

Background

Governance centralization has historically been a major challenge to sustainable development since the founding of Liberia 172 years ago. The system of governance and public administration has always been excessively centralized in Monrovia and has not allowed citizen participation in local governance. This contributed to civil uprisings in the 1970s, and the subsequently military dictatorship of the 1980s and the 14 years of civil crisis between 1989 and 2003.

In an effort to address the over centralization of the governance structure and service delivery, the Government of Liberia launched the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Governance in January 2012; aimed at systematically providing guidance to the process of decentralizing power, authority, functions and responsibilities from the central government to local governments. This landmark policy demonstrates Government's commitment to take government closer to the people through a decentralized, gender-sensitive, participatory and accountable system of local governance. The policy provides that administrative institutions in the counties be revised, restructured and harmonized to implement a responsible and responsive system of local governance and public administration, and to ensure accountable, efficient and transparent management of local resources. Alongside the Policy is a Liberia Decentralization Implementation Plan (LDIP) which provides further prioritization for advancing decentralization.

To operationalize the Government of Liberia Decentralization Policy, UNDP in collaboration with the Government of Liberia designed a five-year Liberia Decentralization Support Programme (2013-2017), which was subsequently extended by two years up to 2019. The first phase further the decentralization agenda through the development of policies resulting in the decentralization of essential services, development of a revenue sharing formula and the passage of the Local Government Act (LGA). These achievements further reaffirm the commitment of the government of Liberia and partners to push for a robust decentralization agenda. Although there has been significant movement in the drafting of policies and an Act

in place, the process of institutionalizing decentralization through the implementation of these policies is just beginning. Consequently, to scale up and sustain the gains made, a second phase has been designed in consultation with the Government of Liberia and other partners. Phase two of the programme (2020-2024) is expected to enhance inclusive governance, provision of basic services and allocation of authority and resources at the most appropriate levels of government as prescribe by the LGA.

LDSP Phase II (2020-2024) will further support and facilitate the implementation of the National Policy on Decentralization and Local Government (NPDLG). It is also meant to operationalize the newly gazetted Local Government Act (2018). The LDSP II deliberately targets decentralization of administrative and political governance in Liberia. The programme is implemented in tandem with the fiscal decentralization component implemented by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning and is aligned to the peace building and reconciliation processes, Public Sector Reform Agenda, Civil Service Reform (CSR) and the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) - under Governance Pillar IV.

To assist the Government of Liberia in managing the process, UNDP is recruiting a National Programme Coordinator on Decentralization Reform and Local Government Capacity Development to be embedded within the Ministry of Internal Affairs to provide technical and managerial support in advancing the priorities outlined above and overall guidance on the technical implementation and monitoring of the program.

Duties and Responsibilities

Working under the overall guidance of the Liberia Decentralization Program Board, and the direct supervision of the UNDP Governance Team Leader , the Decentralization National Coordinator will undertake the following primary tasks:

- Providing technical managerial support along with the CTA to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Governance Commission, in strengthening the National Decentralization Implementation Secretariat (NDIS), improving current structures and setting up requisite systems, processes and procedures as may be required;
- Assisting the Decentralization Secretariat to implement its work plan, including designing systems for monitoring and evaluation as well as reporting;
- Act as a ‘twin’ to the CTA and support the mentoring and coaching of secretariat staff and other national counterparts, including identifying needs, designing and rolling out institutional development and training programs;
- Developing, along with the CTA of the Decentralization Program, strong partnerships with key national actors at national and county levels, such as the Legislature, civil society, local administrations, the Law Reform Commission and the international community, in the area of decentralization reform;
- Providing substantive input and coordination support to the NDIS, including reporting to the various established structures, primarily, the Liberia Decentralization Program Board with regard to the overall support to decentralization; and
- Ensuring facilitation of knowledge building and transfer, including exploring opportunities for information exchange and knowledge networking, especially within the south-south context.

Specific duties

- Provide day-to-day management over the National Decentralization Implementation Secretariat (NDIS) and oversight of the County Service Centers (CSCs).

- Liaise with line ministries, agencies, donors and development partners in sector decentralization;
- Maintain responsibility for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the sector decentralization process nationwide;
- Ensure all administrative and reporting activities for the program are produced according to government guidelines; Ensure timely submission of reports (including quarterly and annual reports)
- Communicate M & E activities results to all actors in the decentralization process;
- Develop Strategic Plan and National Action Plan (NAP) based on the Liberia Decentralization Support Program, working closely with the members of the National Decentralization Program Board;
- Produce reports on existing decentralization policy, initiatives, activities, actors and studies, including best practices and critical unmet gaps;
- Ensure the setting up of a robust monitoring and evaluation system, or a Performance Management Plan for reporting against progress at the output, outcome/ impact level
- Organize all board and technical meetings of the programme
- Ability to develop proposals, concept notes and prepare all annual and quarterly work plans for approval by the project board.
- Facilitate creation of a communication network for the exchange of information among actors involved in decentralization processes;
- Prepare and map clear time frame, role and responsibilities of different stakeholders and ministries with specific outputs at each level;
- Develop and/or update terms of reference and work-plan for the National Decentralization Program Board and serve as the Secretary to the Board;
- Serve as liaison officer for soliciting, acquiring, and managing technical support from donors and other agencies as well as short term consultants;
- Organize consultative and taskforce meetings;
- Ensure NDIS offices are adequately supported to facilitate its functions; and

- Performs other tasks as required.

Impact of Results

Decentralization is central to the ongoing peace-building and reconciliation, governance reforms and medium term development programmes of Liberia..

The key deliverables include, i) Strong, effective and sustainable National Decentralization Secretariat in place ii) Institutional coordination arrangements designed, aligned and strengthened to facilitate integrated and effective implementation of decentralization reforms across sectors; iii) Systems in place for effectively planning, executing, monitoring and reporting program activities that are fully aligned with the LDSP; and iv) technical capacity of key staff of the MIA and GC strengthened to enable them to provide the technical support needed for sustainable implementation of decentralization reforms.

The above are critical for ensuring improved service delivery and accountability of local governments and will achieve the ultimate aim of the PAPD to deliver an improved system of governance that is more localized and responsive to the needs and aspirations of all citizens. Any deviation from this would impact negatively on the government's decentralization efforts.

Competencies

Corporate Competencies:

- Demonstrates commitment to UN/UNDP's mission, vision and values.
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability.
- Demonstrates commitment to Liberia's Vision 2030 and Pro Poor Agenda for Development (PAPD).

Functional Competencies:

- Knowledge and expertise in Decentralization, Local Government capacity development, democratic governance, and rule of law;
- Demonstrated experience in providing technical advice to policy makers; ability to work well with counterparts in government, Legislature, civil society, political parties, and the donor community;
- Excellent negotiation and representational skills, at senior level (with international organizations and/or diplomatic missions).
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills, ability to foster networks and partnerships, and good working knowledge of information and computer technology.
- Displays analytical judgment and demonstrated ability to handle confidential and politically sensitive issues in a responsible and mature manner.
- Demonstrates strong intellectual and operational capacity in providing and coordinating advisory services to stakeholders
- Proven familiarity with gender analysis and concepts
- Proficiency in word processing, spreadsheets and presentation software, e.g. PowerPoint.
- Communications and Networking:
- Excellent oral and written communication skills and conflict resolution competency to manage inter-group dynamics and mediate conflicting interests of varied actors, including detractors.
- Maturity and confidence in dealing with senior and high ranking members of national and international institutions, government and non-government

Required Skills and Experience

Education:

- Master's degree in Public or Business Administration, Law, Political Science, or related field.

Experience:

- Four (4) years of progressive work experience in administration and programme management
- Extensive hands-on experience working in the field at the county or district level of government, with a variety of stakeholders, including technical staff, elected officials, and civil society.
- Strong knowledge and experience in project management, monitoring and evaluation is required.
- Experience in working with the UN Systems is an added advantage.

Language Requirements:

- Fluency in spoken and written English.

Disclaimer

Important applicant information

All posts in the SC categories are subject to local recruitment.

Applicant information about UNDP rosters

Note: UNDP reserves the right to select one or more candidates from this vacancy announcement. We may also retain applications and consider candidates applying to this post for other similar positions with UNDP at the same grade level and with similar job description, experience and educational requirements.

Workforce diversity

UNDP is committed to achieving diversity within its workforce, and encourages all qualified applicants, irrespective of gender, nationality, disabilities, sexual orientation, culture, religious and ethnic backgrounds to apply. All applications will be treated in the strictest confidence.

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