2021:2 Sida Decentralised Evaluation

NIRAS Sweden AB

Mid-Term Evaluation of the Liberian-Swedish Feeder Road Project, Phase 3 (LSFRP 3)

Final Report

Sida

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December 2020

Mike Brewin
John Clifton
Richmond Harding
Annica Holmberg

Sida Decentralised Evaluation 2021:2
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Authors: Mike Brewin, John Clifton, Richmond Harding, Annica Holmberg

The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

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SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Address: SE-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden. Office: Valhallavägen 199, Stockholm
Telephone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64
E-mail: info@sida.se. Homepage: http://www.sida.se

Table of contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AfT	Agenda for Transformation
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCI	Cross Cutting Issues
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ESRP	Economic Stabilization and Recovery Plan
EoS	Embassy of Sweden (to Monrovia)
EQ	Evaluation Question
ET	Evaluation Team
FCG	Finnish Consulting Group
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FL	Fuel Levy
FM	Financial Manager
FPM	Financial Procedures Manual (of the PFMU)
FRAMP	Feeder Roads Alternative and Maintenance Program
GE	Gender Equality
GiZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GoL	Government of Liberia
GSA	General Services Agency
HQ	Head Quarters
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
IIU	Infrastructure Implementation Unit
IFI	International Financial Institution
IPC	Interim Payment Certificate
KII	Key Informant Interview
LIDA	Lofa Integrated Development Association
LSFRP	The Liberian Swedish Feeder Road Project
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MD	Managing Director

M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MLG	Ministry of Local Government
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MoT	Ministry of Transport
MPW	Ministry of Public Works, Liberia
PAM	Project Administration Manual
PAPD	Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development
PFMU	Project Financial Management Unit (of the Ministry of Finance)
PMU	Project Management Unit
PO	Project Office
PPCA	Public Procurement Commission Act
PPCC	Public Procurement Concessions Commission
PU	Procurement Unit
QA	Quality Assurance
RA	Roads Authority
RF	Road Fund
RFA	Road Fund Administration
RMMU	Road Maintenance Management Unit
SI	Spot Improvement
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TA	Technical Assistance
TL	Team Leader
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VfM	Value for Money
VOC	Volatile Organic Compounds

Preface

The overall objective of this mid-term evaluation of the third phase of the Liberia Sweden Feeder Roads Project (LSFRP3) is to *'provide analytical observations on the past performance and, subsequently, make operational and strategic recommendations for the project in the remaining years'*.[1]

The evaluation was commissioned by the Embassy of Sweden in Monrovia and took place between August and December 2020. The evaluation team consisted of Mike Brewin (team leader), John Clifton (civil engineering and road sector expert), Richmond Harding (civil engineering and public works expert) and Annica Holmberg (gender, social equality and climate sustainability expert). Matilda Svedberg managed the evaluation process at NIRAS and Lucien Bäck provided quality assurance. Christian Österlind managed the evaluation at the Embassy of Sweden in Monrovia.

By presenting findings, evaluative conclusions and recommendations, the evaluation serves the twin purposes of accountability and learning: i.e. assessing the extent to which the project has or is likely to achieve its stated objectives and suggest paths for future action.

It is intended that the report will be used by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), and various arms of the Government of Liberia (GoL) (including the Ministry of Transport (MoT), the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the Ministry of Public Works (MPW)) to identify strategies and approaches which will contribute to effective and efficient project delivery over the remainder of the project cycle, and inform decision making around extension and a possible next phase (LSFRP4).

The report comprises five main sections. **Section one** presents a background to Liberia and Sida's work there. It also outlines the importance of rural infrastructure to poverty alleviation, and the aims of the LSFRP projects with regard to this between 2009 and 2021.

Section two sets out the methods used by the ET for this evaluation, with findings related to the Terms of Reference's (ToR) evaluation questions (EQs) presented in **Section three**, under subheadings relating to the five Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria.[2]

Evaluative conclusions are put forward in **Section four**. Finally, five recommendations relating to the current project, a possible extension, and a new phase, are presented in **Section five**.

1 From Terms of Reference

2 Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Sustainability and Coherence (Coordination)

Executive Summary

The overall objective of this mid-term evaluation of the third phase of the Liberia Sweden Feeder Roads Project (LSFRP3) (conducted by a core team of six experts between August and November 2020) is to *'provide analytical observations on the past performance and, subsequently, make operational and strategic recommendations for the project in the remaining years'*. By presenting findings, evaluative conclusions and recommendations, the evaluation serves the twin purposes of accountability and learning, and suggest paths for future action.

Liberia remains one of the poorest in the world, with 76.2% of the population living on less than US$ 1.00 per day and 52% living in abject poverty. Sweden has supported Liberia since the 1960's, and aims to help strengthen Liberia's public services and create the conditions for peaceful, inclusive and sustainable development, while also contributing to increased gender equality as well as an improved environment and reduced climate impact.

LSFRP3 (2017 -2021) supports these development objectives, various SDGs, and the Liberian Government's strategy for a nationwide rural roads programme by rehabilitation or maintenance of over 3,000km of roads in five Counties in the south-east of the country. The project is a continuation of the first two phases of LSFRP, which were successful in rehabilitating 636km of feeder roads in Bong, Lofa and Nimba Counties, and is managed and implemented by a team of international and national staff based in the Ministry of Public Works (MPW).

With funding of SEK197 million (US$22.6m), LSFRP3 aims to achieve three outcomes: 1) Enable small-scale farmers' access to market more agricultural produce; 2) Facilitate all year-round social service delivery particularly in the health and education sectors; and 3) Create income earning opportunities for young men and women in the rural areas.

Relevance

The ET found strong evidence that the design of LSFRP is aligned with Liberia's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 9, the United Nations' Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), and the National Transport Policy and Strategy & Investment Plan. Income earning opportunities provided by the roads continue are relevant to beneficiaries, although they were not yet as widespread as hoped for.

Although gender mainstreaming was integrated in the project planning, resources allocated to the CCI were insufficient, and the integration of CCI have not been adequately monitored, which has counteracted the intentions in the project design.

Support to decentralisation by training County staff to take responsibility for elements of the project. This has faced a number of challenges, including lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities and issues relating to fiduciary risk.

By design, LSFRP3 is aligned with Liberia's Pro Poor Policy and Agenda for Transformation, and its Decentralisation Policy. However, the project's assumption that the GoL will make the necessary administrative and financial investments in road maintenance is seriously flawed., poses a serious threat to the sustainability of what has been achieved so far.

Efficiency

In addition to delays caused by staff turnover and seasonality, one of the main issues impacting efficiency is resource constraints. Transport costs and the need to supervise maintenance work on phase 1 and 2 roads (because of the GoL's failure to contribute to the budget as planned) have accounted for a higher proportion of expenditure than originally planned. The Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, have also curbed the projects ability to deliver training in some important areas.

Efficiency – with regard to managing how resources are allocated to different objectives - is also affected by constraints with regard to measuring some outputs and outcomes. The development of outcome indicators, and collection and analysis of data to report against them was done by external consultants, and the extent to which capacity has been built has not been measured effectively.

Efficiency is further impacted by building roads – that have accessibility objectives – to MPW feeder road specifications. However, where motorbikes are the predominant mode of transport, roads can be narrower, and cheaper to build than those under MPW feeder road specifications.

Effectiveness

LSFRP3 is not currently on track regarding core capacity building at national and local levels and implementation of works compared with programme targets because of logistical problems of implementing works in up-country, delays in contracting, lack of resources to fully address an ambitious programme and the Ebola and Covid-19 outbreaks. However, counterparts and trainees assigned by MPW to LSFRP3 are capable and motivated to acquire enhanced skills and experience, and despite the constraints to progress there has been an increasing rate of progress of works in the past year.

Outcome objectives are being achieved to some degree, with evidence of more traffic and lower transport fares on the improved roads, but such gains will be transitory if are roads not maintained.

An infusion of additional financing matched by a corresponding increase in time for activities to be completed may improve the chances of the project fully delivering its outputs

Sustainability

MPW reportedly has the capacity to undertake functions such as planning, procurement, budget management etc., but such capacity is tempered by a lack of resources poor governance issues, regarding procurement and contract cycle management, and these present a threat to sustainability prospects in the longer term. The TA team is addressing this through a range of support actions, but no provision has been made for continuation of systematic training or maintenance of capacity building activities after the end of the LSFRP3 implementation period. The lack of M&E indicators covering acquisition (and application) of transferred knowledge makes planning capacity building difficult.

The biggest threat to sustainability remains the GoL's shortage of resources. It is estimated that maintenance of the existing feeder road network is US$ 31.8 million. This figure should be compared with total RF revenues of about US$ 30 million/year of which 40% is used for capital works thus leaving a balance of about US$ 18 million/year for maintenance. While the project has contributed to improved sector governance, uncertainty around road sector reform, including definition of responsibilities and authority for sector management, financing, etc. present yet further challenges to sustainability.

Coordination

LSFRP3 has coordinated well with other donor-funded actors working in the sector, although two major projects funded by USAID (FRAMP and the MCC) finished in the early stages of this intervention. The partnership with GiZ, who have also been working to build the capacity of the MPW has been particularly supportive of LSFRP3's objectives.

Organisational structure

Government's ownership of the project under LSFRP3 compares favourably to previous phases of the programme. However, for such to be maintained, GoL must introduce greater incentives to induce project counterpart staff to be stationed in remote rural areas, and must actively discourage the transfer of staff to other positions outside of the feeder road unit. Several institutions such as the Road Maintenance Management Unit (RMRU), the Road Fund (RF) and Road Fund Administration (RFA) have been established. However, the inner workings of these institutions were still not fit for the purpose of delivering the expected outcomes and results. The main challenge faced with regard to restructuring the roads sector is political resistance to the formation of a Roads Authority. The need for this institution is recognised at a project level, but political considerations continue to stymie its formation, and the project itself has limited ability to influence decision making in this area.

Seven recommendations related to 1) programming for the remainder of LSFRP3 as per its current implementation schedule; 2) Recommendations related to any time and / or cost extension of LSFRP3; and, 3) Recommendations related to decision making on a next phase – LSFRP4 are made.

Recommendation 1: Before the end of the project LSFRP3 should conduct a pilot study on the effectiveness of 'village access trails' as a means in improving mobility and 'last mile' access in rural areas in one of the LSFRP Counties.

Recommendation 2: Gaps in training in technical and administrative issues, M&E, and evidence-based decision making, should be addressed at the national and county level before the end of the project cycle.

Recommendation 3: Efforts to make up the shortfalls in training in cross-cutting issues should be redoubled in order to maximise the chances of the project delivering on its human rights objectives.

Recommendation 4: LSFRP3 should, as a matter of priority, produce a comprehensive M&E framework which will be used to guide M&E and generate evidence on effectiveness and efficiency for the remainder of the project.

Recommendation 5: LSFRP3 should conduct a study into the strengths, weaknesses, and prospects for success of the CBO-based maintenance model that is proposed for use on completed feeder roads.

Recommendation 6: Sida should extend LSFRP3 by one year to allow the completion of outstanding outputs to a satisfactory standard.

Recommendation 7: LSFRP4 should only be considered if Sida is convinced that building roads – which may only have a limited lifetime - offers better value with regard to poverty reduction per beneficiary than other investments - for example, education, health, livelihoods support, etc.

1 Introduction

1.1 LIBERIA BACKGROUND

Despite significant progress being made since the signing of the peace treaty that ended the civil war in 2003, including the three successful presidential elections, and the elimination of nearly $5 billion of international debt under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC), Liberia remains one of the poorest in the world, with 76.2% of the population living on less than US$ 1.00 per day and 52% living in abject poverty (less than US$ .50 per day).

Even though unemployment is low at around 3%, informal employment (employment in the informal sector altogether or in a formal business yet under informal circumstances) is around 68%, and vulnerable employment (considering the risk an employee faces of running into financial trouble despite being employed) is about 74%.

Around 70% of the population work in the agriculture sector, which contributes close to 40% of the country's GDP. However, a drop in prices of key export commodities like rubber and iron ore, an Ebola outbreak from 2014 - 2016, and the withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) troops from 2016 to 2018 has limited economic growth, impeded development gains, and negatively impacted post-war recovery.

Liberia's transportation infrastructure is poor and inadequate. The total surface area of Liberia is 111,369 km2 with a public road network comprising about 11,500km, of which only about 690km are paved. This gives it a road density of 6%, which is lower than the sub-Saharan average of 10.9%. Owing to the poor condition of the network, more than half of rural Liberians do not have access to an all-weather road, and transport costs are high. This problem is compounded in the rainy season when heavy rains often render roads impassable and vehicles may be unable to pass critical points for weeks at a time. In 2015 the World Bank estimated Liberia's Rural Access Index (RAI) to be 41.9%, which implies that 2.3 million people (more than half of Liberia's population) remain unconnected.

Unfortunately, the fundamental causes of the civil war persist: Political and economic power is heavily concentrated in Monrovia, youth unemployment is high, democratic and legal institutions are weak, inflation is increasing,[3] and corruption endures. The capacity of key agencies and Government Departments is low, and Liberia remains heavily dependent on overseas aid and remittances, both of which have decreased in size over recent years.[4]

[3] 31.3% by August 2019, up from 26.1% in 2018 (World Bank)

4 Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and donor transfers, declined from $333m (2.5 months of import coverage) at end- 2018 to an estimated $280m (2.1 months of import coverage) at end-2019. (World Bank)

1.2 SWEDEN IN LIBERIA

Sweden has supported Liberia since the 1960's, and it's 2016 - 2020 strategy[5] aims to support Liberia's development plans[6] by 'helping strengthen Liberia's public services and create the conditions for peaceful, inclusive and sustainable development', while also contributing to 'increased gender equality as well as an improved environment and reduced climate impact'.

Sweden's development cooperation with Liberia is based on and characterized by a 'rights perspective and the perspective of poor people on development'.[7] The rights perspective means that human rights and democracy are regarded as fundamental to development, and that poor women's, men's and children's situations, needs, circumstances and priorities are used as the basis for guiding poverty reduction. The current strategy in Liberia support actions that aim to strengthen democracy, gender equality and human rights; create opportunities to enable poor people to improve their living conditions; and promote security and freedom from violence.

The third phase of the Liberian Swedish Feeder Road Project (LSFRP3) supports these development objectives and the Liberian Government's strategy for a nationwide rural roads programme by improving road access through rehabilitation or maintenance of over 3,000km of roads in five poorly-networked Counties in the south-east of the country.[8] The roads will (a) enable small-scale farmers' access to market more agricultural produce; (b) facilitate all year-round social service delivery particularly in the health and education sectors, and (c) create income earning opportunities for young men and women in the rural areas.

When the first phase of LSFRP started the road infrastructure sector in Liberia was also being supported by the Feeder Roads Alternative Maintenance Programme (FRAMP),[9] the Capacity Development in the Transport Sector in Liberia project,[10] and the Millennium Challenge Commission (MCC) funded 'Roads Project'.[11] FRAMP and the Roads Project phased out in 2020 and 2019 respectively, while the GiZ project is scheduled to run until 2024. Recently (2019), the World Bank have approved financing through grants and credit of about 50% of the $188m cost of the proposed Ganta-to-Zwedru Road Corridor.[12] These infrastructure interventions, along with LSFRP (which is described in more detail in Section 1.4), are critical to Liberia meeting several of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as explained in the following section.

5 Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Liberia, 2016–2020. SEK 1,350m divided between Sida (SEK 1,320m) and Folke Bernadotte Academy (SEL 30m)

6 'Agendas for Transformation' and the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) (2018), that support Liberia's long-term development plan 'Liberia Rising 2030'

7 Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Liberia, 2016–2020

8 Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Maryland, Nimba and River Gee

9 Funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

10 Funded by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GiZ)

11 Funded on a 'matched funding' basis by USAID through the Compact with Liberia

12 The GoL is supposed to contribute $24m through Road Fund revenues

1.3 IMPORTANCE OF ROADS FOR DEVELOPMENT

More than 1 billion people are suffering from denial or limited access to education, health, jobs, social and economic activities due to problems with rural access and transport. Most of these people live in rural Africa where poverty indices are highest.[13]

Poverty is a cross-cutting issue with multiple (inter-connected) causes and effects and there is no single solution to alleviating poverty. ADB[14] classified poverty as having three dimensions:

Transient: resulting from sudden shocks (e.g. war, financial crises, natural disasters, pandemics)

Structural: resulting from geographic lack of opportunity arising from disconnection from social and economic facilities (e.g. in rural areas with poor accessibility); provision of infrastructure and services is key to addressing this dimension

Chronic: resulting from disabling factors at individual or households levels (such as dependency, gender, vulnerability, tribal or ethnic, physical and mental disability)

A key element of poverty is isolation (i.e. lack of access) which is manifested as lack of opportunity.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the internationally accepted plan of action for eradication of poverty. 17 SDGs[15] (Sustainable Development Goals) have been drawn up to continue the work towards the preceding MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) seeking to complete what they did not achieve. Of these SDGs there are a number which are directly linked to transport:

- SDG 3 Health (increased road safety)
- SDG 7 Energy
- SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth
- SDG 9 Resilient infrastructure
- SDG 12 Sustainable consumption and production

SDG 9 is particularly relevant, aiming at the achievement of universal rural access by 2030[16] with indicators referring to transport infrastructure (9.1.1) and transport services (9.1.2). Further, sustainable transport will facilitate and enable implementation of nearly all the other SDGs due to inter-linkage effects.

13 58% of the population of low-income countries live in rural areas but some 78% of those in extreme poverty and 85% of the multi-dimensional poor are located in rural areas – as measured by the MPI (Multi-dimensional Poverty Index): Olinte et al 2013; Alkire et al 2014

14 ´Assessing the impact of transport and energy infrastructure on poverty reduction´

15 With 169 targets

16 The 2030 target is very ambitious and not only from the temporal point of view as for some developing countries in Africa this would involve providing rural access for what could be more than 50% of the national population. There is also the practicality of financing being available – conventional rural/feeder roads (e.g. 3.5 – 5m carriageway gravelled) cost up to 20x the cost of more modest access (e.g. basic access or bicycle/ village access trails).

For many years, funds were allocated to larger scale investments such as the major national road network, usually prioritised to roads of higher usage (and higher economic rate of return (EIRR) which, in practise, tended to concentrate resources on urban and more developed areas. Rural areas were largely ignored. Only after the primary network was to an acceptable standard did attention turn to (connecting) rural roads as a facilitator of rural development.[17] Rural access was usually poor with seasonable impassability thus limiting transport of any kind and constraining development.[18]

More recently, a new approach to address the situation of rural dwellers (whatever the condition of the main road network) has gained traction. Central to this approach is a consideration of the transport needs of rural people rather than the ´traditional´ centralised decision making and the ´cascading down´ strategy which depended on road category. The following options – consistent with the current situation in LSFRP3 - were identified for improvement of accessibility and better rural transport:

- development of rural road network connecting to a higher category road (secondary/tertiary/feeder roads) using SI[19] approach
- improvement of village network (including paths, tracks and footbridges which are usable by pedestrians, bicycles or motorcycles)
- development of transport services
- increased use of IMT (Intermediate Means of Transport)

There are three issues concerning rural access:

- sustainability (this issue is discussed separately)
- linkages between rural accessibility, transport and poverty
- local planning participation and ownership

Rural accessibility, transport[20] and poverty: Rural people need access[21] to goods, services and facilities for economic and social ends. In Africa the vast majority of transport movements of goods and people is by road. Rural African transport is characterised by movement for subsistence, economic and social reasons, mainly around the rural community away from the main road network.[22]

Accessibility has three components:

- Location of the starting point
- Location of the destination

17 Given the state of many major roads in Liberia it is arguable whether this ´pivot´ situation has actually been attained.

18 This is still the situation in many rural areas in Liberia

19 ´Spot improvement´ approach whereby only critical obstructions to movement are fixed (e.g. drainage structure or bridge, short section of impassable highway due to erosion)

20 ILO definition of transport ´the movement of people and goods by any conceivable means and for any conceivable purpose´.

21 Access is inversely related to time, cost and effort to reach a location for whatever purpose

22 Which suggests that rural transport planning should consider not only feeder roads but also non-road interventions such as transport services, IMT and village infrastructure such as parks, trails and footbridges.

- The means of travel between these points

Thus, the objective of rural access planning should be to enable access in the most cost-effective manner - for both the ´provider´ and ´user´ of that access. Research[23] show that there is a causal relationship between (lack of) access and poverty and yet it seems tantalisingly difficult to quantify the extent to which ´lack of´ access (among many factors contributing to poverty) actually constrains development.

Nonetheless the potential impact of rural access and transport is clear:

- at micro-level (household level) by direct contribution to better mobility and accessibility and increased access to economic and social opportunities;
- at meso-level (local community) by indirect contribution to economic growth.[24]

Local planning, partnership and ownership: Decentralisation has been trending in Africa in recent years,[25] and for success this initiative requires strengthening of local capacities for prioritisation planning, procurement, implementation, control, monitoring and reporting together with allocation of resources. Development partners have supported this process by identifying empowerment of rural communities and local government as a development strategy better suited to deliver rural infrastructure in accordance with local needs and priorities. Local institutions are better placed to tap into direct contacts with local communities and their needs. However, in Liberia three issues have to be addressed at County level:

1. Development of planning and management systems
2. Enhancement of local capacity for planning and management of rural infrastructure
3. Funding

Responsibilities also need to be understood, i.e. Government (national, local-Counties) and private sector (communities, contractors, SMEs) and capacity building should target local government and local private sector institutions. This concept is a central tenant of the design of LSFRP3.

Top-down planning of small rural infrastructure (the traditional process) without local consultation has been proven to be wasteful, ineffective and lacking local participation or ownership. Rural infrastructure interventions aiming at better rural access should respond to the expressed needs of rural people (and should optimise use of local resources) – communities are fully able to identify and prioritise needs even if their capacity to implement a response is limited. Best practises in local community-based rural infrastructure management include:

- direct and active local involvement in development of local/rural economy which leverages local knowledge
- facilitating optimal use of local resources – land, workforce, local knowledge whilst minimising environmental and social detriment

23 Sustainable Mobility for All. 2019. Global Roadmap of Action Toward Sustainable Mobility: Universal Rural Access. Washington DC

24 As long as this is pro-poor growth

25 Usually characterised as devolution of responsibility without devolution of powers and resources with which this responsibility may be fulfilled

- building local capacity
- increasing community/local involvement and control and thus empowers the community through greater self-reliance and enhances ownership (and, potentially, sustainability)
- encouraging more equitable distribution of benefits in rural community.

1.4 LSFRP

1.4.1 LSFRP1 and LSFRP2

The first two phases of LSFRP (LSFRP1 and LSFRP2) ran from November 2009 to September 2016 and were successful in rehabilitating 636km of feeder roads in Bong, Lofa and Nimba Counties. The Project Completion Report (2016) concluded that the first six years of LSFRP were a success, the project largely achieved its goals, and all targets as set out in the project logframe were achieved with some degree of success. Notable achievements included:

- 636 km of feeder roads rehabilitated at an average construction cost of US$ 36,000 per km.
- Initiation of a maintenance programme at $750 per km
- Delivery of 44,000 hours of training
- Ensuring that the project's Feeder Roads Design & Specification Manual was adopted as a national standard for feeder roads
- Minimizing the adverse impact of HIV/AIDS and environmental impact by ring-fencing the delivery of HIV/AIDS awareness training by the contractor to mitigate adverse environmental effects
- Improving access to access to district, County and national markets

The evaluators made ten recommendations which were supposed to be considered for the design of LSFRP3:

1) Incorporate cost / benefit analysis (as used in the Feeder Roads Alternative and Maintenance Program (FRAMP)) into the process for selecting roads to be improved.
2) Strengthening MPW's design capacity so that it can periodically review and modify feeder road designs
3) LSFRP3 should allow for a progressive handover of responsibilities to national field engineers and empower its Liberian counterparts by delegating more responsibilities to them
4) Development of a results-based monitoring (RBM) framework which focuses on effects brought about by road improvements
5) Link in with the GIZ-supported Capacity Building Program, and the Road Maintenance Management Unit (RMMU) to procure routine maintenance contracts
6) Recruit adequate staff to manage the feeder roads rehabilitation, periodic and routine maintenance works. Staff should also be incentivized so that they are discouraged from leaving their positions until the end of the project
7) Posting of Feeder Roads Unit staff in the Counties – rather than Monrovia - to facilitate meetings, select priority roads, and carry out implementation with the full participation of local communities
8) Supply of suitable 4WD vehicles to field staff for effective supervision of works and allocating sufficient funds for vehicle operational costs and regular maintenance.

9) Including an environmental specialist, to develop strategies to mitigate against negative environmental impacts, and a gender specialist, to increase female participation, in the roster of experts involved in the design and delivery of training
10) Investment of mobile field testing equipment to allow a better standard of quality control

1.4.2 LSFRP3

The third phase of the Liberian Swedish Feeder Road Project (LSFRP3) began in 2017 and is due to finish in 2021. It is funded to the tune of SEK197 million (US$22.6m), with the aim of completing rehabilitation / spot improvement of 370km of feeder roads in five poorly-networked Counties in the south-east of the country.[26] (See Annex 5 for full logframe.)

The rehabilitation project aims to achieve three outcomes:

1) Enable small-scale farmers' access to market more agricultural produce
2) Facilitate all year-round social service delivery particularly in the health and education sectors
3) Create income earning opportunities for young men and women in the rural areas

Outcomes are intended to be delivered through the delivery of six outputs:[27]

1) Rehabilitation of prioritised feeder roads in the Counties of Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Maryland, Nimba and River Gee
2) Regular maintenance of LSFRP 1, 2 and 3 improved roads at the end of the four year project period
3) Maintenance managed by Counties on LSFRP roads in Bong Lofa and Nimba
4) Improved capacity in the public and private sectors to rehabilitate and maintain rural roads
5) A foundation laid for government strategy and donor coordination for a nationwide rural roads programme
6) Potential adverse project impacts from land take, environmental damage are minimised and spread of HIV/AIDS slowed down

In contrast to the first two phases of the project, which aimed for improvements in 'mobility', LFSRP3's overarching focus is on improving 'accessibility' – i.e. an emphasis on ensuring the project prioritises road interventions that enable people – particularly women and youth - to travel from one point to and from places where economic activities and social services are located so as to improve livelihood and wellbeing outcomes.[28] This objective is articulated in a Theory of Change (ToC) (**Figure 1**),[29] under which building feeder roads results in a 'virtuous spiral of positive road investments' whereby constructing a road which links a previously unconnected (and by default poor) area with a local economic hub results in entrepreneurs from

26 Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Maryland, Nimba and River Gee

27 Per the 'new' logframe presented in the 2019 – 2020 Annual Report

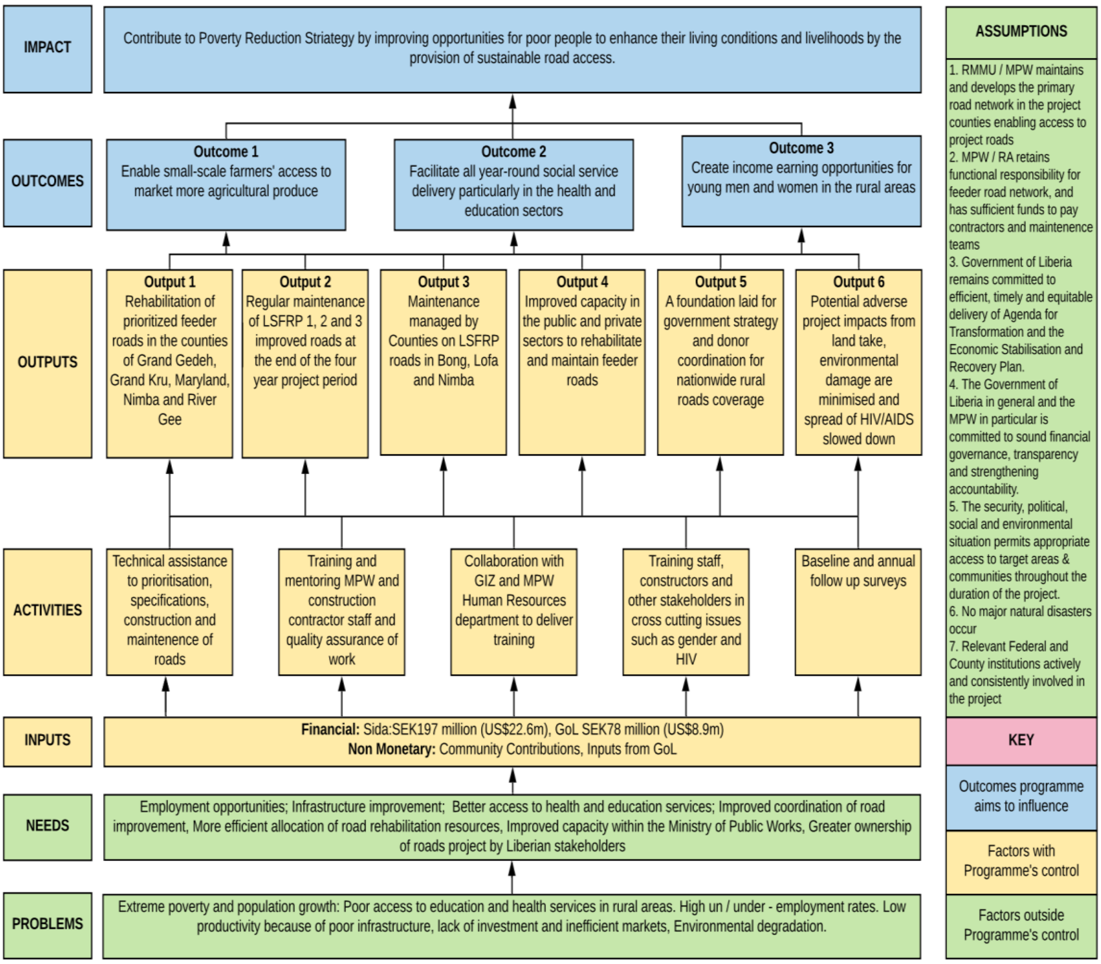
28 E.g. access to health facilities, schools and markets

29 The ToC presented in based on the 'new' logframe presented in the 2019 -2020 Annual Report, and differs from that originally articulated in the Final Proposal - Design And Formulation Liberia Swedish Feeder, Road Project (LSFRP) Phase 3

the community or a nearby town starting to transport people and goods and charge them for these services. As people can now access markets, agricultural production and incomes rise, and opportunities for employment are created. With a good road and higher volumes of people and goods in transit, tariffs fall, and choice and frequency of transit options increase. With good transport, it is easier to recruit and retain staff in the local schools and clinics.

Several assumptions underpin this ToC, the most important of which relate to the Government of Liberia's (GoL) commitment to resourcing road maintenance and ensuring that appropriate institutional framework is in place to manage construction and maintenance of the road network.

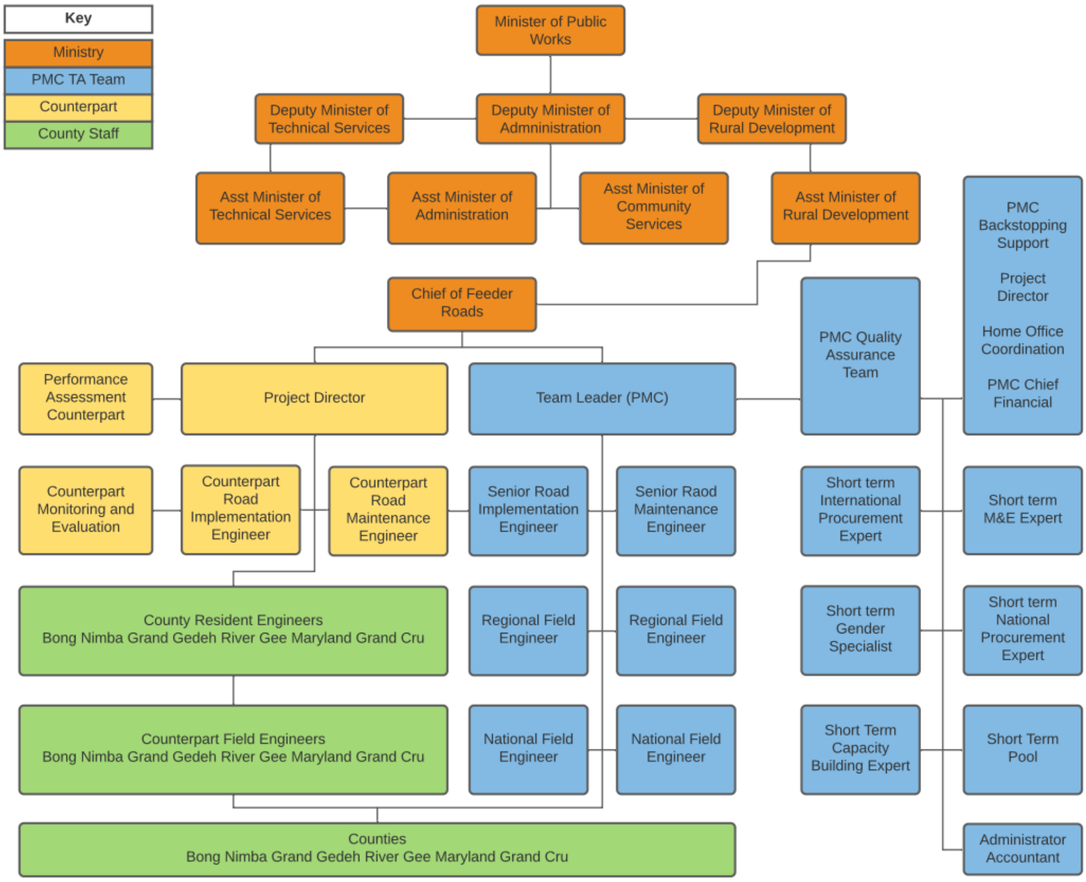
Figure 1: LSFRP3 Theory of Change



If delivered, LFSRP3's outcomes and outputs will support the 'inclusive growth' goals set out in the GoL's current Economic Stabilization and Recovery Plan (ESRP), whose primary aim is to get the economy back on track toward the primary goals of the country's medium and long-term development plans, which in turn support the objectives of the Agenda for Transformation (AfT) and 'Liberia Rising 2030'.

The project is managed and implemented by a team of international and national staff based in the Ministry of Public Works (MPW). There are seven long-term staff, of whom two are international; five of these staff are field based. Much of the delivery of the capacity building work falls to this team. There are effectively nine counterpart staff, eight of which are full-time, and five of these are stationed in the field. These counterpart staff are the main beneficiaries of the on-job support and coaching provided by the PMC field staff. Both teams use their combined their skills together with other MPW staff to build capacity in other parts of the MPW, to the private sector contractors and County staff.

Figure 2: LSFRP3 Organogram[30]



30 Source: LSFRP3 Annual Report July 2019 – June 2020

2 Methodology

The evaluation was conducted by a core team of six experts between August and November 2020. The methodology for the evaluation comprised the following components;

1. Review of ToR and reports related to LSFRP3 and previous phases (Annex 3).
2. Production of Inception Report, which articulated the proposed approach to the evaluation and the 'evaluation matrix', which set out the information needed to answer the evaluation questions asked in the ToR. The report was subject to full quality assurance by in independent expert.
3. Production of interview guides for use with different stakeholder types in the field and through remote interviews.
4. Field work in Liberia from 28th September to 12th October, involving site visits in Nimba and Grand Gedeh Counties (see schedule presented in Annex 4) and one-on-one and group interviews with stakeholders in the field and Monrovia (Annex 2). The field work was conducted by the Team Leader (TL) and the National Consultant (NC).
5. Collation and thorough review of additional documentation provided during the course of the evaluation (Annex 3).
6. Remote interviews with stakeholders, both within and outside Liberia, conducted by all team members depending on area of expertise.
7. Presentation of initial findings and workshop exploring possible options for way forward with MPW and FCG stakeholders at the end of the field visit.
8. Analysis and triangulation of field visit findings and results of document review.
9. Production of final report, including feedback from LSFRP3 stakeholders and quality assurance by independent expert.

The evaluation faced a number of limitations: The field visit was two weeks rather than the planned three weeks due to Covid-19 related flight constraints, and one of the contracted consultants was not able to conduct the field visit because of Covid-19 . This, and the dire condition of the road network in the south east of the country, meant that the ET were unable to visit roads in River Gee and Maryland Counties as originally planned. Secondly, it was not possible to interview a small number of stakeholders because of missed appointments or poor phone connectivity.

3 Findings

3.1 RELEVANCE

3.1.1 Alignment with Pro-Poor Policy and Agenda for Transformation

When LSFRP was designed, the Government of Liberia's (GoL) main development policy was the second 'Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) of 2012 - an Agenda for Transformation' (AfT), which, amongst various other infrastructure targets, aimed to construct 2,092 miles of feeder roads by the end of 2017 and contribute to the longer term development goal of achieving middle income status by 2030 (Liberia Rising 2030). The Government of Sweden supported the PRS, by contributing to both the Liberia Reconstruction Trust Fund (LRTF) as well as by developing a feeder road support program that was to become the Liberian-Swedish Feeder Roads Project.

The ET found strong evidence that the design of LSFRP is aligned with Pillar IV of Liberia's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), and draft versions of the National Transport Policy and Strategy & Investment Plan, both of which recognise the importance of rehabilitating Liberia's devastated infrastructure as a precondition to the delivery of basic pro-poor services and inclusive economic growth. Project design documents[31] reference the PRS, and a 2019 presentation on 'Rural Connectivity in Liberia'[32] made by the TA team emphasised the dire condition of road infrastructure in Grand Kru County and the impact it had on inhabitants of Juluken, Fleneken and Gedebo towns where crops remain unharvested or sold for a very low price, and people reported walking for more than 12 hours to get access to health posts and markets.

Villagers interviewed in Grand Gedeh County by the ET were clear that the roads were instrumental in increasing crop sales, which in turn encouraged farmers to open up more land, and easing journeys to health facilities. These findings reflect those of previous evaluations. For example, the Evaluation of the Liberian Swedish Feeder Roads Project Expansion to Nimba County[33] reported that '*interviews with both primary and secondary beneficiaries of the improved feeder road programme indicated that there have been significant increase in the level of agricultural production which has subsequently resulted in increased quantity of agricultural products available on the local market since the completion of the road rehabilitation works*'.

Evaluations of previous phases of the project[34] highlighted the importance that residents place on employment opportunities offered by the roads. This evaluation finds that the income

31 Final Proposal - Design And Formulation Liberia Swedish Feeder, Road Project (LSFRP) Phase 3

32 FGC 2019

33 Professional Management 2016

34 Ibid

earning opportunities continue to be highly relevant to beneficiaries, although they were not always as manifest as originally hoped for. In Babri village the ET were told how several people had been employed by the contractor to work as steel benders, drivers, and cooks, and women had gained income by sell foodstuffs to construction camp workers, and villagers reported opening up new fields so they could grow more produce for sale now that traders were passing more frequently. In Ziah (Grand Gedo), however, administrative staff and local people complained that the road did not pass close enough to their farms, and that the road itself was too narrow. These complaints would appear to be a result of the project not communicating with and managing community expectations, as the road was largely[35] constructed to MPW specifications, but this dissatisfaction could impact on people's sense of ownership of the road in the future.

The project itself has conducted two 'mid-term' studies of completed roads.[36] These studies indicate that there have been some beneficial economic and mobility related impacts, although the area serves are still 'poor'. It is likely that it will require additional time for the full impact of the roads to be realised, and these impacts will only emerge if maintenance is carried out as planned.

3.1.2 Alignment with UN Development Assistance Framework

Liberia's PRS objectives are supportive of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 9, which aims for universal rural access by 2030, and the United Nations' Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF),[37] which places particular emphasis on the empowerment of women and girls in Liberia, and is delivered through the 'Delivering as One Programme'.

LSFRP3 is also aligned with the UNDAF objectives from a design perspective – i.e. provisions for Cross Cutting Issues (CCI)[38] have been included in the road improvement and road maintenance contracts, and the project aims to deliver training and gender-specific activities to Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and contractors to address gender disparities and gender-based violence (GBV). In addition, UNDAF applies a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) to all development interventions. Attention to CCI and HRBA are also requirements for Sida funding. However, while some progress has been made with sensitisation of CBOs, and Country officials, LSFRP3 has under-delivered in this area because of resource shortages.

Trainings related to gender (and other issues such as workers' safety and environment) have been repeatedly postponed due to lack of funding or low interest by contractors. In one of the communities visited by the ET it was reported that no CCI training / awareness was conducted, while in another it was limited to HIV and gender. The ET finds that though gender mainstreaming was, in principle, integrated in the project planning, gender and other CCI were not part of the capacity building plan, resources allocated to the CCI were insufficient, the

35 The ET noted that more culverts should have been used in some places

36 Findings are reported in the 2019 – 2020 Annual Report

37 2013 – 2017 but extended until December 2019 to enable alignment with the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development.

38 The CCI include gender mainstreaming, disability inclusion, child and youth protection, HIV and AIDS, road safety, community participation, as well as environmental perspective.

integration of CCI have not been adequately monitored, and risks, such as resistance to the issues, were not considered by the project management.

3.1.3 Alignment with Decentralisation agenda

Decentralization is seen as a central component the ongoing peace building and reconciliation, and poverty reduction effort in Liberia. The process, which was instigated in 2013, aims to deliver a system of governance that is more localized and more responsive to the needs and aspirations of all citizens throughout the country.

LSFRP3 attempts to support decentralisation by supporting Counties to increasingly take responsibility for elements of the project that in previous phases were manged from Monrovia. Counties now take responsibility for planning, procuring and supervising the construction and maintenance of road works, and the project's main role is to provide the Counties with the capacity building and training required to assume these responsibilities. It is expected that, if LSFRP3 is successfully decentralised, the MPW's over-burdened workload will be reduced, and Counties' sense of ownership of the assets created.

While the project should be commended for supporting the decentralisation agenda, particularly with respect to building the capacity of and empowering Resident and County Engineers. the evaluation found that it does pose some challenges. First, County administrations are working under the auspices of the Ministry of Local Government (MLG), which does not have a history of road sector interventions. Consequently, County staff in many cases do not have the required technical knowledge for the management of rural road rehabilitation and periodic maintenance assignments. The MLG's institutional distance from the MPW may also exacerbate the already difficult task of accessing Road Fund resources for maintaining roads in the future.

A second concern is fiduciary risk. Decentralising the procurement, disbursement and accounting for the Swedish funds to the Counties significantly increase accountability risks. Indeed, the ET found that in Bong and Lofa Counties (targeted under previous phases), financial reporting standards were not being met,[39] with both Counties having difficulties reconciling advances which had been made to them to pay for project work. Furthermore, normal process was not being followed: in both Bong and Lofa, the Fiscal Superintendent was being excluded from decision making and financial reporting by the Superintendent.

The third issue relates to the extent to which County infrastructure can support the projects decentralisation ambitions, particularly regarding the use of CBOs for ongoing maintenance. In Lofa, for example, there is a serious liquidity crisis: all banks are closed and cash to pay CBOs has to be physically transported from Monrovia.

A final challenge to LSFRP3's successful support of decentralisation is the amount of capacity building needed compared to the remaining lifetime and resources of the project. Hifab (the external M&E provider), in their regular reports, have pointed out that it is doubtful that the project will have been able to develop Counties' capacity to effectively manage their decentralised responsibilities by the end of the project, and as a result resources will be used to

39 Doubtful practices which appear to be an attempt to circumvent Public Procurement Concessions Commission regulations were also reported in Maryland and Grand Gedeh (LSFRP3 AR 2020)

solve immediate problems rather than provide long-term transport solutions. This observation is endorsed by the ET.

3.1.4 Alignment with Sida's development strategy

The ET found that the design of LSFRP3 is consistent with Sida's development strategy for Liberia, the overall aim of which is to contribute to the strengthening of Liberia's public functions, and to create conditions for peaceful, inclusive and sustainable development, based on the perspective of people living in poverty and the rights perspective.[40] The project's support of decentralisation aligns with the Sida objective of 'strengthening democracy and equality', and its was found that the roads themselves enable small-scale farmers' access to market more agricultural produce; facilitate all year-round social service delivery particularly; and create income earning opportunities for young men and women in the rural areas.

However, Sida funding requires mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues (CCI) such as gender, environment and conflict perspectives. Interviews with stakeholders in the field, and the consultant engaged to deliver CCI indicates that these topics have not been afforded sufficient attention or resources so far during the implementation of LSFRP3, mainly for reasons related to other priorities in the MPW and the Covid-19 crisis[41] (see Section 3.2.2 – Allocative Efficiency).

3.1.5 Road Fund and Maintenance of LSFRP roads

One of the main assumptions underpinning project success in the ToC is that the Roads Management Unit (RMMU) and the MPW maintains and develops the primary road network. Not only is this not happening – especially in the Southeast where LSFRP3 is operating – but the ongoing maintenance of roads built under previous phases of LFSFP continues to be problematic. In principle, maintenance of roads should be covered by the Road Fund (RF), which derives from a fuel levy. The exact figures related to the Fuel Levy and RF budget are difficult to ascertain,[42] but it was reported to the ET that the levy collects about $30m per year, and $12m of this is allocated to the RF (the remainder apparently being assigned to more pressing social development needs at the insistence of the International Monetary Fund).

Demands on the limited resources available for maintenance through the RF are high, and it is clear that roads constructed under the first two phases of the LSFRP have continued to deteriorate due to lack of regular maintenance resulting in increased cost for periodic maintenance. For this reason, LSFRP3 has continued to cover the cost of maintaining the roads constructed in the first two phases of the project. However, the absence of a clear strategy or apparent resources for ongoing road maintenance presents a serious risk to the LSFRP objectives.

40 The two perspectives are inclusive in Sida's HRBA. The rights-based principles of accountability, transparency, participation, non-discrimination and linkage to human rights instruments should be integrated in all contributions supported by Sida.

41 Based on an interview with the person responsible for delivering CCI training.

42 Figures have not been open to scrutiny since the Millennium Challenge Commission withdrew support to the formation of the RA in 2019

3.2 EFFICIENCY

3.2.1 Technical Efficiency - Delivery of Outputs by TA Team

One of the main differences between LSFRP3 and previous phases is the increased importance of building MPW capacity.[43] The Technical Assistance (TA) team's specific responsibilities[44] under the logframe relate to this issue; specifically: improving capacity in the public and private sectors to rehabilitate and maintain feeder roads (output 4),[45] and laying a foundation for government strategy and donor coordination for a nationwide rural roads programme (output 5).

In terms of output 4, despite the notional importance of capacity building in the project, a delivery plan was only completed one year after the project started, and the TA post specifically related to delivery came to an end in 2018,[46] with associated tasks being shared between other members of the TA team since.

While the plan for the delivery of training on key topics is clear, and training is planned and monitored efficiently – with MPW counterpart engineers' capacity being built through training and on the job coaching, and tracked through a dedicated 'Counterpart Coaching Plan' (which goes some way to assessing the extent to which capacity has been built)[47] - it is highly likely that after the departure of the TA team, there will be insufficient technical capacity for the professional management of the roads projects.

There are three reasons for this. First, there has historically been a high turnover amongst TA and counterpart staff, resulting in lack of continuity on the training side and a loss of institutional capacity when counterpart staff leave. Although this latter issue has been mitigated somewhat recently, unclear lines of responsibility between the Feeder Roads Unit (FRU) and the County Resident Engineers do not serve the objectives of efficient management of road works.

Resource constraints are a second factor. The poor road conditions in the Southeast of the country have meant that transport costs have accounted for a higher proportion of expenditure than originally planned, and this has impacted significantly on the TA team, who need to spread themselves over not just LSFRP3 Counties, but also those targeted in phased 1 and 2. The GoL's failure to make good on its financial commitment means that maintenance of roads rehabilitated under previous phases has to be paid for from the Sida budget, further stretching available resources.

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43 The 2016 evaluation of the previous phase of the project stated that 'Some training has been provided for key staff at MPW; however, no comprehensive strategy for capacity development of the Ministry has been in place and practiced… and, thus, capacity development of MPW as an institution has been limited. Any continuation of a Sida funded project should be based on a comprehensive strategy for capacity development of the Ministry'.

44 As opposed to responsibilities for delivery of road works shared with the MPW

45 See Logframe in Annex 5

46 Or has not been replaced since the staff member left

47 It is difficult to fully assess the extent to which tangible skills have been transferred during the project lifetime because, while the project is running, the TA team still has oversight, and training recipients are not given the full mantle of authority until the end of the project

Thirdly, delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, and resource shortages, have curbed the projects ability to deliver training in some important areas. For example, the follow up consultations and trainings on CCI that were supposed to take place in 2020 have now been postponed until further notice, and there still appear to be critical gaps in the way funds allocated to County administrations are accounted for.

In an effort to deliver the infrastructure-related outputs, the TA team has prioritised delivery of training on issues specific to maintenance[48] over subjects such road design or environmental and social safeguards topics (referred to as 'cross-cutting' issues in LSFRP3 nomenclature). While this is an understandable approach given the challenges faced, based on the findings of this and previous evaluations,[49] it is unlikely that all the output 4 indicators[50] will have been met by the end of the project's current phase. Dropping CCI – particularly those relating to gender and environment - does, however, raise the question as to whether they have ever been fully mainstreamed. It is argued that if they were, they could not have been put on hold or relegated in importance.

Output 5 relates to the project's objective of 'laying a foundation for government strategy and donor coordination for a nationwide rural roads programme'. The project proposal[51] envisages the TA team (rather than the Project Management Committee) having responsibility for delivering on one indicator under this output: i.e. building the capacity of the MPW's Monitoring and Evaluation Division so that it can take the lead in monitoring LSFRP 3 project effects.

The ET found that there has been some progress on this in that the MPW M&E counterpart was aware of the process for collecting outcome data, the findings of the two outcome studies that have been conducted so far, and their purpose in theory. However, the development of outcome indicators, and collection and analysis of data to report against them was done by external consultants. Given existing resource constraints – both within the project and MPW – it is unclear whether any further outcome assessment will take place, despite the survey methodology being 'simpler' and 'more realistic to the resources available',[52] and it seems unlikely that the data necessary to inform decision making on road maintenance management will be collected once external TA and Sida support ends.

Resource constraints have also meant that there has been little assessment of some aspects of the capacity building training. For example, monitoring guides and tools for CCI were developed but were not used. Trainings of County officials and contractors on how to use these instruments, planned to be conducted earlier in 2020 were postponed due to Covid-19. But the

48 Including Interim Payment Certificate (IPC) preparation, construction supervision and measurement of works

49 Which reiterate the importance of the project having a functional and realistic exit strategy which leaves sufficient capacity in place

50 20 MPW staff, and staff of 25 Contractors and 37 CBOs trained; Road reconstruction and maintenance completed in a timely manner; MPW staff are able to carry out all tasks for reconstruction and maintenance; All admin staff in target Counties trained in full project cycle.

51 Republic of Liberia, Ministry of Public Works, FINAL PROPOSAL - DESIGN AND FORMULATION LIBERIA SWEDISH FEEDER, ROAD PROJECT (LSFRP) PHASE 3

52 LSFRP3 outcome indicators and logframe 2018

fact that they were planned so late indicates the slow progress on attending to monitoring issues, both on the bigger outcomes and on CCI. Even if tools are in place, until the promised 'Results-Based Monitoring Framework' – complete with a description of the indicator, a baseline value with a date, a target with a date, a source of data, a frequency and who is responsible for collection – is finalised, and resourced, project M&E will continue to be lacking.

3.2.2 Allocative Efficiency - Resourcing

Four themes are relevant to the assessment of the extent to which project resources have been allocated efficiently: resource allocations to delivering accessibility; allocations to capacity building; allocations of funds to Counties, and the GoL's contribution of funds. These are addressed in turn below.

Allocations to delivering accessibility: As previously mentioned, LSFRP3 differs from the previous two phases in that it claims to prioritise increasing people's access to services and economic opportunities over simple 'mobility' – the ability to move from one point to another. Improving mobility is – according to the Performance Assessment of 2018 – about four times cheaper than improving accessibility.[53] However, the latest figures presented in the project's 2020 annual report indicate that, during the period 1st July 2019 – 30th June 2020, 189km of roads were completed at a cost of $8,166,770, or $43,210 per kilometre. The results of studies completed by the M&E unit show that accessibility is improving along completed roads, but it is does not appear to be being achieved as efficiently as could be possible because of the relatively high specification of roads being constructed.

It should be noted that the TA team, Hifab, and some of the MPW staff recognise the tension between the project's objective of improving access and continuing to build roads to the standard currently prescribed by MPW with the resources available; indeed, Hifab have noted that accessibility improvements could favour better off over poorer rural residents.[54] The concept of piloting mobility-enhancing 'village access trails', which are built to a lower specification, are cheaper to build and maintain, but still yield the accessibility outcomes the project seeks[55], is being considered at a senior level, and is fully endorsed by the ET.

Allocations to building capacity: FCG state in their 'Performance Assessment' of 2020, '*the professional resources allocated to LSFRP 3 are not substantially higher than the resources allocated to previous LSFRP phases. However, the assignment is expected to achieve the same technical output performance as in previous project phases under the more difficult logistical conditions in the SE'*. The ET concur with this assessment: compared to similar projects, TA resourcing for a feeder roads project of this scale is thin, although the number of counterpart personnel provided by MPW is good. In other words, despite the irregular performance in some areas of capacity building delivery (e.g. cross-cutting issues), the current TA team are achieving more than TA on previous phases, with essentially the same amount of money.

53 the 'Performance Assessment' of 2018 calculated that accessibility improvements – which require mechanized contractors, generally based in Monrovia - are costing around $45,000/km, while mobility improvements – done by County level small scale contractors cost about $10,500 per km.

54 Semi-Annual Review Mission 03 – 14 March 2019, Hifab International

55 Jenkins and Peters, 2016, Rural Connectivity in Africa: Motorcycle Track Construction

County allocations: The ET finds that the formula used to assign funds to Counties to maintain roads is equitable. Around $2.5 million is available every year to the six LFSRP3 Counties to enable them to contract rehabilitation works as per the decentralisation plan. The formula used to determine the size of allocation is based on three factors: 1) length of secondary and feeder roads (representing the amount of work required); 2) population (representing economic and social needs); and 3) equity (each County receives an equal base amount reflecting political and administrative considerations). Questions remain, however, about the certain Counties' ability to manage the funds efficiently. As already reported, some Counties have had problems reconciling and accounting for funds which have been paid out to them, in part because they have bypassed normal accounting procedures.

GoL Contribution: Another challenge to project efficiency has been the Government's failure to allocate the Road Fund resources towards maintenance of LSFRP roads. Originally, $8.7 million was committed, but this has not materialised, and the project has had to fund the maintenance this would have covered from Sida resources. This project specific matter is part of a bigger issue nationally: LSFRP3 calculate that current Development Partner contributions constitute about 18% of the revenue required to maintain the national feeder roads network, and the GoL needs to make budgetary allocations for the remaining 72%. As things stand, this is not happening.

3.2.3 Equity

The issue of under-performance on the delivery of training on cross-cutting issues has already been addressed, but the project should be commended for making steps in strengthening equity in two important areas. First, LSFRP3 has identified outcome indicators[56] which specifically track the project's effect on women and young people. Secondly, a University Graduate Intern scheme to increase the number of women working in road engineering has been initiated. Under the scheme, nine recent graduates nominated by University of Liberia, Tubmanburg University and Society of Women Engineers Liberia have been awarded a six-month internship with the project to gain practical experience.

3.3 EFFECTIVENESS[57]

3.3.1 LSFRP3 Progress

LSFRP3 is not currently on track regarding core capacity building at national and local levels and implementation of works compared with programme targets. Delays are almost inevitable in such capacity development activities especially at local/country level and arguably the

[56] Numbers/proportion of female users of different motorised transport modes; Numbers/proportion of female stall keepers at local markets; Numbers/proportion of female businesses along the road; Number of motorcycle taxis operating on road

57 Main sources include: LSFRP3 Performance Assessment 2018; LSFRP3 Training Needs and Capacity Assessment Plan 2018; LSFRP3 Semi-Annual Report 2019; FCG Performance Assessment 2020; LSFRP3 Annual Report 2019-2020 (2nd draft); Comments on LSFRP3 Annual Report July 2018-June 2019 Hifab International AB; Republic of Liberia Ministry of Public Works: Final Proposal, Design and Formulation LSFRP3; Proposal 5-year Maintenance Strategy for Feeder Roads constructed by Sida in Liberia between 2009 to 2014 under LSFRP, MPW Republic of Liberia; interviews with LSFRP TA team and counterparts.

implementation programme was too ambitious/optimistic even without the benefit of hindsight. Training has been carried out in seven countries and in Monrovia, although the original 2018 formal training programme has not been adhered to. More recently Covid-19 social distancing measures have precluded large groups and, given the limited resources available, the Team has concentrated on works (which is high MPW priority).

Implementation delays have arisen due to procurement processes, Covid-19 pandemic and slow progress of some works contracts. Some contractors delayed mobilisation due to logistical issues of establishment of a works site in a remote location with variable accessibility along main roads[58] and there are continuing issues with some contracts over the suitability and reliability of equipment which has led to implementation delays (and, in some cases quality issues). Technical weaknesses require further capacity building efforts with contractors and at County levels (e.g. bidding and procurement processes, work force and contract cycle management, cash flow management and planning) and there is an expressed belief that more of the capacity building going forward should focus on County level so as to strengthen practical decentralisation efforts (as regards feeder roads).

Also, at County levels, resource and capacity deficits have constrained procurement procedures and works contract supervision. Counterparts and trainees assigned by MPW to LSFRP3 have, on the whole, been capable and motivated to acquire enhanced skills and experience, but doubts have surfaced as to extent to which enabled ´trainees´ will be able to apply these enhanced skills after the LSFRP3 implementation period. Concern has been voiced over lack of MPW resources, non-supportive institutional structures, and high staff turnover. It is suggested that national institutions are lacking the necessary personnel, equipment and financial resources to cover the work associated with the ´Pro- Poor Agenda´ the principal goal of which is road connectivity.

3.3.2 Areas that Require Adjustments

At this stage in LSFRP3 implementation major changes or re-adjustments in programme design are not indicated (given that to a greater or lesser extent some activities are already ´locked in´ e.g. contracts for completion of implementation in 2021).

An infusion of additional financing matched by a corresponding increase in time for activities to be completed may improve the chances of the project fully delivering its outputs, but, given the programmed completion date of end of 2021, only a new approach that could be rapidly implemented, can be considered. In retrospect the specified works contract durations were too short (given the aggressive rainy season limiting access and earthworks/gravelling activities compounded by contractor capability/capacity issues noted above). Such accommodation might also have led to more realistic tender rates.

3.3.3 Delivery of Physical Works at Mid-Term

LSFRP3 is not delivering the physical quantities of works foreseen in the implementation programme of mid-term. Explanation of contract implementation difficulties is noted above but a further issue is the decision taken to re-direct some budget to maintenance (routine and

58 The main road corridor from Ganta to Zwedru and beyond as well as secondary roads connecting to the priority feeder roads to be rehabilitated by LSFRP3

periodic) of feeder roads constructed under previous phased of LSFRP. This decision is fully endorsed by the evaluation even though this reallocation of funding reduced funding available for rehabilitation/construction of ´new´ feeder roads in the south eastern Counties and thus expected outputs in terms of kilometres (km) constructed.

Maintenance of these ´old´ feeder roads was expected to be undertaken by MPW using Road Fund revenues (and was a commitment on the part of the government) but adequate maintenance was not undertaken.[59] These roads had already deteriorated due to this maintenance neglect, a situation exacerbated by high rainfall and unconstrained usage by heavy vehicles (some significantly overloaded). In order to maintain (and restore) service levels (and, in some cases, passability), some limited routine and periodic maintenance regimes were installed on the worst such roads.[60] It is suggested that this was a pragmatic, but highly effective action.

However, despite the constraints to progress noted above there has been an increasing rate of progress of works in the past year.[61]

3.3.4 Achievement of outcome objectives

Follow-up studies conducted by the project on the Jayamai – Barkedu road in Lofa and the Nyila – Boyerma road in Bong, as well as field work and interviews conducted for this evaluation find that outcome objectives[62] are being achieved to some degree. There is evidence of more traffic and lower transport fares on the improved roads, and some people report that they now find it easier to get produce to market and access health facilities. However, in Lofa, school enrolment was falling and in Bong only 42% of the teacher vacancies in school were filled. Villagers in one site visited by the ET in Grand Gedeh reported that the road was not close enough to their fields to make much difference to them selling crops, although access to their nearest health centre was considerably easier. Informants from County administrations in Bong and Nimba mentioned that local community members had expressed a willingness to contribute local resources to the maintenance of such roads.[63] As noted in the 2019-2020 annual report, the outcome-level indicators will take time to emerge:

59 This situation is to some extent ´history repeating itself´ going back to LSFRP1 feeder roads which were expected to be maintained a decade ago.

60 There was insufficient funding available to fully maintain all ´old´ feeder roads.

61 To end of June 2019 works of value SEK 24 million were completed (from start up at the beginning of 2018) i.e. SEK 16 million per year compared with SEK 55 million over the past 12 months i.e. total to June 2020 189 km/ (US$ 8.3 million) of rehabilitation was completed out of a total of 285 km contracted (US$ 11.5 million). Completion dates have been extended for 7/8 contracts. Similarly 149 km (US$ 0.8 million) periodic maintenance (PM) has been completed out of a total of 194 km contracted (US$ 1.4 million)

62 Enabling small-scale farmers' access to market more agricultural produce; Facilitate all year round social service delivery particularly in the health and education sectors; Create income earning opportunities for young men and women in the rural areas

63 It is understood that MPW proposes to further will engage with country administrations on the issues of maintenance

3.4 SUSTAINABILITY[64]

3.4.1 Operational capacity of MPW and County Administrations

Low capacity within the MPW and the County administrations was correctly identified as a constraint to implementation in the short term, to sustainability prospects in the longer term. The TA team is addressing this constraint by training, monitoring, workshops, on-site learning-by-doing and provision of manuals/specifications etc. However, such capacity enhancement and learning is a long-term activity which should include opportunities to apply acquired skills (i.e. after the LSFRP3 implementation period). No provision has been made for continuation of systematic training or maintenance of capacity building activities after the end of the LSFRP3 implementation period.

As noted above under ´Effectiveness´, capacity of personnel of MPW and Counties (and contractors) has been strengthened (despite delays due to Covid-19 and other logistical reasons) but given the lack of M&E indicators covering acquisition (and application) of transferred knowledge and technology, monitoring of such activities is limited to description of training and numbers of participants (and given the limited available resources) there continues to be a certain tension between perceptions of the TA role – is it an implementation or advisory role?

3.4.2 MPW and County Administrations' ability to independently carry out their mandates

MPW and County administrations are on track (albeit separate tracks) to increasing capacities but there are doubts as to the extent either institution will be able to independently carry out their respective mandates at the end of the LSFRP3 implementation period. However, the reasons for this doubt are not the same for both institutions.

MPW reportedly has the capacity to undertake functions such as planning, procurement, budget management etc., but such capacity is tempered by a lack of resources (and lingering suggestions of governance issues, especially regarding procurement and contract cycle management).

On the other hand, at County levels – to differing degrees - there remains only weak capacity for planning, prioritisation, procurement, contract cycle management etc and this fragility is weakened further by lack of resources. LIDA (Lofa Integrated Development Association) has been involved in LSFRP3 by way of road maintenance management at County levels, especially through CBOs (20-30 persons typically routinely maintaining up to 25 km of feeder road using LB methods[65]). Considering that the 2011 NPDLG (National Policy on Decentralisation) aims at decentralisation and transfer of political, fiscal and administrative powers to local government (which implies that management of feeder roads will be

64 Main sources include: LSFRP3 Performance Assessment 2018; LSFRP Training Needs and Capacity Assessment Plan 2018; Presentation on Rural Connectivity in Liberia FCG 2019; ISFRP3 Semi-Annual Report 2019; FCG Performance Assessment 2020; LSFRP3 Annual Report 2019 2nd draft; interviews with LSFRP TA team and counterparts.

65 Capacity building also includes community awareness raising, mobilisation of communities to establish CBOs, training and membership of technical personnel in Counties, training CBOs in LB methods, supervision of works and cross-cutting issues including gender, HIV/AIDS and environmental and social issues.

responsibility of Counties [with FRU oversight]) the continuing weakness of capacity at County level does not bode well for the task of maintaining >50% of the national road network.

LSFRP3 stakeholders estimate that maintaining the 630 km of feeder roads rehabilitated by LSFRP1 & 2 requires a budget of about US$ 2 million/year. Applying the same consideration to the entire network of secondary and feeder roads (~10045 km) implies an annual requirement of about US$ 31.8 million. This figure should be compared with total RF revenues of about US$ 30 million/year of which 40% is used for capital works thus leaving a balance of about US$ 18 million/year for maintenance (of which 2/3 is allocated to primary roads) thus leaving a balance of about US$ 6 million/annum for secondary and feeder roads. And even this reduced amount is not currently being made available. LSFRP3 is undertaking periodic maintenance (PM) on some 200 km of the 630 km of ´old´ feeder roads with routine maintenance (RM) on 680 km.[66] By 2020 539 km of ´old´ feeder roads are being maintained by LSFRP3 (i.e. 350 km plus 189 km which were being maintained by FRAMP but which have been handed back to LSFRP3.

Given the parlous financial situation, consideration of potential sustainability should contemplate the comparative costs of mobility improvements[67] (~US$ 45,000/km) and accessibility improvements (~US$ 10,500/km)[68] (which could of course represent a first stage of access improvement which could be subsequently ´upgraded´ in line with usage demand and availability of financing).

A further sustainability issue arising from the use of plant based (PB) methods is that contractors are only willing to make what can be significant investments in purchase of plant and equipment if there is a reasonable expectation of a continuous stream of work. Given current sector funding problems this expectation is unrealistic.[69]

Another sustainability constraint is uncertainty of road sector reform. Key regulatory and legislation measures are yet to be implemented,[70] including definition of responsibilities and authority for sector management, financing, fund allocation principles and prioritisation, performance based management and adoption of commercial practises in sector operations and management including compliance with national legislation and international practices regarding environmental and social safeguards.

3.4.3 Government Ownership

Given the concurrent funding deficits for maintenance for all road classes, and the absence of any methods to control overloading of vehicles using the feeder roads (a major cause of

66 Some additional 50 km of feeder roads have been rehabilitated

67 Feeder road standard constructed by contractors using plant based (PB) methods who are usually based in Monrovia

68 Lower standard access (bicycles and motorcycles) constructed by small scale local contractors using LB (or LB/plant-assisted) methodology.

69 >70% of Liberian SMEs rely on equipment rental to make up for their shortages of plant should they win a works contract This hired plant is often unreliable (as the plant hire firm does not invest in newer equipment without a continuing programme of works)

70 In some cases the policy has been drafted but not enacted, in others, enacted but not implemented and in still others not yet drafted.

degradation), sustainability and ownership of service levels of LSFRP roads (and the national road network as a whole) remains seriously in doubt.

3.4.4 Considerations for continuation

Finally, one question that emerges when discussing sustainability prospects is should a continuation of LSFRP activities be considered after the end of the current LSFRP3 implementation from 2022? Indeed, the ET found considerable appetite for this prospect at both the community, County, and national level.

There will be a continuing large demand for better rural accessibility (whether a ´mobility´ or ´access´ approach is considered). In Liberia potentially significant developmental results[71] which may, or may not, be addressed by other IFIs but, without a continuation of support to LSFRP it seems very probable that LSFRP achievement in terms of km of improved feeder roads will suffer accelerated deterioration of service levels due to maintenance neglect with resultant loss of rural access and reduction of development outcomes.

3.5 COORDINATION

3.5.1 Coordination and Harmonisation with Other Projects

Evaluations of previous phases of LFSRP[72] identified a lack of coordination with other agencies, and between donors working in the sector. The design of LSFRP3 attempted to address this shortcoming by committing to coordinating capacity building efforts with other donor activities which share the same goals – for example the Millennium Challenge Commission (MCC), GIZ ‘Capacity Building in the Roads Transport Sector’ project, and the USAID-funded ‘Feeder Roads Access Programme’ (FRAMP).

A review of project documentation indicates that some progress was achieved in 2018, but recommendations were still made to strengthen synergy through more frequent donor coordination meetings. However, by the time this evaluation took place, both the MCC and FRAMP projects had finished, and the covid-19 pandemic had severely curtailed people’s ability to meet for coordination or other purposes, so the pool of actors with which the project could work with was reduced.

GIZ’s work in capacity building does continue, however, and the outputs of this project – for example the development of the procurement process and training of staff - are well aligned with and continue to be very beneficial to LSFRP3’s objectives.

3.5.2 LSFRP3’s perception by other stakeholders

The ET found that LSFRP is used synonymously with Sida; in fact, in rural areas respondents referred to the project as Sida roads. Sida has a long and well-regarded history of development programming in Liberia, and the LSFRP3 action is seen by many as a continuation of this.

71 Albeit not particularly clearly quantified in terms of outcomes

72 Evaluation of the Liberian Swedish Feeder Roads Project Expansion to Nimba County, Professional Management, 2016

3.5.3 Capacity of MPW and County Administrations to manage work going forward.

The project's latest Annual Report (June 2020) states that as of 30 June 2020, the structures, trained staff, and management tools were in place and 475 km of feeder roads[73] reportedly 'under routine maintenance and motorable all seasons'. While there are clearly some competent people in post in the MPW, there are still some areas where capacity needs to be improved if project objectives are to be fully realised.

MPW capacity appears to be limited in two particular areas. The first is M&E. To date, articulation of the project's Theory of Change and measurement of roads impact on outcome-level objectives has been done by external consultants. MPW staff have supported these efforts, but questions remain over both in house ability to run surveys, analyse and interpret data. At some point before the end of the project it will be necessary to evaluate the extent to which the project has built capacity, and it is likely that this work will have to be conducted by an external consultant.

A second area – linked to M&E – is the ability to use a data driven approach to road maintenance and communicate plans deriving from this to development partners. One informant with several years' experience interacting with the MPW told the ET that it remains difficult to obtain succinct and up-to-date information about which donors are supporting which road projects – a factor which can deter development partners from making investments in the sector.

At the County level, the capacity of some Administrations to manage the tasks allocated to them under the project's decentralisation agenda is still in question. Areas of concern include the ability of engineers to ensure contractors are building roads to acceptable standards,[74] and Counties' ability to effectively manage and account for funds earmarked for road maintenance. There are also questions about Counties' ability to form, manage, and pay the CBOs who will be responsible for aspects of road maintenance.

Up to September 2020, management of the CBO-led road maintenance component has been subcontracted to Lofa Integrated Development Association (LIDA). They have reportedly done a good job in organising the routine maintenance in Bong, Lofa and Nimba, and in training the staff of these Counties in taking over the management and supervision of routine maintenance. However, the County administrations' ability to manage CBO-based maintenance has been mixed.[75] Counties targeted under LSFRP3 will not receive the same level of support as those covered in previous phases, as Sida support under the current funding arrangement will have ended by the time routine maintenance for LSFRP3 roads is scheduled. Given the serious doubts about whether GoL funds will be made available to Counties for road maintenance, the future sustainability of the roads is in doubt.

73 Including roads built under previous phases

74 The ET witnessed culverts being installed without appropriate compacting machinery in Grand Gedeh

75 For example – payment difficulties in Lofa due to lack of liquidity.

3.6 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

3.6.1 Government Ownership

Government's ownership of the project under LSFRP3 compares favourably to previous phases of the programme. By opening the lines of communication between all stakeholders with increased participation in capacity building with awareness and promoting the decentralization policy, the Government has been more successful in retaining the MPW project counterpart staff that were trained, to be stationed for the duration of the project, both at the Ministry in the Feeder Road Unit and in the Counties - a significant improvement as compared to previous phases. However, for such to be maintained, GoL must introduce greater incentives to induce project counterpart staff to be stationed in remote rural areas, and must actively discourage the transfer of staff to other positions outside of the feeder road unit.

Several institutions such as the Road Maintenance Management Unit (RMRU), the Road Fund (RF) and Road Fund Administration (RFA) have been established, which is in itself an indicator of increased ownership. However, the inner workings of these institutions were still not fit for the purpose of delivering the expected outcomes and results. The key institutional reform still required is to transition of a number of MPW functions into a Road Agency. As long as this administrative unit is not in place and properly resourced and empowered there will continue to be structural challenges to delivering a sustainable road maintenance program.

Progress has been made in the area of service procurement by the GoL. Whereas in the past procurement processes were not harmonized, now, procurement of services is aligned to the PPCC and the legal framework as specified in the PPC Act of 2010. There is now clear collaboration between PPCC and MPW and most of the communication is now directly between PPCC and the Procurement Unit of the Ministry without involving FRU or PMC. In contrast to previous phases, the Procurement Unit prepares Procurement Plans autonomously, and requires no support from the project.

3.6.2 Measures for the TA team to Mitigate Risks

In the true sense of its mandate, the TA team cannot fully mitigate all risks; however, the close working relationship between the TA and senior-level MPW staff means the TA is able to strongly advise the government on issues, for example: the risk of not providing adequate funding for the rehabilitation and the maintenance of the feeder road network; prioritizing the maintenance and development of the primary road network in the project Counties; and ensuring that physical works are timed and synchronized with the construction season.

If a follow on project is envisaged (LSFRP4) it will be very important to time the procurement of the TA component to ensure that they are in place as soon as the financial agreements are signed between Sweden and the Government of Liberia.

3.6.3 Role of the TA in Supporting Restructuring

The main challenge faced with regard to restructuring the MPW is that it is essentially a political issue largely beyond the influence of the TA. There is political resistance to the formation of a Roads Authority[76], and its adequate funding through monies raised through the fuel levy.[77] The TA certainly has the skills and experience to offer sound advice regarding the restructuring necessary, so championing dialogue on the issue, plus building capacity within the MPW should continue alongside delivering the other project outputs and outcomes.

One of the TA's roles is to engage in robust capacity building innovations by collaborating with other partners. By partnering with the Booker Washington Institute (BWI), the TA has been successful in ensuring that contractors, craftsmen, artisan trainers and road supervisors were trained in various road implementation and maintenance procedures and processes. For long term sustainability, a permanent training centre has to be established for continuous capacity building in the full spectrum of feeder road management and implementation.

There are discussions on going between MPW, GIZ and other donors to rehabilitate the Ministry's abandoned Road Maintenance Institute for the training of contractors, craftsmen, artisan trainers and road supervisors, although the extent to which the TA is involved in these discussions is unclear.

76 The GoL is apparently wary of creating more bureaucratic institutions.

77 It was reported to the ET that the International Monetary Fund has insisted that the GoL uses a significant portion of funds generated for social services such as health and education

4 Evaluative Conclusions

4.1 RELEVANCE

By design, LSFRP3 is aligned with Liberia's Pro Poor Policy and Agenda for Transformation, and its Decentralisation Policy. By aiming to improve rural access it is also relevant to SDG9, and the ET found that people living in the roads served were involved in the planning, and appreciated the improved connectivity provided by the new infrastructure. However, the project's assumption that the GoL will make the necessary administrative and financial investments in road maintenance is seriously flawed. The logical and strategic linkages of goods and services to or from the feeder roads are the primary roads; however, the primary roads are not fully in place, and this, combined with the serious void in GoL resources available for road maintenance, plus issues with accountability and governance in the Counties, and M&E capacity, poses a serious threat to the sustainability of what has been achieved so far.

Various issues related to delivery have also impacted on relevance. Strategic measures to secure the integration of CCI were taken at planning stage, but insufficient budget allocation, no real integration of social security and non-discrimination aspects in the capacity building plan, and lack of strategies how to address resistance, counteracted the intentions in the project design. There was no real increase in the awareness on the effects construction of feeder roads might have on child and youth protection, sexual and gender-based violence and/or prevalence of HIV and AIDS. Although capacity was built through workshops and training exercises, it is not possible to assess whether the recipients of the training can fully take over the management of the projects as per the protocols and their offices.

The CBO-based approach proposed for ongoing road maintenance is relevant considering the circumstances, but, based on the experience of previous phases, Counties' ability to manage the arrangements necessary, including timely payment for works, varies from one County to another. A more detailed analysis of how the CBO model has worked in other areas of Liberia, for example under the FRAMP project, would be useful to planning the project's exit strategy and managing expectations.

4.2 EFFICIENCY

Project efficiency has been impacted by three main issues: A first factor is delays in certain work streams, notably capacity building – due to staffing issues, difficulties with access, and Covid-19 – and the development and roll out of an M&E framework which covers all intended outputs and outcomes. This has meant that themes – notably CCI, and internal MPW capacity for M&E – have not been delivered to the expected level.

Secondly, although the project claims to focus on accessibility, the specifications of the roads being built are still matched to 'mobility' requirements as per the MPW's directive. Roads that will deliver accessibility can be - in the Liberian context where motorcycles account for a significant proportion of the transportation of goods and people – narrower, and hence about four times cheaper to build than those under existing feeder road specifications. It is encouraging that the project proposes to pilot village access trails during the remainder of the project period, and that there appears to be provisional support for this within the MPW.

The third factor seriously effecting efficiency is the GoL's failure to make good on its contribution to the project budget. This has meant that already-stretched human and financial resources have been spread over both LSFRP3 Counties, and those targeted in previous phases. The decision to try to maintain the roads built under previous phases with LFSFP3 funds was correct, but the GOL's failure to contribute does not indicate a commitment to ownership beyond the MPW level, and represents a serious threat to sustainability.

4.3 EFFECTIVENESS

LSFRP3 is not currently on track regarding core capacity building or implementation of works at national or local levels compared with programmed targets. There are a number of causes some of which could reasonably have been predicted (e.g. logistical problems of implementing works in up-country Liberia during rains or lack of resources to fully address an ambitious programme), and some of which certainly could not have been predicted (e.g. effects of Covid-19). However, there is a more generic explanation for outcomes of support programmes. As stated in project documents and/or technical proposals: actual achievements differ from those expected because over optimistic assumptions (for example, the GoL's commitment to maintenance of roads through the RF), and over-estimation of expected results.[78]

Training, capacity building and technology transfer (at an individual level) and institutional support can be successful in themselves so that the target individuals and institutions are capacitated to undertake their mandated functions. During the course of the support project there is every likelihood that the empowered support recipients will be able to acquire necessary skills and capacities. However, after the end of project support, possibilities to fully apply such capacities reduced due to lack of resources and/or institutional constraints. Experience from three generations of LSFRP suggest that there is a likelihood of this scenario coming to pass again.

The ET considers that the decision to re-allocate LSFRP3 funds from rehabilitation to maintenance of feeder roads rehabilitated during previous phases of LSFRP was correct given that government commitment to adequately maintain these roads was not delivered. Without this maintenance the service levels (and even passability of some roads) were manifestly threatened with consequent loss of investment value. This decision was highly effective, but again brings into clear focus the risks facing the project's achievement after the end of Sida support.

Wider objectives in terms of rural access and mobility are being achieved, leading to positive economic and social impacts. However, such gains will be transitory should the roads not be adequately maintained in the future. The use of CBOs for such routine maintenance works is potentially the most realistic and effective prospect for such continuing maintenance in a

78 This systematic tendency to be over-optimistic about outcomes/results has been identified as ´optimism bias´.

context of national shortages of resources for road sector investment and maintenance. It also serves the objective of building the concept of local ownership.

Decentralisation is a work-in-progress which will realistically take years to fully come to fruition. Technical capacity and resources available at County levels are limited although there are clear benefits already apparent from increased local engagement and participation (e.g. ownership. application of local knowledge, better prioritisation, potentially better local governance). Engendering and facilitating such involvement and building local capacity are an effective strategy, although it is doubtful that LSFRP3 alone will be able to bring the capacity of local administrations up to the standard necessary before the end of the current project cycle.

4.4 SUSTAINABILITY

Capacity of personnel within the MPW, Counties and contractors has been strengthened, but refresher training has not been completed, and the extent to which this capacity may realistically be used after the project implementation period is a potential constraint to sustainability (together with continuing lack of resources, notably the huge funding deficit for road sector maintenance).

The efforts of FRAMP notwithstanding,[79] support by International Financial Institutions' (IFI) involved in the road sector in Liberia has generally not succeeded in developing and implementing sustainable ways of solving (or even mitigating) the greatest single threat to outcomes, impacts and sustainability of the national road network, not only for rural accessibility and mobility, but also for main roads in Liberia - deficient road maintenance.

If current maintenance neglect continues it will negatively impact upon not only Sida's LSFRP3 objectives, but also on wider development goals for the country as a whole. Paradoxically, major International Finance Institutions' support for major roads runs the risk of a network that is nationally unaffordable and thus beyond the national maintenance capacities whilst simultaneously being insufficient to satisfy national development targets (which are jeopardised further by lack of access for rural dwellers who comprise > 50% of the population of Liberia).

LSFRP3 maintenance of ´old´ LSFRP feeder roads has extended the effective life of these roads which were deteriorating due to maintenance neglect. This action cannot be considered as more than a ´holding action´; it cannot, in itself, ensure sustainability which can only be delivered by long term engagement of national resources.

Sida has contributed to potential sustainability (not to be conflated with prospects of sustainability) by bringing added value to support LSFRP with sector expertise, capacity building, a focus on cross-cutting and social issues (although this has not fully been realised), and flexibility in cooperation with other sector donors. Overall, Sida´s added values have contributed to transparency, procedural probity and due diligence, thus providing a strong demonstration of improved sector governance.

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79 The ET was unable to find any information on the success or sustainability of the CBO-based maintenance model used by FRAMP.

Given the general shortage of funding for road sector management in Liberia, which, due to conventional methods of prioritisation, allocates most funds to main roads to the detriment of rural roads, consideration should be given to whether (and how) limited funding for rural roads might ´go further´. Rural areas in Liberia suffer serious accessibility constraints and even after many years of donor support to rural access projects, there remain huge areas of rural Liberia where access is denied or severely limited. Serious study of alternative (and potentially cheaper) approaches to providing more basic but more widely available rural access – such as village access trails - should be undertaken. The rural poor deserve such consideration.

4.5 COORDINATION

LSFRP3 has coordinated well with other donor-funded actors working in the sector, although two major projects funded by USAID (FRAMP and the MCC) finished in the early stages of this intervention. The partnership with GiZ, who have also been working to build the capacity of the MPW has been particularly supportive of LSFRP3's objectives.

While technical know-how within MPW staff is good, gaps remain in two areas: ability to conduct M&E to assess the impact that improved roads are having on people's lives, and the ability to use the knowledge generated to inform an overall road maintenance strategy. Again, resource limitations have played a part in this, but so have delays in putting in place a credible M&E framework.

4.6 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Resources allocated for the capacity building components were inadequate at the conceptual design phase of LSFRP, and progress was further impacted by Covid-19. For the capacity building components to achieve the full desired outcomes, funding and time available must be adequate to cover all aspects related to the FRU.

The evaluation found that due process is not being followed with regard to use and justification of resources for maintenance in some counties, and it is imperative that this is remedied if Counties are to effectively manage road maintenance going forward. A bigger threat to efficient and effective road maintenance, however, is the continued absence of a functional and adequately resourced Road Authority. The need for this institution is recognised at a project level, but political considerations continue to stymie its formation, and the project itself has limited ability to influence decision making in this area.

5 Recommendations

On the basis of the evaluation's findings and conclusions, and in the knowledge that the project ends in 2021 under current plans, seven recommendations are made. The recommendations are grouped under three themes: 1) Recommendations related to programming for the remainder of LSFRP3 as per its current implementation schedule; 2) Recommendations related to any time and / or cost extension of LSFRP3; and, 3) Recommendations related to decision making on a next phase – LSFRP4.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF LSFRP3

5.1.1 Pilot Village Access Trails[80]

Motorcycles are the main mode of transportation in rural Liberia, being the most affordable and convenient to people on lower incomes. Their relatively cheap purchase price also offers young people opportunities for earning a living transporting people and goods. Specifications for the construction of village access trails already exist, and are known to the LSFRP3 TA team, who have already considered the prospect of a pilot. Given the critical importance of rural access to economic and social wellbeing, village access trails could prove to be an important driver of decentralisation involving not only works but also capacity building, planning and ownership. They would also contribute to the achievement of LSFRP3's main objectives.

Recommendation 1: Before the end of the project LSFRP3 should conduct a pilot study on the effectiveness of 'village access trails' as a means in improving mobility and 'last mile' access in rural areas in one of the LSFRP Counties.

To facilitate ease of supervision, monitoring and evaluation, the pilot should be run in a County which is relatively easy to access from Monrovia, and whose administration is supportive of the idea. Selection of the target community within the chosen County should also be contingent on a good level local of resident's support for the initiative.

Policy changes at the MPW level regarding the role of village access trails in addressing Liberia's transport (and wider decentralisation and poverty reduction objectives) will – quite rightly - only be influenced through a well evidenced pilot study. As such, the pilot should be adequately planned and resourced. In addition to the work involved in site selection and construction, the pilot should include a comprehensive pre-treatment baseline, process monitoring which looks critically at the strengths and weaknesses of the approach used from

80 The ET notes that the project has already made initial steps with this recommendation – planning a pilot in Bong County

the viewpoint of a range of stakeholders in real time, and a thorough evaluation of the finished trail, including cost/benefit analysis.

5.1.2 Training and Capacity Building

Training and capacity building cannot be considered to be truly effective if the newly acquired knowledge, skills and capacities cannot be fully applied for whatever reason. Without the possibility of practical application, the knowledge remains theoretical only. Greater attention should be given to identifying the reasons and constraints to application of skills and working towards mitigating solutions.

Recommendation 2: Gaps in training in technical and administrative issues, M&E, and evidence-based decision making, should be addressed at the national and county level before the end of the project cycle.

Similarly, gender mainstreaming and Human Rights Based Approaches only work when truly integrated in the full project cycle and never as an add-on. Resources need to be allocated not only for short-term awareness trainings, but to expertise positioned at management level with power to enforce the mainstreaming throughout the implementation. Championing of cross-cutting issues at the higher levels of management will benefit the integration across the project.

Recommendation 3: Efforts to make up the shortfalls in training in cross-cutting issues should be redoubled in order to maximise the chances of the project delivering on its human rights objectives.

Capacity building (of individuals and institutions) is not a short-term undertaking especially if acquired skills cannot be immediately applied so as to gain further knowledge and experience by practise (learning-by-doing). Consideration should also be given to means by which training in road maintenance/management could continue to be available in-country over a longer period than individual project implementation periods (e.g. greater engagement with national training institutions).

5.1.3 Monitoring, Evaluation and Research

Much of LSFRP's output relating to results has been focused on reporting the achievement of activities and some, not all,[81] outputs. Only recently in LSFRP3 have resources and effort been allocated to the identification of outcome indicators and their measurement. However, the project still lacks a comprehensive M&E framework which will guide the collection and analysis of data, and reporting of evidence – to Sida and the GoL - about the extent to which it delivers benefits to its stakeholders, and its value for money.

Recommendation 4: LSFRP3 should, as a matter of priority, produce a comprehensive M&E framework which will be used to guide M&E and generate evidence on effectiveness and efficiency for the remainder of the project.

For each output and outcome, the M&E framework should clearly articulate a number of appropriate indicators, ideally with a baseline value, a target value, the sources through which

81 Output monitoring has privileged those related to improvements to roads over those concerning strengthened institutional capacity

data will be collected, the frequency of collection, and responsibilities for analysis and reporting. Results will enable the MPW to make decisions based on hard evidence rather than other considerations. The village access trails pilot, recommended in section 5.1.1, could provide an opportunity for trialling the framework, and building M&E staff capacity, through a full cycle of infrastructure development from baseline to endline.

The absence of an effective M&E system for much of the project has also resulted in a dearth of evidence on the viability and effectiveness of the CBO-based approach to road maintenance that is central to the improved feeder roads' sustainability.

Recommendation 5: LSFRP3 should conduct[82] a study into the strengths, weaknesses, and prospects for success of the CBO-based maintenance model that is proposed for use on completed feeder roads.

Such a study will, if possible, look at both FRAMP and LSFRP roads under CBO maintenance arrangements, and the findings used to make adjustments to the approach going forward.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO THE EXTENSION OF THE CURRENT PHASE

5.2.1 Extension of LSFRP3

Although some positive results are visible in targeted areas, overambitious targets, over optimistic assumptions, staff turnover and the Covid-19 crisis have all contributed to shortcomings in the delivery of outputs and outcomes. The amount of capacity building support that County and contractor staff need, and the amount of time needed to deliver these was underestimated. Furthermore, the resources available to deliver the support needed were reduced when the project took the decision to maintain roads built under previous phases. An extension of the project (plus sufficient additional funding) would enable completion of current objectives.

Recommendation 6: Sida should extend LSFRP3 by one year to allow the completion of outstanding outputs to a satisfactory standard.

If there is no extension, there is a strong possibility that feeder road assets created by three incarnations of LSFRP over more than a decade would crumble due to maintenance neglect and gaps in the capacity of the people who will be responsible for their maintenance going forward.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO A POSSIBLE LSFRP4

5.3.1 Government of Liberia Ownership and Commitment

The project design made unrealistic assumptions about the level of support that would be forthcoming for road maintenance. The GoL has not made good on its commitment to

82 Internally, or through the use of external consultants

contribute to LSFRP costs, and looks unlikely to do so with regard to allocating RF resources to road maintenance, or to the establishment of the administrative structure (the RA) which would manage such resources were they forthcoming.

Furthermore, the Fuel Levy (FL) doesn’t generate sufficient revenue to cover all road maintenance costs in Liberia due to the small size of the vehicle pool; and under current circumstances – which appear unlikely to change in the near future – not all FL revenues are allocated to the RF, even though the way it should be supported as was prescribed by the Act of the Legislation that created it into Law. Quite rightly, RF funds that are assigned to road maintenance are allocated according to road usage, with primary roads taking priority over feeder roads. Thus, the only alternative to practically abandoning certain feeder roads is to rehabilitate them with support from external sources – e.g. Sida.

Recommendation 7: LSFRP4 should only be considered if Sida is convinced that building roads – which may only have a limited lifetime - offers better value with regard to poverty reduction[83] per beneficiary than other investments - for example, education, health, livelihoods support, etc.

If this is not the case, Sida should continue its long and admired partnership with Liberia by supporting other poverty reduction actions, or by changing the project approach to one which focuses on building lower specification roads (for example village access trails), which are cheaper to build and easier to maintain. The pilot study suggested in recommendation 5.1.1 would provide evidence on which this decision can be made.

83 And other objectives presented in its new strategy for Liberia: democracy, human rights and gender equality, peaceful societies, including economic development and the environment and sustainable use of natural resources (https://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2020/05/arbete-med-ny-strategi-for-utvecklingssamarbete-med-liberia-inleds/

Annex 1 – Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference for Mid-Term Evaluation

Liberian-Swedish Feeder Road Project, Phase 3 (LSFRP 3)

1. Background

The Swedish International Cooperation Agency (Sida) has approved a grant of SEK 197 million to assist the Government of Liberia to rehabilitate/improve some 370 kilometers of feeder roads in Nimba and the four south east counties of Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Maryland and River Gee. In doing so, it is supporting Liberia's transition from post conflict reconstruction to inclusive growth and wealth creation (PRS II, the Agenda for Transformation). The Liberian contribution for road maintenance was meant to be approximately USD 8.7 million (equivalent to SEK 78,222,945) but has not materialised to date.

The Liberian-Swedish Feeder Roads Project, in its third phase, proposes a shift in focus to the southeast where some of the poorly connected and poorest counties of Liberia are situated. There, feeder roads will connect communities of small-scale farmers to the functioning road network and help meet the service delivery, agricultural diversification and inclusive growth objectives set out in the current Economic Stabilization and Recovery Plan (ESRP).

The objective of LSFRP3 is to improve opportunities for poor people to enhance their living conditions and livelihoods by the provision of sustainable road access. This involves, at the outcome level, improving road access which will:

a) enable small-scale farmers to market more agricultural produce,
b) facilitate all year round social service delivery particularly in the health and education sectors, and
c) create income earning opportunities for young men and women in the rural areas.

Funding for the works component (SEK 138,440,995) comes from Sida through the Swedish Embassy in Monrovia, through the Public Financial Management Unit in Ministry of Finance. Government procedures are adopted for the procurement and management of contracts. The TA budget administered by FCG amounts to SEK 55,559,005 and includes fees and expenses of the consultants plus capacity building costs and support to MPW counterparts. The project covers a four-year period commencing 6th December 2017. The project has an internal monitoring and evaluation team as seen in the organisation chart shown in Annex A. A baseline survey of outcome indicators has already been collected. A mid term survey is currently underway and preliminary results will be made available to the team.

2. Guiding Documents

The implementation of LSFRP 3 is guided by the following key guiding documents:

Document	Description
Agreement on General Terms and Conditions for Development Cooperation (2009)	General Terms and Conditions for development cooperation between Sweden and Liberia, dated 2009-10-14. This Agreement remains in force until terminated by either party, with 6 months written notice.
Agreement on Development Cooperation (2017)	Framework for development cooperation modalities between Sweden, represented by Sida, and Liberia, signed and approved on 2017-10-19 and valid until 2020-12-31. The document highlights the scope and objective of cooperation, fundamental principles and financing contribution.
Specific agreement (2017)	Specific cooperation modalities for LSFRP 3, signed between the Government of Liberia (MPW) and Sweden (Sida) on 2017-04-26 and valid until 2021-12-31, unless terminated earlier. This agreement covers the whole LSFRP 3 project, i.e. contribution of SEK 197,000,000, including TA. It covers responsibilities of parties, disbursements, procurement, reporting, consultations, monitoring & evaluation, audit, etc.
Ministry of Public Works Final Proposal: Design and Formulation Liberia Swedish Feeder Road Project (LSFRP) Phase 3, 2017	This is the Project Document that draws on the vision of the MPW Liberia Swedish Feeder Road Project (LSFRP) 3 Concept Note and puts it into the development context of Swedish cooperation with Liberia. LSFRP3 provides greater Liberian ownership and involvement by de-concentrating the engineering technical assistance team and the gradual transfer of road rehabilitation planning, design and supervision responsibilities to counterparts based in the project counties.
Contract for Consultancy Services (TA)	Contract between the MPW and FCG/GOPA for the implementation of the TA services outlining contract framework, obligations and responsibilities, TA personnel, payment, etc.
MoU between MPW, MF and the PMC	Tripartite agreement that outlines roles and responsibilities of the 3 parties in supervising and implementing LSFRP 3, as well as policies and guidelines. Signed on 2017-11-19.
Financial Procedures Manual (FPM)	The FPM outlines the accounting and financial control procedures and policies of the PFMU. It provides broad guidelines for the development and maintenance of financial management system for the implementation of donor-funded projects and programmes. It complements and should be read in conjunction with the Project document, the financing agreement (general and specific), and the MOU signed between the PFMU, the MPW and FCG that details the implementation arrangements for LSFRP 3.

Public Procurement and Concession Act (PPCA, 2010)	Act dated 2005, amended, restated and approved 2010-09-16. The PPCA regulates all forms of public procurement, provides for institutional structures for public procurement, and stipulates methods and procedures for public procurement.
Sida Procurement Guidelines (SPG, 2004)	Sets out the procurement policies and rules to be followed in Sida-financed operations, when so agreed in the Agreement, for contracts covering goods, works and consultant services between Sida and the Co-operation partner. Must be applied to all procurement according to Specific Agreement.
Sida Evaluation Handbook, 2018	The handbook consists of two main parts. The first part presents Sida's guidelines for evaluation, which includes Sida's approach to and principles and criteria for evaluation. The second part is a step-by-step guide on how Sida plans, prepares for and commissions evaluations.
Porfolio Analysis by Sida on Gender & Women's Empowerment	Summary matrices are available.

3. Objective of the Mid-Term Review

The overall objective of the MTR is to provide analytical observations on the past performance and, subsequently, make operational and strategic recommendations for the project in the remaining years. Based particularly on relevance and sustainability, the mission will assess whether or not to continue the support after the project period. If support should be continued, the mission will present justifications for it and make initial recommendations on its scope and size.

The MTR is expected to enable the competent authorities and the main stakeholders to evaluate whether the chosen approaches for the programme implementation are sustainable, effective, enhance local ownership and enable continued operations in the absence of the external resources after the project period. It shall provide useful information for all the stakeholders to enhance their work and shall give recommendations for future actions and possible modifications in the programme set-up, objectives and implementation. Evaluators shall use the OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation.

The MTR aims to:
a) Assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of project design and implementation in the new environmental institutional and administrative context in Liberia.
b) Assess whether the resources made available to the project are being used in an appropriate and efficient way, especially the methods of capacity building and the methods of involving all relevant government and private institutions.
c) Assess the performance of LSFRP3 against its intended objectives as set out in the Project Document and to make recommendation to assist its implementation over the remaining term.
d) Assess the impact of LSFRP3 being integrated into the Ministry of Public Works, and if necessary, make recommendations on contingency plans and/or amendments on the project document
e) Assess how the project has contributed to Liberia's decentralisation policies, particularly with respect to empowerment of County Administrations in road sector.
f) Assess the current situation with focus on MPW, County Administrations, road users, and

domestic contracting industry.
g) Assess the project performance from the perspective of the Swedish Development Policy including the cross-cutting objectives and rights-based approach.
h) Draw lessons learned and make recommendations for corrective action to comply with the requirement of the project document/funding agreement.
i) Propose revisions on the project document based on findings and endorsed recommendations.
j) Assess the timing and scope of staffing inputs for the remaining project, and if given pandemic, additional time is needed to complete the project.
k) Formulate an Exit Strategy for the Technical Assistance in close collaboration with MPW providing two options: a) the current phase is to be the last, or b) another phase is planned.

4. Key questions to review

Relevance with key policies and the needs of beneficiaries

• How well is LSFRP3 aligned with Liberia's Pro Poor Policy?
• How does LSFRP3 contribute to the achievement of the Liberia's Agenda for

Transformation and promote its strategic priorities?

• How has the project contributed to Liberia's Decentralisation Policy?
• Are the objectives, achievements and approach of the project consistent with Sida's Development Policies?
• Is the Road Fund now addressing needs for road maintenance in the country including roads improved under previous phases of LSFRP?

Efficiency of the Programme

• Has the TA been able to carry out its tasks or outputs as planned? If not, what deviations have there been and what are the reasons behind them?
• Is the resourcing, both human and financial, for the TA team and counterpart MPW staff adequate for the attainment of its targets?
• Has systematic skill/knowledge transfer been allocated sufficient resources?
• Is the utilisation of resources balanced suitably between technical capacity, institutional capacity and client relation development?

Overall achievement at mid-term stage

• Is the LSFRP3 on track to reaching its agreed objectives as described in the project document on areas including but not limited to:

  - **Sustained capacity and skills transfer:** Is LSFRP3 on track against the objectives in the programme document when comes to core capacity building and delivery ability of MPW and County Administration? Are there areas in programme design that would require readjustments?
  - **Physical Works:** Is the project delivering the physical works anticipated in project document as expected at mid term?
  - **Outcomes**: Are the wider outcome objectives of the project being achieved? Reference will be made to the monitoring system developed by the project and baseline survey data. A mid term survey is planned and some of the results will be available to this Review Team.

Sustainability

• How much has operational capacity of MPW and County Administrations been strengthened?

• Are the MPW and County Administrations on track to being able to independently carry out their mandates at the end of the project period, including financial management (costing, budgeting, reporting) and capacity to rapidly update changing information on the ground?
• Have provisions been made for systematic trainings and maintained capacity building after the project period?
• What has been the impact of Project Management Consultant in terms of capacity building for MPW?
• By which concrete measures does the Government demonstrate ownership of the project?
• What are the overall/general conclusions and lessons learned from the Programme that can be used for a possible continuation from 2022?

<u>Coordination and synergy with other development programmes/projects</u>
• Does LSFRP systematically coordinate and/or harmonize its work with other relevant projects in various sectors in Liberia?
• How is LSFRP perceived by other relevant development partners programmes/projects?
• Are the MPW and County Administrations on track to becoming competent service organisations to respond to the market and developmental needs for accessible roads?

<u>Organisation structure</u>
• The mission will prepare a concise analysis of risks and opportunities in terms of the organizational environment.
• How does the LSFRP3 demonstrate Government ownership of the project as compared to previous phases of the programme?
• Should the TA do adaptive/corrective measures to mitigate related risks?
• What has been the role of the TA in supporting the organizations to clarify their mandates, roles and responsibilities during their restructuring? How can it best contribute to a smooth change management in the future?

5. Evaluation process and reporting

The consultant will adopt a participatory and lessons learning approach for all key stakeholders. The assignment will begin with a kick-off briefing meetings at MPW. During these meetings, support materials, combined with sector and program-specific briefings will be given. The consultants are expected to devise a detailed methodology on this basis. However, it should include the following activities:

I) Desk Review: In addition to the Project Document, MPW and the Embassy of Sweden in Monrovia will assist the team by providing material relevant to the project such as quarterly and annual progress reports.
II) Inception report: Before the field work and on the basis of the desk review, the team shall present a detailed/updated work plan, list of major meetings and interviews planned for the field visit in Liberia as well as detailed evaluation questions linked to the evaluation criteria. The inception report should be presented in a list or table format.
III) Joint interviews and field visits: The team shall to a maximum extent seek opportunities for joint meetings, interviews and missions with Liberia Government and other donors. The field work should include visits to selected counties and road projects as seen appropriate. The meeting arrangement and logistics shall be done in close cooperation between the Team and the ministry counterpart. The Embassy may provide assistance as deemed necessary.
IV) Drafting the first version of the report: On the basis of the desk and field research, the Team shall put its findings in a draft report. Depending on the time available in the field, this may be a synthesised list of findings, presented in tables or bullets. This is to be presented

and guide the discussions at a workshop on the key findings and recommendations. An annex to the report will be presented in the form of a logical framework using the outcome indicators developed by the project M&E team.

V) Workshop: At the end of the field mission, the Team shall prepare and organise a workshop to present the draft report for a focused group.

VI). Drafting the final report: The draft report will be submitted to the MPW and the 7 County Administrations for the correction of factual data presented. The final report will be drafted and submitted to the MPW one week after the final debriefing. The report will include a table of recommended actions indicating responsible institutions and timelines.

VII). Revising the Programme Document: If seen necessary, the programme document may be revised according to the recommendations made in the final evaluation report.

6. Budget and Timetable

The total budget for the assignment shall not exceed SEK 1 250 000. The assignment is expected to take place during Q3-Q4 2020. The timetable will be dependent on the travel restriction to and from Liberia as well within Liberia. Hence, is the timetable set for flexibility.

7. Qualifications and expertise required

The team is expected to contain one national consultants, one international and a seconded MPW staff (2+1). The team shall demonstrate solid experience and knowledge at least in the following fields:

• **Technical expertise relevant to the project,** including: civil engineering and capacity building in road sector.

• **Programme/project evaluation and planning**: Project cycle management (PCM) and Logical Framework Approach (LFA) and their usage in planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Thorough understanding of key elements of results-based programme management

• **Human resources development, organizational change management:** The team is required to thoroughly assess the current capacity levels of the government for tasks required, and make recommendations on capacity building plans and sustainability strategies to ensure maintained use of the systems, including financial sustainability.

• **Experience and knowledge should also be demonstrated in the fields of:** Human rights; regional cooperation; Paris Declaration principles on aid effectiveness, cross-cutting objectives of Sweden: climate sustainability, gender and social equality in project planning, implementation and monitoring.

• **Fluency in English**, both in speaking and writing.

In addition, MPW may assign a member of its staff full time to take part in the MTR.

Annex 2 – List of People Interviewed

Interview type	Stakeholder position
KII	Assistant Superintendent Fiscal Affairs Nimba County
KII	Assistant Superintendent Fiscal Affairs, Bong County
KII	Assistant Superintendent Fiscal Affairs, Lofa County
KII	Associate Magistrate, Ziah Town, Konobo District
KII	County Project Planner, Zwedru
KII	Engineer Road Fund – Representative
KII	European Delegation (Roads) – Representative
KII	FCG – LSFRP3 Home Office Support
KII	FCG – LSFRP3 PMC Team Leader
KII	FCG – LSFRP3 Senior Road Maintenance Engineer
KII	FCG – LSFRP3 Senior Roads Implementation Engineer
KII	FCG – LSFRP3 Short Term Gender Specialist
KII	M&E Consultant - University of Birmingham
KII	Millennium Challenge Commission – Representative
KII	MoT – Represenative
KII	MPW - Assistant Minister, Feeder Roads
KII	MPW - Chief of Feeder Roads, MPW
KII	MPW – LSFRP3 Project Director
KII	MPW – M&E
KII	MPW - Programme Manager Infrastructure Implementation Unit
KII	MPW – Representative
KII	National Road Fund – Representative
KII	Physical Assistant, Health Centre, Grand Gedeh County
FGD	Representative, Babri Village, Nimba County
KII	Representative, Babri Village, Nimba County
KII	Representative, Ziah Town, Konobo District
FGD	Representative, Ziah Town, Konobo District
KII	Road Fund – Representative
KII	Superintendent Nimba County
KII	Superintendent, Bong County
KII	Township Clerk, Ziah, Grand Gedo County

Annex 3 – Documents Consulted

#	Title
1	Agreement between Sida and Liberia on Development cooperation (2017)
2	Agreement between Sweden and Liberia on General Terms and Conditions for Development Cooperation (2009)
3	Annex LSFRP QREP January to March 2020
4	Appraisal of LSFRP3 Intervention highlighted
5	Comments on Draft LSFRP Evaluation Report (MPW)
6	Concept Note on Role of Ministry Following Creation of Road Authority and Road Fund
7	Draft Report, Evaluation of the Liberian-Swedish Feeder Roads Project Expansion to Nimba County, 2016-01-17
8	Draft Report, Evaluation of the Liberian-Swedish Feeder Roads Project Expansion to Nimba County, Appendices, 2016-01-25
9	Draft TNA and Capacity Building Plan rev2
10	Embassy comments on external evaluation LSFRP
11	Final Report, Evaluation of the Liberian-Swedish Feeder Roads Project Expansion to Nimba County, 2016-02-23
12	First Mission Report, Monitoring of the Liberia-Swedish Feeder Roads Project (LSFRP), 2010-07-12
13	Hifab ARM powerpoint presentation, Liberian-Swedish Feeder Roads Project (LSFRP1&2)
14	Hifab comments AR 2017-2018, FINAL 2018-08-30
15	Hifab comments AR 2017-2018, FINAL 2018-11-02
16	Hifab comments Inception Report #2, 2018-05-28
17	Hifab Comments Inception Report #3, 2018-06-28
18	Hifab comments Inception Report, 2018-04-19
19	Hifab comments LSFRP3 Annual Report July 2018-June 2019
20	Hifab comments LSFRP3 Semi-Annual Report July-Dec 2019
21	Hifab comments on Bid Evaluation Report dated December 2018
22	Hifab comments on bidding document of the Zwedru-Ziah Road
23	Hifab comments on draft Project Implementation Manual, (LA 2019-01-31)
24	Hifab comments on draft Report TNA and Capacity Building Plan, December 2018
25	Hifab comments on Performance Assessment, November 2018
26	Hifab comments Semi-Annual Report July-December 2018, Final
27	Hifab Project Completion Report 2009-2012 Liberian-Swedish Feeder Roads Project (LSFRP-1)
28	Liberia road meeting notes, 2015-12-17
29	List of reports submitted by the Monitoring Consultant to date
30	LSFRP Report 3 with annexes reduced size

31	LSFRP3 M&E Indicators and Logframe, 2018-12-17
32	LSFRP3 Performance Assessment 2019, Final
33	LSFRP3 Performance Assessment November 2018, Final
34	LSFRP3 Q Report Jan-Mar 2020
35	LSFRP3 Semi Annual Report 2019 Appendices
36	LSFRP3 Semi-Annual Report 2019
37	Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between MPW, MFDP and PFMU (2018)
38	Ministry of Public Works Final Proposal: Design and Formulation Liberia Swedish Feeder Road Project (LSFRP) Phase3, 2017
39	Mission Report 1, 22-29 April 2018
40	Mission Report 2, 10-15 June 2018
41	Mission Report 3, 16-23 September 2018, Final
42	Mission Report 4, 03-14 March 2019, Revision 2019-03-27
43	Mission Report 5, 15-20 September 2019, Final to Embassy
44	MPW Proposed Maintenance Strategy for Rural roads from M4 07 October 2015
45	Narrative to updated Capacity Building Plan 2019-2021
46	Portfolio Analysis by Sida on Gender & Women's Empowerment
47	Professional Managements response to comments from Hifab
48	Professional Managements Response to MPW Comments Draft LSFRP EVALUATION Report
49	Project Administration Manual LSFRP3, 2020-05-28
50	Project Completion Report of LSFRP September 2016, Final
51	Project Financial Management Unit Financial Procedures Manual (FPM, 2016)
52	Proposed arrangements for network management
53	Public Procurement and Concession Act (PPCA, 2010)
54	Rural connectivity in Africa: motorcycle track construction Jack Thomas Jenkins MA, BA PhD student, Department of Political and Cultural Studies, Swansea University, Swansea, UK Krijn Peters PhD, MSc, BSc Associate Professor in Armed Conflict and Post-war Reconstruction, Department of Political and Cultural Studies, Swansea University, Swansea, UK
55	Rural Connectivity in Liberia, the 26th World Road Congress Abu Dhabi 2019
56	Sida Evaluation Handbook external version (2020)
57	Sida Procurement Guidelines (SPG, 2020)
58	Specific Agreement MPW and Sida (2017)
59	Sustainable Mobility for All. 2019. Global Roadmap of Action Toward Sustainable Mobility: Universal Rural Access. Washington DC
60	Starkey, P., Workman R. and Hine, J. TRL (2020). Guidelines on the Planning, Design and Implementation of Rural Transport: Integrating Access Infrastructure and Transport Services Provision
61	Starkey, P. et al., TRL (2018). Interactions between improved rural access infrastructure and transport services provision: Phase 1 Scoping Report. ReCAP GEN2136A. London: ReCAP for DFID
62	Transport Volume 169 Issue TR6 Rural connectivity in Africa: motorcycle track construction Jenkins and Peters

63	Transport Connectivity and Health Care Access Evidence from Liberia Atsushi Iimi Kulwinder Rao Transport and Digital Development Practice April 2018
64	Updated Capacity Building Plan, March 2020 to December 2021
65	Variation Order No.1 between MPW and FCG, 2018-12-07

Annex 4 – Field Visit Schedule

LFSRP3 Evaluation Field Visit Schedule		
Day	**Date**	**Activity**
M	28 Sept	• TL arrives in Liberia
T	29 Sept	• Internal ET meeting • Meet with FCG staff
W	30 Sept	• Meet with Feeder Road Staff and MPW's authorities associated with feeder road activities
Th	Oct 1	• Leave Monrovia for Ganta • Meet with County Authorities and others in Ganta
F	Oct 2	• Meet with County Authorities and others in Ganta • Leave Ganta for Tappita
S	Oct 3	• Visit Diallah-Behwalay and Beatuo-Old Yorpea Nimba County
S	Oct 4	• Leave Tappita for Zwedru
M	Oct 5	• Visit Zwedru-Ziah Road • Meet with County Authorities and others in Zwedru
T	Oct 6	• Leave Zwedru for Ganta
W	Oct 7	• Leave Ganta for Monrovia
Th	8 Oct	• Meet with Feeder Road Staff and MPW's authorities • Interviews with stakeholders
F	9 Oct	• Interviews with stakeholders
W/E	Oct 10-11	• Interviews with stakeholders
M	12 Oct	• Debrief meeting with Embassy and MPW

Annex 5 – LSFRP3 Logframe

	Intervention Logic	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Source of Verification	Important Assumptions
Overall objective	Contribute to poverty reduction strategy by improving opportunities for poor people to enhance their living conditions and livelihoods by the provision of sustainable road access.	Agenda for Transformation (PRS II) objective achieved	MPW Agenda for Transformation Monitoring Reports.	
Program purpose	Improved feeder road accessibility on a sustainable basis (a) enabling small-scale farmers to market more agricultural produce; (b) facilitating all year round social service delivery particularly in the health and education sectors and (c) creating of income-earning opportunities for women and young men in the rural areas. **Proposed target over project lifetime.** On each road rehabilitated, at least three objectively verifiable indicators show improvements between baseline and final surveys, with at least one showing an improvement of more than 10%.	**Improved road condition** *estimated by:* • Average travel speed for typical vehicles and journeys for main vehicle types **Improved transport services** *estimated by:* • Proportion of passenger and freight carried by different transport modes *(several indicators)* • 'Rural transport premium' (cost-per-passenger-km for the different transport modes relative to long-distance fares on good roads) **Improved access to education** *estimated by:* • Proportion of teaching positions filled in local elementary schools • Numbers of supervisory visits **Improved access to health care** *estimated by:* • Proportion of medical positions filled in local clinics • Numbers of supervisory or support visits (eg, county officials, vaccination teams) • Proportion of referral visits by ambulance or 4-wheel vehicle	New LSFRP3-developed SMART M&E outcome indicators measured by 2.5-day rapid appraisal surveys and disaggregated traffic counts. On all roads, one initial baseline survey followed by mid and end of project surveys using the same methodology. Data collected to be collected from local vehicle operators, transport users, markets, clinics and schools.	RMMU/MPW maintains and develops the primary road network in the project counties enabling access to project roads. MPW retains functional responsibility for feeder road network and has sufficient funds to pay contractors and maintenance teams.

		Improved agricultural production and marketing *estimated by:* • Number and size of agricultural 'stalls' at local markets **Improved local economic activity** *estimated by:* • Number of visible business enterprises along road (retail and manufacturing) • Number and size of retail and food stalls at local market **Economic empowerment for women** *estimated by:* • Numbers/proportion of female users of different motorised transport modes • Numbers/proportion of female stall keepers at local markets • Numbers/proportion of female businesses along the road **Economic empowerment for youth,** *estimated by:* • Number of motorcycle taxis operating on road **Road safety,** *estimated by:* • Number of reported accidents and road safety incidents (*probably a perverse indicator due to traffic speed increasing on*		

Output 1	Rehabilitation of prioritized feeder roads in the counties of Bong, Lofa, Nimba, Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Grand Kru and Maryland.	. Prioritization procedures are harmonized in line with MPW guidelines. . 270 km of feeder roads rehabilitated	Annual County road selection report Project Quarterly Reports.	MPW planning functions are effective. Suitable local contractors available. MPW Procurement Division is functioning.
Output 2	Regular maintenance of LSFRP 1, 2 and 3 improved roads at the end of the four year project period.	Periodic maintenance carried out on 193km of LSFRP 1,2 secondary roads Routine maintenance carried out by labour intensive methods by CBOs on 433km LSFRP 1, 2 roads 2019/20.	Project reports Technical and Financial Audit reports.	
Output 3	Maintenance Managed by Counties on LSFPR roads in Bong, Lofa and Nimba	. Bong, Lofa and Nimba Performance Agreements Signed 2020 . 77km Periodic and 499km Routine Maintenance procured and carried out in 2020 . Bong, Lofa, Nimba, Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Grand Kru and Maryland Performance Agreements Signed 2021 . 742km Routine Maintenance carried out in 2021	Project reports	County Administrations trained and functioning
Output 4	Improved capacity in the public and private sectors to rehabilitate and maintain feeder roads.	. 20 MPW staff, 25 contractors and 37 CBOs trained. . Road reconstruction and maintenance contracts completed in a timely, cost effective manner. . MPW staff able to carry out all the tasks for rehabilitation and maintenance . Bong, Lofa, Nimba, Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Grand Kru and Maryland county administrations trained in full project cycle	Training reports and evaluations. Site visits and supervision reports.	Suitable and motivated staff, local contractors available. MPW Human Resource/staff development function is effective. Counterpart MPW staff assigned to perform the tasks.

Output 5	A foundation laid for government strategy and donor coordination for a nationwide rural roads programme.	. Feeder Road Design Standards and Specifications updated and extended to enhance resilience to climate change and incorporate low cost seals. . Monitoring and Evaluation Division takes the lead in monitoring LSFRP 3 project effects. . Maintenance Management System for the routine and periodic maintenance of feeder roads established. . MPW donor co-ordination widened to focus on sector progress and performance.	Updated Feeder Roads Design Standards and Specifications Manual applied to other projects. LSFRP 3 applies a results-based framework to monitor traffic and access changes before and after road improvements. Routine Maintenance Management system applied to project roads. Minutes of donor coordination meetings.	MPW develops and staffs an appropriate organisational structure. MPW expands its donor coordination activities.
Output 6	Potential adverse project impacts from land take, environmental damage are minimised and spread of HIV/AIDS slowed down.	. Environmental management plans and appropriate method statements incorporated in road reconstruction contracts. . Provision for HIV/AIDS awareness incorporated into contract document, MPW Community Services Monitoring Reports.	Road Construction Contract Documents. HIV/AIDs information disseminated at work sites. Effectiveness of EMPs and HIV/AIDS contract provision evaluated.	Contractor/MPW are sensitive to environmental and HIV/AIDS concerns.
	Activities The core activities encompass all measures for rehabilitating and maintaining feeder roads (selection, design, procurement of contractors and communities, supervision and certifying works for payment. On-the-job training of MPW counterparts, contractors and communities will be an integral part of preparations, procurement and implementation. Supplementary training and theoretical courses will be provided in cooperation with			
	GIZ/MPW Human Resource Administration for the various categories of MPW staff, contractors and communities. Baseline and annual follow up monitoring surveys are carried out.			

Mid-Term Evaluation of the Liberian-Swedish Feeder Road Project, Phase 3 (LSFRP 3)

The Liberian-Swedish Feeder Road Project, Phase 3 (LSFRP3) aims to enable access to markets, facilitate social service delivery and create income opportunities. It is aligned with Liberia's Poverty Reduction Strategy, and other relevant policies. Resource constraints and the requirement to build to a higher specification than necessary affected efficiency. Training on cross-cutting issues was insufficient. LSFRP3 is not currently on track regarding core capacity building. However, rate of progress of works has improved in the past year. Outcome objectives are being achieved, but gains will be transitory if roads are not maintained. The project has contributed to sector governance, but lack of resources and resistance to the formation of a Roads Authority are challenges to sustainability. LSFRP3 has coordinated well with other donor-funded actors, especially GiZ. It is recommended that 1) LSFRP3 conduct a study on 'village access trails' as a means in improving mobility in rural areas; 2) gaps in training should be addressed; 3) training in cross-cutting issues should be expanded; 4) a M&E framework should be produced; 5) a study into the CBO-based maintenance model should be done; and 6) the project should be extended by one year.

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Address: SE-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden. Office: Valhallavägen 199, Stockholm
Telephone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64
E-mail: info@sida.se. Homepage: http://www.sida.se

Sida