



# EU - UNDP GREAT PROJECT

Needs Assessment of The Ministry of Lands, Regional Government and Religious Affairs and The Gambia Association of Local Government Authorities (GALGA)



## FINAL REPORT

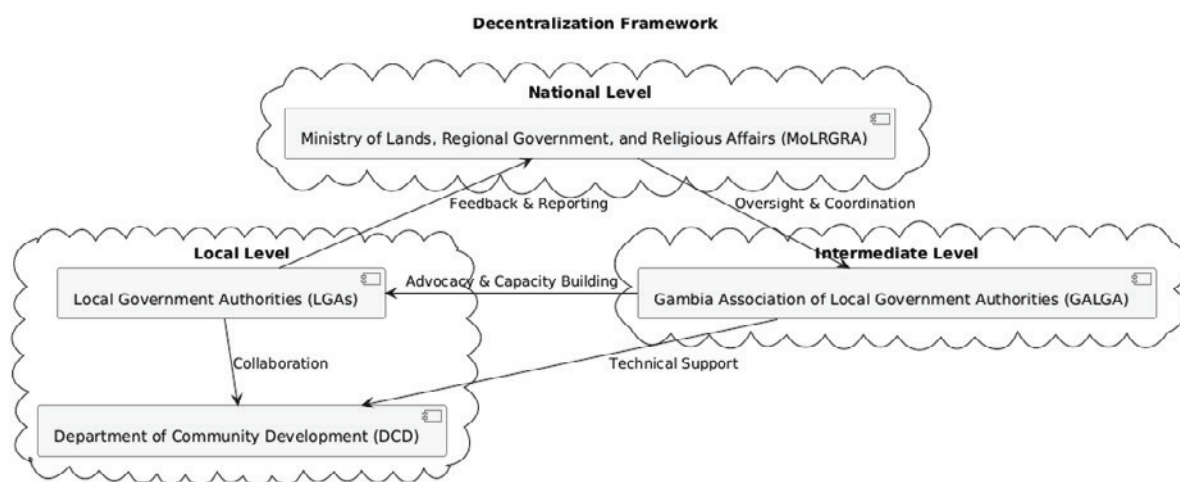
February 2025

## Strengthening Local Governance for Sustainable Development "Empowering Communities, Transforming Governance"

Local governance stands as the pillar of sustainable development, connecting national objectives to grassroots realities. In The Gambia, the Ministry of Lands, Regional Governments, and Religious Affairs (MoLRGRA) and The Gambia Association of Local Government Authorities (GALGA) are critical institutions driving devolution/decentralization and promoting participatory governance. This capacity needs assessment aimed to identify institutional gaps, provide actionable recommendations, and pave the way for enhanced service delivery and inclusive development.

The assessment highlighted key themes critical to strengthening governance and institutional capacity. These include building participatory frameworks aligned with national priorities, diversifying funding sources for financial sustainability, and addressing skill gaps while modernizing operational systems. It also emphasizes promoting inclusivity by strengthening the representation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in governance, and establishing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to ensure accountability and track progress effectively.

**Figure 1: Decentralization Framework**



Addressing institutional challenges and improving collaboration, MoLRGRA, GALGA, Local Councils, and the Department of Community Development can unlock their full potential to empower communities and drive sustainable development. Together, we can create a governance system that is inclusive, efficient, and resilient.

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### Acronyms

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Acronyms</b>	<b>Full Form</b>
<b>1</b>	CPCU	Central Projects Coordination Unit
<b>2</b>	CLGF	Commonwealth Local Government Forum
<b>3</b>	DCD	Department of Community Development
<b>4</b>	GALGA	Gambia Association of Local Government Authorities
<b>5</b>	GREAT	The Gambia's Responsive and Accountable Democratic Transition
<b>6</b>	KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
<b>7</b>	LGAs	Local Government Authorities
<b>8</b>	MoLRGRA	Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs
<b>9</b>	M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>10</b>	PESTLE	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental
<b>11</b>	PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
<b>12</b>	SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
<b>13</b>	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
<b>14</b>	VDC	Village Development Committee
<b>15</b>	WDC	Ward Development Committee

## Executive Summary

This report presents the findings, recommendations, and capacity development plans from the assessment of key institutions responsible for decentralization and local governance in The Gambia. The institutions assessed include the Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs (MoLRGRA); The Gambia Association of Local Government Authorities (GALGA); Local Government Authorities (LGAs); and the Department of Community Development (DCD). The assessment aims to identify gaps, provide actionable recommendations, and propose a costed capacity development plan to enhance institutional effectiveness and promote sustainable governance.

The assessment was conducted using a combination of methodologies, including desk reviews, key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and observational assessments. Analytical frameworks such as PESTLE analysis, the McKinsey 7S model, and the Balanced Scorecard were applied to provide a comprehensive understanding of institutional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Stakeholder engagement was a central component, with input gathered from 57 stakeholders across multiple sectors, including councils, ministries, and community groups. This was achieved through key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs), ensuring that the perspectives of diverse actors were reflected in the findings and recommendations.

The findings reveal significant challenges across the institutions, including inadequate strategic planning, weak resource mobilization strategies, insufficient technical capacity, limited inclusivity in governance processes, and outdated operational systems. For instance, over 70% of LGAs lack comprehensive and up-to-date strategic plans, 60% of funding relies on external sources, and only 15% of marginalized groups are represented in governance processes. Additionally, weak monitoring and evaluation frameworks and "government involvement" were identified as major barriers to effective decentralization. Another critical observation is the potential overlap or fragmentation of institutional roles, which raises the question of whether the existing number of institutions and their mandates are effectively aligned to deliver decentralization objectives. Addressing these structural issues is essential to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure efficiency in governance and service delivery.

To address these challenges, the report provides tailored recommendations for each institution. Key interventions include the revision of strategic plans, establishment of monitoring and evaluation systems, strengthening resource mobilization, addressing skill gaps through targeted capacity-building programs, and fostering inclusivity in governance processes. The recommendations are categorized into short-term, medium-term, and long-term priorities, ensuring a structured approach to implementation.

A costed capacity development plan was developed to operationalize the recommendations. The total estimated cost of implementing the plan is USD 3.2 million, distributed across the institutions based on their specific needs. Short-term priorities focus on addressing urgent challenges, such as recruiting additional staff, modernizing operational systems, and developing strategic plans. Medium-term priorities include implementing monitoring and evaluation frameworks, capacity-building programs, and digitalization of operations, while long-term priorities emphasize institutional sustainability through advanced training programs and enhanced autonomy for local councils.

The implementation modalities detailed in the report include a phased timeline, key milestones, and clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders. Regular monitoring and evaluation, supported by defined key performance indicators (KPIs) and feedback loops, will ensure accountability and adaptability throughout the implementation process. A robust coordination mechanism will be established to ensure collaboration among institutions and alignment with national decentralization goals.

In conclusion, this report provides a roadmap for enhancing decentralized governance and institutional capacity of local governments in The Gambia. By addressing the identified gaps and implementing the proposed recommendations, these institutions can strengthen their roles, improve service delivery, and contribute meaningfully to sustainable development. The commitment of all stakeholders is essential for realizing the vision of inclusive and efficient governance.

# **CHAPTER 1**

# **INTRODUCTION**

## 1.1 Background and Context

The Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs (MoLRGRA) and the Gambia Association of Local Government Authorities (GALGA) are central institutions in ensuring effective decentralized governance, service delivery, and citizen engagement. Enhancing local governance became a key objective of The Gambia's transition to democracy in 2017, as a means to building more accountable institutions promoting inclusivity in decision-making processes and enhancing more equitable delivery of basic services.

Despite visible progress, significant challenges remain: The Institutional, technical, and financial capacities of MoLRGRA, GALGA, and local councils remain limited, hindering their ability to fulfill their mandates, promote sustainable development, and address community needs effectively. To address these challenges, development partners and GoTG are implementing EU-UNDP The Gambia's Responsive and Accountable Democratic Transition (GREAT) initiative. This needs assessment seeks to provide actionable recommendations to strengthen governance and decentralization in The Gambia.

## 1.2 Objectives of the Assessment

The overarching objective of this assignment is to assess the capacity needs of MoLRGRA, GALGA, and local councils to identify gaps and propose practical solutions. Specifically, the assessment aims to:

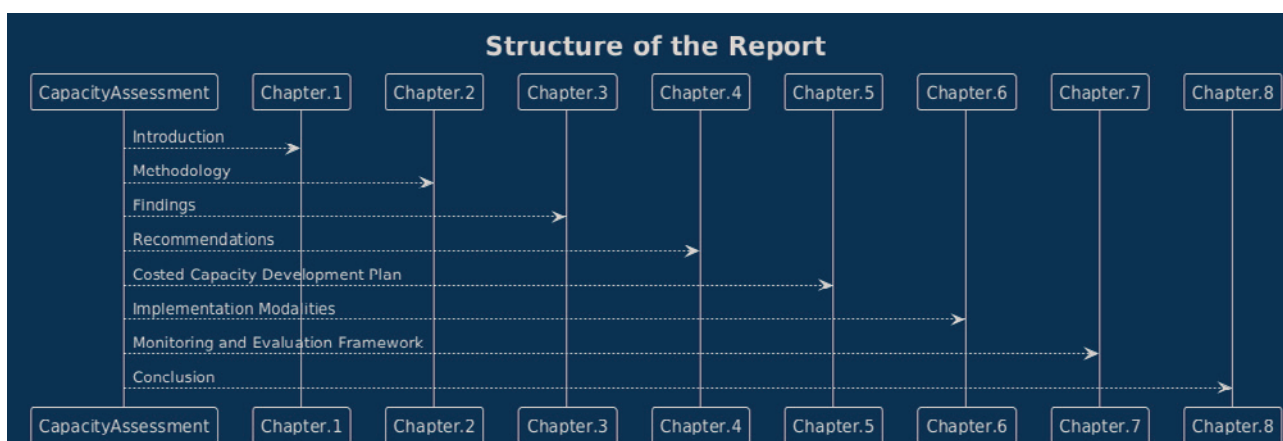
- Analyze the institutional, technical, financial, human resource, infrastructure and legislative capacities of the identified entities.
- Propose feasible, innovative strategies to enhance inclusivity, particularly for women, youth, and marginalized groups.
- Develop a cost-effective capacity development plan to address short-term, medium-term, and long-term priorities.
- Strengthen collaboration between MoLRGRA, GALGA, Councils, and stakeholders to ensure effective service delivery and decentralized governance.

## 1.3 Scope of the Assessment

The assessment encompasses an in-depth analysis of the operational capacities of MoLRGRA, GALGA, and local councils across The Gambia. Key focus areas include:

- **Institutional Frameworks:** Evaluating governance structures, policy coherence, and decision-making processes.
- **Resource Capacities:** Assessing technical, financial, infrastructure and human resource capabilities.
- **Service Delivery:** Analyzing the effectiveness of public service delivery mechanisms and citizen engagement practices.
- **Inclusivity:** Identifying strategies to enhance the participation of marginalized groups in governance.
- **Sustainability:** Proposing interventions to ensure long-term operational and financial stability.

*Figure 2: Structure of the Report*



# **CHAPTER 2**

# **METHODOLOGY**

## 2.1 Approach and Analytical Frameworks

The methodology employed for this needs assessment integrates a combination of analytical frameworks and participatory approaches to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of the institutional, technical, financial, infrastructure and operational capacities of MoLRGRA, GALGA, and local councils. The chosen frameworks—PESTLE Analysis, McKinsey 7S Framework, and Balanced Scorecard—allow for a multi-dimensional analysis that identifies both internal and external factors affecting governance and service delivery.

### 2.1.1 Rationale for Methodological Integration

The use of these frameworks is designed to provide a layered and interconnected understanding of the assessment objectives. PESTLE Analysis captures external environmental factors shaping the operational context, ensuring that political, economic, social, and technological considerations are included. McKinsey’s 7S Framework complements this by focusing on internal organizational dynamics, such as leadership, skills, and shared values. Together, these tools highlight how external pressures and internal structures influence performance. Finally, the Balanced Scorecard translates these insights into actionable strategies by aligning them with financial, customer, internal process, and learning perspectives. This interconnected approach ensures that findings are both holistic and actionable, addressing challenges from multiple vantage points.

## 2.1.2 Interconnectedness of Frameworks

Each framework builds upon the others to create a cohesive assessment. For example, the PESTLE Analysis informs the environmental constraints and opportunities that the McKinsey 7S Framework examines within organizational operations. The Balanced Scorecard then operationalizes these insights by setting measurable goals across financial and public-focused dimensions. This integration ensures that interventions are grounded in evidence, practical in application, and aligned with both internal capabilities and external demands.

### 2.1.3 Limitations of the Methodologies Used and Mitigation Strategies

While the methodology employed for this needs assessment was comprehensive, certain challenges were encountered during the process. These limitations were mitigated through various adaptive strategies to ensure a robust and inclusive assessment. The table below outlines the key challenges and the measures taken to address them.

**Table 1:** Limitations of the Methodologies Used and Mitigation Strategies

Limitations	Mitigation Strategy
Limited Availability of Respondents	We rescheduled some meetings to accommodate stakeholders' availability, ensuring their participation.
Potential Bias in Responses	Findings were cross-checked using data triangulation by verifying responses through multiple sources, including interviews and official documents.
Inconsistencies in Data Quality	Stakeholder insights were corroborated with official reports, and additional independent verifications were conducted.
Geographical and Logistical Constraints	To ensure broad participation, we traveled to six regions to meet stakeholders and conducted virtual interviews where necessary.
Scheduling Conflicts	Meetings were adjusted to align with stakeholders' preferred time slots, ensuring maximum engagement.
Time Constraints	Priority was given to key discussions, and rapid assessment techniques were applied to gather relevant insights effectively.
Stakeholder Engagement Challenge	In cases where in-person meetings were not feasible, alternative arrangements such as online consultations and flexible scheduling were implemented.

## 2.2 Examining the different approaches

### PESTEL Analysis

The PESTEL Analysis framework was used to examine external factors that impact the operational environment of MoLRGRA, GALGA, and local councils. This approach ensures that political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental factors are thoroughly evaluated to provide a contextual understanding of the challenges and opportunities for decentralization and governance reform.

- **Political:** Examined the influence of government policies, decentralization agendas, and political stability on local governance.
- **Economic:** Assessed the financial constraints and opportunities, including revenue generation, fiscal decentralization, and donor support.
- **Social:** Evaluated the inclusivity of women, youth, and marginalized groups in governance structures and decision-making processes.
- **Technological:** Investigated the use of technology in governance, such as digital tools for financial management, monitoring, and service delivery.
- **Legal:** Reviewed the legislative frameworks governing decentralization, including the Local Government Act and its implementation.
- **Environmental:** Considered the impact of climate change and environmental challenges on local governance and service delivery, such as waste management and urban planning.

Figure 3: PESTEL Analysis

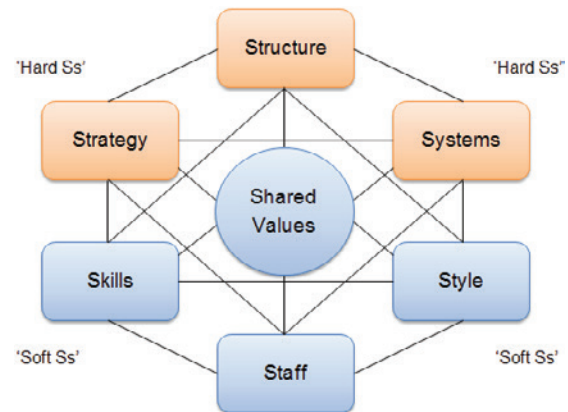


### McKinsey 7S Framework

The McKinsey 7S Framework was applied to assess the internal organizational capacity of MoLRGRA, GALGA, and local councils. This approach focuses on seven interrelated elements that influence organizational effectiveness:

- **Strategy:** Evaluated the presence, clarity, and effectiveness of strategic plans in guiding governance and service delivery.
- **Structure:** Analyzed the organizational frameworks to determine their alignment with decentralization objectives.
- **Systems:** Assessed operational processes, including financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and communication systems.
- **Shared Values:** Examined the cultural and ethical foundations that drive inclusivity, accountability, and transparency in governance.
- **Style:** Reviewed leadership and decision-making approaches, focusing on collaboration and responsiveness.
- **Staff:** Evaluated human resource capacities, including staffing levels, skills, and training opportunities.
- **Skills:** Identified gaps in technical expertise and professional development among staff.

Figure 4: McKinsey 7S Framework



### Balanced Scorecard

The Balanced Scorecard framework was used to align the objectives of the assessment with the strategic priorities of MoLRGRA, GALGA, and local councils. This approach ensures that capacity-building interventions address critical areas across four dimensions:

1. **Financial Perspective:** Evaluated the financial health and sustainability of councils, including revenue generation, budget management, and donor support.
2. **Customer Perspective:** Assessed citizen satisfaction with service delivery and community engagement practices.
3. **Internal Processes Perspective:** Analyzed operational processes to identify inefficiencies and areas for improvement.
4. **Learning and Growth Perspective:** Focused on human resource development, including training, skills enhancement, and knowledge management.

The Balanced Scorecard provided a structured framework for identifying gaps and aligning strategic objectives with actionable recommendations for governance and service delivery improvement.

## 2.2 Data Collection Tools

To ensure a comprehensive and inclusive assessment, a variety of data collection tools were employed. These tools were selected to capture qualitative insights from diverse stakeholders, ensuring a holistic understanding of the capacities, challenges, and opportunities of MoLRGRA, GALGA, and local councils.

### Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

KIIs were conducted with senior officials, technical staff, and representatives from key institutions to obtain in-depth perspectives on governance, operational capacities, and policy frameworks.

- **Purpose:** To gather expert insights into strategic priorities, institutional challenges, and opportunities for capacity building.
- **Target Respondents:**
  - Ministry officials.
  - GALGA staff and leadership.
  - Mayors/Chairpersons, Council CEOs, and department heads (e.g., Finance, Human Resources, Planning).
- **Focus Areas:**
  - Strengths and weaknesses of governance frameworks.
  - Resource constraints and capacity gaps.
  - Collaboration and communication between stakeholders.
- **Representativity:**
  - A total of 33 key informants were interviewed across various institutions, ensuring diverse representation.
  - Breakdown by Institution:
    - Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs (MoLRGRA): 2 respondents, including senior officials and technical staff.
    - GALGA: 3 respondents, covering leadership and technical staff.
    - Local Government Authorities (LGAs): 20 respondents, with at least 2 respondents per council, including Mayors/Chairpersons, CEOs, and department heads.
  - Geographical Breakdown by LGA:
    - Banjul City Council (BCC): 3 respondents.
    - Kanifing Municipal Council (KMC): 7 respondents.
    - Brikama Area Council (BAC): 3 respondents.
    - Kerewan Area Council (KAC): 5 respondents.
    - Mansakonko Area Council (MAC): 2 respondents.
    - Janjanbureh Area Council (JAC): 5 respondents.
    - Basse Area Council (BASAC): 3 respondents.
    - Governors/Executive Coordinators (WCR, BJL, KM, Janjanbureh and Basse)

This representativity ensures that the findings reflect the diverse perspectives of key actors at both national and local levels, capturing variations in challenges and opportunities across the institutions.

### Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

FGDs were organized to capture the perspectives of specific stakeholder groups, including community representatives, women, youth, and persons with disabilities. These discussions provided rich qualitative data on inclusivity, service delivery, and community engagement.

- **Purpose:** To understand diverse stakeholder experiences and gather context-specific insights into local governance.
- **Target Groups and Criteria for Selection:**
  - **Women's Groups:** Participants were selected based on their active involvement in community initiatives and leadership roles, ensuring insights into gender-specific barriers and opportunities.
  - **Youth Groups:** Composed of young people engaged in local governance and community activities, with an emphasis on capturing the aspirations and challenges of youth in decision-making.
  - **Community Leaders and Marginalized Populations:** Included Alkalos, VDC representatives, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) to ensure representation of diverse voices, particularly those often excluded from governance processes.
  - The groups were assembled to reflect the demographics of their respective regions, ensuring a balanced mix of gender, age, and socio-economic backgrounds. This approach ensures relevance and representativity in the findings.
- **Key Topics Discussed:**
  - **Barriers to Participation in Governance:** Exploring obstacles faced by marginalized groups, such as lack of access, systemic biases, or cultural norms.
  - **Satisfaction with Public Services:** Participants shared their experiences and perceptions of service delivery at the local government level.
  - **Recommendations for Improving Local Government Responsiveness:** Stakeholders provided actionable insights to enhance inclusivity and accountability.
- **Relevance and Representativity:** FGDs were conducted in diverse geographical locations to capture regional variations and ensure the findings reflect the lived experiences of various stakeholder groups. This qualitative approach complements quantitative data from KIIs, providing a holistic view of local governance challenges and opportunities.

## Observational Assessments

Observational assessments were conducted through structured field visits to evaluate the physical and operational infrastructure of local councils and the Ministry. These assessments aimed to provide objective insights into the adequacy of resources, service delivery processes, and accessibility for marginalized groups.

- **Purpose:** To assess operational conditions, resource adequacy, and infrastructure needs across local councils and the Ministry.
- **Methodology:** Field visits were conducted to 7 local councils and the Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs (MoLRGRA). During these visits, assessment checklists were used to systematically document observations on physical infrastructure, equipment, and operational processes. Observational data was triangulated with findings from KIIs and FGDs to ensure accuracy and reliability.
- **Locations:**
  - Banjul City Council (BCC).
  - Kanifing Municipal Council (KMC).
  - Brikama Area Council (BAC).
  - Mansakonko Area Council (MAC).
  - anjanbureh Area Council (JAC).
  - Basse Area Council (BaSAC).
  - Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs (MoLRGRA).
- **Areas Observed:**
  - **Office Facilities and Equipment:** Availability, condition, and adequacy of office infrastructure and tools (e.g., buildings, vehicles, IT equipment).
  - **Record-Keeping and Documentation Systems:** Efficiency and security of systems for managing files and data.
  - **Accessibility:** Physical accessibility of facilities for women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs).

### Key Observations:

- **Physical Infrastructure:** Some councils and the Ministry operate from outdated or poorly maintained buildings with limited facilities.
- **Operational Processes:** Manual processes dominate, with inefficient document handling and limited client service capacity.
- **Resource Availability:** Insufficient equipment, such as vehicles and IT tools, impacts operational efficiency.
- **Inclusivity:** Limited accessibility for marginalized groups, particularly in older council facilities.

This approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of the operational environment across institutions, enabling targeted recommendations to address infrastructure and resource gaps.

## 2.3 Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Stakeholder engagement was designed to ensure inclusivity, transparency, and alignment with the objectives of the capacity assessment. The process incorporated diverse groups, including government institutions, local councils, development partners, community representatives, and private sector actors. Stakeholders were categorized and prioritized based on their influence, interest, and role within the decentralization system.

### Stakeholder Categorization and Prioritization

Stakeholders were categorized based on their level of influence (their ability to affect decision-making or implementation), interest (their stake in the decentralization process), and their role in governance systems. The prioritization matrix below guided the engagement strategy:

**Table 2: Stakeholder Categorization and Prioritization**

Category	Criteria	Examples
High Influence, High Interest	Key decision-makers and implementers of decentralization policies.	Ministry officials, Local Council CEOs, GALGA leadership.
High Influence, Low Interest	Influencers of governance but less directly involved.	Development partners, private sector actors.
Low Influence, High Interest	Direct beneficiaries or those impacted by governance processes.	Community representatives, youth, women, and PWDs groups.
Low Influence, Low Interest	Peripheral stakeholders with minimal engagement in decentralization.	Some external technical experts or consultants.

This categorization ensured that high-priority stakeholders were engaged extensively, while less-influential groups were included to capture diverse perspectives.

**Table 2: Stakeholder Engagement Plan**

Stakeholder Group	Engagement Method	Objective
Ministry Officials	Consultations, FGDs and KIIs	Understand governance challenges and strategic priorities.
Local Councils	KIIs, FGDs,	Assess service delivery capacities and resource constraints.
GALGA	Consultations KII	Evaluate advocacy efforts and inter-council collaboration.
Community Representatives	FGDs	Capture community needs and perceptions of governance.
Private Sector Actors	Consultations	Identify potential partnerships and resource mobilization opportunities.

### Methods and Tailored Approaches

1. Interviews and Consultations: Tailored for senior officials, CEOs, and technical staff to gain strategic insights into governance systems and institutional challenges.
2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Designed for community representatives and marginalized groups (e.g., women, youth, and PWDs) to ensure inclusivity.
3. Private Sector Engagement: Consultations focused on exploring partnerships for resource mobilization and capacity-building initiatives.

### 2.4 Risk Management Approach

A proactive risk management plan was adopted to mitigate potential challenges during the assessment process. This section addresses identified risks, their potential impact, and the mitigation measures applied. The approach also includes strategies tailored to ensure inclusivity, confidentiality, and operational efficiency while addressing expert concerns and recommendations.

**Table 2: Stakeholder Engagement Plan**

Risk	Potential Impact	Mitigation Measures
Limited stakeholder participation	Lack of diverse input, particularly from marginalized groups (e.g., women, youth, PWDs).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct targeted outreach using local leaders and community networks.</li> <li>2. Leverage social media platforms to reach youth and remote populations.</li> <li>3. Use flexible scheduling to accommodate stakeholders' availability.</li> </ol>
Political sensitivities	Biased responses or reluctance to share information.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage trusted intermediaries or neutral facilitators.</li> <li>2. Ensure confidentiality of responses using anonymous surveys or third-party facilitators.</li> <li>3. Establish a code of conduct for discussions to ensure mutual respect.</li> </ol>

Resource constraints	Delays in data collection and analysis.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Seek financial and technical support from development partners.</li> <li>2. Establish a contingency plan to prioritize critical tasks if resources are delayed.</li> <li>3. Leverage in-house expertise to manage resource gaps.</li> </ol>
Incomplete data	Compromised quality of findings and recommendations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Operationalize triangulation by conducting surveys, KIIs, and FGDs sequentially.</li> <li>2. Reconcile discrepancies using team debriefs and collaborative data reviews.</li> <li>3. Conduct capacity-building sessions for the data collection team.</li> </ol>
Public health restrictions	Limited face-to-face engagements.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use virtual platforms for interviews while ensuring accessibility and familiarity with technology.</li> <li>2. Where internet access is a barrier, conduct telephone interviews or distribute hard copies of surveys.</li> <li>3. Offer technical support for virtual tools.</li> </ol>

### Additional Strategies for Risk Mitigation

- **Tailored Outreach for Marginalized Groups:** Marginalized communities, including women, youth, and PWDs, are at risk of underrepresentation. To address this, the following strategies were implemented:
  - Local Leader Engagement: Partnering with community leaders to encourage participation.
  - Alternative Communication Channels: Using SMS or radio broadcasts to reach remote or underserved communities.
  - Language Sensitivity: Translating materials into local languages and providing interpreters during discussions.
- **Confidentiality Measures:** To build trust and maintain confidentiality:
  - Anonymous survey tools to be used to collect sensitive information.
  - Neutral facilitators ensured unbiased discussions during FGDs.
  - Data handling protocols were implemented to safeguard privacy.
- **Handling Political Resistance:** To address political resistance:
  - Trusted intermediaries were engaged to mediate discussions with resistant stakeholders.
  - A code of conduct for discussions was introduced to foster respectful and constructive dialogue.
  - Efforts were made to highlight mutual benefits of the assessment outcomes to align with stakeholders' interests.

- **Data Triangulation and Capacity Building:** To operationalize triangulation effectively:
  - Data collection followed a sequence: surveys → KIIs → FGDs.
  - Discrepancies between data sources were resolved through team reviews and consensus.
  - Capacity-building sessions were held to train data collectors in advanced triangulation methods.
- **Virtual Platform Challenges:** To mitigate challenges with virtual platforms:
  - Participants without internet access were engaged via telephone interviews.
  - Technical assistance was provided to participants unfamiliar with virtual tools.

**Figure 3:** Risk Management Framework



# **CHAPTER 3**

## **FINDINGS**

This chapter presents the key findings of the assessment for decentralized governance in The Gambia, focusing on the Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs (MoLRGRA), the Gambia Association of Local Government Authorities (GALGA), Local Councils, the Department of Community Development, and cross-cutting issues impacting governance and service delivery. The findings are organized into distinct categories based on these institutions, highlighting their operational capacities, challenges, and areas for improvement.

Each category of findings provides a detailed analysis of institutional performance, informed by stakeholder consultations, document reviews, and field observations. Additionally, this chapter employs a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis for each institution to provide a comprehensive overview of their current state. This structured approach enables a clear understanding of internal capacities and external factors influencing governance outcomes.

The findings are further supported by actionable recommendations tailored to address the specific challenges identified. These findings are aligned with the McKinsey 7S Model, ensuring a holistic approach to strengthening institutional frameworks, enhancing operational systems, and fostering inclusivity and accountability in governance. This chapter lays the foundation for the capacity development strategies detailed in subsequent sections.

## Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs

### SWOT Analysis

The **SWOT analysis** provides a comprehensive evaluation of the Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs (MoLRGRA), examining its **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats**. This analysis identifies internal and external factors influencing the Ministry's performance and its ability to achieve decentralization objectives. Systematically assessing these factors, the SWOT analysis offers actionable insights for addressing challenges and leveraging opportunities to enhance governance and service delivery.

The **Strengths** section highlights the Ministry's foundational capabilities, including its legal mandate to lead decentralization efforts, established policy frameworks, and experienced leadership. These assets position the Ministry as a central authority in coordinating governance and fostering local government capacity.

The **Weaknesses** section identifies internal limitations, such as the absence of a clear and participatory strategic plan, over-reliance on external funding, and insufficient technical and human resources. These weaknesses impede the Ministry's ability to implement reforms effectively and sustain initiatives.

The **Opportunities** section explores external factors that the Ministry can harness to strengthen its operations. These include partnerships with development organizations, alignment with the National Development Plan (NDP), and the potential to digitize systems and establish a Central Project Coordination Unit (CPCU) to streamline project management and resource allocation.

Finally, the **Threats** section outlines external challenges that could hinder the Ministry's progress. These include political interference, financial constraints, resistance to decentralization reforms, and public dissatisfaction with service delivery inefficiencies. Addressing these threats is essential to ensuring the Ministry's success in achieving its mandate.

The SWOT analysis serves as a critical tool for identifying priority areas for intervention and strategic planning, enabling the Ministry to address gaps, build on its strengths, and capitalize on emerging opportunities while mitigating risks.

**Table 5: SWOT Analysis for the Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs**

Strengths	Weakness
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Legal mandate to lead decentralization efforts and oversee local governance.</li> <li>2. Existing policy frameworks, such as the Local Government Act and National Decentralization Policy.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Absence of a clear and participatory strategic plan to guide operations.</li> <li>2. Over-reliance on external funding, limiting financial sustainability.</li> <li>3. Weak coordination mechanisms with councils and stakeholders.</li> <li>4. Inadequate monitoring and evaluation frameworks to track project outcomes and decentralization progress.</li> <li>5. Limited technical capacity in critical areas such as project management, financial analysis, and policy development.</li> <li>6. Staff turnover due to uncompetitive salaries and lack of incentives.</li> </ol>

Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Availability of development partners (e.g., EU, UNDP, CLGF) to support decentralization and capacity-building initiatives.</li> <li>2. Potential for establishing a Central Project Coordination Unit (CPCU) to streamline project management and resource allocation.</li> <li>3. Leverage the Recovery Focus - National Development Plan (RF-NDP) to align the Ministry's goals with national priorities.</li> <li>4. Opportunity to digitize systems and modernize records management for increased efficiency.</li> <li>5. Engage marginalized groups to strengthen inclusivity in governance processes.</li> <li>6. Established network with councils, GALGA, and development partners for policy implementation.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Limited financial resources to implement strategic and operational plans effectively.</li> <li>2. Resistance to decentralization reforms from some stakeholders.</li> <li>3. Vulnerability to donor funding fluctuations, affecting the sustainability of initiatives.</li> <li>4. Public dissatisfaction due to inefficiencies and delays in service delivery.</li> <li>5. institutional instability due to frequent movement of leadership.</li> </ol>

### Strategy

**Finding 1:** The Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs lacks an updated strategic plan to guide its operations.

The absence of a strategic plan has created fragmented efforts in achieving the Ministry's decentralization objectives. There Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020 is outdated and lack alignment with modern governance needs, leading to inefficiencies and weak coordination with local councils. Stakeholders highlighted the absence of a participatory approach, which limits ownership and integration of diverse perspectives into the Ministry's long-term planning.

**Table 6:** Evidence Summary Table

Source	Evidence
Desk Review	The review of strategic document 2016 - 2020 revealed that the plan is outdated and fail to address decentralization objectives comprehensively.
Stakeholder Consultation	Stakeholders (Councils) expressed that they were not involved in shaping or contributing to any strategic planning process for the Ministry.
Observation	There is no evidence of a recent strategic plan during document reviews, and staff acknowledged this as a critical operational gap. However, the ministry is currently in the process of developing an updated strategic plan.

**Finding 2:** Reliance on external funding hinders the sustainability of initiatives.

The Ministry heavily depends on external funding sources to implement its programs and achieve decentralization objectives. While this has supported the delivery of critical initiatives, the lack of sustainable internal revenue generation mechanisms makes the Ministry vulnerable to funding fluctuations and donor priorities. This dependency limits the Ministry's ability to plan and execute long-term projects independently.

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*Table 7: Evidence Summary Table*

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	Financial reports and budget documents show a high percentage of program funding sourced from external donors, with minimal internally generated revenue.
Stakeholder Consultation	Stakeholders noted that several key initiatives rely on external funding, and the absence of reliable government allocation leads to delays or cancellations of activities.
Observation	The Ministry lacks a resource mobilization strategy or mechanisms for securing sustainable funding.

**Finding 3:** The Current Drive to Strengthen the Planning Unit.

The Ministry lacks a centralized coordination mechanism within its planning unit to effectively manage projects and resources. This results in fragmented project implementation, inefficiencies, and duplication of efforts. Strengthening the planning unit with a dedicated structure, skilled personnel, and digital tools will enhance strategic planning, resource allocation, and inter-agency coordination.

*Table 8: Evidence Summary Table*

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	Desk review reveal inconsistencies in reporting formats and unclear lines of accountability for resource management.
Stakeholder Consultation	Stakeholders emphasized challenges in coordinating projects, citing a lack of a centralized system to harmonize planning and implementation.
Observation	The Ministry does not have a Central Project Coordination Unit (CPCU) for project and resource oversight. However, the planning unit is tasked with the responsibility to coordinate projects but do not have the required capacity.

**Structure**

**Finding 4:** Weak Coordination and Skill Gaps Hindering Decentralization

The **lack of coordination between the Ministry and councils** negatively impacts decentralization efforts, leading to inefficiencies in policy implementation, resource allocation, and service delivery. Weak communication channels and fragmented decision-making hinder alignment between national and local governance priorities.

Additionally, **significant skill gaps in project management, financial analysis, and policy development** further limit the capacity of both the Ministry and councils to execute decentralized governance effectively. Many staff members lack the necessary expertise to develop strategic policies, manage public resources efficiently, and implement impactful projects.

Strengthening **inter-agency coordination mechanisms** and investing in **capacity-building programs** will enhance collaboration, improve policy execution, and equip staff with essential technical skills for effective governance.

**Table 9: Evidence Summary Table**

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Local Government Act (2002)</b> outlines coordination between the Ministry and councils but lacks enforcement mechanisms, leading to weak inter-agency collaboration.</li> <li>• <b>The Gambia National Policy on Decentralization (2015-2024)</b> highlights the need for structured coordination mechanisms but notes implementation challenges due to financial and technical limitations.</li> <li>• <b>The Strategic Plan MoL&amp;RG 2016-2020</b> identifies skill gaps in policy development, financial management, and project planning as barriers to effective decentralization.</li> </ul>
Stakeholder Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Council officials</b> reported a lack of timely guidance from the Ministry, causing delays in policy implementation and decision-making.</li> <li>• <b>Ministry representatives</b> cited inconsistencies in local governance structures, affecting decentralization efforts.</li> <li>• Stakeholders highlighted <b>inadequate training</b> in project management, financial analysis, and policy development, limiting the ability to manage decentralized programs effectively.</li> </ul>
Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination meetings between the Ministry and councils were found to be <b>infrequent</b>, resulting in <b>misalignment</b> between national policies and local implementation.</li> <li>• Staff across both the Ministry and councils <b>lack expertise</b> in critical areas such as policy drafting, budgeting, and project execution.</li> <li>• The absence of structured <b>training programs</b> further exacerbates the skill gap, limiting the efficiency of decentralization processes.</li> </ul>

## Systems

**Finding 5:** The absence of modern records management and digital systems reduces efficiency.

The Ministry relies heavily on outdated manual systems for record-keeping and data management, which hinders operational efficiency and decision-making. Without modern digital tools, retrieving, updating, and sharing information is time-consuming and prone to errors. This gap in digital infrastructure limits the Ministry's ability to effectively manage resources, monitor progress, and coordinate with councils and stakeholders.

**Table 10: Evidence Summary Table**

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	Reviews of operational procedures revealed a lack of digital record-keeping systems, with reliance on paper-based methods.
Stakeholder Consultation	Stakeholders noted delays in accessing accurate data and reports due to inefficient manual systems.
Observation	Observed the absence of functional digital tools or databases in key departments, leading to inefficiencies in daily operations.

**Finding 6:** Weak monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks hinder progress tracking.

The Ministry's monitoring and evaluation processes are underdeveloped, lacking standardized indicators, systems for data collection, and analysis mechanisms. This inadequacy results in limited oversight of projects and decentralization efforts. The absence of a robust M&E framework also undermines accountability, making it challenging to track progress, measure impact, and adapt strategies effectively.

**Table 11:** Evidence Summary Table

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Strategic Plan MoL&amp;RG 2016-2020</b> highlights the need for capacity building in M&amp;E but lacks an actionable implementation framework</li> <li>The <b>National Policy on Decentralization 2015-2024</b> stresses the importance of M&amp;E but reveals implementation bottlenecks due to resource gaps</li> </ul>
Stakeholder Consultation	Stakeholders noted inconsistent project tracking and a lack of clear reporting structures for evaluating decentralization progress.
Observation	Monitoring and reporting practices observed within the Ministry are fragmented, with no dedicated unit for M&E functions.

**Shared Values**

**Finding 7:** Inclusivity is limited in governance structures, particularly for marginalized groups.

Governance structures within the Ministry and related institutions lack adequate mechanisms to include marginalized groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Despite the recognition of inclusivity as a policy priority in decentralization frameworks, practical implementation remains insufficient. This exclusion limits the diversity of perspectives in decision-making processes and reduces the effectiveness of governance outcomes.

**Table 12:** Evidence Summary Table

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	<p>The <b>National Policy on Decentralization 2015-2024</b> emphasizes inclusivity but provides no detailed guidelines for implementation</p> <p>The <b>Local Government Act 2002</b> acknowledges representation but lacks enforcement mechanisms to ensure participation of marginalized groups</p>
Stakeholder Consultation	Stakeholders reported minimal representation of marginalized groups in decision-making roles, particularly in councils and Ministry-led governance forums.
Observation	Governance meetings and documents revealed limited efforts to engage women, youth, or persons with disabilities in planning and decision-making processes.

**Style**

**Finding 8:** Leadership struggles with decentralization due to political interference.

The Ministry's leadership faces significant challenges in implementing decentralization policies effectively, as political interference undermines decision-making processes. This interference limits the autonomy of leaders, delays critical reforms, and creates tension between the Ministry, councils, and other stakeholders. As a result, leadership efforts are often reactive rather than proactive, reducing the Ministry's capacity to address decentralization priorities comprehensively.

**Table 13: Evidence Summary Table**

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	The National Policy on Decentralization 2015–2024 highlights political neutrality as a key principle but notes gaps in ensuring its implementation. The Local Government Act 2002 provides legal backing for council autonomy, but practical enforcement is often obstructed by political influence.
Stakeholder Consultation	Stakeholders reported delays in decision-making and inconsistent implementation of policies due to political interference.
Observation	Instances of political influence on council operations and Ministry directives were noted, impacting leadership effectiveness.

## Staff

### Finding 9: Staffing Challenges Affecting Efficiency and Retention

The heavy workload and limited personnel across units hinder the effective delivery of the Ministry's mandate. Many departments operate with insufficient staff, leading to inefficiencies, delays in service delivery, and increased pressure on existing employees. Additionally, high staff turnover due to low salaries and lack of incentives further exacerbates these challenges. Without competitive compensation and structured career growth opportunities, retaining skilled personnel remains difficult, impacting overall institutional performance. Strengthening workforce capacity through strategic recruitment, improved incentives, and professional development opportunities is essential for enhancing efficiency and service delivery.

**Table 14: Evidence Summary Table**

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Local Government Staff Service Rules (2003)</b> and Schemes of <b>Service for Local Government (2003)</b> outline recruitment and employment conditions but lack updated policies on staff incentives, career progression, and digital skills development.</li> <li>The <b>Strategic Plan MoL&amp;RG 2016–2020</b> highlights staffing shortages and the need for increased personnel to enhance decentralization efforts.</li> <li>The <b>Financial &amp; Accounting Manual for LGAs (2009)</b> does not address modern workforce management strategies, contributing to inefficiencies.</li> </ul>
Stakeholder Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders cited <b>heavy workloads</b> due to limited staff, causing delays in service delivery and inefficiencies.</li> <li><b>High staff turnover</b> was linked to <b>low salaries, lack of incentives, and limited career development opportunities</b>.</li> </ul>
Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Several departments were observed to have <b>insufficient personnel</b>, with existing staff handling multiple roles.</li> <li><b>Workforce shortages</b> were evident, particularly in <b>technical and administrative</b> positions.</li> <li>Limited use of <b>digital tools and modern HR management practices</b> was noted, further reducing efficiency.</li> </ul>

## The Gambia Association of Local Government Authorities

The Gambia Association of Local Government Authorities (GALGA) is an umbrella organization representing the eight local councils in The Gambia. Established to promote effective local governance and decentralization, GALGA serves as a platform for collaboration, advocacy, and capacity building among councils. It works closely with the Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs to ensure that councils have the resources and support needed to fulfill their mandates.

GALGA's core functions include advocating for councils' needs at both national and international levels, coordinating training and development programs, and promoting inclusivity and citizen participation in local governance. Fostering partnerships with development partners such as UNDP and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), etc. GALGA aims to strengthen local governance structures to enhance the delivery of services to communities. Despite these efforts, the organization faces several challenges that hinder its effectiveness, which are addressed in the following findings.

### SWOT Analysis for GALGA

The following SWOT analysis provides an overview of the internal strengths and weaknesses of the Gambia Association of Local Government Authorities (GALGA), as well as the external opportunities and threats influencing its performance. This analysis highlights the key factors impacting GALGA's capacity to fulfill its mandate of supporting local councils, advocating for their needs, and promoting decentralized governance in The Gambia.

**Table 15: SWOT Analysis for GALGA**

Strengths	Weakness
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Established as the umbrella body for local councils, giving it a strong representational mandate.</li> <li>2. Recognized by councils and key stakeholders as the primary advocacy body for local governments.</li> <li>3. Experience in coordinating capacity-building initiatives for councils in collaboration with partners.</li> <li>4. Access to partnerships with development organizations like UNDP and CLGF etc.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Absence of a comprehensive strategic plan to guide operations and priorities.</li> <li>2. Heavy reliance on council subventions, leading to financial instability.</li> <li>3. Limited staff, with significant gaps in technical expertise in areas like budgeting, governance, and proposal writing.</li> <li>4. Inadequate office infrastructure and outdated systems for communication and operations.</li> <li>5. Lack of a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the impact of initiatives.</li> </ol>

Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Potential to leverage partnerships with development organizations for funding and technical support.</li> <li>2. Preparation of Resource Mobilization, Lobbying, and Advocacy Strategies to diversify funding sources.</li> <li>3. Growing national and international interest in decentralization and local governance reforms.</li> <li>4. Opportunities to promote inclusivity by engaging marginalized groups in governance.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Political interference undermining GALGA's neutrality and advocacy efforts.</li> <li>2. Delayed subvention payments from councils, impacting GALGA's financial stability.</li> <li>3. Resistance from some stakeholders to decentralization policies, reducing alignment with GALGA's goals.</li> <li>4. Public dissatisfaction with perceived inefficiencies in local councils may reflect on GALGA.</li> </ol>

## Strategy

### Finding 1: Absence of Key Institutional Policies and Incomplete Resource Mobilization Strategy

GALGA **lacks critical institutional policies**, including a **Staff Service Rule, Manual of Procedures, and Strategic Plan**, which are essential for guiding operations, governance, and decision-making. The absence of these foundational policies creates **operational inefficiencies, weak institutional governance, and limited accountability**, making it difficult for GALGA to function effectively as the umbrella body for local councils.

Additionally, while GALGA has **initiated a Resource Mobilization Strategy, it remains incomplete**, leaving the organization without a structured approach to securing sustainable funding. The **heavy reliance on inconsistent council membership dues** continues to impact financial stability, limiting GALGA's ability to advocate for councils and implement capacity-building programs.

Developing and finalizing **key institutional policies, including a complete Resource Mobilization Strategy**, will strengthen GALGA's governance framework, enhance operational efficiency, and improve financial sustainability.

*Table 16: Evidence Summary Table*

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GALGA <b>does not have a Staff Service Rule, Manual of Procedures, or a Strategic Plan</b>, making governance and decision-making unstructured.</li> <li>The <b>Local Government Act (2002)</b> outlines GALGA's role but does not provide a clear operational framework due to the absence of guiding policies.</li> <li>The <b>Draft Resource Mobilization Strategy</b> exists but remains incomplete, lacking a structured approach to diversifying funding sources.</li> </ul>
Stakeholder Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council representatives expressed concern over GALGA's <b>lack of structured policies</b>, leading to <b>inconsistent operations and unclear governance procedures</b>.</li> <li>Stakeholders highlighted that without a <b>Strategic Plan, GALGA lacks a clear direction and measurable goals</b>, affecting its ability to support councils effectively.</li> <li>GALGA leadership acknowledged that <b>financial sustainability remains a challenge</b> due to the <b>incomplete Resource Mobilization Strategy</b>, resulting in continued reliance on subventions from councils.</li> </ul>
Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>No documented operational guidelines</b> were found within GALGA for staff procedures, governance, or long-term strategic direction.</li> <li>The <b>absence of a structured governance framework</b> has led to <b>ad-hoc decision-making</b> and difficulty in aligning with national decentralization efforts.</li> <li>GALGA's <b>financial planning remains weak</b>, with no structured mechanisms to pursue external funding opportunities beyond council contributions.</li> </ul>

## Structure

### Finding 2: Ineffective Secretariat Due to the Number and Quality of Staff

GALGA's **limited staffing and skill gaps** significantly hinder its ability to effectively support councils and fulfill its mandate. Currently, **only three staff members—a Program Manager, Admin Staff and Finance Assistant**—manage all operations, creating excessive workloads and reducing efficiency. The **absence of key personnel**, such as a **Secretary General, Communication Officer, and additional technical staff**, weakens governance structures and operational capacity.

Furthermore, **staff have limited opportunities for professional development and lack formal qualifications in critical areas such as governance, financial management, and resource mobilization**. The lack of structured training programs further exacerbates skill gaps, reducing GALGA's ability to provide technical support and advocacy for local councils.

Investing in **staff expansion, structured capacity-building programs, and professional development opportunities** will enhance GALGA's operational effectiveness and ability to support decentralized governance.

**Table 17: Evidence Summary Table**

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>GALGA Organogram</b> indicates that <b>several critical positions remain unfilled</b>, including the <b>Secretary General, Program Officer, Communication Officer, and additional finance/admin staff</b>.</li> <li>The <b>Local Government Act (2002)</b> recognizes GALGA's role in supporting councils but lacks provisions for ensuring adequate staffing levels to meet operational needs.</li> </ul>
Stakeholder Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Councils reported that <b>GALGA's minimal staff limits its ability to provide technical and strategic support</b> to councils.</li> <li>Stakeholders emphasized that <b>staff members lack training in key areas such as financial management, governance, and policy development</b>, affecting overall service delivery.</li> <li>GALGA leadership acknowledged that <b>resource constraints prevent recruitment and professional development opportunities for staff</b>.</li> </ul>
Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>GALGA operates with only three staff members</b>, making it difficult to manage advocacy, policy coordination, and council support effectively.</li> <li>The <b>absence of technical staff</b> means GALGA <b>relies on external partners</b> for capacity-building instead of offering in-house support to councils.</li> <li><b>No structured training programs or skill development initiatives</b> were observed within the institution.</li> </ul>

## Systems

**Finding 3:** Delayed subvention payments from councils hinder GALGA's financial stability.

GALGA relies heavily on subventions from local councils to fund its operations. However, delays in payments disrupt its ability to execute planned activities and sustain essential functions. These delays often stem from councils' own financial constraints or lack of enforcement mechanisms to ensure timely payments. The resulting financial instability limits GALGA's ability to support councils effectively and undermines its overall operational capacity.

**Table 18: Evidence Summary Table**

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	GALGA's financial report reveal frequent delays in membership dues payments from councils, leading to budget shortfalls for their activities. Currently and amount of D3,700,000 is outstanding.
Stakeholder Consultation	Stakeholders reported that delayed payments from councils negatively affect GALGA's ability to plan and implement programs.
Observation	No mechanisms were observed for enforcing timely subvention payments, and GALGA staff cited ongoing cash flow challenges.

**Finding 4:** Infrastructure and Resource Deficits Affecting GALGA's Operations

GALGA **faces significant infrastructure deficits**, including **inadequate office space, lack of essential office equipment, and limited mobility resources**. The absence of a **fully equipped workspace** affects operational efficiency, while the lack of **computers, printers, and communication tools** hampers day-to-day administrative functions. Additionally, **limited transport facilities** restrict GALGA's ability to engage with councils and stakeholders, affecting its role in decentralized governance.

Investing in **modern office infrastructure, digital tools, and transport resources** will enhance GALGA's operational capacity and enable it to function more effectively as the umbrella body for local councils.

*Table 19: Evidence Summary Table*

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GALGA <b>lacks an adequate office building</b>, affecting its ability to operate efficiently.</li> <li>The <b>absence of modern office equipment</b> (computers, printers, and communication tools) limits productivity.</li> </ul>
Stakeholder Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff reported that <b>limited office space and outdated equipment</b> make it difficult to conduct administrative tasks efficiently.</li> <li>Stakeholders emphasized that <b>mobility constraints prevent GALGA from effectively engaging with councils</b>, limiting its advocacy and coordination role.</li> <li>The lack of <b>investment in infrastructure and digital tools</b> has hindered GALGA's ability to modernize its operations and improve service delivery.</li> </ul>
Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Office conditions were observed to be inadequate</b>, with insufficient furniture and equipment.</li> <li><b>Staff rely on manual processes</b> due to the lack of computers and digital systems, reducing efficiency.</li> <li><b>No dedicated transport resources</b> were available for GALGA to visit councils or participate in key stakeholder engagements.</li> </ul>

**Finding 5:** There is no monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to track the impact of GALGA's initiatives.

GALGA lacks a structured M&E framework to assess the effectiveness of its programs and initiatives. The absence of standardized indicators and tracking mechanisms limits its ability to measure outcomes, identify areas for improvement, and demonstrate accountability to stakeholders. This gap reduces GALGA's capacity to plan strategically, secure funding, and align its activities with the needs of councils and national development goals.

*Table 20: Evidence Summary Table*

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	Reviewed organizational documents revealed no evidence of an existing M&E framework or defined performance indicators for GALGA's initiatives
Stakeholder Consultation	Stakeholders noted the absence of tools or systems for monitoring the progress and impact of GALGA's programs.
Observation	No centralized system or dedicated personnel for M&E was observed within GALGA, with reporting practices appearing ad hoc.

## Shared Values

**Finding 6:** Limited collaboration and communication between GALGA, councils, and the Ministry.

GALGA's ability to support councils and advocate for their needs is undermined by weak communication and collaboration with councils and the Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs. The lack of regular dialogue and coordination mechanisms leads to misaligned priorities, duplication of efforts, and delays in implementing governance reforms. This gap reduces the overall effectiveness of GALGA in fostering strong relationships and ensuring alignment with decentralization objectives.

**Table 21:** Evidence Summary Table

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	Documents reveal a lack of formalized mechanisms, such as regular forums or structured reporting, for communication between GALGA and key stakeholders
Stakeholder Consultation	Stakeholders indicated insufficient engagement between GALGA, councils, and the Ministry, leading to conflicting priorities and inefficiencies.
Observation	Observed a lack of joint meetings or collaborative planning sessions between GALGA and its stakeholders.

## Skills

**Finding 7:** Staff lack technical expertise in budgeting, proposal writing, and governance.

GALGA staff face significant skill gaps in essential technical areas such as budgeting, proposal writing, and governance. These deficiencies limit the organization's ability to secure funding, manage resources effectively, and provide robust support to councils. The lack of expertise in these critical areas also affects GALGA's ability to align its initiatives with national governance priorities and advocate effectively on behalf of councils.

**Table 22:** Evidence Summary Table

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	Organizational documents highlight an absence of structured training programs for budgeting, proposal writing, and governance
Stakeholder Consultation	Stakeholders noted inefficiencies in GALGA's resource mobilization efforts due to limited proposal writing skills among staff.
Observation	Staff were observed to lack the technical capacity needed to draft budgets or manage projects effectively, affecting organizational performance.

## Local Government Authorities (LGAs)

Local Government Authorities (LGAs) in The Gambia consist of eight councils, each responsible for governance and service delivery within their respective regions. These councils operate under the framework of the Local Government Act 2002 and are mandated to promote decentralization, foster community development, and deliver essential services such as waste management, infrastructure development, and public health. LGAs serve as the closest tier of government to the people, ensuring that decisions and resources are localized to address community needs effectively.

Despite their pivotal role, LGAs face numerous challenges, including limited autonomy, resource constraints, and capacity gaps, which hinder their ability to fulfill their mandates. The findings in this section provide a detailed analysis of the challenges and opportunities faced by LGAs, structured using the McKinsey 7S Model to address operational, structural, and strategic gaps. The analysis also identifies actionable solutions to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of LGAs in supporting The Gambia's decentralization objectives.

## SWOT Analysis for Local Councils

Local councils in The Gambia play a crucial role in decentralization by providing governance and essential services at the regional and community levels. Operating under the **Local Government Act 2002**, councils are tasked with responsibilities such as waste management, infrastructure development, and community engagement. Despite their centrality in local governance, councils face several challenges, including limited autonomy, financial constraints, and capacity gaps, which hinder their ability to deliver on their mandates effectively. This SWOT analysis evaluates the internal strengths and weaknesses of local councils and examines the external opportunities and threats that influence their performance. Identifying these factors, the analysis provides a basis for developing strategies to enhance councils' operational effectiveness, align their objectives with national goals, and foster sustainable development at the local level.

**Table 23:** SWOT Table for Local Councils

Strengths	Weakness
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Legal framework provided by the Local Government Act 2002, granting council's authority over local governance.</li> <li>2. Proximity to communities allows councils to identify and address local needs directly.</li> <li>3. Established revenue streams such as property rates and market fees.</li> <li>4. Experience in implementing community development projects with donor support.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Outdated operational tools and manual systems hinder efficiency in financial management and service delivery.</li> <li>2. Lack of clear and updated strategic plans limits alignment with national development goals.</li> <li>3. Weak revenue mobilization efforts due to outdated tariffs and reliance on external agencies.</li> <li>4. Significant capacity gaps in technical areas like project planning, financial management, and policy development.</li> <li>5. Staff turnover due to low salaries, lack of incentives, and limited training opportunities.</li> </ol>

Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Partnerships with development agencies (e.g., EU, UNDP, CLGF) to support capacity building and funding.</li> <li>2. Advancements in technology offer potential for digitalizing operations and improving efficiency.</li> <li>3. Growing national and international interest in decentralization reforms and local governance.</li> <li>4. Potential to integrate marginalized groups (e.g., women, youth, and PWDs) into governance structures.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Political interference undermines council autonomy and decision-making.</li> <li>2. Delayed subventions from the Ministry and financial instability limit councils' ability to operate effectively.</li> <li>3. Resistance from some stakeholders to decentralization policies and governance reforms.</li> <li>4. Public dissatisfaction due to inefficiencies in service delivery and governance practices. Eg Delayed Waste Collection Leading to Public Complaints</li> </ol>

## Strategy

### Finding 1: Gaps in Implementation and Alignment of Strategic Plans

Most local councils have recently validated their strategic plans, demonstrating efforts to improve governance and service delivery. However, challenges remain in effectively implementing these plans and aligning them with national development goals. Some councils face resource constraints, limited technical capacity, and weak monitoring mechanisms, which hinder the full execution of their strategic objectives. Strengthening capacity for implementation, enhancing coordination with national policies, and improving resource mobilization will ensure that validated strategic plans translate into tangible development outcomes.

**Table 24: Evidence Summary Table**

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recent council reports confirm that <b>most local councils have validated their strategic plans</b>, demonstrating progress in structured governance.</li> <li>The <b>National Development Plan (NDP)</b> emphasizes alignment with local government strategies, but gaps remain in <b>resource allocation and execution</b>.</li> <li>Some councils still <b>lack detailed implementation frameworks</b>, making it difficult to track progress effectively.</li> </ul>
Stakeholder Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council representatives acknowledged that while <b>strategic plans are in place, actual implementation remains a challenge</b> due to <b>budget constraints and insufficient technical expertise</b>.</li> <li>Stakeholders highlighted that <b>many councils lack effective monitoring mechanisms</b>, making it difficult to assess impact and adjust strategies accordingly.</li> </ul>
Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field visits confirmed that <b>many councils have validated strategic plans but face obstacles in execution</b>, particularly due to <b>limited financial resources and inadequate staff capacity</b>.</li> <li>Several councils <b>lack digital tools and structured reporting mechanisms</b> to track the progress of their strategic initiatives.</li> </ul>

**Finding 2:** Revenue mobilization efforts are weak, relying on outdated tariffs and external agencies for collections.

Local councils face significant challenges in mobilizing revenue, as they continue to rely on outdated tariffs that do not reflect current economic conditions. Furthermore, key revenue streams, such as sand mining and property rates, are often managed by external agencies, limiting councils' control over their own finances. External agencies such as the **Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA)** control local tax collections, the **National Road Authority (NRA)** manages road and vehicle-related fees, central government agencies oversee **land lease payments and stamp duties, and private waste collection companies** directly collect waste management fees, limiting councils' financial autonomy. These inefficiencies undermine financial sustainability and constrain councils' ability to fund essential services and development projects.

**Table 25: Evidence Summary Table**

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recent council reports confirm that <b>most local councils have validated their strategic plans</b>, demonstrating progress in structured governance.</li> <li><b>The National Development Plan (NDP)</b> emphasizes alignment with local government strategies, but gaps remain in resource allocation and execution.</li> <li>Some councils still <b>lack detailed implementation frameworks</b>, making it difficult to track progress effectively.</li> </ul>
Stakeholder Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council representatives acknowledged that while <b>strategic plans are in place, actual implementation remains a challenge</b> due to <b>budget constraints and insufficient technical expertise</b>.</li> <li>Stakeholders highlighted that <b>many councils lack effective monitoring mechanisms</b>, making it difficult to assess impact and adjust strategies accordingly.</li> </ul>
Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field visits confirmed that <b>many councils have validated strategic plans but face obstacles in execution</b>, particularly due to <b>limited financial resources and inadequate staff capacity</b>.</li> <li>Several councils <b>lack digital tools and structured reporting mechanisms</b> to track the progress of their strategic initiatives.</li> </ul>

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*Table 25: Evidence Summary Table*

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	Financial documents reviewed indicate reliance on outdated revenue collection systems and limited adjustments to tariffs over the years
Stakeholder Consultation	Stakeholders reported inefficiencies in revenue collection processes, with external agencies retaining significant control over key revenue streams. Stakeholders lamented on constraints in adjusting tariffs which include legal and bureaucratic delays, political resistance and fear of public backlash, lack of standardized tariff review mechanisms, limited public awareness and compliance, and economic hardships affecting affordability.
Observation	Observed systems for revenue collection were manual and lacked automation, contributing to delays and inaccuracies in financial reporting.

### Structure

**Finding 3:** Limited Autonomy and Dependence on Centralized Structures

Local councils operate under **significant constraints due to limited decision-making autonomy**, particularly in **administrative and financial management**. Key decisions, such as **staff recruitment, budget approvals, and resource allocation**, require approval from the **Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs (MoLRGRA)** or third-party entities, slowing down processes and restricting councils' ability to respond effectively to local needs.

A major barrier is the **centralized Local Government Service Commission (LGSC), which controls recruitment and promotions for local councils but operates inefficiently**, leading to **delays in hiring, unresolved staffing gaps, and poor human resource management**. For example, some councils reported that **staffing requests had been pending with the LGSC for over a year**, affecting service delivery and administrative efficiency.

This dependency **undermines decentralization efforts**, preventing councils from independently managing their affairs and limiting their capacity to drive local development initiatives. Strengthening **council autonomy, streamlining approval processes, and improving the efficiency of the LGSC** are critical steps toward effective decentralization.

*Table 26: Evidence Summary Table*

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Local Government Act (2002)</b> provides councils with administrative authority, but in practice, many decisions remain centralized under <b>MoLRGRA</b> and the <b>LGSC</b>.</li> <li>The <b>LGSC's recruitment and promotion processes lack efficiency</b>, often delaying essential staff appointments in councils.</li> </ul>

Stakeholder Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council officials reported that <b>budget approvals and financial decisions require Ministry approval</b>, causing delays in project implementation.</li> <li>• Multiple councils cited <b>cases where recruitment requests remained unresolved for over a year due to LGSC inefficiencies</b>, affecting service delivery.</li> <li>• Some stakeholders expressed concerns that <b>third-party entities and bureaucratic bottlenecks limit councils' financial independence and decision-making power</b>.</li> </ul>
Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several councils <b>operated with critical staffing shortages, with unfilled vacancies attributed to delays from the LGSC</b>.</li> <li>• Budget allocations were <b>delayed due to central approvals</b>, impacting the timely execution of local projects.</li> </ul>

**Finding 4:** Governance roles and responsibilities between councils, Alkalos, and VDCs are unclear.

A lack of clarity regarding the governance roles and responsibilities of councils, Alkalos (village heads), and Village Development Committees (VDCs) creates overlaps and conflicts in local governance. This confusion often leads to inefficiencies, delays in decision-making, and strained relationships among these key actors. The absence of well-defined protocols for collaboration undermines the effectiveness of governance processes and reduces trust and cooperation within local communities.

**Table 27:** Evidence Summary Table

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	The <b>Local Government Act 2002</b> outlines general roles but lacks specific guidelines for collaboration and conflict resolution among councils, Alkalos, and VDCs
Stakeholder Consultation	Stakeholders reported frequent conflicts between councils and Alkalos over decision-making authority and resource allocation.
Observation	Observed a lack of formalized processes or communication frameworks between councils, Alkalos, and VDCs during governance activities.

## System

**Finding 6:** Weak monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks reduce accountability and tracking of council projects.

Local councils lack robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track the progress, outcomes, and impacts of their projects. The absence of standardized M&E frameworks and clear performance indicators hinders accountability and the ability to measure success. This gap leads to inefficiencies in project implementation, inadequate reporting, and missed opportunities for learning and improvement. Without an effective M&E mechanism, councils struggle to align their initiatives with decentralization and national development goals.

**Table 28:** Evidence Summary Table

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>Strategic Plan MoL&amp;RG 2016-2020</b> identifies weak M&amp;E as a significant challenge but does not provide actionable strategies for improvement.</li> <li>• The <b>National Decentralization Policy 2015-2024</b> highlights the importance of M&amp;E for local governance but notes limited implementation at council levels.</li> </ul>
Stakeholder Consultation	Stakeholders reported inconsistencies in tracking project outcomes and noted the lack of structured M&E systems to assess performance.
Observation	Observed a lack of formalized processes or communication frameworks between councils, Alkalos, and VDCs during governance activities.

## Shared Values

**Finding 7:** Inclusivity efforts are insufficient, particularly for marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities.

Despite policy commitments to inclusivity, local councils struggle to integrate marginalized groups, such as persons with disabilities (PWDs), women, and youth, into governance and decision-making processes. Limited representation in council meetings, project planning, and implementation results in the exclusion of diverse perspectives and needs. This gap reduces the effectiveness of governance initiatives and undermines efforts to promote equity and social cohesion.

**Table 29:** Evidence Summary Table

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Local Government Act 2002</b> mandates inclusivity in governance but lacks enforcement mechanisms for ensuring representation of marginalized groups.</li> <li>The <b>National Policy on Decentralization 2015–2024</b> highlights inclusivity as a priority but reveals weak implementation at the council level.</li> </ul>
Stakeholder Consultation	Stakeholders reported that PWDs, women, and youth have limited opportunities to participate in council activities or influence decision-making.
Observation	Governance meetings and council projects were observed to lack adequate representation or tailored provisions for marginalized groups, such as PWDs.

## Style

**Finding 8:** Leadership struggles with political interference, limiting effectiveness.

Leadership within local councils faces **significant challenges due to political interference**, which undermines **decision-making and operational autonomy**. This interference often **delays critical reforms, misaligns councils with community needs, and fosters a lack of trust among stakeholders**. External political agendas further limit council leaders from prioritizing local governance objectives, weakening decentralization efforts.

In 2023, multiple councils **reported politically motivated staff appointments**, with some **CEOs replaced due to political affiliations**, causing leadership instability. **Budget approvals were delayed due to political influence**, restricting service delivery and project implementation. Council leaders were also **pressured to allocate resources to politically connected groups**, leading to inflated costs and substandard infrastructure.

Political interference **prevents councils from adjusting tariffs or enforcing tax collection** on politically linked businesses, creating **revenue shortfalls and poor service delivery**. Additionally, some mayors and chairpersons faced **intimidation or threats of removal for resisting undue political influence**, further weakening governance and council effectiveness.

To strengthen local governance, **councils need greater autonomy, transparent recruitment processes, and financial independence**. Addressing political interference will enhance **service delivery, accountability, and trust in local government institutions**.

**Table 30:** Evidence Summary Table

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	<p>The Local Government Act 2002 grants councils operational independence but does not provide adequate safeguards against political interference.</p> <p>The Local Government Act (2002) outlines councils' autonomy, but in practice, political actors often interfere in council decisions.</p> <p>The National Policy on Decentralization 2015–2024 notes the negative impact of political influence on governance processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reports highlight cases where CEOs and key staff were replaced due to political considerations, disrupting council administration.</li> </ul>

Stakeholder Consultation	Multiple councils reported that staff recruitment and dismissals were influenced by political affiliations rather than performance or merit.
Observation	Observed instances where council leadership decisions were influenced by external political pressures, causing delays and reduced focus on community priorities.

## Staff

### Finding 9: Limited Staffing and Skill Gaps Undermine Council Efficiency

Local councils across the country are face an overall **staffing shortage of 20%**, limiting their ability to deliver on their mandate and effectively implement decentralization policies. Many councils operate with **minimal staff in some departments/units**, often requiring personnel to take on multiple roles, leading to inefficiencies and delays in decision-making.

Additionally, **many council staff lack technical expertise in financial management, project planning, and policy development**, further constraining their ability to execute mandates effectively. The **absence of structured training programs and career development opportunities** exacerbates this issue, making it difficult to retain qualified personnel and maintain institutional knowledge.

Expanding council staffing levels, recruiting qualified personnel, and investing in **capacity-building programs** will enhance service delivery, governance, and overall efficiency in local councils.

*Table 31: Evidence Summary Table*

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Local Government Staff Service Rules (2003)</b> and <b>Schemes of Service for Local Government (2003)</b> outline recruitment guidelines but lack provisions for modern HR practices such as career development and performance-based incentives.</li> <li>The <b>Strategic Plan MoL&amp;RG 2016-2020</b> highlights staffing shortages as a major barrier to achieving decentralization goals.</li> <li>The <b>Financial &amp; Accounting Manual for LGAs (2009)</b> lacks modern workforce management strategies, contributing to inefficiencies.</li> </ul>
Stakeholder Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Council officials</b> reported that <b>staffing shortages create excessive workloads</b>, affecting service delivery and operational efficiency.</li> <li><b>Staff turnover</b> was attributed to <b>low salaries, lack of incentives, and limited career growth opportunities</b>.</li> <li>Stakeholders emphasized <b>the need for technical training in financial management, project planning, and policy development</b> to strengthen council operations.</li> </ul>
Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some councils like janjanbureh, Brikama, Kuntaur etc were <b>understaffed</b>, with employees performing multiple roles due to a lack of personnel.</li> <li><b>Gaps in technical expertise</b> were evident, particularly in <b>budgeting, revenue collection, and project implementation</b>.</li> <li>Councils lacked <b>structured training programs or career development initiatives</b>, further limiting their ability to build long-term capacity.</li> </ul>

## Department of Community Development

The **Department of Community Development (DCD)** plays an important role in supporting The Gambia's decentralization agenda by promoting community-driven development and enhancing local governance structures. Operating under the Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs, the DCD is tasked with mobilizing communities, facilitating participatory planning processes, and implementing development initiatives at the grassroots level. The department serves as a crucial link between local councils, Village Development Committees (VDCs), and other stakeholders, ensuring that development priorities are inclusive and responsive to community needs.

Despite its importance, the DCD faces significant challenges that hinder its ability to fulfill its mandate effectively. These include resource constraints, insufficient staffing, outdated systems, and gaps in monitoring and evaluation. Addressing these issues is critical for strengthening the department's capacity to empower communities and contribute to sustainable development. The following findings highlight the key challenges faced by the DCD and provide a basis for actionable solutions.

### SWOT Analysis for the Department of Community Development

The Department of Community Development (DCD) plays a critical role in facilitating community-driven development and supporting decentralization in The Gambia. Operating as a key link between local councils and communities, the DCD mobilizes grassroots participation, implements development initiatives, and promotes inclusivity in governance processes. However, the Department faces numerous challenges, including resource constraints, insufficient staffing, and outdated systems, which limit its ability to fulfill its mandate effectively. This SWOT analysis evaluates the internal strengths and weaknesses of the DCD, as well as external opportunities and threats that influence its operations. By identifying these factors, the analysis provides a foundation for strategic planning and capacity-building efforts to strengthen the Department's capacity to empower communities and contribute to sustainable development.

**Table 32: SWOT Table for the Department of Community Development**

Strengths	Weakness
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mandate to facilitate community-driven development and support decentralization efforts.</li> <li>2. Experience in mobilizing grassroots participation and implementing development projects.</li> <li>3. Established networks with Village Development Committees (VDCs) and councils.</li> <li>4. Promotes inclusivity by engaging marginalized groups in governance processes.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Staffing is limited to 100 employees, leaving some wards without representation.</li> <li>2. Lack of advanced skills in project management and technical expertise among staff.</li> <li>3. Outdated operational tools and office equipment hinder efficiency in administrative tasks.</li> <li>4. Staff turnover due to lack of incentives, performance evaluations, and career development.</li> <li>5. Weak monitoring and evaluation frameworks reduce accountability and project tracking.</li> </ol>
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Partnerships with development agencies for funding and technical support.</li> <li>2. Growing national focus on decentralization reforms and inclusive governance.</li> <li>3. Potential to integrate modern technology to improve operational efficiency and service delivery.</li> <li>4. Opportunity to align activities with national development goals and secure increased government support.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Limited funding and over-reliance on external donors make the Department vulnerable to budget fluctuations.</li> <li>2. Political interference may disrupt operational independence and decision-making processes.</li> <li>3. Resistance to decentralization initiatives at some community levels may hinder project implementation.</li> <li>4. Public dissatisfaction with service delivery gaps could affect the Department's credibility.</li> </ol>

### Strategy

**Finding 1:** The department has a community development policy awaiting approval, delaying progress on planned initiatives.

The Department of Community Development (DCD) has developed a community development policy that outlines its vision, priorities, and operational framework. However, the policy has yet to be approved, leading to delays in implementing planned initiatives. This lack of an endorsed policy document hinders the department's ability to align its activities with national development goals, secure funding, and provide clear guidance for its operations. The delay also affects coordination with stakeholders, limiting the effectiveness of participatory planning and community engagement efforts.

**Table 33: Evidence Summary Table**

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	The review of draft strategy documents revealed a comprehensive framework for community development, but the document remains unapproved.
Stakeholder Consultation	Stakeholders expressed concerns that the absence of an approved strategy creates uncertainties in planning and resource allocation.
Observation	No finalized or operational strategic document was observed during assessments, with staff citing delays in approval as a barrier to implementation.

**Finding 2:** Resource mobilization strategies are limited, relying heavily on external donors.

The Department of Community Development (DCD) depends significantly on external donors to fund its activities, with limited efforts to diversify its resource base. This over-reliance on donor funding leaves the department vulnerable to changes in donor priorities and funding availability. The absence of a structured resource mobilization strategy further constrains the department's ability to secure sustainable funding for community development initiatives, affecting the long-term implementation of its programs.

**Table 34: Evidence Summary Table**

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	Financial reports and operational documents highlighted the predominance of donor funding in the department's budget, with no evidence of internal resource mobilization strategies.
Stakeholder Consultation	Stakeholders noted that the department often struggles to secure sufficient funding when donor priorities shift or projects end.
Observation	Observed programs were largely funded by external donors, with limited initiatives to generate internal or alternative funding sources.

### Structure

**Finding 3:** The Department of Community Development operates with an inadequate organizational structure, as current policies limit the number of staff at the decentralize level to 100 , which is insufficient to cover all 120 community wards.

The Department's staffing policy is a critical structural limitation, allowing only 100 representatives nationwide, leaving 20 wards without direct representation. This staffing cap restricts the Department's capacity to fulfill its mandate, particularly in regions with high community engagement needs. Additionally, the limited career advancement opportunities and unstructured roles within the organization contribute to high staff turnover, further weakening the Department's capacity to deliver on its objectives.

**Table 35: Evidence Summary Table**

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	The <b>Local Government Act</b> does not adequately account for the increasing demands on the Department, particularly in staffing policy
Stakeholder Consultation	Participants emphasized that the staffing policy is outdated and that the shortage of personnel creates gaps in service delivery at the community level.
Observation	Observed insufficient staff coverage in some wards, with multiple responsibilities assigned to existing personnel, leading to inefficiencies.

## System

**Finding 3:** Weak monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks hinder project tracking and accountability.

The Department of Community Development (DCD) lacks effective/upgraded monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems to track the progress, outcomes, and accountability of its projects. The absence of standardized indicators, reporting structures, and a centralized M&E framework results in inconsistent tracking of initiatives, reduced accountability, and limited insights into the effectiveness of interventions. This hinders the Department's ability to adapt strategies, secure donor confidence, and align with decentralization objectives.

**Table 36:** Evidence Summary Table

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Strategic Plan MoL&amp;RG 2016-2020</b> identifies weak M&amp;E as a barrier to operational efficiency but does not include actionable steps for improvement.</li> <li>The <b>National Decentralization Policy 2015-2024</b> emphasizes the need for robust M&amp;E but acknowledges challenges in implementation due to resource constraints.</li> </ul>
Stakeholder Consultation	Stakeholders highlighted inconsistencies in project tracking, with no clear tools or guidelines for monitoring outcomes.
Observation	Observed practices included fragmented and ad hoc reporting, with no upgraded M&E systems in the Department.

## Staff

**Finding 7:** Staff turnover due to lack of incentives and performance evaluations.

The Department of Community Development (DCD) faces persistent challenges in retaining staff, driven by the absence of incentives, structured performance evaluations, and career development opportunities. Staff often leave for better-paying roles or organizations that offer professional growth and recognition. This high turnover disrupts continuity, increases workloads for remaining staff, and widens skill gaps, negatively impacting the Department's operational efficiency and service delivery.

**Table 37:** Evidence Summary Table

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Draft Strategic Plan MoL&amp;RG 2016-2020</b> identifies the need for performance-based incentives to improve retention.</li> <li>Reviewed financial documents reveal limited budgetary allocations for staff incentives or development programs.</li> </ul>
Stakeholder Consultation	Stakeholders emphasized that the absence of structured performance evaluations and rewards has led to low morale and high staff turnover.
Observation	Observed departments were understaffed, and remaining personnel reported increased workloads and dissatisfaction due to lack of career incentives.

## Skills

**Finding 8:** Staff lack advanced skills in project management and technical expertise.

The Department of Community Development (DCD) struggles with significant skill gaps among its staff in critical areas such as project management, technical expertise, and resource mobilization. These deficiencies limit the Department's ability to effectively plan, implement, and monitor development projects. The lack of targeted training and professional development programs exacerbates these skill gaps, reducing the overall efficiency and impact of the Department's initiatives.

**Table 38:** Evidence Summary Table

Source	Evidence Summary
Desk Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The <b>Strategic Plan MoL&amp;RG 2016-2020</b> identifies technical and managerial capacity gaps as major barriers to achieving operational efficiency.</li><li>• Reviewed training records show limited opportunities for staff to acquire advanced skills in project management and technical areas.</li></ul>
Stakeholder Consultation	Stakeholders reported delays in project implementation and inefficiencies in technical planning due to inadequate staff expertise.
Observation	Observed staff handling complex projects without adequate technical skills, relying heavily on external consultants for critical tasks.

# **CHAPTER 4**

# **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations are structured by institution, focusing on strategic, operational, and systemic interventions aligned with the identified gaps. For each institution, the recommendations emphasize actionable solutions, including capacity building, resource mobilization, policy reforms, and technological modernization, to ensure alignment with national development goals and sustainable governance outcomes.

The categories of institutions for which recommendations are provided include:

1. **Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs (MoLRGRA):** Recommendations focus on strategic planning, structural reforms, resource allocation, and coordination mechanisms to enhance the Ministry's leadership role in decentralization.
2. **Gambia Association of Local Government Authorities (GALGA):** Emphasis is placed on strengthening advocacy, resource mobilization, and technical capacity (skills, knowledge, and institutional frameworks) to support councils effectively.
3. **Local Government Authorities (LGAs):** Recommendations address revenue mobilization, service delivery, and staff capacity building to improve their operational efficiency and alignment with decentralization objectives.
4. **Department of Community Development (DCD):** Solutions focus on addressing staffing limitations, technical skill gaps, and the integration of inclusive governance practices. Address policy gaps and promote reorientation to strengthen decentralization and people-centered participatory development.

## Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs (MoLRGRA)

**Recommendation 1:** Finalise the strategic plan aligned with operational and decentralization goals.

The Ministry should create a strategic plan that reflects stakeholder input, aligns with the **National Development Plan (NDP)**, and addresses decentralization objectives. This plan must include measurable goals, clear priorities, and performance indicators to guide implementation and track progress.

### Key Actions:

1. Engage stakeholders through consultations and workshops.
2. Align the strategic plan with national policies and decentralization goals.
3. Define measurable goals and indicators for tracking progress.
4. Mobilize resources from development partners for implementation.
5. Establish regular reviews to keep the plan relevant and adaptive.

**Recommendation 2:** Strengthen resource mobilization by training staff in proposal writing and diversifying funding sources.

The Ministry should enhance its capacity to mobilize resources by equipping staff with skills in proposal writing and developing partnerships with diverse funding sources. Relying heavily on external donors or subventions creates financial instability, and diversifying funding streams is essential for sustainability. Training programs on resource mobilization, combined with a proactive approach to engaging development partners, can significantly improve the Ministry's financial independence.

### Key Actions:

1. Conduct staff training on proposal writing and resource mobilization techniques.
2. Establish a dedicated resource mobilization team within the Ministry.
3. Build partnerships with development agencies and private sector organizations.
4. Explore innovative funding models, such as public-private partnerships (PPPs) and community-based financing.
5. Develop a resource mobilization strategy to align funding efforts with strategic priorities.

**Recommendation 3:** Establish a Central Project Coordination Unit (CPCU) to streamline project planning, monitoring, and reporting.

A Central Project Coordination Unit (CPCU) will enhance the Ministry's capacity to manage projects effectively by centralizing planning, monitoring, and reporting processes. The CPCU will reduce duplication of efforts, ensure better resource allocation, and provide a unified platform for tracking project progress. This unit will also improve coordination between the Ministry, local councils, and development partners, ensuring alignment with national goals.

### Key Actions:

1. Define the structure, roles, and responsibilities of the CPCU.
2. Allocate resources and recruit skilled personnel to manage the unit.
3. Develop standardized tools and templates for project planning, monitoring, and reporting.
4. Train staff in project management and data analysis to enhance CPCU efficiency.
5. Integrate digital systems for real-time project tracking and reporting.

**Recommendation 4:** Recruit additional staff and decentralize responsibilities to ensure adequate support for all units.

The Ministry's limited workforce and centralized decision-making hinder its ability to provide effective support to local councils and implement decentralization objectives. Recruiting additional personnel will address workload challenges, while decentralizing responsibilities will improve operational efficiency and responsiveness across all units.

**Key Actions:**

1. Conduct a staffing needs assessment to identify gaps and priority areas for recruitment.
2. Develop clear job descriptions and roles for additional staff to avoid overlapping responsibilities.
3. Decentralize operational responsibilities by empowering regional and local offices to handle specific tasks.
4. Secure funding for staff recruitment and training from national budgets and development partners.
5. Monitor and evaluate the impact of staff expansion and decentralized responsibilities on operational efficiency.

**Recommendation 5:** Establish inter-agency coordination frameworks to streamline communication and operations.

Weak coordination between the Ministry, councils, and stakeholders creates inefficiencies and operational delays. Establishing formal inter-agency coordination frameworks will improve communication, reduce overlaps, and ensure alignment in implementing policies and programs. These frameworks will enable better collaboration, information sharing, and decision-making across all levels.

**Key Actions:**

1. Develop a formal framework with clear roles and communication protocols.
2. Hold regular coordination meetings with councils, GALGA, and partners.
3. Create a digital platform for real-time information sharing.
4. Train staff on effective inter-agency collaboration.
5. Monitor the framework's impact on communication and efficiency.

**Recommendation 6:** Invest in digital tools, such as a comprehensive records management system, and ensure regular maintenance. The Ministry relies heavily on manual processes and outdated systems, which hinder operational efficiency and decision-making. Investing in modern digital tools, including a centralized records management system, will improve data accuracy, streamline workflows, and enhance transparency. Regular maintenance of these tools will ensure their longevity and effectiveness.

**Key Actions:**

1. Procure a centralized records management system for storing and tracking information.
2. Train staff on the use of digital tools and data management practices.
3. Integrate digital systems into all administrative and operational workflows.
4. Allocate resources for regular maintenance and system upgrades.
5. Monitor the impact of digital tools on efficiency and service delivery.

**Recommendation 7:** Implement a robust M&E systems to evaluate outputs and ensure accountability.

The Ministry's current lack of structured monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks limits its ability to track progress, measure outcomes, and ensure accountability. Establishing robust M&E systems will provide data-driven insights, improve decision-making, and enhance transparency in project implementation. These

systems will also strengthen reporting to stakeholders and development partners.

**Key Actions:**

1. Develop a comprehensive M&E framework with standardized indicators and reporting templates.
2. Assign dedicated M&E personnel to track and evaluate project outcomes.
3. Train staff in M&E tools and methodologies for consistent data collection and analysis.
4. Use digital platforms to integrate real-time project tracking and reporting.
5. Conduct regular evaluations and share findings with stakeholders to enhance transparency and accountability.

**Recommendation 8:** Promote inclusive practices by integrating women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) into decision-making processes.

The Ministry's current efforts to promote inclusivity in governance remain insufficient, with limited representation of women, youth, and PWDs in decision-making. Strengthening inclusivity will ensure diverse perspectives are incorporated, enhance equity, and align governance practices with national and international commitments to inclusivity and social justice.

**Key Actions:**

1. Establish formal mechanisms to include women, youth, and PWDs in decision-making bodies.
2. Partner with organizations advocating for marginalized groups to inform and support inclusivity initiatives.
3. Develop policies that mandate representation of marginalized groups in governance structures.
4. Conduct regular awareness and sensitization programs for stakeholders on the importance of inclusive governance.
5. Monitor and evaluate the impact of inclusivity practices on decision-making and community outcomes.

**Recommendation 9:** Strengthen leadership autonomy by establishing clear operational boundaries free from political influence.

Political interference undermines the Ministry's leadership autonomy, delaying reforms and disrupting effective decision-making. Establishing clear operational boundaries will enable leaders to focus on decentralization and governance priorities without external political pressures. This will enhance transparency, accountability, and the Ministry's ability to implement policies effectively.

**Key Actions:**

1. Develop and enforce policies that define the operational independence of leadership roles.
2. Conduct advocacy and awareness campaigns to promote political neutrality in governance.
3. Establish oversight mechanisms to monitor and address instances of political interference.
4. Provide leadership training focused on conflict resolution and maintaining professional boundaries.
5. Engage stakeholders to gain consensus on the

importance of leadership autonomy in achieving decentralization goals.

**Recommendation 10:** Introduce performance-based incentives and provide opportunities for career growth to improve retention.

High staff turnover within the Ministry is driven by uncompetitive salaries, lack of incentives, and limited career development opportunities. Implementing performance-based incentives and clear pathways for career growth will motivate staff, improve job satisfaction, and enhance retention. This will also foster a skilled and committed workforce, essential for achieving the Ministry's goals.

**Key Actions:**

1. Develop a performance appraisal system to evaluate staff contributions objectively.
2. Introduce monetary and non-monetary rewards linked to performance outcomes.
3. Create career advancement pathways, including promotions and training opportunities.
4. Partner with academic and professional institutions to offer long-term development programs for staff.
5. Monitor retention rates and adjust incentive programs based on staff feedback and organizational needs.

**Recommendation 11:** Conduct targeted training programs and capacity-building workshops to address skill gaps.

The Ministry faces significant skill gaps in critical areas such as project management, financial analysis, and policy development. Addressing these gaps through targeted training and capacity-building workshops will enhance the technical expertise of staff, improve operational efficiency, and strengthen the Ministry's ability to implement decentralization objectives effectively.

**Key Actions:**

1. Identify specific skill gaps through a comprehensive needs assessment.
2. Develop tailored training programs focused on project management, financial analysis, and governance.
3. Partner with training institutions and development organizations to deliver workshops and courses.
4. Establish a mentoring program to enhance knowledge transfer within the Ministry.
5. Monitor the impact of training initiatives through regular evaluations and feedback mechanisms.

## The Gambia Association of Local Government Authorities (GALGA)

**Recommendation 1:** Develop and implement a strategic plan with clearly defined goals, performance indicators, and milestones.

GALGA currently lacks a comprehensive strategic plan to guide its operations and priorities. Developing a clear and actionable strategic plan will align its efforts with decentralization goals, improve resource allocation, and enhance organizational efficiency.

**Key Actions:**

1. Conduct stakeholder consultations to inform the strategic plan.
2. Define specific goals, performance indicators, and milestones.
3. Align the plan with national decentralization policies and council needs.
4. Secure funding to support the development and implementation of the plan.
5. Regularly review and update the strategic plan to remain relevant and adaptive.

**Recommendation 2:** Finalise resource mobilization framework to diversify funding sources and ensure sustainability.

GALGA is currently preparing Resource Mobilization, Lobbying, and Advocacy Strategies for GALGA and the eight councils, with co-funding from the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) and UNDP. While CLGF has supported the initial preparation of the document, UNDP is expected to fund the review and validation processes. This framework is critical to diversifying funding sources, reducing reliance on council subventions, and ensuring financial sustainability for GALGA's operations and initiatives.

**Key Actions:**

1. Finalize the draft Resource Mobilization, Lobbying, and Advocacy Strategies currently under review by CLGF.
2. Request and secure UNDP's support for the review and validation phases of the strategies.
3. Train GALGA staff and council representatives on implementing the strategies effectively.
4. Establish partnerships with donors and private sector organizations to align funding opportunities with the strategies.
5. Monitor and evaluate the impact of the resource mobilization framework to adapt and optimize its implementation.
6. Organize fund raising events such as ....
7. Create LGA competitions and advocacy forum for .....

**Recommendation 3:** Recruit additional staff, such as a procurement officer and communication officer, to improve operational capacity.

GALGA's limited staffing hinders its ability to support councils effectively and manage operations efficiently. Recruiting key personnel, such as SG, a procurement officer and communication officer, will enhance resource management, improve stakeholder communication, and strengthen overall organizational capacity.

**Key Actions:**

1. Identify critical staffing gaps through an organizational needs assessment.
2. Develop clear job descriptions and recruit qualified personnel for priority roles, including Secretary General, procurement and communication officers.
3. Secure funding for new positions through partnerships or internal resource reallocation.
4. Provide onboarding and training programs for new recruits to ensure alignment with GALGA's objectives.

5. Regularly evaluate the impact of new roles on operational performance and organizational efficiency.

**Recommendation 4:** Enforce timely membership dues payments by introducing penalties for delays and incentivizing compliance.

Delayed subvention payments from councils disrupt GALGA's operations and financial stability. Implementing measures to enforce timely payments, such as penalties for delays and incentives for compliance, will ensure consistent funding for GALGA's activities and improve its ability to support councils effectively.

**Key Actions:**

1. Develop a policy framework that outlines penalties for delayed subvention payments and rewards for timely compliance.
2. Collaborate with councils to agree on clear timelines and mechanisms for subvention payments.
3. Establish a monitoring system to track payment timelines and identify delays.
4. Use penalties, such as fines or reduced access to support services, to discourage late payments.
5. Provide incentives, such as priority access to GALGA programs or resources, for councils that consistently comply with payment schedules.

**Recommendation 5:** Invest in modern office equipment and develop digital systems to streamline operations and communication.

GALGA's reliance on outdated office equipment and manual processes limits its operational efficiency and communication capacity. Investing in modern equipment and digital systems will enhance productivity, improve data management, and facilitate seamless communication with councils, stakeholders, and partners.

**Key Actions:**

1. Procure modern office equipment, including computers, printers, and communication tools.
2. Develop and implement digital systems for data management, reporting, and communication.
3. Train staff on the effective use of digital tools to maximize efficiency.
4. Establish a budget for regular maintenance and upgrades of equipment and systems.
5. Monitor the impact of these investments on operational efficiency and stakeholder engagement.

**Recommendation 6:** Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system to assess program effectiveness and guide decision-making.

GALGA currently lacks a structured monitoring and evaluation framework, which limits its ability to track the impact of its programs and initiatives. Establishing a robust M&E system will enhance accountability, improve decision-making, and provide data-driven insights to optimize its operations and align efforts with its strategic goals.

**Key Actions:**

1. Develop an M&E framework with clear performance indicators and reporting structures.
2. Assign dedicated M&E personnel to oversee tracking and evaluation activities.
3. Integrate digital tools for real-time data collection and analysis.
4. Train staff on M&E best practices to ensure consistent implementation.
5. Use evaluation findings to refine programs and demonstrate accountability to stakeholders.

**Recommendation 7:** Organize regular dialogue sessions and stakeholder forums to improve coordination and mutual understanding.

Weak coordination and communication between GALGA, councils, and stakeholders hinder alignment and effective collaboration. Regular dialogue sessions and stakeholder forums will foster mutual understanding, enhance coordination, and ensure that GALGA's activities align with the needs and priorities of councils and other partners.

**Key Actions:**

1. Schedule periodic dialogue sessions with councils, development partners, and stakeholders.
2. Create structured agendas for forums to address key challenges, opportunities, and updates.
3. Facilitate inclusive discussions that incorporate input from marginalized groups.
4. Use outcomes from forums to inform decision-making and refine GALGA's strategies.
5. Establish follow-up mechanisms to ensure that actions agreed upon during discussions are implemented.

**Recommendation 8:** Ensure all programs and initiatives integrate marginalized groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs).

GALGA's inclusivity efforts need to go beyond policy commitments and ensure practical integration of marginalized groups into its programs and initiatives. By actively engaging women, youth, and PWDs, GALGA can enhance representation, equity, and the overall effectiveness of its governance and advocacy efforts.

**Key Actions:**

1. Develop policies that mandate the inclusion of marginalized groups in all programs and initiatives.
2. Partner with organizations representing women, youth, and PWDs to inform program design and implementation.
3. Establish dedicated platforms for marginalized groups to voice their needs and priorities.
4. Monitor participation rates of marginalized groups in GALGA's activities to measure progress.
5. Provide training and capacity-building opportunities tailored to the needs of marginalized groups.

**Recommendation 9:** Provide leadership training on governance, advocacy, and strategic planning to enhance GALGA's role.

GALGA's leadership plays a critical role in advocating for local

councils and supporting decentralized governance. However, gaps in governance, advocacy, and policy development skills limit its effectiveness. Targeted leadership training will strengthen GALGA's capacity to engage stakeholders, influence policy, and drive meaningful reforms.

**Key Actions:**

1. Identify leadership training needs through a skills assessment.
2. Partner with training institutions and development organizations to deliver tailored programs.
3. Focus training on governance best practices, advocacy strategies, and effective policy formulation.
4. Provide opportunities for peer learning and knowledge exchange with leaders in similar organizations.
5. Evaluate the impact of training programs on leadership performance and advocacy outcomes.

**Recommendation 10:** Institutionalize long-term and short-term training programs to upskill staff in governance and resource mobilization.

GALGA's staff face significant skill gaps in governance, resource mobilization, and related areas, which hinder the organization's effectiveness. Institutionalizing structured training programs will ensure continuous professional development, enhance technical expertise, and improve the capacity of staff to support councils effectively.

**Key Actions:**

1. Design a comprehensive training program tailored to governance, resource mobilization, and technical skills.
2. Partner with development organizations and academic institutions to deliver both long-term and short-term training.
3. Create an annual training calendar to ensure consistent skill development for all staff.
4. Incorporate training evaluations to assess learning outcomes and impact on performance.
5. Provide opportunities for staff to attend regional and international capacity-building programs.

**Recommendation 11:** Conduct capacity-building workshops and training programs tailored to GALGA's operational needs.

GALGA's operational effectiveness is limited by gaps in technical and managerial skills among its staff. Tailored capacity-building workshops and training programs will address these gaps, enhancing staff competency in areas such as financial management, project planning, advocacy, and governance.

**Key Actions:**

1. Assess GALGA's operational needs to identify key skill gaps.
2. Design workshops and training programs focused on practical skills, such as proposal writing, governance, and project management.
3. Partner with development organizations and training institutions to deliver high-quality sessions.
4. Provide follow-up support and mentorship to ensure knowledge retention and application.

5. Evaluate the effectiveness of workshops and adjust future programs based on feedback and organizational priorities.

## Local Government Authorities (LGAs)

**Recommendation 1:** Develop and or implement strategic plans tailored to regional needs and aligned with decentralization goals.

Most local councils operate without clear or updated strategic plans, which limits their ability to address regional priorities effectively. Developing tailored strategic plans will provide councils with a structured roadmap for service delivery, resource allocation, and alignment with national decentralization objectives.

**Key Actions:**

1. Conduct regional assessments to identify local priorities and needs.
2. Engage stakeholders, including community members and development partners, in the planning process.
3. Align the strategic plans with the Recovery Focus - National Development Plan (RF-NDP) and decentralization policies.
4. Define measurable goals, timelines, and performance indicators for tracking progress.
5. Review and update the plans periodically to reflect emerging needs and challenges.

**Recommendation 2:** Modernize revenue collection systems and revise tariffs to reflect current economic realities.

Outdated revenue collection systems and tariffs limit councils' ability to generate sufficient income for operations and development projects. Modernizing these systems and revising tariffs to align with economic realities will enhance financial sustainability and improve service delivery.

**Key Actions:**

1. Digitize revenue collection systems to enhance transparency and reduce leakages.
2. Conduct an economic analysis to determine fair and competitive tariff rates.
3. Engage communities and stakeholders to ensure buy-in and compliance with revised tariffs.
4. Train staff on the use of digital tools for revenue management.
5. Monitor and evaluate revenue performance to ensure effectiveness and make adjustments as needed.

**Recommendation 3:** Advocate for amendments to the Local Government Act to grant councils greater independence in decision-making.

Councils currently face restrictions in decision-making due to centralized control by the Ministry. Advocating for amendments to the Local Government Act will empower councils with greater autonomy, enabling them to make timely decisions on recruitment, budgeting, and resource management, which are critical for effective service delivery.

**Key Actions:**

1. Collaborate with GALGA to develop a policy brief outlining necessary amendments to the Local Government Act.
2. Engage stakeholders, including the Ministry and development partners, to build consensus on the proposed amendments.
3. Conduct advocacy campaigns to highlight the benefits of council autonomy for governance and decentralization.
4. Present the proposed amendments to legislative bodies for approval.
5. Monitor and evaluate the impact of increased autonomy on council operations and service delivery.

**Recommendation 4:** Clarify governance roles through training and updated protocols to improve collaboration and accountability.

Unclear governance roles between councils, Alkalos, and Village Development Committees (VDCs) create confusion, inefficiencies, and conflicts. Providing role-specific training and updating governance protocols will foster better collaboration, enhance accountability, and streamline decision-making processes.

**Key Actions:**

1. Conduct a governance audit to identify role overlaps and gaps among councils, Alkalos, and VDCs.
2. Develop and disseminate updated protocols that clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each entity.
3. Organize training sessions for councils, Alkalos, and VDC members on their roles in governance.
4. Establish mechanisms for conflict resolution and improved communication among these entities.
5. Monitor the implementation of updated protocols and evaluate improvements in collaboration and accountability.

**Recommendation 5:** Upgrade technology and introduce digital systems for financial management, planning, and reporting.

Outdated tools and manual systems hinder councils' efficiency in financial management, planning, and reporting. Upgrading technology and implementing digital systems will streamline operations, improve accuracy, and enhance accountability in governance processes.

**Key Actions:**

1. Procure modern digital tools and software for financial management, planning, and reporting.
2. Train council staff on the effective use of digital systems to ensure smooth implementation.
3. Integrate digital platforms for real-time tracking of financial transactions and project progress.
4. Develop a centralized database to store and manage council data securely.
5. Monitor and evaluate the impact of digital systems on operational efficiency and service delivery.

**Recommendation 6:** Establish robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks to track the impact of initiatives and enhance transparency.

Local councils lack structured M&E frameworks, making it difficult

to track the outcomes of their initiatives and ensure accountability. Establishing robust M&E systems will improve transparency, provide data-driven insights, and help councils refine their programs to better serve their communities.

**Key Actions:**

1. Develop a comprehensive M&E framework with clear performance indicators for all initiatives.
2. Assign dedicated personnel to oversee M&E activities within the councils.
3. Train staff on M&E tools and methodologies for consistent data collection and analysis.
4. Implement digital systems for real-time tracking and reporting of projects and programs.
5. Use M&E findings to inform decision-making and demonstrate accountability to stakeholders.

**Recommendation 7:** Develop policies to ensure representation of marginalized groups in councils and promote their participation in decision-making.

Marginalized groups, such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs), are often underrepresented in council decision-making processes. Developing policies that mandate their inclusion will ensure diverse perspectives, promote equity, and enhance the overall effectiveness of governance at the local level.

**Key Actions:**

1. Draft and adopt policies that require representation of marginalized groups in council structures.
2. Partner with organizations advocating for women, youth, and PWDs to inform policy development.
3. Create platforms and mechanisms to facilitate active participation of marginalized groups in council meetings and decisions.
4. Provide training for council members on inclusive governance practices.
5. Monitor and evaluate the impact of these policies on participation and governance outcomes.

**Recommendation 8:** Foster political neutrality in council leadership to enable effective and unbiased decision-making.

Political interference in council leadership undermines autonomy and disrupts decision-making processes. Promoting political neutrality will ensure that leadership decisions are based on governance priorities and community needs, rather than external political pressures, enhancing transparency and effectiveness.

**Key Actions:**

1. Develop and enforce guidelines that promote political neutrality in council leadership roles.
2. Conduct training programs on ethical leadership and conflict resolution for council leaders.
3. Establish oversight mechanisms to monitor and address instances of political interference.
4. Advocate for amendments to relevant policies to safeguard leadership autonomy.
5. Engage stakeholders to build consensus on the importance of impartial governance at the local level.

**Recommendation 9:** Introduce competitive salary structures, professional development opportunities, and performance incentives.

High staff turnover in councils is driven by uncompetitive salaries, lack of career growth opportunities, and limited incentives. Introducing competitive compensation packages, creating pathways for professional development, and linking incentives to performance will improve retention, motivate staff, and enhance overall productivity.

**Key Actions:**

1. Conduct a salary benchmarking study to align compensation with industry standards.
2. Develop a structured professional development program, including training and career progression pathways.
3. Establish a performance appraisal system to objectively evaluate staff contributions.
4. Introduce monetary and non-monetary rewards based on performance outcomes.
5. Monitor retention rates and adjust strategies based on staff feedback and organizational needs.

**Recommendation 10:** Provide targeted capacity-building programs to address skill gaps and enhance operational efficiency.

Councils face significant skill gaps in critical areas such as project management, financial analysis, and governance. Targeted capacity-building programs will equip staff with the technical expertise needed to improve service delivery, ensure resource accountability, and align council operations with decentralization goals.

**Key Actions:**

1. Conduct a skills assessment to identify gaps and training needs among council staff.
2. Design and implement targeted training programs focused on financial management, project planning, and governance practices.
3. Partner with training institutions and development agencies to deliver high-quality capacity-building sessions.
4. Include follow-up mentorship or coaching programs to reinforce knowledge and application.
5. Monitor the impact of training initiatives on staff performance and council efficiency.
6. Provision of technological support for modernization and greater efficiency
7. Allocate resources for modern office equipment, including laptops, desktops and essential tools for enhance delivery

## Department of Community Development (DCD)

**Recommendation 1:** Expedite the approval process for the community development policy to guide operations effectively.

The delayed approval of the community development policy hampers the Department's ability to align its activities with national goals and execute planned initiatives. Fast-tracking the approval

process will provide a clear framework for operations, enable better resource allocation, and enhance coordination with stakeholders.

**Key Actions:**

1. Engage decision-makers to prioritize the approval of the strategy.
2. Review and finalize the draft strategy to ensure alignment with national development goals and decentralization policies.
3. Conduct stakeholder consultations to validate and refine the strategy before approval.
4. Allocate resources for the implementation of the strategy post-approval.
5. Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the strategy to ensure its effectiveness.

**Recommendation 2:** Develop a robust resource mobilization strategy to diversify funding sources and ensure sustainability.

The Department's heavy reliance on external donors limits financial sustainability and exposes it to funding fluctuations. Developing a comprehensive resource mobilization strategy will help diversify funding sources, strengthen financial independence, and ensure the continuity of community development initiatives.

**Key Actions:**

1. Conduct an assessment of current funding gaps and potential revenue streams.
2. Develop a detailed resource mobilization strategy aligned with departmental goals and priorities.
3. Engage development partners, private sector stakeholders, and local communities to secure diversified funding.
4. Train staff in proposal writing and donor engagement to improve fundraising efforts.
5. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of resource mobilization initiatives to optimize strategies.

**Recommendation 3:** Revise staffing policies to expand the workforce and meet service demands at the decentralized level in all wards.

The Department's staffing policy, which limits the workforce at the decentralized level to 100 representatives, leaves several wards without adequate representation and support. Revising these policies will allow the Department to expand its workforce, address service delivery gaps, and meet the growing demands of community development across all wards.

**Key Actions:**

1. Conduct a workforce assessment to determine staffing needs for full ward coverage.
2. Advocate for policy amendments to increase the staffing cap and secure necessary approvals.
3. Allocate budgetary resources to support recruitment and onboarding of additional staff.
4. Develop clear job descriptions and roles for new staff to ensure effective deployment.
5. Monitor staffing levels and performance to ensure operational efficiency and coverage.

**Recommendation 4:** Update the monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

system to monitor community initiatives and improve reporting to donors.

The lack of a structured M&E system limits the Department's ability to track the progress and impact of community initiatives. Establishing a robust M&E framework will enhance accountability, provide valuable insights for improving program outcomes, and strengthen donor confidence through accurate and transparent reporting.

**Key Actions:**

1. Develop a comprehensive M&E framework with clear performance indicators for community initiatives.
2. Assign dedicated M&E personnel to oversee tracking and evaluation activities.
3. Train staff on M&E tools and methodologies to ensure consistent data collection and analysis.
4. Utilize digital platforms to streamline data tracking, reporting, and analysis.
5. Share regular M&E reports with donors and stakeholders to demonstrate accountability and impact.

**Recommendation 5:** Develop a participatory planning process starting from villages, integrating community priorities at all levels.

Community development initiatives often lack alignment with grassroots priorities due to limited participation in the planning process. Establishing a participatory planning framework that begins at the village level will ensure that community needs are effectively integrated into ward, council, and national development plans, fostering inclusivity and ownership.

**Key Actions:**

1. Establish guidelines for participatory planning that start at the village level and build upward.
2. Train Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Ward Development Committees (WDCs) on participatory planning methodologies.
3. Facilitate structured forums to gather input from communities during the planning process.
4. Integrate community inputs into broader ward and council development plans.
5. Monitor the implementation of community-driven plans to ensure alignment with community priorities and goals.

**Recommendation 6:** Strengthen participatory leadership with performance reviews and defined deliverables for greater accountability.

While the Department promotes participatory leadership, the absence of formal accountability mechanisms weakens its effectiveness. Introducing performance reviews and clear deliverables will enhance transparency, improve leadership efficiency, and ensure alignment with departmental objectives.

**Key Actions:**

1. Develop a framework for leadership performance reviews with clear metrics and deliverables.
2. Conduct regular assessments to evaluate leadership performance and identify areas for improvement.
3. Provide leadership training on accountability and effective decision-making.

4. Engage staff and stakeholders in assessing leadership outcomes through feedback mechanisms.
5. Use performance review findings to refine leadership approaches and enhance operational efficiency.

**Recommendation 7:** Introduce performance-based rewards, career growth opportunities, and formal evaluation mechanisms

The lack of performance-based rewards and career development opportunities contributes to low staff motivation and high turnover within the Department. Introducing structured evaluation systems, performance incentives, and career progression pathways will improve staff retention, morale, and productivity.

**Key Actions:**

1. Develop a performance evaluation framework to assess staff contributions objectively.
2. Introduce performance-based incentives, including monetary rewards and recognition programs.
3. Create clear career progression pathways, with opportunities for promotions and advanced roles.
4. Partner with training institutions to provide professional development and long-term training programs.
5. Monitor the impact of these initiatives on staff retention and productivity, making adjustments as needed.

**Recommendation 8:** Provide capacity-building programs, including long-term training (e.g., master's and PhD programs).

The Department faces significant skill gaps in areas such as project management, policy development, and technical expertise. Offering capacity-building programs, including opportunities for long-term education, will enhance staff capabilities, improve service delivery, and strengthen the Department's ability to achieve its community development goals.

**Key Actions:**

1. Identify staff members with potential for long-term training and align opportunities with departmental priorities.
2. Partner with academic institutions and development organizations to offer master's and **PhD programs.**
3. Secure funding to support staff participation in advanced education and training programs.
4. Develop agreements to ensure trained staff return and contribute to the Department's goals after completing their programs.
5. Monitor the impact of capacity-building initiatives on departmental performance and adjust as needed.

**Table 39:** Summary Recommendation Table: Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs

No	Recommendation	Key Actions	Description	Supporting Party	Roles	Findings	Priority	Timeframe	Expected Outcome
1	Develop a participatory and realistic strategic plan.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct stakeholder consultations.</li> <li>2. Align the plan with national policies.</li> <li>3. Define performance indicators.</li> </ol>	Establish a clear roadmap for the Ministry's operations and decentralization objectives.	UNDP, CLGF, Local Councils	Provide technical support and funding.	Lack of a clear and participatory strategic plan to guide operations.	High	6-12 months	A comprehensive, inclusive strategic plan guiding the Ministry's activities effectively.
2	Strengthen resource mobilization through training and diversification.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Train staff in proposal writing.</li> <li>2. Develop partnerships with donors.</li> <li>3. Explore alternative funding models.</li> </ol>	Ensure financial sustainability by diversifying funding sources.	The Government, Development Partners, Ministry Staff	Offer funding, conduct training, and engage donors.	Over-reliance on external funding limits financial sustainability.	High	6-9 months	Increased financial independence and diversified funding streams.
3	Establish a Central Project Coordination Unit (CPCU).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define CPCU structure and roles.</li> <li>2. Recruit skilled staff.</li> <li>3. Create standardized project tools and systems.</li> </ol>	Centralize project planning, monitoring, and reporting for greater efficiency.	UNDP, Technical Consultants	Provide technical expertise and resources.	Absence of a centralized coordination mechanism for managing projects and resources.	High	12-18 months	Streamlined project management, improved monitoring, and better resource allocation.
4	Recruit additional staff and decentralize responsibilities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct a staffing needs assessment.</li> <li>2. Revise recruitment policies.</li> <li>3. Allocate resources for onboarding and training.</li> </ol>	Address staffing gaps and improve operational efficiency by empowering regional offices.	National Government, HR Unit	Allocate budgets and recruit qualified staff.	Heavy workloads and limited personnel across units hinder effective mandate delivery.	High	6-12 months	Increased capacity to deliver services across all regions effectively.

5	Invest in digital tools and a records management system.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Procure and deploy digital tools.</li> <li>2. Train staff on systems.</li> <li>3. Allocate resources for maintenance and upgrades.</li> </ol>	Modernize operational processes to enhance efficiency and transparency.	Development Partners, ICT Experts	Provide funding, training, and system deployment.	Outdated operational tools and software hinder service delivery and efficiency.	Medium	12-24 months	Digitized workflows, improved data accuracy, and enhanced transparency.
6	Implement robust M&E systems.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop an M&amp;E framework.</li> <li>2. Assign M&amp;E personnel.</li> <li>3. Train staff in M&amp;E practices.</li> </ol>	Ensure effective tracking of project outcomes and enhanced accountability.	Development Partners, M&E Experts	Provide technical support and funding.	Weak monitoring and evaluation frameworks hinder progress tracking.	High	6-12 months	Improved service delivery, project tracking, accountability, and data-driven decision-making.
7	Establish inter-agency coordination frameworks.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a formal framework with clear roles.</li> <li>2. Organize regular coordination meetings.</li> <li>3. Use digital tools for real-time collaboration.</li> </ol>	Improve communication and alignment among agencies to enhance operations.	Ministry of Justice, Development Partners	Support framework development and implementation.	Lack of coordination between the Ministry and councils impacts decentralization efforts.	High	6-9 months	Streamlined inter-agency communication and more effective collaboration.
8	Promote inclusive practices in governance.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop policies for inclusion.</li> <li>2. Partner with organizations representing marginalized groups.</li> <li>3. Monitor inclusivity efforts.</li> </ol>	Integrate women, youth, and PWDs into decision-making processes.	Advocacy Groups, Local Councils	Collaborate on policy formulation and execution.	Inclusivity is limited in governance structures, particularly for marginalized groups.	Medium		

9	Foster leadership autonomy by minimizing political interference.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop operational independence policies.</li> <li>2. Conduct training on conflict resolution.</li> <li>3. Establish oversight mechanisms.</li> </ol>	Enable leadership to operate free from external political pressures.	Ministry of Justice, Development Partners	Advocate for structural reforms and offer training.	Leadership struggles with decentralization due to political interference.	High	6-12 months	Autonomous leadership focused on decentralization and governance priorities.
10	Introduce performance-based incentives for staff.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a performance appraisal system.</li> <li>2. Develop monetary and non-monetary reward structures.</li> <li>3. Monitor retention rates.</li> </ol>	Improve staff retention and motivation by linking rewards to performance.	HR Unit, Ministry Staff	Implement policies and monitor effectiveness.	High staff turnover due to low salaries and lack of incentives affects retention.	Medium	6-9 months	A motivated and stable workforce contributing to enhanced operational capacity.
11	Conduct targeted capacity-building workshops.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify skill gaps.</li> <li>2. Develop training programs.</li> <li>3. Partner with institutions for capacity building.</li> </ol>	Strengthen technical expertise in project management, financial analysis, and	Development Partners, Training Institutes	Provide training resources and monitor outcomes.	Significant skill gaps in project management, financial analysis, and policy development.	High	6-12 months	Improved staff capacity and operational efficiency.

4	Enforce timely subvention payments from councils.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop and enforce subvention policies.</li> <li>2. Introduce penalties for delays and incentives for compliance.</li> <li>3. Monitor payment schedules.</li> </ol>	Ensure consistent and timely funding from councils.	Local Councils, GALGA Board	Oversee implementation and enforcement.	Delayed subvention payments from councils hinder GALGA's financial stability.	High	6-12 months	Regular and predictable subvention payments for financial stability.
5	Invest in modern office equipment and digital systems.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Procure laptops, printers, and communication tools.</li> <li>2. Implement digital platforms for data management.</li> <li>3. Train staff on systems.</li> </ol>	Enhance operational efficiency and streamline communication processes.	UNDP, Development Partners	Provide funding and technical expertise.	Inadequate office infrastructure and outdated systems hinder communication and operations.	Medium	6-12 months	Improved operational efficiency through modernized systems and equipment.
6	Establish a robust M&E system.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop an M&amp;E framework.</li> <li>2. Assign dedicated M&amp;E personnel.</li> <li>3. Train staff in M&amp;E tools and methodologies.</li> </ol>	Strengthen accountability and track the effectiveness of GALGA's initiatives.	Development Partners, M&E Experts	Provide technical support and funding.	Lack of a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the impact of initiatives.	High	6-12 months	Improved project tracking, accountability, and decision-making.
7	Organize regular dialogue sessions and stakeholder forums.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Schedule forums with councils, development partners, and stakeholders.</li> <li>2. Facilitate inclusive discussions.</li> </ol>	Foster mutual understanding and coordination with stakeholders.	Local Councils, Advocacy Groups	Organize and facilitate discussions.	Limited collaboration and communication between GALGA, councils, and the Ministry hinder alignment.	Medium	Quarterly	Improved stakeholder coordination and mutual understanding.

**Table 40: Summary Recommendation Table: The Gambia Association of Local Government Authorities (GALGA)**

No	Recommendation	Key Actions	Description	Supporting Party	Roles	Findings	Priority	Timeframe	Expected Outcome
1	Develop and implement a strategic plan.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct stakeholder consultations.</li> <li>2. Define goals, performance indicators, and milestones.</li> <li>3. Align with decentralization policies.</li> </ol>	Provide a clear roadmap for GALGA's operations and priorities.	UNDP, CLGF	Provide technical support and funding.	Absence of a comprehensive strategic plan to guide operations and priorities.	High	6-12 months	A well-defined strategic plan to guide GALGA's activities effectively.
2	Create a resource mobilization framework.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finalize Resource Mobilization, Lobbying, and Advocacy Strategies.</li> <li>2. Secure UNDP's support for reviews.</li> <li>3. Train staff in proposal writing.</li> </ol>	Diversify funding sources to reduce reliance on council subventions.	CLGF, UNDP	Provide technical and financial support.	Resource mobilization strategies are underdeveloped, leading to overreliance on subventions.	High	6-9 months	Sustainable funding streams and reduced reliance on council subventions.
3	Recruit additional staff to improve operational capacity.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct a staffing needs assessment.</li> <li>2. Recruit key personnel (e.g., procurement, communication officers).</li> <li>3. Allocate budget for new hires.</li> </ol>	Address staffing limitations to enhance GALGA's effectiveness.	Ministry of Finance, GALGA Board. GALGA is not Government and therefore should not target government funding	Allocate funding and approve new positions.	Limited staff with significant gaps in technical expertise affects operations.	High	6-9 months	Increased staff capacity to meet GALGA's operational needs.

8	Ensure programs integrate marginalized groups.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop inclusion policies.</li> <li>2. Partner with organizations representing women, youth, and PWDs.</li> <li>3. Monitor participation.</li> </ol>	Promote inclusivity and equity in GALGA's governance processes.	Advocacy Groups, Local Councils	Collaborate on program design and implementation.	Inclusivity is promoted but needs to be strengthened in governance activities.	Medium	6-12 months	Increased participation of marginalized groups in GALGA's programs and initiatives.
9	Provide leadership training on governance and advocacy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct a skills assessment for leaders.</li> <li>2. Deliver tailored training on governance and advocacy.</li> </ol>	Strengthen GALGA's capacity to advocate for councils and support decentralized governance.	UNDP, CLGF	Fund and deliver training programs.	Leadership lacks tools and resources to effectively advocate for councils' needs.	High	6-9 months	Enhanced leadership capacity to influence policy and advocate for councils effectively.
10	Institutionalize long-term and short-term training programs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Partner with institutions to offer advanced training.</li> <li>2. Create a training calendar for staff.</li> </ol>	Address skill gaps through consistent capacity-building initiatives.	Training Institutions, Development Partners	Provide funding and deliver training sessions.	Staff lack technical expertise in governance and resource mobilization.	Medium	12-18 months	Improved staff skills and operational efficiency through structured training programs.
11	Conduct capacity-building workshops and training programs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess staff training needs.</li> <li>2. Design workshops focused on governance, advocacy, and project management.</li> </ol>	Enhance staff competency and operational efficiency through targeted training.	Training Institutions, Development Partners	Provide funding and technical expertise.	Staff require capacity-building workshops tailored to GALGA's operational needs.	Medium	6-12 months	Increased staff capability to meet organizational objectives.

**Table 41:** Table 41: Summary Recommendation Table: Local Government Authorities (LGAs)

No	Recommendation	Key Actions	Description	Supporting Party	Roles	Findings	Priority	Timeframe	Expected Outcome
1	Develop and or support implementation of councils strategic plans.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct regional assessments.</li> <li>2. Engage stakeholders in planning.</li> <li>3. Define goals and performance indicators.</li> </ol>	Provide a roadmap for addressing regional needs and aligning with decentralization goals.	Councils, Ministry of Lands, and Development Partners	Provide funding and technical guidance.	Lack of clear and updated strategic plans limits alignment with national development goals.	High	6-12 months	Improved alignment of council operations with regional and national priorities.
2	Modernize revenue collection systems and revise tariffs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Digitize revenue collection.</li> <li>2. Conduct economic analysis for tariff adjustments.</li> <li>3. Train staff in revenue management.</li> </ol>	Enhance financial sustainability by improving revenue systems and updating tariffs.	Ministry of Finance, Development Partners	Provide funding, technical expertise, and training.	Weak revenue mobilization efforts rely on outdated tariffs and external agencies.	High	6-9 months	Increased revenue generation and financial stability for councils.
3	Advocate for amendments to the Local Government Act.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a policy brief.</li> <li>2. Engage stakeholders for consensus.</li> <li>3. Conduct advocacy campaigns.</li> </ol>	Grant councils greater autonomy to make decisions on recruitment, budgeting, and resource management.	Ministry of Land, Ministry of Justice, and GALGA	Advocate for legislative reforms and consensus building.	Limited autonomy hinders councils' decision-making effectiveness.	High	6-12 months	Greater autonomy for councils, enabling efficient decision-making and governance.

4	Clarify governance roles through training and updated protocols.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct governance audits.</li> <li>2. Develop clear protocols.</li> <li>3. Train councils, Alkalos, and VDCs on their roles.</li> </ol>	Improve collaboration and accountability among councils, Alkalos, and VDCs.	Ministry of Lands, GALGA	Provide guidance and facilitate training.	Governance roles and responsibilities between councils, Alkalos, and VDCs are unclear.	Medium	6-9 months	Enhanced coordination and accountability in local governance structures.
5	Upgrade technology and introduce digital systems.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Procure and deploy modern digital tools.</li> <li>2. Train staff in system usage.</li> <li>3. Allocate resources for maintenance.</li> </ol>	Improve service delivery and operational efficiency through modernized tools and systems.	Development Partners, ICT Experts	Provide funding and technical expertise.	Outdated operational tools hinder service delivery and efficiency.	High	6-12 months	Improved efficiency and accuracy in council operations and service delivery.
6	Establish robust M&E frameworks.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop an M&amp;E framework.</li> <li>2. Train staff on M&amp;E tools.</li> <li>3. Use digital platforms for real-time tracking.</li> </ol>	Strengthen accountability and ensure transparency in tracking council projects and initiatives.	Development Partners, M&E Experts	Provide technical and financial support.	Weak monitoring and evaluation frameworks reduce accountability and tracking of council projects.	High	6-12 months	Improved tracking of initiatives, leading to greater accountability and decision-making.
7	Develop policies to ensure representation of marginalized groups.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Draft policies mandating inclusivity.</li> <li>2. Partner with advocacy groups.</li> <li>3. Monitor participation of marginalized groups.</li> </ol>	Promote inclusivity in councils to ensure equitable representation and governance.	Advocacy Groups, GALGA	Collaborate on policy formulation and implementation.	Inclusivity efforts are insufficient, particularly for marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities.	Medium	6-12 months	Greater participation of marginalized groups in governance and decision-making processes.

8	Foster political neutrality in council leadership.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop guidelines for neutrality.</li> <li>2. Conduct training on ethical leadership.</li> <li>3. Establish oversight mechanisms.</li> </ol>	Reduce political interference to enable unbiased and effective decision-making in councils.	Ministry of Justice, GALGA	Advocate for reforms and provide training.	Leadership struggles with political interference, limiting effectiveness.	High	6-12 months	Autonomous and impartial leadership focused on governance priorities.
9	Introduce competitive salary structures and incentives.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct salary benchmarking.</li> <li>2. Develop performance appraisal systems.</li> <li>3. Introduce monetary and non-monetary incentives.</li> </ol>	Improve staff retention and motivation through competitive compensation and career opportunities.	Ministry of Finance, HR Units	Allocate budgets and implement new systems.	Staff retention is a challenge due to low salaries and lack of incentives.	High	6-12 months	Reduced staff turnover and increased morale, leading to improved council performance.
10	Provide targeted capacity-building programs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify skill gaps through assessments.</li> <li>2. Partner with training institutions.</li> <li>3. Deliver tailored training programs.</li> </ol>	Address technical expertise gaps to enhance operational efficiency and governance outcomes.	Training Institutions, Development Partners	Deliver training and monitor outcomes.	Staff lack technical expertise in key areas such as financial management, project planning, and policy development.	High	6-12 months	Improved staff skills and operational efficiency in councils.

**Table 42:** Summary Recommendation Table: Department of Community Development (DCD)

No	Recommendation	Key Actions	Description	Supporting Party	Roles	Findings	Priority	Timeframe	Expected Outcome
1	Expedite the approval process for the community development strategy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage decision-makers to prioritize approval.</li> <li>Conduct stakeholder consultations.</li> <li>Finalize and validate the strategy.</li> </ol>	Provide a clear framework for guiding departmental operations and initiatives.	Ministry of Lands, Development Partners	Advocate for prioritization and provide technical support.	The department has a community development strategy awaiting approval, delaying progress on initiatives.	High	3-6 months	Approved strategy guiding departmental priorities and operations effectively.
2	Develop and implement a robust resource mobilization strategy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess funding gaps and opportunities.</li> <li>Train staff in proposal writing.</li> <li>Engage development partners for diversified funding.</li> </ol>	Reduce reliance on external donors and ensure financial sustainability.	Development Partners, Private Sector	Provide funding and facilitate training programs.	Resource mobilization strategies are limited, relying heavily on external donors.	High	6-9 months	Sustainable funding streams and strengthened financial independence.
3	Revise staffing policies to expand the workforce.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a workforce needs assessment.</li> <li>Advocate for policy amendments.</li> <li>Recruit and onboard additional staff.</li> </ol>	Ensure adequate staffing to meet service demands across all community wards.	Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Public service HR Units	Allocate funding and approve recruitment policies.	Staffing policies limit the workforce to 100 employees, insufficient for 120 wards.	High	6-12 months	Expanded workforce ensuring comprehensive service coverage.
4	Implement a robust M&E system.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an M&amp;E framework.</li> <li>Train staff in M&amp;E methodologies.</li> <li>Use digital platforms for real-time tracking.</li> </ol>	Strengthen project accountability and improve reporting to donors.	Development Partners, M&E Experts	Provide technical support and resources.	Weak monitoring and evaluation frameworks hinder project tracking and accountability.	High	6-9 months	Improved accountability and data-driven decision-making.

5	Allocate resources for modern office equipment.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct an equipment needs assessment.</li> <li>2. Procure laptops, desktops, and essential tools.</li> <li>3. Establish maintenance plans.</li> </ol>	Enhance operational efficiency through updated tools and infrastructure.	Development Partners, ICT Experts	Provide funding and oversee procurement.	Outdated office equipment limits operational efficiency.	Medium	6-9 months	Modernized tools improving efficiency and productivity.
6	Develop a participatory planning process.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish guidelines for village-level planning.</li> <li>2. Train VDCs and WDCs.</li> <li>3. Integrate community inputs into council plans.</li> </ol>	Ensure community priorities are reflected in development initiatives.	Advocacy Groups, Local Councils	Facilitate training and integrate feedback.	Inclusivity is promoted in governance but integration with council priorities remains weak.	Medium	6-12 months	Improved alignment of community priorities with council and national development plans.
7	Strengthen participatory leadership with performance reviews.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop performance review frameworks.</li> <li>2. Conduct regular assessments.</li> <li>3. Provide leadership training on accountability.</li> </ol>	Enhance leadership effectiveness and transparency through accountability mechanisms.	Ministry of Lands, Development Partners	Advocate for leadership reforms and training.	Leadership employs a participatory approach, but lacks formal accountability mechanisms.	Medium	6-9 months	Increased leadership accountability and operational efficiency.
8	Introduce performance-based rewards and career growth opportunities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a performance appraisal system.</li> <li>2. Develop monetary and non-monetary incentives.</li> <li>3. Establish career progression pathways.</li> </ol>	Improve staff retention and motivation through rewards and growth opportunities.	Ministry of Finance, HR Units	Allocate budgets and develop incentive systems.	High staff turnover due to lack of incentives and performance evaluations.	High	6-12 months	Reduced turnover and a more motivated workforce.

8	Introduce performance-based rewards and career growth opportunities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Partner with institutions for long-term training.</li> <li>2. Offer master's and PhD programs.</li> <li>3. Monitor training outcomes.</li> </ol>	Address skill gaps and enhance technical expertise among staff.	Training Institutions, Development Partners	Fund and deliver training programs.	Staff lack advanced skills in project management and technical expertise.	High	12-18 months	Highly skilled staff capable of meeting operational and strategic demands.
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**CHAPTER 5**

**COSTED  
DEVELOPEMENT  
PLAN**

## Chapter 5: Costed Capacity Development Plan

This chapter outlines a costed capacity development plan designed to address the identified gaps and priorities for the Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs (MoLRGRA); the Gambia Association of Local Government Authorities (GALGA); Local Government Authorities (LGAs); and the Department of Community Development (DCD). The plan provides a roadmap for implementing recommendations with a focus on financial sustainability, operational efficiency, and long-term impact.

The chapter includes a detailed budget for capacity development, a priority ranking of interventions based on urgency and impact, and an analysis of potential funding sources to support implementation. These components align with national development goals and decentralization policies to ensure effective resource allocation and sustainable governance outcomes.

The following sections detail the activities, cost estimates, and implementation framework for each institution, providing a comprehensive guide for operationalizing the recommendations outlined in the previous chapter.

**Table 43:** Costed Capacity Development Plan for MoLRGRA

No	Activity	Description	Estimated Cost (Usd)	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Expected Outcome
1	Develop a participatory and realistic strategic plan.	Conduct stakeholder consultations, define goals, and align with national policies.	40,000	Immediately	MoLRGRA, UNDP, CLGF	A comprehensive strategic plan to guide operations and decentralization efforts.
2	Strengthen resource mobilization through training and partnerships.	Train staff in proposal writing and engage development partners to diversify funding.	50,000	Short-Term (6-9 months)	MoLRGRA, Development Partners	Increased financial independence and diversified funding streams.
3	Implement a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system.	Develop an M&E framework, train staff, and integrate data collection tools.	100,000	Short-Term (6-9 months)	MoLRGRA, M&E Experts	Improved tracking of project outcomes and enhanced accountability.
4	Recruit additional staff to address workload challenges.	Conduct staffing needs assessment and onboard personnel to meet operational demands.	200,000	Short-Term (6-9 months)	MoLRGRA, PMO, Ministry of Finance	Increased operational capacity and effective service delivery.
5	Foster leadership autonomy through reforms and oversight mechanisms.	Develop policies to minimize political interference and train leaders in conflict resolution.	80,000	Short-Term (6-9 months)	MoLRGRA, Ministry of Justice	Autonomous leadership focused on governance and decentralization priorities.

6	Establish a Central Project Coordination Unit (CPCU).	Set up the unit, recruit staff, and develop project management tools and systems.	150,000	Medium-Term (12-18 months)	MoLRGRA, Development Partners	Streamlined project management and improved resource allocation.
7	Invest in digital tools and a records management system.	Procure digital tools, train staff, and establish a maintenance plan.	180,000	Medium-Term (12-18 months)	MoLRGRA, ICT Experts	Enhanced operational efficiency through modernized processes and transparency.
8	Promote inclusivity in governance processes.	Develop inclusion policies, engage marginalized groups, and monitor participation rates.	70,000	Medium-Term (12-18 months)	MoLRGRA, ICT Experts	Enhanced operational efficiency through modernized processes and transparency.
9	Conduct capacity-building workshops and long-term training programs.	Address skill gaps in governance and financial management through tailored training programs.	120,000	Medium-Term (12-18 months)	MoLRGRA, Training Institutions	Enhanced technical capacity and operational efficiency.
10	Establish inter-agency coordination frameworks.	Develop frameworks, hold regular coordination meetings, and implement digital collaboration tools.	90,000	Long-Term (Beyond 18 months)	MoLRGRA, Development Partners	Streamlined communication and effective collaboration among agencies.
11	Introduce performance-based incentives for staff.	Create appraisal systems and link rewards to performance outcomes.	100,000	Long-Term (Beyond 18 months)	MoLRGRA, HR Units	Improved staff retention and morale, leading to increased productivity.

### Summary of Costs

- Short-Term (6-9 months): USD 470,000
- Medium-Term (12-18 months): USD 520,000
- Long-Term (Beyond 18 months): USD 190,000
- Total Estimated Cost: USD 1,180,000

**Table 44: Costed Capacity Development Plan for GALGA**

No	Activity	Description	Estimated Cost (Usd)	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Expected Outcome
1	Develop and implement a strategic plan.	Conduct stakeholder consultations, define goals, and align with decentralization objectives.	40,000	Short-Term (6-9 months)	GALGA, UNDP, CLGF	A comprehensive strategic plan guiding GALGA's priorities and operations effectively.
2	Create a resource mobilization framework.	Finalize the resource mobilization strategy, train staff, and engage partners to diversify funding.	50,000	Short-Term (6-9 months)	GALGA, Development Partners	Sustainable funding streams and reduced reliance on council subventions.
3	Recruit additional staff for operational capacity.	Conduct staffing needs assessment and hire key personnel, including procurement and communication officers.	100,000	Short-Term (6-9 months)	GALGA, Ministry of Finance	Enhanced operational capacity to meet organizational demands.
4	Enforce timely membership dues payments from councils.	Develop policies to ensure timely payments, introduce penalties for delays, and incentivize compliance.	30,000	Short-Term (6-9 months)	GALGA, Local Councils	Regular and predictable membership dues payments ensuring financial stability.
5	Invest in modern office equipment and digital systems.	Procure laptops, printers, and software, and train staff in their use.	70,000	Medium-Term (12-18 months)	GALGA, Development Partners	Improved operational efficiency and streamlined communication processes.
6	Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system.	Develop an M&E framework, assign personnel, and integrate digital tools for project tracking.	60,000	Medium-Term (12-18 months)	GALGA, M&E Experts	Improved accountability and tracking of initiatives.
7	Organize regular dialogue sessions and stakeholder forums.	Facilitate inclusive discussions with councils, partners, and stakeholders to enhance coordination.	40,000	Medium-Term (12-18 months)	GALGA, Advocacy Groups	Improved collaboration and alignment among stakeholders.

8	Promote inclusivity in governance processes.	Develop policies, engage marginalized groups, and monitor participation.	50,000	Medium-Term (12-18 months)	GALGA, Advocacy Groups	Increased representation of marginalized groups in GALGA's programs and initiatives.
9	Provide leadership training on governance and advocacy.	Conduct training sessions for leaders to enhance advocacy, policy development, and governance skills.	60,000	Medium-Term (12-18 months)	GALGA, UNDP, Training Partners	Strengthened leadership capacity to support decentralized governance.
10	Institutionalize long-term and short-term training programs.	Partner with institutions for advanced training programs and create a training calendar.	90,000	Long-Term (Beyond 18 months)	GALGA, Training Institutions	Improved staff capacity through structured and continuous training initiatives.
11	Conduct capacity-building workshops and tailored training.	Address operational needs through targeted workshops and skill-building sessions.	50,000	Long-Term (Beyond 18 months)	GALGA, Development Partners	Enhanced staff competency to meet organizational goals.

### Summary of Costs

- Short-Term (6-9 months): USD 220,000
- Medium-Term (12-18 months): USD 280,000
- Long-Term (Beyond 18 months): USD 140,000
- Total Estimated Cost: USD 660,000

**Table 45: Costed Capacity Development Plan for Local Government Authorities (LGAs)**

No	Activity	Description	Estimated Cost (Usd)	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Expected Outcome
1	Develop and support implementation of councils strategic plans.	Conduct regional assessments, engage stakeholders, and define goals and performance indicators.	120,000	Short-Term (6-9 months)	LGAs, Ministry of Lands, Development Partners	Clear and actionable strategic plans aligned with regional needs and national goals.
2	Modernize revenue collection systems and revise tariffs.	Digitize revenue collection processes, train staff, and update tariff structures based on economic realities.	150,000	Short-Term (6-9 months)	LGAs, Ministry of Finance, ICT Experts	Improved financial sustainability through modernized and efficient revenue systems.
3	Advocate for amendments to the Local Government Act.	Develop a policy brief, conduct advocacy campaigns, and engage stakeholders for consensus building.	50,000	Short-Term (6-9 months)	LGAs, GALGA, Ministry of Justice	Greater council autonomy in decision-making and resource management.
4	Clarify governance roles and responsibilities.	Conduct governance audits, update protocols, and train councils, Alkalos, and VDCs on their roles.	80,000	Medium-Term (12-18 months)	LGAs, Ministry of Lands, GALGA	Enhanced collaboration and accountability among councils, Alkalos, and VDCs.
5	Upgrade technology and introduce digital systems.	Procure and implement digital tools for financial management, planning, and reporting.	200,000	Medium-Term (12-18 months)	LGAs, ICT Experts, Development Partners	Improved operational efficiency and transparency through modernized systems.
6	Establish robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks.	Develop an M&E framework, train staff, and integrate digital tracking systems for initiatives.	100,000	Medium-Term (12-18 months)	LGAs, Advocacy Groups, GALGA	Increased representation of marginalized groups in governance and decision-making.
7	Promote inclusivity in governance structures.	Draft inclusion policies, engage advocacy groups, and monitor participation of marginalized groups.	70,000	Medium-Term (12-18 months)	GALGA, Advocacy Groups	Improved collaboration and alignment among stakeholders.

8	Foster political neutrality in council leadership.	Develop guidelines for neutrality, train leaders, and establish oversight mechanisms to monitor compliance.	60,000	Medium-Term (12-18 months)	LGAs, GALGA, Ministry of Justice	Autonomous leadership capable of unbiased and effective decision-making.
9	Introduce competitive salary structures and performance incentives.	Conduct salary benchmarking, develop appraisal systems, and link rewards to performance outcomes.	200,000	Long-Term (Beyond 18 months)	LGAs, Ministry of Finance, HR Units	Improved staff retention and morale, leading to enhanced productivity.
10	Provide targeted capacity-building programs.	Address skill gaps through tailored training in governance, project management, and financial analysis.	150,000	Long-Term (Beyond 18 months)	LGAs, Training Institutions, Development Partners	Enhanced technical capacity and operational efficiency.

### Summary of Costs

- Short-Term (6-9 months): USD 320,000
- Medium-Term (12-18 months): USD 510,000
- Long-Term (Beyond 18 months): USD 350,000
- Total Estimated Cost: USD 1,180,000

**Table 46:** Costed Capacity Development Plan for the Department of Community Development (DCD)

No	Activity	Description	Estimated Cost (Usd)	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Expected Outcome
1	Expedite the approval process for the community development strategy.	Engage stakeholders, finalize the strategy, and secure approval.	00	Short-Term (6-9 months)	DCD, Ministry of Lands	An approved strategy guiding DCD's operations and community initiatives.
2	Develop a resource mobilization strategy.	Assess funding gaps, train staff in proposal writing, and engage development partners for diversified funding.	50,000	Short-Term (6-9 months)	DCD, Development Partners	Increased financial sustainability and diversified funding streams for community initiatives.
3	Revise staffing policies to expand the workforce.	Conduct a workforce needs assessment at the decentralized level, advocate for staffing increases, and recruit additional	120,000	Short-Term (6-9 months)	DCD, Ministry of Finance	Expanded workforce ensuring comprehensive service delivery across all wards.
4	Implement a robust M&E system.	Upgrade the M&E framework, train staff, and integrate digital tools for data collection and reporting.	100,000	Medium-Term (12-18 months)	DCD, M&E Experts, Development Partners	Improved accountability and tracking of community initiatives.
5	Allocate resources for modern office equipment.	Procure laptops, desktops, and communication tools, and establish maintenance plans.	70,000	Medium-Term (12-18 months)	DCD, ICT Experts	Enhanced operational efficiency through modernized tools and infrastructure.
6	Develop a participatory planning process.	Train VDCs and WDCs on participatory planning and integrate community priorities into council plans.	60,000	Medium-Term (12-18 months)	DCD, Advocacy Groups, Local Councils	Improved alignment of community priorities with council development plans.
7	Strengthen participatory leadership with performance reviews.	Introduce performance review systems, train leaders on accountability, and conduct regular assessments.	50,000	Medium-Term (12-18 months)	DCD, Ministry of Lands	Improved leadership accountability and operational efficiency.

8	Introduce performance-based rewards and career growth opportunities.	Create appraisal systems, develop career pathways, and provide incentives for high-performing staff.	90,000	Long-Term (Beyond 18 months)	DCD, Ministry of Finance	Improved staff retention and morale, leading to enhanced productivity.
9	Provide capacity-building programs for staff.	Address skill gaps through long-term training opportunities such as master's and PhD programs.	150,000	Long-Term (Beyond 18 months)	DCD, Training Institutions, Development Partners	Highly skilled workforce equipped to meet operational and strategic demands.

### Summary of Costs

- Short-Term (6-9 months): USD 170,000
- Medium-Term (12-18 months): USD 280,000
- Long-Term (Beyond 18 months): USD 240,000
- Total Estimated Cost: USD 690,000

# **CHAPTER 6**

## **IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES**

## Chapter 6: Implementation Modalities

This chapter outlines the implementation modalities for operationalizing the recommendations and capacity development plans detailed in the report. It provides a roadmap for ensuring the successful execution of the proposed interventions across the Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs (**MoLRGRA**); the Gambia Association of Local Government Authorities (**GALGA**); Local Government Authorities (**LGAs**); and the Department of Community Development (**DCD**).

The chapter is divided into three sections: **Implementation Timeline**, detailing the timeframe for short-term, medium-term, and long-term activities; **Key Milestones**, highlighting major achievements expected during the implementation process; and **Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders**, which clarifies the contributions and accountabilities of each stakeholder involved. These modalities are designed to ensure coordinated action, effective resource utilization, and measurable progress towards achieving the objectives of decentralization and governance reforms.

### 6.1 Implementation Timeline

The implementation timeline provides a structured approach to executing the recommendations and capacity development plans outlined in this report. It categorizes activities into short-term, medium-term, and long-term phases, ensuring that urgent priorities are addressed promptly while laying the foundation for sustainable, long-term development.

*Table 47: Implementation Timeline*

Phase	Timeframe	Key Activities
<b>Short-Term</b>	0–9 months	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop strategic plans for MoLRGRA, GALGA, and LGAs.</li> <li>2. Finalize and approve the Community Development Strategy.</li> <li>3. Conduct resource mobilization training for stakeholders.</li> <li>4. Implement initial M&amp;E frameworks and establish dedicated personnel.</li> <li>5. Recruit additional staff to address immediate workload challenges.</li> </ol>
<b>Medium-Term</b>	9–18 months	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish Central Project Coordination Unit (CPCU).</li> <li>2. Modernize revenue collection systems for LGAs.</li> <li>3. Roll out digital tools and records management systems.</li> <li>4. Conduct capacity-building workshops on project management, governance, and financial analysis.</li> <li>5. Promote inclusivity by developing policies for marginalized group participation.</li> </ol>
<b>Long-Term</b>	18 months and beyond	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Institutionalize long-term training programs, including master's and PhD opportunities.</li> <li>2. Monitor and refine M&amp;E systems for all institutions.</li> <li>3. Foster inter-agency coordination frameworks for enhanced collaboration.</li> <li>4. Develop and implement performance-based incentive programs for staff.</li> <li>5. Conduct periodic evaluations of strategic plans to ensure ongoing alignment with national priorities.</li> </ol>

### Monitoring and Adaptation

The timeline will be continuously monitored to ensure progress and adapt activities based on emerging challenges and priorities. Institutions are encouraged to provide regular updates and coordinate with stakeholders to achieve timely and impactful implementation of the recommendations.

### 6.2 Key Milestones

The following key milestones mark significant progress points in the implementation of the recommendations and capacity development plans. These milestones will help monitor progress, ensure accountability, and maintain alignment with institutional and national objectives.

**Table 48: Key Milestones**

No	Milestone	Timeline	Responsible Parties	Expected Outcome
1	Approval of the Community Development Strategy.	Month 3	DCD, Ministry of Lands	A finalized strategy to guide community development initiatives effectively.
2	Completion of participatory strategic plans for MoLRGRA, GALGA, and LGAs.	Month 6	MoLRGRA, GALGA, LGAs, Development Partners	Strategic plans providing clear direction and alignment with decentralization goals.
3	Establishment of the Central Project Coordination Unit (CPCU).	Month 12	MoLRGRA, Development Partners	Centralized management of projects, ensuring streamlined operations and resource allocation.
4	Rollout of digital tools and records management systems.	Month 12	All Institutions, ICT Experts	Improved operational efficiency and transparency through modernized systems.
5	Implementation of initial M&E frameworks.	Month 6	MoLRGRA, GALGA, LGAs, M&E Experts	Enhanced project tracking, accountability, and data-driven decision-making.
6	Recruitment of additional staff to address workload gaps.	Month 6	MoLRGRA, Ministry of Finance	Increased capacity to meet operational and service delivery demands.
7	Completion of resource mobilization training for stakeholders.	Month 6	MoLRGRA, GALGA, Development Partners	Improved financial sustainability through diversified funding sources and partnerships.
8	Establishment of inclusivity policies across institutions.	Month 12	Advocacy Groups, GALGA, LGAs	Increased participation of marginalized groups in governance processes.
9	Institutionalization of capacity-building programs.	Month 18	Training Institutions, Development Partners	Long-term programs ensuring sustainable skill development and operational efficiency.
10	Launch of performance-based incentive programs for staff.	Month 18	HR Units, Ministry of Finance	Improved staff motivation, retention, and productivity through structured performance rewards.
11	Implementation of inter-agency coordination frameworks.	Month 18	MoLRGRA, GALGA, Local Councils	Improved collaboration and communication among institutions for better governance outcomes.

### 6.3 Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders

The successful implementation of the capacity development plan relies on the active participation and collaboration of all key stakeholders. The following table outlines the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder involved in executing the recommendations and achieving the expected outcomes.

**Table 49: Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders**

Stakeholder	Roles and Responsibilities
Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs (MoLRGRA)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide leadership and oversight for the implementation of recommendations.</li> <li>2. Coordinate with other stakeholders to align efforts with national development goals.</li> <li>3. Approve policies, strategies, and frameworks.</li> <li>4. Mobilize resources and monitor progress.</li> </ol>
Gambia Association of Local Government Authorities (GALGA)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advocate for councils' needs and ensure alignment of recommendations with local governance objectives.</li> <li>2. Support capacity-building initiatives for councils.</li> <li>3. Facilitate stakeholder forums and communication between councils and the Ministry.</li> </ol>
Local Government Authorities (LGAs)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement recommendations related to strategic planning, revenue collection, and governance reforms.</li> <li>2. Ensure compliance with inclusivity policies and promote participation of marginalized groups.</li> <li>3. Establish and maintain M&amp;E frameworks to track progress at the local level.</li> </ol>
Department of Community Development (DCD)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lead community engagement and ensure that participatory planning processes are integrated into local governance.</li> <li>2. Implement the Community Development policy and support M&amp;E efforts.</li> <li>3. Provide training to VDCs and WDCs on participatory governance and planning.</li> </ol>
Development Partners (e.g., UNDP, CLGF)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide technical and financial support for the implementation of recommendations.</li> <li>2. Facilitate capacity-building programs and training sessions.</li> <li>3. Monitor and evaluate the progress of funded initiatives.</li> </ol>
Ministry of Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Allocate funding to support staff recruitment, infrastructure upgrades, and other key activities.</li> <li>2. Ensure timely disbursement of resources to implement recommendations.</li> </ol>
Advocacy Groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote inclusivity by engaging women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) in governance processes.</li> <li>2. Monitor the implementation of inclusivity policies and provide feedback.</li> </ol>
ICT Experts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Design, deploy, and maintain digital systems for operational efficiency.</li> <li>2. Train stakeholders in the use of modern tools and technology.</li> </ol>
M&E Experts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop and operationalize monitoring and evaluation frameworks.</li> <li>2. Train staff on M&amp;E methodologies and support data-driven decision-making.</li> </ol>
Training Institutions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Deliver tailored capacity-building programs to address skill gaps in governance, project management, and financial analysis.</li> <li>2. Provide long-term training opportunities, including advanced degrees.</li> </ol>

**CHAPTER 7**

**MONITORING AND  
EVALUATION  
FRAMEWORK**

## Chapter 7: Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

This chapter outlines the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework designed to track the implementation and impact of the capacity development plan. The framework provides a structured approach to measure progress, ensure accountability, and facilitate data-driven decision-making throughout the implementation process.

The chapter is organized into three sections. **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** defines measurable indicators to assess progress and outcomes for each recommendation. **M&E Mechanisms** details the tools, processes, and structures required to collect, analyze, and report data effectively. **Reporting and Feedback Loops** describes how findings will be communicated to stakeholders and used to refine strategies, ensuring continuous improvement.

### 7.1 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are essential for measuring the progress and effectiveness of the capacity development plan. They provide measurable benchmarks to track the implementation of activities, assess their impact, and ensure alignment with the overall objectives of decentralization, governance reform, and institutional strengthening.

The table below outlines the KPIs for each focus area of the capacity development plan:

**Table 50: KPIs**

Focus Area	KPI	Target	Frequency of Measurement
Strategic Planning	Percentage of institutions with finalized and operational strategic plans.	100% of institutions by Month 6.	Quarterly
Resource Mobilization	Number of funding proposals submitted to development partners.	At least 5 proposals submitted annually.	Semi-Annually
Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	Percentage of projects with operational M&E frameworks and regular reporting mechanisms.	80% of projects by Month 12.	Quarterly
Human Resources and Staffing	Number of additional staff recruited and trained to meet operational needs.	100% of staffing gaps filled by Month 9.	Bi-Annually
Inclusivity in Governance	Percentage increase in participation of marginalized groups (women, youth, PWDs) in governance processes.	20% increase by Year 1.	Annually
Digitalization and Tools	Percentage of institutions utilizing digital tools for operations and records management.	75% by Month 18.	Semi-Annually
Training and Capacity Building	Number of staff trained in project management, governance, and financial analysis.	200 staff trained by Month 12.	Quarterly
Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration	Number of stakeholder forums or coordination meetings conducted annually.	At least 4 meetings annually.	Annually
Financial Sustainability	Percentage increase in internally generated revenue (e.g., improved tariffs, reduced leakage).	15% increase by Year 2.	Annually
Policy Reforms and Leadership Autonomy	Number of policy reforms or guidelines implemented to enhance autonomy and reduce political interference.	3 major reforms implemented by Year 2.	Annually

## 7.2 M&E Mechanisms

Effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) mechanisms are crucial for tracking the implementation and impact of the capacity development plan. These mechanisms ensure accountability, facilitate data-driven decision-making, and provide insights into the success and challenges of the interventions.

**Table 51:** Key M&E mechanisms for tracking progress and outcomes:

Mechanism	Description	Application	Responsible Parties
Baseline Assessments	Conduct initial assessments to establish benchmarks for KPIs.	Used to measure progress against pre-existing conditions and set realistic targets.	M&E Experts, Development Partners
Regular Progress Reports	Compile periodic reports detailing the status of implementation activities, challenges, and achievements.	Provides updates to stakeholders and identifies areas requiring corrective actions.	Institutions' M&E Units
Digital Monitoring Systems	Utilize digital tools and platforms for real-time data collection, tracking, and reporting.	Improves accuracy, efficiency, and accessibility of data for decision-making.	Institution ICT Teams, Institutions' M&E Units
Field Visits and Spot Checks	Conduct on-site evaluations of project activities to verify data and ensure compliance with implementation plans.	Ensures on-ground activities align with planned interventions and identifies issues early.	M&E Teams, Development Partners
Stakeholder Feedback Mechanisms	Collect feedback from stakeholders, including beneficiaries, councils, and advocacy groups.	Captures perspectives on the effectiveness and inclusivity of interventions.	Institutions, Advocacy Groups
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Annual Reviews and Evaluations	Conduct comprehensive annual reviews to assess the overall effectiveness and impact of the plan.	Evaluates long-term outcomes and identifies lessons learned for future planning.	MoLRGRA, GALGA, Development Partners
Performance Dashboards	Develop visual dashboards to monitor progress on KPIs and share updates with stakeholders in real time.	Facilitates transparency and accessibility of performance data.	ICT Experts, M&E Units
Third-Party Audits	Engage independent auditors to review the implementation process and validate reported outcomes.	Ensures credibility and objectivity in assessing the effectiveness of interventions.	Independent Auditors, Development Partners

### 7.3 Reporting and Feedback Loops

A robust reporting and feedback loop ensures continuous communication among stakeholders, timely identification of challenges, and adaptive implementation of the capacity development plan. This system facilitates accountability, data-driven decision-making, and stakeholder engagement throughout the process.

**Table 52:** Reporting and feedback mechanisms:

Mechanism	Description	Frequency	Responsible Parties	Purpose
Progress Reports	Regular reports detailing the status of activities, achievements, and challenges.	Quarterly	Institutions' M&E Units	Keeps stakeholders informed about implementation progress and identifies areas for improvement.
Stakeholder Validation Workshops	Forums to present findings, validate outcomes, and gather input from stakeholders.	Bi-Annually	MoLRGRA, GALGA, DCD, Development Partners	Ensures stakeholder alignment and fosters ownership of outcomes.
Performance Dashboards	Visual representations of KPI progress accessible to all stakeholders via digital platforms.	Real-Time	ICT Experts, Institutions' M&E Units	Enhances transparency and allows stakeholders to monitor performance at a glance.
Feedback Surveys	Surveys conducted among beneficiaries, councils, and other stakeholders to gather insights on effectiveness.	Annually	Advocacy Groups, M&E Teams	Captures stakeholder perspectives and ensures interventions align with their needs.
Annual Implementation Reviews	Comprehensive reviews to assess progress against targets, challenges, and lessons learned.	Annually	MoLRGRA, GALGA, Development Partners	Evaluates the effectiveness of activities and informs adjustments for the next implementation phase.
Issue Escalation Channels	Mechanisms for reporting and addressing implementation challenges promptly.	As Needed	Institutions' Leadership Teams	Ensures timely resolution of challenges and prevents delays in project implementation.
Final Evaluation Reports	Comprehensive reports at the end of the implementation period summarizing outcomes, impact, and lessons learned.	At Project Completion	Independent Auditors, M&E Experts	Provides a full assessment of the capacity development plan and informs future interventions.

# **CHAPTER 8**

# **CONCLUSION**

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

The findings from this assessment reveal significant gaps and opportunities across the Ministry of Lands, Regional Government, and Religious Affairs (MoLRGRA); the Gambia Association of Local Government Authorities (GALGA); Local Government Authorities (LGAs); and the Department of Community Development (DCD). Key issues identified include a lack of strategic planning, weak resource mobilization, insufficient technical capacity, and limited inclusivity in governance processes. Additionally, operational inefficiencies, outdated systems, and weak monitoring and evaluation frameworks have hindered progress toward achieving decentralization objectives.

To address these challenges, a set of tailored recommendations was developed for each institution, focusing on areas such as strategic planning, resource mobilization, capacity building, and governance reforms. The costed capacity development plans provide a clear roadmap for implementing these recommendations, with actionable steps categorized into short-term, medium-term, and long-term priorities. Key interventions include developing participatory strategic plans, modernizing operational tools and systems, strengthening inclusivity, and fostering inter-agency collaboration.

These recommendations, when implemented effectively, will strengthen institutional capacities, enhance governance systems, and promote sustainable development aligned with national decentralization goals.



# Best Practices in Capacity Development

## Learning from Similar Contexts

Addressing the capacity gaps identified in this assessment requires a strategic adoption of proven best practices. Lessons from successful capacity development initiatives in similar contexts can provide innovative and actionable solutions. Below, selected case studies are highlighted to offer guidance for The Gambia's decentralization and governance efforts.

### Case Study 1: Decentralization and Local Governance in Rwanda

- **Context:** Rwanda implemented a comprehensive decentralization policy to empower local governments and enhance service delivery. A key focus was on aligning district development plans with national priorities and strengthening local governance structures.
  - **Key Interventions:**
    - Development of participatory district development plans with input from local communities.
    - Introduction of revenue collection systems, including automated tools for local taxation.
    - Extensive capacity-building programs for local government staff, focusing on governance, financial management, and community engagement.
  - **Outcome:**
    - Local governments increased their revenue generation by 30%, allowing for improved delivery of health, education, and infrastructure services.
    - Greater community ownership of development projects, resulting in enhanced accountability.
  - **Relevance to The Gambia:**
    - The Gambia can adopt participatory strategic planning processes to align local and national priorities and address challenges in revenue mobilization.
- **Reference:** Rwanda Ministry of Local Government (2019). Decentralization Implementation Strategy 2019–2024.

### Case Study 2: Digital Transformation in Kenya's Local Governance

- **Context:** Under Kenya's 2010 Constitution, county governments were empowered to enhance service delivery and transparency through digital transformation. Key focus areas included revenue collection and public service management.
  - **Key Interventions:**
    - Digitization of land records, revenue collection, and permit issuance processes.
    - Implementation of e-governance platforms for real-time data tracking and citizen engagement.
    - Capacity-building programs to train county staff in using digital tools.
  - **Outcome:**
    - Operational inefficiencies were reduced significantly, and revenue collection increased by 35%.
    - Enhanced transparency and citizen trust in local

government services.

- **Relevance to The Gambia:**
  - Kenya's approach highlights the potential for The Gambia to leverage digital platforms to modernize operational systems, improve efficiency, and enhance transparency in service delivery.
- **Reference:** Kenya National Treasury and Planning (2020). Kenya Digital Economy Blueprint: Powering Kenya's Transformation.

### Case Study 3: Community Participation in Ghana's Decentralization

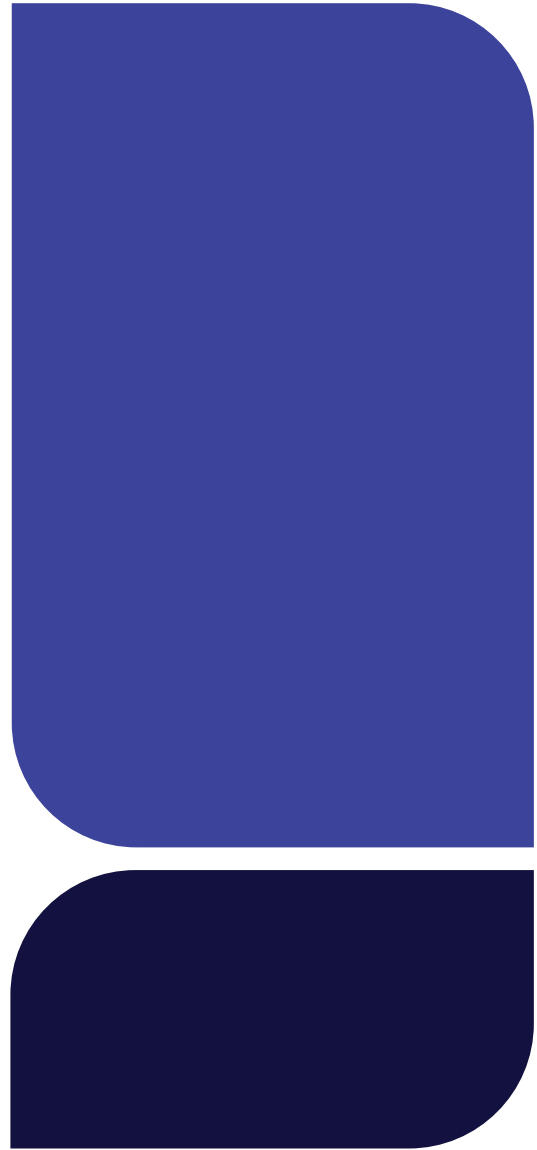
- **Context:** Ghana's decentralization reforms prioritized inclusivity and participatory governance to strengthen local governments' legitimacy and effectiveness.
  - **Key Interventions:**
    - Creation of Ward Development Committees (WDCs) to foster community participation in planning and decision-making.
    - Implementation of targeted programs to increase women's representation in local governance structures.
    - Establishment of feedback mechanisms to address community concerns and enhance accountability.
  - **Outcome:**
    - Improved alignment of development projects with community needs, resulting in increased public trust in local governance.
    - Women's representation in local decision-making roles increased by 20%.
  - **Relevance to The Gambia:**
    - Institutionalizing WDCs in The Gambia can strengthen inclusivity, particularly for women, youth, and PWDs, and enhance community ownership of governance processes.
  - **Reference:** Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Ghana (2021). Decentralization and Local Governance Performance Report.

**Table 53: Best Practices Summary**

Country	Key Intervention	Outcome	Relevance to The Gambia
<b>Rwanda</b>	Participatory district development plans and capacity building.	Increased revenue generation by 30%.	Align local council plans with national priorities.
<b>Kenya</b>	Digitization of revenue and service delivery processes.	Increased revenue collection by 35%.	Modernize operational systems to improve transparency.
<b>Ghana</b>	Ward Development Committees to enhance inclusivity.	Improved community trust and participation.	Strengthen community engagement and inclusivity.

**Integrating Best Practices into The Gambia's Context**

- Strategic Planning: Adapt participatory approaches, as seen in Rwanda, to create actionable strategic plans for local councils.
- Digital Modernization: Draw inspiration from Kenya to implement e-governance systems for revenue collection and service delivery.
- Community Engagement: Leverage Ghana's experience with WDCs to institutionalize mechanisms for participatory governance and inclusivity.



Needs Assessment of The Ministry of Lands, Regional  
Government and Religious Affairs (MoLRGRA) and The  
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(GALGA)