in-hand with sustainable procurement. Furthermore, thanks to their significant experience as observers during the past elections, CSOs such as Integrity Watch and Naymote Partners for Democratic Development are well placed to play an oversight role, including of the democratic functions of the government. Working with civil society organizations will strengthen democratic oversight and enhance the transparency and integrity of the Liberian government.

Furthermore, natural and man-made disasters have the potential to throw elections into chaos, destroying infrastructure, displacing populations, and potentially rendering the impacted system more vulnerable to security threats. While politicians are not responsible for natural disasters, they are often held accountable and expected to act. This project supports plans for Business Continuity Plans, in particular for electoral bodies, and the deployment of an early warning and response system that may go beyond the mere focus of electoral violence (e.g. Election situation room). Where applicable, this project also considers the environment in procurement actions, with an attempt to employ re-usable materials and support sustainable energy. This project considers environmental sustainability in its advice, where applicable.

2.1.1. Partnerships and stakeholders

This Project is implemented jointly with its main counterpart, the National Elections Commission (NEC), which is member of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) / Project Board and will, jointly with the Project, guide the strategic direction of UNDP's electoral assistance. This Project is further implemented in collaboration with other national government institutions, including the Legislature, Judiciary and Executive; the Law Reform Commission and the Peace Building Office as well as Civil Society Organizations. It builds on the previous Support to Electoral Cycle Project, supported by the EU, Sweden, Ireland, Canada, Japan and Germany. The partnerships with the key partners will leverage their strategic position in the country and in the region. The Project fosters collaboration at the level of knowledge and information-sharing, synergies with previous and future activities, reflecting established priorities for development support.

The ***National Elections Commission (NEC)*** is an independent body with a seven-member Board of Commissioners (BoC), out of which four are currently women. The NEC is responsible for the organization of all elections and referenda, as well as for the registration and dissolution of political parties. The BoC is responsible for policy formulation, strategic direction, and oversight of the Secretariat, which is the executive arm of the NEC led by an Executive Director and three Deputies who are in charge of its three departments (Administration, Operations, and Programmes). Apart from the Legal, Internal Audit and Oversight, and the Dispute Hearing Section, which report directly to the BoC, other NEC sections are subordinated to the three above-mentioned departments. The Project provides direct technical, advisory, and financial support to the NEC, notably on more advanced strategic areas.

To effectively execute its mandate, the NEC remains in close interaction with the Government, Legislature, Security institutions, Civil Society — including those representing marginalized groups Political Parties, and Media.

In the Government, the ***Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP)*** – via the National Authorizing Office (NAO) – is a key partner of the Project. The MFDP is member of the Project Board, and responsible together with UNDP and the NEC for Strategic Direction of the Project. The Project

continues close collaboration with the MFDP. In addition, MFDP and Legislature will be included in the Project's interventions in the area of capacity building for sustainable budgeting.

The Project seeks further collaboration with the **Ministry of Education and Ministry of Youth and Sports** to advance CVE and promote the participation of youth in the electoral process. The Ministry of Justice, Supreme Court, Public Prosecutor, Law School, Liberia National Bar Association and County Bars will be key partners to strengthen capacity in electoral disputes resolution. This project will continue to help the NEC to establish a strong relationships with the above institutions and promote collaboration in the above-mentioned areas.

Security Institutions: The Liberian National Police (LNP) assumes the lead in the country's internal security responsibilities during electoral events. It works in conjunction with the joint security committee. There is good collaboration between NEC and LNP, nevertheless the establishment of a national security collaboration mechanism has faced some challenges. The Project engages the LNP and the NEC in the areas of training/sensitization, support to improved coordination and planning, including budgetary planning for electoral security.

Enhanced citizen participation, especially of women, youth and persons with disabilities (PWDs), to drive knowledge and accountability in governance is realized through partnership with **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).** Civil society in Liberia is vibrant and active, albeit its limited capacity at the grassroot level and lack of financial resources. CSOs coordination networks exist for various areas related to electoral and democratic processes, such as electoral observation, reform and women's participation. While the NEC enjoys good relations with CSOs, a coordination platform has never been formalized. The Project works closely with NEC and CSOs to formalize some of these platforms (e.g. for civic and voter education, inclusive governance, etc.). The bi-weekly stakeholder engagement that started leading towards the 2023 elections is a good start. The Project also seeks to empower CSOs through long-term support to continuous civic education and build capacity in enhancing oversight of the country's democratic institutions and processes to increase accountability of Liberia's governance framework.

Media: Reporters without Borders (RSF) ranks Liberia 75th among 180 countries in the 2022 World Press Freedom Index. Since the mid-2000s, the political stability that flourished in the aftermath of the Liberian civil war has favoured the growth of the press. Overall, the information landscape in Liberia reveals that news consumption in the country is done primarily via community radio stations and community networks in rural settings. Monrovia and other urban settings consume information mostly via radio, printed newspapers, and online newspapers[10]. The media seems to operate relatively freely, although cases of intimidation against media practitioners or outlets sporadically occur during tense political events. Attacks on journalists however remain unpunished[11]. The partnership with the **Press Union of Liberia** (media) leads to media oversight, accountability and citizen engagement role. The Collaboration with Female Journalists Association of Liberia (FEJAL) and the Liberia National Police (LNP) is critical to enhance the protection of journalists, and in particular of female journalists. The quality of media reporting remains poor. The concepts of rumours and fake news are not enough to explain disinformation and hate speech. In many instances false information can be attributed to human error, while others might be purposefully doctored with the intent to cause harm. Therefore, classifying instances of fake news, rumours, and disinformation into different definitions is helpful when designing a system to mitigate these phenomena. The Project seeks, in synergy with partners such as Internews and Local Voices of Liberia (LVL), to further build the capacity of media but also to strengthen their access to information, and prevent dis/misinformation and hate speech.

Political parties are among the key stakeholders in the process and a specific target of this action, therefore, the situation of political parties is described in a more detail in a separate section below. While political parties enjoy relatively well structured and cordial relationship with the NEC, their capacity in the area of electoral operations remains limited, notably at the grassroot levels. The

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[10] Report: Support to Tackle Disinformation and Hate Speech in Liberia (UNDP, 2021).
[11] https://rsf.org/en/index; There have been recorded attacks against journalists since 2018, driving the Press Union of Liberia to write a letter to the UN Secretary General voicing their concern regarding attacks against free media in the country. Furthermore, journalists from FrontPage Africa, one of the leading newspapers in the country, were briefly imprisoned after writing an article on government corruption. Additionally, according to the NetBlocks Internet Observatory, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp were blocked by internet providers in Liberia in July 2019, in the wake of demonstrations in Monrovia against government corruption. "Liberia Blocks Social Media to Quell Monrovia Anti-Corruption Protests," NetBlocks (blog), June 7, 2019, https://netblocks.org/reports/liberia-blocks-social-media-to-quell-monrovia-anti-corruption-protests-RyjozX8g.
Hannah N. Geterminah, "Liberia: Covid-19 Pandemic Worsens Journalists' Economic Woes,"
allAfrica.com, August 30, 2021, https://allafrica.com/stories/202108300614.html. "Liberia: Political Ownership of the Media Threatens Journalism & Societal Cohesion," accessed September 22, 2021, http://www.pul.org.lr/story.php?record_id=455&sub=119&mi=1.

Project further supports the IPCC mechanism and attempt to build the capacity of political parties via the NEC and separately, through the support of NIMD.

The **National Legislature** is equally directly targeted by this project and its challenges described in detail below. Legislative support will be provided by UNDP in partnership with NIMD. Legislative Committees are effective in enhancing governance by calling for accountability in the execution of government functions and strengthening citizen participation in the legislative business. Legislative Committees are effective in the engagement of citizens on thematic matters relating to the Legislature's representation, oversight and legislative mandate, and in advocating for the national level implementation of recommendations for treaty monitoring bodies. This project will enhance the knowledge and skills of relevant Legislative Committees and Caucuses on access to justice, rule of law, electoral reform and SDG implementation. Through Non-State Actors (NSA), this project engages Legislative Committees and Caucuses on women and youth mainstreaming in public policies and processes, as well as on the participation of marginalized groups to inform gender responsive planning, budgeting and implementation. The project will strengthen the secretarit and various overight committees to senable them perform adequately; for example on budget and legal analysis.

UN Delivering as One: UN agencies leverage on the capacities and comparative advantages of existing projects and interventions to promote integrated electoral assistance and support under the Governance portfolio and this Project. Within this project, UNDP sets up a direct cooperation with UN Women who will implement the gender aspects of this Project. Collaboration is further set up with OHCHR or IOM in relation to human rights and cross-border aspects respectively, and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) regarding the census and delimination of electoral boundaries.

This project builds on existing partnerships and seeks to build further synergies with past and existing activities on the ground. The ongoing collaboration that will be further explored has been established with efforts to promote electoral reform, support political parties, and support women's participation. In addition, during the electoral period, collaboration is developed with other electoral assistance providers on the ground such as Democracy International, ECOWAS, Carter Center, or National Democratic Institute.

The specific areas of collaboration include but are not limited to:

Lessons learnt and Electoral Reform: This coordinates lessons learnt from each of the electoral cycle and promote and support additional electoral reform initiatives.

Political parties strengthening: This project will continue working closely with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and establish partnership with Integrity Watch to ensure that parties are well trained on specific areas of the electoral process, notably campaign finance, EDR, and that NEC has sufficient capacity to ensure parties' compliance with the legal frameworks.

Poll watchers: This project will collaborate with NDI and Democracy International to train poll watchers deployed by political parties. The project is also well placed to support coordination between national and international electoral missions deployed on the ground for the electoral period and to provide support to the Diplomatic Watch.

Civil Society: The Project seeks synergies with other partners supporting capacity-building of civil society (Carter Center, DI, EU, USAID, Sweden, Ireland, among others). While the Project's focus is more on CVE and accountability, synergies are identified to enforce existing programs and strengthen the CSO framework. Collaboration is specifically sought with youth groups, disabled persons' organizations, community and faith-based organizations, and, where applicable, human rights defenders, to eliminate obstacles to inclusive participation in electoral and political processes.

Similarly to synergies with the UNDP Governance Portfolio aiming at developing links between electoral support and support to Rule of Law, Anti-corruption and Peacebuilding efforts, women participation, and other elements of democratic governance, this project liaises closely with USAID to build synergies and collaboration with its programs dealing with the legal, political parties, media, anti-corruption, and so on. In anticipation of USAID electoral assistance program, the Project will seek close collaboration with USAID and its contractors to ensure sufficient coordination, to avoid duplication and conflicting technical advice.

In addition to specific partnerships with identified institutions, the project promotes national dialogue on governance, democracy, and elections to leverage existing assets and capacity to reduce electoral costs and make the process more efficient. Private sector partnership may be further explored for possible leveraging through favorable national policies to support electoral and democratic processes.

To support NEC in advancing towards the 2023 General Elections and to address timely any challenges, the Government of Liberia agreed to set up the **National Steering Committee on Elections** (NSCE). The NSCE is Chaired by the Ministry of Justice, ECOWAS Ambassador and the UN Resident Coordinator. This project assists the NSCE in its preparations, deliberations, and follow up to the action points agreed. This Strategic Committee fosters partnerships and build on comparative advantages and leverage of various government agencies.

2.2. Development Context

Liberia's political environment remains stable having overcome the state of immediate post-conflict fragility.[12] However, the country faces serious governance, democratic, and rule of law challenges. This is largely attributed to the civil war which destroyed the institutions and systems that protected democracy and good governance practices. The challenges are systemic and continue to negatively impact most of the country's citizens. The country has high levels of poverty and social exclusion, poor infrastructure, limited access to basic social services, and low human development indicators.[13] In the 2021-2022 UNDP Human Development Report Liberia ranks 185 of 191 countries.[14]

Since the end of the Second Liberian Civil War and the signing of the Accra comprehensive Peace Agreeent in 2003, the country with the support of development partners, has focused on improving its quality of democracy and governance. Despite efforts to enhance good governance and democracy in the country, some challenges to governance persist.[15] These challenges include constraints to service delivery, corruption, marginalisation, and limited inclusion of citizens especially youth and women in governance processes, limited accountability and inadequate oversight, impunity, and limited capacity of government institutions to deliver on their mandates. In 2021, Afro barometer observed that while 90% of Liberians want to choose their leaders through regular, open, and honest elections, they are not satisfied with the manner democracy works in the country.[16] Six in 10 (61%) Liberians indicated that they are 'not satisfied' or 'not at all satisfied' with the way democracy works in the country.[17]

As Liberia remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with high rates of illiteracy,[18] aspirants' campaigns are not based on ideological principles but rather personality politics that exploit these weaknesses of vulnerable populations. This is particularly pronounced among youth as about 80 - 90% of youth in Liberia cannot find meaningful employment opportunities.[19] These factors, coupled with rising economic inequalities, inflation, lack of progress in fighting corruption, and decline in political inclusion, accountability, and participation have a large impact on the sense of civic responsibility among communities with high numbers of youth, reducing their ability to promote social cohesion and peaceful co-existence with those of different political opinions during and after electoral processes.[20] As further suggested by the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) Index, there is inadequate progress in reconciliation and healing, and limited dialogue between civil society and Government institutions because of distrust in the governance structure, perceptions of widespread corruption and a culture of impunity, physical insecurity, and daily risks of violence.[21]

Furthermore, gender-based politically motivated violence and harassment have become deeply rooted within the Liberian society. Angie Brooks International Centre for Women's Empowerment, Leadership Development, International Peace and Security (ABIC) alleged that '*this is further compounded by social norms about the domestic roles of women, which results in unfair and*

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[12]   EU, Republic of Liberia Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 p2.
[13]   As above.
[14]   See UNDP, Human Development Report 2021-2022.
[15]   See UNDP, Liberia CPD 2020-24.
[16]   Afrobarometer, Liberia Survey (2021) https://www.afrobarometer.org/articles/liberians-prefer-democratic-governance-are-dissatisfied-way-democracy-working-afrobarometer/ accessed 09 June 2022.
[17]   As above.
[18] The current population of Liberia is 5,291,779 based on projections of the latest United Nations data. Over 63.8 percent of the population is estimated to be poor. This estimate of poverty is below the level obtained in a previous study by UNDP Liberia (2001, 2006), according to which 76.2 percent of the population was poor. According to World Bank data (September 2021), among youth (15-24) the literacy rate amounted to 55% and 48% for the entire population (15+) https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.1524.LT.ZS?end=2017&locations=LR&start=2017&view=bar, while HDI
[19] Despite the official World Bank data only suggesting a 3.3% unemployment rate (15 – 24) (Ref. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?locations=LR), ILO suggests that the definition only counts as unemployed "those who report working less than one hour per week". The ILO survey further underscores that formal employment reaches only 5 percent of the population, while nearly 80 percent of the labour force is in vulnerable employment – a level that reaches 90 percent for women (https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/projectdocumentation/wcms_504717.pdf).
[20] https://scoreforpeace.org/en/liberia/publications
[21] https://scoreforpeace.org/en/liberia/publications

unjustifiable intimidation and attacks on women in elections, swinging them on a pendulum of unequal power relations.' One such concrete occurrence is the use of traditional practices to harass female candidates during elections. This harmful narrative suggests that electing women have a potential to destabilize the country politically, and enforces the perception that women are just 'bulk of voters to elect law makers,' rather than also candidates, party leaders, or representatives.[22] This affects women's potential to meaningfully participate in politics of their country.

Although, women and youth make up the greatest fraction of Liberia's population, they are underrepresented and marginalised in political processes. Vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities (PWDs) and other minority groups are equally underrepresented and excluded from governance and political processes. While political parties as central actors in Liberia's governance and democratic space should serve as vehicles for participation of these groups in political processes, they continue to be weak.[23] They are not institutionalised but strongly personalised. Because most political parties are not institutionalised, have limited internal capacities, and do not work based on manifestos and ideologies, political decision making is often determined by personal interests. This means that the political parties do not represent and respond to distinct societal interests. In addition, while they conduct party primaries, their internal democracy is weak, and results are influenced by party leaders.

Within this context, political and electoral institutions in Liberia remain fragile and weak. Frequent criticism by the opposition and civil society of the key institutions, including the National Elections Commission (NEC), appear to aggravate the current politico-electoral environment. Some of these criticism include lack of transparency and alleged financial corruption, the accuracy of the voters' roll, perceived lack of neutrality and independence of the electoral dispute resolution mechanisms, NEC's deficiency in sustained internal communication, insufficient civic and voter education, and an overall lack of a level playing field for candidates, particularly women. The proportion of women in the Legislature is a mere 10.7%, with the danger of this reducing further. The struggle for gender balanced-representation has been elusive despite several attempts to introduce an Equitable Participation and Representation Act. It remained necessary to adopt key electoral reforms to address these concerns in order to strengthen public confidence in the upcoming 2023 General Elections, however, the electoral reform has yet to materialise.

Furthermore, the bicameral National Legislature which should have the oversight responsibility faces extensive challenges including limited capacity in specialised areas.[24] Inadequate expertise at the Secretariat limits oversight and rational law and policy formulation. In many instances, legislators' private interests take precedence over national or political party considerations. The Legislature's secretariat and support structures have limited capacity and continue to be chronically deficient in terms of human, technical and financial resources. Due to these constraints and challenges, the Legislature struggles to effectively conduct its three fundamental constitutional functions of legislating, oversight, and representation. Moreover, due to poor transparency, civil society organisations and media face challenges in obtaining information about legislative processes, which undermines accountability.[25]

2.2.1. Electoral Context

The Republic of Liberia held democratic Presidential and Legislative Elections in 2005, 2011 and 2017, after 14 years of devastating civil wars. The conduct of 2005 elections was led by the international community under the supervision of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). Also, the 2011 elections received significant technical and advisory support from UNMIL. The third general elections in 2017 were the first post-conflict elections entirely managed by Liberians, nevertheless, still with massive support by the UNMIL. The EU Election Observervation Mission deployed to the 2017 electoral process provided recommendations that underlined the need to improve on election dispute resolution (n.9); passive registration system (n.13); adequateNational Elections Commission resources on monitoring campaign and political party finance (n.16); legislation modification and women participation (n.19); improved access and opportunity to vote for people with disabilities (n.20), amongst others. The subsequent EU Election Follow Up Mission (EFM) indicated that 61% of the recommendations were not yet considered. This project takes these recommendations into consideration; specific recommendations are indicated later in the document and linked to specific activities.

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[22] ABIC: 'Liberian Women Prepare for 2023 Elections.' https://womenvoicesnewspaper.org/liberian-women-prepare-for-2023-elections/.

[23] Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2022 Country Report — Liberia. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2022 p13 - 14.

[24] See Congressional Research Service, Liberia: Background and U.S. Relations February 14, 2020.

[25] See National Democratic Institute, Liberian Lawmakers Watch: New Tools Shed Light on Parliamentary Performance Before the General Elections https://www.ndi.org/Liberian-Lawmakers-Watch accessed 23 May 2022.

Gradually and building on experiences and lessons learned from previous electoral processes[26], the NEC has increasingly assumed national ownership of its electoral mandate and responsibilites. This was evidenced by the 2020 Special Senatorial Elections conducted during the Covid-19 outbreak and with only limited international support provided by UNDP. Nevertheless, challenges persist to the effective electoral participation. Addressing these challenges is critical to increase public confidence in the NEC and the electoral process, which is currently low or very low[27]:

There are several specific challenges impacting the conduct of elections in Liberia. These challenges include, amongst others:

Planning and budgeting: The timely allocation of resources for electoral process remains a challenge. Serious efforts have so far been made to cut down electoral costs; in response to the current economic challenges the country faces. In light of decreasing donor support, cost-cutting is an important strategy for the sustainability of the electoral funding, and the electoral process overall. Furthermore, the recent Covid-19 pandemic puts additional pressure on the Government budget and by extension, electoral budget, as implementation of health response is more of a priority over elections funding. Timely strategic planning of the entire electoral cycle will be critical to maintain the integrity of NEC.[1] Lack of resources to support elections also impacts on activities of civil society, political parties, and other actors critical to the creation of a vibrant democratic space. To preserve and further the democratic gains, support needs to be extended to the areas beyond the capital Monrovia.

Electoral violence: Currently there are 35 Registered Political Parties with NEC. This political fragmentation generally characterizes the electoral campaigns, often leading to electoral violence. While the Inter-Party Consultative Committee (IPCC) structure managed to bring the parties together to discuss electoral violence prevention, the institutionalization of the IPCC is yet to be achieved. The national early warning and response mechanisms, which is to provide early detection of violence, still lacks a full strength in its response component and coordination amongst variety of partners need to be further stregtehned.

Voter registration: To address mistrust in the previous voter registration system (optical mark recognition), the NEC is currently implementing the biometric voter registration (BVR). A careful introduction of this technology remains critical for Liberia to maintain a voter register trusted by stakeholders. In the meantime, the implementation exerts pressure on Liberia scarce resources and new technologies and, if not well managed, this may lead to further challenges and even unrest.

ICT infrastructure: NEC's ICT infrastructure faces critical vulnerabilities as follows: (1) ICT is not always aligned with management, organizational planning, and culture; (2) weak ICT asset management and maintenance, including software licencing, power downtimes, lack of internet connection, and file storage facilities; and (3) aging, inadequate security and back-up for the voter registration, result management system and other databases. Between elections, funding is usually reduced, skills lost, and the registration system falls into disuse and disrepair. The reverse is the case when elections are due. During this time, donor funding becomes available, and new systems replace obsolete ones. Strategic and long-term planning must be strengthened to address vulnerabilities of the results, and affect the credibility of the process.

Electoral Dispute Resolution (EDR): the NEC is the place of first instance for adjudication of electoral disputes. The NEC has been facing numerous challenges in this sensitive role, including the incoherent timelines for filling and adjudicating complaints, limited training for the Magistrates and Hearing Officers, and difficulty to find and retain trained EDR temporary staff, notably in the counties. Public information and outreach during EDR remain limited, with a challenge to reach remote areas of the country. Moreover, the limited capacity of the political actors to understand the complicated aspects of a formal EDR mechanism continues to pose challenges to the credibility of the process.

Communication: NEC has a Communication Department Team to direct, manage, and implement its mandate. While they have an open-door communication policy where information can be shared freely, proactive approach to communication remains a challenge. Nevertheless, the lack of strategic approach in reaching out to electoral stakeholders, and lack of comprehensive communication framework throughout the electoral cycle to ensure an increase inclusion of all voters --- women,

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[26] See UNDP Terminal Evaluation of the 2015-2018 (2020) Support to Liberia Electoral Cycle, August 2020. NEC Lessons Learnt Comprehensive Report, March – April 2021.
[27] According to the UNDP Public perception survey, about 66% of respondents trust the NEC (https://www.undp.org/liberia/publications/public-perception-elections-and-women-political-participation), while only 34% of the respondents said they trusted the NEC in the Afrobarometer survey See https://www.afrobarometer.org/articles/popular-trust-in-national-elections-commission-remains-weak-as-liberia-prepares-for-general-elections/).

youth, and marginalized groups --- in the electoral process is key to building confidence of the electorate and ensuring overall integrity of the electoral process.

Gender: While women make up 50% of voters, they are under-represented in the Legislature, leadership and decision-making.[1] The NEC is committed to promoting "opportunities for equal participation of men and women", and has reaffirmed its commitment to gender equality through efforts to promote women's participation as voters, candidates, electoral officers and observers, among others.

In addition, the **Constitutional provisions resulting in proliferation of various elections** increase electoral costs exponentially and put periodic electoral process at risk, often undermining confidence of the electorate in the NEC. Insufficient infrastructure and holding elections during the rainy season add to the costs and logistical challenges. Remote population with 16 different recognised ethnic groups speaking more than two dozen local languages make the dissemination of effective voter education challenging. Limited border control opens space for widespread allegations of voter trucking and decreases trust in the electoral process.

To address the above challenges, the NEC Strategic Plan (2018 – 2024) has been developed based on lessons learnt from previous elections, consultations with stakeholders, and recommendations provided by electoral observers and stakeholders. The plan was further revised in 2022, based on post-Special Senatorial Elections lessons learnt. The overall objective of the Strategic Plan is to contribute to the consolidation of nascent democracy through delivery of inclusive, transparent and credible elections. It stands on three key premises of inclusive participation, availability of resources, and retention of qualified and motivated staff. It focuses on five pillars: (1) Legal Framework; (2) Electoral Stakeholders Engagement, (3) Civic and Voter Education and Public Information; (4) Institutional Strengthening, and (5) Election Operations. During the revision of this Strategic plan, the NEC conducted detailed SWOT and GAP analysis for each of the departments. These analysis are fully factored into this project and activities tailored to address challenges identified by the NEC[28].

Consequently, support to civic and voter education, communication, institutional strengthening, and electoral violence prevention, including violence against women in elections and politics (VAWIE-P) remain critical for the consolidation of the fragile Liberian peace; this remains on top of NEC's strategic priorities. Well-coordinated and carefully planned UN assistance is important to leverage the UN's role and complement development partners' participation, while ensuring national ownership, respect for national sovereignty, promotion and protection of human rights, and strict impartiality.

2.2.2. 2023 General elections

Liberians will go to the polls in 2023 to elect the President, Vice President, 73 members of the House of Representative and 15 members of the House of Senate. This is a critical moment for the country and its people to either strengthen its democratic tenets and peace or jeopardize its peace and security. This will be the second nationwide elections to be conducted under the mantle of the Government of Liberia since the departure of UNMIL in March 2018.

Elections in Liberia generally comply with international standards, including secret ballot, and universal suffrage.[29] Liberia has equally successfully conducted peaceful presidential and legislative elections. Key electoral challenges remain and stem from the fragile political, economic situation and electoral system, including delays in allocating electoral funding, electoral violence, and violence against women in elections, lack of public trust in the voter register, protracted electoral disputes.

The Constitutional provisions resulting in the proliferation of various elections increase electoral costs exponentially and put periodic electoral process at risk, often undermining confidence of the electorate in the NEC.[30] Holding the constitutionally mandated 2020 Special Senatorial Elections was equally a challenge due to the lack of timely government budget the Covid-19 pandemic. To address the overall sustainability and costs-effectiveness of Liberia's electoral cycle, a full constitutional

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[28] NEC Strategic Plan Review Reports (UNDP). November 2022.
[29]   US Department of State: 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Liberia March 30, 2021. See also, the European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM), Final Report Presidential and House of Representatives Elections Liberia 2017.
[30] For example, in 2019, NEC has been highly criticized by observers and political parties for postponing constitutionally mandated by-elections due to the delay of arrival of electoral material caused by late release of funding to the process. At the same time, the current constitutional and legal framework does not provide apparent options to postpone elections due to the force majeure and instances of natural disaster such as health crisis.

reform would be necessary.[31] The 2019 reform of the Election Law has been largely consultative. Nevertheless, due to delays in finalizing the propositions emanating from these consultations, ahead of tabling them with the Legislature, the process lost its momentum.

The draft of an Act to Amend Certain Sections of the New Elections Law (1986 as amended 2014) to the National Legislature; submitted to plenary on January 2022, and later in the year was passed in each House, on 13th January in House of Representatives (HoR) and 16th January in Senate, included a 30% gender quota for candidate listings and party leadership and an enforcement mechanism by the NEC would have had a potential to improve women's political participation. The status of the Act remained unclear (Protocol A/SP1/12/01 (Article 2) on Democracy and Good Governance, requiring that Member States do not make changes to their electoral law within 6 months of elections, except with the consent of most political actors. The Protocol is a regional political commitment that Liberia has adhered to and generally follows.In the 2020 Referendum, the population also failed to adopt any of the constitutional amendments, presumably due to limited time to conduct awareness and adequate civic and voter education. The failure to pass the electoral reforms is an opportunity lost. It would, finally, also address some of the EU EOM and other observers' recommendations, including in the area of electoral dispute resolution, strengthened electoral administration, and women's participation. It is therefore important that the reform is re-initiated after the 2023 elections.

Human rights violations and violence against women in elections and politics (VAWIE-P) persist as significant challenges within the Liberian electoral context. Despite legal frameworks and international commitments aimed at promoting gender equality and protecting human rights, women continue to face numerous obstacles and abuses when participating in elections. Intimidation, harassment, and physical violence directed at women who are candidates, voters, or involved in electoral processes are prevalent. These actions undermine the principles of democracy, impede women's political participation, and perpetuate gender inequalities in Liberia. To prevent and/or mitigate the effects of VAWIE during the 2023 genral elections UNDP continues collaborating closely with UN Women to reduce the Impact and occurrence of this phenomena on women participating in the electoral process. To strengthen the response to trends undermining human rights and equal participation of women in the electoral process, UNDP will likewise continue to collaborate with UNHCR on topics of hate speech prevention both in the digital and non-digital realm.

For the first time, Liberia is also implementing its Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) to compile the voters' roll. The decision has been taken considering the options, opportunities, and challenges outlined in the 2021 BVR Feasibility Study mandated by the NEC and supported by UNDP, in collaboration with ECOWAS. In this regard, the Project continues to provide technical advice to the implementation of BVR which aims at improving credibility of the voters' roll by removing duplicated entries and mitigating possible fraud in the voters' roll. This exercise, which ultimately intends to support the National Identification Registry (NIR) by facilitating civil registry and to strengthening the sustainability and integrity of the electoral process, does not come without challenges, including late delivery of the electoral materials, technical glitches, delayed payment to the staff, amongst others. With agreement and support of all the political actors, it could also pave the way to the registration of the passive voters' in the future, in line with the EU EOM recommendation.

In 2022, Liberia also finally initiated the national census, which was concluded in June 2023. Unfortunately, the final data were not released on time for the NEC to delineate electoral boundaries in accordance with the Consitution. The boundary delineation and allocation of the seats in the Legislature needs to be revisited following the 2023 elections, in line with the Liberia's legal framework and the results of the population census.

Consequently, support to civic and voter education, communication, institutional strengthening, and electoral violence prevention, including violence against women in elections and politics (VAWIE-P), remain critical for the consolidation of the fragile Liberian peace and on top of the NEC's strategic priorities. Well-coordinated and carefully planned UN assistance is important to leverage the UN's role and complement donors' participation, while ensuring national ownership, respect for national sovereignty, promotion and protection of human rights, and strict impartiality.

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[31] The constitutional reform that has been ongoing in parallel failed to fully benefit from public consultations. The proposition of the text to be considered in the constitutional referendum had been published in the National Gazette already on 8 October 2019 before the public consultations completed. The propositions address three areas: (1) the issue of double citizenship; (2) tenure of elected representatives; and (3) election date. The propositions do not address the issue of proliferation of various elections and by-elections or electoral dispute resolution system[31],. The election date is only moved one month from early October to early November, which according to many interlocutors will not have significant effect on the electoral preparations outside of the rainy seasons.

2.2.3. Political Parties in Decmoratic Governance Context

There is currently 35 registered political parties in Liberia. While they enjoy relatively well structured and cordial relationship with the NEC, their capacity in the area of electoral and governance aspects remains limited, notably at the grassroot levels. While the existence of regional strongholds, the potential derived from motivated members/activists, growing access to the internet and social media amongst the youth, and willingness of leadership to build capacity, and willingness of CSOs to build relationship with the ruling party are positive aspects to work with, the parties face several challenges to their further development. Those challenges include a top-down and weak structure, weak internal democracy, lack of financial resources that often make the parties active in Monrovia only, no relationship with the CSOs, non-existent party programs, and weak grip on the representatives. These challenges expose parties to potential social conflicts and instability, internal conflicts, and corruption.

In order to improve democratic governance, the functioning of the political parties is key.
Currently, Political Parties are built around persons, have a weak party structure, do not lean on a sound ideology and most of them lack a platform. Party loyalty is weak. Due to the constituency system, legislators feel more affiliated to their constituency than to their party. Personal interests make it profitable for them to jump over to another party if that will secure their seat in the upcoming elections. The two big political parties of Liberia are the Unity Party (UP, 18 seats in the House) and the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC-coalition, 21 seats). Smaller parties with seats in House are the Liberty Party (LP, 3 seats), the All Liberian Party (ALP, 3 seats) and the People's Unification Party (PUP, 5 seats). It must be underlined that, despite the copy/paste of the US Legislature, all elections since 2005 had a (more than two) multi-party result, with no majority in each of the houses for the party of the President.

The considerable issues around party financing further add to the weakness of the parties, and especially to the personalization of politics and corruption; there is no state financing allowed, only private financing from Liberian citizens. This results in a significant lack of transparency when it comes to the party finance system, as there is no oversight on the sources of party finance. The parties are formally obliged to give that overview, but it is not enforced. Consequently, it is often said that the standard bearers of parties tend to rule their party 'as if they own it', as it is often their resources who are keeping the party alive and running. This can further disincentivize parties to become more institutionalized and less dependent on individuals, as it might be perceived as the standard bearer or party leader will lose his or her influence over the party that they finance.

As there is little party loyalty, and the annual salary of an MP is considerable, it is said that party members and MPs will easily switch to another party, if they believe that serves their own personal interest better. This means that any personal conflict between party members potentially endangers the coherence and institutionalization of that party.

Second, the lack of institutionalization of parties leads to a catch-22 when it comes to implementing new guidelines and rules. It is difficult for parties to work on such rules, guidelines etc., as there is no organization set up to absorb and comply with such rules. Subsequently, the lack of structure also hampers processes and activities that seek to improve inclusion of underrepresented groups in politics such as women. Overall, this obstructs building a democratic culture within the political parties.

Third, and related to this, is the lack of enforcement for parties to adhere to current rules about party development. For example, though parties are supposed to have a county presence, it is our understanding that not all parties have such a presence. Furthermore, the fact that many parties do often have a branch in the USA, which is not required by law, might reflect the power of the diaspora over the local county communities.

Besides the negative effect on the democratic culture within parties, the lack of institutionalization also negatively affects several important processes between parties and other institutions parties, and between parties themselves. For example, the National Elections Commission (NEC), despite communicating with the parties regularly through the IPCC, often does not have effective methods to communicate with parties' structures, e.g. always the same individual within a party to work with, lack of information flow within the parties, and participation of those not having decision-making powers at the IPCC. This exacerbates political conflicts, due to misunderstandings and lack of appropriate information. This is true for other institutions and parties as well. The lack of structure and the strong personalization adds to the polarization and conflicts that are part and parcel of the political landscape. There is a weak connection between parties and the Members of the Legislature, which is further exacerbated by corruption and bribing of MPs to vote in favor or against a legislation, rather than voting across party or policy lines. In addition, there is currently considerable conflict within the government and within the opposition coalitions, and hardly any interaction between government and opposition parties.

UNDP electoral assistance has worked with the political parties notably to improve their knowledge and understanding of the electoral process, improve the relationship with the NEC, and increase women' s participation in the party leadership and on candidates listing. As a method of conflict prevention, NEC with UNDP engaged political parties in IPCC conflict prevention dialogues to ensure peaceful electoral environment. Since 2016, the political parties came together and signed joint declarations (Ganta Declaration, Farmington Declaration) committing to peaceful elections.

In 2016, the NEC signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with political parties with the view to encourage and promote consensus between and amongst political parties. The objective of the IPCC is to provide a platform for the structured multi-party dialogue, encourage consensus building, and strengthen, in a structured manner, the role of the political parties in the electoral governance. The IPCC has been ever since supported by UNDP and other partners' (NDI, DI, IFES, UN Women) electoral assistance. Within the auspices of the IPCC, the parties also signed and revised (2020 and 2022) their Code of Conduct guiding the behavior of political parties and their supporters before, during, and after elections. UNDP and NDI also supported the trainings of political party agents / poll watchers ahead of all the national elections, to mitigate conflict at the polling places during the election day.

Political parties themselves are also believed to be an obstacle, rather than enabling factor, to women's political participation. Women wings operate very separately from the executive committees; there are no cross-overs. The separation between the party and the wings leads to a severe lack of influence in the party and a severe lack of information on party developments etc. UNDP, UN Women, NDI and others have been engaging with the political parties to address the issues hindering women in political parties, e.g. through the voluntary adherence to the 30% gender quota.

Normalization of increasing violence against women in elections and in political life in Liberia was documented in the 2017 election observation report[32], in the 2019 by-elections, and the 2020 Special Senatorial Elections. This type of male-dominated exclusionary politics, coupled with the threat of violence, results in women often choosing not to engage, and their voices being excluded from security, politics, and peacebuilding related planning. Therefore, the NEC with the support of UN Women and UNDP initiated consultations with key Liberian electoral stakeholders to assess the prevalence of VAWiE/P, identify its root causes and propose instruments and guidelines to address it. Gender equality, women's leadership and political participation for achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs) by 2030 as they require important progress in the areas of building a peaceful society, inclusive institutions and accessible justice for all.

The objective of the present Violence Against Women in Elections and Politics Protocol and the Action Plan signed by the political parties in February 2022 is to fill the gaps identified in the MoU relating to the IPCC and the Code of Conduct for Political Parties while promoting and advocating for increased women's leadership and political participation in the country. It is a result of participatory consultations, analysis and dialogues held regionally between the period from December 2019 to February 2022, under the guidance of the NEC, UN Women and UNDP with key stakeholders, including leaders of political parties, the Vice President's Office, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MGCSP), the Ministry of Justice, the Women's Legislative Caucus of Liberia, the Coalition of Political Party Women in Liberia (COPPWIL), civil society organizations' representatives, as well as women who participated as candidates in recent elections and who experienced violence during their campaigns.

2.2.4. Inclusion (women, youth, and persons with disabilities) context

Women and youth face significant challenges to participate in political decision making. The influence of women and youth wings on the policy of their mother parties seems to be weak. Lip-service is often paid by the leadership to women and youth issues, because they form the majority of the electorate. However, the representation of women and youth in the Legislature and in the national boards of the political parties is very low. In everyday's politics women- and youth issues are seldom initiated by the male-dominated bodies in the Legislature or in political parties.
 Women and youth are marginalised in the political life, with major gaps in their representation in political processes, even though they constitute the largest part of the population. Youth represent the majority of the population in Liberia with close of one third ready to be engaged in the next election. Women make up 49.6% of the country's population, their participation in governance and politics remains low even if Liberia recorded the first elected African female President.The last few years have marked an increase of Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) cases to the point that in 2020 the President of Liberia declared it a national emergency. Recent by-elections showed few

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[32] Refer to the Compendium of NEC (with UNDP support) Recommendations from the Election Observation Missions, published in 2020 (recommendations no. 45, 18)

cases of extreme violence against women in politics somehow linked to tradition and culture. In the last Mid-Term election (2020) only 2 women won senatorial seats, out of 15 winning candidates, while the actual leading party did not present any female candidates. Successful steps have been taken afterwards by the political parties with the signature of the Violence against Women in Elections and Politics protocol (VAWiE-P) at the beginning of 2022 and declarations of some of the main parties about a reserved quota for female candidates for the 2023 contest. The NEC submitted to the Legislature an amendment to the current New elections law including a 30% gender quota for candidate listing. While this has been successfully approved by the House of Representatives, it was not passed by the Executive in time for the 2023 General Elections. This partially responds to the EOM Recommendation n.9, however the effective engagement of women and youth and marginalised groups among them in the political process remains limited. There is a specific culture affecting women's participation. The social sanctions against women who break cultural barriers and speak out are huge; husbands and family get involved and communities can actively keep them out. These social sanctions are exacerbated by the parties' behavior towards women. And when it comes to policies and legislation to support women's political participation, it is the party that says, "The buck stops here". In addition, party structures are built around the lives of men, e.g., having influential decision-making meetings even after midnight. Yet, it must be stated that there are differences between parties.

Traditional leaders have a very strong role, and they are very conservative. Even powerful male representatives are afraid to oppose them during elections when it comes to women's rights issues – the example given of how an FGM article had to be taken out of a women's rights law so that it could be passed, due to resistance by these male representatives who feared the traditional leaders in their constituent counties right before the elections.

Also, constituents are less likely to vote for women candidates, believing them unsuitable for various reasons, including the fact that women are not always allowed to join the traditional leaders decision-making table at the county level.

Lack of women's political participation is further hindered by the VAWIE-P. As the above mentioned VAWIE-P Protocol states "*VAWiE-P is driven by discriminatory gender norms and men's desire to hold onto power and maintain the status quo, whereby women are largely excluded from key leadership positions and political power.*" This type of violence has a wider systemic effect, because it sends a message to women that politics is not their place and that their participation involves great personal risk. Thus, women and girls who may have otherwise had leadership ambitions are more likely to not engage and disengage from political life.' The root causes of VAWIE/P include unequal gender power relations and patriarchy (male dominance) in society and political institutions, discriminatory gender norms and discrimination of women in the participation of politics and leadership positions, including the idea that women are not prepared to exercise leadership positions, especially in politics. Low level of enforcement of existing laws and policies, including the equal representation of women candidates at political party level; lack of economic empowerment of women and social protection are amongst the contributing factors.

This project works with the NEC, political parties, civil society, Ministry of Gender, Childen and Social Protection and other institutions to build on previous interventions, notably the development of a regulatory framework, legal reform and advocacy, training, capacity building, and support for women to effectively enter politics on the equal basis.

In 2020, to support electoral violence prevention, ECOWAS deployed an election situation room, while Angie Brooks International set up a women's situation room. Both were put in place in 2020 and were widely recognized for mitigating electoral violence through mediation. Similarly, OHCHR monitored election-related human rights violations across the 15 counties in Liberia. The monitors provided support to the Independent National Human Rights Commission (INHRC) and civil society organizations (CSOs) to monitor human rights in the context of the 2020 Special Senatorial Elections. That is complementary to international and national election observation missions (EU, Carter Center, NDI, ECOWAS, UNOWAS, Liberia Election Observation Network and Elections Coordinating Committee), which also play an important role in strengthening electoral integrity and preventing electoral violence.

The Women Situation Room (WSR), initiated in 2011 to train and empower women in collaboration with youth to take ownership of peace processes in their country, was particularly efficient in the 2020 Special Senatorial Elections in Liberia. The WSR undertook the first response to the violence against the senatorial candidate in Gbarpolu. Support to WSR activities, envisioned in this project, is timely and strategic not only to further strengthen the EWER mechanism, but also to ensure VAWIE-P is mitigated in the lead-up to the 2023 polls. The establishment and key features of the WSR will be supported under this Project intervention. The support of this project is complementary to the support provided by the PBF intervention.

According to UNFPA, the age structure of the population of Liberia is young; 63 per cent is less than 25 years old and 32.8 per cent is 10-24 years old. The youth, some of whom are ex-combatants, face formidable challenges, including limited access to employment and stable sources of income, and sexual and reproductive health information and services[33]. At the same time, this young demographic in Liberia holds an enormous quantity of energy that can be used in addressing the continent's many social, cultural, financial, political, and ideological challenges. While it is true that youth can spur innovation, creativity, social change, economic growth, and enterprise all of which enhance development, if young people are not well managed, and involved into political representations they can fuel instability, violent protest, and conflict. When there are obstacles to participating in formal, institutionalized political processes, young people can rapidly feel disempowered. And youth often tend to believe that their voices are not heard, and they are not being taken seriously despite their sensitivity to the demands for social equity and justice, which often leads to youth's involvement in freedom or independence struggles, mobilizing and campaigning against autocratic governments, and championing opposition to virtual forms of democratic governments.

In Liberia, the major political parties have youth wings that serve as the youth-oriented divisions of their respective parties. These youth wings are primarily responsible for mobilizing and engaging young people in political activities, advocating for youth issues, and promoting the party's agenda among the youth population. Furthermore, umbrella youth oranizations such as the Federation for Liberian Youth (FLY) serve as an umbrella organization representing the collective interests and aspirations of young people across the country aiming to empower youth, promote their rights, and provide them with opportunities for personal and professional development. Naymote, amongst other organizations, focuses on leadership and policy skils development of the youth in Liberia.

UN and partners in Liberia have also provided a platform for Liberian youth to continue to stand up for human rights, promote peace, and contribute to sustainable development. As part of these efforts, youth-led organizations participated in the first National Inception Workshop on maintaining national peace and security in Liberia, held in 2019. The participation of youth at the first National Inception Workshop set the stage for their inclusion in the implementation of peacebuilding initiatives under the UNDP supported project "Promoting Sustainable Peace through National Youth Policy in the Framework of the 2030 Agenda". Since 2019, the project has provided opportunities, tools, capacity building, and grants for young people to engage actively in development and peacebuilding processes that influence national policies. Several activities to develop youth potential in entrepreneurship, financial management, peacebuilding, project proposal writing, fundraising, sustainability, communication, and partnership building also took place under the Project implemented by Accountability Lab Liberia, in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sport (MOYS) and the Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY) with support from UNDP, as well as UNDESA. UNDP Electoral Assistance held three youth forums to strengthen youth involvement in society. In 2017, the EU Election Observation Mission reported that through their involvement in the signature of the Farmington Declaration, youth noted that it was the first time they got a space in decision-making. Widening this space is critical to address youth disengagement and decrease the potential for the mobilization of electoral violence. This Project will further open space for youth to be engaged in early warning, response, community watch, and further electoral violence prevention activities.

In line with the above, this project mainstream youth into its interventions to build on gains achieved during the past electoral assistance. The intervention takes into consideration the recommendations of the 2021 UN Global Report on Protecting Young People in Civic Space and seeks to encourage the facilitation and establishment of open, safe and inclusive spaces where young activists can regularly come together and discuss threats, challenges and seek solutions. The project also support activities of the youth wings of political parties and encourage the Government of Liberia to facilitate establishing of dedicated, inclusive, and independent youth structures, mechanisms and institutions by providing necessary resources and conditions[34].

Persons living with disabilities (PWDs) face many challenges in Liberia as cultural approaches to disability remains largely negative. Persons living with disabilities are often excluded or not considered for employment and their specific needs are often not catered for. The Action will specifically focus on inclusion and promotion of diversity through the removal of barriers to equal participation to the electoral and political process. This project supports actions to reduce or eliminate physical barriers, including through identification of specific needs in various counties and deployment of tools (such as tactile ballot papers) to advance on PWDs' participation. The NEC, with support from LESP, has also worked with PWDs to brainstorm on the policy and strategies to mainstream all types of disability into electoral and democratic programming. Throughout the objectives, the project promotes participation in the political process for persons living with disabilities, the rural population, and other marginalised groups.

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[33] https://liberia.unfpa.org/en/topics/adolescents-and-youth-4
[34] Rita Izsák-Ndiaye, If I Disappear Global Report on Protecting Young People in Civic Space. (2021) UN Office of Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.

Civil society is critical to promote inclusion in the development context. Many CSOs in Liberia, however, seem to struggle with the transition from a scenario of past, largely humanitarian, funding policies to an evolving development context, although in a still very poor country. In part in cooperation with government institutions, a large number of CSOs have been actively involved in the electoral process, with a focus on Civic and Voter Education and peace promotion. While CSOs implementing civic education projects for the NEC and donors had regular engagement with the NEC, the interaction of many other CSOs' with the NEC, and vice versa, is mainly on perfunctory nature, for advocacy on specific concerns of their respective target groups. Different to the IPCC-meetings, which take place frequently between the NEC and political parties, there is so far no regular and institutionalised forum which would guarantee a two-way information flow between the NEC and civil society. At the same time, there is mistrust between CSOs and the Government. The Government often feels under unjustified criticism by civil society and perceives that CSOs take away donor resources. Enhancing partnerships between government institutions and CSOs remains a critical aspect of this project, not only to foster inclusion but also to enhance transparency and accountability of the electoral and democratic processes (as mentioned above).

2.2.5. The status of Legislature

The Constitution of Liberia provides per Chapter V, article 34 among others, the oversight responsibilities of the National Legislature. This function remains much to be desired especially with a Secretariat that lacks the requisite modern tools and skills to perform effectively. The National Legislature with the oversight responsibility faces enormous challenges, including limited capacity in specialized areas as well as the limited capacity of the Secretariat.

Consequently, supporting the research and analytical capacity of the Secretariat in the Legislature to provide information to decision-makers will enhance participatory democracy, peace, and stability in Liberia.

The Liberian Legislature is a bi-cameral law-making body, with the Liberian Senate of 30 Senators and the House of Representatives of 73 legislators representing electoral constituencies.
Liberia has 15 political subdivisions. Lawmakers are elected by a simple majoritarian system. Members of the House of Representatives are elected once every six years. The House of Representatives elects a speaker as the presiding officer, a deputy speaker, and other officers with the tasks to provide administrative functions. Similarly, the members of the Senate are elected once every nine years. The Senate elects a President Pro-Tempore who works with the President of the Senate to administer the affairs of the Senate. The President of the Senate is the Vice President of the Republic of Liberia.

Despite Liberia's ratification of the Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, its domestication remains inadequate. The Gender Inequality Index of 0.610 ranks Liberia 177 of 188 countries, a decline from earlier years.[13] The rate of women's participation in politics and governance remains low; women occupy only 2 of 30 seats in the Senate and 9 of 73 seats in the House of Representatives. In addition previous interventions with the legislature demonstarted they are not gender-sensitive as they are are immersed in norms, practices and policies that discriminate against women, making it difficult for women to be promoted and effect change, including policy change.

The Constitution lays out three broad functions, powers, and responsibilities of the legislature as follows: representation, lawmaking, and oversight. These functions and powers are broadly provided for in various articles in the 1986 constitution.

The Liberian Constitution provides extensive lawmaking, oversight, and representational powers to the Legislature. From a theoretical perspective, the Legislature is a very strong and independent institution and is the first branch of government. However, there is a wide-ranging national consent that the Legislature has not been effectively conducting its core functions of lawmaking, oversight, and representation. Many believe that the powers and authority bequeathed to it by the Constitution are underutilized due in part to executive influence.

The Liberian Legislature has two Secretariats providing administrative and clerical support to both Houses as follows:

The Secretariat of the Senate is headed by the Secretary of the Liberian Senate who is elected by a simple majoritarian system and can only be removed for cause by a 2/3 majority of votes of Senators duly seated. The Secretary of the Senate works under the direction of the President of the Liberian Senate or President Pro-Tempore (rule 16, Section 1). He or she supervises the Senate employees, including members of the Secretariat of the Senate (rule 16, Section 2).

The Secretary of the Senate also administers the various departments of the Liberian Senate in the execution of their respective functions. He recommends employment and termination of services of

employees in said category to the Senate through the Committee on Rules, Order, and Administration (rule 16, section 3).

The Secretary of the Senate has the power to receive and open all correspondences and messages addressed to the Liberian Senate either by, or through the President of the Senate, or the President Pro-Tempore of the Senate at the time when the Senate is in session or under adjournment, keeps all records of the Senate and ensures their safety. He serves as the parliamentarian advisor to the Senate (rule 16, sections 4, 5 &6).

Overall, the Secretariat of the Liberian Senate lacks a proper record-keeping system. It has difficulty with sending correspondences and attending to individual legislators' requests to write letters, do bill drafting, and analyze legislative instruments. The Chief Clerk is assisted by an Assistant Secretary who, however, at this moment, lacks the technical capacity to perform other legislative functions. This weak insituional capacity at many levels undermines the ability to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

The Secretariat of the House of Representatives is headed by the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives elected by a simple majoritarian system and can be removed only for cause by a 2/3 majority of votes of representatives duly seated. The Chief Clerk is tasked to supervise all clerical functions of the House of Representatives with similar responsibilities as the Secretary of the Senate and similar organizational weaknesses and challenges.

The Liberian Legislature consists of four bicameral support structures born out of the 2009-20013 Legislative Modernization program. This plan, developed in a participatory manner over a period of more than one year, defines the strategic thrusts to underlie the modernization of the Liberian Legislature covering its key constitutional mandates of law making, representation and executive oversight[35]. The support structures created by this plan include:

• Public Account Committee Secretariat
• Legislative Budget Office
• Legislative Information Services
• Joint Legislative Modernization Secretariat

Legislative employees are divided into two categories as follows:

Central Administration: Staff employed in central administration are spread across 11 departments on the Senate's side, and 16 departments on the House's side. When taken together, the total number of employees in central administration at the legislature is estimated at around 1000. Some place the figure above 1200. The Human Resources departments in the Senate and House of Representatives have no accurate record of the employment data due to a lack of record system.

Personal staff is directly hired by legislators to provide certain services as required by the Rules of procedures for the House, and the Standing Rules for the Liberian Senate. Each legislator is entitled to 15 staff. The Senate decided at the close of 2021 to add 5 more staff to the existing 15 which increased their numbers to 20. Altogether, personal staff accounts for over 55% of the total legislative workforce.

The Institutional mapping and needs assessment of the Secretariat of the National Legislature of Liberia undertaken to develop this Project document concludes that despite substantial assistance provided from 2006 to 2014, the Liberian Legislature remains a dysfunctional institution not capable of effectively conducting its three core constitutional functions of legislation, oversight, and representation.

A well-structured, functional, and independent Secretariat is the backbone of an effective legislature. However, the Secretariat and support structures remain chronically deficient. Consequently, the Liberian Legislature should initially focus on strengthening the Secretariats of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

2.3. Programming Context

This project document is aligned with global, regional, and national frameworks and agenda which support the promotion of a more inclusive and accountable democracy in Liberia. The project document is aligned with SDG 16 which seeks to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels, as well with as SDG 5 on gender equality. It is also in line with Aspiration 3 and 6 of the African Union's Agenda 2063 'An Africa of good governance, respect for

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[35] https://www.agora-parl.org/resources/library/legislative-modernization-plan-liberia-2009-2013.

human rights, justice and the rule of law' and 'An Africa, whose development is people driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children'. Further, the project builds on UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025, UNDP Country Programme Document for the Republic of Liberia (2020-2024) and Liberia's Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development 2018–2023. The Project further responds to the 2019 UN Needs Assessment Mission invited by the Liberian Government and the Strategic Plan 2018-2024 of the NEC.[36] Furthermore, this Project considers the 2021-2027 European Union (EU) Multi Indicative Programme (MIP) Priority area 3 (Improved financial and democratic governance) and the implementation of the EU Election Observation Mission's (EOM) recommendations. This Project is thus aligned with national needs and priorities and supports the government to deliver on its obligations to its people.

Building on three consecutive cycles of electoral assistance and the results of the ongoing LESP[37], this project is also focused on the entire electoral cycle, beyond the immediate electoral period, including capacity-building and institutional strengthening. It has helped consolidate Liberia's democracy through the conduct of three successful general elections under the auspices of a well-functioning NEC. Given the successful conduct of the third electoral cycle, the future electoral assistance needs to continue support to further enhance national ownership in supporting electoral and democratic institutions in more advanced areas of electoral operations.

This project is implemented by UNDP and in full cooperation with the EU Member States represented in Liberia, as well as in strong coordination with all other partners contributing to the governance process, as described in *Chapter 2.1.1.*

The EU supported the Liberian Election cycles under the 10th and 11th European Development Fund (EDF) via UNDP. The NEC has been supported by the EU during two previous election cycles via the UNDP Elections Programme. Many improvements have been acknowledged, but many challenges are still present (as described in detail in *Chapter 2.2.1*). Evaluations have been conducted at the end of the programmes in (2020). Conclusions recommended to continue support to NEC, notably in the areas of civic voter education, with specific focus on gender sensitive civic education curricula, fostering women's political participation and representation, mainstreaming gender policies, strengthening capacity of NEC and political parties, as well as building peaceful electoral environment, amongst others. All recommendations have been considered in the formulation of this project.

In the spirit of Delivering as One, UNDP and UN Women in Liberia are delivering a Joint Programme funded by the PBF Promoting Inclusive Political Participation (PIPP) and Elimination of Violence Against Women in Politics. Moreover, UN Women contributed to the LESP Project Document, which incorporates key elements of UN Women's Theory of Change (ToC) which reads: If (1) electoral frameworks and arrangements promote gender balance in elections; if (2) a cadre of interested, diverse and capable women political leaders is formed; if (3) women are perceived as equally legitimate political leaders as men in society; and if (4) women are promoted as leaders in gender sensitive political institutions, then (5) women will be politically empowered and realize their rights, because (6) women will have political agency and lead in decision-making. Given the complementarity of the PIPP and LESP projects as well as other UN Women initiatives in the field of women's political participation[38] and UN Women's comparative advantage in women's political empowerment, UNDP and UN Women have agreed to collaborate on gender and inclusion activities.

Furthermore, the implementation of Outcomes 2 and 3 of this project is supported by NIMD. NIMD undertook a desk study and a complementary mission in December 2021.The findings of the desk study suggested the need for a greater support to political party development, especially in the area of internal democracy and inclusion, and strengthening of the legislature, notably its Secretariat. NIMD builds the democracy support programmes ensuring that no one is left behind. The Project uses their comparative advantage across five key thematic areas: (1) impartiality; (2) inclusiveness; (3) flexibility; (4) local ownership; (5) long-term commitment. These areas are closely aligned with the Project. UNDP will sub-contract NIMD to deliver part of this project.

The project will further develop a coordination system / mechanism with the "AHEAD Liberia project" to be implemented by European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) to work in full synergy and complementary.

.[36] http://necliberia.org/pg_img/NEC%202018-2024%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf
[37] See Liberia Electoral Support Project Annual Reports 2020, 2021, and 2022 for reference.
[38] These initiative include for example Women Political Empowerment and Leadership (WPEL) Project (2017 – 2021) funded by Government of Canada; Sustainable and inclusive peace in Liberia through promoting women leadership and participation in civic and political life (2021 – 2022) funded by PBF; or Advancing implementation of UNSCR on women peace and security throught strengthening accountability frameworks, innovative financing and gender responsive budgeting (2019 – 2021) funded by PBF.

The project will also develop synergy with other EU financed projects (like the European Commission Flagship programme for youth participation (WYDE)[39] or the Team Europe Democracy (TED). TED initiative aims at: promoting and protecting democracy and human rights worldwide with actions based on academic evidence; shared experiences on democracy support models; and building broad alliances to inform international and national policies, programmes and actions. The TED Initiative entails actions at three different levels: (1) Increasing the knowledge base on Democracy support for evidence-based policy making; (2) Creating a TED network including EU Member States and civil society organizations, with the purpose of exchanging information and creating collaborations and synergies on democracy support, and (3) Supporting civil society in participating in the Summit for Democracy.[40]

The project will also develop, as much as possible, concrete coordination and synergies with other regional projects financed by the EU, such as the ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture (EPSAO) project program and the new « Electoral violence Monitoring Analysis and Mitigation Programme » (Projet E-MAM 2023-2026).

III. STRATEGY

In line with the above-mentioned Government priorities, NEC priorities and Strategic plan 2018 – 2024, and UNDP Country Programme Document, the Project adopts a human rights-based approach along with the 'Leaving No-One Behind' principle by focusing on the most vulnerable and marginalised. The project is adaptable and flexible to cater to changing and unforeseen circumstances, addressing structural issues for lasting results, and ensuring sustainability. This is important to ensure that citizens exercise their democratic rights. A conscious gender lens is applied throughout to take into consideration the differentiated needs, and roles, in terms of awareness and equal participation and representation of women and men in elections. There will equally be a deliberate effort to ensure the engagement and contribution of young people to the outcomes of this Project. Meaningful participation of women, young people, vulnerable and marginalised groups in the electoral and democratic process are key to ensuring sustainable gains.

3.1. Guiding principles

The principles that guide and inform the development of this project document as well as its implementation and monitoring include:

Human rights-based approach: In the implementation of this project, UNDP will adopt a human rights-based approach. This entails adherence to international human rights standards. This is critical to addressing various challenges that such inequalities, discrimination, exclusion, and vulnerabilities that undermine democracy and good governance in Liberia.

Complementarity to existing frameworks and plans of action: This project document is complementary to and builds on existing frameworks and plans of action such as the SDGs, AU's Agenda 2063, the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development 2018 – 2023, UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025 UNDP Programme Document for Republic of Liberia (2020-2024) and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework **2020-2024** for Liberia.

Collaboration and coordination: Collaboration and coordination with relevant government counterparts, UN agencies (as described in detail in *Chapter 2.1.1. Partnerships and stakeholders*) taking into consideration their mandates, e.g women's rights, persons living with disabilities, and youth led organisations and groups, traditional and community structures, media, universities, think tanks and private sector will be encouraged. This is critical in terms of maximising resources, avoidance of duplication of efforts and leveraging on the strengths as well as comparative advantage and reach of each of these stakeholders. UNDP uses a portfolio approach in addressing the governance challenges in Liberia. Consequently, this project will contribute to the overall aspiration of "improving the quality of democratic governance–legal and policy frameworks, systems, institutions and capabilities that are required to deliver essential services to the population – as the foundation of the social contract between the people and the State".

Adaptability & Flexibility: Adaptability & flexibility are instrumental because while implementing the project, adjustments and innovation will be required to address unforeseen and/or changing circumstances.

Conscious and responsive to gender, persons with disabilities and youth considerations: Throughout the implementation of project, conscious effort will be made to address the gendered dimensions of each of the identified outcome areas. The same will be done for young people and

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[39] https://epd.eu/women-and-youth-in-democracy-wyde/
[40] https://capacity4dev.europa.eu/library/ted-initiative-fact-sheet

persons with disabilities to provide them with an opportunity to contribute to the promotion and consolidation of a strong, accountable, and inclusive governance system in Liberia. This is consistent with UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025, UNDP gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025 and the PAPD.

Sustainability and resilience: Sustainability and resilience are at the heart of implementing this project. This will be achieved through inclusion and meaningful engagement and participation of relevant stakeholders in Liberia's democratic and governance ecosystem. Importantly, the Project's strategic outcomes and outputs are aligned to existing national priorities as articulated under the PAPD, and the National Elections Commission Strategic Plan 2018-2024. Sustainability and resilience is particularly achieved through a strategic long-term approach to all areas of the Project. For example, this project takes a step away from isolated trainings but rather implement full capacity strengthening strategies[i]. The project aims at training the trainers and co-create with and hand over curricula to the Liberian institutions, for them to ultimately continue implementation without international support. Focus is also on long-term national initiatives, such as passive voter registration process.

Financial sustainability through counterpart financing: The UN will engage with all levels of State institutions so that the government of Liberia can provide any contribution required in the development and implementation of relevant projects. The UN will also ensure that the funds are factored in the government budgets, the resources have been factored in the project document as part of the government contribution and included in the Results and Resources Framework. Annual Work Plans and annual budget will be approved through the Project Steering Committee, with clear government allocations to programme activities.

South-South and Triangular Cooperation: The Project will build linkages with and seek lessons from other projects in the region (including UE projects) and in other UN offices within the Regional Bureau for Africa within the framework of South-South Triangular Cooperation. These lessons will be used to strengthen its design and improve its implementation in a bid for it to deliver sustainable impact for the people of Liberia.

Capacity building through local institutions: All capacity building initiatives will be designed with a strong focus on imparting new knowledge that leads to a positive shift in attitudes and practices of public service. The project will partner with or contract expertise that are utilizing transformative capacity building approaches and include training of trainers and phasing out strategies.

Institutionalized knowledge management: Learning and knowledge management will be supported through scaling up best practices, accountability for and communication results to key stakeholders and support to learning activities.

Exit strategies for Technical Assistance: Institutional support includes placing demand-driven technical expertise in key relevant government institutions. As appropriate, technical assistance is taken up by partners through inclusion in budget process. Developing exit strategies with Liberian authorities and partners taking on functions upon termination of the intervention is critical to ensure the project's sustainability. The exit strategy will be informed by the evaluation to be conducted in 2023 and will consider, in particular, the capacity built, curricula and products handed over, as well as contingency and business continuity strategies to be developed with the national partners.

3.2. Intervention Logic and Theory of Change

3.2.1. Problem Statement

Over **20** years since the end of the Civil War, Liberia still faces challenges in establishing an inclusive, effective, transparent, and accountable governance system. This undermines democracy and good governance in the country. This theory of change assumes that the Government of Liberia and particularly the National Legislature, Political Parties, the National Elections Commission, and other relevant actors will assumes ownership of this Project and will be open to fostering inclusion, transparency, accountability, effectiveness in democratic and governance processes in Liberia. While more work needs to be done in strengthening national ownership, the 2020 Senatorial Elections were an evidence that NEC has been gradually assuming a full ownership of the electoral process. NEC is also seen as extensively assuming ownership of the LESP interventions, including of key national documents and processes, such as electoral law reform, VAWIE Protocol and action plan, amongst other. The national ownership needs to be fostered through government assuming full responsibility for financing its electoral and democratic processes. While this is beyond the project reach, the project will work with the counterparts to support effective electoral budgeting approaches.

The focus of this project is on three key problems identified during consultations with national stakeholders as priorities. These include (1) addressing challenges facing the integrity of electoral

institutions and processes; (2) addressing challenges undermining the participation of women and inclusion of marginalised groups in political processes; and (3) addressing key challenges faced by the National Legislature especially the Secretariat to enhance its role in legislative oversight.

Mainstreaming gender and diversity: The gender approach to governance and elections borrows from the UNSDCF pillar 4 and UN Women Flagship Programme Initiatives (FPI) theory of change, which defend that the gender sensitive capacity strengthening of Liberian institutions will lead to delivery of women's participation and leadership in elections and politics in line with the law, policies, standards, norms, and frameworks ensuring that the rights holders have the knowledge, service seeking behaviors and capacity to utilize them.

Aligned to the UNSDCF is the UN Women's theory of change for women's political empowerment and leadership which, based on the achievements of women in politics and lessons learned to date, envisions a four-pronged strategy: (1) support development and implementation of robust legal frameworks and administrative arrangements that promote gender balance and facilitate women's participation; (2) expand the pool of qualified and capable women to run for election; (3) transform gender norms so that women are accepted as legitimate and effective leaders; and (4) support women leaders in gender-sensitive political institutions to attract, promote and retain women leaders, and highlight the constructive contribution they make to decision-making. Within the broader governance portfolio, the Project will ensure a close collaboration with other projects and partners, notably UN Women, to leverage expertise in a joint effort to mainstream gender in the electoral cycle and democratic processes.

Gender and diversity are mainstreamed throughout the interventions of this project. This involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and spending programmes, with a view to promoting equality between women and men, and combating discrimination. Liberia's electoral system does not predispose the few women in electoral contests to win against men candidates, notably within the context of historic barriers and unlevel playing field for women and men. Whilst the Electoral Law of 2014 has established voluntary gender quota provisions on nominations which are worth leveraging in efforts to promote the participation of women in elections and political life in Liberia, the Law does not make the provision to influence for quota on results, neither does it provide for the handling and addressing of VAWIE-P. The previous UN and partners' electoral assistance and institutional strengthening efforts of the NEC accomplished the establishment of the Gender Unit, with a Gender Policy for the EMB and a mainstreaming strategy, which was reviewed in 2021/2022. Following this, the NEC has adopted an action plan which is to revise and update the Gender Policy and the implementation plan and develop a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy and a costed implementation plan that will address disability and other forms of discriminations. The NEC has managed to carry out several key gender-sensitive interventions, including sex-disaggregated data collection in the 2011 and 2017, outreach and civic – voter education (CVE) specifically targeting women, and the establishment of Gender Election Coordination Groups (GECGs). However, structural limitations and barriers (as described in detail in *Chapter 2.2.4. Inclusion context*) continue to impact on the meaningful participation of women in elections and politics in Liberia. The above challenges of gender mainstreaming in electoral context affect women's participation in other democratic institutions in Liberia, such as political parties and legislature, hence the project ensures gender consideration in all its activities.

3.2.2. Overarching Hypothesis

This project is based on the premise that the country needs to address its governance challenges to establish inclusive, effective, transparent, and accountable governance. It is founded on the logic that strong oversight, institutionalisation of political parties, and improved electoral processes will strengthen an inclusive, effective, transparent, and accountable governance system in Liberia. This theory of change acknowledges that engagement, collaboration and coordination with key stakeholders and partners is critical to the realisation of ownership, legitimacy, synergy building, avoidance of duplication of efforts and the attainment of the overall goal of the project.

3.2.3. Intervention logic

The Project seeks to apply novel approaches to mark a qualitative difference and further progression in democratic support and electoral assistance in Liberia, while embarking on the fourth consecutive cycle of electoral support. This cycle will be marked by further increased national ownership as well as continued progress towards more inclusive and transparent democracy. The overreaching strategy of the Project is therefore to be based on a workplan established along broader conceptual areas/outputs of inclusion and participation of youth, women, and persons with disabilities, transparency through civil society and legislative oversight, integrity, capacity of democratic and electoral stakeholders, and programming for peace, whereas individual actions targeting diverse and expanded electoral stakeholder groups will aim to enhance and supplement the technical electoral

assistance with broader targets, working towards a more conducive political environment and better democratic governance. This thematic as well as multi-stakeholder approach will also offer a more holistic response to observations and recommendations by stakeholders and partners, including election observation missions.

3.2.4. Theory of change

This project envisions that strengthening of inclusive, effective, transparent, and accountable governance will promote good governance and democracy in Liberia:

IF support to the electoral cycle and sustaining peace is enhanced (Outcome 1); **IF** the meaningful participation of women and inclusion of marginalised groups in political processes is enabled (Outcome 2); and **IF** the participation of citizens in the decision-making processes and accountability (through increased legislative oversight) is enhanced (Outcome 3).

THEN:

a. Electoral processes will be transformed and improved leading to enhanced inclusiveness, effectiveness, transparency, and accountability in democracy, governance, and peace in Liberia.
b. Participation of women and inclusion of marginalized groups in political processes will be realized leading to the enhancement of quality of democracy and governance in Liberia.
c. The oversight role of the National Legislature will be discharged effectively thereby leading to the enhancement of democratic values and good governance in Liberia.

WHICH will lead to the overall objective of this project: a more inclusive and transparent democracy in Liberia.

Detailed theory of change for each outcome is described below:

Outcome 1. Enhanced electoral cycle and sustenance of peace: **IF** we strengthen electoral communication as the NEC strategic communication yet remains weak; **IF** we mitigate mis/disinformation and hate speach, which has a potential to undermine confidence in the electoral process; **IF** we enhance civic and voter education critical to ensure participation in a society where literacy levels are below 50%; and **IF** we increase women's participation through the mainstreaming of gender throughout the NEC and electorate, noting that support is needed to strengthen normative influence of the NEC Gender Unit; **THEN** transparency and inclusion in the electoral process will be enhanced (Output 1.1.)

IF we enhance the technical capacity and skills of the NEC and of electoral stakeholders, notably in the advanced areas of electoral operations; **IF** we strengthen civil society's oversight of electoral and democratic processes; **IF** we enhance the technical capacity of political parties in specific areas of electoral operations; and **IF** we strengthen NEC electoral infrastructure and knowledge management; **THEN** the institutional capacity of the NEC and of electoral stakeholders will improve (Output 1.2)

IF we strengthen the early warning and response mechanism, addressing notably its weak response link and challenge of too many actors with unclearly defined responsibilities; **IF** we further train electoral security in human and electoral rights surrounding elections; **IF** we raise awareness and support mitigating measures to prevent VAWIE; **THEN** the conflict prevention and mitigation mechanism to support peaceful conduct of elections will be strengthened (Output 1.3).

IF the inclusion and transparency of the electoral process are strengthened (Output 1.1.); **IF** the institutional capacity of thr NEC and electoral stakeholders is enhanced (Output 1.2); **IF** the conflict prevention and mitigation mechanism to support the peaceful conduct of elections is strengthened (Output 1.3); **THEN electoral cycle and sustenance of peace will be enhanced (Outcome 1).**

Outcome 2. Enhanced participation of women and inclusion of marginalized groups in political processes. **IF** we develop a cohort of young political leader alumni that are connected with senior party members through mentorship, **then** youth representation and influence in decision-making within parties will increase, because these youth will have developed a powerbase in their parties. It is assumed that parties have some minimal structures, and standard bearers are supportive of training youth and connecting alumni and mentors; **IF** youth representation and increased influence in decision making within parties is achieved (Output 2.1); **THEN** Liberian parties are strengthened as a result, and are more inclusive, because diversity makes parties stronger and more electorally effective.

Furthermore, **if** we develop a cohort of women leaders, established and connected in the parties, then women's representation and influence in decision-making with the parties will increase, because they occupy influential positions within the party, will have a powerbase, and will also attract and set an example for further women's participation. It is assumed that a talented and motivated women leadership cohort exists in Liberian counties, and that a gender quota provides incentives for standard bearers to be supportive of them gaining space in their parties. It is also assumed women leadership can remain motivated and able to navigate the socio-cultural barriers in parties. **Then**, as a result, Liberian political parties become more inclusive, and gain strength, both organisationally and electorally.

Lastly, **if** we engage more persons with disabilities in decision making and policy setting, **then** disability will be given greater consideration in all aspects of public and political life, leading to inclusive governance that leaves no-one behind.

IF Liberian parties are more inclusive **THEN** youth and women's participation and inclusion in decision-making is enhanced (Output 2.1).

IF IPCC, inter-party and intra-party dialogues are strengthened through greater institutionalisation and regular engagements; **IF** political parties are trained to comply with new rules and regulations; **THEN** Politcy-based connections, collaborations, and engagements between political parties, their MPs, and voters are strengthened (Output 2.2).

IF youth and women's participation and inclusion in decision-making is enhanced (Output 2.1); **IF** Politcy-based connections, collaborations, and engagements between political parties, their MPs, and voters are strengthened (Output 2.2); **THEN** the participation of women and inclusion of marginalized groups in political processes will be enhanced (Outcome 2).

Outcome 3: Increased participation of citizens in the decision-making process and accountability:
IF there is an adequate human force, equipment, and support in the Secretariat's legislature; **IF** standing rules and procedures are reviewed and amended and legal reforms to strengthen the role of the Secretariat implemented; **IF** a full scale audit of the central administration is conducted, the modernisation plan evaluated and recommendations implemented; **IF** oversight capacity to conduct budget scrutiny and analysis is strengthened; **IF** donor and government coordination for sustainable legislative support is strengthen towards national ownership; **THEN** the capacity of the Secretariat in Legislative oversight, including on budget analysis and coopration with civic actors, will improve (Output 3.1).

IF partnerships between CSOs and national legislature improve; **IF** public access to information is fully implemented and transparency is promoted; **IF** capacity of media and CSOs on how to engage and influence legislative decisions through advocacy to impact their constituencies is built and CSOs is support to oversee the legislatur; **IF** a CSO – Legislature Dialogue platform is established; **THEN** capacity of CSOs and the media in furtherance of the oversight functions of the Legislature increses (Output 3.2).

IF the capacity of the Secretariat in Legislative oversight, including on budget analysis and coopration with civic actors, will improve (Output 3.1); **IF** capacity of CSOs and the media in furtherance of the oversight functions of the Legislature increses (Output 3.2); **THEN** the participation of citizens in the decision-making process and state accountability will increase. Strong, viable, transparent, and open Legislature will accelerate development, reduce poverty and contribute to the consolidation of peace, stability, and democracy in Liberia.

IV.   PROJECT RATIONALE AND DESCRIPTION

Cognizant of the political and economic environment in Liberia, UNDP through its Governance Portfolio has been providing support to the Government of Liberia to enhance and strengthen the quality of governance and democracy in the country. To bolster these efforts, UNDP seeks to support legal, policy frameworks, systems strengthening, institutional capacity development and the delivery of essential services to the people of Liberia, including the enhancement of social accountability, voice, and participation through civil society organizations. This is aimed at bringing the government closer to the people and to promote inclusivity, equity, and equality.

To this end, the overall goal of this project is to 'promote a more inclusive and transparent democracy in Liberia.'

4.1. Strategic Outcomes

Promotion of a more inclusive and transparent democracy in Liberia may take various forms. The focus of this project is on three key problems identified during consultations with national

stakeholders as priorities. These include (1) addressing challenges facing the integrity of electoral institutions and processes; (2) addressing challenges undermining the participation of women and inclusion of marginalised groups in political processes; and (3) addressing key challenges faced by the National Legislature especially the Secretariat to enhance its role in legislative oversight. Therefore, the Project identifies the following three **strategic outcomes** which are interrelated, interdependent and transformative:

> **Outcome 1:** Enhanced electoral cycle and sustenance of peace
> **Outcome 2:** Enhanced participation and inclusion of women and marginalized groups in political processes; and
> **Outcome 3:** Increased state accountability (through increased legislative oversight)

Outcome 1: Enhanced electoral cycle and sustenance of peace

Credible, inclusive transparent, and peaceful elections are critical to democracy, peace, and stability in Liberia. While elections in the country have become credible, legitimate, and peaceful various shortcomings have been witnessed.[41] The National Elections Commission (NEC) faces organizational, capacity, and sustainability challenges such as planning and budgetary shortcoming relating to timely allocation of resources, weak asset management systems, weak internal and external communication, exacerbated by inadequate ICT infrastructure, limited infrastructure and the rainy season impacting electoral preparations (as described in detail in Chapter 2.1). Gaps in the electoral dispute resolution system are often exploited by actors aiming to undermine the electoral process, and low literacy among the voters remains a challenge. Even though elections have largely been peaceful, perceptions of vote tampering, tension and isolated instances of election violence, intimidation, and harassment of female candidates have been documented in reports of election observation missions.[42] Consequently, support to institutional strengthening, and capacity development of NEC, political parties and electoral stakeholders remains critical for the consolidation of the fragile Liberian peace.

While UNDP support, and most recently LESP, has been working with the NEC to address these challenges, more efforts are still required to support and strengthen Liberia's electoral cycle. To this end, in line with Outcome 1 of the UNDP Country Programme Document for Liberia 2020-2024, UNDP working with other development partners will harness its comparative advantage to enhance support to Liberia's electoral cycle and sustenance of peace. UNDP will work closely with UN Women to use their comparative advantage in promoting women's political participation. CSOs will further engage in implementation of specific outputs or activities as per specific thematic area (see below).

Output 1.1: Strengthened inclusion, and transparency of the electoral process.

This output is implemented within the framework of Governance Portfolio output area 3.2 Enhanced civic and voter education and public information towards inclusive and active democratic societies and 3.3 Capacity of political parties and civil society improved to participate in political processes and decision-making, especially women, persons living with disabilities and youth.

Women, youth, persons with disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities, and CSOs are important players in Liberia's democratic and governance processes. Based on this understanding, recently democratic governments have made efforts to improve their inclusion in political processes. However, because of Liberia's long history of discrimination, there still exists multiple structural challenges that hinder the participation of the groups in political and electoral processes in the country. For instance, in the 2020 senatorial elections only 20 out of 118 senatorial candidates were women.[43] Thus, women are far from attaining gender equality in political representation bodies and electoral processes generally.

Some of the ways to enhance and ensure inclusion, participation, and transparency in the electoral processes include ensuring effective communication, involvement of women, youth, persons with disabilities and CSOs in the NEC's activities, and conducting voter education.

UNDP, in collaboration with its partners, will focus on the following indicative activities for this output:

Activity 1.1.1: Strengthening the NEC's strategic approach to communication, external relations, and disinformation management

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[41]   See European Union Election Follow-up Mission Liberia 2021 Final Report and The Cater Centre, National Elections in Liberia, Fall 2017 Final Report.
[42]   As above.
[43]   Ambassadorial-Level Meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission Liberia Configuration 12 November 2020 Chair's Summary p2.

Electoral Stakeholders´engagement, Election Education and Public information have been identified among the two key areas in the NEC Strategic Plan 2018 – 2024. While the NEC has structures to build on (decentralized communication structures in the region, existence of the well-structured communication policy signed in 2021, active web presence, and access to media), more efforts need to be placed into strategic communication and addressing weaknesses such as lengthy decision making on communication issues, and gaps in equipment and capacity available to the Communication department of the NEC[44]. While the Electoral Observers to the 2017 General Elections noted genuine efforts by the NEC to keep stakeholders informed throughout the electoral process, opposition parties and civil society criticized the NEC for its poor management of communication and the lack of a two-way dialogue.[45] To ensure comprehensive, timely, and accurate information about all stages of the electoral process towards the variety of electoral stakeholders in all areas of the country, it is critical that communication related to the electoral process is integrated into every function of the NEC. Timely publication of the NEC Board of Commissioners (BOC) decisions would increase transparency of the process[46]. The NEC Strategic Plan also stresses the need to strengthen the Information Management system as well as enhance internal communication within the NEC HQ and from NEC HQ to the magisterial office. This is a critical initial step to ensure that accurate information is primarily well-understood at all levels of the NEC, and subsequently picked up by the relevant section (Communication, Political Parties' Liaison, ICT), as well as NEC Senior Management to accurately, timely, and effectively communicate to electoral stakeholders.

A communication strategy to implement the communication policy has been approved. Based on this strategy, the project will continue advocating for robust communication strategies and their implementation to support effective communication planning and execution towards increased public trust in the electoral process, building upon its earlier efforts, such as technical advice to communication, and training to media.

The concepts of rumours and fake news are not enough to explain disinformation and hate speech. In many instances false information can be attributed to human error, while others might be purposefully doctored with the intent to cause harm. Therefore, UNDP LESP worked with the UN Joint Task Force for Electoral Assistance and a variety of partners, including OHCHR, in classifying instances of fake news, rumours, and disinformation into different definitions. Subsequently, the iVerify platform managed by Local Voices of Liberia (CSO) has been designed. At the same time, the quality of media reporting on electoral issues appears poor, with journalists reporting without proper verification and fact-checking. The increased politicization of the media further decreases independent reporting. As dis/misinformation and hate speech have a harmful impact on peaceful electoral process, the iVerify System implemented by Local voices Liberia (LVL), with support from the EC-UNDP Joint Taskforce for Electoral Assistance (JTF), will continue providing targeted mitigation of disinformation related to the electoral process.

The activities will, therefore, also strengthen the capacities of national institutions to deal with misinformation, disinformation and hate speech, while protecting the human rights of Liberian citizens.

Indicative actions involved in this activity include:

- Capacity building , advisory and funding support to the NEC leadership and Communication Section (Provision of technical assistance)
- Provision of infrastructure and tools to improve election-related communication
- Developing an effective communication flow within the NEC structures and external relations to strengthen timely, effective, and accurate information sharing e.g., support to regular stakeholder engagement meetings calendars, support to organizing regular engagement activities, advice to enhance two-way-communication).
- Consolidating communication and information sharing framework within the NEC to allow a robust approach to NEC external relations.
- Improving existing NEC communication channels (website, call center, social media) to carry out electoral messaging accurately, timely and effectively.
- Exploring innovative strategies for open governance and information- sharing
- Funding support to improve communication capabilities of the media section: equipment (hardware, software), staff training.
- Conducting a post-2023 elections public perception surveys to monitor changes in public opinion and inform strategies aimed at enhancing public confidence in the NEC (this survey conducted before the 2023 elections serves as a baseline for this and other project activities; the survey will be co-funded between LESP and PBF Inclusive Political Participation Project).

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[44] NEC Strategic Plan Review 2022, Communication Department, SWOT Analysis.
[45] EU Election Observation Mission Final Report p. 55.
[46] Recommendation of the EU Election Follow-Up Mission, Final Report (June 2021), p. 14.

- Strengthening NEC relations with the media and improve NEC's capacity to carry out effective media trainings to ensure accurate coverage and enhance the capacity of media to effectively communicate about electoral process and decrease instance of misinformation.
- Continuous support to IT solution to support the coordination, identification and mitigation of disinformation phenomenon.
- Training for the national level iVerify platform managed by LVL on the identification and response to disinformation.
- Training of LVL fact checkers involved in the iVerify platform.
- At least five trainings for the media to improve communication on electoral issues (grant to LVL).
- At least five tranings for electoral stakeholders on misinformation and false reporting.
- Development of a toolkit for NEC, media, and other stakeholders (IPCC, civil society) with relevant knowledge and tools to identify and combat all types of false reporting, intentional or not.
- Build collaboration between CSO and UN OHCHR to strengthen the prevention of mis/dis-information and hate speech (synergy with Peaceful electoral environment project).
- Strengthen the capacities of national public institutions to deal with derogatory and inflammatory language especially against women candidates, misinformation, disinformation and hate speech, while protecting the human rights of Liberian citizens (implemented in synergy with activities under the PBF Project on Peaceful Electoral Environment, in collaboration with OHCHR; UN Women will support the gender component).
- Establish statistics on mis/disinformation and hate speech that will allow monitoring trends in the future (LVL).
- Through UN Inter-Agency coordination, strengthen the political reach of iVerify to address mis-/disinformation and hate speech in other areas beyond elections. This will also enhance sustainability of the action.

Activity 1.1.2. Strengthening capacity of NEC, civil society, and other actors in conducting civic and voter education

Effective Civic and Voter Education (CVE) is critical to ensure that voters have the necessary information and understanding to exercise their right to vote. The concept of CVE encompasses the wider aspects of meaningful and inclusive participation in a democratic society. The need for civic and voter education at a grass root level, targeting all populations including Persons living with disabilities, women, youth, particularly in rural and less accessible areas remain critical in fostering broad confidence in elections and their outcomes. The Evaluation of Support to 2015 – 2018 Electoral Support Project as well as the Observer Reports revealed that marginalized groups and the poor, urban and rural populations continue to face challenges to meaningful participation.[47]

The intervention will include support to CVE during electoral events and long-term more strategic CVE support. In 2022, LESP supported the NEC in the creation of CVE cells in all counties to bring the CVE closer to the people. The support will continue to ensure positive impact on 2023 General elections but also a sustainability of the cells. Further support will be channeled to develop a more robust CVE

Indicative actions involved in this activity include:

- Expert support to timely planning and delivery of public outreach and CVE specifically targeting women, youth, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable and marginalized groups (Provision of technical assistance)
- Advisory and funding support to CVE coordinating platform. Support to platforms enhancing NEC interactions with electoral stakeholders based on two-way dialogues and principles of inclusive governance, integrating youth, women, persons with disabilities, and vulnerable groups. Continuous engagement with CVE Taskforce set up in 2022.
- Development and distribution of CVE toolkit targeting various stages of the electoral process, with particular focus on youth, women, persons with disabilities, vulnerable and marginalized groups
- Support to activities and sustenance of electoral district (73)-based CVE cells (equipment, training); continuous support to CVE-cells based on performance and coverage to carry out electoral and civic education throughout the electoral cycle.
- Printing CVE materials and translating CVE into local languages.
- Establishing CVE clubs in schools and university to carry long-term CVE.

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[47] *Inter alia,* in 2017, campaigns were mounted, for example, to avoid nomination of Muslim candidates. The 30% quota on women participation cannot yet be effectively enforced.

- Develop strategies and support to reach-out to disadvantaged groups (women, youth, persons with disabilities, amongst others).
- Dialogues with the Government and development partners to enhance sustainability of civic and voter education (possibly also through the renewed dialogue on the school-based CVE curricula.
- Conducting at least two youth summits to strengthen youth engagement and electoral violence prevention (thorugh a grant to the local CSO).
- Recruit CSOs to support the conduct of CVE (small grants to CSOs).
- Deployment of joint NEC – UNDP Monitoring Teams to oversee CVE activities.

Activity 1.1.3. Improve access and opportunity of the right to vote and inclusion of women and vulnerable groups in electoral processes.

While all interventions by the project carefully consider and adopt a human rights-based approach and mainstream vulnerable groups, specific activities are designed to improve meaningful access and opportunity of the vulnerable and marginalized groups to electoral and democratic processes.

While some procedures and policies to facilitate participation of persons with disabilities were introduced during the last electoral cycles, they need to be further streamlined and fully implemented.[48] The disability policy, which was discussed during the 2021 consultations, necessitates the final review and approval. The access of persons with disabilities to the electoral process need to be facilitated by ensuring better access to polling stations and voter registration process, through the re-assessment of polling stations and their layout, and introduction of mobile registration. Better training of polling staff and voter education campaign should be afforded to the measures in place, including the use of tactile ballot papers.[49] The effective inclusion of women, youth and vulnerable and marginalized groups requires their full participation in the NEC consultation platforms.

Under the LESP, the NEC revitalized six Gender Election Coordination Groups (GECG) in five counties i.e., Lower Montserrado, Bomi, Grand Cape Mount, Gbarpolu and Margibi, with support from UN Women. The GECGs are coordination and information sharing mechanisms which will support the mainstreaming of gender and social inclusion in elections including CVE cells by sharing information with respect to the free and equal participation of women, persons with disability and other vulnerable groups with NEC headquarters and from the NEC to electoral stakeholders at the county level. As part of this process of re-establishing the GECGs, the NEC worked to increase the capacities of GECG members, which include the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection (MGCSP) County Coordinators, women leaders, youth leaders, persons with disabilities, representatives of women, youth, and disabled people's organizations working on gender and social inclusion, other community leaders, elections magistrates and other local NEC staff. Through workshops, GECG members learned about key issues around gender and social inclusion in elections, discussed the roles of each stakeholder, and revised the terms of reference for the GECG. Going forward, UN Women will support the Gender Section to complete the establishment of GECG in the remaining 13 magisterial areas and support coordination meetings and information dissemination on gender and social inclusion. The GECG also has a key role to play towards the dissemination and sensitization on the simplified VAWIE-P Protocol and in collecting and sharing information about VAWIE-P incidence in their respective magisterial areas. UN Women will also aim to further support collaboration between the NEC and the MGCSP so that these structures and constitutive relations can be sustained to support coordination on gender and inclusion in democratic governance beyond elections.

Indicative actions involved in this activity include:

Support to NEC Gender Section in developing formative influence over the NEC to mainstream gender-related policies by (the below activity components will be implemented by UN Women,):
- Enhancing coordination and mainstreaming of gender within the NEC.
- Implementation of the Gender Policy and Strategy to ensure prioritization of gender in the work of all NEC departments and sections.
- Comprehensive review of NEC laws, procedures, and regulations to identify specific obstacles to women's participation and seek redress.
- Collection of gender disaggregated electoral data and development of repository and databases; enhance NEC capacity to review the data.

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[48] EU EOM 2017, p.3.
[49] The National Union of the Disable noted that CVE messages were not produced for visually and hearing impaired. Other than that, the CVE material was not translated in the minority languages.

- Implementation and enforcement of 30 percent gender quota and, if applicable, monitoring of compliance by political parties through the collection of gender disaggregated data and on the development of national database.
- Advocacy for enforcement of temporary special measures for women's participation in electoral processes, appointment of women in leadership positions.
- Development and dissemination of gender-sensitive CVE.
- Design and publish innovative multimedia products to promote political rights and gender and social inclusion in elections.
- Support to GECGS to monitor and report on the inclusion of women and vulnerable groups and disseminate key messages/CVE materials.
- Use billboards in support of the inclusion of women and vulnerable groups in all 15 counties.

Promoting inclusion and eliminating obstacles to inclusive political participation (some activity components in this area will be implemented by UN Women– to be specifically determined in the annual workplans)**:**

- Expert support to women's political participation and prevention of VAWIE-P, including the coordination function of the UN Women-implemented and PBF-funded activites (Provision of technical assistance))
- Political party liaison within NEC in implementation of Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol, and national laws provisions by NEC and political parties.
- Awareness raising and gender-sensitive trainings for NEC staff and other electoral stakeholders (Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE), VAWIE, disability inclusion trainings).
- Continuous support to awareness raising and trainings on women and PWDs participation in electoral and political processes.
- NEC to strengthen and adopt the draft policy on disability with its implementation plan.
- Integration of women, youth, disability-based organizations in NEC consultations for electoral planning.
- Multi-stakeholder Lessons Learnt consultations following the completion of 2023 electoral cycle and further support to identified reforms of the electoral legal framework to ensure positive enforcement for participation of women, youth, and vulnerable and marginalized groups in electoral process.
- Support to Human Resources Department in improving existing policies and strategies to ensure gender, youth, PWD-sensitive recruitment.
- NEC to use tactile ballots/ballot guides and ensure that extensive training on its usages is carried out with targeted stakeholders.
- Conduct inclusive election rights campaigns.
- Explore platforms to bring people closer to politics and strengthen citizen participation in electoral and democratic processes.
- Gender responsive civic and voter education campaign using SMS and social media.
- Develop code of conduct on gender responsive reporting and training of journalists on gender responsive reporting on women in elections and politics
- Media engagement portraying women in active leadership roles, including support to radio programs and radio messaging.

Output 1.2: Enhanced institutional capacity and accountability of NEC and electoral stakeholders.

In line with Governance Portfolio, output area 3.1 Strengthened electoral framework (laws, policies, institutions, and processes) for inclusive, transparent, and peaceful conduct of elections, the Project supports institutional capacity and accountability of the NEC and electoral stakeholders. Institutional capacity and accountability of NEC and electoral stakeholders contributes to building trust in the electoral system and enhance the implementation of recommendations of various electoral observation missions to the country.[50] Importantly, increased institutional capacity and accountability is central to realisation of credible, legitimate, and transparent elections, an essential pillar of good governance, democracy, peace, and stability in Liberia.

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[50] See European Union Election Follow-up Mission Liberia 2021 Final Report and The Cater Centre, National Elections in Liberia, Fall 2017 Final Report.

While ensuring that all capacity strengthening interventions build on evidence-based capacity assessment and long-term sustainable approach, the Project focuses on the following indicative activities for this output.

Activity 1.2.1. Provide technical capacity and skills enhancement of NEC at all Levels.

The building of institutional capacities to conduct credible and peaceful election process is a key focus of the project. ***At the system level,*** the capacity development includes reforming electoral institutions, policies and laws as well as enhancing the ability of civil society, political parties and all eligible voters, including the marginalized groups, to fulfil their role in the electoral process. ***At the organizational level***, capacity support is provided to assist the NEC to plan, conduct and manage different electoral cycles in a professional, independent, and sustainable manner. The Project focuses on the establishment of procedures and knowledge management services to enable the institution to face sudden loss of key personnel and changes in the Board of Commissioners. The Project also promotes strong organizational culture for the NEC to build the trust of electoral stakeholders by displaying strong adherence to transparency, neutrality, and professionalism. ***At the individual level***, capacity development is provided to voters and candidates to play constructive long-term role in a democratic society. The Project supports NEC to enhance the quality and impact of Civic and Voter Education (CVE) during elections and throughout the electoral cycle. This is done in a close collaboration with other partners, including international and domestic civil society organizations, with the overall aim to strengthen meaningful the participation of Liberians in electoral and democratic process.

The levels are closely interlinked and build on robust capacity-development program developed in 2021/2022 targeting all levels to ensure sustainability and involvement of all relevant stakeholders. To ensure the national ownership and parallel development of the NEC and electoral stakeholders, NEC continues playing a central role in delivering CVE for elections and trainings for electoral stakeholders.

Furthermore, the reliance on donor funding presents significant challenges to electoral sustainability in Liberia throughout the wider electoral cycle. At the same time, NEC faces significant difficulties in development and submission of realistic operational budget proposals. The project supports the NEC and Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) to strengthen their planning and budget formulation methods (short- and long-term) to ensure that NEC's planning is realistic in its assumption of security and stability, considering unforeseen circumstances, as well possible austerity measures caused by COVID-19. Basing budgeting on the Strategic Plan improves the NEC's accountability for the use of public and other funds, and helps it focus on delivering cost-effective services. It helps the NEC to identify layers of details within both regular (operational) and election event budgets, with the aim to achieve cost-effectiveness and efficiency in the use of resources. Different approaches may be taken to create the budget levels, considering available funds. In times of austerity and budget cuts, the prioritization between the items in the strategic plan needs to take place

Indicative actions involved in this activity include:

- Provide technical and expert support to the NEC and electoral stakeholders capacity strengthening (provision of technical assistance)
- Conduct final review of the NEC Strategic Plan and development of the 2025 – 2031 Strategic Plan
- Lessons learnt conference after 2023 elections.
- Identification, development and implementation of strategies and adoption of policies for retention of trained electoral staff.
- Specialized trainings for NEC staff in professional areas as per capacity assessment conducted in 2021.
- Enhancing NEC capacity to organize BRIDGE trainings for electoral stakeholders to advance their knowledge in more specialized areas of electoral process (this activity builds on engagements in 2022 where LESP conducted the Train the Facilitators workshop to enhance the cohort of suitable facilitators at the national level)
- Strengthening NEC capacity to deliver regular trainings and briefings for electoral stakeholders on individual phases of the electoral process, including at the county level (voter registration, candidate nomination, campaign, campaign finance, observation of elections, etc.) based on adult learning methodology
- On-the-job capacity-building of NEC in ensuring compliance with electoral political and campaign finance legal and regulatory framework.
- Support to training of the electoral staff prior to elections, including review of training materials to ensure they are fully in line with amended electoral procedures, regulations, and laws; cascade training roll-out – Training of Trainers component; and production of some electoral training materials.

- Support to Effective Electoral Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, and Evaluation towards Greater Sustainability and Accountability.
- Support to boundary delimitation and its alignment with the Liberia's legal framework
- Development of business continuity plans.
- Strengthened monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and continuous implementation of lessons learnt through enhanced capacity of the M&E staff.
- Strategic review of electoral planning and budgeting at all levels post-2023 General Elections
- Procurement of M&E software and related on-the-job training.
- Review of existing plans, regulations, and procedures to seek more sustainable solutions for logistics and electoral operations.
- On-the-job training and troubleshooting for Enterprise Resource Management System to achieve full utilization.
- Promotion and support of national dialogue for elections to explore existing national capacities and assets to ensure cost-effective electoral administration.

Activity 1.2.2. Provide technical capacity support to electoral stakeholders towards greater accountability and electoral integrity

The 2019 UN NAM recommended support to electoral stakeholders in advanced areas of electoral operations. The key identified areas where the project engages are identified and described below.

Electoral dispute resolution: Electoral observation reports, UN Needs Assessment Mission (NAM), and lessons learnt identified shortcomings in the professional capacity of lawyers at all levels, among different stakeholders, and in various stages of the electoral disputes' resolution process. NEC regulations were barely enough to ensure due process; cases could have been dealt more expeditiously. Trainings for hearing officers provided a good start, but there is space to further enhance overall capacity. As part of LESP EDR Capacity Development Plan, UNDP LESP has earlier developed a multi-year training program aimed at enhancing the credibility of the electoral dispute resolution process. This framework offers a long-term support and professionalization of EDR (comprehensive capacity development plan). This project aims to fully implement this plan and improve the EDR process in the long run.

Capacity of political parties in specific areas of electoral operations: The existing Inter-Party Consultative Committee (IPCC) platform is well placed to enhance capacity-building of the political parties. In collaboration with other partners, the Project seeks to strengthen capacity of political parties in specific areas of electoral operations, specifically in campaign finance, voter registration, campaign rules and regulations, electoral dispute resolution, and poll watching among others. The Project's approach of engagement is through partnership with NEC's political party liaison, finance, and training departments, providing NEC with adequate mechanisms, resources, and knowledge to train political parties.

IPCC is also well established to promote accountability and electoral integrity amongst the political parties and enhance respect for peaceful elections. In line with the Farmington Declaration, a previous electoral project has supported the revision of the Code of Conduct, to ensure renewed commitment to the peaceful process. The Project will continue supporting the strengthening of the IPCC and enhance its efforts to target relevant actors at the county and grassroot levels.

Political/campaign finance regulations intend to create a level playing field for electoral competition. In line with Liberian Constitution, Article 83(d) of the 1986 Constitution that requires disclosure from candidates, committees, and political parties of the amount and source of contributions and expenditures, the 2017 EU EOM recommended the strengthening of the framework and capacities in this area. In 2022, LESP supported NEC in revising these regulations, however, institutional capacity and capacity of electoral stakeholders to implement and oversee this aspect is limited. CSOs and activists across the world have begun to monitor campaign finance and advocate for reforms in order to reduce the opportunities for corruption, with some promising results. Furthermore, CSOs are well placed to play an oversight role, stemming notably from significant experience as observers during the past elections. The knowledge of the operational area, nevertheless, needs to be further improved. Integrity Watch Liberia (IWL), having a set up MOU with the NEC to support the implementation of campaign finance framework, has been identified to support the project in strengthening the campaign fianance framework. Through the cooperation with IWL, this Project seeks to invest in strengthening the long-term oversight role of the civil society to enhance accountability of Liberia's democratic institutions to the people.

IWL will further implement the e-platform to strengthen campaign finance tracking. The electronic platform on campaign finance reporting can be an important tool in the effective submission, review and publication of financial reports, which will help the NEC and other relevant stakeholders to

perform its campaign finance oversight function more efficiently contributing to the transparency of the electoral process.

Indicative actions involved in this activity include:

Support to EDR:
- Provision of technical support to the EDR
- Support NEC in formalizing partnership with the Liberia National Bar Association (LNBA), Judicial Institute, and Supreme Court to increase professionality of disposing electoral cases.
- Provision of technical and advisory support to the NEC on EDR and legal matters.
- Development and implementation of comprehensive and sustainable multi-actor, multi-layer, and multi-year EDR training program.
- Implementation of an EDR capacity development plan[51] or NEC and stakeholders at all levels to strengthen EDR capacity.
- Support NEC and LNBA in developing a multi-year schedule and conduct regular EDR trainings to enhance knowledge of electoral stakeholder.
- Incorporating EDR component into CVE.
- Identifying and hiring legal volunteers in counties to support NEC in EDR during the electoral period and to enhance national capacity in EDR. Support NEC with recruitment of Hearing Officers and Clerk.
- Successfully implement case management system for faster disposal of electoral cases.
- Development of database of trained election lawyers.
- Conduct EDR lessons learnt to contribute to the electoral reform aiming to improve legal framework.

Support to IPCC (the activities between Output 1 and 2 are linked. While this Output focuses on engaging IPCC in advanced areas of electoral operation and electoral violence prevention, Output 2 builds overall IPCC capacity in inter- and intra-party engagements and broader democratic governance issues).
- Provision of technical support to the political parties and campaign finance (Political party/campaign finance specialist)
- NEC and its magisterial offices to hold briefings for political parties on specific areas of electoral operations (cascade trainings).
- NEC briefings for political parties on voter registration in HQ and counties
- NEC briefings for political parties on EDR in HQ and counties
- Strengthening IPCC as a dispute resolution and violence prevention mechanism in line with the Farmington Declaration.
- Support to Farmington Declaration and the revision of the political party Codes of Conduct.

Support to campaign finance monitoring and civil society oversight (these activity components are to be implemented through Responsible Party Agreement with Integrity Watch Liberia):
- Enhance political party financial compliance through sensitizing, training, and coaching
- Design and implement an E-platform to strengthen campaign finance tracking involving the NEC, the independent audit agency and political parties.
- Support NEC briefings for political parties on campaign finance rules and regulations in HQ and counties.
- Strengthen Civil Society and Media oversight of Liberia democratic institutions and processes – political/campaign finance expenditure oversight
- Development of CSO oversight strategy towards enhancing accountability of democratic Institutions.
- Development of training manuals for CSOs to strengthen their oversight capacities.
- Cascade training for CSOs to enhance oversight capacity of democratic institutions nation-wide.
- Distribution of small grants to CSOs to oversee campaign finance framework during 2023 elections

Activity 1.2.3 Increase Integrity and Sustainability of Electoral Operations, including Voter Registration Process.

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[51] See LESP EDR Capacity Development Plan, (UNDP, 2021).

The active voter registration is considered costly and not sustainable by the NEC and electoral stakeholders. Moreover, the electoral stakeholders expressed repeatedly a significant distruct in Optional Mark Recognition System. The NEC therefore considered introducing biometric voter registration. In 2021, UNDP supported NEC in conducting the Feasibility Study on the introduction of biometric voter registration system in Liberia. After weighting all challenges and responsibilities, NEC has subsequently decided to implement BVR in 2023 General Elections. It was also agreed that following the elections, cooperation will be set up with the National Identification Registry (NIR) towards the functioning civil registry, and eventually a passive voter registration process as recommended by EU EOM 2017 amongst others. This will be an important aspect in strengthening sustainability and integrity of the electoral process. This activity will assist NEC in implementing credible and transparent voter registration strategies.

Indicative actions involved in this activity include:

- Advisory, logistics, and training support to BVR and development of a credible voter list (Technical assistance through consultancy to the process)
- Development and implementation of strategies and safeguards to improve public perception of the voter list.
- Support to NEC Consultations with electoral stakeholders on the voter registration process.
- Support to investigation of the voter list by voters, civil society, and possibly independent experts.
- Support to audit of the first biometric voter registration process and support in drawing lessons learnt from the proves.
- Further engagement with and support to NEC-National Identification Registry (NIR) collaboration on civil and voter registration processes
- Support to engagements towards the passive voter registration process

Activity 1.2.4. Strengthen NEC infrastructure, including physical, ICT and knowledge management

The digitalisation permeates the entire project document. The areas considering the technology use (or strengthening the use of existing technology) if useful, feasible, and advisable, take into consideration the integrity of the electoral process. The areas related to key electoral operations, such as observer accreditation, recruitment, candidate nomination, amongst others, would benefit from digitalization, hence, this project provides technical assistance to the NEC to enhance capacity in these areas. Furthermore, in 2020, LESP conducted an ICT infrastructure assessment identifying several risks, including the complexity of ICT-based procurements, lack of back-up, lack of adequate planning in procurement renewals, issues related to cyber security, and system outdating. The continuous support to the NEC in this area is therefore based on the assumption that ectoral procurement must be conducted with a high degree of integrity, transparency, and competitiveness. Therefore, tender exercises must be identified well in advance as well as carefully planned and timed. Any ICT-based procurement is to be coupled with adequate planning, asset management, maintenance, and access policies, to further strengthen the data security, and training to ensure proper handling and full use of the system.

Records management and research is a fundamental management function which allows institutions to store essential documents, track and retrieve information when needed. The NEC records and research unit had been challenged to effectively manage essential electoral and historical documents of the institution due to capacity gap in filing, proper labeling, and management. UNDP embraced the archiving section of the NEC and is committed to strengthening their capacity in knowledge and resource management. In 2021/2022, eight (8) staff (6 RRC, 1 Chairperson office and 1 co-chair office of the NEC) underwent comprehensive training in records management, electronic archiving, and research methods. The training strengthened staff knowledge in electronic archiving, filing, bookkeeping and resource management. This project continues building capacity of this important department.

Relative to the strengthening of general infrastructure, in March/Apri 2020, the LESP conducted the defect liability assessments for the 12 warehouses rehabilitated under the previous Liberia Electoral Support Project (2015-2020). LESP also supported revision and repairs of solar panels in all 19 magisterial offices and provided some support to infrastrustural strengthening. While development partners strongly feel that the infrastructural work and generally functioning of the democratic institutions must be in the hands of the government, and therefore there are no specific activities in this project to fix or build physical infrastructure, this activity remains open in case the urgent need arrises to provide infrastructural support – especially in cases related to electoral security.

Indicative actions involved in this activity include:

- Provision of Technical Assistance (consultant) to support the ICT infrastructure
- Analysis of ICT Procurement needs and long-term procurement planning.
- Enhancing NEC staff's knowledge of the ICT innovation cycles and sustainability of the ICT system through in-house training.
- Some ICT procurement (where applicable; to the limited extent).
- Review and update of existing NEC databases and the security of the data.
- Development of new databases, including database of vetted electoral staff, campaign finance, political party, observers, agents' databases.
- Trainings related to the efficient use of the new infrastructure.
- Development of ICT asset management policies and procedures.
- Development of access policies as they relate to protection of sensitive data and relevant in-house training.
- Digitalization of all NEC documents, their categorization, cataloguing and storage.
- Equipment for the Resource and Research Center (software and hardware).
- Strengthening NEC's capacity in knowledge resource management, archiving and bookkeeping.
- Strengthening of the physical infrastructure only if the urgent need arrises and with the agreement of the Project Donor Group

Output 1.3. Strengthened conflict prevention and mitigation mechanisms to support peaceful conduct of elections.

Strengthened conflict prevention and mitigation mechanisms are central to the peaceful conduct of elections and stability in Liberia. While the 2020 mid-term Senatorial elections, the first national elections after the departure of UNMIL, were orderly and peaceful, there are still significant election-related tensions and increased incidents of violence, particularly against women.[52] UNDP and ECOWAS have been supporting the NEC to strengthen electoral dispute resolution mechanisms and to increase efforts to prevent conflict through working closely with the Liberian National Police and the Women's Situation Room (WSR) Liberia branch.[53]

Considering that underlying grievances can easily contribute to political violence, there is need to invest in conflict prevention and dispute resolution mechanisms, and to contribute to credible, fair, inclusive, and transparent elections in the interest of good governance, democracy, and peace in Liberia. Thus, Under the Governance portfolio output area 3.1 Strengthened electoral framework for inclusive, transparent, and peaceful elections, the Project supports prevention and mitigation mechanisms, institutions, and actors to conduct peaceful elections, and to reduce obstacles to women's participation. Building on its comparative advantage, UNDP will focus on the followong indicative activities for this output.

Activity 1.3.1. Provide technical and capacity building support to strengthen existing national mechanisms to early identify and respond to electoral violence.

In 2021, LESP conducted an assessment of the Liberia's *early warning and response infrastructure*. One fundamental take-away from the mission is that there are systematic flaws in the general EWER landscape that hamper not only the efficiency of the PBO early warning system but other electoral violence prevention systems in Liberia as well. The country has a general challenge with responding to reported incidents that stem from issues such as: (1) Delays that may be encountered at the response level, where actors such as the PBO forward incidents to the National Center for Coordination of the Response Mechanism (NCCRM), that then transmits them to relevant response actors (e.g., police, ministries, etc.) where, ultimately, a specific response is issued. A three-step response system may hamper the timeliness of responses. (2) Problems related to a phased approach to response, where the NCCRM coordinates responses to incidents three days a week (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays), result in an occasional lack of response outside these timeframes. Additionally, current procedures envisage the transmission of verified incidents by email or the LERN platform, which hampers the efficient and timely transmission of these incidents to decision-makers at the NCCRM. (3) The actual response to incidents or risks, once the NCCRM transmits the reports to relevant actors, is severely hampered and limited due to operational and logistical constraints. Through discussions with relevant actors, complaints have been voiced regarding issues such as lack of vehicles, fuel, general equipment or even personnel that impedes either timely or effective responses to issues raised. (4) Lack of means to monitor implemented responses following the coordination actions undertaken by the NCCRM. Currently, there is no system in place that allows for

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[52] EU Multiannual Indicative Programme Liberia 2021-2027 p8.
[53] Ambassadorial-Level Meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission Liberia Configuration 12 November 2020 Chair's Summary p2.

effective tracking of responses. The PBO EWER is a long-established system that has proven successful on many fronts, but stil facing challenges of too many actors and unclearly defined responsibilities that results in the lack of country-level statistcs on incidents of electoral violence. The limited data analytical capacity of the EWER monitors and analysts also contributes to this factor[54].

The Project works with partners to establish closer relationships amongst PBO, NCCRM, IPCC, NLP, Independent National Commission for Human Rights, (INCHR), Women's Sitatuion Room (WSR), NEC and other stakeholders through a coordination mechanism (EWER/LERN platform) on prevention and response to electoral violence. The Standard Operating Procedures for the actors were drafted in 2020. This project therefore furtehr intends to strengthen coordination and multi-stakeholder dialogue between the partners (and possibly other relevant stakeholders) through an IT platform (Liberia Early Warning and Response Network [LERN] / iReport) specifically designed to enhance data collection, sharing and analysis. The platform forms the basis for well-informed prevention and response planning and real-time actions.

The **Liberian National Police** (LNP) plays a vital role in the electoral process to prevent and address instances of electoral violence. Building upon the good work done by the LNP in the 2017 elections, the Project, in collaboration with relevant partners, continues strengthening the capacity of the LNP to protect human rights during the electoral process and secure the upcoming elections.

While there is a relatively free space for media to operate in Liberia, harassment and intimidation has been reported in tense situations. The media is key to ensuring transparent and credible electoral processes, and journalists need to be protected from harassment to provide a conducive environment to report on the electoral process. In collaboration with NEC and relevant partners, the Project continues to support collaborative relationships between media and law enforcement, based on Standard Operating Procedures signed by both sides in November 2022. The iVerify system, supported under Output 1.1, also feeds into the EWER, especially in instances where mis/dis-information or hate speech has a potential to result in electoral violence.

The **campaign period** was the most vulnerable point during the 2017 elections. The election observers, including those belonging to the EU EOM, noted that provisions to regulate campaign activities were scattered across several documents. That resulted in the lack of precise directives for the approval and coordination of campaign events, and therefore, sporadic clashes between supporters of different political camps occurred. The Project supports the consolidation of the regulatory framework in one document issued by the NEC, and its dissemination and enforcement jointly with the LNP. This would help decrease tensions stemming from conflicting campaign events. The revitalization of security coordination mechanisms and refresher training for the LNP and relevant electoral stakeholders remain key to promote peaceful conduct of the electoral process.

Indicative actions involved in this activity include:

- Support to the EWER mechanism and stakeholders:
- Continuation of the IPCC electoral violence prevention dialogue, including relevant government institutions and non-government actors, with additional focus on consultations at the local level (at least 10 dialogues to be conducted).
- Consolidation, printing, and dissemination of regulatory framework for electoral campaign.
- Support coordination and response planning capacities between the NEC and the Government's Peace Building Office (PBO), the LNP, and NCCRM (and other relevant stakeholders) to strengthen national election-related early warning capacities and electoral violence prevention, including through training and dialogue.
- Procurement of required material to allow for effective coordination between stakeholders involved.
- Continuous support to PBO Election Situation Room and ABIC Women's Situation Room. Financial support and incentives to monitors in the field and analysts in the situation room.
- Develop and conduct specific training for PBO early warning monitors on the detection of electoral violence (Training of Trainers (ToT), printing and distribution of material, etc.) and the Liberia Early-Warning and Response Network (LERN) platform intended to enhance data collection, sharing and analysis. The specific training focuses on the 272 conflict early warning monitors and 30 youth agents of peace in the 15 counties and link them to strategic groups observing election and national referendum processes.
- Support awareness raising, communication and sensitization of the general population on the Early Warning Mechanism for electoral violence prevention.
- Produce and air peace messages on peaceful election.

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[54] Report: Early Warning and Response (EWER) Assessment Mission (UNDP, September, 2021).

- Develop jingles and drama on peaceful election and air on state and community radio stations across the country, also on the ECOWAS radio station.
- Support to training of the LNP, and security actors as well as media in relation to the safety of journalists.
- NEC-led refresher training for the LNP and other electoral security stakeholders.
- Dissemination and implementation of SOPs on protection of journalists during the electoral process and continuous engagement.
- Revision, printing, and dissemination of security booklets.
- Support to consolidation of campaign regulations.
- Development of active grassroot structure under the IPCC to enhance electoral violence prevention (cascade training).

Activity 1.3.2. Support, awareness-raising, and mitigation measures to prevent violence against women in elections and politics.

In response the above-mentioned challenges (see *Chapter 2.2.4. Inclusion (women, youth, and persons with disabilities) context*) to women's political participation, in 2022, twenty-nine political parties signed the VAWIE protocol and action plan. However, dissemination, awareness, and full implementation are yet to be taken up by the NEC. In close collaboration with UN Women, the LESP project supported awareness-raising among the electoral actors of VAWIE, its impact on the electoral process, and strategies to tackle it. In collaboration with UN Women, a simplified and graphic version of the VAWIE/P Protocol which will be easily understood by the general public will be developed. UN Women will support key messaging on the Protocol with reporting channels to be aired on community radio stations. In the long run, and in close collaboration with the Peacebuilding Fund Project, these activities further support the integration of VAWIE into EWER structures and pathways of referral for VAWIE victims. The Project engages in lobby to clearly define penalties for perpetrators. The Project also supports a Focal Point set up at relevant institutions to support VAWIE victims.

Furtehrmore, the project focuses on the integration of VAWIE into EWER and support to the Women's Situation Room (WSR) implemented by Angie Brooks International Center. This is done in synergy with the PBF Project on Inclusive Political Participation (PIPP) Project described in Chapter *2.3 Programming context.* Jointly with PBF PIPP, LESP has launched the public perception survey in 2022 to generate baseline data for measuring performance and outcomes related to women's political participation. The survey will be concluded early 2023.

This activity is mostly implemented by UN Women.

Indicative actions involved in this activity include

- The Gender Unit and NEC in raising awareness of the VAWIE Protocol and its implementation.
- Platforms to ensure safe and inclusive discussions on VAWIE prevention (at least 10 consultative meetings).
- Enhance capacity of CSOs and political parties to understand and combat VAWIE (funding support to printing and dissemination of relevant materials, two trainings on VAWIE).
- Implementation of reporting pathways for victims of VAWIE and lobby to define penalties for perpetrators.
- Conduct training on gender responsive conflict early warning for the election.
- Provide legal aid and information to women and vulnerable candidates, including women experiencing VAWIE.
- Support capacity building of justice sector to prevent and respond to VAWIE.
- Integrate iReport platform into EWER (jointly with PIPP interventions that focuses specifically in launching VAWIE/P referral pathway under the EWER)
- Support to Women's Situation Room (this activity is implemented through a grant to the Angie Brooks International Center and is supported in synergy with PBF Peaceful electoral environment project)

Outcome 2. Enhanced participation and inclusion of women and marginalized groups in political processes

Although women and youth constitute majority of Liberia's population, they are marginalised in political processes. For example, while women make up 49.6% of the country's population, their

participation in governance and politics remains low.[55] In addition, other groups such as persons with disabilities and religious and ethnic minorities have repeatedly raised concerns about exclusion in democratic and governance process including particularly in political party structures.[56] This means that women, youth, and other vulnerable groups do not reap the full benefits of political processes in Liberia.

Political parties which should be a key vehicle in enhancing women, youth, persons with disabilities and minorities' engagement in political processes, are generally weak, largely undemocratic, not institutionalized and strongly personalized and not people-centred. As such, societal interests are not prioritised, as well as inclusivity of citizens interests especially youth, women and persons living with disability remains wanting. Personal interests take precedence and patronage interests and practices are normalised. This weakens democracy and undermines good governance and service delivery in Liberia. Collaboration and cooperation of political parties in pursuit of national, citizen's and shared interests is hamstrung by partisan politics that are devoid of a willingness to look beyond narrow party interests. Afro Barometer has indeed noted that only 48% of Liberian electorate identify with a political party in the country.[57]

These challenges clearly demonstrate that more efforts are required to enhance the participation of women, youth, and inclusion of marginalised groups in political processes in Liberia. Therefore, in line with Outcome 1 of the UNDP Country Programme Document for Liberia 2020-2024,
UNDP, working with other development partners, will harness its comparative advantage to enhance the participation of women and youth and inclusion of marginalised groups in political processes.

This component will be implemented by UNDP, the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty-Democracy (NIMD), and UN Women based on the comparative advantage of each of the partners.

To increase the participation of women and inclusion of marginalised groups in political processes, this project focuses on the following output areas:

Output 2.1. Enhanced opportunities for youth and women of political and civic engagement.

In the recent past democratic governments in Liberia have made efforts to enhance the realisation of women, youth, and other vulnerable groups' rights in political and economic spheres. For instance, the Government of Liberia has demonstrated commitment towards this end by adoption of the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD), which is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[58] However, due to structural hinderances, women, youth, and other vulnerable groups are still underrepresented and marginalised in political processes.[59]

Activity 2.1.1. Provide support to youth and women's organizations, and formations for greater political party representation and increased influence in decision-making.

Addressing the root causes of women's exclusion and marginalization through conscientizing on existing multiple forms of discrimination and inequality and the negative effect of the same will be done with various groups including politcal parties, communites, women's rights organisations and networks taking into account the principle of Leave No One Behind (LNOB) with intentional targeting of young women (18-35), women living with disability etc. This will be achieved through dialogue, advocacy, awarness raising and community mobilisation activities and by building solidarity among diverse groups of women in Liberia promoting women's participation in public and poltical life.

Promoting gender as an agenda among political parties is key to achieving a gender equal society. Political parties have a significant role to play in shaping public policy, and their commitment to gender equality can have a ripple effect throughout society. By including gender equality in their platforms and policies, political parties can help to ensure that the needs and concerns of women and girls are represented in decision-making processes. Through collaboration with UN Women, support will be provided to women's and youth auxiliaries in political parties so that they are equipped to lobby for internal gender quota within their political institutions so they adopt gender policies and other necessary measures to promote women's political participation and inclusive political institutions. Gender as an agenda will be promoted throughout? the election by supporting debates among political parties.

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[55] Provisional results of its 2022 National Population and Housing Census. https://liberia.un.org/en/220493-liberia-announces-provisional-results-its-5th-national-population-and-housing-census
[56] See The Cater Centre, National Elections in Liberia, Fall 2017 Final Report p9.
[57] Bratton M & and Bhoojedhur S, Africans want open elections – especially if they bring change Afrobarometer Policy Paper No. 58, June 2019 p17.
[58] , UN Women, Liberia Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) August 2021.
[59] UNDP, *Human Development Report 2019;* Republic of Liberia, PAPD, UN Women, Liberia Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) August 2021 p8 & The Cater Centre, National Elections in Liberia, Fall 2017 Final Report p9.

Indicative actions involved in this activity include:

- Organize networking, dialogues, conference, and opportunities for women leaders and advocates (advocacy & mobilization) including the National Women's Conference and establishment of the African Women Leaders' Network Youth Caucus to promote gender as an agenda and build solidarity among diverse groups of women in Liberia.
- Hold debates amongst political parties on gender equality issues in Liberia, including male politicical leaders to ensure broad support for women inclusion
- Support women's auxiliaries in political parties to lobby for the adoption of internal quotas for women as candidates and in leadership positions in political parties.
- Convene post-election national conference on women's political participation to take stock of the experiences of women throughout the 2023 and previous electoral cycles, to analyze gains and persisting challenges, as well as elaborate key lessons learned and inform a strategy of support to women in future political processes and elections.
- Support community dialogues and awareness interventions on existing multiple forms of discrimination, discriminatory gender norms and inequality, and its effects on women's representation and participation in leadership and decision making.

Activity 2.1.2. Provide support to youth and women candidates to be included in electoral lists (horizontal and vertical)

Srengthening the leadership capacity of women, young women, aspirants and create a support system for them through networking and mentorship structures is also an integral intervention strategy in Liberia, and it is an area where UN Women demonstrated ability to sustainably expand the pool of women leaders and aspirants so they participate equally in politics and public life. This has been done through the delivery of a capacity building programme for women/young women aspirants/candidates and campaign staff on political leadership and campaigning. UN Women's standardized Political Leadership and Candidate Training Manual and workbook will be used to facilitate the training using qualified trainers that went through a training of trainers (TOT) on the Manual. UN Women will continue to expand a pool of trainers through TOT on both its political leadership training materials and transformative leadership manual including adult learning skills.

Post election, in collabartion with UN Women, support will be provided to women leaders in the legislature, executive and local governance through capacity building programs and south-south experience sharing. UN Women will also ensure there is standardization and institutionalization of capacity building programmes provided to women leaders and members of the Legislature (Senate and House of Representatives), women in the executive and local governance to ensure quality, standardization, contextualization, and sustainability of capacity building trainings.

Indicative actions involved in this activity include:

- Political leadership and candidates' training to expand a pool of qualified and capable women to run for election.
- Conduct a gender audit in collaboration with NEC to assess the gender sensitiveness of the entire election process.
- Convene a post-election national conference on women's political participation to take stock of the experiences of women throughout 2023 and previous electoral cycles, to analyze gains and persisting challenges, as well as to elaborate key lessons learned and inform a strategy of support to women in future political process and elections.
- Support women and youth auxiliaries of political parties to become future leaders enhancing their skills through transformative leadership development.
- Organize capacity building for women aspirants and leaders on transformative leadership for gender equality.
- Organize a democracy schools, including training of trainers

Activity 2.1.3. Provide capacity building and technical assistance to political parties to strengthen youth and gender-responsive policies and practices and promote internal democracy

Political parties remain as the major entities through which people can choose their representatives and are indispensable institutions for democratic politics and representation. The role of political parties has long been essential to the functioning of a modern representative democracy as they are seen to be among the key institutions for inclusive participation and accountable representation.[60] In

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[60] International IDEA 2012.

Liberia, the majority of political parties lack internal policies such as gender policy and anti-sexual harassment policy that will facilitate women's and youth participation. Political parties should be strongly encouraged to remove all barriers that directly or indirectly discriminate against the participation of women and youth to develop their capacity to analyse issues. To this effect, the project will support the gender audit of political parties and the development of action plans following a participatory process to help institutionalize gender equality in political party structures, processes and practices. The gender audits assess party procedures, activities and culture from a gender perspective and help identify discriminatory practices that hinder women from advancing their political careers. Based on the gaps identified by these self-assessments, political parties will be supported to develop a comprehensive action plan to strengthen internal democracy including to foster women's and youth participation.

Most political parties in Liberia have women's auxiliaries or branches to advance their political participation. Among other functions, these platforms can advocate within the party on issues of particular concern for women constituents and women party members; influence the party's policy positions; promote women's leadership at all levels within the party; lobby for and oversee gender policies; and mobilize women voters and support for the party and its candidates during elections. These platforms will be used to promote women and youth participation and gender as an agenda within political parties.

Indicative actions involved in this activity include:

- Undertake a gender audit of political parties to institutionalize gender equality in political party structures, processes, and practices.
- Organize capacity building training to political parties based on the findings of the gender audit.
- Provide technical support to strengthen internal democracy and promote women and youth participation in political parties.
- Develop and implement mentorship programme for women and youth and provide technical support to women and youth wings of political parties in collaboration with UN Women.

Activity 2.1.4. Develop and implement a mentorship programme for women and youth and provide technical support to women and youth wings of political parties.

Facilitating opportunities for women to access coaching and mentorship opportunities and targeting young women on this is part of this strategy to ensure that the effort does not stop at capacity building, but requires creating a space for internalization of learning and having a support system. UN Women will work with the Liberia Institute for Public Administration and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to support training and mentorship of women leaders in the public sector. Promoting intergenerational leadership, experience sharing and solidarity and movement building amongst women groups including African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) Liberia Chapter, the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Presidential Center for Women and Development (EJS Center) and Angie Brooks International Center (ABIC) will also contribute to women being able to exercise voice, agency, and improved leadership competencies. An internship program for young women including those in youth wings of political parties will be organized for those with aspirations to work in elected office and the public service.

Indicative actions involved in this activity include:

- Internships for young women in WLC, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Secretariat, etc.
- Provide mentorship and coaching for incoming women leaders.
- Support mentorship and coaching for aspirants/women wings and young women in youth wings.
- Dissemination of and consultation on EOM recommendations

Output 2.2 Strengthened inter-party collaboration and policy-based connections between parties, their MPs and voters.

Conscious of the challenges facing political parties in Liberia and the important role that they have in democratic processes in the country, it becomes imperative to develop a more robust inter-party collaboration and policy-based connections between political parties, their MPs, and voters. While considering existing mechanisms such as the IPCC, inter-party collaboration and policy-based connections are likely to enhance the role played by political parties and adequately respond to expectations of voters and citizens in general.

Importantly, to change policy or legislation, especially regarding important themes such as inclusive democracy, it is crucial to have as many political parties on board as possible. The bigger the majority for these kinds of measures, the better these new measures are embedded and have a broad political support base. Therefore, dialogue on these issues within the parties themselves and between the parties and voters is crucial.

Activity 2.2.1 Support policy-based connections, collaboration and engagements between political parties, their MPs, and voters.

The strength of a political party is defined by its cohesion and the way all branches of the party present themselves, responding to the voters. Political power is obtained to do something with it: advance with the political agenda that political parties have defined. Therefore, it is important to enhance the thematic knowledge of political parties, so that they can translate that into policy and legislation. For that, all branches of the political party should be on the same page.

Indicative actions involved in this activity include:

- Political Economy Analysis to understand the power dynamics in the country;
- Organize thematic knowledge sessions on the major issues/developments in the country for all political parties– trust building activity;
- Organize with each political party internal dialogue for them to define their proposal on the thematic issue;
- Ensure alignment between the party and their chosen representative to advance the issue in Congress

Activity 2.2.2 Facilitate inter-party and intra-party dialogues and engagement between political parties and the National Elections Commission through the Inter-Party Consultative Committee (IPCC).

This activity is to be done in a follow up, synergy and complementarity with Outcome 1 of this Project (follow up to the LESP) and activities implemented by Democracy International (DI), and UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) projects, amongst others, while ensuring collaboration and national ownership by the NEC and political parties. The support will also strengthen, where applicable, the Resident Coordinator's 'Good Offices' and diplomatic efforts to mitigate inter- and intra-party issues and challenges.

Indicative actions involved in this activity include:

- Support greater institutionalization of the IPCC
- Re-explore the setting up the IPCC Secreatariat or similar mechanism that would allow greater coordination inter- and intra party
- Continuation of IPCC dialogues as a conflict prevention tool, including relevant government institutions and non-government actors, with additional focus on consultations at the local level

Activity 2.2.3 Provide support and training of political parties to comply with new rules and regulations.

For democracy to properly function the rules of the game are crucial. Liberia is making progress towards a more robust political system. Several proposals are on the table regarding reform of the political party and electoral system to make the system more inclusive especially regarding the position of women and youth. The project will engage with political parties to better understand legal and regulatory reforms, towards a greater implementation of some of the EU EOM recommendations.

Indicative actions involved in this activity include:

- Advice/Technical assistance to make a comparative analysis of current legislation and reform proposals regarding inclusive democracy.
- Cost of politics study implementation and dissemination.
- Training on the new rules and regulations once adopted.

- Support to the political parties to implement the new rules.
- Monitor compliance of the parties and follow up where needed.

Outcome 3 Increased state accountability (through increased legislative oversight)

The media and civil society organisations have not been actively involved in Legislature's activities which undermines oversight and accountability. An open and transparent Legislature provides a space for citizens' participation and enhances the accountability of Legislators to their respective constituencies. This makes support to civil society and the media to understand, monitor, and report on the workings of the Legislature critical to the attainment of inclusive, accountable, and transparent governance in Liberia. Inclusion of media and civil society organisations in Legislature's activities will contribute to minimisation of corruption, promote good governance, and enhance the quality of democracy in the country.

To attain this strategic outcome, UNDP will harness its comparative advantage and build on lessons learned from earlier support to the Legislature in 2006 and 2012. It will further utilise NIMD's advantage working with national parliaments globally. To reinforce the legislative institutions by strengthening the Secretariat function of the Legislature toward modernization; enhance the engagement of Civil Society Organizations, and the Media as a watchdog of the society in furtherance of the oversight role of the National Legislature, and strengthen the Legislative Budget Office, the Legislative Modernization Secretariat, and other organs, for improved budget analysis and scrutiny.

Output 3.1: Improved capacity of the Secretariat in legislative oversight, including on budget analysis and cooperation with civic actors.

The Legislature's Secretariat and support structures lack capacity and continue to be chronically deficient. The Secretariat lacks the requisite modern tools and skills to perform its functions in supporting the Legislature to effectively implement its oversight function. This makes improving the capacity of the Secretariat a crucial output towards effective discharge of legislative oversight.

Activity 3.1.1. Enhancing the Secretariat function towards reform and modernization

This activity focuses on making the Liberian Legislature 21st-century compliant to play its role effectively in the governance process of the country as the law-making arm of the government. A well-structured, functional, and independent Secretariat is the backbone of an effective legislature. However, the Secretariat and support structures remain chronically deficient. Consequently, the Project will focus on modernizing and strengthening the Secretariats of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The activity will build on lessons learned from mitigated results in past efforts to upgrade the capacity of the Liberian Legislature, by focusing on actions to reinstate donors' confidence in the Legislature's political will to modernize, by correcting identified weaknesses of previous engagements, and by developing unimplemented activities of the 2009-2013 Legislative Modernization Plan (LMP).

During the implementation, UNDP will offer a high-level support for a new/revised LMP by the Legislature, with a review of internal mechanisms for coordinating and overseeing the implementation of the LMP to ensure effective reporting to the HOR and Senator Leadership Committees. In practice, to reach this goal, political will is needed to lobby for institutionalized budgetary support through the national budget to be allocated towards the implementation of the LMP and/or a revised LMP that would reflect the updated priorities of the upcoming 55th legislature. In the past, monitoring of the implementation of the LMP was sporadic and there was no regular monitoring of progress. Consideration should be given to how the JLMC can more systematically report on progress to the Leadership Committees of both houses.

Each house in the Legislature has a Leadership Committee comprising their Presiding Officer and all Statutory Committee Chairs. The JLMC (a joint Select Committee) is not currently represented on those Leadership Committees. Consideration could be given to including the JLMC in both of those groups and/or requiring the JLMC to report periodically to each Presiding Officer, who would then present the JLMC report to the Leadership Committee, for their information and guidance. This is important because these Leadership Committees have decision-making powers over the Legislature's budget and the Presiding Officers and key Committees also have accountability lines over staff. This recommendation was made in the 2012 stocktake report supported by UNDP but was never implemented. This activity will support implementation of this recommendation.

The Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism of the 2009-2013 LMP provided for a mid-term review of its implementation and required approval of the plenary of the Senate and House for any major modification to the Modernization Plan. This mid-term review was never undertaken, and, as a result, recommendations of the 2012 stocktake report were never formally endorsed by the Legislature, nor implemented to this day. This activity aims to support the mid-term review of a new LMP is conducted.

Indicative actions involved in this activity include:

- Sign formal technical assistance and corporation agreement between the legislature and UNDP.
- Hire an independent firm to implement a full-scale system and personnel audit of central administrations.
- Provide technical support to the Secretariat, bicameral departments, and Joint Legislative Modernization Committee (JLMC) to undertake training, research, documentation, and capacity building for Secretariat staff.
- Provide technical and digital equipment for the Legislative Secretariat and 4 bicameral support structures.
- Align UNDP's project portfolio and GOL's PAPD
- Conduct capacity building of select legislative staff and enhance gender-sensitivity awareness of Legislators with emphasis on women caucus members.
- Support policy and legal reforms in the Legislature that strengthen the role of the Secretariat.
- Support implementation of a full scale system and personnel audit of central administration
- Review and amend standing rules of both houses
- Support to restructuring of departments with overlapping functions and design, standardized pay system and TORs for departments and employees.
- Support the mid-term review of a new LMP

Activity 3.1.2. Building Legislative capacity to contribute to poverty reduction through budgetary allocation

This activity focuses on reviewing and reinforcing mechanisms by which the Legislature can strengthen its contribution to poverty reduction efforts by improved budget analysis and scrutiny, and cooperation with civic actors at each stage in the domestic policy cycle.

Section 7 of the 2009-2013 LMP on implementation arrangements specifically included a section on the role of international development partners. UNDP was given the role of continuing to chair the Donor Coordinating Committee (DCC), but it is understood that this has not occurred. It is strongly encouraged that the DCC be re-established and convened regularly to provide an opportunity for the Legislature and development partners to talk honestly and openly about the work of the Legislature. The Legislature is often not a well-understood branch of government, with donors more routinely engaging with the Executive, so the DCC would provide a very strategic platform for the Legislature to build the understanding of these key partners of its special role within the nation's governance framework. Consideration could be given to including both JLMC members as well as the two Presiding Officers in the meetings of the DCC, to ensure that messages from donors can be fed back to the Leadership Committees of both houses. This was also a recommendation of the 2012 stocktake report.

One of the drawbacks of the 2009-2013 LMP at a strategic level was an over-focus on infrastructure priorities. While the institutional mapping and needs assessment annexed to this project document indicates that infrastructure improvements will have to be considered to improve the delivery capacity of the Legislature, the heavy emphasis on infrastructure, especially in terms of the budget, may have inadvertently resulted in a dilution of the focus on activities to support Members and staff development. While it is not suggested that infrastructure activities be excluded from any future revised LMP, nonetheless, strategically it would be useful to separate infrastructure from ongoing capacity development – both to build support within Government for the Legislature's budget proposals, as well as to encourage development partners to invest in the LMP's implementation. When the infrastructure plan is revisited and revised, consideration may be given to grouping major structural renovations together, and major internal equipment purchases together. Smaller packages of work may help make bids for funding more digestible to the Government and donors and would also allow equipment purchases to be made over years. Again, this was a recommendation of the 2012 UNDP-supported stocktake report that was never implemented.

Indicative actions involved in this activity include:

- Enhance budgetary capacity of the legislature to contribute to poverty reduction through budget allocation
- Strengthen oversight capacity to conduct budget scrutiny and policy analysis
- Enhance donor coordination for sustainable legislative support
- Re-establish and convene the Legislative Support Donor Coordination Committee to facilitate dialogue between the Legislature and development partners.

- Evaluate the implementation of the new legislative modernization plan
- Develop a separate infrastructure development plan which can be annexed to a revised LMP and provided separately to government and development partners.
- Support dialogue on sustainability of legislature and its enterventions.

Output 3.2:. Increased capacity of CSOs and the media in furtherance of the oversight functions of the Legislature.

Considering the importance of an open and transparent legislature to citizen participation, oversight, and accountability, the UNDP aims to broaden the civic space in Liberia. This will include a focus on strengthening the voice and participation of CSOs, and the media, through whom the voices of the communities/constituencies are heard. This will build constructive legislative-civic partnerships and identify opportunities for cooperation that strengthen each of the legislature's oversight function.

Activity 3.2.1. Support CSOs, media and citizens to enhance legislative oversight

In order for democracy to function, it is important to have independent media and strong civil society organizations to be the watchdog of democratic developments and political decision-making. At the same time the political actors should be open and receptive to suggestions, comments and recommendations from civil society to improve responsiveness of political actors. The project will support the set-up of citizen consultation platforms and mechanisms which enable interactions between the Legislature of Liberia and the citizens. The mechanism will also allow citizens to exchange views on ongoing debates through various tools for petition and consultation on the same website as the Legislature.

The activity will also support gender-responsive participation, with special focus on meaningful participation of women as well as promoting their increased access to the information on on-line activities and facilitating grassroots involvement. The activity links to the UN Women support to the specialized committees in the legislature and liaises with various CSOs and networks including rural women for close collaboration between the women and the legislature.[61] Online tools may be explored, however, noting the electricity gap and low internet penetration, triangulation remains very key to ensuring inclusive and meaningful women's participation.

Indicative actions involved in this activity include:

- Build capacities of political parties and national legislature to respond to comments and recommendations from civil society
- Facilitate and develop partnerships between Civil Society Organizations, media and national Legislature and individual members of the Legislature to strengthen civic engagement with the Legislature.
- Improve public access to information; facilitate citizens participation and promote transparency
- Conduct trainings and capacity building for Civil Society Organizations and the media on how to engage and influence legislative decisions to impact their constituencies.
- Provide grant to CSOs and media organizations to monitor, report and publish findings on the work of the national legislature.
- Establish quarterly CSO-Legislature dialogues to facilitate sustained interactions between the Legislature and citizens (Parliamentary Monitoring Organizations (PMOs)), media, recognized youth, and women's organizations).
- Support legislative oversight on budget analysis and cooperation with civic actors.

V.   PROJECT MANAGEMENT MODALITIES

5.1. Project Implementation Modalities

The project is co-funded by the European Union (EU), Sweden, Ireland, and UNDP. The EU is the main strategic partner in the implementation of this project, together with Sweden and Ireland. In the Government, the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning – via the National Authorizing Office

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[61] UN Women intend to involve the women networks especially African Women Leaders Network - Liberia (LWLN) chapter who have access to internet and have had various consultations with women CSOs, Association of Rural women, political parties women's wings, Coalition of Political Parties' Women in Liberia (COPPWiL) and other like-minded networks. The rural women structure is very organised and have representation, which vibrantly work well with various stakeholders.

(NAO) – is a key partner of the Project. The MFDP is member of the Project Board, and responsible together with UNDP and the NEC for strategic direction of the Project.

EU support is in line with its Multiannual Indicative Programme Liberia 2021-2027. The Project is managed as a pooled fund ('multi-donor action') reflecting upon UNDP comparative advantage in the changing aid environment. It is to position the organisation around UNDP's proven strengths in capacity development, policy advisory services, human development advocacy and support to development programme implementation, founded on evidence-based analysis and practice. This approach is also based on existing UNDP's experience in implementing projects in Liberia including the ongoing EU-UNDP partnership on electoral assistance. The approach is endorsed by other EU Member States (Ireland and Sweden), leading to an EU unified common approach and engagement. The possible leverage to the overall governance process is amplified via the overall coordination among all actors. The basket fund is also opened to other development partners who wish to provide funding support.

5.1.1. Implementing and collaborating partners

As this project is implemented by the UNDP Direct Implementation Modality (DIM), UNDP assumes overall responsibility and accountability for the project management and implementation. Accordingly, UNDP follows all policies and procedures established for its own operations. Based on the comparative advantage, UNDP has identified several collaborating partners (third paties) who act on behalf of the UNDP on the basis of a written agreement or contract to deliver some of the activities, purchase goods or provide services using the project budget. The collaborating partner may manage the use of these goods and services to carry out project activities and produce outputs[62]. All collaborating partners are directly accountable to UNDP in accordance with the terms of their agreement or contract with UNDP. Under Outcomes 1 and 2, UN Women serve as responsible party to implement activities specified in the above section. NIMD, on a separate contract, will conduct some activities under Outcomes 2 and 3. The project will also engage civil society organizations and companies (contractors) (to be specified based on competitive procurement or recruitment proceses). The project engages LVL under the Outcome 1 to implement iVerify system. Under Outcome 2, UNDP engages LNBA and Intergrity Watch to deliver specific activities as described in the above section. The Angie Brooks International Center will deliver activities related to the implementation of the Women's Situation Room and PBO related to the Early Warning and Response. These collaborating partners / third parties were selected based on their comparative advantage.

UNDP enhances the collaboration with Government of Liberia and relevant EU Governments, other UN Agencies, CSOs and the private sector, where applicable. The Project is implemented in collaboration with national government institutions including: the NEC, Legislature, Judiciary and Executive; Law Reform Commission, and the Peace Building Office as well as Civil Society Organizations, media, and security institutions. It will build on existing partnerships and seek to build further synergies with past and existing activities on the ground. The ongoing collaboration that is being further explored has been established with efforts to promote electoral reform, support political parties, and support women's participation. In addition, during the electoral period, collaboration and synergies are ensured with other electoral assistance providers on the ground. These entities, which will not have a contract with UNDP but may be engaged in cost-sharing of some of the project's activities include:

- USAID-funded Eletions and Democracy Activity, implemented by Democracy International (DI): this activity provides some direct support to the NEC and will collaborate with the project for example on electoral audit, training of political party agents / poll watchers, communication, and civic and voter education.
- The project works with the NDI on party agents training and promoting women's political participation.
- Internews collaborates with the project on training of journalists and media.
- The Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA), the Carter Center, and others (as described in detail in the *Chapter 2.1.1. Partnerships and stakeholders* support the electoral observation. The project will engage with these institutions as well as the EU EOM to share information and facilitate access to electoral officials where needed.

5.1.2. Strategic outcomes

The project is delivered in three strategic outcomes:

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[62] Direct Implementation Modality,
https://popp.undp.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/FRM_Financial%20Management%20and%20Implementation%20Modality_Direct%20Implementation%20Modality.docx&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1 .

Strategic Outcome One - *Enhanced support to the electoral cycle and sustenance of peace* – is implemented jointly with its main counterpart, the National Elections Commission. UNDP's partnership with NEC is well established, based on support provided to the process through the four consecutive cycles and ongoing Liberia Electoral Support Project co-funded by the EU, Sweden, Ireland, and UNDP through the basket fund.

Other implementing partners include the tLiberia Peacebuilding Office, the tLiberia National Bar Association, Local Voices of Liberia, UN Women, and the Angie Brooks International Center amongst others. The Project further works with security institutions, notably the Liberia National Police (LNP), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the Press Union of Liberia (PUL) and the Female Journalist Association of Liberia (FeJal) aim to promote collaboration in its intervention areas. The role of these partners is described in detail in *Chapter IV – Project rationale and description.*

Strategic Outcome Two - **Enhanced participation and inclusion of women and marginalized groups in political processes** - implemented by UNDP in collaboration with NIMD, and UN Women, drawing from their comparative advantages. ***Political parties , IPCC, youth and women organizations*** are among the key stakeholders in the process.

Strategic Outcome Three – **Increased state accountability (through increased legislative oversight)**
– will be delivered by UNDP in collaboration with NIMD, drawing on their comprehensive advantages. This Outcome will start in year 2 of the action once the newly elected representatives assume their seats. This is important to enhance the impact of this outcome. The Project will be implemented in partnership with relevant public sector institutions across the executive and legislative branches of government. These institutions have played important roles in previous programs focused on legislative reforms and modernization as far back as 2006 when the Legislature invited UNDP to conduct a legislative needs assessment which followed the design of a **legislative modernization program** supported also by other development partners such as the World Bank, the European Union, the African Capacity-Building Foundation (ACBF), the African Union, ECOWAS, UNDP, the Embassy of the People's Republic of China, USAID through NDI, and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAF).

The Legislature will seek to cultivate a strong partnership with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the media as a watchdog of the society, youth, and women organizations in efforts to establish a functional platform for legislative interactions with the public through these different national structures. The partnership will be a significant step towards bridging information gaps between legislators and their constituencies and will enhance the national push toward legislative openness. Towards this end, a quarterly CSO - Legislaturer oundtable dialogue will be established to facilitate constant interactions between the legislature and citizens (PMOs, Media, recognized youth, and women organizations).

5.2. Management of the Project

A **Steering Committee/Project Board (SC/PB) is** constituted by the Government of Liberia – MFDP and NEC, UNDP (co-chairs) and its development (funding) partners: the EU, Sweden, and Ireland (members). UN Women, NIMD and other responsible parties, together with the engaged national and international partners will be engaged as observers. The SC/PB will offer strategic guidance and oversight to the implementation of the project, while the technical committees (Technical Working Groups, and other ad hoc committees) will be established to enhance dialogue and cooperation amongst the various stakeholders across the political, strategic and operational levels. The technical committee's membership would be broad, to be diverse, inclusive and gender-sensitive, and ideally entail all partners including CSOs and NGOs working on good governance, including development partners, with regular thematic meetings during the year. The SC/PB would meet twice a year to review and determine the following issues:

- Assessment of the status of implementation of the Project as well as monitoring and tracking progress.
- Provide strategic guidance and recommendations based on Political Economy Analysis, including on project management and good governance.
- Validation of strategies and results.
- Approval of work plans.
- Review evaluation and audit reports

The Steering Committee is assisted by the **Project Donor Group (PDG).** This group serves as a technical committee to the SC/PB and meets at technical and strategic level. It brings together the project development partners, UNDP and key collaborating partners (UN Women, NIMD). The PDG meets quarterly or as needed to approve policy level decisions for project funding, such as the annual work plan and review project progress, evaluation, audits, monitor implementation progress. It

provides technical advice to the Project SC/PB on project issues, identify risks and propose mitigation measures.

The electoral component is further supported by the **Technical Working Group (TWG).** The TWG is co-chaired by UNDP's Chief Technical Adviser for Elections and NEC's Executive Director. It is held at the technical level to update on ongoing activities with a variety of international development partners involved in the electoral support. It facilitates information-sharing and development of synergies between the activities.

The Project activities are implemented under the overall guidance and strategic direction of UNDP Resident Representative and where applicable the UN Country Team, programmatic direction and guidance of UNDP's Deputy Resident Representative and Governance Team Leader and with Project assurance by the UNDP's Project Management Unit established in the UNDP Country Office. In addition, each Outcome will have its own implementation structure. While a separate Project Management Structure is already established for the electoral component (Outcome 1) copying the initial LESP structure in line with UN electoral assistance principles, Outcomes 2 and 3 will be led by UNDP's Governance Team Leader and supported by Project Officer.

The Governance Team leader leads **UNDP's Inclusive Governance Portfolio (IGP) team.** The IGP was formally set up by the Country Programme Document (CPD) by the Executive Board in September 2019[63]. The IGP team will work with the implementing partners – UN Women and NIMD to set up and guide the implementation team. The IGP will also dedicate a project officer / manager to oversee the implementation of Outcomes 2 and 3 and to coordinate with Outcome 1 led by CTA (Elections). As UN Women implement activities under Outcome 1 and 2, the implementation team will report to UNDP's Chief Technical Adviser on Elections for Outcome 1 and Governance Team Leader for Outcome 2.

At the request of one of the donors (EU, Sweden, Ireland) **ad hoc meetings** may be established to jointly review the proper implementation of the project (budget, budget planning, work plans, monitoring and evaluation modalities) or other issues of internal or external coordination.

Project Management Chart

The project takes the strategic guidance from the PB/SC (detailed composition stated above) and the UN Country Team that comprises all UN agencies present in Liberia. Programatic direction and guidance is provided by UN Deputy Resident Representative of Programmes (DRR-P) and Inclusive Governance Team leader. Outcome 1 (electoral assistance) is retained in the same composition as ongoing LESP. It is managed by UNDP's Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) who is already in place

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[63] Terms of Reference for Inclusive Governance Outcome Evaluation. https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/19897 .

(*detailed description below*). The CTA also provides electoral advisory support to the PB/SC, UN CT and the Governance Team. He/she provides electoral guidance to UNDP Inclusive Governance Team and collaborating partners, including NIMD and UN Women. He/she is responsible for ensuring that support for this project is in compliance with international electoral standards and best practices, as well as the needs of the NEC and electoral stakeholders.

Inclusive Governance Team Leader provides programmatic guidance to all three outcomes. To manage Outcomes 2 and 3, UNDP engages a Project Officer who will oversee and coordinate the work of UN Women and NIMD under Outcomes 2 and 3. He/she coordinates the reporting under different outputs and official submission to the donor partners.

The **CTA** for electoral assistance is responsible for coordination and creation of synergies with other electoral assistance providers through the Technical Working Group (TWG) on elections and chairs technical level Project Donor Working Group.

For the electoral assistance/support (Outcome 1) the Project Management Unit (PMU) is led by the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) / Project Manager. The CTA is recruited by UNDP along other technical staff (finance, procurement, admin, thematic specialists, etc.). The CTA takes responsibility for the daily management and administration of the project and ensures the project produces the expected results. The Finance and Administration Specialist, assisted by the Administration and Finance Assistant, ensures the effective utilization of the budget and financial oversight of the project implementation. The Programme Officer liaises with UNDP's Project Management and Support Unit to ensure compliance of the implementation with corporate requirements. He/she also supports the CTA in reporting and implementation of the Project. The Procurement Assistant is hired throughout the electoral cycle to ensure timely procurement, notably during the 2023 elections. The M&E Analyst ensures day-to-day monitoring of project implementation and reporting. Throughout the duration of an activity, the Project will employ up to three drivers to support activities of the Project and field missions. Support to the field missions is of particular importance given the decentralized nature of this project and its aim to reach all 15 counties of Liberia. Lastly, given the technical assistance nature of the Project, the Project recruits staff and consultants to implement specific activities. These do not form part of the project management, are identified during the course of action, and approved by the PDG and Project Steering Committee through the annual workplan. The costs of these personnel are factored in individual activities within the Annex 3, where applicable. The additional technical assistance personnel and consultants are identified based on lessons learnt and in the situation when context so warranties. The flexibility allows the project to act quickly to challenging circumstances, and fill the capacity gaps as identified.

The PMU is established at / embedded within the NEC and is responsible for management of project funds and implementation of electoral assistance. It has the following functions:
  - Implement electoral assistance activities under this project
  - Coordinate and create synergies with other outcomes of this project
  - Serve as the 'Secretariat' of the Steering Committee / Project Board
  - Jointly with the NEC, serve as a Secretariat for the National Steering Committee on Elections (when established)
  - Call and organize Project Steering Committees / Project Board meetings
  - Monitor progress against the project's results framework in according with the monitoring and evaluation plan and prepare regular progress reports
  - Coordinate the development of annual work plans for discussion and prepare project documents and budget revisions
  - Provide general oversight, monitor progress, and provide support to the other Agencies.
  - Consolidate the annual and final narrative progress reports based on submissions provided by different technical experts and collaborating partners (where applicable, the project will consolidate contribution of other agencies)
  - Coordinate resource mobilization efforts and actively engage in resource mobilization.
  - Ensure availability of technical expertise to achieve required results of the project.
  - Coordinate permanent and temporary technical specialists, consultants, and IUNVs.
  - Facilitate evaluations and audits.

The Project, upon agreement with PDG, will identify and recruit additional technical staff and consultants to provide technical assistance to the NEC and national counterparts under specific activities as described in Section IV.

UN Women: Under the overall programmatic guidance of the Deputy Representative, the Governance and Participation Section Programme Specialist and Lead, supported by a Programme Specialist and Lead on Women's Political Participation, and Project Officer will see the overall management and delivery of UN Women's assigned interventions under Outcome 1 and 2, including tracking results, coordinating implementation and overseeing reporting under the project/UN to UN Agreement. The Programme Lead will work closely with the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA)/Project Manager, as well as other relevant stakeholders to ensure synergies with other program activities. UN Women will also utilize technical consultants as needed and if agreed in the PDG.

The **NIMD** supports specific activities under Outcomes 2 and 3 as stipulated in Chapter IV – Project rationale and project description. It will start in the second quarter of year 1 and will continue until the closure of the project in the end of year 4.

NIMD will also utilize technical staff and consultants on a need basis and if agreed by PDG.

First steps for the NIMD programme include:

- Identification and recruitment of staff. The NIMD's staff will consist of a Programme Assistant, Administrative and Support staff, and Technical and M&E Officer personnel. The administrative and support staff needed for implementation will be fully identified during the start-up of activity in Year 1. The staff is responsible for the implementation of activities where NIMD is identified as collaborating partner, including the provision of technical assistance.
- Assess registration procedures and identify support for this process
- Identification and renting of NIMD office space
- Purchase of furniture, computers, laptops and other utilities
- Review existing support to political parties, legislature and inclusive governance to ensure synergies with other programming and to avoid duplication. NIMD can benefit the TWG coordination structures.
- Bilateral meeting with political parties and actors
- Implementation of Political Economy Analysis (PEA)

The support will initially start in Monrovia. After the initial phase of the project, NIMD will assess the feasibility of extending the project to other counties. The identification of the counties will take place on the basis of a needs assessment and also take into account geographical coverage, programmes and projects of other organizations to ensure coordination of activities and avoid duplication.

Additional project support is provided by the UNDP Bureau for Programme and Policy Support (BPPS) through relevant experts posted at the UNDP Regional Service Center for Africa in Addis Ababa and the Brussels-based EC-UNDP Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance (JTF), as well as the UNDP Global Policy Network (GPN). BPPS will provide substantive electoral technical advisory assistance, democratic governance assistance, and conflict prevention and recovery expertise to the implementation of the project based on regional and global best practices, as needed. UNDP has developed a Concept Note dated March 2022 setting a framework[64] with the JTF to utilize experts on the need basis under various activities, notably iVerify and EWER. The compensation for the JTF experts is done on the basis of the timesheets (paid for the work completed only) and paid from the budget attributed to the specific activities, as per the Concept Note and workplan for this action.

UNDP's Strategic Plan (2022 – 2025)[65] recognizes the importance of contextual analysis, crisis prevention and recovery, and the management of multidimensional risks as fundamental for development. The Crisis Bureau is responsible for UNDP's corporate crisis-related strategies, vision and priorities for crisis prevention, response, and recovery. One of the areas of responsibility of UNDP's Crisis Bureau is to ensure that UNDP is well positioned to anticipate and to respond in the timeliest and most effective manner to crisis. The JTF Early Warning System on prevention of electoral violence with work in close collaboration with UNDP Country Office's Crisis Risk Dashboard (CRD).

Other project office costs

The project team for the Outcome 1 is collocated at the offices of the NEC (in kind contribution to the project by the Government of Liberia). While the project is not charged for a rent, it takes care of the maintenance, which is charged to the project. UN Women are located at the One-UN House, while

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[64] Ref. Concept Note on support to (1) iverify liberia, (2) the peace building office (pbo) early warning early and response sytem, (3) the citizen consultation platform for the liberia legislature and (4) the liberia institute of public administration through the liberia election support project (LESP) by the the EC-UNDP Joint Taskforce on Electoral Assistance (JTF).

[65] UNDP Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025. https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjw9oDdIoGAAxWOUqQEHapKDg0QFnoECBgQAw&url=https%3A%2F%2Fstrategicplan.undp.org%2F%23%3A%7E%3Atext%3DIt%2520explains%2520how%2520UNDP%2520will%2Cbusiness%2520model%2520and%2520operational%2520excellence.&usg=AOvVaw22w_Ma7TMp6XG1z_lOE0Vn&opi=89978449

NIMD needs to identify office space in Year 1, for the duration of the Project. For NIMD, the office costs will include rent, in addition to other costs. NIMD also needs to carry out registration costs in Year 1 of the project to be eligible to work in Liberia. The other office costs for the project, which are necessary for the running of the project, include utilities, vehicle costs and maintenance (fuel, repairs, insurance, servicing), delivery enabling services / country office cost-sharing when a project activity entails functions which require UNDP staff for effective execution, but full-time staff is not warranted, and a cost-recovery for UNDP's shared services, such as UN Clinic and other regular costs such as stationary, internet, printing, ICT equipment, additional visibility costs, cleaning and maintenance services, staff training, and security services.

5.3. Geographical coverage

The geographical coverage for this project is all the 15 counties of Liberia. Women, persons with disabilities and youth will particularly be targeted in all interventions under the project.

5.4. Knowledge Management

A well-designed and executed knowledge management is a critical driver for program implementation and delivery. The project will place proactive knowledge management and strategic communication at the center of its implementation. This approach will ensure that the project remains nimble to the dynamic political narrative of democracy and elections in Liberia. The project will therefore leverage inherent knowledge management strengths of partnering institutions (UNDP, UN Women, NIMD, among others) and comparative advantage of the agencies and partners to effectively gather, archive and manage tacit and explicit knowledge for cross-organizational learning, peer to peer sharing and evidence-based innovation.

From the implementation of the Project, there is need to document and archive the learnings from electoral assistance and governance projects to inform future programming on democratic governance and elections. The project will use these lessons learnt to establish robust implementation approaches and sustainable results delivery. While the project covers other areas of democratic governance and gender equality, it will endeavor to strictly follow the Electoral Cycle Approach (ECA). It will ensure that key activities throughout the 2023 electoral cycles are adequately implemented, including addressing framework conditions and deep-seated governance issues which cause violence and discontent in past electoral cycles. The ECA addresses electoral assistance as part of the longer-term process of democratic development rather than as support for a one-off polling event. It also addresses the different elements of the cycle that affect the quality of the electoral process and the credibility of its events.

The results of the project, successes, challenges and lessons learnt will be documented and shared with other similar projects and projects within the UN system and with our development partners including the EU, Ireland, Sweden, and others. All documents will be carefully archived, and a repository of knowledge documents created under the EC – UNDP Joint Taskforce for Electoral Assistance (JTF).

5.5. Communication and visibility

The visibility costs are incorporated in Annex 3 into every activity costs necessary to ensure compliance with contractual visibility requirements and factored into the budget foreseen for the relevant objectives and activities of the action. UNDP will enhance visibility using the EU emblem accompanied by the funding statement, together with UNDP's logo and the logos of other partners of the action (Sweden, Irealnd, and others, where applicable). In case of support to infrastructure, the Project will provide commemorative plaques with similar emblems and logos. Vehicles procured by the project, as well as any supplies and equipment procured with support from the EU, will carry above-mentioned logos and funding statements. In the same vein, the project will produce a banner for every activity as well as a generic project banner. The EU and partners' contribution will be further acknowledged throuh media briefings, press releases engagements with local media, and press conferences. The project, in collaboration with UNDP Country Office, will draft op-eds and success stories, acknowledging the contribution from UNDP, the EU, and the partners and giving credit for the results achieved. All publications and print materials, including meeting agendas, will similarly acknowledge the contribution. In social media reporting, UNDP will use hashtags of the partners to give credit for the implementation and achieved results. In addition, information about the activities and milestones of the project will be placed on the government and CSOs' websites aside from being featured on other strategic partners' communications platforms and portals, acknowledging the EU and partners' contributions. The EU and parnters' officials and staff will be invited to events supported by the project to deliver speeches and underline support.

Furthermore, in line with the EC-UNDP Guidelines on Electoral Assistance (signed by UNDP Administrator and EC Commissioner and available at https://www.ec-undp-

electoralassistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Electoral-Assistance-Guidelines-EC-UNDP-2016-2nd-Review.pdf), the JTF is mandated to assist all UN Electoral Support Programmes with EU funding in terms of implementation, reporting, visibility and any other issues. Dedicated website with success stories, press releases, and project updates will be set up for this action. Regular visibility reports (annually) will be provided to the EU as per key requirement of the EU-UNDP agreement.

5.6. Project assurance

Project quality assurance will be provided by UNDP. Project quality assurance will follow UNDP's programming systems, tools and procedures and feed directly to the Project Steering Committee and the Project Donor Group. Assurance will also be an important part of internal coordination mechanisms within the UN system especially in sharing information and advancing programming priorities.

As per UNDP Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP), the Project Assurance role supports the Steering Committee by carrying out objective and independent project oversight and monitoring functions. This role ensures appropriate project management milestones are managed and completed. This delegated role will be undertaken within the UNDP Country Office – Governance Unit. The project assurance role involves oversight over the operations processes, budget planning and financial management, donor coordination, and tracking donors' contributions and transfers.

The programme will organize regular meetings and consultations at both technical and policy/decision making levels. The PMU will ensure routine liaison between the project and partners at all levels. This will ensure programme management milestones are managed and completed and that corrective actions anticipated, discussed and decisions are taken as required.

5.7. Monitoring and evaluation

The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning approach consists of quantitative indicators, combined with a qualitative outcome harvesting approach, as well as quarterly learning and reflection sessions. In line with the guidelines and reporting requirements, the project proposes to monitor at activity, output, outcome, and impact level.

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this Project will be a continuous process. The activities will be recorded through a standardized digital form using KOBO Toolbox. This activity reporting form includes data on participants (numbers disaggregated by gender, age,and affiliation, cadre of participants), as well as the activity itself (type, direct outputs, evaluation). The activity data will be used to aggregate data that corresponds to indicators at output level. The data collection for the outcome level indicators requires follow-up interviews and desk study. The output and outcome level are monitored through a set of indicators defined in the log frame that are clear, relevant, economic, adequate and monitorable (C.R.E.A.M).

The indicators cover the range of results that are in the control and sphere of influence of the project and therefore contributed to by the project. Moreover, the indicators are developed to measure results that can realistically manifest themselves over the course of three years of implementation. The project proposes to monitor the impact level by use of external indicators, such as the scores on nation-wide surveys (Afrobarometer, Varieties of Democracy, Ibrahim Index of African Govenance, Legislature annual report, amongst others).

Also, considering the importance of this project, a **mid-term evaluation** will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by UNDP. The Mid-Term Evaluation forseen in the LESP and to be conducted in 2023, will determine progress attained towards the realisation of the outcomes and will focus on effectiveness, efficiency, and timeliness and identify course corrective actions and adaptive learning if need be. The final evaluation focusing on the delivery of the project's results as initially planned and corrected after the mid-term evaluation will be conducted. It will also provide recommendations for follow-up of results including lessons learned for sustainability, and replicability of the project's results (best practice), for future referencing and planning.

VI.   RISK MANAGEMENT

Category	Risks Title	Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)	Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)	Mitigating measures
Political	Risk 1: Changes in political environment leading to shifting priorities and demands	Medium	Medium	Encourage consultations and dialogue among national stakeholders to resolve any impasse and agree on common priorities
Political	Risk 2: The political will of the National Legislature to move forward with transformative changes not forthcoming or sustained.	High	High	Engage with the leadership of the National Legislature, through the Joint Legislative Modernization Committee (JLMC) and the Secretariat to ensure buy-in and support of this Action.
Political	Risk 3: Continued fragmentation and personalisation of political parties	High	High	This is a major issue, but the Action has included trust building activities with the political parties, trainings, and workshops to address it.
Political	Risk 4: A non-transformative approach to electoral cycle and deepening democracy issues, leading to non-completion of next electoral cycle legal framework.	Medium	High	UNDP supports NEC and CSO efforts to advocate for reforms on the legal framework or improvement of processes through adequate regulations. Comprehensive capacity strengthening programs, engaging NEC, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure buy-in and adoption of a transformative approach to the electoral cycle.
Societal and cultural	Risk 5: Low citizens' confidence, or identification with the electoral process or its aspects, owing to the disenchantment of past elections and a negative perception of the Legislature.	Medium	High	Support NEC Communication and voter education efforts to engage in raising awareness of citizens on the importance of participation in electoral processes.
Political	Risk 6: Political instability resulting from government incapacity or lack of political will to address the deep social disparities prevailing in Liberia.	Medium	High	Continuous engagement by development partners to support the Government medium term development agenda- the Liberia's Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development 2018–2023.
Economic	Risk 7: Lack of sufficient funding under the Liberian National Budget to proceed with the overall Electoral process.	High	High	Constant monitoring and active coordination with all partners involved through technical and political dialogue.
Political and economic	Risk 8: Delays in the ongoing Census, which has implications for boundary delineations for the elections.	High	Medium	Constant monitoring and active coordination with all partners involved through technical and political dialogue.
Technical	Risk 9: Limited capacities of implementing partners twinned by low availability of skilled resources.	Medium	High	Constant monitoring and active coordination with all partners involved through technical and political dialogue.

Societal	Risk 10: Perpetuation of gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms. Dissolution of the gender perspective during the implementation of the Action.	High	High	A gender mainstreaming and right-based approach and the principle of 'leave-no-one-behind' will be implemented in all phases of the Action.
Financial	Risk 11: Diminishing donor resources for deepening democracy projects	High	High	Enhanced focus on national ownership and sustainability. Continuous coordination with development partners, highlighting financial and thematic synergies with relevant UN entities, in particular PBSO, UNDP Governance, violent extremisms.
Financial	Risk 12: Malversation, corruption, fraud	Medium	High	Continuing implementation of the project by using DIM. Enhanced controls and follow up with the organizations benefiting grants and funds transfer by the UNDP.

Decentralization and revenue sharing: In theory, an effective decentralization process could create incentives for political parties to build their county presence and strengthen local to national connections. One of the causes of the war was the centralization of government and decision-making. Therefore, the population and international community are keen to make the decentralization process work. A revenue sharing bill is in the making, to ensure that the current decentralization law will go together with resources and can strengthen the currently weak (and not democratically elected) local/county government structures. However, in practice, the implementation of the decentralization meets many obstacles. By far the most powerful obstacles are the current power holders that benefit from the centralized power structure in place. Real decentralization means that the powers of the President and the lawmakers are (partly) taken away from them and given to elected local authorities and bodies. This will lead to a redistribution of power and of financial resources. Lawmakers control the spending of the Social Development Fund, as well as other earmarked budgets in their county and have a say on the concession-policy of natural resources to foreign companies. They routinely override county administrators by awarding contracts to befriended companies or awarding their supporters with civil service positions. This begs the question of whether lawmakers will support real democratic decentralization. In addition, other significant obstacles to effective decentralization are the underdeveloped rural areas outside the capital Monrovia. Bad roads, a hampering electricity network and a very weak internet make it almost impossible to build a trustful fiscal and administrative administration. This also leads to inadequate supervision and enhances the risks of bribe and mismanagement.

Lessons Learnt: In the design and implementation of this project, UNDP will deploy experiences and lessons learnt from previous and current programmes it is implementing. For example, it will build on lessons learnt from each of the Liberia's electoral cycles which it has provided support to. A 2020 evaluation of the electoral support programme for instance recommended to continue supporting the NEC, civic voter education, gender sensitive civic education curriculum, fostering women's political participation and representation and mainstreaming gender policies, as well as providing more training to political parties. The Evaluation further underlined the importance of proper Legislation, so the relevance of the Legislature in the overall process as its accountability; the timely availability of the financial resources (from Government of Liberia as well as? donors and partners) to guarantee elections operations. The coordination of and cooperation with all different partners, national and international, engaged in the support to Elections cycle in Liberia remain crucial. The evaluation foreseen in 2023 will further inform the implementation of this project.

These lessons have been integrated to strengthen the design of the Action and improve its implementation to strengthen inclusive, effective, transparent, and accountable governance in Liberia. During the implementation of the Project, knowledge, good practices, and lessons learnt will be captured and documented regularly. The latter will be integrated to improve and recalibrate effective delivery. The Project will equally build upon linkages and seek lessons from other projects in other UN offices within the Regional Bureau for Africa. Such comparable lessons and experience will strengthen the design of the project and improve its implementation to ensure inclusive, effective, transparent, and accountable governance in Liberia.

VII Logical framework and Activity matrix

Project: Promoting a More Inclusive and Accountable Democracy in Liberia

	Results chain	*Indicator*	*Baseline (value & reference year)* *(2022)*	*Target (value & reference year)* *(2026)*	*Current value* (reference year) (* to be included in interim and final reports in due time)*	*Source and mean of verification*	*Assumptions*
Impact level (Overall objective)	**O.O.**: More Inclusive and Accountable Democracy in Liberia	**OO.1.** Voter turn-out (disaggregated by type of elections: Presidential and Parliamentary elections)	75,2% Presidential (2017) 72,5% House of Representatives (Legislative) (2017) 35,8% Special Senatorial Election (2020)	TBD Presidential elections: X House of Representative (Legislative) elections: X Special Senatorial Election X		Official data of the National Elections Commission International IDEA: https://www.idea.int/data-tools/country-view/223/40	NOT APPLICABLE
		OO.2. Country (score) ranking according to the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI)-governance Index (OPSYS core indicator 597)	(5,01) 59 / 137	TBD		Bertelsmann Transformation Index *https://bti-project.org/en/?&d=G&cb=00000*	
Outcome level	**SO 1:** Enhanced electoral cycle and sustenance of peace	**SO.1.** Status of the legal framework for elections in relation to stability and the rule of law	TBD	TBD		EU Elections Follow Up Mission Final Report	NEC and electoral stakeholders assume a transformative approach to electoral assistance, which will

		SO.2. Status of compliance of the legal framework of elections with international standards	*While the Constitutional legal framework enshrines key fundamental rights and is a solid basis for the conduct of democratic elections, it does not fully accord with Liberia's international legal obligations prohibiting racial discrimination. The EOM recommended for the legislature to initiate a constitutional referendum process for the successful removal of the ethnic definition of Liberian citizenship.*	TBD		Universal Human Rights Index https://uhri.ohchr.org/en/
		SO.3. Number of EU Election Observation Missions (EU EOM) recommendations implemented in Liberia (disaggregated by implementation status)	8, which 1 fully implemented; 2 partial implementation; 5 ongoing activity.	15, of which: At least 5 fully implemented and 10 in process.		EU Elections Follow Up Mission Final Report
		SO.4. Status of the gender quota on candidate nomination and party leadership	The gender quota (i.e., 30%) is voluntary	The gender quota (i.e. 30%) is obligatory		Official Law bulletin
		SO.5. Percentage of registered political parties in compliance with National Election Committee (NEC) campaign finance regulations	TBD	60%		National Election CommissionReports
	SO 2: Enhanced participation and inclusion of women and marginalized	**SO.2.1.** Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (% of	10,96%	TBD		UNSTATS *https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/countryprofiles/lbr*

(right column, spanning top rows)
allow for implementation of meaningful electoral reforms.

There is sufficient funding from the Government to sustain results of the project.

Liberia's government remains stable and peaceful following the 2023 elections.

There is a political will by the Legislature towards the implementation of a progressive agenda.

No fragmentation and personalisation of political parties.

groups in political processes	total number of seats) (OPSYS core indicator 67 / GERF 1.29 / SDG 5.5.1)				*#goal-5*
	SO.2.2. Status of participation of women and marginalized groups in decision making	The participation of women and marginalized groups in decision making is limited	TBD		Universal Human Rights Index https://uhri.ohchr.org/en/
	SO.2.3. Number of political parties putting in place policies and practices to address gender-based discrimination and/or combat gender stereotypes	4	10		UN Women reports.
SO.3 Increased State accountability (through increased legislative oversight)	**SO.3.1.** Percentage of people indicating that they have increased confidence in the National Elections Committee (disaggregated by sex and age)	66% of respondents highly trust or trust NEC to organize 'free and fair' elections M: X, F: X Age: X	>66% trust or highly trust NEC M: X, F: X Age: X		NEC-UNDP-UN Women post-election public perception surveys
	SO.3.2. Number of laws or policies adopted by the State to strengthen the role of the Secretariat in legislative oversight (OPSYS core indicator)	0	2		Public sector reports (Laws and regulations; Strategies and policy documents)

		SO.3.3. Number of Civil Society Organisations' (CSOs) and media representatives actively covering legislative engagements (disaggregated by sex and target group)	TBD (M:X; F:X)	TBD (M:X; F:X), of whom X CSO representatives X media representatives		Civil society platforms national Reports
Output level **Outputs (for each Outcome**	**OP1.1:** Strengthened inclusion and transparency of the electoral process	**OP.1.1.1.** Number of reports fact checked per month through the iVerify platform with the support of the intervention	0 (2022)	5 media reports per month fact-checked per month through the platform.		Progress reports for the intervention	Citizens will have confidence in the electoral process and the NEC to continue engage in electoral and democratic processes. The target groups overcome at least some gender stereotypes to progress towards greater political participation. Enough capacities of implementing partners Priority to gender perspective during the implementation of the Action.
		OP.1.1.2. Number of people reached by the intervention in civic – voter education awareness raising campaigns supported by the intervention (disaggregated by sex and age) (OPSYS core indicator 673)	TBD (M:X; F:X) Young people (18-35 years old): X	TBD (M:X; F:X) Young people (18-35 years old): X		Progress reports for the intervention	
		OP.1.1.3. Number of people are participating in the clubs established in schools and universities with support of the intervention	0	TBD		Progress reports for the intervention	

		OP.1.1.4. Number of people trained by the intervention with increased knowledge and/or skills on accountability and electoral integrity (disaggregated by sex and target group) (OPSYS Core indicator 674 proxy)	TBD M:X; F:X	TBD M:X; F:X, of whom X members of political party, X representatives of CSOs, X representatives of women groups, X youth X PWDs		Pre and post training test reports
		OP.1.1.5. Status of the Gender mainstreaming strategy	Gender mainstreaming policy and implementation plan adopted (2017)	Gender mainstreaming policy revised and implemented		Progress reports for the intervention
	OP1.2: Enhanced institutional capacity and accountability of the National Elections Commission (NEC) and electoral stakeholders	**OP.1.2.1**. Number of National Elections Commission members trained by the intervention with increased knowledge and/or skills on electoral process and facilitate BRIDGE training (OPSYS Core indicator 674 proxy) (disaggregated by sex and type of training)	12 accredited at the Training of Facilitators (TTF) workshop M:X; F:X Electoral process: X BRIDGE modules: X (2022)	25, of whom: At least additional 15 accredited in specialized in BRIDGE modules as facilitators) M:X; F:X Electoral process: X BRIDGE modules: X		Workshop reports and evaluation. BRIDGE accreditation records.
		OP.1.2.2. Number of election resolutions lawyers trained by the intervention in the Electoral Dispute	5 senior lawyers 24 lawyers Trained in EDR	10 senior lawyers 30 lawyers to serve as Hearing Officers Trained in EDR M:X; F: at least 30%		Pre and post training test reports NEC database records.

	Resolution (EDR) expert database (disaggregated by sex)				
OP1.3: Strengthened conflict prevention and mitigation mechanisms supporting peaceful conduct of elections	**OP.1.3.1.** Status of nation-wide statistics on electoral violence and violence against women in elections	No national statics available on electoral violence and VAWIE	Accident type and county disaggregated statistics on electoral violence and Violence Against Women in Elections (VAWIE) is operational		Progress reports for the intervention
	OP.1.3.2. Number of cases of misconduct by the security forces during electoral activities documented with the support-of the intervention	0 %	100 %		Progress reports for the intervention
OP2.1: Enhanced opportunities for youth and women of political and civic engagement	**OP.2.1.1.** Number of candidates to be included in electoral list mentored with the support of the intervention (disaggregated by sex and age)	TBD M:X; F:X Young people (18-35 years old): X	TBD M:X; F:X Young people (18-35 years old): X		Progress reports for the intervention
OP2.2: Strengthened inter-party collaboration and policy-based connections between parties, their MPs (Members of Parliament) and voters	**OP.2.2.1.** Number of persons participating in inter-party dialogues events on the engagement of political parties and the National Elections Commission with the support of the	TBD M:X; F:X	TBD M:X; F:X		Progress reports for the intervention

		intervention (disaggregated by sex) (OPSYS core indicator 763 proxy)					
		OP.2.2.2. Number of women trained by the intervention with increased knowledge and/or skills on participation in public life and exercise leadership (OPSYS Core indicator 674 proxy)	TBD	TBD		Pre and post training test reports	
		OP.2.2.3. Extent to which CSOs (Civil society Organizations) and political parties' capacity to disseminate messages to combat violence against women in election are strengthened	Electoral violence and displacement, especially against women during pre-election period, election day and post-election period because there is no capacity to disseminate messages to combat violence against women in election	Electoral violence and displacement, especially against women during pre-election period, election day and post-election period is greatly reduced thanks to the involvement of civil society		Progress reports for the intervention	
	OP3.1: Improved capacity of the Secretariat in Legislative oversight, including on budget analysis and cooperation with civic actors	**OP.2.3.1.** Number of Secretariat staff in parliament trained by the intervention with increased knowledge and/or skills on reforms, modernization, and effective oversight (disaggregated by sex) (OPSYS Core	TBD M:X; F:X	TBD M:X; F:X		Pre and post training test reports	

		indicator 674 proxy),				
		OP.2.3.2. Number of policy legal reforms to strengthen the role of the secretariat drafted with the support of the intervention	0	2		Progress reports for the intervention
		OP.2.3.3. Number of bicameral structures where ICT facilities and equipment to support legislative work identified have been provided by the intervention (OPSYS core indicator 318)	0	4		Progress reports for the intervention
	OP2.4. Increased capacity of CSOs and the media in furtherance of the oversight functions of the Legislature	**OP.2.4.1**. Number of CSOs representatives and staff trained by the intervention with increased knowledge and/or skill in legislative oversight (disaggregated by sex and target group) (OPSYS core indicator 764)	0	15 M:X; F:X CSO representatives: X Media representatives: X		Pre and post training test reports
		OP.2.4.2. Number of CSOs and media representatives and staff actively covering legislative	TBD M:X; F:X	TBD M:X; F:X		Progress reports for the intervention

		engagements (disaggregated by sex)					
		OP.2.4.3. Number of CSOs benefitting from (or reached by) the intervention who received small grants to monitor the work of the national legislature (OPSYS core indicator 47 proxy)	TBD	TBD		Progress reports for the intervention	

Activity Matrix

Key activities	Means and Costs	Assumptions
Output 1.1 **Activity 1.1.1**. Strengthening NEC strategic approach to communication, external relations, and disinformation management. **Activity 1.1.2**. Strengthening capacity of NEC, civil society, and other actors in conducting civic and voter education. **Activity 1.1.3**. Improve access and opportunity of the right to vote and inclusion of women and vulnerable groups in electoral processes. *Output 1.2* **Activity 1.2.1**. Provide technical capacity	*Please refer to Annex III/Budget for the Action for details*	Availability of skilled human resources Availability of methodological and technical resources

and skills enhancement of NEC at all Levels. **Activity 1.2.2**. Provide technical capacity support to electoral stakeholders towards greater accountability and electoral integrity. **Activity 1.2.3**. Increase Integrity and Sustainability of Electoral Operations, including Voter Registration Process. **Activity 1.2.4**. Strengthen NEC infrastructure, including physical, ICT and knowledge management. *Output 1.3* **Activity 1.3.1**. Provide technical and capacity building support to strengthen existing national mechanisms to early identify and respond to electoral violence. **Activity 1.3.2**. Support, awareness-raising, and mitigation measures to prevent violence against women in elections and politics. *Output 2.1* **Activity 2.1.1**. Provide support to youth and women organizations, and formations for greater political party representation and increased influence in decision-making. **Activity 2.1.2**. Provide support to youth and women candidates to be included in electoral lists (horizontal and vertical) **Activity 2.1.4**. Develop and implement mentorship programme for women and youth and provide technical support to		

women and youth wings of political parties. ***Output 2.2*** **Activity 2.2.2**. Facilitate inter-party and intra-party dialogues and engagement between political parties and the National Elections Commission through the Inter-Party Consultative Committee (IPCC). **Activity 2.2.3**. Provide support and training of political parties to comply with new rules and regulations. ***Output 3.1*** **Activity 3.1.1**. Enhancing the Secretariat function towards reform and modernization **Activity 3.1.2**. Building Legislative capacity to contribute to poverty reduction through budgetary allocation. ***Output 3.2*** **Activity 3.2.1**. Support platform to engage CSOs, Media and Citizens to enhance legislative oversight.		

VIII Multi-year workplan

Output	Activities	YEAR 1				YEAR2				YEAR 3				YEAR 4			
		Q1	Q 2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Outcome 1: Enhanced electoral cycle and sustenance of peace																	
Output 1.1: Strengthened inclusion and transparency of the electoral processes	***Activity 1.1.1*** *Strengthening NEC strategic approach to communication, external relations, and disinformation management*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
	Activity 1.1.2*. Strengthening capacity of NEC, civil society, and other actors in conducting civic and voter education*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
	Activity 1.1.3. *Improve access and opportunity of the right to vote and inclusion of women and vulnerable groups in electoral processes*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Output 1.2: Enhanced institutional capacity and accountability of NEC and electoral stakeholders	***Activity 1.2.1*** *Provide technical capacity and skills enhancement of NEC at all levels*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Activity 1.2.2 *Provide technical capacity support to electoral stakeholders towards greater accountability and electoral integrity*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Activity 1.2.3 *Increase Integrity and Sustainability of Electoral Operations, including Voter Registration*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
	Activity 1.2.4 *NEC Infrastructure Strengthening towards Greater Electoral Integrity*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				

Output	Activities	YEAR 1				YEAR2				YEAR 3				YEAR 4			
		Q1	Q 2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Output 1.3. Strengthened conflict prevention and mitigation mechanisms to support peaceful conduct of elections.	***Activity 1.3.1*** *Provide technical and capacity building support to strengthen existing national mechanisms to identify and respond to electoral violence early*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
	Activity 1.3.2 *Undertake and support awareness-raising and mitigation measures to prevent and address violence against women in elections and politics*	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Outcome 2: Enhanced participation and inclusion of women and marginalised groups in political processes																	
Output 2.1: Enhanced opportunities for youth and women of political and civic engagement	***Activity 2.1.1*** *Provide support to youth and women organisations and formations for greater political party representation and increased influence in decision-making*			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Activity 2.1.2 *Provide support for youth and women candidates to be included in electoral lists (horizontal and vertical)*			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Activity 2.1.3 *Advise and provide technical assistance to political parties to strengthen youth and women policies and practices and promote internal democracy in political parties*			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			■
	Activity 2.1.4 *Develop and implement mentorship programme for women and youth and provide technical support to women and youth wings of political parties*			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Output 2.2 Strengthened inter-party collaboration and policy-based connections between parties, their MPs and voters	***Activity 2.2.1*** *Support policy-based connections, collaboration and engagements between political parties, their MPs and voters*			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Activity 2.2.2 *Facilitate intra-party dialogues and engagement between political parties and the National Elections Commission through the Inter-Party Consultative Committee (IPCC)*					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Activity 2.2.3 *Provide support and training of political parties to comply with new rules and regulations*			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Outcome 3: Increased state accountability (through increased legislative oversight)																	
Output 3.1 Improved capacity	***Activity 3.1.1*** *Enhancing the Secretariat function towards reform and modernisation*					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Output	Activities	YEAR 1				YEAR2				YEAR 3				YEAR 4			
		Q1	Q 2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
of the Secretariat in Legislative oversight, including on budget analysis and coopreation with civic actors	***Activity 3.1.2*** *Building Legislative capacity to contribute to poverty reduction through budgetary allocation*									■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Output 3.2: Increased capacity of CSOs and the media in furtherance of the oversight functions of the Legislature	***Activity 3.2.1.*** *Support CSOs, Media and Citizens to enhance legislative oversight*					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Project Management																	
Effective Project Management	Project personnel and staffing	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Monitoring and evaluation	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Project implementation and office running costs	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

IX Workplan Year 1

		YEAR 1											
Outcome 1: Enhanced electoral cycle and sustenance of peace													
Output 1.1: Strengthened inclusion and transparency of the electoral processes													
Activities	**Responsible party and Collaborating parners**	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Capacity-building, advisory and funding support to the NEC Leadership and Communication Section												
Activity 1.1.1: Strengthening NEC strategic approach to communication, external relations, and disinformation management	Deployment of technical assistance (Communication Analyst)	UNDP											
	Support to NEC Communication section & implementation of NEC communication policy	UNDP, NEC											
	Media trainings & production of information toolkits	UNDP, NEC, UN Women											
	Sms-service (public voter information) / Digital campaigns	UNDP, NEC											
	Infrastructure and tools to improve election-related communication and combat misinformation at national level												

Activity	Description	Responsible party	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Deployment of technical assistance (Digital and transparency coordinator – 50%)	UNDP												
	Implementation of platform to combat disinformation and hate speech	UNDP, UNICC, LVL												
	Training of Stakeholders on mi/disinformation and hate speech management (prevention of hate speech notably against female candidates incl.) using the iVerify platform (5 workshops)	UNDP, NEC, LVL												
	Support NEC and other stakeholders in the development and organization of social media and other visibility campaigns on inclusive electoral rights														
	Inclusive elections campaign	UNDP, NEC												
	Youth Summit	UNDP, CSO (TBD)												
Activity 1.1.2: Strengthening capacity of NEC, civil society, and other actors in conducting civic and voter education	Deployment of Technical Assistance (CVE Specialist)	UNDP												
	Support to CVE cells (training, remuneration)	UNDP, NEC (via LOA)												
	Support to CSOs to conduct civic and voter education	UNDP, CSOs (TBD)												
	Production, translation and distribution of CVE materials and distribution to the cells	UNDP, NEC												
	NEC-UNDP Joint Monitoring Visits to oversee the implementation of the CVE	UNDP, NEC												
Activity 1.1.3: Improve access and opportunity of the right to vote to women and vulnerable groups in eletoral processes	**Support to Gender Section in developing formative influence over the NEC to mainstream gender-related policies**														
	Deployment of technical assistance (Gender Specialist)	UNDP												
	Support NEC to undertake gender assessment, and develop gender equality and social inclusion policy	UNDP, UN Women, NEC												
	Support NEC Gender Unit (GU) to work with data centre to capture types of disability during voter registration	UNDP, UN Women, NEC												
	Promoting inclusion and eliminating obstacles to inclusive political participation														
	Sign, dissemination, and implement the MOU on gender quota by political parties + adherence to inclusion of women in leadership	UNDP, UN Women, NEC												
	Continue revitalization of Gender and Elections Coordination Group (GECG) and support them to monitor and report on the inclusion of women and vulnerable groups and disseminate key messages/CVE materials.	UNDP, UN Women, NEC												
	Use billboards in support of the inclusion of women and vulnerable groups in all 15 counties.	UNDP, UN Women, NEC												
	Development and dissemination of gender-and disability sensitive voter education materials	UNDP, UN Women, NEC												
	Tactile ballot training & production of the tactile ballot guides and papers	UNDP, UN Women, NEC												
	Deployment of Chief Technical Adviser to provide strategic and technical assistance to implementation of Output 1.1 (25%)	UNDP												

Output 1.2: Enhanced institutional capacity and accountability of NEC and electoral stakeholders

Activities		Responsible party	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Develop capacity of the NEC in advanced areas of electoral operations														
Activity 1.2.1: Provide technical capacity and skills enhancement of NEC at all levels	Finalize pre-election public perception survey (to inform lessons learnt), incl. on voter roll, inclusion, women, youth, and PWDs political participation	UNDP, NEC, UN Women												
	Deployment of Technical Assistance (Capacity Strengthening Specialist)	UNDP												
	Implementation of BRIDGE Strategy	UNDP, NEC												
	Support to development of NEC Training Unit into independent analytical and training centre (Concept and initial discussions; peer-to-peer experience with other EMBs)	UNDP, NEC												
	Implementation of NEC Capacity Development Plan	UNDP, NEC												
	Support to Effective Electoral Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation towards Greater Sustainability and Accountability														
	Deployment of Technical Assistance (M&E Specialist) to support implementation of Activity 1.2.1 (50%)	UNDP												
	Support to M&E Section of the NEC	UNDP, NEC												
	Spatial and Data Management Consultant	UNDP, NEC (via LOA)												
	Support to credible and efficient electoral dispute resolution														
	Deployment of Technical Assistance (EDR Specialist)	UNDP												

Activity		Responsible Party	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Implementation of EDR Capacity Development Plan / Support to election disputes during 2023 General Elections	UNDP, NEC, LNBA, Judicial Institute, Supreme Court												
	Strengthen CSO oversight of the Liberia democratic institutions													
	Conduct CSO mapping, specific to elections and democratic governance to identify CSOs available to monitor campaign finance framework, develop oversight criteria, training manuals and implement strategy	UNDP, Integrity Watch												
Activity 1.2.2: Provide technical capacity support to electoral stakeholders towards greater accountability and electoral integrity	**Strengthen capacity (understanding) of political parties in NEC policies and procedures, including in electoral operations**													
	Deployment of Technical Assistance (Political Party / Campaign Finance Specialist)	UNDP												
	Technical support to political parties on the topic of financial compliance	UNDP, Integrity Watch												
	Political Party Documents Software and upgrade of Political Party Website (to provide first-hand information for counties)	UNDP, Itegrity Watch												
	Enhance integrity and cost-effectiveness of NEC observer and party agents accreditation process	UNDP, NEC												
	Deployment of regional electoral coordinators (4) and community volunteers (19)	UNDP, UNV, NEC												
	Training of trainers + decentralised trainings for party agents	UNDP, NEC												
Activity 1.2.3.: Increase Integrity and Sustainability of Electoral Operations, including Voter Registration	**Support to credible and Sustainable Voter Registration Process**													
	Public consultations, awareness, and public information on voter registration process	UNDP, NEC												
	Voter list audit	UNDP, NEC, ECOWAS												
	Deployment of Technical assistance to BVR implementation (including testing) / Consultant	UNDP, NEC												
	Rehabilitate the remaining NEC warehouses and security enforcement of NEC offices													
	Enforce security of the NEC compound & Refurbishment of James Fromayan Hall	UNDP, NEC												
Activity 1.2.4: NEC infrastructure strengthening towards greater electoral integrity (including physical, ICT and knowledge **management)**	**Strengthen NEC ICT and knowledge management infrastructure**													
	Technical Assistance to (i) Post-election ICT infrastructure assessment (servers, licenses, routers, servers and internet configurations, active domains, firewall, etc.); (ii) In-House Training for NEC Staff on sustainability and ICT innovation cycles	UNDP, NEC												
	Procurement of ICT & election equipment	UNDP, NEC												
	Strengthen NEC's capacity in knowledge resource management, archiving, filing, and bookkeeping (training TBD based on capacity assessment) through liaising with National Archive / LIPA	UNDP, NEC												
	Deployment of Chief Technical Adviser to provide strategic and technical assistance to implementation of Output 1.2 (25%)	UNDP												

Output 1.3. Strengthened conflict prevention and mitigation mechanisms to support peaceful conduct of elections

Activities		Responsible Party	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Strengthen existing national mechanisms to early identify and respond to electoral violence													

Activity		Responsible party	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Activity 1.3.1. Provide technical and capacity building support to strengthen existing national mechanisms to early identify and respond to electoral violence	Train joint security for elections with focus on inclusiveness and human rights	UNDP, NEC, LNP												
	Deploy Technical Assistance (Digital Transformation and Transparency Coordinator, 50%)	UNDP												
	Provide technical and advisory support to PBO and implementation of EWER mechanisms	UNDP, UNICC, PBO												
	Support to strengthening IPCC and electoral violence prevention dialogues	NEC												
Activity 1.3.2: Undertake and support, awareness-raising, and mitigation measures to prevent violence against women in elections and politics	**Raise awareness of Violence Against Women in Elections and its impact on women participation**													
	Dissemination of VAWIE awareness & integration with EWER	UNDP, NEC, UN Women												
	Implementation of VAWIE training module based on UNDP-UN Women manual & Action plan on prevention and response of violence against women (LIPA/UN Women/NEC)	UNDP, NEC, UN Women												
	Development and dissemination of a popular version of the VAWIE Protocol and its Action Plan & quarterly monitoring of political parties HQ to ensure adherence to the Protocol	UNDP, NEC, UN Women												
	Support to Women Situation Room	UNDP, ABIC												
	Deployment of Chief Technical Adviser to provide strategic and technical assistance to implementation of Output 1.3 (25%)	UNDP												

Outcome 2: Enhanced participation and inclusion of women and marginalised groups in political processes

Output 2.1: Enhanced opportunities for youth and women of political and civic engagement

Activities		Responsible party	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Activity 2.1.1: Provide support to youth and women organisations and formations for greater political party representation and increased influence in decision-making	Organize National Women's Conference to promote gender as an agenda and build solidarity among diverse groups of women in Liberia	UNDP, UN Women												
	Hold debates amongst political parties on gender equality issues in Liberia	UNDP, UN Women												
	Convene post-election national conference on women's political participation to take stock of the experiences of women throughout the 2023 and previous electoral cycles, to analyse gains and persisting challenges, as well as elaborate key lessons learned inform a strategy of support to women in future political process and elections	UNDP, UN Women												
	Select NIMD operational modality and hire staff	UNDP, NIMD												
	Democracy School, consultation with local actors. 8-10 meetings with political parties, academia, CSOs	UNDP, NIMD												
	Democracy School: Set up criteria for participants and trainers. Call for application	UNDP, NIMD												
	Democracy Schools Training of Trainers	UNDP, NIMD												

Activity	Description	Responsible
Activity 2.1.2: Provide support for youth and women candidates to be included in electoral lists (horizontal and vertical)	Carry out political leadership and candidates training to expand a pool of qualified and capable women to run for election.	UNDP, UN Women, Sali, Wongosol
	Conduct a gender audit in collaboration with NEC to assess gender sensitiveness of the entire election process.	UNDP, UN Women, NEC
Activity 2.1.3: Advise and provide technical assistance to political parties to strengthen youth and gender responsive policies and practices and promote internal democracy	Consultations and assessment criteria to select political parties to be involved in the trajectory	UNDP, NIMD
Activity 2.1.4: Develop and implement mentorship programme for women and youth and provide technical support to women and youth wings of political parties	Political party speed date	UNDP, NIMD
	Dissemination and consultation on EOM recommendations with pp including youth, women and other groups currently underrepresented in politics	UNDP, NIMD
Output 2.2 Strengthened inter-party collaboration and policy-based connections between parties, their MPs and voters		
Activity 2.2.1 : Support policy-based connections, collaboration and engagements between political parties, their MPs and voters	Political Economy Analysis	UNDP, NIMD
	Thematic multi-stakeholder dialogue sessions preparation/trust building activities	UNDP, NIMD
Activity 2.2.2: Facilitate intra-party dialogues and engagement between political parties and the National Elections Commission through the Inter-Party Consultative Committee (IPCC)	**Not targeted in year 1**	
Activity 2.2.3: Provide support and training of political parties to comply with new rules and regulations	Advice / Technical Assistance to make a comparative analysis of current legislation and reform proposals	UNDP/NIMD
	Cost of Politics study	UNDP/NIMD
PROJECT MANAGEMENT		
	Project personnel and staffing	
	Deployment of Chief Technical Adviser to manage Outcome 1 of the Project and create synergies with Outcome 2 and 3 (25%) - international	UNDP
	Finance and Administration Specialist (full time support to Outcome 1) - national	UNDP
	Program Officer (full time support to Outcome 1) - national	UNDP
	Admin and Finance Assistant (full time support to Outcome 1) - national	UNDP
	Procurement Assistant (full time support to Outcome 1) – national	UNDP
	Programme Specialist and Lead - International (20%) to support to implementation of gender aspects for Outcomes 1 and 2	UN Women
	Project Officer (National) - 50% 2 to support to implementation of gender aspects for Outcomes 1 and 2	UN Women
	Program Assistant to support setting up and running NIMD activities under Outputs 2 and 3	NIMD
	Administrative and support staff (TBD) for NIMD activities under Outputs 2 and 3	NIMD

	Technical and M&E Officer to support NIMD activities under Outputs 2 and 3	NIMD																
	Drivers (3) – full time	UNDP																
	Monitoring and evaluation																	
	Regular monitoring of project activities and field monitoring missions	UNDP/ UNWOMEN / NIMD																
	Project implementation and office running costs																	
	Procurement of Project vehicle & vehicle Maintenance, servicing, insurance, fuel	UNDP																
	Office running costs (maintenance of the office at the NEC, stationary, printing, office items, staff training, country office cost sharing, internet services, security)	UNDP/UN Women / NIMD																
	Registration (NIMD)	NIMD																
	Office and services (NIMD)	NIMD																