



**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)**

# **MONITORING & EVALUATION POLICY**

**December 13, 2024**  
**Monrovia, Liberia**



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## Foreword

On behalf of the Senior Management Team of the Environmental Protection Agency, it is with immense pleasure that we present this Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Policy to the EPA. This meticulously crafted document is a testament to our shared commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable development in Liberia.



This M&E Policy is not merely a set of guidelines; it is a strategic roadmap for ensuring the Agency's effectiveness and accountability. In today's dynamic world, where resources are often scarce and demands on the EPA are increasing, it's imperative that every project and program deliver measurable results aligned with the Agency's mission. This policy provides the framework for that—evidence-based decision-making, transparency, and continuous improvement.

The principles enshrined within these pages—relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact, form the cornerstone of sound environmental management. By embedding M&E processes into the Agency's work, we foster a culture of learning, ensuring that valuable lessons from past endeavors inform future initiatives. Furthermore, this document supports the integration of M&E into all levels of operations, from individual projects to broader programs and policies, enhancing collaboration and coordination.

The successful implementation of this policy will not only improve program performance but also enhance the Agency's reputation, attracting further support from national and international partners. It is a critical investment in the Agency's future, ensuring its continued success in protecting Liberia's invaluable natural resources and safeguarding the environment for generations to come. I am confident that the adoption and diligent implementation of this M&E Policy will mark a significant step forward in achieving the EPA's mandate.

I commend the EPA's entire workforce and all stakeholders for their unwavering dedication to safeguarding Liberia's environment. May this policy be a beacon guiding you toward a brighter, more sustainable future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Urey Yarkpawolo'.

Emmanuel K. Urey Yarkpawolo, Ph.D.  
**Executive Director/CEO**  
Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia

## Abbreviations & Acronyms

EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red crescent Societies
GEF	The Global Environmental Facility
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAXQDA	An All-in-One Qualitative and Mixed Methods Data analysis Software
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
NDPC	National Development and Planning Commission (Ghana)
Nudist	Software for Qualitative text data analysis
NVivo	Qualitative text data analysis software
OECD	Office for Economic Cooperation and Development
Quirkos	Software package for qualitative analysis of text data
SMART criterion	Simple/Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant Timely
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training & Research
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

## Definitions of Monitoring and Evaluation Terms

Term	Definition
<b>Accountability</b>	To bear responsibility for resources, activities or trust received; answerability for public/social trust in keeping with standing rules and standards
<b>Activity</b>	Actions taken or work performed in a project to produce specific outputs (which contribute to results) by using inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other types of resources.
<b>Assessment</b>	A process of gathering information, analyzing it, then making a judgement on the basis of the information.
<b>Baseline Information</b>	Information – usually consisting of facts and figures collected at the initial stages of a project – that provides a basis for measuring progress in achieving project objectives and outputs.
<b>Effectiveness</b>	The extent to which the project or program produces its expected outputs and thereby achieving its purpose and contributing to its goal.
<b>Efficiency</b>	The extent to which project or program is achieving its expected outputs at minimum cost.
<b>Evaluation Design</b>	The parameters that define the evaluation and how it is to be undertaken, including the evaluation questions, methodology, data collection plan, methods of analysis
<b>Evaluation</b>	Evaluation is process of making determinations about a project or program, either during or after its implementation. The issues on which determinations are often made in a project or program are effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, impact, and sustainability, as well as design.
<b>Formative Evaluation</b>	This is undertaken during the implementation of project or program interventions. It is intended to identify implementation challenges to be addressed with the view to improve performance.
<b>Impact</b>	The changes in the lives of people, as perceived by them and their partners at the time of evaluation, plus sustainability enhancing change in their environment to which the project or program has contributed. Changes can be positive or negative, intended, or unintended.
<b>Impact Assessment</b>	The process of assessing changes in beneficiaries or their environments as the result of project and program interventions area.
<b>Indicator</b>	A pointer or gauge that determines if performance targets are being achieved or not.
<b>Logical Framework</b>	
<b>Mid-term Evaluation</b>	This is conducted half-way into the implementation of a project or program. It provides information on performance mid-way into implementation and consider possible needs for modifications.
<b>Monitoring</b>	It is a process of tracking project or program interventions or activities to ascertain if progress towards desired goal or objectives are being achieved.
<b>M &amp; E Framework</b>	The M & E structure developed during the design phase of a project or program and included in the project or program documentation.
<b>M &amp; E Matrix</b>	A table that logically links M & E objectives to indicators, verifiers, and data sources on each indicator, as well as inputs required to implement key activities of the project or program.

<b>M &amp; E Plan</b>	A tool employed by an agency or any of its operating units to monitor, evaluate and assess progress toward achieving stated goals and objectives.
<b>Outcome</b>	Medium-term results attributable to an operation
<b>Output</b>	Planned, actual achievement/results
<b>Program</b>	A group of interventions that consist of several planned, interrelated projects designed to achieve defined goals and objectives within a given budget and time.
<b>Project</b>	An intervention that consists of a set of planned, interrelated activities designed to achieve defined objectives within a given budget and a specified period.
<b>Qualitative Data</b>	Non-numeric information that are descriptive and conceptual such as perceptions, attitudes, and opinions.
<b>Quantitative Data</b>	Information expressed in numbers such as percentages, ratios, averages, and totals.
<b>Relevance</b>	The extent to which an intervention is consistent with the needs, policies and priorities of entities, communities, country
<b>Reliability</b>	The degree of a measurement that is consistent when repeated several times, and can, therefore, be depended upon.
<b>Sample</b>	The selection of a representative part of a population to determine parameters or characteristics of the whole population
<b>Summative Evaluation</b>	This is carried out at the end of a project or program. They provide valuable information on the effectiveness and identify lessons learned, including best practices that could be employed in similar future projects.
<b>Sustainability</b>	The extent to which benefits derived from a project will continue after the planned end of a project. In environmental science, it is balancing the requirement for meeting the needs of present generation with the ability of meeting the needs of the future.
<b>Validity</b>	The extent to which conclusions of a monitoring and evaluation work are correct as justified by the data presented.
<b>Validation</b>	The action providing proof of support or endorsement for a finding or policy affecting the general population

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is committed to a culture of learning from experience. It adopts the posture that projects and programs must be systematically tracked and appraised to determine how they are faring; and the feedback obtained therefrom, used for improving performance going forward. The Agency thus places premium on operating for evidence-based results and outcomes. Towards this end, the Agency supports the management of domestic and internationally supported projects and programs caringly, to ensure their effectiveness and efficiency, as well as transparency and accountability in resource utilization.

This commitment requires the development of a policy on monitoring and evaluation at EPA. It originates from the Act establishing the Agency which mandates it "...to establish a monitoring, coordinating and supervisory authority for the sustainable management of the environment...and to provide high quality information and advice on the state of the environment and for matters connected therewith".

The Act, in turn is supported by the 1986 Constitution of Liberia which provides for the "...management of the national economy and the natural resources of Liberia in such manner as shall ensure the maximum feasible participation of Liberian citizens under conditions of equality as to advance the general welfare of the Liberian people and the economic development of Liberia."

Thus, this Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Policy is to institutionalize result-oriented management at the Agency. It facilitates the integration of M&E processes into the management of projects and programs to inform decision-making of staff, management, and other stakeholders.

### 1.2 Purpose

This M & E Policy sets out the Agency's commitment to an evidence-based management. It is designed to ensure tracking and assessing of the results, outcomes and impacts of projects and programs undertaken at the Agency. It provides a basis for the systematic application of a process for planning, collecting, and processing operational data, and disseminating the analytical results to decision-makers to reveal the success levels of projects and programs being implemented or that have been implemented by the Agency.

### 1.3 Objectives

Accordingly, the objectives of this M&E Policy are as follows:

- To ensure that management and operational decision-making relative to projects and programs are informed by effective monitoring and evaluations.
- To establish an institutional framework for undertaking monitoring and evaluation of projects and programs.



- To ensure predictable and successful deliveries of projects and programs occasioned by an institutional culture of meticulous monitoring and evaluation.
- To provide the basis for building the capacities of directors and managers of projects and programs in the fundamentals of M & E towards better interactions with M & E professionals.
- To promote a culture of “institutional learning” through lessons learned from reports of M&E undertakings of projects and programs implementation.

#### 1.4 Scope

Application of this M&E Policy is Agency-wide. It covers all projects, programs, and operations of the Agency at head office and branches in all the political sub-divisions (counties) of Liberia. Where appropriate, it shall also cover projects and programs undertaken jointly with partner stakeholders and implementing institutions.

#### 1.5 Expected Users

The policy is meant to serve as a guide for all professionals, directors, and managers, as well as stakeholders in partnership with the Agency in the implementation of projects and programs.

#### 1.6 Revisions

This Policy shall be reviewed after every five (5) years. Revision shall be managed by the Policy and Planning Department, with support of the envisaged Program Management Department. Revisions shall be done through Agency-wide consultations, with the input of staff and the validation of stakeholders. Revision shall be under the oversight of the Deputy Executive Director.

## 2.0 Conceptual Framework

### 2.1 Monitoring

Monitoring is the process of tracking project or program interventions to determine if implementation is on course and if desired results are being achieved. It is a measure of progress. It involves tracking processes, resource utilization, and the verification of results. Resource utilization is commonly the focus of monitoring, in natural resource management. Thus, monitoring is not only concerned with asking the question, “Are we taking the actions we said we would take?” but also, “Are we making progress in achieving the results that we said we wanted to achieve?” (UNDP, 2009)

Monitoring provides organizational leaders, at both the policy making and management levels, information for periodic comparison of actual performance levels of a project or program with planned levels. It informs decisions about possible changes and/or adjustments in project and program interventions, providing justifications for re-allocation of resources towards this end.

The key outcomes of monitoring are often the findings and recommendations that inform considerations of decision makers on ongoing projects and programs.

Effective monitoring yields many benefits to institutions and organizations. Prominent among these are the following:

- **Information on level of progress:** It provides information on whether progress is being made towards achieving stated goals and objectives.
- **Basis for remedial actions:** It provides the rationale and basis for taking timely, corrective actions in interventions to ensure that state goals and objectives are eventually met.
- **Learning from feedback:** It enhances institutional learning and improves planning and implementation towards achieving effectiveness and efficiency of interventions.
- **Enhances accountability:** It contributes to accountability of results and the utilization of resources to stakeholders, particularly to management, policy makers, and donors.
- **Enhances positive reinforcements:** It assists project and program staff and managers to recognize and reinforce positive results, strengths, and successes, while simultaneously addressing identified challenges.
- **Opportunity to review relevance:** It provides opportunities to review the continued relevance of a project or program by studying the rationale for project or program interventions.

### 2.2 Evaluation

Evaluation is the process of obtaining information to determine whether projects or programs are achieving or have achieved their goals and objectives and are producing or have produced desired outcomes and impacts. Evaluation deals with project and program results and builds on monitoring data. Evaluation validates the results of monitoring.

In effect, evaluation covers the issues of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. At such, it covers the design, plan, implementation, and results of an intervention (OECD, 2002).

The key outcomes of evaluations are often the findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Another important outcome is lessons learned that are meant to guide the design, planning, and implementation of future projects and programs.

There are many benefits derived from undertaking evaluations. Prominent among these are the following:

- **Provide information for decision-making:** They provide policy makers and management with information that assist them review, determine status of, and make forward looking decisions on goals, objectives, and strategies.
- **Determine strengths and weaknesses of projects and programs:** They determine strengths and weaknesses of project or program implementation thus enabling policy makers and managers to maximize strengths, while addressing weaknesses.
- **Determine project and program outcomes and impacts:** They determine the extent to which project and program interventions are achieving planned outputs, outcomes, or impacts.
- **Provide useful information for future projects and programs:** They provide lessons learned which are useful to the design, planning, and implementation of future projects or programs.
- **Strengthen Institutional Learning:** In the context of the above, they enhance institutional learning, growth, and development.

### 2.3 M&E Logical Framework

The Logical Framework (log frame) is a useful tool to manage the results of projects and programs. It adopts, from inception, an approach that identifies inputs (activities), results (outputs), outcomes, and impacts. These are followed by the identification of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), means of verifying these indicators, at each level of outputs, outcomes, and impacts.

Further, performance indicators usually include baseline and target measures for expected results. In the event baseline information are not available at the commencement of a project or program, managers should plan to obtain baseline information within a reasonable period from project and program start-up to ensure monitoring and evaluability of results.

The M&E framework provides two (2) sets of logics. **First**, the vertical logic shows the linkages from inputs (activities) to outputs, to outcomes, to impacts. **Second**, the horizontal logic shows the linkages from objectives to indicators, to verifiers, to sources of information/data. These are usually depicted in a matrix for easier comprehension.

## 3.0 Policy Commitments

### 3.1 Policy Pledges

M&E is a way of ensuring focus in mission, key actions, and results. Without this focus, there could be mission creep, wastage of resources, and unsuccessful project or program deliveries. For better project and program management, the EPA obligates itself to the following commitments in its M&E processes:

**Focus on Mission:** The ultimate purpose of M&E activities shall be to ensure focus on and dedication to project and program goals and objectives. To achieve this focus requires clarity in goals, objectives, and the strategies employed to achieve them.

**Holistic Applications:** M&E activities shall be applicable to all projects, programs, and operations at the Agency, from the head office located in Monrovia, to branches in the counties. They shall also cover donor-sponsored projects and programs.

**Logical Framework:** M&E activities shall be built on current management science M&E logical framework that contains a vertical logic and a horizontal logic as described in Section 2.3 above.

**Ethics:** M&E activities shall be mindful of the need to protect the human rights of people and communities. Accordingly, they shall safeguard the dignity, rights, safety, and privacy of people and communities, while collecting required information/data on project and program implementations.

**Support:** M&E functions require adequate resources. Without this, M&E activities and their results will be to less meaningful. Therefore, within the context of limited resources, and as is reasonable and possible, M&E activities shall be given maximum institutional support, including financial.

### 3.2 Guiding Principles

This M&E Policy adheres to certain core principles. Taken together, these principles are mutually reinforcing and complimentary to ensure the achievement of desired and planned project and project results, outcomes, and impacts.

These guiding principles will be followed as closely as is practicable:

- **Relevance:** M&E activities shall ensure that projects and programs attend to the issues or problems they were intended to address for which their interventions were designed, planned, and executed.
- **Effectiveness:** M&E activities shall seek to determine whether planned project and program goals and objectives are being achieved through the strategies (interventions) designed, planned, and implemented.

- **Efficiency:** Similarly, M&E activities must ensure that financial and other resources dedicated to projects and programs are being expended and utilized proficiently for the purposes for which they were intended, mobilized, and allocated.
- **Outcomes & Impacts:** M&E activities shall measure both intermediate results (outcomes) and long-term overall effects (impacts) of projects and programs. Outcomes and impacts may be either positive or negative, intended, or unintended.
- **Professionalism:** Given the importance of M&E activities to policy and management decision-making, they shall be undertaken by persons with the required knowledge, skills, and experiences.
- **Participatory:** M&E activities shall ensure the inclusion of representatives of relevant stakeholders, especially beneficiaries, where applicable. This will ensure easy feedback, commitment, and ownership.
- **Contextual Sensitivity:** M&E activities shall be sensitive to political, economic, social, legal, environmental, gender contextual issues. However, they shall be devoid of bias based on any one or a combination of these factors.
- **Transparency:** M&E activities shall be conducted with openness. There shall be unrestricted access to information, including baseline data, project or program documentations, reports, and stakeholders' views.
- **Accountability:** M&E efforts shall demonstrate the Agency's obligation to be answerable to the Government and citizens of Liberia, and other stakeholders for the results achieved, processes followed, and funds utilized. Implicitly, the Agency has a responsibility to regularly report to stakeholders on the results of its stewardship.
- **Institutional Learning:** M&E reports shall reflect the need for institutional learning going forward, particularly as it relates to how to do things better, at least cost, with greater and more sustained results (outputs), outcomes, and impacts. Implicitly, lessons learned shall be an important element in evaluation reports.

## 4.0 Types of M & E

### 4.1 Types of Monitoring

There are several types of monitoring. Each type is informed by the specific objective the monitoring seeks. Some types are often implemented simultaneously with others. This policy shall employ five (5) types of monitoring. These types and their descriptions are depicted in the matrix below.

**Matrix 1: EPA Adapted Types of Monitoring**

No.	Type	Description
1	Performance Monitoring	Tracks progress in the achievement of results. It examines if a project or program is effective (achieving desired results). Progress is measured against specific indicators.
2	Financial Monitoring	Tracks the use of funds against the budget. The key idea is to ensure that financial resources are being properly used and that the program or project is efficient (achieving results at minimum cost of inputs).
3	Compliance Monitoring	Assesses submission to relevant laws, policies, regulations, and contractual provisions such as environmental laws, local government laws, and requirements of donor agreements, as well as ethical standards.
4	Situation Monitoring	Tracks an evolving situation to determine when and what kinds of actions will need to be taken. As it relates to projects or programs, it tracks the environmental setting within which a project or program operates as regards various risks, assumptions, and changes outside the control of the project or program that may arise and have the potential of impacting going project activities.
5	Beneficiary Monitoring	Tracks the perceptions of the target population (beneficiaries) of the project or program. Elements to track may include their satisfaction or complaints, treatment, participation, access to resources, and the changes in their lives they are experiencing on account of the project or program.

## 4.2 Types of Evaluations

There are four (4) general types of evaluations. Like monitoring, they are also generally classified based on their objectives. This policy shall employ all four (4) types. The four (4) types are as follows:

**Table 2: Types of Evaluations**

No.	Type	Description
1	<b>Formative Evaluations</b>	These are undertaken during the implementation of interventions. They are intended to identify implementation challenges to be addressed with the view to improving performance.
2	<b>Mid-Term Evaluations</b>	These evaluations are conducted half-way into the implementation of a project or program. They provide information, analysis, and conclusions on success levels, and consider possible needs for modifications in management, interventions, and resource re-allocations.
3	<b>Summative (End-of-Project) Evaluations</b>	These are carried out at the end of a project or program. They provide valuable information on effectiveness and efficiency, as well as identify lessons learned, including best practices that could be employed and bad practices that should be avoided, in similar future projects.
4	<b>Impact Evaluations</b>	These evaluations are meant to assess changes in behaviors or wellbeing of beneficiaries and, as such, seek to establish cause-and-effect relationships. Direct and indirect impacts will be assessed. The assessments aim to establish whether observed changes in a community/beneficiary are attributable to interventions of a project or program.

## 5.0 Planning for M & E

Planning for M&E shall be purposeful, deliberate, and comprehensive. It shall occur at the design stage of the process. It shall entail developing a blueprint within the framework of the logical framework. As such, it shall entail addressing several issues such as the following: what will be the objective; what activities will be needed; how will the process be conducted; what results will be expected; who will be involved; what resources will be required; how will results be organized and communicated to stakeholders (policy makers, management, donors, project staff, beneficiaries).

### 5.1 Determining of Purpose

Each M&E assignment shall begin with a statement of purpose (objective). The purpose will depend on the level (outputs, outcomes, impact) of the specific assignment. The Agency shall prioritize the levels and frequencies for every project and program. A clear identification of level with its corresponding objective shall suggest expected results which, in turn, shall inform scope, activities, participants, and resource requirements.

The best source for determining the purpose for a M&E undertaking is often the project/program document, since well-designed projects and programs take into consideration the requirements for monitoring and evaluation.

Additionally, it may be necessary to determine if operational activities and other developments may have influenced changes in the original design of projects and programs. This affords an opportunity to assess the conditions under which the M & E activities are to be carried out.

Following determination of the purpose, the next planning activity shall be to exact the scope of the assignment. Confirming the scope builds mutual expectations between the project/program managers and the M&E team. It brings clarity to roles definition, coverage of the exercise, identifies technical inputs, logistical and resources required to undertake the assignment. In essence, clarity of objectives and scope facilitate the development of a realistic budget for the M&E assignment.

### 5.2 Identifying Indicators

Indicators are factors that determine whether a planned change has occurred. They may be quantitative (number specific) or qualitative (inference). Indicators are developed to achieve specific purposes. Indicators measure realization of inputs (activities), outputs, effects (outcomes), and impacts, relative to the design of a project or a program. Indicators also help to address key questions in the evaluation process (Caldwell, 2001).

There are several types of indicators. Each type measures a different aspect of the project/program design. Taken together, indicators succeed in measuring the attainment of objectives (outputs, outcomes, impacts) resulting from the implementation project/program interventions. Briefly, indicators are generically classified as input indicators, process indicators, output indicators, outcome indicators, and impact indicators.



Good indicators exhibit several characteristics, including the following depicted in the matrix below:

### Matrix 3: Characteristics of Good Indicators

Characteristic	Description
<b>Valid</b>	Must be an accurate measure of a behavior, or an activity, or a variable. It must not be vague.
<b>Quantifiable</b>	Must be measurable, using available methods and tools
<b>Reliability</b>	Must consistently give the same information
<b>Precise</b>	Must be clear, exact, easily seen by all actors
<b>Independent</b>	Must be capable of standing alone; unbiased
<b>Timely</b>	Must be timing responsive to key actions, goals, objectives of the project or program
<b>Programmatic</b>	Must be linked to activities and changes that are in sequence and consistent with the project or program goal and objectives

### 5.3 Identifying Verifiers

Verifiers authenticate indicators. For each indicator there may be one or several verifiers. They inform the nature and type of data to be collected and the method/s to be used. Together, these inform the cost of collecting the required information/data.

### 5.4 Identifying Sources of Information

Identification of verifiers should be followed by sources of data and where, when, and how the information can be collected. The main sources of data for M & E are primary and secondary sources.

Primary sources may take the form of input, output, or outcome data. These may be collected directly through surveys, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Primary data are often more costly to collect especially in instances where baselines are not available and are, therefore, to be established.

Secondary data are obtained from project or program documents, reports, publications, and other existing sources. They provide clear advantages of time-saving and low-cost M & E undertakings. However, the downside are reliability and validity. A user must be certain that their sources are reliable and the information valid.

## 5.5 Determining Methods of Data Collection

Data collection methods fall under two (2) broad categories: quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative methods probe for *how much* and *how many*. Findings are more precise and specific. Representative household surveys are examples of quantitative methods.

Qualitative methods will seek answers to *how* and *why*. They focus more on explanations, meanings, processes, and reasons. and Key Informants Interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Direct Observations (DOs) are examples of qualitative methods.

Quantitative and qualitative methods are not necessarily exclusive. They can be and are often used complementarily. Qualitative methods can be used to probe quantitative findings. For instance, quantitative method can establish a relationship between land ownership and gender, whereas a focus group discussion will establish reasons and explanations for the ownership pattern.

## 5.6 Determining Reporting Format

Sharing M&E findings can be done using different communication channels such as through formal reports, executive briefs, workshops presentations, informal discussions, posters, releases, and newsletters. Often, a project document will specify who should receive M & E reports and by what means. Formal reporting, however, is the convenient way of sharing M & E findings in an institution/organization. (UNITAR 2012)

At the EPA, policy makers, management, departments, and program managers should be the audience of these reports. Where appropriate, technical units and other sections should be provided copies of the report.

Equally so, end-users, and other stakeholders such as beneficiaries should be informed through appropriate means.

As M & E reports bode mostly on accountability of results, funding agencies have a primary interest and should be copied.

Thus, given the overall importance of M & E reports, it is important that they be structured and conform to some minimum standards as follows:

- **Thoroughness:** Report preparation must be done with diligence. Presentation must be factual and limited to findings of results from the process. All inconsistencies should be removed.
- **Clarity:** Because of the diverse audience reflected by varying stakeholders, reports should be clear and concise in presentations of findings. Use of simple, unambiguous, and standard industry language is recommended.
- **Sensitivities:** The writers should be mindful about sensitive information. The report should be technical, neutral, and apolitical. Confidential information should be treated as such and provided gingerly through appropriate means, on a to-know-basis.

- **Analytical:** The reports should be analytical both in the narratives and presentation of the findings, summaries, and conclusions. Where suitable, infographics and visuals should be utilized to enhance comprehension.

## 6.0 Institutional Arrangement for M & E

M&E functions entail the structures, processes, and systems put into place to ensure robust, results-based, M&E activities and outputs. Thus, these institutional arrangements contain herein define and elaborate the structural dimension of the M&E functions to be installed at the Agency.

Executive Management, departments, and program Managers shall have shared responsibilities for M & E functions at the Agency. Their roles shall be complementary, collaborative, and mutually reinforcing. As such, teamwork, information, and experience sharing shall be key ingredients in their relationships. This will ensure that M&E functions are both effective and efficient to the benefit all stakeholders.

### 6.1 Executive Management

Executive Management shall provide strategic direction to M&E functions. This shall be linked to the mandate and vision of the Agency. The importance of M&E and the institutional commitments given to it shall be set and exemplified by the pronouncements and actions of Executive Management.

Accordingly, under the direction and guidance of the Executive Director, Executive Management shall have the following roles and responsibilities for M&E functions at the Agency:

- Ensure that M&E functions are aligned to and supportive of the mandate, mission, and vision of the Agency.
- Ensure the development and approval Annual M & E Workplans that are consistent with the strategic orientation and direction of the Agency.
- Direct and ensure the cooperation of all departments and program managers with M&E consultations and activities.
- Within the context of available resources and competing demands, ensure meaningful material, financial, and logistical support to M&E activities. However, when resources are scarce, prioritize the types, levels, and frequency of M&E activities of projects, programs, and operations.
- Ensure regularity of feedback reporting to stakeholders, including the Board of Directors and donors, from M&E activities through means such as briefings, reports, workshops, and dedicated IT platforms.

### 6.2 Role of Policy & Planning Department

One of the responsibilities of the Policy and Planning Department shall be to oversee M&E functions. The Department shall work with Executive Management to create and establish an M & E Division within the Department.

Once established, the department shall have the following oversight roles and responsibilities of the Division:

- Ensure that the division develops an Annual M&E Workplan for consideration by Executive Management.
- Ensure the division meticulously implements the M&E workplan as approved by Executive Management.
- Ensure the implementation of this M&E Policy, ensuring full application of its principles and foundation elements, with resultant required feedback reports.
- Facilitate the division's sharing of best practices informed by lessons learned to enhance future project and program planning and execution, as well as improving institutional learning.
- Oversee human capacity development of staff of the division and the application of learned knowledge and skills to M&E activities.
- Promote research activities to ensure that M&E activities remain current with innovative practices of the management science of the industry.

### 6.3 Role of M & E Division

Under the strategic direction and guidance of Executive Management and oversight of the Department of Policy and Planning, the Division of Monitoring and Evaluation shall have the following functions:

- Serve as custodian for the management of M&E functions. In this context, develops and promotes M & E standards, collaborate and coordinate with other bodies on issues relating to monitoring and evaluation.
- Establish an appropriate M & E system for departments, projects, and programs, and operations.
- In consultation with departments and program managers, prepare Annual M& E Workplans for consideration of Executive Management. These plans shall be a subset of the Workplans of the Policy and Planning Department.
- Undertake periodic M & E activities with timeliness and proficiency, and prepare and distribute reports of findings, conclusions, recommendations, and lessons learned to stakeholders (Executive Management, Board of Directors, Departmental Directors, Program Managers, Donors/Sponsors) as required.
- Where external evaluators are required, assist in the selection of competent (knowledge, skills, experience) independent evaluators and provide oversight to their engagement with the Agency.

- Where applicable, monitor and evaluate projects and programs sponsored by donors and partners of the international environmental community.
- Identify and articulate lessons learned from M&E undertakings to facilitate knowledge management, experience sharing, and institutional learning towards enhancing future project or program design, planning, and execution. Towards these ends, the division shall develop and maintain a depository of M & E reports.

#### 6.4 Role of Directors/Program Managers

- Collaborate with the M&E Division in developing M&E workplans for their departments and programs.
- Cooperate with the M&E Division in implementing M&E activities for their departments and programs.
- Provide timely feedback to M&E reports relative to their Departments and Programs.
- Cooperate with Executive Management and the Policy and Planning Department in implementing approved recommendations for their departments and programs emanating from M&E reports.
- Participating in staff capacity-building activities undertaken by the M&E Division under the leadership of the Policy and Planning Department.

## 7.0 M & E Applications

Within the context of the goals and objectives set out in this Policy, the M & E logical framework, principles and processes shall be applicable to the entirety of the operations of the Agency. Particularly it shall be applicable to departments, stand-alone programs, projects, and cross-cutting issues of national concern such as gender mainstreaming. All of these are briefly described below.

### 7.1 Departments

All departments have defined functions, roles, and responsibilities. All departments are meant to contribute to the achievement of the mandate of the Agency. All departments have annual workplans that direct and guide their activities. Accordingly, M&E shall be undertaken for all departments to ensure that their operations are on track and to ascertain that they are doing and achieving what they are set up to do and achieve.

### 7.2 Sponsored Programs

Parallel to the departments, the Agency also runs stand-alone programs. These are programs sponsored by various members or agencies of the international environmental community. Member states of the community support certain programs of interest to them. An example is the program on Climate Change that is supported by resources mobilized from many sources of the community. All programs falling within the realm of stand-alone, sponsored undertakings shall be subject to M&E applications.

### 7.3 Projects

From time to time, the Agency undertakes specific and/or specialized projects. These have specific objectives, are time-bound, and have dedicated resources committed to their execution. For example, the Agency may collaborate with the Monrovia City Corporation in the design, planning, and execution of a two-year Waste Collection and Disposal Project. This and all projects that fall in this or similar categories shall be subject to the application of M&E activities as set forth in the Policy.

### 7.4 Specialized Undertakings & Situations

M&E applications, as may be directed from time to time by Executive Management, shall also be in the areas of financial management, compliance management, specific situations, and beneficiaries as set forth in Matrix 1 of this Policy under Monitoring. The objectives and parameters for non-customary domain M&E applications shall be clearly defined and established.

### 7.5 Gender Mainstreaming

In conformity with and support to the national commitment to gender equality in Liberia, particularly in public sector institutions and in sectors and domain of national life, gender mainstreaming shall feature in M&E applications at the Agency. This will include gender sensitive decision-making and implementation including, planning, budgeting, and operations.





## 8.0 M & E Procedures

To ensure that M&E applications are valid, reliable, and consistent, they shall follow the following procedures.

### 8.1 Initiating M & E Processes

Consistent with the commitment for openness, each M & E undertaken shall begin with a planning meeting with the relevant department, program, or parties. At this formal meeting, the anticipated process shall be introduced and reviewed. The elements to be discussed at this meeting shall include purpose, timing, and processes, as well as what is expected of them in terms of support and/or participation. The essence of this engagement is to obtain buy-in to the process and to alleviate fears that may exist. The M&E Team shall be assisted by the M&E Desk Officer within the Department, Program, or Project.

Further, the M&E Division shall take advantage of this meeting to ask for the inputs of the Department, Program, or Project to the envisaged process. If this is not the first of an M&E process for the Department, Program, or Project, the M&E Team should review the result of the most recent monitoring engagement or evaluation. This procedure shall be repeated at the beginning of every M&E process.

### 8.2 Determination of Data Requirements, Sources, Methods

The initial planning meeting shall be followed by another meeting to discuss and determine data requirements. As indicated earlier, data requirement could be either quantitative or qualitative, or both. Alongside the determination of data requirements shall be the determination of data sources and data collection methods.

### 8.3 Selection of Data Collectors

Most M & E processes shall be carried out by staff of the M&E Division with the participation of the relevant Department, Program, or Project. Where there are limited staff, Executive Management, could second staff from other departments to assist. The number, qualification and selection of data collectors shall be informed by the data requirements, sources of data, and data collection methods, and duration of the M&E exercise. For transparency purposes, mid-term and end-of-project/program evaluations shall consider the use of competitively recruited external consultants that shall, similarly, recruit data collectors and data managers in a transparent manner.

## 8.4 Training of Data Collectors

Towards ensuring data quality assurance, all staff to be engaged in an M&E process shall be required to undergo either training or orientation. The value of such training is to ensure the staff understand the assignment, regardless of their engagement on a previous or similar assignment.

The training or orientation shall be meant to enable data collectors understand the background, data collection instruments, and field protocols. Specifically, it shall assist data collectors have knowledge of and develop skills in field procedures such as interview techniques, focus group discussions management, and sampling methods, as well as the need for data quality assurance.

Tools (instruments) to be used in data gathering shall also be reviewed, tested, and refined. Testing shall be done in an environment comparable to the actual setting of the study. Because humans including department, program, or project staff are regularly the objects of most of the processes, ethical procedures will be reviewed, explained, and update over time.

## 8.5 Data Collection & Analysis

Data collection shall begin when data collectors are deployed, following their training and orientation. They will be fully provided with the full range of required materials and logistics. The team shall be assigned under the supervision of a senior data collector for guidance and direction. That supervisor shall serve as the first level of quality assurance, ensuring that all data collected are reviewed in the field.

Data analysis is the process of transforming raw data through statistical and other applications to useful information. Within the context of M&E, it enables the teams to exact findings, draw conclusions on departmental, program, or project activities, their status, challenges, and achievements. It assists them make informed decisions regarding recommendations and, often, lessons learned.

Data analysis: Both quantitative and qualitative techniques can be used in analyzing outputs and outcomes based on findings. Qualitative results can also be analyzed manually and through software applications.

## 8.6 Report Preparation

Reporting is the convenient way of sharing M&E findings. Sharing of information can be done using different communication channels such as formal progress reports, informal briefs, workshops, informal discussions, posters, releases, and newsletters. Often, a project document will specify who should receive a report and how often. Because M&E reports bode on accountability reasons, funding agencies have a primary interest and should be copied. Relevant stakeholders such as the Executive Management, the Board of Directors, Sponsors, Directors of Departments and Program Managers should be provided copy of reports. In some cases, beneficiaries should also be informed.

## 8.7 Report Dissemination

A communication strategy often guides the release findings from M&E processes. It determines who shall be informed, the frequency of their being informed, and how they are to be informed. Thus, the M&E Division should be versed on the overall communications strategy of the Agency. Often this strategy will cover the dissemination of M&E reports. Where the Division is in doubt, it should consult Executive Management. Dissemination of M&E report must be considered an ongoing process as it facilitates policy and management decision-making and institutional learning.

## 8.8 Review of M & E Reports

M&E Reports should be reviewed by stakeholders and given timely feedbacks. To facilitate immediate due attentions, it may be necessary to have the reports presented in formal meetings workshops, or whatever forum that are deemed appropriate for the purpose. Reviews and feedbacks can be given via emails or a dedicated IT platform for this purpose.

Feedbacks are necessary because they inform policy makers and executive management in discerning the consensuses on the substantive findings, conclusions, recommendations, and lessons learned, that help to inform their decision-making moving forward.

## 8.9 M & E Reports Follow-Up

M&E Reports shall be followed up appropriately and meticulously. These reports contain valuable information on the works of departments and the status of projects and programs. They provide conclusions and recommendations upon which policymakers and Executive Management shall make decisions going forward. These decisions, whether they deal with changes in objectives, operations, implementations, or resource allocations, must be implemented. Accordingly, there should be a structured process for following-up M&E Reports. Toward these ends, the following shall be considered:

**First**, based on feedbacks from various stakeholders, relevant decision-makers shall hold discussions and/or consultations on the specific findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

**Second**, informed by these discussions and/or consultations, policymakers and Executive Management will take various decisions going forward.

**Third**, specific institutional organs or bodies or professionals shall be given responsibilities to ensure that policy and executive management decisions are duly implemented within specified timeframes. In some cases, middle and lower-level managers will be instructed to take actions that fall within their authority.

**Fourth**, ideas emanating from lessons learned shall be noted and utilized as the Agency moves forward with implementing its mandate. The Agency shall be learning institution, always striving to be more relevant, productive, and efficient.

**Fifth,** the Department of Policy and Planning shall have overall responsibility for ensuring that resultant decisions from M & E Reports are appropriately followed through by those designated to do so. The Department shall report to either Executive Management or a General Management body on this responsibility.

## 9.0 M & E Financial Resources

Funding for M&E activities shall primarily come from departments and stand-alone programs which shall commit resources in their budgets. These shall be consolidated in the Agency's Annual Budget.

Additionally, the Agency shall request its partners to include funding for M&E activities in their various sponsored projects and programs. At a minimum, ten percent of the project cost shall be allocated for M & E activities.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Aspects of Data Analysis

There are three main aspects of data analysis: data cleaning, data analysis and interpretation.

**Data Cleaning:** This is the first stage of treatment or review of raw data obtained from the field/source. It is to scrutinize data to ensure that anomalies and omissions are addressed. It involves examining the instrument, in case of sample surveys, to ensure that errors such as full recording, coding, shifting patterns, unit conversions are corrected prior to entry into the data shell for processing.

**Descriptive analysis:** This is the stage at which the variables in the data set are used to generate findings about an activity, project, program, or target population. Like the main M&E process, data analysis is planned, in advance under a data management plan that determines how data are to be handled both during and after the M&E. Analysis should be done for both quantitative and qualitative datasets.

For quantitative analysis, the process begins with simple descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, central tendencies (mean, mode, median) and depiction by simple graphing. Common tables generated from the analysis include one-way tables or frequency distribution tables (using one variable), which analyze information on a single variable to explain information such as age, gender, education, or land holding. When the analysis two or more variables to explain situations like behavior or poverty, cross-tabulations are used to provide answers for the relationships between multiple variables.

For qualitative data, the analysis helps to broaden the findings on complex issues like gender and land ownership. Analysis will include detailed descriptions and direct quotations from responses to open-ended/unstructured questions posed in key informant interviews and focused group settings. The most common method for analyzing qualitative data is using consolidation matrices. Further, there is a host of software like NVivo, Quirkos, MAXQDA and Nudist that can used to process and analyze qualitative data.

**Data Interpretation:** Interpreting the findings of the analyses from both quantitative and qualitative methods is essential to draw conclusions and attach meanings to the analysis. It will involve explaining the patterns and trends and looking for relationships and linkages between the various factors and impacts. It is at this point that the M&E team has to ask itself, what does the data say. How reliable are the findings? Are there lessons learnt from the intervention?

Answers to these questions often attract interest beyond the M&E team that is engaged on the process. They equally claim the interest of other technical managers, top management, beneficiaries, and end-users of EPA services. To satisfy those interest and to ensure that the findings are valid and reliable, it is advisable to organize a forum (workshop) for validation of the findings.

## Appendix 2: Characteristics of Good M&E Reports

Thus, given the overall importance of reports generated by M&E, it is important that the reports be structured and measure up to some minimum essentials:

- **Thoroughness:** Report preparation must be done with diligence. Presentation must be factual and limited to results from the process. All inconsistencies must be removed.
- **Clarity:** Because of the varying readership, be clear and concise in presentations of findings. Use simple unambiguous language, no jargons.
- **Sensitivities:** Be mindful about sensitive information. Be neutral and apolitical.
- **Analytical:** In many regards, M&E reports are technical reports. Be analytical in providing information. Consider each activity critically.

### Appendix 3: Characteristics of Good Report Dissemination

That plan must take into consideration the following:

- **Timeliness:** Managers of programs and projects can best relate to reports if received in time to take corrective actions. Information is of little or no value if late or infrequent.
- **Relevance:** A well-packaged M&E report should serve a purpose. The report in whatever form should be consistent with the purpose for which the M&E was organized and directed.
- **Concise:** The report must not include everything. It must be precise on its findings.
- **Action Oriented:** Recommendations in the report must emphasize action to be taken.
- **Learning:** Information shared must be on facts, which when internalized, will be knowledge shared and support learning.



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