

COUNTRY LEVEL EVALUATION

Liberia

Final Report

(Final version)

Volume 1: Main Report

03rd of December 2010



Evaluation carried out on behalf of the European Commission



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Contract No EVA 2007/geo-acp

This evaluation is mandated by

The Joint Evaluation Unit for:
EuropeAid Cooperation Office (AIDCO)
Directorate General for Development and
Directorate-General External Relations

This evaluation is managed by the Evaluation Unit, which also chairs the Reference Group made up of members from EuropeAid, DG Development, EU Delegation in Liberia, and the Embassy of Liberia

The opinions expressed in this document represent the views of the authors, which are not necessarily shared by the European Commission or by the authorities of the countries concerned.

Status and versions of the document

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Feedback /Date</i>
1 st	18/11/2010	Draft	02/12/2010
2 nd	03/12/2010	Final	

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACRONYM	MEANING
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific
ACPA	Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement
ADE	Aide à la Décision Economique
AECID	Spanish Development Agency
AfDB	African Development Bank
AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
AFROSAI-E	African Organisation for English-speaking Supreme Audit Institutions
AIDCO	EuropeAid Cooperation Office
AIDP	Agriculture and Infrastructure Development Programme
ALAT	Administrative and Technical Local Agent
ALP	Accelerated Learning Programme
APC	Area Programme Co-ordinator
AU	African Union
BCE	Bureau of Customs and Excise
BCS	Background Conclusion Sheet
BL	Budget Lines
BMA	Bureau of Maritime Affairs
BTI	Bertelsmann Transformation Index
CA	Cancelled
CA	Contract Agent
CAFF	Children Associated with Fighting Forces
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CDA	County Development Agenda
CDC	County Development Committee
CDD	Community Driven Development
CDP	County Development Programme
CE	Commission européenne
CESD	Community Empowerment and Skills Development
CFSNS	Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey
CIBAP	Capacity and Institutional Building Action Plan
CL	Closed
CMC	Cash Management Committee
COE	Customs Operations Expert
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CPPB	Conflict Prevention and Peace Building
CRC	Community Rehabilitation Component
CRIS	Common Relex Information Services
CSO	Civil Society Organisation

ACRONYM	MEANING
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCI	Development Co-operation Instrument
DDC	District Development Committee
DDH	EC Thematic Budget line for Human Rights and Democracy
DDRR	Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration
DfID	UK Department for International Development
DG	Directorate-General (EC)
DG DEV	Directorate-General for Development (EC)
DNH	Do No Harm Approach
DPKO	UN Department of Peace Keeping Operations
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
EAMR	External Assistance Management Report (EC)
EBA	Everything But Arms
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECSEL	EC Support to Education in Liberia
EDF	European Development Fund
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ENRTP	Thematic Programme for Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources
ENV	EC Thematic Budget line for Environment
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EPP	Emergency Power Programme
EQ	Evaluation Question
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
ESDP	Education Sector Development Programme
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
FA	Financing Agreement
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FD	Financing Decision
FDA	Forest Development Agency (Liberia)
FED	Fonds européen de développement (see EDF)
FG	Focus Group
FGD	Focus Group Discussion

ACRONYM	MEANING
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FS	Food Security
FSBL	Food Security and Food Aid Budget Line
FSTP	Food Security Thematic Programme
GAC	General Auditing Commission
GAINS	Gbarpolu Agriculture, Infrastructure and Nutrition for Food Security
GE	Government Effectiveness
GEMAP	Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship
GoL	Government of Liberia
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Technical Cooperation)
ha	hectare
HDI	Human Development Index
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
HQ	Headquarters
HR	Human Resources
HV/MV	High Voltage / Medium Voltage
ICGL	International Contact Group for Liberia
IDA	International Development Assistance
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGA	Income Generating Activities
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
INTOSAI	International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutes
IP	International Partner
iPRS	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy
iQSG	Internal Quality Support Group (EC)
IR	Inception Report
ISCBP	Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building Programme
ISP	Institutional Support Programme
IVS	Inland Valley Swamps
JAR	Joint Annual Report (EC)
JC	Judgment Criteria
JEU	Joint Evaluation Unit
JIU	Joint Implementation Unit
JNA	Joint Needs Assessment

ACRONYM	MEANING
JVG	Joint Visibility Guidelines
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (German Financial Cooperation)
km	Kilometre
kV	Kilo Volt
LACE	Liberian Agency for Community Empowerment
LBR	Liberia
LCD	Local Community Development
LCIP	Liberian Community Infrastructure Project
LDC	Least Developed Countries
LDDRRP	Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme
LDHS	Liberia Demographic Health Survey
LEC	Liberia Electricity Company
LED	Local Economic Development
LISGIS	Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Service
LNPF	Liberian National Police Force
LOIC	Liberia Opportunities Industrialisation Centre
LPRC	Liberia Petroleum Refining Company
LRDC	Liberian Reconstruction and Development Committee
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
LT TA	Long-term Technical Assistance
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
LWSC	Liberia Water and Sewage Company
L-PERP	Liberian Primary Education Sector Recovery Programme
M	Million
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia
MoE	Liberian Ministry of Education
MoF	Liberian Ministry of Finance
MPEA	Liberian Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs
MR	Monitoring Report
MS	Member States
MT	Metric ton
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
N/A	Not applicable
NAO	National Authorising Officer
NCDDRR	National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration
NDS	National Drug Service
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development

ACRONYM	MEANING
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIP	National Indicative Programme
NPA	National Port Authority
NSA	Non-State Actors
NTGL	National Transitional Government of Liberia
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OJ	Official Journal of the European Union
OLAS	On-line Accounting System
oQSG	Office Quality Support Group (EC)
PAAB	Programme d'apurement des barrières sur fonds FED de la BEI
PCRCBP	Post Conflict Rehabilitation and Capacity Building Programme
PCRD	Post Conflict Rehabilitation and Development
PE	Programme Estimate
PEACE	Enhancing Agricultural Capacities and Economy
PHC	Primary Health Care
PIA	Project Implementation Agreement
PMT	Project Management Team
PMU	Project Management Unit
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
REH	Rehabilitation Budget line (EC)
RFTF	Results Focused Transitional Framework
RG	Reference Group
RIA	Roberts International Airport
RIMCO	RFTF Implementation and Monitoring Committee
RIP	Regional Indicative Programme
ROM	Results Oriented Monitoring
RR	Rehabilitation and Reintegration
RRM	Rapid Response Mechanism
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SC	Scheme of Certification
SF	Strategy Framework
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SIDA	Swedish Development Agency
SMEP	Small and Micro-Enterprise Programme
SOE	State-Owned Enterprise

ACRONYM	MEANING
SSP	Small-Scale Project
SSR	Sub-Saharan Region
SSS	Special Security Service
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
TA	Technical Assistance
TAP	Technical and Administrative Provisions
TC	Technical Cooperation
TCC	Technical Cooperation Committee
TCF	Technical Cooperation Facility
TF	Trust Fund
ToR	Terms of Reference
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Committee
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
US\$	US Dollar
VA	Voice and Accountability
VAP	Voluntary Partnership Agreement
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VRA	Volta River Authority
WB	World Bank
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme
WGI	World Governance Indicators
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization
XC	Ex-Combatant

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation was done to learn lessons for future EC cooperation

This report presents the findings of the 2010 Country Level Evaluation of EC support to the Republic of Liberia. The evaluation was carried out to provide meaningful feedback to the European Commission and to the general public on the Commission's achievements in its cooperation with Liberia between 1999 and 2008. Lessons from this evaluation are meant to be used to inform the EC's current and future support to Liberia and other countries.

The evaluation covered the EC's cooperation with Liberia during times of violent conflict in the country, i.e., from 2000 until 2003 but also the time after the signing of the *Comprehensive Peace Agreement* in 2003 in Accra and the first national elections after the war in 2005. The evaluators considered EC assistance during the periods of the EDF8 and 9 (from a variety of instruments), but also considered choices made by the EC to disburse aid under the EDF10. This report is covering the different sectors the EC supported in this period, including humanitarian aid¹ and food security, support to disarm, demobilise, rehabilitate and reintegrate former fighters (DDRR), peace building, education and county development. Cutting across these sectors was the concern for gender and environmental issues.

Methodology: How was the evaluation done?

The evaluation is answering ten evaluation questions that cover different parts of the Commission's strategy and its implementation. The evaluators formulated these questions based on an analysis of the Commission's country strategy and other policy documents.

Answers to the evaluation questions take into account a selection of the projects that the EC had financed in Liberia. The evaluators

selected those projects together with EC staff. The projects and their combined contribution to the development of Liberia were then analysed on the basis of project evaluations, internal progress reports and other monitoring data and documents from other donors, including, among other things, UNDP, the World Bank or USAID. During a subsequent visit to Liberia, the evaluators used interviews, focus group discussions and visits to project sites to validate the hypotheses they had formulated after the review of the documents.

- Overall the evaluators carried out about 90 interviews in Brussels and in Liberia (Monrovia and 4 of the surrounding counties), with Government representatives, Civil Society, other donors and media organisations
- Held 13 focus groups with different groups of beneficiaries from EC financed interventions, including former fighters from the Liberian conflict, beneficiaries of a road project and farmers who had received food security support from the European Commission.
- Visited project sites for approximately 10 projects and programmes.

What is the political, social and economic context in Liberia?

Liberia is one of the least developed countries in the world. According to UNDP's Human Development Index, it ranks 169th out of 182 countries. 83.7% of Liberians live in absolute poverty on less than US\$1.25 per day.

In 2003, 14 years of a devastating civil war came to an end, after having claimed the life of about 250,000 people. After exile in Nigeria, the President Charles Taylor was transferred to the Special Court for Sierra Leone to be tried for crimes against humanity. Of a former population of 2.8 million, approximately 300,000 persons had been internally displaced during the war; another 300,000 had fled to neighbouring countries. The displacements and other effects for the

¹ Included here, because some money from the European Development Fund was also used to fund the work of the European Humanitarian Agency (ECHO).

long period of violence had overburdened the resources of most Liberia's communities.

Still in 2003, the United Nations launched UNMIL, the multilateral peacekeeping mission to the country and with it a comprehensive programme for disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration of former fighters. In 2005, UNMIL declared Liberia 'arms-free' after having disarmed more than 100,000 combatants, 12,000 out of which were child soldiers.

The years of civil war and government mismanagement had destroyed much of Liberia's economy and infrastructure. Many businessmen had fled the country, taking capital and expertise with them. Nonetheless, Liberia remains to be richly endowed with water, mineral resources, forests, and a climate favourable to agriculture. Historically, the country Liberia had been a major producer and exporter of raw timber and rubber. In 2007, Liberia reached fourth place among the 10 African top performers regarding annual economic growth due to its mineral richness. Since the lifting of the United Nations ban on Liberian diamond exports in April 2007, development in this sector has resumed. Until today, the country depends heavily on support by the international community.

In 2005, Liberia held its first democratic elections since the end of the fighting. The newly elected President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf started to take the first steps towards developing a coherent policy framework for the country, and reforming Liberia's corrupt and dysfunctional Government.

How did the EC cooperate with Liberia?

In response to repeated human rights violations, corruption and failure to respect the rule of law, the EC had stopped all regular assistance to Liberia in 1990. Between 1990 and 2003, the EC continued assistance on a limited basis in order to respond to growing humanitarian needs among the population. After signature of the peace agreement in 2003, the EC committed €55.1m from the 9th European Development Fund (EDF9) to help the parties to implement the terms of their agreement and the strengthen the peace in the country. In the following years, the Commission provided another €61.8m of aid

for education, economic and social development in rural areas (termed "county development"), the rehabilitation of the electricity grid and water infrastructure in Monrovia, the capital, and the development of organisational capacity in Liberia's Government.

What were the findings of the evaluation?

Despite important achievements, the performance of the European Commission lagged significantly behind its true potential and aspirations.

In many ways, the Commission had been an active participant in many of the key political events that helped to bring Liberia out of decades of conflict and violence. This included the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2003, the country-wide disarmament and demobilisation, and the holding of democratic elections in 2005. The European Commission's willingness to back the peace agreement with a much-needed financial commitment helped to keep the peace between the warring factions in the immediate aftermath of the conflict. EC support for disarmament and demobilisation helped former fighters to turn the page and to consider reconciliation and rehabilitation as a real opportunity. The Commission also helped to contain the conflict-related food security crisis and was instrumental in the creation of the successful Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme (GEMAP). Finally, European Commission "stop-gap" support to the capital's water and electricity providers helped to ensure that Monrovia's would continue to receive at least a minimal level of these services.

The EC's financial and political engagement was not backed up by sufficient operational resources to make sure that more of the committed money could be adequately distributed and invested.

The small office that the European Commission was maintaining in Monrovia for most of the period between 1999 and 2008 was simply overburdened with the operational duties connected to the disbursement of the large amount of money that had been made

available. In the years immediately following the Peace Agreement in 2003, the EU Delegation was still able to ensure an adequate outflow of funds, in part by transferring a large portion of the funds to multi-lateral organisations who managed the resources on their behalf. In this way, the EC could contribute money to finance the Liberian process of Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR). However, even in these years, many aspects of EC assistance, such as the adequate supervision, monitoring, quality control, coordination of assistance and the visibility of the European Commission overall suffered from the understaffing. Other, technical weaknesses added to the problems: For example, money that had been intended to improve the economic conditions of Liberia's returning refugees and internally displaced persons bypassed these groups at least in part because the associated small scale grants had not been specifically earmarked to support these groups.

Starting in 2005/06, the low organisational capacity of the EU Delegation started to seriously affect and diminish the flow of money to the beneficiaries in Liberia.

In 2007, a year after Liberia's newly elected President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf had taken up office, European Commission merely contracted a total sum of €2.24m to its implementing partners – a fraction of the money that had been promised to the Liberian Government for that year.

In conjunction with administrative delays of prior years, and the overall difficult conditions for delivering aid in Liberia this severely affected the performance of the European Commission.

Support that the European Commission had promised to help build and repair Liberian schools, train teachers and to improve the management of educational affairs and resources by country's Ministry of Education arrived with nearly 3 years of delay. Money that had been meant to build up the agricultural sector in Liberia was also delayed by several years; a serious gap in support was only avoided because ECHO, the

humanitarian agency of the European Commission was able to extend its support to make up for the shortfall. The rebuilding of electrical and water infrastructure in Monrovia was also affected by these delays; many of the intended projects to make lasting improvements to the capitals infrastructure started only with 2-3 years of delay. Overall, therefore, the assistance of the European Commission reached a far smaller fraction of vulnerable and marginalised Liberians than had been originally intended.

Main Conclusions

The evidence collected during the evaluation has led the evaluators to draw the following conclusions:

1. Understaffing of the EU office in Monrovia

The capacity of the European Commission in Liberia was clearly inadequate and the EU Delegation too understaffed to be able to respond to the operational demands that the large aid portfolio had placed on the organisation, leading to unfulfilled expectations among the Commission's main partners.

2. Disconnect between fund commitments and providing operational resources

The design of the EC's cooperation strategy and the commitment at political level of large-scale support during Liberia's post-war years did not sufficiently consider the very limited implementation capacity of the EU's own Delegation in Liberia during those years.

3. Anticipation of risks and other post-conflict constraints

The European Commission's procedures and mechanisms for design, planning and implementation did not adequately take into account the difficult conditions, vagaries, risks and operational constraints of Liberia's post-conflict environment.

4. Shortcomings led to unused EC potential

The EC could successfully provide some relevant and important impulses for Liberia's stabilisation, but only in only a relatively small

number of cases. Overall, the EC's contributions lagged significantly behind its actual potential and value-added for assisting post-conflict societies and its commitment to focus support on the most vulnerable, marginalised Liberians.

Main Recommendations

The three most important recommendations flowing from this evaluation are listed below:

R1: Link resource commitments to operational resources

The European Commission needs to strengthen the operational and procedural linkages between the commitment of development resources on the one hand and the allocation of operational capacities and resources to its own country offices on the other hand. The EC experience in Liberia illustrated that currently no procedures are in place to prevent even dramatic imbalances between committed development funds and the available operational capacity at country level to spend these resources. This disconnect extended also to the programme level.

For this reason, the European Commission needs to amend its own framework and standard format for drafting its country strategies to require that they also take into account the EC's own operational capacity in partner countries. Project documents also need to more clearly analyse and outline the tasks and responsibilities expected from the Commission's own staff and need to ascertain the actual availability of staff to do the work.

R2: Better anticipate risks and constraints

In addition, the European Commission, including the EU Delegation in Monrovia, needs to strengthen procedures and mechanisms that can help to adequately anticipate the particular risks and constraints of working in Liberia, and in post-conflict countries in general.

Specifically, the EC needs to specify more stringent requirements for "risk analysis" and development of "risk management strategies" when it identifies and prepares projects for financing. These requirements need to be written into the Terms of Reference of all technical experts and implementing partners

and also need to be included in the quality assessment guidelines for tender submission and other products of external consultants. In addition, the EU Delegation also needs to invest more time and resources for the so-called "inception phase" of programmes, when implementers determine how a project will be set up and managed, and tighten the criteria applied to judging the quality of the reports, work plans and budgets that implementing partners submit at this point. This is also the time when the EU Delegation needs to have the time to ensure that "lessons learned" from previous or similar programmes were adequately taken on board.

R3: Refocus support on most vulnerable and marginalised Liberians

Finally, the European Commission needs to refocus its efforts to channel assistance to the most severely marginalised groups of the Liberian population. The goal has to be, as before, to help reduce the socio-economic disadvantage of these population groups.

In many ways, the EC's portfolio between 1999 and 2008 had been made up of programmes that were designed to channel assistance to the most socio-economically marginalised Liberians. However, because of the many shortcomings of EC assistance, support has reached only a much smaller share and a different segment of Liberia's population than had originally been intended. In education, the EC will need to assess how any initial achievements of its current programme can be consolidated through follow-up support. The European Commission also needs to continue and possibly broaden its investment in Liberia network of rural feeder roads, considering the immense importance of improved transport infrastructure for the economic opportunities of most Liberians. The EC will also need to strengthen its engagement in the agricultural sector and focus its efforts on the long-term development of the agricultural capacity of Liberia.

Additional Recommendations

R4: Review lessons learned in capacity development

The EU Delegation should also refocus and refine its capacity development support in Liberia to reflect the European Commission's own lessons-learned in this area and also sustain and expand capacity development support at national, but in particular at local level. To do this, the EU Delegation can learn from its own successes in supporting Liberia's General Auditing Commission. It also needs to step up the adoption of the European Commission's "backbone strategy" for "reforming technical cooperation".

R5: Improve coordination and coherence of assistance

The EU Delegation also should improve the strategic orientation of sector coordination, i.e. in particular in education, capacity development and food security in order to increase the overall coherence of donor support as such, and its alignment with Government-owned structures and mechanisms. First and foremost, the Delegation will need to develop clear operational and strategic principles for donor coordination in main sectors (education, local economic development / decentralisation, health), based on a joint assessment of the options for Government-led coordination in Liberia.

R6: Improve monitoring, supervision and oversight

The EU Delegation needs to increase attention on supervision, monitoring and evaluation of EC-financed projects, including those covered by contribution agreements with multilateral organisations. Weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation have affected amongst others EC financed interventions in food security, and DDDR. Problems in other areas, such as the targeting flaws in the EC's support to income generation could have been detected earlier had more stringent monitoring and evaluation provisions been in place. In particular, the EU Delegation needs to make better use of the ROM missions and reports.

R7: Improve mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues

The EU Delegation needs to critically review the practice of "mainstreaming" of cross-cutting issues in Liberia and use the results of this review to refocus its mainstreaming approach in important sectors, such as education, health and county development. This needs to start by adapting concepts such as "gender" and "environment" to the particular post-conflict circumstances in Liberia and by developing customised operational principles and guidelines for the Commission's main sectors.

Figure 1: Map of Liberia



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose and Objectives of the Evaluation

The evaluation of the Commission's co-operation with Liberia was part of the 2009 evaluation programme as approved by External Relations and Development Commissioners. The main objectives of the evaluation, as laid out in the ToR, were:

- To provide the relevant external co-operation services of the European Commission (EC) and the wider public with an *overall independent assessment* of the Commission's past and current cooperation relations with Liberia;
- To identify *key lessons* in order to improve the *current and future strategies* and programmes of the Commission (emphases added by the consultant).

These objectives have to be considered in the context of the overall priorities of the European Commission. The systematic and timely evaluation of its expenditure programmes is one of these priorities. As stated in the Terms of Reference (ToR), evaluations of this kind are meant to:

- Account for the management, i.e., the use, of the allocated funds and to
- Promote a lesson-learning culture throughout the organisation.

The evaluation therefore was designed and carried out to strike an appropriate balance between a) adopting a wide enough scope that will allow a comprehensive evaluation of the EC strategy in order to fulfil the above accountability requirement and b) narrowing the scope where necessary in order to be able to produce sufficiently specific and relevant lessons that can be used by the EC and its partners to increase the results-orientation of its support.

1.2. Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation covered the Commission's co-operation with Liberia and its implementation for the period 1999-2008. In addition, the evaluation looked ahead and tried to develop lessons learned for fine-tuning the implementation of the present programme 2008-2013.

The evaluators assessed:

- The relevance and coherence of the Commission's co-operation strategies for the periods 1999-2008 (two previous programming cycles) and 2008-2013. The consistency of EC strategy in Liberia with the general policy framework of the EC towards developing countries was considered.
- The implementation of the Commission's co-operation, focusing on effectiveness, impact and efficiency for the period 1999-2008 on focal sectors and other important funding sectors (County development, Education, Institutional development, Reintegration, Peace Process, Conflict Prevention), and on intended effects for the period under the programming cycle 2008-2013. The evaluation provides a detailed analysis of the results achieved and lessons learned.
- The coherence and complementarity of the Commission strategies with the national strategies and the interventions of other donors, notably the Member States (MS) as well as the EC value added were also analysed.

Thematically, the evaluation focused on the sectors requested in the ToR and which are the core of the EC strategic response through the European Development Fund (EDF) 8, 9 and 10 periods. The following main sectors were identified:

- Programmes functioning through a civil war and a fragile state
- Post conflict rehabilitation programmes (incl. county development and education)
- Capacity building programmes
- Support to the Peace Process

- Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) (coordination/ continuity with actions of the European Commission Humanitarian Aid (ECHO))
- Income generation
- Infrastructure
- Specific actions devoted to a post crisis state (post conflict programmes, humanitarian assistance, food security (FS))

The analysis of these sectors and issues covered the whole mix of instruments, approaches, financing modalities used under EC assistance, based on a full inventory of its funding during the period under review.

The evaluation also took into account the results of the thematic evaluation of the EC support to Conflict Prevention and Peace Building and specifically assessed if relevant instructions regarding “conflict prevention/ peace building” are correctly applied in the support to Liberia.

1.3. Objectives and Structure of the Final Report

The main objective of this final report is to present a synthesis of the evaluation findings and also outline the main conclusions and recommendations following from these findings. The report has been kept short and concise in order to allow quick access to the findings. A detailed analysis of findings and evidence for each indicator and judgment criteria as well as further background information for all evaluation questions can be found in the Evaluation Matrix in the Annex.

In addition to the findings, this report also outlines the methodology chosen for this evaluation, the strategic context of EC cooperation that needs to be taken into account when assessing the performance of EC support and finally a short description and analysis of the support strategy of the European Commission in Liberia. Supporting documentation to the methodological approach and the data collection are compiled in the Annex.

2. METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION

Based on the methodology developed by the EC's Joint Evaluation Unit, this country level evaluation has followed five phases:

- (i) a **preparation phase**;
- (ii) a **desk phase**, divided into an *inception phase* which has further defined the scope of the evaluation by defining a series of evaluation questions, judgement criteria and indicators and the *conclusion of the desk phase*, in which the team started compiling documented evidence for each of the indicators and formulated preliminary answers or hypotheses for each of the evaluation questions;
- (iii) a **field phase**, in which the team has collected additional information and has validated the preliminary hypotheses formulated during the desk phase;
- (iv) a **synthesis phase** which has brought together the results of the field and desk phases. This report corresponds to the end of the synthesis phase;
- (v) subsequently, the evaluation will enter its **feedback and dissemination phase**, to allow relevant stakeholders to learn about and to comment on the findings of this evaluation.

2.1. Evaluation Questions, Judgment Criteria and Indicators

As mentioned above, the evaluation is centred on a number of evaluation questions that were developed based on an in-depth analysis of the EC policy framework and the specific EC strategy towards Liberia contained in the respective CSPs. The evaluators used this analysis to identify the intervention logic of the EC for EDF9 and EDF10². The resulting evaluation questions were selected in cooperation with the reference group for this evaluation and formed the structure of the evaluation process. Subsequently, the evaluators identified suitable judgement criteria and indicators and discussed and eventually selected them in cooperation with the steering group. Both the judgment criteria and the indicators were formally approved in the inception report; however, they were further refined and amended during the desk phase of the evaluation. In addition to the changes to indicators and judgment criteria in the desk phase, the evaluators made very few changes to some indicators during the field phase (see Annex Table 82).

2.2. Data Collection Process

2.2.1. Data Collection during the Desk Phase

In the elaboration of the desk study the evaluators have completed the following tasks:

- Collected data and documentation from EC headquarters (CRIS, OLAS databases) and the EU Delegation in Monrovia, other donors, Government Agencies and Ministries, and the Internet. In particular the search for documents in the EU Delegation in Monrovia produced a lot of useful material. The search of CRIS, on the other hand, did not add a lot of value, mainly because most of the documents had not been uploaded into the database.
- Conducted interviews with EC officials in Brussels and the EU Delegation³ and met key stakeholders in Monrovia for preliminary discussions⁴.

² For EDF8, the evaluators had to revert to the objectives of the individual Financing Agreement because no CSP existed for the time prior to 2006.

³ See Annex 5 for a list of persons met

⁴ See Annex 5 for a list of persons met

- Held a team meeting in Brussels to discuss the overall strategy for this evaluation and to share the documents that had been collected and to prioritize their analysis.
- Analysed the data available and elaborated preliminary hypothesis to be tested during the field mission. The desk analysis benefited greatly from the thorough document search in Monrovia that had produced an unexpected wealth of information on most EC-financed programmes.
- Elaborated the methodological approach for the field phase.

The resulting desk report set out findings and evidences and also the first answers to these evaluation questions. The evaluators developed a set of hypotheses that were subsequently tested during the field visit.

2.2.2. Data Collection during the Field Visit

The primary aim of the field visit was to test the preliminary hypotheses that the team had formulated during the desk phase and to provide additional information on the issues the team had pinpointed during the desk phase. The evaluators used the 12 days they were able to spend in Liberia as follows:

- The team conducted individual interviews with EC stakeholders (GoL, including Line Ministries and other agencies, donors, Civil Society, private sector organisations, members of the Liberian press. In total, the team held interviews in Monrovia and in 4 out of Liberia's 15 counties (Bomi, Bong, Montserrado / Greater Monrovia and Nimba).
- Conducted 13 focus groups with EC beneficiaries, i.e.:
 - *On DDDR and Peace-Building*: with members of a local union of motorcycle taxis; with members of a local Peace Council; with beneficiaries of EC-financed vocational trainings and other former fighters who benefitted from EC support.
 - *On Food Security and Humanitarian Aid*: with beneficiaries of an NGO-run food security project in three separate villages; and with beneficiaries of ECHO-provided humanitarian assistance that had been funded with EDF money, also in three separate villages.
 - *On Income Generation and Infrastructure*: with female and male beneficiaries of two EC-financed projects, i.e. on road construction and market hall construction, in two separate groups, differentiated by gender.
 - *On Community Development and Education*: with teachers who had participated in the EC-financed construction of a school auditorium for a local primary school.
- In the process, the team visited the sites of current and former EC-financed programme and projects in Monrovia and the four above-mentioned counties, including:
 - The Second Rehabilitation Programme (1998 – 2001)
 - The Reintegration Programme for Returnees and Displaced People (2001 – 2006)
 - The various DDDR contributions of the European Commission, i.e. to the UNDP-managed DDDR trust fund
 - The Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and Capacity Building Programme (2003 – 2009)
 - Electricity Grid Rehabilitation in Monrovia (2006 – 2011)
 - Various Food Security Projects, implemented both by EuropeAid and ECHO, funded with EDF resources
 - Rehabilitation of Phebe Hospital (1998 – 2001)

2.2.3. Selection of Programmes included in Field Phase

The evaluators had selected the programmes to be included in visits and interviews during the field phase to make sure that:

- All major primary commitments from EDF8 and EDF9 would be included
- All thematic budget line projects that were of particular strategic importance for the European Commission, i.e. those with regard to peace building and conflict prevention, food security or health / health infrastructure would be included
- A significant portion of the overall commitments of EC support would be included in the field phase. Overall, the programmes and projects examined during the field phase, with field visits, interviews and focus groups, accounted for approximately €170.0m of the EC commitments from EDF8 and 9, out of a total of approximately €175.0m of total commitments from both EDFs.

The resulting list of projects and programmes is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: EC-financed Projects and Programmes included in the Field Phase

<i>Decision reference</i>	<i>Contract title</i>	<i>Budget (contracted)</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Evaluation Questions</i>
EDF8				
FED/1998 /013-789	Second Rehabilitation Programme	€25.0m	1998-2001	EQ1: Relevance; EQ3: LRRD; EQ5: Food Security; EQ7: Infrastructure; EQ10: Adequacy of Cooperation Frameworks and Implementation Mechanisms
FED/2001 /015-489	Reintegration Programme for Returnees and Displaced People <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Development Component: Small Scale Projects • Integrated Nutritional Programme • Livestock Development Project 	€20.6m	2001 - 2005	EQ1: Relevance; EQ3: LRRD; EQ4: Peace Building and Conflict Prevention; EQ6: Income Generation; EQ10: Adequacy of Cooperation Frameworks and Implementation Mechanisms
EDF9				
FED/2003 /016-417	Post Conflict Rehabilitation and Capacity Building Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDDR component, e.g.: • CRC component • ISP component 	€ 43.1m	2003-2011	EQ1: Relevance; EQ2: DDDR; EQ3: LRRD; EQ4: Peace-Building and Conflict Prevention; EQ6: Income Generation; EQ7: Infrastructure; EQ8: Capacity Development; EQ9: Education; EQ10: Cooperation Frameworks and Implementation Mechanisms
FED/2003/ 016-344	Support to the Peace Process in Liberia	€ 2.9m	2003 - 2006	EQ4: Peace-Building and Conflict Prevention
FED/2005/ 017-819	Demobilisation and Reintegration	€ 9.1m	2005-2011	EQ2: DDDR; EQ6: Income Generation
FED/2006/ 020-717	EC Support to Education in Liberia	€ 11.7m	2006 - 2012	EQ9: Education, EQ10: Cooperation Frameworks & Implementation Mechanisms

<i>Decision reference</i>	<i>Contract title</i>	<i>Budget (contracted)</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>Evaluation Questions</i>
FED/2007/019-186	Electricity Grid Rehabilitation in Monrovia	€ 14.4m	2006 - 2011	EQ7: Infrastructure
FED/2007/020-795	Liberia County Development	€ 25.0m	2007 – 2013	EQ6: Income Generation; EQ7: Infrastructure; EQ8: Capacity Development; EQ10: Cooperation Frameworks and Implementation Mechanisms
FED/2007/020-824	Institutional Support and Capacity Building Programme (ISCBP)	€ 7.4m	2007 – 2013	EQ4: Peace-Building and Conflict Prevention; EQ8: Capacity Development
Thematic Budget Lines				
FOOD/2004/016-699	Food Security Programme 2004 - NGO Programme Liberia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agro-economic Assistance to 6,460 rural farmers in Bong and Lofa counties • Sustainable Improvement of living conditions of the most vulnerable populations of Bong county 	€2m	2006-2008	EQ3: LRRD, EQ5: Food Security
REH/1998/004-316	Rehabilitation of Phebe Hospital, Lutheran World Federation	€1.6m	1998-2001	EQ7: Infrastructure
NGOPVD/2004/064-386	Dealing with a health crisis among war affected people	€0.4m	2004-2006	EQ7: Infrastructure
NSAPVD/2008/152-057	Supporting Youth Livelihoods in Liberia and Sierra Leone	€0.9m	2008-2011	EQ4: Peace-Building and Conflict Prevention, EQ6: Income Generation
ECHO (EDF funded⁵)				
FED/2004/017/421	Humanitarian Assistance to returnees, ECHO	€4.3m	2004	EQ3: LRRD, EQ5: Food Security
FED/2005/017-798	Humanitarian Assistance to returnees, ECHO	€2.7m	2005	EQ3: LRRD, EQ5: Food Security
FED/2006/020-713	Humanitarian Assistance to returnees, ECHO	€1.4m	2006	EQ3: LRRD, EQ5: Food Security

2.3. Approach for Data Analysis and for Ensuring Data Reliability and Validity of Conclusions

The evaluation was designed to ensure a high level of data reliability and validity of conclusions by combining the use of qualitative and quantitative data and to rely both on primary and secondary data sources. The objective was to use the overlapping strengths and weaknesses of different data collection tools to assemble a data set and an overall body of information that would allow the evaluators to check the correctness of information from one source with data from another. Table 2 shows how the evaluators have used primary and secondary sources to compile the data set underlying this evaluation.

The evaluators used data collected with these different tools and from these different sources in

⁵ Note: This evaluation did not look at the entire aid portfolio of ECHO in Liberia, but only consider ECHO projects that had been funded with money from the European Development Fund (B Envelope). ECHO's engagement in Liberia goes beyond what is being discussed in this report.

their analysis, going through the following steps:

1. Throughout, and with increasing intensity towards the end of the field phase, the evaluation team compiled the emerging findings and cross-cutting lessons in brief internal work sessions. The results from these work sessions also helped in the preparation of the PowerPoint Presentation that was used in debriefing with the EU Delegation (see below).
2. Before their departure from Liberia, the team held a debriefing with the EU Delegation to present the team's hypotheses at the end of the field phase. This debriefing very much functioned as an opportunity to check the validity, i.e. credibility of the team's preliminary conclusions, or to build on them, where necessary.
3. Right after its time in Liberia, the team conducted an internal team workshop to bring together the findings from the different sectors in a more comprehensive way than had been possible during the country visit. The team also began forming an overall assessment of EC support.
4. The team also gave a presentation of the findings and conclusions from the country visit at EC headquarters in Brussels to the members of the reference group for this evaluation. Just like the debriefing with the EU Delegation in Monrovia, the main aim of this meeting was to increase the credibility/ validity of the team's conclusions.
5. During the synthesis phase, the team deepened the analysis, finalized the judgements according to judgement criteria and provided answers to the evaluation questions.

Table 2: Approach to Triangulation of this Evaluation

Evaluation Question	Delegation	National Government	Sub-national Government	Civil Society	Private Sector	Beneficiaries	Other donors	Data collection methods
1. Relevance	▲ ○	▲ ○	▲ ○	○	▲ ○	▲	▲ ○	Document analysis, interviews
2. DDDR	▲ ○	▲ ○	▲	▲	○	▲ ○	▲ ○	Document analysis, interviews, field visits, focus groups
3. LRRD	▲ ○	▲ ○		▲ ○		▲	▲	Data and document analysis, focus groups, interviews, field visit
4. Peace-building	▲ ○	▲ ○	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲ ○	Data and document analysis, interviews, field visits, interviews
5. Food Security	▲ ○	▲ ○	▲	▲ ○	▲	▲	▲ ○	Data and document analysis, interviews, focus groups, field visit
6. Income Generation	▲ ○	▲ ○	▲		▲ ○	▲	▲ ○	Data and document analysis, interviews, focus groups, field visits
7. Infrastructure	▲ ○	▲ ○	▲ ○		▲	▲	▲ ○	Data and document analysis, field visit, interviews, focus group
8. Capacity Building	▲ ○	▲ ○	▲	▲		▲	▲ ○	Data and document analysis, field visit, interviews
9. Education	▲ ○	▲ ○	▲ ○			▲	▲ ○	Data and document analysis, interviews
10. Cooperation Frameworks/ Mechanisms	▲ ○	▲ ○				▲	▲ ○	Data and document analysis, interviews

▲ = Primary Sources (Interviews, Focus Groups), ○ = Secondary Sources (Evaluations, studies, project reports)

The synthesis phase was terminated with a seminar in Monrovia where the findings of the evaluation were presented and discussed. The results of the seminar have been taken into account in this final report and the minutes and slides of the seminar are attached in the Annex.

2.4. Limitations

While carrying out this evaluation, the team had to deal with and respond to a number of constraints, as laid out in Table 3:

Table 3: Main Constraints faced during the Evaluation

Constraint	Evaluators' Response
One evaluation team member had to be replaced, due to serious health concerns that made his continued work on the evaluation impossible.	The team took on a new colleague (Stefan Jansen), who took over the portfolio of the previous expert. Any delays to the work plan could be avoided.
Limited availability of e-copies of documents in CRIS	Team focused the preparatory visit to Liberia (3/2010) on searching and scanning the archives at the EU Delegation in Monrovia. The resulting collection of documents provided information on most primary commitments and thus was a good basis for the desk report.
Low access to hardcopy documents, and in particular financial data, for older EC-financed programmes (e.g. "Second Rehabilitation Programme; EDF8 Reintegration Programme)	Team attempted to directly contact consulting companies and individual experts who had worked on the respective programmes. In some cases, this helped the team to acquire key documents, such as "End of Programme" reports or other, more detailed information (e.g. the electronic archive of all Small Scale Grants disbursed under the EDF8 Reintegration Programme). However, not all information gaps could be filled successfully. This affected, among other things, the evidence base on the cost-effective use of EC resources (EQ10).
Significant staff turnover in the EU Delegation between 2000 and 2008	The team used interviews with current staff (in Headquarters (HQ) as well as the Delegation) to identify individuals who had been at the EU Delegation in the early years, i.e. between 2000 and 2007. Fortuitously, at least some of these staff members were employed by the EC, albeit in different positions. Others were still in Monrovia, but were no longer working for the European Commission. In the case of former project staff, the team used names of individuals and organisations to track the whereabouts of former staff members, and in particular of Liberians who no longer worked for EC projects, but who still remained in Monrovia or at least in Liberia. In many cases, the evaluators were able to find former technical staff, e.g. of the Second Rehabilitation Programme (1998 – 2001, the EDF8 Reintegration Programme (2001 – 2006) or the Post Conflict Rehabilitation and Capacity Building Programme (2003 – 2009).
Low initial availability of and access to project staff of closed EC projects	
Low availability of Government-provided data on EC cooperation and donor cooperation overall	As much as possible, the team attempted to use information from other donors to make up for the dearth of data from the Liberian Government.
Country visit coincided with planting season in Liberia, which made it difficult to meet farmers in their villages	The evaluation team was partly able to resolve this problem by leaving very early to the villages to encounter the target group before they set off to the fields and by spending the night in the villages to meet people also in the late afternoon and the evening after they returned from the fields.
Limited time available for field visit	The team attempted to secure interview appointments before going to Liberia at least for the first 3-5 days in country, in part with the help of the EU Delegation but also with the help of other EC stakeholders. The brief time in Liberia did only allow field visits to the counties that directly surrounded Monrovia (i.e. Montserrado, Bong, Bomi and Nimba).

3. STRATEGIC CONTEXT OF EC COOPERATION

With a coastline of 579 km and a surface of 111,370 km² Liberia is a rather small tropical African country with a very low population density. The estimated population in July 2009 was 3,441,790.

3.1. Political and Socio-economic Context

After 14 years, the devastating Liberian civil war came to an end in August 2003. The war had started in 1989 and cost about 250,000 lives. It finally ended with a comprehensive peace agreement and the resignation of President Charles Taylor who was exiled to Nigeria and in 2006 transferred to the custody of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Due to concerns about regional security, the Special Court arranged for the trial to be held not in Sierra Leone itself, but instead at The Hague within the facilities of the International Criminal Court. Based on the Accra Peace Accord an all-inclusive National Transitional Government (NTGL) was installed on October 14th, 2003, and in late 2005, a democratic election, described as free and fair despite fraud allegations brought Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to power.

Today, Liberia is still one of the least developed countries worldwide (Human Development Index (HDI) 2009 rank: 169 out of 182 listed countries) and is generally characterised as a fragile state. 83.7% of the population live in absolute poverty on less than US\$1.25 per day. Six years after the end of the civil war, both the physical infrastructure and the economic production system in Liberia are still almost completely destroyed. The Liberian health and public education systems have collapsed, and infrastructure and water and sanitation structures have equally deteriorated over the years and are today non-existent in rural areas. Rural infrastructure is in a desperate state of affairs. The road network is extremely limited, and very few roads can be used throughout the year.

Conflict and population displacements have also overburdened resident communities' fragile socio-economic resources. Of a former population of 2.8 million inhabitants, approximately 300,000 persons were internally displaced during the war, and another 300,000 Liberians fled to neighbouring countries. For a long time, a large number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been reluctant to accept resettlement programmes due to security concerns prior to the 2005 election, and to the insufficiency of basic social services such as health and education. Population displacements, together with the poor road infrastructure, led to an almost complete standstill in agricultural production and thus to a considerable decrease in incomes; 76.9% of Liberia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is produced in the agricultural sector by 70% of the country's labour force.

Since 2003, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has shown a strong presence throughout the country. In 2003, UNMIL launched a DDRR (disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration) programme. In December 2005, the disarmament programme resulted in UNMIL declaring Liberia 'arms-free' after having disarmed more than twice as many combatants as originally anticipated, i.e. more than 100,000 combatants. Of these combatants 11,780 were child soldiers.

3.2. Evolution of the Economic Situation

From an economic perspective, civil war and government mismanagement have destroyed much of Liberia's economy, especially the infrastructure in and around the capital. Many businessmen have fled the country, taking capital and expertise with them. Richly endowed with water, mineral resources, forests, and a climate favourable to agriculture, Liberia had been a producer and exporter of basic products – primarily raw timber and rubber before the economy was degraded due to the civil war. In 2007, Liberia reached fourth place among the 10 African top performers regarding annual economic growth due to its mineral richness. Since the lifting of

the United Nations ban on Liberian diamond exports in April 2007, development in this sector has resumed.

3.3. Liberia's Policy Framework

Between 1997 and 2003 Liberia was internationally isolated and remained without a capable government or a coherent policy framework. Even after a transitional Government took over in 2003, policy capacities remained very weak. The process of establishing a policy framework was dominated by the international donor community. A Joint Needs Assessment (JNA), carried out in 2003 by the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank (WB) and endorsed by the NTGL in January 2004, defined the priority requirements for Liberia's transition from relief and recovery.

After the 2005 election of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Liberia's Government started to take first steps towards the development of a coherent policy framework. The GoL immediately elaborated a 150-day plan of action to be implemented in the first half of 2006. This plan was followed by an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy (IPRS) and in 2008 by a full Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) focusing on Security, Economic Revitalisation, Governance, Rule of Law, Infrastructure and Basic Services.

3.4. Development Assistance

Liberia depends heavily on support by the international donor community. While during the years of conflict most donors withdrew from Liberia and Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitments came close to zero, aid commitments have been steadily increasing since the signature of the peace agreement and even more since the Government of President Johnson-Sirleaf took office in 2005. The new government is perceived to be a reliable partner in its relations with the international community. Prospects are that Liberia can restore its full rights with international financial institutions and attract more donors to actively support the country.

As of 2009, Liberia had a non-accrual status with the World Bank (WB), which makes the country ineligible for regular International Development Assistance (IDA) credits. Nevertheless the WB has an ongoing grant portfolio supported via pre-arrears clearance grants and is planning to contribute about US\$35m per year, mainly for assistance in economic management, institutional capacity building, community empowerment and infrastructure. Liberia reached the decision point under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative in 2008 and is targeting to reach the HIPC completion point in 2010. Once this happens, most of the remaining debt of currently US\$1.7 billion⁶ would likely be cancelled; a chance for Liberia to normalise its relations with the investment community and become eligible for new credits.

Table 4 and Table 5 below present the commitments and disbursements of ODA in the period from 1999 to 2008. The EC has committed a total of US\$349.94m (in current dollars) in the period between 1999 and 2008, about 13% of the total aid amount committed to the country. The EC and European Union (EU) member states together have committed almost half of the total aid pledged.

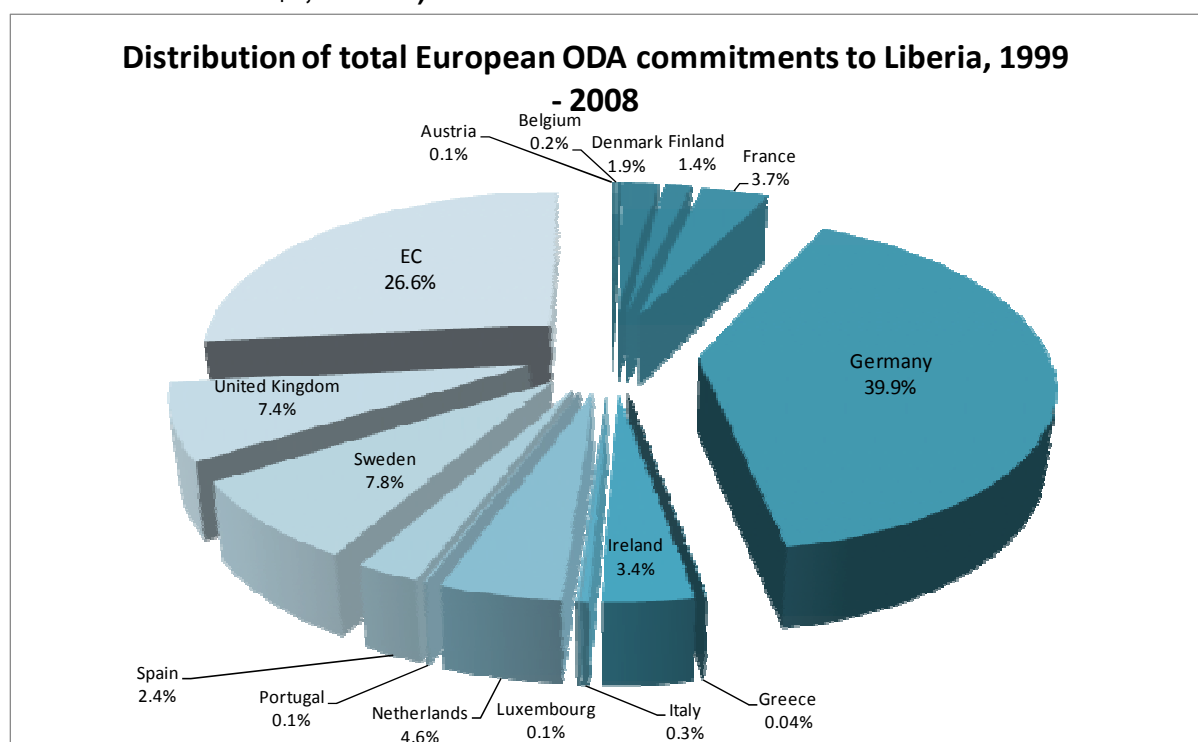
⁶ Which is still higher than the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) 2009 of US\$1.4 billion.

Table 4: Commitments of Development Assistance to Liberia, 1999-2008 (Current US\$ m)⁷

	In US\$ m (current prices)	Percentage of total assistance
EU (MS and EC)	1,315.98	49%
Out of which EC	349.94	13%
Other bilateral donors	827.97	31%
Multilateral donors	523.39	20%
Total assistance	2,667.34	100%

Source: OECD/DAC data, extracted 02/12/2010

Figure 2: Distribution of total European ODA commitments to Liberia, 1999 – 2008 (total committed amount: US\$1,315.98m)



Source: OECD/DAC data, extracted 02/12/2010

In the group of European donors, i.e. including EU Member States and the European Commission, Germany committed the largest share of assistance to Liberia, accounting for nearly 40% of the total commitments from 1999 to 2008. The European Commission is thus the European donor with the second largest commitment of European funds to Liberia, having pledged nearly 27% of European ODA (see Figure 1). The UK and Sweden fall into third place among European donors, each with approximately 7% of European aid commitments to Liberia in the period from 1999 to 2008. Among the 27 EU member states, only Germany and France maintain embassies in Liberia. The United Kingdom (UK) and Sweden have only one-person postings with limited support staff. Denmark, the Netherlands, Ireland, Finland and Greece have been intervening in different sectors.

Actual EC aid disbursements account for only for 8% of total assistance, suggesting that the EC committed far more funds than it was able to spend.

⁷ Data in Table 4 and 5 as well as in figure 1 is presented in US\$ as this is the currency utilised for the official Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) figures which were used as data sources.

Table 5: Gross Disbursements of Development Assistance to Liberia, 1999-2008 (Current US\$ m)

	In US\$ m (current prices)	Percentage of total assistance
EU (Member states and EC)	1,241.66	36%
Out of which EC	272.00	8%
Other bilateral donors	877.83	25%
Multilateral donors	1,366.68	39%
Total assistance	3,486.17	100%

Source: OECD/DAC data, extracted 02/12/2010

Member States' funding is mainly disbursed through UN agencies and trust funds (TF). Co-financing, pool funding and multi-trust donor funds are being discussed, but not many have been established yet. A Partner Forum for Liberia was conducted 2007 in Washington and a Liberia Poverty Reduction Forum in 2008 was held in Berlin, both with the objective of attracting further support. Commitment and disbursement increases show that donor interest is developing at European and international level as donors see some progress in governance.

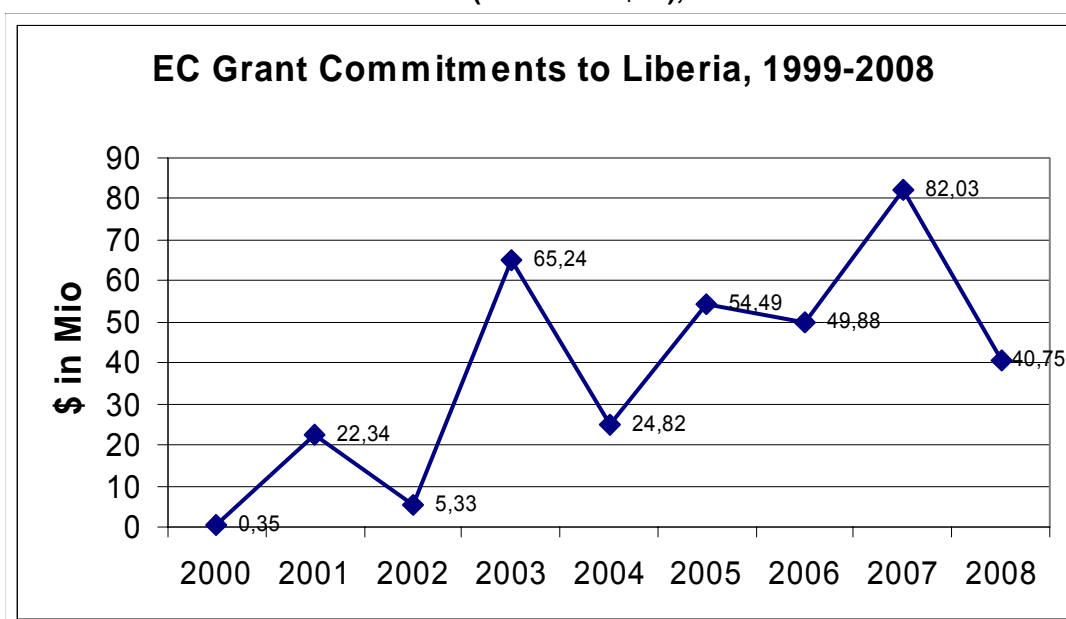
The most important bilateral donor is the United States of America (USA) with commitments of US\$190.0m for the Financial Year 2006/07 alone. The Bertelsmann Transformation Index highlights China's growing engagement in the country, once Liberia had re-established ties with China in 2003 after 14 years of broken-off relations due to Liberia's recognition of Taiwan.

4. EC CO-OPERATION WITH LIBERIA

4.1. EC Assistance in Figures

In 1990, the European Commission discontinued regular EDF assistance to Liberia in response to repeated human rights violations, corruption and failure to respect the rule of law. The EC continued assistance on a limited basis in order to respond to growing humanitarian needs. In 1994, the First Rehabilitation Programme (€15.2m) was started, to be followed by the Second Rehabilitation Programme (€17.6m). Both programmes were implemented through NGOs and private contractors on the basis of Article 255 of the Lomé Convention. Between 1997 and 2001 two large rehabilitation programmes were funded amounting to €52m.

Figure 3: EC Grant Commitments to Liberia (Current US\$ m), 1999-2008



Source: Authors, from OECD/DAC data, extracted 02/12/2010

Between 2003 and 2005, the EC committed €55.1m of EDF9 funds under Article 255⁸ of the Lomé Convention. The intention was to strengthen the peace after signature of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2003 and in particular to aid with the demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants and the reintegration of refugees and IDPs after the fighting had come to an end. Regular EDF assistance resumed with the signature of a Country Strategy Paper (CSP) in 2006 when the newly elected government took office. Under this CSP / NIP, the EC committed a total of €27.0m to its two focal sectors, education and county development. €7.4m were committed to finance institutional support and capacity development in Liberia. Another significant amount of aid (€12.4m) was committed to support the rehabilitation of the electricity grid in Monrovia (compare Table 6).

⁸ Article 255 of the Lomé Convention allows the European Commission to grant assistance “to ACP States taking in refugees or returnees to meet acute needs not covered by emergency assistance, to implement in the longer term projects and action programmes aimed at self-sufficiency and the integration or reintegration of such people”, and also to “help with the voluntary integration or reintegration of persons who have had to leave their homes as a result of conflicts or natural disasters”.

Table 6: EC Commitments to Liberia under EDF9 (2003 – 2007)

Project No.	Sector/Programme title	Global commitment (€)
9 LBR 02	Support to the Peace Process in Liberia	2,899,608
9 LBR 03 / 07	Post Conflict Rehabilitation & Capacity Building Programme	43,135,462
9 LBR 08	Demobilisation and Reintegration	9,100,000
Commitments previous to CSP / NIP (EDF9) (Subtotal)		55,135,070
9 LBR 09 / 17	Electricity Grid Rehabilitation in Monrovia	12,400,000
9 LBR 15	EC Support to Education in Liberia	12,000,000
9 LBR 16	Technical Cooperation Facility	1,500,000
9 LBR 18	Liberia County Development	25,000,000
9 LBR 19	Macro-Economic Stabilisation: partial payment of EIB arrears	3,500,000
9 LBR 20/21	Institutional Support & Capacity Building Programme	7,400,000
Commitments under CSP / NIP (EDF9) (Subtotal)		61,800,000
9 LBR 04	ECHO Humanitarian Aid ⁹	4,300,000
9 LBR 06	ECHO Humanitarian Aid	2,700,000
9 LBR 10	ECHO Humanitarian Aid	1,400,000
Commitments from EDF9 to ECHO		8,400,000
Total Commitments to Liberia from EDF9		125,335,070

Source: Internal figures, EuropeAid, Unit C3

Under the EDF10 National Indicative Programme, the EC significantly increased its allocation of EDF funds to Liberia in comparison to EDF9. In the initial draft of the NIP, the EC had pledged a total of €161.8m to Liberia, €150.0m under Envelope A and €11.8m under Envelope B. This initial allocation was revised, however, in two addenda:

- With the first addendum, the EC increased the allocation to Envelope B by €4.14m in response to the soaring international food prices that also were affecting the food security situation in Liberia.
- With the second addendum, the EC re-allocated €20.2m from the initially foreseen €125.0m to provide general budget support to Liberia, in order to acknowledge and underpin the progress Liberia had achieved in improving macro-economic stability and public finance management, and to help the country to face the additional challenges posed by the global economic and financial crisis.

Table 7 shows the initial and revised allocations of EDF10 funds to Liberia.

Table 7: Initial and revised EDF allocations to Liberia under CSP/NIP for EDF10

Sector / Sub-Sector:	Initial allocation (€m)	Revised allocation (€m)
Total LRRD in a post-conflict fragile state (focal sector)	€145.0	€145.0
Sub-Sector: Rehabilitation (basic infrastructure and basic services)	€125.0	€104.8
Sub-Sector: Governance (institutional and capacity building)	€20.0	€20.0
General Budget Support	N/A	€20.2
Non-focal Sector	€5.0	€5.0
EDF10 Allocation (Envelope A)	€150.0	€150.0
EDF10 Allocation (Envelope B)	€11.8	€15.9
Total EDF10 Allocation (Envelopes A&B)	€161.8	€165.0

Source: Official figures, European Commission, Unit D2

⁹ ECHO projects and programmes are usually not considered in EuropeAid Country Level Evaluations. However, in the case of Liberia, ECHO humanitarian assistance was in part funded with resources from the European Development Fund. The actions funded with this money have therefore been considered in this evaluation.

In addition to EDF funds, the EC committed a total of €34.6m through the various budget lines (BL) (Table 8) between 1999 and 2008, with a focus on food security interventions.

Table 8: EC Budget Line Support to Liberia, 1999-2008 (€ m)

	In € m	Percentage of total assistance of EC Budget lines
Food Security	15.1	43.7%
Environment	6	17.4%
Non-state actors (NSA)	4.4	12.7%
Rehabilitation	3.4	9.9%
Health	1.9	5.5%
Democracy	1.8	5.2%
Rapid Response Mech.	1.4	4.1%
Gender	0.5	1.4%
Information	0.05	0.1%
Total assistance of EC Budget lines	34.55	100%

Source: CRIS data, extracted 27/01/2010

4.2. Overall EC Intervention Logic

4.2.1. *EC Intervention Logic in Liberia, 1999 – 2005 (EDF8¹⁰ and EDF9¹¹)*

Since discontinuing normal EDF assistance to Liberia in 1990, EC-Liberian co-operation had continued on the basis of “intensified political dialogue” and consultations, supported by Article 8 and Articles 96 and 97 of the Cotonou Agreement. Until 2006, the EC did not develop and agree on formal *Country Strategy Papers* with the Liberian authorities. During the 1990-2006 period, EC assistance focused on the following themes or issues:

- **Rehabilitation, i.e. of infrastructure, including water and sanitation, roads and educational facilities**, which was supported in particular by two separate programmes, the “2nd Rehabilitation Programme” (EDF8, 1999 – 2001) and the “Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and Capacity Building Programme” (EDF9, 2003 – 2011). In addition, Liberia received funds from the Rehabilitation Budget Line and the Non-governmental Organisation (NGO) Co-financing Budget Line of the European Commission.
- **Reintegration of returnees and displaced people and demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants**; supported in particular through a €20.6m. *Reintegration Programme for Returnees and Displaced People* (2001 – 2005) and a contribution of €9.1m. to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) administered trust fund for Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration (DDRR):
- **Food Security**, financed exclusively through the *EC Thematic Budget Line on Food Security* (approx €11.4m).
- **Development of organisational capacity** in the Liberian Government, supported primarily through an *Institutional Support Component* of the *Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and Capacity Building Programme* (2003-2011, EDF9). In addition, the *EDF8 Reintegration Programme for Returnees and Displaced People* (EDF8, 2001-2005) aimed at the improvement of community capacity for self-directed development.

¹⁰ EDF8 ran from 1995 until 2000

¹¹ EDF9 ran from 2000 until 2007

4.2.2. EC Intervention Logic in Liberia, 2006 – 2007 (EDF9, based on Country Strategy Paper)

In January 2006, Louis Michel, the EC Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid and the newly elected President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, signed the first Country Strategy Paper for EC-Liberia Cooperation since the European Commission had discontinued EDF assistance 16 years before. The paper focused on the following sectors and issues:

- **Focal Sector 1: County Development:** The intention with this focal area was twofold: a) to help with the rehabilitation of economic and social infrastructure (primary health care; primary, secondary and vocational education; community water and sanitation infrastructure and access roads) and b) to improve the performance of public services in selected counties. In choosing this approach, the EC tried to emphasise the needs of Liberia's rural population over those of the urban population in Monrovia. Working directly with county governments was meant to allow the EC to channel assistance more directly to these rural beneficiaries. Eventually, assistance was meant to translate into improved access to education (as a complement to EC education support initiatives at the national level), health services and improved water and sanitation and the overall welfare of the rural population.
- **Focal Sector 2: Education:** The Commission's aim was to help improve the quality of educational outcomes in Liberia by increasing access to quality education. The EC planned to help in the construction of schools, train more teachers and education officers and assist in the development of teaching curricula and learning materials. Supporting non-formal education and training was meant to address the needs of former child soldiers. Finally, the EC also intended to help address the gender disparities in school enrolment and attendance. Strengthening the policy and institutional framework of the Ministry of Education (MoE) was meant to help improve school management and work on the upgrade of monitoring systems in the sector. EC support to the sector was ultimately supposed to help lay the foundations for a sector wide approach.
- **Non-Focal Sector: Institutional Support and Capacity Development:** One intention was to continue earlier EC support to Government Ministries, Agencies of other Offices under the Post Conflict Rehabilitation and Capacity Building Programme "at a smaller scale". In addition, the Commission planned to offer macro-economic support to help clear financial arrears with international financial institutions, including the European Investment Bank. The goal was to make Liberia eligible for Debt Relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative.

Box 1: EC Budget support to Liberia

The EC considered the eventual shift to budget support already in the Country Strategy Paper for the EDF9 in relation to the choice of "County Development" as one of the focal sectors. The strategy states that although "under current circumstances full ownership of the strategy by local institutions is proscribed [...] support to the sector will reflect the need to move progressively from transitional implementation arrangements towards full cooperation based ultimately on budget support". The end-of-term review of the EDF9 in 2006 recommended to "increase the funds available under the A envelope by €5m for budgetary support" (European Commission, 2007b), a subsequent study determined that based on the prevailing circumstances in Liberia, even considering budget support was premature. As a result, no budget support was paid under EDF9. The €5m therefore were to be used for the Technical Cooperation Facility, to increase EC investment in the electricity sector (EDF9) and to clear debt arrears owed to the European Investment Bank.

For EDF10, the EC initially confirmed its hesitation to move to budget support in Liberia, but also left room for the possibility that "the possibility of using budget support will be considered if prospective eligibility improves". A subsequent "ad hoc review" (14 May 2009) recommended to introduce general budget support to the Liberian aid portfolio. The rationale cited in the eventual addendum to the CSP was that general budget support of €20.2m should help Liberia "to move from emergency to a regular development phase, underpinning the significant progress achieved in macroeconomic stability and public finance management, and helping the country to face the additional challenges posed by the economic and financial crisis". The decision to offer budget support to Liberia under EDF10 is outside of the temporal scope of this evaluation (1999 – 2008). This report therefore does not offer an assessment of this decision.

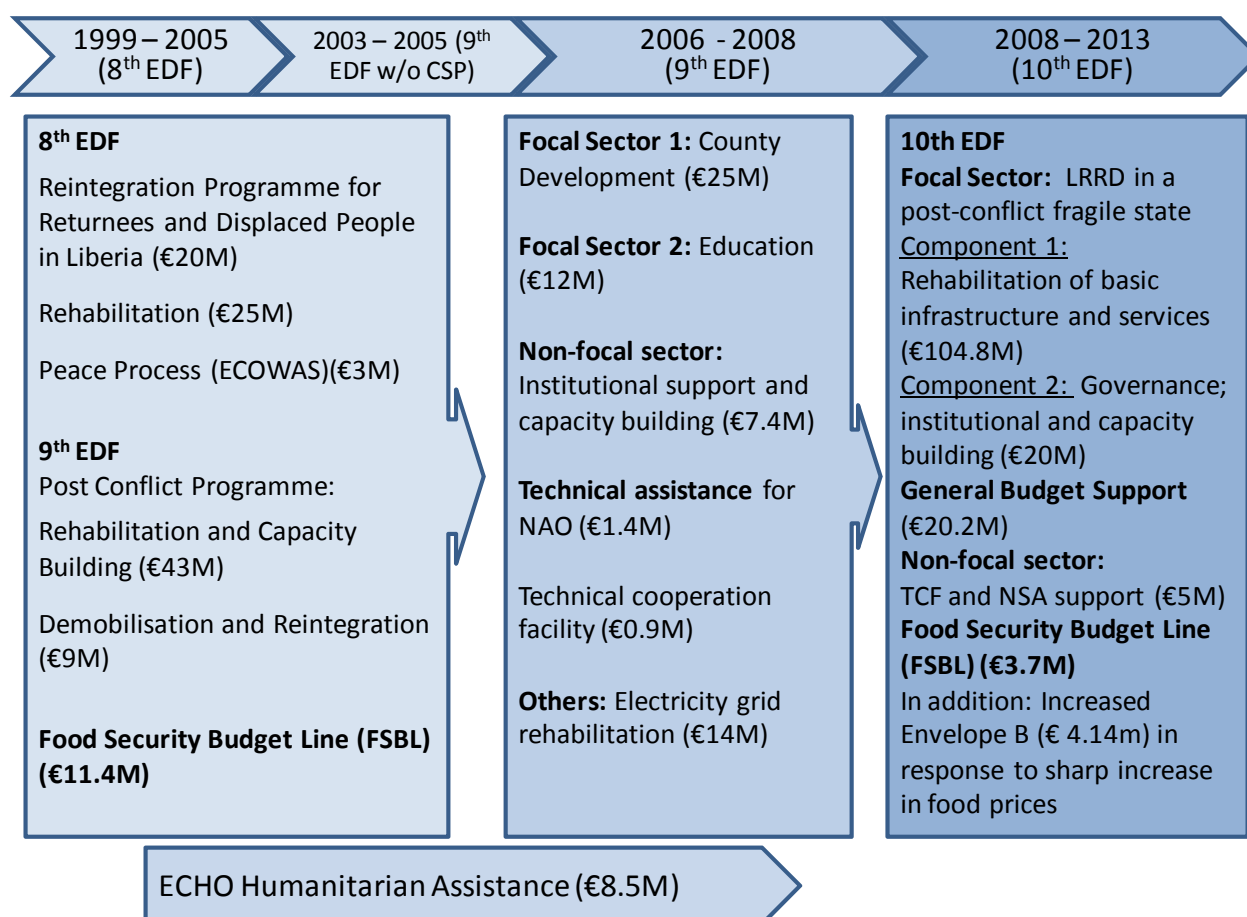
4.2.3. *EC Intervention Logic in Liberia, 2008 – 2013 (EDF10)*

The most recent strategy was shaped by the Commission's desire to preserve maximum flexibility for reacting to emerging needs of the Liberian society. The CSP assumes many of the aspects of the Liberian aid context to be "in flux": at the time of drafting the strategy, the new GoL was still in the process of finalising its Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). Also, it was becoming clearer in the eyes of the Commission that a transition to a development mode of operation would take longer than expected (European Commission, 2007g). The conclusion was that the best response was to base the country strategy on a broad spread of sectors and to streamline the EC approach at an appropriate later time. Sectors and issues included in the CSP are the rehabilitation of infrastructure and services (electricity, water and transport), support to the health sector, and continued support to education. The strategy also leaves open the option to continue previous support for capacity development.

4.3. Evolution of the EC Intervention Logic

Figure 3 below shows the different components of EC support and their evolution over time, i.e., between 1999 and 2013, the year that will mark the end of the EDF10.

Figure 4: Evolution of the EC Cooperation Portfolio, 1999 – 2013¹²



Source: Presentation by consultants

The comparison shows that the early years of EC assistance were clearly focused on the rehabilitation of basic services and infrastructure in Liberia, coupled with support to the reintegration and rehabilitation of displaced people and ex-combatants. The CSP for the EDF9,

¹² Figures for EDF10 represent allocations of funds under the CSP / NIP, not actual aid commitments.

however, seems to shift towards adopting a more development oriented approach, in particular with its support to education. However, the choice and scope of *County Development* as a focal sector certainly is suited to continue some of the reconstruction and rehabilitation activities of the earlier period. Still, compared to the development emphasis of the latter part of the EDF9, the EDF10 strategy appears to take a step back and return to an approach that is more geared towards the satisfaction of immediate needs, in particular to fill any possible “rehabilitation gap” while the international community is transitioning away from humanitarian assistance.

Between 1999 and 2008, Liberia did not benefit from regional programmes of the European Commission. Regional support, such as the provision of €5.5m to Sierra Leone and Liberia in 2009 to establish a new Trans-boundary Peace Park to save the Gola Forest as the last intact rainforest in the Upper Guinea Area fell outside of the temporal scope of this evaluation. The country was however included in a €1.2m grant agreement under the EU Water Facility and also in a €4.8m 6-country grant under the Energy Facility.

5. ANSWERS TO EVALUATION QUESTIONS

5.1. Relevance of EC Cooperation Objectives

Question 1	
Question	<i>To what extent did EC development cooperation objectives correspond to the needs of the Liberian population, GoL development priorities and other related objectives of the European Commission, taking into account the evolving situation in Liberia?</i>
Judgment Criteria	<p>The answer to the evaluation is based on these judgment criteria:</p> <p>JC 1.1: EC cooperation takes into account the short term and longer term needs of Liberia's population in the conflict, post conflict, rehabilitation and development periods</p> <p>JC 1.2: EC cooperation objectives are consistent with the policy priorities of the Government of Liberia</p> <p>JC 1.3: EC mechanisms and procedures for formulating cooperation objectives allow for their accurate and timely definition and revision</p> <p>JC 1.4: Absence of conflict between EC development objectives in Liberia and EU global and regional policies and strategic frameworks</p>

Answer to the evaluation question

Correspondence of EC objectives and GoL priorities

From 1999 to 2005, EC cooperation objectives reflected the dominant needs of Liberia's population and, after the appointment of a transitional Government in 2003, were also consistent with the GoL's newly defined policy priorities. In this earlier period, the EC frequently and in a timely fashion adjusted its objectives to the changing circumstances in the country. This included its fast response to the 2003 signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Accra, which was facilitated by the EC's direct political involvement in the peace negotiations. The flexibility in these early years stands in contrast to the Commission's slow reaction to the first democratic election of a new Liberian Government in over 25 years in 2005. The Country Strategy Paper that the Commission used to launch its cooperation with the new Government was outdated and did not recognise that many immediate needs of the Liberian population still had to be met (such as the provision of basic infrastructure and social services, including water, sanitation or health), before the Government and the international community could start to transition from "rehabilitation" to "development". In its CSP for EDF10, the EC corrected these shortcomings. EC development assistance is broadly in line with the Commission's "Strategy for Africa" and is also consistent with the EU's other key policies, in particular in the area of trade, such as "Everything But Arms", the ongoing ECOWAS EPA negotiations and the revocation of bans on the import of rough diamonds and timber in 2007.

By and large, EC cooperation objectives were consistent with the policy priorities of the transitional Government of Liberia in the years from 2003 to 2005¹³. EC objectives also clearly reflected the dominant needs of Liberia's population throughout the entire period from 1999 to 2005. This includes the EC response on issues such as security, DDRR, refugees and IDPs, Governance (including elections) and rule of law, health, education, agriculture, food security, income generation and economic and financial management (see Annex EQ1, JC1.1). The

¹³ Prior to 2003, i.e. during the time of the Taylor-regime, the EC response was not based on a Government-owned strategic framework – the issue of consistency of EC and Government objectives thus did not arise.

relatively close correspondence of needs and EC objectives can also be linked to the fact that in this period, the European Commission repeatedly adjusted its cooperation objectives and modalities for Liberia to reflect changes in the political circumstances and security situation in Liberia in this period. For example, in response to the renewed violent conflict in Liberia that had started in 2000, the EC was able to quickly launch a comprehensive reintegration programme meant to assist internally-displaced persons and refugees in Liberia¹⁴. The EC also initiated formal political dialogue on the worsening human rights situation, on the violations of democratic principles and the rule of law in the last years of the Taylor Presidency¹⁵. After signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Accra in August 2003, it took the European Council only 7 days to make available an additional €50.0m to support the implementation of the CPA. The money was committed to two major initiatives (the “Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and Capacity Building Programme” and the “Support to the Peace Process in Liberia”) within only one and three months of the Council Decision, respectively. The high-level political involvement of the European Commission in the peace negotiations in Accra set the stage for securing the EC’s financial commitment to securing the peace process in Liberia and for speedily writing and adopting the corresponding Financing Agreements, i.e. for the Post Conflict Rehabilitation and Capacity Building Programme (PCRCBP) and the Support to the Peace Process in Liberia. However, these commitments at the political level did not translate into commensurate changes at the operational level to prepare the newly deconcentrated EC structures for handling this kind of resources (**see Annex EQ1, JC1.3**).

This speedy response in these first years from 1999 to 2003 stands in relatively stark contrast to the understated and slow reaction to the 2005 election of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Most significantly, the European Commission did not use the inauguration of the new Government in Liberia as an opportunity to adapt its cooperation objectives to the stated priorities of the incoming President. Instead, the Commission signed a CSP with the President on January 16, 2006 that had been written already two years before, in 2004, to bring the EC’s involvement in Liberia formally in line with the terms and requirements of the deconcentrated EC services. However, signing the CSP was delayed until after the national elections, to allow for the chance to adopt the paper in partnership with a democratically elected Government instead of the transitional Government. The CSP was not updated from its 2004 version in a significant way before it was signed. As a result, it still centred on two coordination and reference frameworks that were essentially already outdated on the day the paper was signed¹⁶. At the same time, the incoming President’s 150 Day Plan for Liberia (published in April 2006) is not mentioned in the Country Strategy Paper at all. The CSP was signed only 3 months before the Plan’s publication, suggesting that certain cornerstones of its priorities would have been available already in January. It therefore should have been possible to either mention the rough outline of the 150 Day Plan in the CSP or slightly postpone the signing the CSP and to up-date it in the meantime. According to information from the EC, the Commission refrained from updating the strategy in agreement with the incoming Government, because at least initially, both parties seemed to agree that all important, including all important short-term, i.e. emergency issues could be covered in the existing, albeit old, strategy. Only later did it become apparent that priorities did not match as well as had been thought initially (**see Annex EQ1, JC1.2, JC1.3**).

As a consequence, the European Commission and the Liberian Government essentially based their actions in the two years following the presidential election on differing views regarding the appropriate timing of “migrating” from relief and short-term rehabilitation to a longer-term, development-oriented support in the time following the presidential election in 2005. The European Commission’s Country Strategy Paper for EDF9 that had been signed in January 2006 essentially still assumed that Liberia’s relief and rehabilitation related needs would already be

¹⁴ I.e. the 2001 “Reintegration Programme for Returnees and Displaced People”, EDF8

¹⁵ Based on Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement

¹⁶ The strategy still refers to the “Results-Focused Transition Framework” (RFTF) as the main cooperation mechanism upon which its implementation will be based, although the RFTF was set to expire only two months after the signature of the Paper, in March 2006. Similarly, the Joint Needs Assessment (JNA), the second key reference of the CSP, really only stated the priority needs for 2004 and 2005 and did not make any claims for the period beyond that.

sufficiently covered by previous assistance from EDF8 and the first half of EDF9. In contrast, the newly-elected Liberian Government's 150-day plan clearly stressed the importance of "quick-impact" rehabilitation of basic infrastructure and services, the provision of "quick impact" income generating opportunities to Liberians. From the perspective of the Liberian Government, the Commission's "migration" to longer-term development seems to have happened too early and conflicted with the GoL's intention to use the time after the elections to quickly address the many remaining immediate needs of the Liberian population. The two sides did not fundamentally disagree on the choices of sectors, but they differed in their opinion as to whether the emphasis should be on immediate and short duration rehabilitation initiatives or on more complex and longer-to-implement "development" initiatives (see Annex EQ1, JC1.2).

The European Commission eventually acknowledged the gap between relief-targeted, short-term rehabilitation support and the longer-term development interventions in its EDF10 Country Strategy Paper. The most recent strategy paper provides a basis for the Commission to "catch-up" on older LRRD-related needs that had not been fully addressed up to that point (e.g. providing basic infrastructure and services across all sectors), including any remaining "immediate" needs in education. In addition, the broadly-targeted strategy maintains the opportunity for the EC to continue its support of institutional reforms and capacity building to help improve democratic and economic governance, in line with its Strategy for Africa. However, the choosing this kind of "flexible approach" for EDF10 does leave the challenge of selecting the most appropriate and relevant areas for EC support to the subsequent process of programming and contracting (see Annex EQ1, JC1.1, 1.2, 1.4).

EC development policy is also broadly consistent with other EU policies vis-à-vis Liberia, including in particular the trade related initiatives, such as "Everything But Arms" (EBA) and also the general intention of negotiating an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with Liberia, as part of the ongoing EU-Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) EPA negotiations. EC regional development support in the area of timber certification is consistent with the decisions of the Council of the European Union to revoke the import bans on Liberian timber and rough diamonds and the subsequent legislation to ban import of illegally harvested timber. This requires Liberia to respond to a new set of eligibility criteria and tracing requirements for any timber it hopes to export to the EU common market (see Annex EQ1, JC1.4).

5.2. Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration

Question 2	
Question	<i>To what extent did EC support contribute to the disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants in Liberia?</i>
Judgment Criteria	<p>The answer to the evaluation question is based on these judgment criteria:</p> <p>JC 2.1: EC-financed DDRR interventions tie into a nationally-owned integrated and comprehensive framework for peace-building and long-term development</p> <p>JC 2.2: EC-financed DDRR interventions create and take advantage of synergies with corresponding interventions of other stakeholders (donors, GoL)</p> <p>JC 2.3: EC-financed DDRR interventions have contributed to progress in resettlement of former combatants</p> <p>JC 2.4: EC-financed DDRR interventions have increased the viability of livelihoods of ex-combatants and their families.</p> <p>JC 2.5: Value-Added of EC involvement in DDRR</p>

Answer to the Evaluation Question

EC contribution to the disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants

With its grant-support to the UNDP-managed DDRR trust fund in the years 2004 and 2005, the European Commission provided timely and relevant support to the demobilisation and reintegration process in Liberia. With its first financial contribution (2004), the EC provided crucial funds to fund the disarmament and demobilisation of former fighters. The EC's second (2004) and third (2005) contributions to the fund helped in particular to support the Vocational training and formal education of ex-combatants. These trainings have helped to improve the opportunity for socio-economic advancement of former fighters. However, these first steps will have to be followed-up with additional assistance to consolidate the integration of these groups into local labour markets and the local economy. Women and girls have also benefitted from this support, despite the higher likelihood that they will drop out of the programmes. Weak coordination, i.e. in particular with programmes that were parallel to the NCDDRR programme, such as the UNICEF-run intervention on "Reintegration of children associated with fighting forces" or the NGO-run Labour Intensive Works Programme, and delays have reduced the performance of individual interventions.

The DDRR programme made a valuable contribution to the stabilisation of post-conflict Liberia, despite several challenges and the difficult start of the Disarmament and Demobilization process. In particular the first round of reintegration efforts in 2003 suffered from under-funding, when the number of individuals eligible for reintegration support turned out to be four times higher as originally estimated: Instead of 30.000 individuals, the number of Liberians who eventually registered as former fighters was 120.000 (**see Annex EQ2, JC2.3**). The programme maintained a degree of flexibility without losing the focus on its main objective: to support the peace process and to reintegrate ex-combatants into society.

Evaluations of the quality of outputs and impact of DDRR activities widely recognize that the EC contribution to DDRR¹⁷ in Liberia was adequate and timely (**see Annex EQ2, JC2.2, JC2.5**). The impact of training activities on beneficiaries has been described as sustainable and effective and has improved the socio-economic situation of participants. The need for follow-up measures to strengthen sustainability effects is nonetheless crucial for the development process. Apart from this limitation, the Liberian Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programme (LDDRRP) has delivered assistance to nearly all eligible persons and, along the way, has also covered individuals that did not match the eligibility criteria, the so-called "proxy-beneficiaries", i.e. friends and family of eligible ex-combatants (**see Annex EQ2, JC2.4**).

Coordination and communication amongst stakeholders proved to be difficult and has to some degree negatively affected the performance of individual projects under the EC-funded DDRR programme. Parallel activities, missing steering capacities and weak strategic guidance from the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (NCDDRR) have resulted in slight implementation delays. However, evaluations emphasize that the individual projects achieved their objectives to an appreciable degree. In assessing the overall performance of the programmes, one needs to take into account the difficult environment in which activities have taken place. Apart from a fragile security situation, implementers and the Delegation have had to deal with limited capacities of national and local government bodies, missing local support structures (NGOs) and cases of misreporting of figures (**see Annex EQ2, JC2.1**).

The groups made most vulnerable by the conflicts, women and children, have benefited from DDRR measures in spite of a higher drop-out rate of female participants. Men were more reluctant to register officially for receiving support through the DDRR programme (**see Annex EQ2, JC2.3**).

¹⁷ It should be noted that the European Commission and the Council of the European Union approved a joint concept for support to Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) in December 2006.

Critical issues have been associated with the partly low quality of trainings for ex-combatants and the population affected by war. Trainings were not adapted to the needs of the beneficiaries; the duration was too short and implemented without using a participative approach. The lack of pre-assessments and the critical factors have resulted in high drop-out rates, as participants did not gain the expected results from the training and education measures. The weakness of monitoring and follow-up of the training activities made it difficult to identify these shortcomings. Another contributing factor was the long chain of "broker agencies" that were involved in the implementation of these programmes. In the case of livelihoods training for ex-combatants in Gbarnga (Bong County), the chain had four separate links and involved three intermediaries: The EC as funding agency; a national programme coordinator; YMCA as local coordinator; the local training institute as implementer and, finally, the beneficiaries (**see Annex EQ2, JC2.4**).

The EC's contribution to DDRR has created important short-term effects for the confidence building within the returning process, as it enabled a rapid resource delivery to the beneficiaries. Additionally, it has strengthened stability in the short- to mid-term through the economic empowerment of targeted groups. The support has created an unintended positive effect through the establishment of local NGOs which acted as service providers. This process has helped to jump-start the reconstitution of civil society, despite the fact that many of the smaller national NGOs disappeared again after funding was stopped and the DDRR activities were terminated. As a number of these local implementers have integrated conflict management issues into their project portfolio, EC support also helped to facilitate the first steps towards a community based reconciliation process (**see Annex EQ2, JC2.5**).

5.3. Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD)

Question 3	
Question	<i>To what extent has the EC been able to create appropriate linkages between humanitarian and relief operations in Liberia and its rehabilitation and development support?</i>
Judgment Criteria	<p>The answer to the evaluation question is based on these judgment criteria:</p> <p>JC 3.1: Appropriateness of coordinated strategic planning for LRRD, in particular between ECHO and Europe Aid</p> <p>JC 3.2: Flexibility and timeliness to react to changing conditions during implementation</p> <p>JC 3.3: Stepwise transition of EC cooperation with non-governmental partners to governmental partners</p> <p>JC 3.4: Needs of recipients of humanitarian assistance (in particular women and girls) remain satisfied in transition to rehabilitation and development assistance</p>

Answer to the Evaluation Question

LRRD in EC assistance to Liberia

The European Commission's transition from relief to rehabilitation and development in Liberia occurred primarily in an ad-hoc fashion and was affected by the delayed arrival of EDF development funds. Between 1999 and 2003, EC assistance consisted mostly of relief and short-term rehabilitation operations, in response to the growing humanitarian needs of returning refugees and internally displaced persons. Both ECHO and EuropeAid provided assistance in this period, however ECHO only from 2002 onwards, support that was funded in part with EDF funds. From 2001 until 2005, EuropeAid resources mainly financed the EDF8 Reintegration Programme. After the war ended in 2003, the Commission complemented short-term support with medium- to long-term rehabilitation assistance, under the Post-Conflict Rehabilitation Programme. Money for this intervention was committed quickly, which could have allowed a seamless transition away from short-term relief. However, starting in 2003, EC planning and delivery of EC assistance was increasingly plagued by delays, caused in large part by increasing staff bottlenecks in the EU representation in Monrovia. This affected the arrival of rehabilitation assistance on the ground and also affected the ability of the Commission to appropriately adjust its own strategic framework to the circumstances in Liberia. The premature departure from "rehabilitation" in favour of "development" assistance was in part a result from these factors. Both this strategic shortcoming and the procedural delays weakened the link between rehabilitation and development and contributed to a "rehabilitation gap". Shortcomings in involving Governmental partners in the implementation of EC-financed activities, e.g., in the areas of county development, local economic development and food security, also threatened the sustainability of some of the EC's achievements. ECHO and EuropeAid staff compensated for the absence of a LRRD transition strategy with informal, interpersonal coordination.

EC support to Liberia between 1999 and 2008 was characterised by the need to link humanitarian and relief operations and rehabilitation and development support in order to ensure a smooth transition and avert the "rehabilitation gap" that is regarded as a critical weakness in international post-conflict support.

Coordination is regarded as a crucial aspect for strategic planning of LRRD. Due to the extremely limited staffing level of the Delegation during most of the period under evaluation, the EC was unable to keep up a lead role in international donor coordination and had to withdraw from important coordination mechanisms. The low presence of EC staff considerably reduced political leverage and EC visibility in the LRRD process. Inter-service coordination, once characterised as exemplary with regular meetings and innovative approaches, similarly

deteriorated to the point that no formal coordination mechanisms existed and coordination happened on an informal ad-hoc basis. EC strategic planning documents show little evidence of a coordinated strategic approach for LRRD, suggesting that there is currently no formalised coordinated strategic planning for LRRD between ECHO and Europe Aid for Liberia, neither at headquarters (HQ) level nor in Liberia (**see Annex EQ3, JC3.1**).

The EC, and in particular ECHO, was visibly concerned about avoiding the “rehabilitation gap”. If this gap was partly avoided in reality, it was not due to successful sequencing and phasing in and out of relief, rehabilitation and development interventions, but to the extension of ECHO interventions beyond the acute emergency phase and the flexibility of ECHO to engage in more development oriented approaches (**see Annex EQ3, JC3.4**).

Relatively speaking, EC cooperation in the LRRD context was extraordinarily flexible regarding decision making and the choice of available cooperation instruments. Decisions on the nature of the support of the peace process were taken immediately after the signing of the CPA; Rehabilitation Programmes were launched quickly afterwards; flexible financing instruments were applied systematically and with regard to the evolving situation in the country. Again the staffing situation hindered the EC to live up to the full potential that the flexible financing instruments could have offered. Budget lines could have been used to a greater extent to link relief and rehabilitation, but personnel were unavailable for the processing of these funds. ECHO proved to be highly flexible to respond to the changing environment, the fragile context in the country and the ongoing need for humanitarian assistance in Liberia. The transitional phase has only recently started, the creation of linkages between humanitarian assistance and development is needed right now (**see Annex EQ3, JC3.2**).

Notwithstanding the above, high levels of flexibility in instrument selection did not go hand in hand with timeliness. EC rehabilitation and development interventions suffered from long delays, partly due to procedural causes, to the extent that funds were close to being de-committed or were de-committed. Delays from one to three years in a post-conflict environment with pressing needs are bound to create disruptions in the transition process; in the Liberia case, they did, in fact, put programme results at risk (**see Annex EQ3, JC3.2**). The transition from NGO partners as service providers to government agencies was and is still hampered by the lack of capacity building measures for the Government of Liberia. This probably indicates that national and international NGOs will continue to play an important role for substituting government responsibilities in particular in rural areas (**see Annex EQ3, JC3.3**).

Transition from relief to rehabilitation to development was slow and not continuous, with humanitarian aid staying in place for an exceptionally long period of time and rehabilitation and development interventions slow to get off the ground. While EDF9 support already had a stronger focus on development, assuming that relief and rehabilitation needs were already covered by other instruments, there is a change in approach in EDF10 with a strong focus on rehabilitation enhancing the chances that EDF interventions can take over from relief instead of trying to complement it (**see Annex EQ3, JC3.4**).

Important stabilization effects were achieved through (short-term) job creation activities in the context of the rehabilitation programmes, as for example in Lofa, where agricultural and infrastructure projects have created working opportunities for ex-combatants and conflict affected youth and contributed to the reintegration of these target groups into the socio-economic environment of their communities.

5.4. Peace-building and Conflict Prevention

Question 4	
Question	<i>To what extent has EC support to Liberia contributed to the consolidation of peace and a reduced risk of future violent conflicts?</i>
Judgment Criteria	<p>The answer to the evaluation question is based on these three judgment criteria:</p> <p>JC 4.1: EC assistance is guided by conflict prevention principles</p> <p>JC 4.2: Effect of EC assistance on equalisation of access to economic resources</p> <p>JC 4.3: EC assistance helps to strengthen / does not weaken the democratic culture legitimacy of Liberian State</p>

Answer to the Evaluation Question

EC contribution to the consolidation of peace and reduced risks of future conflict

Despite demonstrated awareness of conflict prevention principles at strategic level, EC support to equalize access to economic resources, one of the acknowledged root cause of conflict, suffered from delays, weak targeting, low quality of trainings and insufficient coverage. In comparison, EC assistance to improve economic and democratic governance was more successful. This includes in particular the EC-financed strengthening of the General Audit Commission and the EC support to Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as one of the interventions that had been specifically designed to improve the management of conflict and to bolster the reconciliation process within Liberian society. In addition, EC humanitarian assistance targeted issues that had been associated with some of the root causes of past conflicts in Liberia. Weak monitoring and evaluation of effects of EC assistance on peace-building and conflict prevention made it more difficult for the European Commission to develop a coherent steering / management strategy for related interventions in Liberia.

Some EC resources were used to fund projects and programmes that had been specifically designed to foster dialogue, improve conflict management and strengthen reconciliation efforts in Liberia. In addition, the Commission's overall aid portfolio targeted immediate humanitarian needs and longer term development issues that had been associated with many of the root causes of the past conflicts in Liberia's history. The Commission's Country Strategy Papers take into account the main factors for instability and conflict in the country. The CSPs are also designed in a way that allows the EC to respond to the root causes of conflict in Liberia (**see Annex EQ4, JC4.1**).

Existing documentation suggests that the EC support had an effect on stability, in particular through its support of capacity building at the national level. There is some evidence that electoral support, and assistance for improving economic governance structures helped to establish the Liberian State as a more legitimate, i.e. democratically sanctioned and accountable actor in Liberian affairs (**see Annex EQ4, JC4.3**). The deployment of technical advisors to the TRC has not created the expected results due to cultural issues (communication and working culture) and the critical internal dynamics of the TRC process.

The lack of EC funding for specific community based CPPB structures has limited local government's capacities for conflict prevention and -management; the creation of government structures and capacities for CPPB (for example the Peace Building Office) were not in the focus of the EC support (**see Annex EQ4, JC4.3**). Attempts to strengthen skills for community-based conflict management and technical assistance to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) have had less of a sustainable impact on the ground. Effects on the development of private business seem to be small (**see Annex EQ4, JC4.1**).

Complex administrative procedures (including tender and procurement regulations) have limited the operational flexibility of the European Commission. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the

effects of EC support on peace consolidation and conflict prevention has been erratic, which has constrained the ability of the European Commission to adjust its cooperation strategy with regard to these issues appropriately and in a timely manner.

Gender mainstreaming was not comprehensively applied in programming and implementation. Even though there was awareness on gender issues, gender specific priorities were not properly assessed and planning was not based on gender disaggregated data and hence could not be sufficiently gender specific. All interventions did target women with specific activities, but it is not evident that gender was mainstreamed, i.e. taken into account through all stages of planning and implementation (see Annex EQ4, JC4.2).

Apart from some counterproductive incidents and the erosion of confidence between Commissioners and TAs, the contribution of EC support to the overall reconciliation process was significant, especially in a situation where other important donors did not support the TRC's work and investigations. Apart from the financial contributions and the technical support, the continued support by the Delegation also has had considerable symbolic value and has strengthened the reputation of the Commission during its investigative phase. The major

Box 2: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Liberia

The creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was mandated by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2003. A corresponding legislative act was passed into law in June 2005 (i.e. the TRC Act). The Act concretizes the TRC's purpose and objectives and states that the overall objective of the commission is to "promote national peace, security, unity and reconciliation."

To this end, the TRC was given the mandate to investigate the root causes of the conflict and the gross human rights and international humanitarian law violations between 1979 and 2003. This included explicitly economic crimes as well as the particular experiences of women and children. The TRC Act also empowered the Commission to make detailed recommendations on prosecutions, which included its right to grant amnesty for crimes. However, the Act explicitly excludes the possibility of granting amnesty for violations of international humanitarian law and crimes against humanity. In the current political debate, it is discussed if the state of Liberia is legally bound by the TRC's recommendations.

In December 2009 the Liberia Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) released its Final Report about the Liberian conflict including recommendations on Liberia's post conflict recovery. The report gives a comprehensive overview of Liberia's history and the gross human rights violations committed during 14 years of conflict. It points out the need for criminal accountability, reparations, memorialization and institutional reform. The TRC's recommendations on criminal accountability have been debated controversially within the Commission itself and across the country. Among the Commission's recommendations are the establishment of an extraordinary tribunal and prosecutions within domestic criminal courts as well as granting individual amnesties and traditional reconciliation methods.

problems, partly related to an ongoing debate on the legal aspects and the appropriateness of the TRC's recommendations, have no direct or indirect linkage to the support of the EU.

The overall process of the TRC was highly controversial and full of obstacles and internal conflicts within the Commission. The structure of the TRC was not complex enough to deal with the number of informants. The investigations were not always based on sufficient evidence and the sincerity and credibility of testimonies were at times questioned by outside observers and members of the Liberian public. Nonetheless, the process should be regarded as a first and important step for a public discussion and a wider reconciliation process in Liberia.

Despite some of the difficulties, the TRC investigations have helped to energize the discussion on the reconciliation process in the Liberian society. Liberians now acknowledge that the persistence of peace is a necessary precondition for the continued economic and social development of the country (see Annex EQ4, JC4.3).

5.5. Food Security

Question 5	
Question	<i>To what extent has EC support, and particularly support to Food Security, contributed to an increase in food security and in food production capacity based on sustainable rural development in Liberia?</i>
Judgment Criteria	<p>The answer to the evaluation question is based on these judgment criteria:</p> <p>JC 5.1: Evidence of decreased undernourishment in counties with EU supported food security programmes</p> <p>JC 5.2: Evidence of an increase in crop yields / area for the main staple foods</p> <p>JC 5.3: EC food security strategy and other EC policies on food aid / food security, gender mainstreaming are applied throughout the relief, rehabilitation and development phases</p>

Answer to the Evaluation Question

The EC's contribution to Food Security and Food Production

EC assistance helped to contain the most severe effects of the conflict-related food security crisis in Liberia. ECHO and EuropeAid extended short-term food security support beyond the originally intended period and thereby helped to maintain a relatively stable food security situation without acute food shortages. In that sense, food security support helped to fill at least part of the "rehabilitation gap" that had opened.

The real challenge of ensuring the sustainable long-term development of Liberia's agricultural sector remains, however. EC assistance so far could not adequately respond to these longer-term short-comings. This also has to do with the fact that early interventions that had targeted these issues between 1998 and 2002 were disrupted by the resurging fighting and conflict, leading to a situation where follow-up interventions after the war essentially had to start again "from scratch". EC post-crisis support to long-term food security interventions has so far rendered only minor results as it failed to consider the time required to achieve changes in agricultural production and design programmes accordingly with a stronger emphasis on consolidation of intervention results and their sustainability. The shortage of staff in the EU Delegation clearly negatively affected the level of coordination and oversight that should have been in place for food security interventions.

The EC response to the impact of the global food crisis in 2008 on Liberia resulted in upgrading the EC food security portfolio, turning the EC into one of the major donors within the sector. First ROM assessments revealed problems and serious deficiencies in project design and TA reports indicate problems with actor coordination, so that there seems to be an ongoing necessity of strengthening EC supervision of interventions.

In its effort to increase food security and food production capacity in Liberia, the EC supported vulnerable population groups through direct interventions carried out by International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and other international/multilateral organisations mainly through budget lines and the EDF¹⁸. Successful aspects of the intervention are the containment of the most negative effects of the crisis and the prevention of an even higher proportion of

¹⁸ Major interventions included: Short-term / Relief: Humanitarian Assistance to Returnees (ECHO 2004-2006, €8.4m); Food Aid (WFP / UN Consolidated Appeal Process 2003-2004, €14m). Food security: Second Rehabilitation Programme (Cardno Agrisystems 1998-2001, €25m, partly for FS); Food Security Liberia 1997 and 1998 (NGOs, 1997-2000, €7.4m); Grand Bassa Food Security Project (Concern, 2003-2004, €1.7m), Food Security Programme 2004 (Trocaire, Solidarité, 2006-2008, €2m). Regional focus of EC food security support is the Northwest (Lofa, Bong, Nimba) and the Southeast (Maryland, Grand Kru, Grand Gedeh, River Gee) of the country

undernourished people in the immediate post-conflict period.¹⁹ The extension of humanitarian assistance beyond the conflicts contributed to a relatively stable food security situation with rather low levels of acute food scarcity.²⁰ (see Annex EQ5, JC 5.1)

However, high chronic malnutrition rates continue at the same level as before the war. This highlights that, while the effects of the conflict may be mitigated by short to medium term relief and rehabilitation interventions, the real challenge is the long-term development of the agricultural sector. (see Annex EQ5, JC 5.1)

As right after the conflict short-term relief interventions prevailed, little attention was paid to bringing medium to long-term programmes on the way. Between 2006 and 2008, apart from ECHO interventions, only two FS projects were being implemented under the Food Security Budget Line (FSBL), so that the EC FS portfolio was of minor priority.

As the global food crisis in 2008 negatively affected the Liberian food security situation due to the countries' high dependency on rice imports, the EC responded quickly to that situation by substantially upgrading and developing its food security portfolio.²¹ EC has thus become one of the major donors in the Liberian food security sector. (see Annex EQ5, JC 5.1)

Support to returning refugees and internally displaced people focused on agricultural input distribution which can be regarded as effective as it did accelerate and facilitate the resumption of farming activities²². Long-term interventions aiming at food production capacity and sustainable rural development were disrupted and the results they achieved annihilated by the resurging conflict in 2002/2003 that led to the suspension of the ongoing interventions; long-term development efforts had to re-start from scratch and did not render major long-term results. As achieving sustainable changes in agricultural productivity takes five to ten years at least²³, the short project duration of two to three years without immediately available funding for succession projects, severely hampered the achievement of impact.²⁴ Thus programmes were not successful in changing farmers' attitudes and behaviours and bring about the changes in agricultural practices and community organisation required for the development of the

¹⁹ In 2004 almost one third of the Liberian population depended on some kind of EC supported food aid intervention.

²⁰ EC supported United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) interventions were able to decrease the under-five underweight rate in targeted areas from 27% to 22%. Surveys state that malnutrition was apparently not worsened by displacement and return and interprets this fact as an indicator for the success of humanitarian interventions.

²¹ Major interventions include: Short term measures (UNICEF, WFP, 2010-2013, €4.14m); Food Security Thematic Programme (FSTP) Component LRRD (NGOs, 2008-2014, €10m); FSTP Response to Soaring Food Prices (NGOs, 2010-2013, €4.7m); Food Facility (Contribution agreements with UNDP, FAO, WFP and UNICEF, 2009-2011, €10.86m); Food Facility (NSA/NGO/MS agencies, 2009-2011, €3.3m); NSA/PVD (NGOs, 2010-2011, €0.9m). The total sum of commitments is €33.9m.

²² Some evidence for the acceleration and facilitation of the resumption of agricultural activities after the conflict was generated by the Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition Survey the Government and several UN agencies carried out in 2006. The survey showed that "seed distribution also had an impact on the ability of households to produce crops. Households that received seeds in the form of external assistance were significantly ($p < 0.001$) more likely to have produced crops in 2005 than those who did not (82% versus 71%)." (page 30). This observation was confirmed by farmers' perceptions in all three focus groups on humanitarian assistance as well as by project reports, e.g. the Annual Report 2004 by Concern, page 16: "Without the rice seed distribution, the households and communities would have planted no rice, as seed was very scarce in spring 2004."

²³ This is highlighted by the two available ROM reports on food security interventions: The monitoring report for DCI_FOOD/2008/172-568 states that "The most serious deficiency in design is the lack of realism of trying to increase agricultural production in two years in a manner that can be sustained. Five to ten years would be more realistic." And the monitoring report for DCI-FOOD/2008/172-566 underlines that "if the target is to remove food insecurity completely from 60% of the targeted households in a manner that can be sustained, then it is clear that the project purpose is unlikely to be attained within a three year period."

²⁴ This is illustrated by the example of Solidarité food security interventions in Bong. The INGO implemented the EC FSBL funded project "Sustainable improvement of living conditions of the most vulnerable populations of Bong county" implemented from 2006 to 2007. It was then able to access ECHO food security funding and continued working with the same communities. After ECHO funding ceased, there was a gap of several months after which the project was able to secure funding through the NSA/PVD budget line. Only after several years of interventions some community structures seem to have established a more sustainable organisational set-up to sustain results. As INGOs increasingly depend on third party funding long-term interventions require secure funding sources for an extended time span.

agricultural sector.²⁵ The frequently utilised group approach for most activities was probably not adequate for the cultural setting and for the organisational capacities, so that activities failed, because groups were unable to solve their management difficulties. Wherever INGOs were able to continue with successor projects, the tendency was to move to more individual support approaches. **(see Annex EQ5, JC 5.1, JC 5.2)**

EC supported long-term food security interventions are therefore facing the challenge of sustainability. One example illustrating this problem is the Inland Valley Swamps (IVS) that are a central element of most of the EC FS interventions. The short implementation time frame along with technical weaknesses of design has impeded visible benefits sufficient to convince farmers to invest more of their labour into IVS. Further limiting factors related to intervention impact were the low technical capacities of NGO staff that was more experienced in relief operations, a failure to outsource complex technical issues to specialised service providers and consequently low technical quality of interventions. **(see Annex EQ5, JC 5.2)**

Frequently interventions were successful at the time of implementation, but benefits could not be sustained. There are several examples to be mentioned in this context: IVS do render higher yields, especially in the first year of cultivation. Still the labour intensity of swamp development and other reasons made farmers abandon IVS after project support ceased. Farmers appreciated improved seeds, but failed to keep managing seed banks to secure the availability of seeds in the villages; road maintenance facilitated access to villages and improved the marketing of agricultural products, but some maintenance results did not even survive the first rainy season. Animal distributions increased the number of livestock in the villages, but communities are facing problems feeding the pigs and lose animals to diseases as there are no veterinary services available. It seems to be an unsatisfying approach to limit interventions to the distribution of items and the set-up of structures without empowering and enabling communities to take care of them. **(see Annex EQ5, JC 5.2)**

EC support to bridge and culvert construction and rehabilitation clearly increased vehicle access to rural communities hence facilitating the marketing of agricultural products and motivating farmers to produce for the market. Beneficiaries regard these interventions as very relevant to the villages. **(see Annex EQ5, JC 5.2)**

Interventions followed a “classical” and rather top-down approach with few innovative ideas. They focused on execution, neglecting their pilot character and the parallel requirement for a lessons learned approach. Little attention was paid to framework support, capacity building of local structures, participation and ownership²⁶. Even though the intervention activities in themselves have most probably given positive results for many local beneficiaries, an increase in agricultural production based on sustainable support to rural development would have required more long-term development oriented approaches. In the Liberian context, this could not realistically be expected regarding the time span available for long term interventions. In effect, as most interventions were still focused mainly on relief and rehabilitation, less attention was paid to long-term development. **(see Annex EQ5, JC5.2; JC5.3)**

Due to severe staff shortages, the food security EC intervention portfolio was hardly managed, monitored or supervised.²⁷ In some cases, this led to delays in processing requests from implementing agencies hence causing delays in implementation.²⁸ Another consequence was

²⁵ Field observations and food security focus group discussions revealed that many innovations introduced by the projects, such as inland valley swamp development and partly fish ponds, were abandoned by the target groups right after the end of the respective projects. Farmers returned to their old ways of agricultural production and did not incorporate the new techniques into their production systems in a sustainable way.

²⁶ It is important to note that the Liberian Government did not have a specific food security policy during those years.

²⁷ The FS portfolio was managed by TAs from Niger (around 2004, more data not available) and from Sierra Leone (2007-2009, mission reports available) who were only able to allocate limited time to Liberia. For example the TA from Sierra Leone was only able to visit Liberia six times during his two year assignment and could only once leave the capital for project visits.

²⁸ As conditions in the field as well as government rules and regulations at that time were changing rapidly, projects had to adapt the implementation to the changing circumstances and would have needed a responsive and flexible Delegation. One example from Solidarité shows that the occurrence of animal diseases and new government

that the implementing agencies carried out their activities without coordination and harmonisation of strategies and procedures, leading to overlapping and duplication.²⁹ **(see Annex EQ5, JC5.2; JC5.3)**

Implementing agencies did little to analyse and document lessons learned. At project level outcome indicators were not properly assessed in baseline studies, monitoring exercises and impact surveys, so that there is little evidence on which impacts can be expected from different interventions. The lack of monitoring by the implementing partner in one case (Trocaire FOOD/2005/113-599) delayed the identification of serious implementation problems not reported by the local partners, so that in the end the intervention could not be satisfactorily finalised. The Trocaire example³⁰, at first regarded as a promising and innovative set-up, could today serve as an example where the long chain of intermediaries makes management, monitoring and handing on of lessons learned difficult. As the knowledge management within the EC is weak, it is difficult to draw lessons learned from the long and complex EC intervention history in the sector. **(see Annex EQ5, JC 5.3)**

EC main policies and strategies on food aid and food security³¹ were applied in food security interventions in Liberia. While there was a strong emphasis on relief and rehabilitation, some long term interventions were included early in humanitarian relief interventions. With regard to an integrated food security approach, the focus was on availability of and access to food, with few interventions aiming at balancing the main pillars of food security and including food use and utilisation issues³². A specific EC food security strategy for Liberia, even though supposed to be worked out in 2004 and in 2008, has not been elaborated up to today, a fact that is negatively influencing planning and programming efforts. The two results oriented monitoring (ROM) reports for the latest interventions state partly problems (C rating) and serious deficiencies (D rating) in project design.³³

Gender mainstreaming was not comprehensively applied in programming and implementation. Even though there was awareness of gender issues, gender specific priorities were not properly assessed and planning was not based on gender disaggregated data and hence could not be sufficiently gender specific. All interventions did target women with specific activities and some

regulations forced the project to reorganise its livestock activities. As EC approval took a very long time, the implementation time of the livestock activities was reduced from 16 to 8 months, severely limiting the effectiveness of the activity.

²⁹ One of the examples for overlapping and duplication is the case of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) interventions in Lofa county. Both stakeholders planned swamp development and irrigation scheme interventions at the same sites, so that there was a competition on who would be carrying out the intervention and long planning processes proved to be in vain as sites had to be changed again in order not to interfere with the other agencies interventions.

³⁰ Trocaire did not implement the project, but subcontracted the implementation to a Consortium of three local NGOs: Sustainable Development Promoters, Development Education Network – Liberia and Integrated Rural Development Organisation.

³¹ European Commission (2009q): *Towards an EU policy framework to assist developing countries addressing agriculture and food security challenge*, Issues paper; (2007j): *Food Security Thematic Programme – Thematic Strategy Paper and Multiannual Indicative Programme 2007-2010*; (2007p): *2007 Annual Action Programme for Food Security implementing "Thematic Strategy Paper and Multi-Annual Indicative Programme 2007-2010" for the Development Cooperation Instrument*. Memorandum to the Commission; (2006d): *A Thematic Strategy for Food Security – Advancing the food security agenda to achieve the MDGs*; (2003c): *Food security and linking relief, rehabilitation and development in the European Commission*; (1996): *Food-Aid Policy and Food-Aid Management and Special Operations in Support of Food Security*, Council Regulation no. 1292/96.

³² The concept of food security is based on three pillars or determinants that are requisites for achieving food security: 1) *Food availability* is defined as sufficient quantities of food for all people through production or purchase on a consistent basis; 2) *Food access* means having sufficient resources to obtain appropriate foods for a nutritious diet; 3) *Food use and utilisation* is related to the appropriate use of food based on knowledge of basic nutrition and care, as well as adequate water and sanitation. It also tackles issues of intra-household food distribution and cultural nutritional habits.

³³ ROM-FOOD-172-568 and ROM-FOOD-172-566 reports criticised e.g. the lack of realism in objectives, the low quality of the log frames, the missing involvement of stakeholders in project design and implementation and the lack of attention to gender issues

projects even had more than 50% female beneficiaries, but it is not evident that gender was mainstreamed. **(see Annex EQ5, JC 5.3)**

As two food security CA have taken up their assignments with the EC in Liberia in the course of 2010 there is an opening opportunity to strengthen technical support, supervision and coordination of the current substantial food security portfolio and elaborate a food security strategy for Liberia as a framework for EC supported interventions. **(see Annex EQ5, JC 5.3)**

5.6. Income Generation

Question 6	
Question	<i>To what extent has the EC successfully contributed to sustainably increasing and improving the quality of income generating opportunities in urban and rural areas, in particular for Liberia's youth, returnees and displaced people and ex-combatants?</i>
Judgment Criteria	<p>The answer to the evaluation question is based on these judgment criteria:</p> <p>JC 6.1: Increased availability of EC-financed "quick-impact" income generating opportunities (including cash-for-work and public works programmes),</p> <p>JC 6.2: EC-financed interventions helped to increase access to productive assets and inputs for target groups</p> <p>JC 6.3: EC-financed interventions improved access to skill-building opportunities for target groups</p> <p>JC 6.4³⁴ Environmental concerns flow into planning and implementation of EC-financed income generation initiatives</p>

Answer to the evaluation question

The EC's contribution to improved income generating opportunities

Commission support has helped ex-combatants to increase their chances for gainful employment, primarily by supporting their education and vocational training throughout the DDRR process. However, for all targeted groups, including ex-combatants, the cumulative or overall effect of EC assistance on job creation or even improved job placement was small. The number of jobs that EC assistance directly helped to create was small, and the sustainability of the created positions was low: nearly 50% of the approximately 4,000 jobs the EC helped to create disappeared over the first two years. Indirect employment effects of EC support from the improvement and supply of economic assets also were relatively small, in particular in relation to the size of the needs. The corresponding income generating interventions, including those under the Local Community Development Component of the EDF8 Reintegration Programme did not specifically target IDPs, returnees or youth. Instead, the eligibility criteria allowed to give grants to any business or organisation that applied and that could demonstrate an expected positive cash-flow resulting from the investment. As a consequence, a wide selection of businesses and organisation, including a number of oil and rubber farms owned by relatively wealthy Liberian families, received money from the EC in that period. The use of grants left the proprietors without strong incentives to ensure the profitability of and continued operation of their businesses. The biggest impediment that kept the Commission from having a larger effect on the creation of short- and longer term income sources has likely been the absence of EC support for micro-credit and the relative low support of large scale labour intensive works programmes. For the most part, environmental concerns are hardly considered during project planning and implementation.

Among its target groups³⁵, European Commission support has helped in ex-combatants to improve their chances for finding viable income generating opportunities. The EC has made a difference not so much by helping to create new employment opportunities, but rather by helping to train and equip approximately 40% of all ex-combatants who went through vocational training that had implemented under the UNDP DDRR trust fund (**see Annex EQ6, JC6.1; JC6.3**). The EC financed the procurement of toolkits for approximately 40% (5,750) of all demobilised ex-combatants who had chosen vocational training as a means of enabling their economic

³⁴ Previously judgment criterion 6.5

³⁵ Ex-combatants, women and girls, returnees and IDPs.

reintegration into their communities. Whereas beneficiaries repeatedly criticized the low quality of the trainings, the limited capacities of the trainers and under-equipped training institutions, the support with toolkits was appreciated by the majority of the recipients, despite several problems and delays in the distribution of the kits (**see Annex EQ6, JC6.2**).

EC support did not help to place individuals from vulnerable groups in specific jobs. Ex-combatants who had been provided with vocational training and tool kits for their new trade (**see Annex EQ6, JC6.3**) did largely not receive any follow-up placement support, i.e. help in finding jobs where they could use their newly acquired skills. Although this type of support had originally been foreseen, it was eventually not implemented by UNDP. Also, the number of jobs that the EC directly helped to create was relatively small in relation to the much larger need for employment among returnees and displaced people (**see Annex EQ6, JC6.1**). To illustrate, the estimated 4,000 people placed in jobs directly created with EC assistance in 2005, accounted for less than 1% of all people who were estimated to be internally displaced in Liberia in 2004³⁶. Compared to the total number of expected returnees in 2004³⁷, the jobs created with EC assistance in 2005 would have provided employment for merely 1.5% of them. In addition, the created positions were not sustainable: Nearly 50% of the 4,000 initial jobs disappeared again within two years of the end of the project that created them. The lack of follow-up support to fledgling, newly created businesses and an exceedingly narrow perspective on operating costs in assessing the prospects for business sustainability have likely contributed to this weak performance. The weak needs and poverty orientation of the project selection process and the misplaced use of grants as private sector funding instruments also have played a role. Casual, i.e. temporary, employment in EC-financed community-driven investment projects provided daily wages of approximately US\$ 2.0 to US\$ 3.0 (**see Annex EQ6, JC6.1**).

The EC also had intended to increase the access of IDPs, returnees and youth to productive assets and inputs, such as tools and equipment or credit, to strengthen their potential for income generation (**see Annex EQ6, JC6.2**). In particular the EDF8 Reintegration Programme for Returnees and Displaced People and its Local Community Development component were meant to be used to that effect. Ultimately, however, this and other programmes made only a relatively small contribution to the improvement of assets. The biggest detractor for any long-term effect of the EDF8 Reintegration programme was that the EC did not manage to set-up a micro-credit scheme in rural communities, as had originally been foreseen in the Financing Agreement. Micro-loans would have allowed beneficiaries to finance any update of physical assets on their own volition. In the absence of a micro-credit scheme, the EDF8 reintegration programme relied on a series of small scale grants to channel investment capital into Liberia's economy, i.e. by supporting about 170 so-called "Small Scale Projects" (SSPs) around the country. However, Internally Displaced Person (IDP) and returnee specific targeting of this programme component was weak. At least a portion of the grant money was made available to well-established and relatively well-off Americo-Liberian families who used the EC grants either to finance part of the operating costs of their established farm businesses – often oil or rubber farms³⁸ – or to temporarily revive previously defunct and ultimately unprofitable farm operations. The use of grants left the supported proprietors without strong incentives for a thorough ex-ante assessment of the profitability of the investments or for trying to recoup the invested amounts after the projects, i.e. by capitalising on the improved assets. This allowed proprietors to discontinue farm production in reaction to relatively minor operational hurdles, such as the breakdown of individual pieces of equipment. Many of the supported plantations, especially those in relative proximity to Monrovia and with "absentee owners" seemed to remain in fairly

³⁶ The Joint Needs Assessment put the number of internally displaced persons in Liberia at approximately 490,000 (GoL/UN/World Bank, 2004). This is not to say that people employed in these positions were in fact IDPs – the comparison is merely meant to illustrate the remaining need. The evaluators did not have access to data that would allow them to gauge which groups benefitted most from the EC-created jobs.

³⁷ 250,000 people, based on estimates of the Joint Needs Assessment in 2004 (GoL/UN/World Bank, 2004).

³⁸ EC grants from the Local Community Development (LCD) component of the EDF8 Reintegration Programme were used to rehabilitate approximately 93 square kilometres (23,000 acres) of rubber and fruit tree plantations.

poor conditions, despite EC support. The condition of supported plantations in more remote areas (e.g. Bong and Nimba Counties) was better **(see Annex EQ6, JC6.2)**.

At least some EC-financed road projects did succeed in improving the access to cash and income generating opportunities for the communities along the new road. With transportation infrastructure particularly weak in Liberia, the creation of improved access to markets provided villagers with the means to make the transition away from mere subsistence agriculture to a mixed system, where surplus products could be sold for a small cash-income. Thanks to the inflow of cash, community members were able to buy their own vehicles, send children to college in Monrovia, and establish savings schemes and to renovate existing houses or build new houses **(see Annex EQ6, JC6.2)**.

For the most part, environmental issues were not systematically considered, neither during planning nor during implementation or monitoring and evaluation of the supported income generation projects and programmes **(see Annex EQ6, JC6.4)**.

5.7. Infrastructure

Question 7	
Question	<i>To what extent has EC support contributed to the reconstruction or expansion of social and economic infrastructure in Liberia, including power, roads, water and sanitation?</i>
Judgment Criteria	<p>The answer to the evaluation question is based on these four judgment criteria:</p> <p>JC 7.1: Health facilities in EC-supported areas in good condition and within reach of population</p> <p>JC 7.2: Increased access to electricity in urban and rural EC-supported areas</p> <p>JC 7.3: Improved conditions of rural and feeder roads in EC supported areas</p> <p>JC 7.4: Increased access to Water and Sanitation services in EC supported areas</p>

Answer to the Evaluation Question

EC contribution to reconstruction of social and economic infrastructure

In the period immediately following the end of war in 2003, "emergency" and "stop gap" support from the EC helped to maintain at least basic levels of water and power services in Monrovia, a contribution that was sorely needed in this period. After the 2005 elections, Commission support also gave the newly elected President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the opportunity to celebrate the inauguration of three small, generator-powered electricity grids and associated streetlights. However, assistance to the more significant and long-term rehabilitation of Monrovia's infrastructure produced far fewer tangible results. The repair of water and power infrastructure has suffered significant delays. It took approximately 3.5 years from the initial stop-gap measures in 2003 until EC support to Monrovia's water and power supply again became tangible "on the ground". Even at the time of this evaluation, at least some of the projects that had been started 4 to 5 years ago still were not operational. Outside of Monrovia, the EC-funding was used to construct or repair a small number of roads, clinics and water / sanitation systems. However, the desire to combine infrastructure rehabilitation with the development of lasting social and administrative structures lessened the focus on the physical works and reduced the number of structures that were completed. In spite of the accompanying focus on lasting social structures in these later years, the sustainability of much of the constructed buildings and roads remains in question.

The European Commission has provided crucial emergency support in the months and the years immediately following the signing of the CPA in 2003 to ensure that many Liberians in Monrovia continued to receive a basic supply of water and electricity. These "stop-gap" or emergency measures ensured that the water authority and the Liberia Electricity Company could pay operating expenses and do basic maintenance on the otherwise decrepit systems (**see Annex EQ7, JC7.2; JC7.4**). After the 2005 elections, the EC was also able to finance and complete three small but politically significant electricity projects, i.e. the instalment of three small, generator-powered electricity grids (in Congo town, Kru town and the Paynesville suburb) along with accompanying street lighting, to allow the newly elected President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to point to first, (albeit small and largely symbolic) signs of success within months of her inauguration (**see Annex EQ7, JC7.2**).

On a larger scale, however, EC support to rehabilitate urban infrastructure for both water and electricity has been plagued by significant delays. Construction on the EC-supported rehabilitation of Monrovia's electricity grid started only in May 2009, three years after the initial launching of the tender. Reasons given for the delays were difficulties in finding enough interested parties to respond to the tender, lengthy evaluations of the received bids and time-consuming negotiations between the EC office in Monrovia and the Delegation in Ivory Coast on the application of "negotiated procedures" for the award of the contract. Since the start of the

construction in early 2009 the works seem to have progressed well, and as of February 2010, the biggest part of the EC-financed work on the electricity grid seems to have been completed (**see Annex EQ7, JC7.2**). In the water sector, approximately 3.5 years passed between the initial “stop-gap” measures in 2003 and the next time that EC support could be “felt” and “seen” in the form of actual construction on the ground³⁹. This also had to do with delays of two procurement contracts that had been initiated already in October 2004 and July 2005, respectively but not signed until at least 2006.⁴⁰ In the case of one of the contracts, dealing with replacement pumps for the water purification plant at White Plains, the installation was still not complete by the end of 2008. Many of the works projects that had been targeted for completion in 2004 and 2005 had to be carried over into the next EDF and had to be included in the Post-Conflict Rehabilitation Programme in order to continue to be financed. At the time of the evaluation, not all of the finished components, including a pipeline⁴¹, were operational, due to the delayed commencement of related installations⁴² (**see Annex EQ7, JC7.4**).

The EU has focussed on the reconstruction of the water and electricity infrastructure in urban areas, mainly Monrovia. The rural areas have not been targeted with EU funding, but also in Monrovia the water and sewage system has not been sufficiently recovered due to serious delays in the disbursement of funds and the implementation of the work on the water facilities. Outside of Monrovia, the EC-funded “Second Rehabilitation Programme” that ended in 2001 had the biggest effect on the integrity of water and sanitation infrastructure. The programme rehabilitated or constructed a total of 1,600 water sources in 8 counties, mostly wells and hand pumps; it also helped to improve access to improved sanitation facilities in 5 counties (Nimba, Grand Gedeh, Sinoe, Maryland, and Grand Kru). Overall, an estimated 12,504 people benefitted from these facilities, but it is not clear how many of the installations are still operational at this point. In the years from 2003 to 2008, the contribution of the EC to the provision of safe water and reliable sanitation facilities decreased significantly. Two programmes⁴³ added water sources for about 7,000 people⁴⁴ and provided improved sanitation facilities for an estimated 1,200 people⁴⁵, a much smaller number if compared to the achievements of previous support (**see Annex EQ7, JC7.4**).

In the transport sector, EC-financing was used to rehabilitate, reconstruct or construct an estimated 2,300 km of feeder and main⁴⁶ roads. If all of these roads were still intact and passable in 2008, this would account for an estimated 47% of Liberia’s main roads and 21% of feeder roads. However, a dominant share of the roads was rehabilitated before the signing of the CPA in 2003, by the “Second Rehabilitation Programme” that expired in 2001. It is very likely that a large percentage of these roads have again fallen into disrepair in the meantime, due to war and lack of maintenance (**see Annex EQ7, JC7.3**).

Since signing of the CPA, the EC’s contribution to the physical reconstruction of roads has sunk significantly. EC-support only accounts for 563 km of rehabilitated main and feeder roads in the last five years. This accounts for an estimated 21% of all feeder roads; but only 5% of main roads. The biggest contributing programme to this total since 2003 has been an NGO-run labour

³⁹ During this time, the EC merely funded a number of technical and legal studies on the rehabilitation of the water supply network in Monrovia and supported organisational capacity building / training for the Liberian water authority, for an amount of €642,077.

⁴⁰ For the installation of replacement pumps at Liberia’s only water purification plant in White Plains and for reservoir and main trunk rehabilitation

⁴¹ I.e., the Somalia Drive Pipeline.

⁴² In this case a Booster Station should have been included in EDF9 support, but had to be handed over to the World Bank when works under the Post-Conflict Rehabilitation Programme ceased.

⁴³ The CRC programme under the Post-Conflict Rehabilitation Programme and the Reintegration Programme for Returnees and Displaced Persons.

⁴⁴ 6,000 as a result of 33 water sources constructed under the PCRCBP and an estimated 1,000 funded under the EDF8 Reintegration Programme.

⁴⁵ The high estimate would put this total number at approximately 16,000 people. Information from post-monitoring visits and evaluations suggest, however, that the low estimate (1,200 people) is likely to be more accurate.

⁴⁶ Primary and secondary roads.

intensive infrastructure programme⁴⁷. Unfortunately, provisions for the maintenance of roads that have been rehabilitated with EC support are weak and their functioning contingent on a number of external factors that have been left outside of the scope of the programmes that funded the rehabilitation of the roads in the first place. This significantly limits the prospect that many of the roads will remain passable for a long time⁴⁸. At least in the short-term, however, the EC-financed rehabilitation of roads has produced a number of benefits, with regard to reduced travel times, increased economic opportunities and access to services, such as hospitals or markets⁴⁹ (**see Annex EQ7, JC7.3**).

Between 1996 and 2001, European Commission assistance helped to rehabilitate 18 health clinics in three of Liberia's counties: Grand Bassa, Montserrado and Sinoe. However, since the signing of the CPA in 2003, the direct contribution of EuropeAid to the physical rehabilitation of health facilities and clinics in Liberia has been relatively low⁵⁰, also because ECHO, the European Commission's humanitarian agency, invested considerably in the construction of clinics during this period⁵¹. This assessment does cover EC support that is not infrastructure, related, such as the capacity building support to the Ministry of Health and other interventions (**see Annex EQ7, JC7.1**).

Critically assessed were the missing planning capacities of the government for the physical reconstruction and the lack of a governmental master plan for infrastructure. The EU support has not strengthened the capacities for policy design and implementation in the sector, which needs to be seen as a high priority due to the massive lack of adequately trained staff (engineers, technicians) at this level. The lacking capacity ultimately also threatens the possibility of adequately maintaining the investments, and thus the sustainability of the initial achievements.

The donor coordination for the infrastructure sector was generally good, the LWSA as steering unit conducted between 2007 and 2009 monthly donor coordination meetings. The responsibility was in 2009 transferred to the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy. On the other hand, LWSC mentions the lack of technical knowledge at the Delegation, which limited the possibilities of LWSC to communicate priorities to the EC.

The EC made only limited use of the peace dividend for a few large infrastructure projects, mainly the road and bridge reconstruction. More could have been done in this field, as the immediate impact on the economic situation of communities is relatively high. On the other hand, community participation was strengthened through small infrastructure projects. But here it is important to note that small infrastructure projects have not reached sufficient impact, sustainability and efficiency are extremely limited.

⁴⁷ This programme alone accounts for 505 km of the total of 563 km of roads that have been reconstructed since 2003. The CRC component of the Post-Conflict Rehabilitation Programme of the EDF9 only contributed 47km of road, partly because many of the medium-scale road construction projects, with a combined budget of over €237,000, could not be implemented due to the significant delays in grant processing that affected the programme (on this, see also EQ10 on aid modalities and cooperation frameworks).

⁴⁸ The Community Rehabilitation Component of the CRC attempted to develop locally-owned road maintenance schemes following a "learning by doing" approach that also included the supply of tools to the local authorities in Bong and Nimba, the two counties where this approach was tried. The scheme seems to have taken hold only in Bong county, but was still in its infant stages when the CRC programme ended. It is not clear if the scheme received the "close monitoring" that it required, according to the final report of the CRC. The NGO-run labour-intensive infrastructure programme in Maryland, River Gee and Grand Kru (Southern Liberia) relied on the continued willingness of local communities to maintain the roads in exchange for food-for-work support. The project did not identify where the food-for-work support was meant to come from.

⁴⁹ Examples include increased timber extraction, sawn timber production and increased production and sales of palm oil and rubber (all in Bong County). The construction of bridges as part of road rehabilitation has decreased travel times; e.g. the reconstructed "Beh Bridge" (also Bong county) is said to have reduced travel times to the seat of the county administration (Gbarnaga) from surrounding areas by two hours.

⁵⁰ Only 6 new facilities have been constructed in this time period, under the Community Rehabilitation Component of the Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and Capacity Building Programme.

⁵¹ According to information from an ECHO representative, the agency has financed the rehabilitation of over 60 health centres since the end of the war.

5.8. Capacity Building

Question 8	
Question	<i>To what extent has EC support to institutional reform and capacity development helped the Liberian Government to increase its capacity for adopting a legitimate role in providing key social services and infrastructure to the Liberian population?</i>
Judgment Criteria	<p>The answer to the evaluation question is based on these judgment criteria:</p> <p>JC 8.1: Increased portfolio of EC-supported Government Agencies and Ministries</p> <p>JC 8.2: Target groups (incl. women / girls) benefit from increased quality of Government-provided services and infrastructure</p> <p>JC 8.3: Improved accountability of EC-supported Government agents vis-à-vis their constituents</p>

Answer to the evaluation question

EC Contribution to increased Government Capacity

Overall, EC capacity development support was relatively successful, but had weaknesses in particular at local level. At national level, Commission assistance has made some widely acknowledged positive contributions to the ongoing reforms of economic governance. EC-financed audits of five state-owned enterprises and the Central Bank in 2004 revealed the extent of corruption and fraud; the audits galvanised the donor community into joint negotiations with the transitional Government that resulted in the creation of the successful Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme (GEMAP). Subsequent support to the General Auditing Commission (GAC) under the GEMAP umbrella helped to strengthen the capacity for third-party audits of Liberia's Government institutions and has thereby increased the accountability of the Liberian Government over the use of public funds. At the same time, the recent publication of insufficiently substantiated audit results has increased the GACs vulnerability to criticism from other Government stakeholders. Other interventions, such as support to Liberia's Bureau of Customs and Excise, were less successful. EC assistance of capacity issues at county level, e.g. under the Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and Capacity Building Programme, have not made lasting contributions to an improved county capacity for decentralised planning and project implementation. As a result, EC assistance has not improved the level and quality of Government-provided services that Liberia's youth, ex-combatants and refugees are receiving. The use of parallel structures, i.e. programme offices at county level, diverted attention away from immediate support of the county and district structures; county and district staff who worked with EC experts during programme implementation were not able to transfer skills or lessons to their original positions after the end of the EC interventions.

The European Commission has supported governance reform and capacity building between 1999 and 2008, primarily at national level, and to a lesser extent at county level⁵². At the national level, EC support has helped to improve key economic governance processes and related organisational capacity⁵³. Small investments for financial audits of five state-owned enterprises and the Liberian Central Bank provided the evidential basis for galvanising the international

⁵² Most EC resources for capacity development went to support national Ministries and agencies. E.g. from the EDF9 Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and Capacity Building Programme, about €7.7m went to the national level (including NAO support, but excluding election support); only a much smaller amount (approximately €250,000) were budgeted; and an even lower amount (approximately € 120,000) were spent on workshops and coaching activities for capacity development in local administrations, i.e. in three counties (Bong, Lofa, Nimba).

⁵³ The EC also supported some capacity development in water and electricity. This is mentioned in the previous chapter, in connection with the evaluation question on infrastructure.

community into negotiations with the GoL on broad-based economic governance reforms. These negotiations eventually led to the creation of the successful GEMAP (Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme). Subsequent EC support of the General Auditing Commission (GAC) under the GEMAP umbrella has translated into a broadened portfolio and overall increased performance of this organisation. The GAC was able to increase the number of audits it carries out every year, from only two in 2005 to 14 in 2006, based on strengthened human resources (HR) and systems (administrative staff, auditors and the Auditor General). EC-financed Technical Assistants contributed to these achievements by providing customised advice and training in areas like human resource management, staff development and auditing. The TAs also used their own professional networks on the African continent to put the GAC in touch with expertise in other Auditing Commissions and to integrate the organisation in relevant professional associations, such as AFROSAI-E. The experts remained free of any operational responsibilities within the GAC, and therefore were able to devote their attention exclusively to providing these kinds of support in close cooperation with GAC management (**see Annex EQ8, JC8.1**). Although the improved performance of the GAC is not directly benefitting the socio-economic situation of the EC target groups (i.e. youth, ex-combatants, returnees, women and children), the reforms have made an important contribution to the improved functioning of the GoL in financial terms – which eventually can translate into an improved availability of resources for infrastructure and services investments. Youth, women, ex-combatants and other vulnerable groups therefore still stand to gain from this assistance, albeit in a more indirect way (**see Annex EQ8, JC8.2**). Apart from helping to increase the amount of revenue the GoL is able to collect⁵⁴, the EC support to the GAC also contributed to an increased transparency concerning the use of public resources and the financial accountability of the Liberian Government vis-à-vis its constituents. The results of GAC audit reports are regularly and comprehensively covered by the Liberian media and the efforts of the organisation to publicise the findings of its auditors have been praised as a model for other supreme audit organisations in Africa (**see Annex EQ8, JC8.3**). Despite these successes, apparent shortcomings in the GAC's quality review and quality assurance procedures have allowed the publication of a number of insufficiently substantiated audit results, e.g. in relation to an audit of the Ministry of Education payroll. These occurrences have made the GAC vulnerable to criticism from other Government stakeholders and can ultimately have a negative impact on the legitimacy of the GAC and its ability to continue to play an important role in improving the financial accountability of the Liberian Government (**see Annex EQ8, all JCs**). Compared to the GAC support, EC assistance to reforms of the Bureau of Customs and Excise (part of the Ministry of Finance (MoF)) was less successful due to the low performance of the EC-financed technical assistant.

At county level, EC support⁵⁵ has not helped to improve the capacity of Liberia's local authorities for adopting a legitimate role in providing key social services and infrastructure to the Liberian population. County and district administrations were not able to increase and widen their work portfolios as a result of their cooperation with EC programmes. Any learning by county staff during the programme did not carry over into the sustained adoption of new tasks after the end of the EC support. Persisting substantial organisational capacity bottlenecks, such as lacking operational budgets to maintain equipment or finance travel within the county or district or the lack of electricity in administration building prevented this from happening. In this type of environment, the supported county administrations also were unable to maintain and make use of any former programme equipment that was left with the local authorities. Integration of and coordination between County and National level Government structures remained weak and therefore could not help to reduce these bottlenecks (**see Annex EQ8, JC8.1**). Most activities that were meant to bring essential services and infrastructure to local communities were driven by EC programme teams, not by local authorities. EC experts acted largely independently of the local authorities (e.g. in the case of the EDF8 Reintegration Programme) and were the main

⁵⁴ For example, the annual revenue collected from four of the five EC-audited SoEs nearly doubled in the period spanning the era of Liberia's transitional Government until 2007.

⁵⁵ Mostly offered under the 9th EDF Community Rehabilitation Component of the "Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and Capacity Building Programme" and, more recently, under the County Development Programme of the EC.

facilitator for the improved service delivery (i.e., in the case of the CRC / PCRCBP). Programmes also established parallel structures that channelled resources away from the county and district administrations (e.g. in the case of the CRC / PCRCBP that set up its own offices in the counties). Government officials were not equipped to operate independently of the EC-financed programme teams, neither during the duration of the programme nor afterwards. Attempts to involve district and county staff in the supervision and maintenance of EC-financed investments, such as the Suakoko-Yaendewon road, were not successful: the designated local administration staff members never took up their posts over disagreements over the appropriate remuneration through “sitting fees”. At least some of the investments made by the EC are likely to eventually be unsustainable because local communities were not able to obtain additional support from local authorities and national Ministries. The practical significance of the County Development Agendas (CDAs)⁵⁶ is ultimately constraint by the continuously weak implementation and planning capacity at county and district level and the resulting threats to the impact and sustainability of any project that might be carried out from the CDAs (**see Annex EQ8, JC8.2**).

The decision to channel support to and through the informal District Development Committees (DDCs) has further detracted from the increased role of local authorities vis-à-vis these parallel structures. In the years directly following the signing of the CPA, the UN-sponsored bodies did play a temporary role in local development planning. However, at the time of the evaluation, the DDCs had been more or less defunct for the previous two years, i.e. approximately since 2008 and were not involved in relevant processes at county level, such as the allocation of “County Development Fund” money to different community projects. Although President Johnson Sirleaf has signed an executive order to give the DDCs a formal role in local administrations, in practice they are often perceived as in competition to the original local administrative structure, lack even the most basic resources to function properly and are sidelined in key political processes at district and county level (**see Annex EQ8, JC8.2**).

⁵⁶ Multi-annual strategic plans that are “owned” by the counties and that were drafted with EC support in Bong, Lofa and Nimba counties

5.9. Education

Question 9	
Question	<i>To what extent has the EC helped to reduce the socio-economic marginalisation of vulnerable groups in the population, identified as one of the root causes of past violent conflicts, through its support to the education sector?</i>
Judgment Criterion	<p>The answer to the evaluation question is based on these judgment criteria:</p> <p>JC 9.1: Timely commencement of and progression through implementation of EC financed activities in the sector</p> <p>JC 9.2: Increased involvement of EC-supported target groups / target communities in re-installment of education services, in particular of women.</p> <p>JC 9.3: Improved and gender-balanced access to “emergency” and long-term educational opportunities at primary, secondary, tertiary and vocational level⁵⁷</p> <p>JC 9.4: Increased economic utility of education and educational content for economic and social advancement of learners, including improved employability (quality)⁵⁸</p>

Answer to the evaluation question

EC contribution to reduction of marginalisation through education

Significant delays of nearly 3 years of the EC-financed programme “EC support to Education in Liberia” (ECSEL) have prevented the arrival of tangible EC education assistance “on the ground” and have thereby kept the Commission from using its support to education to helping reduce the socio-economic marginalisation of vulnerable Liberians. Most of ECSEL’s delays were caused by drawn-out internal EC procedures, but the design of the programme itself would have made its scheduled and timely implementation unlikely: the ECSEL intervention logic, and the intended course and flow of the programme were based on an overly optimistic view of the existing organisational capacity in the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the 12 months allotted to the planning and implementation of the organisational restructuring of the Ministry were too short. These problems also affected so-labelled “quick-impact” activities, i.e., the training of teachers and the supply of adequate learning materials. The EC-financed construction of 35 schools under other programmes until 2008 was too small in scale to have made any significant difference in access to education.

While the EC contribution to education all but stalled, other donors and the Government slowly moved ahead with the rehabilitation of Liberia’s education system; however, the work of all donors and implementing agencies in the sector was affected by the difficult working conditions in the sector, wanting leadership by the MoE and often insufficient donor coordination. The few advances in the last 5 years notwithstanding, the education-related needs of Liberia’s population remain severe. Swift support to education in Liberia remains as relevant now as it was 5 years ago.

ECSEL⁵⁹ experienced repeated delays throughout its identification / planning and programming. Overall, a total of 3 years and 5 months passed between the intended date for signing the

⁵⁷ The EC has had no direct effect on access to education, due to the significant delays of its assistance.

⁵⁸ Apart from EC DDDR support (see the Evaluation Question (EQ) on DDDR), the EC has had no direct effect on access to education, and therefore can claim no effect on improved economic opportunities due to improved education.

⁵⁹ The overall objective of ECSEL was to help widen “access to education, and reducing gender imbalance and illiteracy rate”, i.e. specifically by ensuring “that learners of Liberia benefit from improved relevance, quality and provision of education through the restoration of Liberia’s education system”. The concrete results, ECSEL was meant to put in place were a) reforms of key institutional structures in the sector; b) strengthening of overall quality assurance, including M&E functions and putting in place an Education Management Information System (EMIS); c)

Financing Agreement (FA) at the end of 2005 and the actual recruitment of the Long-Term Technical Assistant team in March of 2009. Even as of September 2009, four years after preparation of ECSEL had initially begun, none of the "tangible" activities had started, i.e., the training of teachers, distribution of books and learning materials and reconstruction of schools and other physical infrastructure. The delays were chiefly caused by staff bottlenecks in the European Union Delegation / Office in Monrovia, coupled with protracted attempts to mobilize floaters and other short-term help from Commission headquarters in Brussels to assist in the implementation of the programme. The situation was exacerbated by the failure of contribution agreement⁶⁰ negotiations with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) that would have channelled Commission funds into the provision of text books for Liberian schools. After a year-long negotiation, the draft agreement was eventually abandoned in May 2008, because of difficulties with the procurement procedures for the textbooks that UNICEF had chosen. The delays also affected the so-called "quick impact" activities that should have led to the training of up to 1,500 teachers as well as the provision of learning materials that should have been completed within months of the signing of the Financing Agreement (**see Annex EQ9, JC9.1**).

Although most of the ECSEL's delays were caused by drawn-out internal EC procedures, the design of the programme itself contained a number of characteristics that would have made its implementation according to schedule unlikely: The intended logic, course and flow of the programme were based on an overly optimistic view of the existing organisational capacity in the MoE, and consequently, the time that had been allotted to the restructuring at the MoE, i.e., one year, including planning and implementation of reforms, was too short. According to the original design, only the team leader was meant to be in charge of the organisational restructuring of the Ministry; i.e. part time, in addition to her other team leading duties. ECSEL's design also contained contradictory conceptualisations of "organisational restructuring" of the MoE both as "programme results"⁶¹ and as "programme pre-conditions"⁶². This confounds the intervention logic of the programme and might have contributed to the fact that "capacity development" as a programme achievement was insufficiently emphasized in ECSEL's work plan, schedule and (human) resource allocation. Also, the implementation modalities for the intended "quick impact activities" were not clearly spelled out in the Financing Agreement. Overall, these shortcomings pose a significant threat to the feasibility of the programme's intended work plan and schedule (**see Annex EQ9, JC9.1**).

As a result, EC-assistance was all but absent from Liberia's schools until 2008. One of two exceptions to this overall picture was the very limited EC-financed construction or reconstruction of approximately 35 schools buildings across Liberia under two programmes that precede the Commission choice of education as one of its focal sectors⁶³. These 35 schools account for only 3% of the total number of schools that had been destroyed during the conflict. However, none of the EC-financed programmes was designed to provide any of the complementary inputs, such as books or teachers to the communities (**see Annex EQ9, JC9.3**). The communities who formally "owned" these construction projects were in most cases not able to fall back on any sufficiently established decentralised planning capacity at county level to ensure that their new schools would be supplied with teachers, books or other essential inputs.

strengthening of strategic needs-based planning, policy-making and budgeting in the MoE; d) curriculum development and reform; e) training of primary school teachers; and f) rehabilitation of educational infrastructure.

⁶⁰ Contribution agreements are the standard contractual tool of the European Commission to delegate budget/financial-implementation tasks of specific actions to an international organisation. By means of a contribution agreement, the international organisation becomes the delegate of the Commission (not the beneficiary), which means that the organisation can use European Union (EU)/EDF funds to launch call for tenders or proposals, award grants, carry out payments, etc, according to its own rules and administrative standards.

⁶¹ I.e. three out of six of ECSEL's results related to organisational restructuring and capacity building in the MoE (see JC 9.1 in Annex 1).

⁶² "MoE restructuring" is listed as one of three "conditions for reform" (i.e. under "risks and assumptions" in the FA) that, if not in place will risk "the overall effectiveness of the project" (EC, 2006e, p.9).

⁶³ The programmes in question are the EDF 8 "Reintegration Programme for Returnees and Displaced People" and the Community Rehabilitation Component (CRC) of the "Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and Capacity Building Programme (PCRCBP, EDF9)".

The second exception is the support to approximately 8,670 former ex-combatants and their friends and relatives that the EC helped to finance through its contributions to the UNDP-managed DDDR trust fund.

The delays in EC support are particularly disconcerting, since educational opportunities at primary and secondary level continued to be severely constrained, despite some achievements of other donors and the GoL. The dire situation is illustrated by the fact that the enrolment of school-aged children in their age-appropriate school types at primary and secondary level, i.e. Liberia's "net enrolment rate" (NER), has actually declined between 1999 and 2007/08, from 46% to 33% in primary, and from 34% to 5% in secondary school. The significantly higher enrolment of over-aged students in Liberia's schools⁶⁴ suggests that the education system is currently being dominated by those students who want to make up for missed educational opportunities during the conflict years. As much as this is desirable, it must give rise to concern that younger children might in fact be "crowded out" of an overstretched Liberian education system. Also, overall progress has been greater at the primary rather than at the secondary level. Propositions from the MoE to redirect some donor funding to help promote Liberia's secondary education have not yet translated into corresponding changes from the donor community. Currently, all donors are focusing their support at the primary level (**see Annex EQ9, JC9.3**).

Also due to its delays, ECSEL has had no direct effect on strengthening the representation of interests of Liberia's vulnerable groups⁶⁵ in Parent Teacher Associations or any other education-specific fora at community or county level. The EC did provide support to County Development Agenda (CDA) consultations in three counties (Nimba, Lofa and Bong Counties) under the Community Rehabilitation Component of the EDF9 Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and Capacity Building Programme (PCRCBP). The population of two of these counties, Bong and Lofa, have significant proportions of returnees, i.e. 53% and 36%, respectively, however, none of the final documents for these three counties specifically prioritise their educational needs. The practical importance of the CDA consultations for the actual involvement of EC-targeted groups (women, returnees, ex-combatants) in educational planning is likely to be low. The agendas remain fairly general and as of 2008 had not been backed up by a well established decentralised planning capacity at county and district level (**see Annex EQ9, JC9.2**). The concept of gender is not well anchored in ECSEL in general. Although its Financing Agreement calls for the programme to reduce "gender imbalance and illiteracy rate" in the sector, the programme estimate neither specifies any more concrete actions to ensure that women and girls will indeed be specifically supported, nor details how the EC's concern for advancing the position of women and girls in education is meant to be reconciled with Ministry's own priorities and organisational provisions for gender mainstreaming. This is particularly significant since the MoE's organisational structures for gender mainstreaming are weak and its own policy for girls' education is lacking a clear operational framework to ensure its implementation⁶⁶ (**see Annex EQ9, JC9.3**).

The work of all donors and implementing agencies in the sector was affected by the difficult working conditions, wanting leadership by the MoE and often insufficient donor coordination. At least in some cases these shortcomings translated into duplication of efforts, delayed projects or low quality, i.e. in the construction of school buildings. Donors overall struggled with the challenge to adequately align themselves with the weak Governmental structures in the sector in ways that would maintain the principle of Government ownership and the donors' ability to move forward their individual programmes and initiatives. For the European Commission, this means that offering swift support to education in Liberia remains as relevant now as it was 5 years ago, and in some ways, more so (**see Annex EQ9, JC9.3**).

⁶⁴ As demonstrated by the significantly higher gross enrolment rates (GER) in counties across Liberia.

⁶⁵ In the context of this evaluation, the evaluators considered in particular ex-combatants, IDPs and returnees and women / girls.

⁶⁶ Interviews in the Ministry suggested that the Ministry of Education's concern for advancing the position of women and girls is more closely tied to improving the quality of education in Liberian schools overall. It is not clear, therefore, how the EC's particular concern for gender mainstreaming is accommodated by this position without more specific efforts to ensure its practical relevance for day-to-day operations in the sector.

5.10. Adequacy of Cooperation Frameworks and Implementation Mechanisms

Question 10	
Question	<i>To what extent have chosen cooperation frameworks and implementation mechanisms allowed adequate use of EC resources to facilitate the intended results of EC assistance to Liberia?</i>
Judgment Criteria	<p>The answer to the evaluation question is based on these judgment criteria:</p> <p>JC 10.1: EC organisational resources and EC capacity in Liberia can respond to organisational demands of chosen cooperation frameworks and implementation mechanisms on EC structures</p> <p>JC 10.2: Choice of cooperation frameworks and implementation mechanisms shows / allows adequate anticipation / response of / to external risks, i.e., resulting from political fragility</p> <p>JC 10.3: Adequacy of cost / output ratios (compared to country specific benchmarks)</p>

Answer to the evaluation question

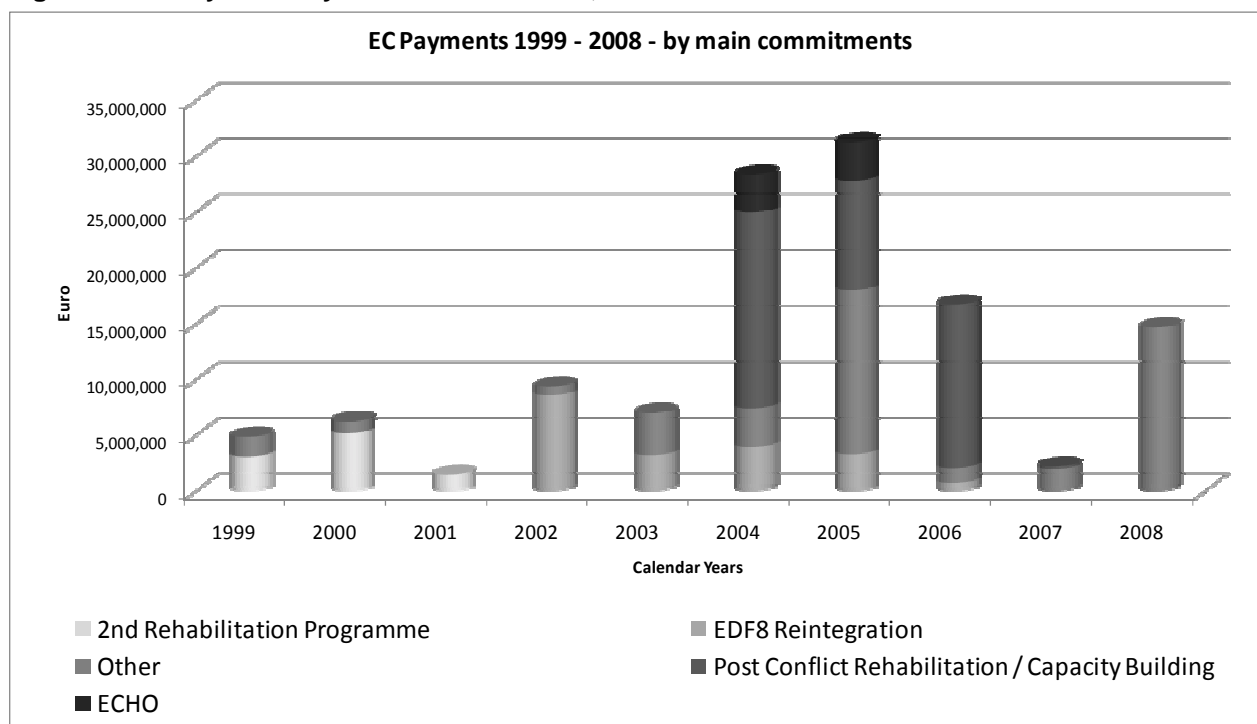
Adequacy of Cooperation Frameworks and Implementation Mechanisms

The demands that planning and implementation of EC assistance have placed on the EC in Monrovia have overburdened and overwhelmed the organisational and human resources of the EC office and later the EU Delegation in Monrovia. Disbursing funds primarily through contribution agreements with other donors and implementing agencies and attempting to bolster human resources of the Delegation with temporary personnel from contractors or EC HQ in Brussels were not enough to alleviate the strain on EC staff and to prevent negative effects on the delivery, quality and sustainability of EC results. Additionally, the allocation of staff to the Delegation also suffered from considerable delays. Together, the staff bottlenecks and the status of the EC Delegation in Monrovia as sister delegation of Abidjan have substantially prolonged processing times during programme identification, programming and implementation. The ability of the EC to anticipate and react to programme-related risks in the extremely volatile Liberian aid context also suffered from the staff shortage. Contracting out programme implementation did not necessarily help the EC to deal with these kinds of risks effectively. The example of the County Development Programme suggests that contracting out might even have made it more difficult to ensure that "lessons-learned" on particular risks of working in Liberia find their way into contractor-driven programme operationalisation and implementation, especially when staffing levels were as low as was the case for the EC Delegation in Monrovia between 2003 and 2007. Although the EC initially considered granting budget support to Liberia in 2006, the Commission ultimately refrained from using this modality during EDF9, but committed an amount of €20.2m during for budget support during EDF10.

Administrative delays resulted at least in part from a severe shortage of Liberia-based EC staff. In practice, this meant that important contributions from the EC did not become available on the ground when they were expected or needed. This was most prominently the case for ECSEL (EC Support to Education in Liberia), but also in other programmes. In the case of parts of the Community Rehabilitation Component of the Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and Capacity Building Programme (CRC / PCRCBP), the delays meant that a number of projects had to be cancelled due to D+3 de-commitment of the foreseen funds that just previously had been officially acknowledged and announced to the Liberian population by Liberia's President. This and other instances of unfulfilled expectations have caused the Liberian President to repeatedly register formal complaints about the slow delivery of promised EC assistance. The availability of EC support suffered in particular during the years 2006 and 2007, two years that was particularly important for the newly elected Government to ensure that it could fulfil many promises from the election campaign. In 2007, the EC contracted only €2.24 million (see Figure 4). In particular the

delay of ECSEL contributed to this bottleneck, but also the delays in planning and operationalising the County Development Programme. As a result of the overwhelming demands on EC staff in Monrovia, the EU Delegation temporarily felt forced to withdraw from essentially all of the bi- and multi-lateral coordination platforms, including the prominent donor-GoL consultations on the development of Liberia's Poverty Reduction Strategy (**see Annex EQ10, JC10.1**).

Figure 5: EC Payments by Main Commitments, 1999 - 2008



The fact that the Commission's programme identification and formulation did not adequately take into account its own limited organisational capacity contributed to these shortcomings. For example, the commitment of € 50.0m immediately after the signing of the CPA had raised expectations with Liberian partners that the Commission's inadequately resourced operational staff subsequently struggled to fulfil. In the case of ECSEL, the failure to consider the EC's own severely limited organisational capacity in Liberia already during the programme's design led to serious gaps in the delivery of European Commission support, which damaged the reputation of the Commission as a reliable development partner (**see Annex EQ10, JC10.1**). Contracting out the programme oversight and supervision to third parties, such as consulting companies and multilateral agencies might have somewhat relieved the considerable pressure on the shorthanded EC staff in Monrovia, but added the challenge of ensuring that "lessons-learned" from earlier programmes were adequately considered in programme management, as well as the adequate analysis of political and socio-economic risk factors in Liberia's fragile and unpredictable aid context. To begin with, the analysis of risks in fundamental programme documents, such as Financing Agreements, remained very general and did not provide a good basis for preparing a nuanced programme management strategy. Contracting out of programme management might have added to this challenge. In the case of the County Development Programme, the contractor's awareness of the specific risks and challenges of the programme lagged behind the relatively nuanced analysis and knowledge of past "lessons-learned" that had been demonstrated in the ToR for this assignment. This case also illustrates how low staffing levels and high staff turnover at the EU Delegation can contribute to the loss of tacit knowledge and subsequently of this knowledge as "lessons learned" in the work of EC contractors. Time pressure compounded this challenge by constraining the ability of the Delegation staff to ensure that at least all of the documented knowledge and lessons were being considered by EC contractors.

The low “risk preparedness” of many EC-financed programmes in Liberia meant that the staff of these projects had to make relatively ad-hoc adjustments to their interventions when their initial assumptions were not satisfied. Changes like “time consuming accounting exercises” to make up for lower than expected fiduciary standards of county administrations have increased the risk of reduced project benefits or smaller than expected sustainability of investments. Making the necessary shifts in project substance without (documented) losses of project quality was possible only in a few cases (**see Annex EQ10, JC10.2**).

At least in some programmes, the EC faced challenges to adequately balance investments and community level with adequate administrative costs. Unit costs for job creation were relatively high in key programmes⁶⁷, in particular when considering not only the actually invested amounts, but also the “administrative overheads” of the individual grants: the administrative costs more than doubled the costs of each created job. For both of these programmes, the “operational” expenses were 100% to 150% of the actually invested amount. In the case of the EDF8 Reintegration Programme, this meant that grants of the average size of €14,240 would incur an administrative “overhead” of approximately €21,700, bringing the total costs for each of these grants to an average of €36,000. For the Small-Scale Grants of the Community Rehabilitation Component, the administrative, staff and other “overhead” expenses were approximately 105% of the invested amounts. For a the average grant of €8,755.77, the EC and its partners incurred estimated administrative costs of €9,149.99, bringing the total cost of the average investment to €17,905.76.

The unit-costs for jobs created by the Community Rehabilitation Component of the PCRCBP, including both “investment” and “administrative” costs, were approximately 5 times higher than those of the EDF8 Reintegration programme⁶⁸. At least in part this can be attributed to the emphasis this programme placed on “capacity building” in addition to community investments and associated job creation. However, given the overall unsatisfactory results of the programme in this area (see Chapter 5.8 on capacity building); the considerably higher costs are not justified.

Using competitive tendering to select contract partners was often not possible in the context of Liberia; interest from potential bidders was often too low. As a result, the Delegation often had to revert to negotiated procedures (**see Annex EQ10, JC10.3**).

⁶⁷ Such as the EDF8 Reintegration Programme and the Community Rehabilitation Component of the Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and Community Building Programme.

⁶⁸ The CRC / PCRCBP had per unit investment costs (i.e. excluding administrative costs) of €6,140.41 for each of the 77 created full-time positions; and overall per unit costs (i.e. including administrative costs) of €12,557.29 per job. The per unit costs of the EDF8 Reintegration Programme were only €1,113.00 and €2,813.00, respectively.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The following chapter will outline the overall conclusions that the evaluators formulated based on the findings and answers to the evaluation questions in Chapter 5 above. The immediately following section will first present 5 principal conclusions that the evaluators consider to be the most important results of this evaluation. The subsequent section will then advance a number of additional conclusions that often serve to elucidate the 5 principal conclusions.

6.1. Principal Conclusions

PC 1	<i>The capacity of the European Commission in Liberia was clearly inadequate and the EU Delegation too understaffed to be able to respond to the operational demands that the large aid portfolio had placed on the organisation, leading to unfulfilled expectations among the Commission's main partners.</i>	<i>Origin:</i> EQs 1 (Relevance), 5 (Food Security), 8 (Capacity), 9 (Education), 10 (Mechanisms/Frameworks)
		<i>Criteria:</i> Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact
		<i>Importance:</i> Very high

Despite the choice of contribution agreements as implementation mechanisms, staffing in the under-resourced EU Delegation was too low to adequately handle the tasks that remained in the hands of the Delegation. This includes the timely preparation and supervision of contribution agreements⁶⁹ (e.g. in the case of ECSEL), the adequate monitoring and supervision of programmes (e.g. Food Security), but also the management and supervision of programmes that did not lend themselves to contribution agreements. The Community Rehabilitation Component of the PCRCBP, for example, was supervised directly by the Delegation and suffered significant delays in its implementation, due to long response times of the EU Delegation to requests from the Project Team. Another task that often suffered was adequate quality control of inputs from external contractors, as for example in the case of the case of the inception report of the County Development Programme.

The disconnection between Liberian expectations and the ability of the EC to deliver the promised assistance became particularly pronounced during the years 2006 and 2007. During this period, the support of the Commission that actually was contracted reached a low, with only just over €2m signed over to implementing partners of the EC. Disbursement from all programmes during these years became significantly delayed. This included the last payments from the Post-Conflict Rehabilitation and Capacity Building Programme, but most significantly the new commitments under ECSEL and the County Development Programme. During this period, the Liberian President repeatedly registered complaints with the European Commission in Brussels about the slow disbursement of EC aid. The staff shortages also forced the EU Delegation to withdraw from all coordination fora during 2006 and parts of 2007.

⁶⁹ As laid out in the "Practical Guide to Contract Procedures for EU External Actions", the Commission remains responsible to "scrutinize" the implementation of the respective action, i.e. by focusing on agreed results, but also to in relation to the implementation of an intervention "at different levels, notably i) through the assessment of the reports submitted by the international organisation and the Commission's requests for additional information whenever such reports are insufficient and, where necessary, ii) through verifications (i.e. checks of supporting documents and on-spot verification missions)" (European Commission, 2008g).

PC 2	<i>The design of the EC's cooperation strategy and the commitment at political level of large-scale support during Liberia's post-war years did not sufficiently consider the very limited implementation capacity of the EU's own Delegation in Liberia during those years.</i>	Origin: EQs 1 (Relevance), 5 (Food Security), 9 (Education), 10 (Mechanisms/Frameworks)
		Criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability
		Importance: Very high
<p>The political process that led to the commitment of European Commission support to post-war Liberia did not trigger a needed parallel process EC to ensure that the organisation would have the required operational resources to implement these commitments. Neither the commitments of resources right after the peace negotiations nor the additional funds committed through the EDF9 CSP were backed up by systematic assessments of how and the organisation would be able to deliver the considerable aid it was promising. The disconnect between the large-scale commitment of funds and the serious constraints in the Commission's capacity to implement continued at the level of programmes: Neither the Technical and Administrative Provisions (TAPs) of key programme, such as the <i>Post Conflict Rehabilitation and Capacity Building Programme</i> nor the designs of later programmes, such as ECSEL, systematically considered how the EC with its fledgling structures in the country would respond to the considerable demands that the commitment of the money was going to place on the organisation. The design of ECSEL, for example, did not factor in the staffing bottlenecks at the EU Delegation at all, despite the serious understaffing at the Delegation in 2006 and 2007.</p>		

PC 3	<i>The European Commission's procedures and mechanisms for design, planning and implementation did not adequately take into account the difficult conditions, vagaries, risks and operational constraints of Liberia's post-conflict environment.</i>	Origin: Primarily EQ 10 (Mechanisms / Frameworks), but also EQs 6 (Income), 8 (Capacity), 9 (Education).
		Criteria: Efficiency, Effectiveness, Sustainability
		Importance: Very high
<p>The low practical significance of the notion of “risk” in planning and implementation of EC-finance interventions was caused by a combination of factors: a) Many programmes suffered from an insufficient analysis of “risk factors” already during their conception. This was the case, for example, for ECSEL, where the risks associated with attempting to develop the organisational capacity of a post-conflict Ministry were not adequately considered in the timing of deliverables, the work plan and the resourcing of this programme component. In other cases, such as the County Development Programme, the identification of programmes was based on a fairly good and comprehensive analysis of possible risks. However, the awareness of these risks diminished as the planning and preparation of the programme progressed. As a result, the inception report of the technical assistant team recruited to manage the programme did no longer contain or reflect the detailed risks analysis that had still been part of the ToR for the TA assignment. Risks are also insufficiently codified in key programme documents, such as Financing Agreement and the corresponding Technical and Administrative Provisions).</p> <p>All of these circumstances contributed to the fact that many EC financed programmes operated without appropriately developed risk management plans and contingencies in budget or time, which limited their ability to adequately respond to fairly foreseeable stumbling blocks they encountered in the implementation of their programmes.</p>		

PC 4	<i>The EC could successfully provide some relevant and important impulses for Liberia's stabilisation, but only in only a relatively small number of cases. Overall, the EC's contributions lagged significantly behind its actual potential and value-added for assisting post-conflict societies and its commitment to focus support on the most vulnerable, marginalised Liberians.</i>	<i>Origin:</i> EQs 1 (Relevance), 2 (DDRR), 3 (LRRD), 4 (Peace/Conflict) 5 (Food Security), 7 (Infrastructure), 8 (Capacity Building)
		<i>Criteria:</i> Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability
		<i>Importance:</i> High
<p>In spite of the significant difficulties, the assistance of the European Commission to Liberia helped to set a few important signals at relevant times in the country's peace and post-war reconciliation process. The quick commitment of €50.0m to support the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement is one example. Also the emergency support of Monrovia's municipal services, the financial support of the post-war disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process, and the provision of assistance to ensure food security of the Liberian population, the EC helped to stabilise Liberia's post-war society.</p> <p>However, overall, the extent of these successes lags far behind the EC's own stated objectives in Liberia.</p>		

6.2. Complementary Conclusions

The following paragraphs will present a number of additional conclusions that serve to elucidate some of the points made by the principal conclusions above. Specifically, the complementary conclusions will provide additional summations regarding the following points:

- The consequences of the Commission's limited operational capacity in Liberia (PC1)
- The shortcomings of the EC to take into account the specific challenges of delivering aid to Liberia as a post-conflict country (PC3)
- The kinds of impulses that EC assistant was able to provide (PC4)

6.2.1. Consequences of the Inadequate Operational Capacity at Delegation level (PC1)

C 5	<i>Procedural delays prevented the EC from providing timely support in crucial post-war / post election years, affecting primarily education, but also infrastructure (electricity, water) and county development.</i>	<i>Origin:</i> Chapter 5.9 (Education), 5.10 (Frameworks and Mechanisms), 5.7 (Infrastructure)
		<i>Criteria:</i> Efficiency, Effectiveness

Serious understaffing and cumbersome administrative procedures with the EU Delegation in Abidjan meant that in particular after the 2005 election EC assistance all but completely stalled. The delays affected primarily the commitments that the EC had made in connection with the Country Strategy Paper for the EDF9, and therefore in particular the education sector and the county development programme. The fact that these delays caused bottlenecks in the aid delivery during the politically sensitive, post-election year detracted from the contribution the EC was able to make to the continued stabilisation of Liberian society during these years.

C 6	<i>The challenge of matching EC implementation capacity with organisational demands of aid portfolio is still current in the case of EDF10, especially considering the broad and all-inclusive layout of the strategy.</i>	Origin: Chapter 5.1, 5.10
		Criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, Sustainability

The CSP for EDF10 was written in a way that should allow the EC the utmost flexibility in allocating resources to various sectors during EDF10. Consequently, the paper mentions most, if not all, sectors as possible targets for EC support, in the context of LRRD. Although this was an appropriate way to deal with the formal requirement of writing a CSP under the uncertain circumstances in Liberia and the European Commission itself, it postponed the challenge of matching the organisational demands that support in any of these sectors will place on the EU Delegation with the available staff capacity to the programme identification stage.

Although the staffing situation in the Delegation has improved considerably since 2003, this does not mean that staffing bottlenecks as a potential source of delays have been completely removed.

C 7	<i>In many sectors, EC-financed interventions and donor-financed programmes in general suffered from a lack of or at least insufficient coordination</i>	Origin: Chapters 5.2 (DDRR); 5.5 (Food Security); 5.9 (Education)
		Criteria: Efficiency

In the absence of strong Government partners that could have led the efforts to coordinate donor assistance donors often found it challenging to agree on mutually acceptable coordination mechanisms. The EC's role was additionally weakened by the precarious staffing situation in the EU Delegation. In education, these shortcomings led to at least some cases of duplicated efforts, delayed projects or low quality. Also in Food Security, coordination between stakeholders was generally weak. The lack of coordination in planning and programming among implementers of EC funded programmes led to duplications, overlap and even competition, thus reducing efficiency of interventions. Coordination and communication amongst stakeholders also proved to be difficult in DDRR and negatively affected the performance of individual projects under the EC-funded DDRR programme.

C 8	<i>The choice of "contribution agreements" as one of the main vehicles for disbursing EC funds in Liberia was justified and helped to relieve some, but not all, of the pressure on the under-staffed EU Delegation.</i>	Origin: Chapter 5.10
		Criteria: Various

The need to administer and disburse the large amounts of EC assistance in the years from 2003 to 2007 despite the low staffing levels did not leave the EU Delegation with many operational options. Therefore, choosing the mechanisms of "delegated cooperation" and to transfer the resources to the United Nations and the World Bank as eligible international organisations was appropriate. The fact that the signing of the contribution agreements made these organisations and primarily responsible for launching call for tenders, signing procurement contracts and awarding grants did relieve some of the operational pressure on EC staff. However, formally, the use of contribution agreements does not relieve Commission services of the responsibility to subject the delegated cooperation to the appropriate level of "scrutiny", i.e. through corresponding monitoring and supervision arrangements that include the assessment of reports submitted by the international organisation; and also through "spot-on" verification missions⁷⁰.

⁷⁰ European Commission, 2008g, p.117.

6.2.2. *Inadequacy of Design, Planning and Implementation Procedures and Mechanisms (PC3)*

C 9	<i>The EC missed the opportunity to use a review of the CSP in cooperation with the newly elected Government to establish a clear strategic basis for its cooperation from 2006 onward, also in view of its own limited implementation / operational capacity.</i>	Origin: EQs 1 (Relevance), 10 (Mechanisms / Frameworks)
		Criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness
		Importance: Medium

Merely reverting to an old draft of a CSP that had been written already in 2004 meant that the EC missed a chance for an in-depth consultative process with the newly elected Government that might have revealed that both parties were basing the cooperation on slightly differing assumptions: Although the Government and the EC were largely in agreement regarding the main sectors that should be supported, the 150-day plan of the newly elected Government clearly placed a greater emphasis on "short-term" and "emergency type" measures. The strategy of the EC, on the other hand, assumed already a gradual transition to longer-term rehabilitation interventions.

By omitting the CSP review, the EC also missed an opportunity to adjust the aid portfolio it was committing to its own internal operational and implementation capacity. As a result, the significant delays of EC assistance in the years 2006 and 2007 added to the difficulties of the EC to satisfy the GoL's desire for "quick", rehabilitation-oriented support. Consequently, the delays were one of the main complaints of the GoL regarding EC performance.

C 10	<i>In Liberia's post-conflict situation, the technical knowledge of selected implementers, as well as their organisational capacity and their familiarity with Liberia's particular challenges was often too low for the EC to rely on their capacity alone to ensure the proficient implementation of programmes and projects.</i>	Origin: Chapters 5.2 (DDRR), 5.5 (Food Security), 5.8 (Capacity Development)
		Criteria: Effectiveness, Impact, Sustainability

In food security, for example, most implementing partners came from an emergency background. As a result, the staff did often not dispose of sufficient technical knowledge for implementing food security interventions. In many cases, this led to technically weak solutions and consequently to low impact and limited sustainability of the benefits. In one case the unfamiliarity with the Liberian context led an INGO to overestimate the national partners' capacities and to underrate the need for a strong in-country presence to supervise implementation progress. In DDRR, the capacity of contractors who had been selected to provide employment training for war affected people was insufficient, which resulted in a very low quality training.

C 11	<i>At the same time, the European Commission itself was not able to adequately ensure that lessons-learned and knowledge from previous programmes were transferred into follow-up interventions.</i>	Origin: Chapters 5.5 (Food Security); 5.8 (Capacity Development), 5.10 (Frameworks and Mechanisms)
		Criteria: Efficiency, Sustainability

Knowledge management in the EU Delegation was weak overall, a shortcoming that also was in part caused by the inadequate staffing at the Delegation. Other factors, such as the frequent turnover of relatively weak implementing partners compounded the effects from insufficient oversight, knowledge management and quality assurance on the part of the Commission services. Despite the fact that the implementation of programmes such as the CRC / PCRCPBP was contracted out to long-term TA teams, the responsibility to ensure continuity and quality of the work done by these contractual partners remains in the hands of the EU Delegation. This

responsibility placed operational demands on the EU Delegation in Liberia that it was not able to adequately fulfil.

C 12	<i>EC-financed programmes often lacked appropriate monitoring and evaluation of their outcome and impact, i.e. in particular in the case of Food Security Interventions and DDDR support.</i>	<i>Origin:</i> Chapter 5.5 (Food Security)
		<i>Criteria:</i> Effectiveness, Impact

In particular in Food Security and DDDR interventions, there was an apparent lack of monitoring, follow-up and outcome and impact analysis. Within the Delegation the responsibility for the food security interventions was outsourced to TAs in Niger and later Sierra Leone who did not have time available for monitoring visits. Even the ROM missions that should be carried out yearly were only carried out for two FS projects in 2009 due to the lack of human resources within the EU Delegation to accompany these exercises. Implementers carried out very little outcome and impact assessment and therefore little evidence on impacts of interventions was available. The Delegation seemingly did not insist that implementers should develop sound M&E systems and carry out proper baseline and impact studies. Monitoring as an important management tool for improving results achievement was neglected and a lot of learning opportunities were missed out.

C 13	<i>EC reliance on parallel structures (programme offices, DDCs) and TAs with operational responsibilities to push county-level development projects detracted from strengthening of county level administrative structures.</i>	<i>Origin:</i> Chapter 5.8 (Capacity Development)
		<i>Criteria:</i> Efficiency, Effectiveness

In other programmes with a capacity development component, however, the EC fell back on the more traditional pattern of combining the task of capacity development with other operational responsibilities. In those instances, such as the “Community Rehabilitation Component” (CRC) of the Post-Conflict Development and Capacity Building Programme, the temptation to use the technical assistants to implement the programme eventually took over and crowded out the capacity development components of the assignment. The fact that the programme staff was located in separate programme offices outside of the county administration buildings only compounded this effect. As a result, the CRC for the most part had no lasting effects on the organisational capacity of the county administration⁷¹.

C 14	<i>The time horizon of many interventions was too short to effectively establish or change social structures and behaviour that would have been needed to sustain the benefits of EC-financed interventions.</i>	<i>Origin:</i> Chapters 5.5 (Food Security), 5.6 (Income Generation), 5.8 (Capacity Development), 5.9 (Education)
		<i>Criteria:</i> Effectiveness, Impact, Sustainability

In Food Security, the time horizon of EC interventions was clearly too short to achieve the desired results. EC ROM reports criticise the lack of realism in project design in relation to the project time horizons and regard five to ten years as a more realistic time frame for sustainable results in relation to food security as changes in agricultural practices take time to show tangible results and then take even longer until farmers adopt changes to their own farming systems. In education, the design of ECSEL was based on an overly optimistic view of the existing organisational capacity in the MoE and of the ability of the EC to affect changes in the Ministry in the very short time allotted to these efforts. In the case of food security and income generation

⁷¹ These observations very much in line with the findings that underpin the EC “Backbone Strategy for Technical Cooperation for Capacity Development”. Relevant elements of the backbone strategy will be picked up in the corresponding recommendation.

projects, many physical improvements and investments the EC had financed, such as fish ponds, roads or Inland Valley Swamps were ultimately not taken over and maintained by the beneficiaries, often because they either had not really come to appreciate the usefulness of the improvements, or because the social structures that would have needed to be in place to allow for the community-driven management of these assets had not been allowed to develop and strengthen.

C 15	<i>Lack of systematic and appropriate follow-up and care for earlier achievements limited the extent to which fledgling achievements could be secured and consolidated</i>	<i>Origin:</i> Chapters 5.5 (Food Security), 5.6 (Income Generation), 5.7 (Infrastructure), 5.8 (Capacity Development)
		<i>Criteria:</i> Impact, Sustainability

In Food Security, many interventions, including inland valley swamps or fish ponds, were quite successful at the time of implementation, but benefits could not be sustained. Likewise, farmers initially appreciated improved seeds, but failed to keep managing seed banks to secure the availability of seeds in the villages; road maintenance facilitated access to villages and improved the marketing of agricultural products, but some maintenance results did not even survive the first rainy season. Animal distributions increased the number of livestock in the villages, but communities are facing problems feeding the pigs and lose animals to diseases as there are no veterinary services available. In most of these cases, the continued management and maintenance of the new assets failed because communities were not able to mobilise enough members to continue investing their time and effort into these new activities. Road maintenance efforts did not come off the ground, because the different communities benefitting from the road and local authorities squared off over the appropriate procedures for collecting tolls and mobilising work crews. Left to their own devices, the parties were not able to solve these not necessarily insurmountable challenges.

C 16	<i>In some sectors, long chain of broker institutions and other intermediaries made management and "learning" / handling of lessons learned difficult</i>	<i>Origin:</i> Chapters 5.2 (DDRR); 5.5 (Food Security)
		<i>Criteria:</i> Efficiency, Effectiveness

In sectors such as Food Security and DDRR, the presence of long chains of intermediaries, at times stretching from the EC as provider of funds via the Commission's primary contractors (i.e. well-established "northern" NGOs) to Liberian "local" contracting NGOs (who at times even further subcontracted the actual implementation of actions on the ground). This structure made the transmission of management information or feedback from the ground difficult and imprecise, as any signals had to travel up or down this long chain and were often distorted or even interrupted in the process. In the case of reintegration assistance to ex-combatants, this meant that discontent over the low quality of training that was clearly expressed at the level of beneficiaries did neither reach the primary contractor of the EC nor the EC itself. In Food Security, the use of multiple intermediaries delayed the identification of serious implementation problems at the level of the local implementing partner by the primary contractor (a "northern" NGO) and by the EC itself.

C 17	Mainstreaming of crosscutting issues, including Gender, was generally only treated as a formality without significance for making the issues count during beneficiary targeting and the implementation projects and programmes by the EC and its partners	Origin: Chapters 5.2 (DDRR); 5.5 (Food Security); 5.6 (Income Generation), 5.9 (Education)
		Criteria: Various

Gender mainstreaming or the consideration of environmental issues in the design of interventions was evident only at the level of Financing Agreements and other project design documents. In the formulation of County Development Agendas (CDAs), which also was supported by the EC in three counties, the concerns of women were only decidedly taken into account towards the end of the consultation process. The resulting CDAs also treated gender concerns as a mere formality, with sections on the development needs of women that were identical in all CDAs across Liberia. In the actual implementation of programmes, these concepts played a relatively minor role. In education, ECSEL neither proposes any concrete actions to ensure that women and girls will indeed be targeted by EC support, nor any details on how the EC's specific concern for advancing the position of women and girls in education is meant to be reconciled with Ministry's own more general priorities and overall weak organisational provisions for gender mainstreaming. Also in other important areas such as income generation or food security, women were not specifically targeted by the interventions and planning of projects was often done on the basis of data that was not disaggregated by gender.

6.2.3. Impulses Emanating from EC Support to Liberia and Important Omissions (PC4)

C 18	At the policy level, the EC reacted speedily and decisively to the chance of supporting the stabilisation of the peace process in Liberia. High level political involvement of EC in peace negotiations facilitated this speedy adjustment of EC cooperation priorities to the requirements of post-conflict Liberia	Origin: Chapter 5.1
		Criteria: Relevance, Value Added

The European Commission seized the opportunity to show support for the peace process in Liberia by quickly committing considerable sums of support in important areas, including DDRR and the support of the ECOMOG peace force in the country. The fact that the money was made available and assigned to particular programmes quickly, i.e. within months of the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement provided momentum to the peace process when it was really needed. The fact that the European Commission was represented at the peace talks and therefore had access to first hand impressions and information on the dynamics of the negotiations has likely helped to convince the EC as an organisation of the urgency to commit money to stabilise the situation in Liberia. The fast commitment of the money, i.e., within three months of signing the CPA, considerably faster than usual, is therefore also likely to be a result of this direct involvement.

C 19	EC support of the DDRR process helped to stabilise the post-conflict situation in Liberia, by signalling the availability of post-war livelihoods opportunities and by helping to jump-start the return of IDPs and refugees.	Origin: Chapter 5.2
		Criteria: Effectiveness, Impact

The availability of training opportunities helped to instil confidence among former fighters and other war affected person that a post-war existence was in fact possible and viable. Similarly, Liberians who had fled from the fighting, either to other places within Liberia or to surrounding countries saw the availability of assistance as a sign that a return to their places of origin was in fact possible. Both factors helped to stabilise the economic and social circumstances in many places in Liberia that had been severely impacted by the violence.

C 20	<i>The provision of early "stop-gap" support in water and electricity to help fend off serious interruptions of basic services in Monrovia in the immediate aftermath of the war was relevant and effective</i>	Origin: Chapter 5.7 (Infrastructure)
		Criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness

Showing that life in post-war Liberia was possible and preferable to the conditions that persisted during the fighting was an important element in the stabilisation of the country in months and years following the peace agreement. Ensuring at least basic levels of service provisions in the two important areas of water and electricity helped to meet this challenge. Without EC support at this time, both the water authority and the Liberian Electricity Cooperation, unable to pay their basic operating expenses on their own, likely would have completely imploded.

C 21	<i>The timely provision of technical competence, regional experience and TAs with exclusive responsibility for capacity building allowed the EC to make valuable contributions to the organisational development of Liberia's General Audit Commission</i>	Origin: Chapter 5.8 (Capacity Development)
		Criteria: Effectiveness, Relevance

In particular the absence of any direct operational responsibilities allowed the technical assistants to develop a productive relationship with primary accountability towards the GAC management. Their relevant background and experience gave the TA team credibility and good standing in the organisation, which helped build a productive and cooperative relationship between the EC experts and the GAC. All of this was combined with energetic Liberian leadership, which allowed the technical assistance to be truly "owned" – and as a consequence used - by the Liberian partners.

C 22	<i>Delays, targeting shortfalls and technical weaknesses of EC projects have led to the situation where EC support so far has for the most part bypassed the medium- to long-term needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised Liberians.</i>	Origin: EQs 2 (DDRR), 3 (LRRD), 4 (Peace/Conflict) 5 (Food Security), 6 (Income Generation), 7 (Infrastructure), 8 (Capacity Building), 9 (Education)
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Shortcomings in education, income generation, food security, infrastructure and governance have led to a situation where EC support that was meant to improve the conditions of Liberia's most vulnerable groups has largely most materialised. This was the case most prominently in education, where approximately 3 years of EC support have prevented any tangible benefits to accrue to Liberian schools; this was also the case in income generation, where weak targeting and limited sustainability of investments kept EC support from lastingly affecting the livelihoods of the country's poorest groups. In food security, the delayed arrival of EDF funding meant medium- to long-term needs in the agricultural sector, relevant for most Liberians, could not be adequately addressed. Weaknesses in EC capacity development support outside of Monrovia detracted from sustained improvements of the ability of local authorities in Bong, Lofa and Nimba to take charge of local development concerns; and finally, inefficiencies in infrastructure investments, i.e. in particular roads and bridges, diminished the Commission's contribution to an improved transport infrastructure in rural Liberia, a factor that, among other things, directly affected the chances of rural Liberians to market agricultural surplus goods and to enter the cash economy. Finally, "gender" has only been considered on a formal basis in EC project documents, without any direct significance for targeting support and implementation specifically at women.

Thanks to the European Commission's support to the DDRR process, ex-combatants have fared relatively better than other Liberians. EC-financed support that was part of the DDRR package gave former fighters access to educational opportunities and vocational training and improved their access to economic access (namely by means of the tool sets distributed through the NCDDRR programme). However, for the most part, this support did not benefit the wider population.

7. OVERALL JUDGMENT OF EC COOPERATION

Overall, the performance of the European Commission in Liberia lagged significantly behind its true potential and its own aspirations for assisting and helping to stabilise post-conflict societies. In many ways, the Commission had been an active participant and actor in many of the key political events that helped to bring Liberia out of decades of conflict and violence (**EQ1, EQ2, EQ3, EQ4, EQ5, EQ7, and EQ8**). This included the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2003, the country-wide disarmament and demobilisation, and the holding of the first national democratic elections since the end of the war in 2005. The European Commission's willingness to back the terms of the peace agreement with a much-needed financial commitment was important for bringing the warring factions together in the immediate aftermath of the conflict; and the EC support of the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process in the following years helped to consolidate the peace assisted former fighters as well as Liberians overall to turn the page on the past violence and to consider reconciliation and rehabilitation as a real opportunity (**EQ2, EQ6**). EC food security support helped to contain the most severe effects of the conflict-related food security crisis in Liberia (**EQ5**) and EC-financed institutional audits were instrumental in galvanising donors into demanding the creation of the successful *Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme (GEMAP)*⁷² (**EQ8**). As part of GEMAP, the EC also helped to strengthen Liberia's *General Auditing Commission*. Finally, European Commission "stop-gap" support to the capital's water and electricity providers helped to ensure that Monrovia's would continue to receive at least a minimal level of these services (**EQ7**).

In light of this prominent political role and these important achievements, it is unfortunate that these aspects of the European Commission's engagement were in many ways not backed up by sufficient operational resources to make sure that more of the committed money could be adequately distributed and invested. The small office, i.e. the fledgling EU Delegation that the European Commission was maintaining in Monrovia for most of the period between 1999 and 2008 was simply overburdened with the operational duties connected to the disbursement of the large amount of money the European Commission had committed (**EQ1, EQ5, EQ9, EQ10**). In the years immediately following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2003, the EU Delegation was still able to ensure the appropriate outflow of funds, in part by transferring a large portion of the approximately €50m to multi-lateral organisations who would manage the resources on the European Commission's behalf. In this way, the EC could contribute money to finance the Liberian process of Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) (**EQ2**). However, even in these years, many aspects of EC assistance, such as the adequate supervision, monitoring, quality control and coordination of assistance suffered from the staffing bottleneck of the Commission in Monrovia. Money that had been intended to improve the livelihoods of Liberia's returning refugees and internally displaced persons at least in part bypassed these intended beneficiaries, because the eligibility criteria for the associated small-scale grants did not specifically earmark this support to these groups (**EQ2, EQ6**).

Starting in 2005/06, the low organisational capacity of the EU Delegation started to seriously affect and diminish the flow of money to the beneficiaries in Liberia. In 2007, for example, the contracts that the European Commission signed with implementing partners only added up to a total monetary value of €2.24m – a fraction of the money that had been promised to the Liberian Government for that year. In conjunction with the administrative delays of prior years, and the overall difficult conditions for delivering aid in Liberia this severely affected the performance of the European Commission. For the education sector, this meant that support that the European Commission had promised to help build and repair schools, train teachers and to improve the management of educational affairs and resources by the Ministry of Education arrived with

⁷² A joint programme of donors and the Liberian Government that served as umbrella for a number of initiatives to improve the management of public resources in the country.

nearly 3 years of delay (**EQ5**). Commission support that had been meant to help build up the agricultural sector in Liberia was also delayed by several years; a serious gap in support was only avoided because ECHO, the humanitarian agency of the European Commission was able to extend its support to make up for the shortfall (**EQ3, EQ5**). The rebuilding of electrical and water infrastructure in Monrovia was also affected by these delays; many of the intended projects to make lasting improvements to the capitals infrastructure started only with 2-3 years of delay (**EQ7**). Overall, therefore, the assistance of the European Commission reached a far smaller fraction of vulnerable and marginalised Liberians than had been originally intended.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation No. 1 Strengthening link between resource commitments and operations	Directed at: <i>DG Development, DG Relex, EuropeAid (HQ)</i>	
	Priority: Very high	Based on Conclusions: PC1, PC2, C5, C6, C7, C8, C9, C11
Overall recommendation (and explanation)	<p>Strengthen the operational and procedural linkages between the commitment of development resources on the one hand and the allocation of operational capacities and resources to EU Delegations on the other hand.</p> <p><i>The EC experience in Liberia illustrated that currently no procedures are in place to prevent even dramatic imbalances between committed development funds and the available operational capacity at country level to spend these resources. For the EU Delegation in Monrovia it was therefore impossible to adequately respond to the operational demands of the considerable aid that had been committed in the years following the comprehensive peace agreement in 2003. This disconnect extended also to the programme level.</i></p>	
Specific operational recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EC needs to amend the EC Framework for Country Strategy Papers (SEC(2000)1049) and the New Format for a Common Framework for Drafting Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) to require that the CSP drafting process includes an assessment of the operational capacity that the EC has actually available to manage the implementation of the assistance it is committing itself to. The operational assessment should ideally become part of the National Indicative Programme, as the more concrete specifications of the NIP allow a more realistic assessment of the organisational resources that will be required. • At programme and project level, the EC should also require that Technical and Administrative Provisions clearly analyse and outline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the tasks and responsibilities expected from the EC services (EU Delegation and HQ); b) the estimated resource requirement (human and other resources) to carry out these tasks; and c) the actual availability resources in the Commission services (EU Delegation and HQ). As part of this effort: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Guidelines and templates for the drafting of identification fiches, financing proposals and technical and administrative provisions will need to be updated and amended to include detailed instructions for assessing the operational demands of individual programme components. ➤ Staff and experts preparing identification fiches, financing proposals and TAPs will need to have access to specific guidance on how the operational demands for individual programmes should be estimated and how these assessments should be documented. The resource assessment also will need to be included in the quality assurance processes through the iQSG of EuropeAid. ➤ The results of this assessment process will need to be annexed to the Financing Proposal and the Financing 	

	<p>Agreement, so that its appropriateness can be evaluated at regular intervals and so that the Commission services can refine its guidelines on the staff and resource requirements of different types of programmes over time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EU Delegation in Liberia should only continue the use of cooperation agreements as long as it is necessary to make up for staffing shortfalls. However, the Delegation will need to improve its oversight over these agreements. • In order to allow for the appropriate implementation of EDF10 in Liberia, the EU Delegation should conduct a capacity review to determine where gaps in EU Delegation staffing are most likely to be expected and develop "fallback" action plan to compensate for the shortfall. • In addition, the EU Delegation should also consider the option of strategically reducing (in coordination with the NAO) the number of sectors it supports, in order to bring its own operational capacity in line with the daily operational demands; and to be able to improve the quality of cooperation in a smaller, more focused portfolio.
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Recommendation No. 2 Anticipation of risks and constraints	Directed at: <i>EuropeAid (HQ); EU Delegation</i>	
	Priority: Very high	Based on Conclusions: PC3, C9, C10, C11, C12, C13, C14, C15
Overall recommendation <i>(and explanation)</i>	<p>Strengthen procedures and mechanisms that help the European Commission, the EU Delegation and EC-financed implementing partners in Liberia to adequately anticipate the particular risks and constraints of working in Liberia, and in post-conflict countries in general.</p> <p><i>Past EC experience in Liberia shows that programmes and projects have often been designed without seriously considering the various risks they might face and that might adversely affect their performance and achievement of results. In addition, the Commission and its implementing partners, many of which had only Liberia-specific experience, frequently did not have sufficient time to take into account lessons from previous programmes or projects for the set-up of a follow-on intervention.</i></p>	
Specific operational recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Liberia and at global level, the EC needs to specify more stringent requirements for "risk analysis" and development of "risk management strategies" during project identification / preparation of financing decisions and agreements and inception phase. These requirements need to be written into the Terms of Reference of Long-Term TA assignments and programme management services and also need to be included in the quality assessment guidelines for tender submission and other products of external consultants. • In addition, the EU Delegation needs to invest more time and resources into the inception phase of programmes, and tighten the criteria applied to judging the quality of inception reports and their components (work plan, budget, etc.), including in particular regarding the incorporation of "lessons learned" from previous or similar programmes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The 2008 EC Backbone Strategy on "Reforming Technical Co-operation and Project Implementation Units" already introduces 	

	<p>the concept of "Project Implementation Arrangements" (PIAs)⁷³ and finds that "how a project is set up and managed can be as important for its impact as other aspects of design" (European Commission, 2008h, p.8). The appropriate time for developing these appropriate implementation arrangements is the inception phase of a programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If possible, the EU Delegation also needs to create and manage a database of experienced (external) personnel that can be called upon to be used in the planning and implementation of interventions. In particular under the volatile conditions in Liberia, newly arriving contractors are generally not able to fall back on experienced personnel that have already acquired very specific expertise. The EU Delegation, as the Commission's only institutional constant in Liberia, will need to find a way to compensate for this shortcoming.
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Recommendation No. 3 Re-focusing EC support on the most vulnerable and marginalised	Directed at: <i>EuropeAid (HQ); EU Delegation</i>	
	Priority: Very high	Based on Conclusions: PC4, C5, C6, C9, C10, C13, C14, C15, C17, C22
Overall recommendation <i>(and explanation)</i>	<p>Refocus efforts to channel assistance to the marginalised majority of Liberians, to make EC assistance count in particular for helping to reduce the socio-economic disadvantage of these population groups. To the extent necessary (i.e. to bring in line the capacity of the EU Delegation with the operational requirements), this might include focusing EC support on a smaller number of sectors.</p> <p><i>In the past, EC support has reached only a much smaller share of Liberia's population than had originally been intended. Successes in improving economic governance were confined to national level organisations (i.e. the General Auditing Commission) and infrastructure improvements were successful (albeit still delayed) mainly in the capital. EC support to education, vocational training and income generation reached primarily former members of the various militias and armed groups. Meanwhile, many of the interventions that were targeting Liberians on a larger scale, such as in education, income generation, food security, etc., were either delayed or affected by other technical shortcomings. The EC needs to compensate for these weaknesses in the future.</i></p>	
Specific operational recommendations	<p>In many ways, the EC's portfolio between 1999 and 2008 was made up of programmes that were designed to channel assistance to the most socio-economically marginalised Liberians. The European Commission, in coordination with the now officially appointed NAO, will need to decide, which sectors the EC will be able to support in the future, also taking into account its own limitations with regard to operational capacity. Given the current portfolio of the EC, the options are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If continuing support to education after the end of ECSEL, the European Commission needs to continue pursuing improvements of access to primary education through Liberia's public education 	

⁷³ Defined as " the organisational set-up established to implement a programme or a project, in terms of governance, accountability, management, division of labour and coordination" (European Commission, 2008h).

	<p>system. This issue is of utmost importance for the majority of Liberia's children and youth. After following through with ECSEL, the EC will need to assess how any initial achievements can be consolidated through follow-up programmes. More likely than not, this will mean that the EC should continue funding education in Liberia. The EC has invariably learned important lessons in the last 5 years in supporting this sector, and these lessons should not be wasted. <u>In addition to supporting primary education, the EC also needs to seriously consider the requests from the Liberian Government to extend support to secondary education as well.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in Liberia's road infrastructure hold immense potential for helping many Liberian to improve their livelihoods options and to enter the cash-economy. The EC therefore needs to continue its engagement in the reconstruction of feeder roads. Currently, EC money is channelled through the World Bank-administered <i>Agriculture and Infrastructure Development Project</i> (AIDP). In time for the preparation of the Country Strategy Paper for EDF11, the EC will need to examine if additional support is needed in this sector. The Commission should also be open to investing more efforts into ensuring the appropriate maintenance of Liberia's road network. • The Commission also needs to strengthen its engagement in food security and agricultural support to finally allow the transition from short-term relief in the sector to long-term rehabilitation and development. The additional money from the European Food Facility has made the European Commission to the largest contributor of food security support in Liberia. This financial engagement has to be backed up with an adequate food security and agricultural support strategy, adequately timed food security projects and highly skilled technical experts who are familiar with the post-conflict conditions of Liberia. • Finally, the EC should assess if there is the need for a stronger engagement of the Commission in micro-finance. The development of a micro-credit system had been foreseen under the EDF8 Reintegration programme, but was never realised. Still, access to finance seems to continue to be inadequate, in particular for smallholders in rural Liberia. <p>This recommendation is conceptually linked to Recommendation No. 4 on capacity development. In line with the assessment that the EC needs to increase its efforts in Liberia's rural areas, the Commission also needs to expand its capacity development support to Liberia's local authorities⁷⁴, so that over time local authorities can play a stronger role in the local economic development and social service delivery.</p>
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⁷⁴ Or the Commission needs to ensure that capacity development of local authorities is adequately covered by other donors and needs to improve coordination of these efforts with its own support in education, food security

Recommendation No. 4 EC capacity development support	Directed at: <i>EuropeAid (HQ); EU Delegation</i>	
	Priority: High	Based on Conclusions: PC3, PC4, C5, C6, C11, C13, C14, C21, C22
Overall recommendation (and explanation)	<p>Refocus and refine capacity development support to Liberia to reflect the EC's lessons-learnt in this area and sustain and expand capacity development support, particularly at local level.</p> <p><i>EC capacity development support in Liberia has encountered many of the challenges and obstacles that already have been recognised in a number of the Commission's own studies and publications⁷⁵. In addition, the EU Delegation itself has gained valuable experiences in supporting reforms of Liberia's General Auditing Commission. The EC has to apply these lessons to its other capacity development initiatives, and expand its efforts at the local level, where achievements so far have been lagging behind.</i></p>	
Specific operational recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EU Delegation can use the lessons from the past support to the GAC to revise and improve the "Project Implementation Arrangements" (PIA) of ongoing and future EC-financed capacity development projects. • In addition, the EU Delegation needs to step up the adoption of the EC's own "backbone strategy" for "reforming technical cooperation". The starting point will be a mapping of major TC operations of the EU Delegation in Monrovia, and the development of a concise Action Plan to identify 'quick-wins' in the reform of the Delegations capacity development portfolio. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This review will need to include in particular the County Development Programme, i.e. its components that focus on the development of organisational capacity at local level; as well as the Institutional Support and Capacity Building Programme and its sub-components (including the support to the GAC). ➤ The EC will also need to include its sector-specific capacity development support, i.e. in education, in this review. In particular any follow-up support to ECSEL needs to be based on the principles of the EC backbone strategy for technical cooperation. • In particular, the Delegation will pay closer attention to heading the call to use TAs primarily for "supporting internal country processes to promote capacity development at individual, organisational and countrywide levels", and, it at all, only secondarily to provide support for the implementation and facilitation/preparation of EC cooperation can provide important guidance for the design of EC CD assistance in Liberia. • Finally, the EU Delegation also needs to extend the time horizons, i.e. the duration, of interventions that aim at changing established social structures and behavioural patterns, based on more realistically timed work plans. 	

⁷⁵ E.g., the 2007 Court of Auditors report on "The Effectiveness of Technical Assistance in the Context of Capacity Development", and the subsequently formulated EC Backbone Strategy on "Reforming Technical Co-operation and Project Implementation Units" (2008).

	➤ <u>NOTE: This should not only be considered for capacity development programmes, but in general. for all interventions whose effectiveness and sustainability are dependent on fundamental changes in beneficiary behaviour, including for example food security projects</u>
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Recommendation No. 5 Coordination and coherence of assistance	Directed at: <i>EuropeAid (HQ); EU Delegation</i>	
	Priority: High	Based on Conclusions: PC1, PC2, C6, C7
Overall recommendation (and explanation)	<p>Improve the strategic significance of sector coordination, i.e. in particular in education, capacity development and food security in order to increase the overall coherence of donor support as such, and its alignment with Government-owned structures and mechanisms</p> <p><i>In the past, the Liberian Government had low capacity for leading the strategic and day-to-day coordination of donors; donors had differing visions on how to coordinate under these circumstances; and the Delegation had serious staffing shortfalls that hindered its participation in coordination efforts. In the future, the EC will need to better assess, where coordination is strategically important, what coordination means for its own human resource constraints and how donor coordination now shall be tied to the necessity of successively putting more responsibility on the shoulders of the Liberian Government.</i></p>	
Specific operational recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EU Delegation needs to develop clear operational and strategic principles for donor coordination in main sectors (education, local economic development / decentralisation, health), based on a joint assessment of the options for Government-led coordination in Liberia. • Corresponding agreements among donors and between donors and the Liberian Government also need to provide a prioritisation of issues that should be subjected to increased coordination efforts. The agreements also will need to clarify, how any sector-specific coordination fora will be linked to Government wide coordination mechanisms, and the respective strategic policy frameworks in each of the sectors. • The EC, the other donors and the Government also should outline how donor coordination in the short- and medium term will be linked to the intent of gradually transferring leadership over donor coordination exclusively to the Liberian Government. These principles and guidelines need to be shared among all stakeholders (including Civil Society), and also need to be included in any programme, sector or country level evaluations. • For the EU Delegation, it is particularly important to realistically assess, how much of its staff time it will be able to devote to donor coordination, and to factor this assessment into the scope of its commitments to donor coordination mechanisms. 	

Recommendation No. 6 Monitoring, supervision and oversight	Directed at: <i>EU Delegation</i>	
	Priority: Medium	Based on Conclusions: PC1, PC2, PC3, PC4, C8, C10, C11, C12, C16, C17, C22.
Overall statement of recommendation (and explanation)	<p>Increase attention on supervision, monitoring and evaluation of EC-financed projects, including those covered by contribution agreements with multilateral organisations.</p> <p><i>In the past, difficult country conditions, weak implementing partners and an overburdened EU Delegation allowed for problems in projects to go unnoticed for too long. Weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation have affected amongst others EC financed interventions in food security, and DDDR. Problems in other areas, such as the targeting flaws in the EC's support to income generation and the lack of appropriate assessments of EC contributions to peace building and conflict prevention arguably could have been detected earlier, had more stringent monitoring and evaluation provisions been in place.</i></p>	
Specific operational recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EU Delegation needs to make better use of the potential of ROM missions and reports for results-oriented supervision and oversight of its programmes. In the past, the lack of sufficient staff to host external monitors prevented a number of ROM missions from happening, e.g. in food security. • ROM recommendations need to be followed-up more thoroughly and the progress reported on in the appropriate places, e.g. the "External Assistance Management Reports" (EAMRs). • The EU Delegation also needs to limit the number of intermediaries involved in the delivery of EC-financed assistance in Liberia. Apart from the escalating administrative costs, upwards as well as downwards communication between the funding agency and the beneficiaries also is made impossible. Controlling, monitoring and evaluation depend on second hand reporting and do not allow a readjustment of activities, even if urgently needed. 	

Recommendation No. 7 Mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues	Directed at: <i>EU Delegation</i>	
	Priority: Medium	Based on Conclusions: PC4, C17, C22
Overall statement of recommendation (and explanation)	<p>The EU Delegation needs to critically review the practice of “mainstreaming” of cross-cutting issues in Liberia and use the results of this review to refocus its mainstreaming approach in important sectors, such as education, health and county development.</p> <p><i>In the past, mainstreaming of gender, environmental and other “cross-cutting” were treated merely as a formality. “Gender” was present all but exclusively in the planning documents at project and programme level. In most cases it did not have any practical significance during implementation. “Environment” was not even mentioned in the project documents. Mainstreaming was rarely based on a real understanding of the practical meaning and relevance of cross-cutting issues in Liberia’s post-war context.</i></p>	
Specific operational recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refocusing the EC practice of mainstreaming gender and environment in its cooperation with Liberia needs to start by adapting the concepts to the particular post-conflict circumstances in Liberia. • This review of “appropriate practices” has to be coupled and combined with an intensive consultations and workshops with the Commission’s main counterparts in Liberia, including first and foremost the Liberian Government. Both parties, i.e. the EC and the Liberian Government, have to be able to commit to a joint strategy that is based on a realistic and good understanding of what either of these concepts can mean in Liberia’s challenging political, social and economic environment • Based on this agreement on the main principles and objectives of mainstreaming, both parties can approach the equally important task of developing operational principles and guidelines for concrete sectors. 	