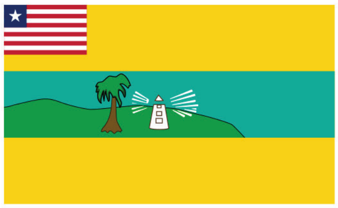
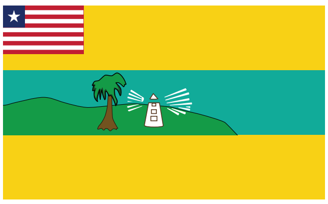
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA



MARYLAND
COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

MARYLAND COUNTY
2025-2029



MARYLAND COUNTY

County Development Agenda (CDA)

2025-2029

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

My fellow Marylanders in and out of Liberia, our foreign partners residing in Maryland, development Partners, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I am greatly honored to express my profound thanks to you for your overwhelming support given me through your attendance and exchange of ideas during the one-week consultative meeting in connection with the County Development Agenda. This gathering of minds and hearts has been more than a meeting—it has been a true demonstration of unity, purpose, and commitment. Your contributions, insights, and collaboration in developing the County Development Agenda have laid a strong foundation for progress that will benefit generations to come.

Our achievement was never going to be possible without your input. It is therefore incumbent upon me to recognize you as the chief architects of this framework.

We as Marylanders, along with other stakeholders, were able to come out with several projects as our five-year development plan which is in line with the ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development. These projects, if fully implemented, will greatly benefit our county and its citizenry and bring about the needed transformation that our people have been advocating for over the years. As you are fully aware, our county was for many years almost neglected or left abandoned in the areas of roads, safe drinking water, agriculture, etc. Through this consultative meeting, the groundwork has now been laid for us to swing into action in bringing into reality what we have envisaged to do.

Fellow Marylanders and all stakeholders, I want to urge you to be aware of the benefits and consequences associated with developments. We all must be prepared to pay the ultimate price as the government starts to build roads, run pipes for safe drinking water, and take land for agricultural purposes.

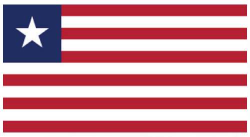
May God bless us.

Please accept the renewed assurance of my highest esteem.

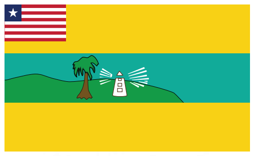
Sincerely yours,

Henry Cole
Superintendent, Maryland County

LETTER FROM THE PEOPLE OF MARYLAND COUNTY



THE PEOPLE OF MARYLAND COUNTY
Harper City, Maryland County
Republic of Liberia



November 14, 2024

His Excellency
Joseph Nyumah Boakai, Sr.
President
Republic of Liberia

Your Excellency:

Permit us to extend sincere facilitations and best wishes, and to express our heartfelt gratitude for the opportunity afforded us to derive our own County Development Agenda (CDA) that aligns with the ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development (AAID).

The people of Maryland County met at the district and county levels in July 2024 to engage, prepare and formulate the CDA. We have gathered from November 13-14, 2024 to validate what was formulated in July.

Mr. President, Maryland County is blessed with abundant natural resources including gold, forest, the Atlantic Ocean for fisheries purposes and some of the finest beaches in West Africa that could be developed for tourism. These serve as our comparative advantage for the implementation of the County Development Agenda (CDA).

The result of this exercise is a final validated County Development Agenda (CDA) which we now proudly present to Your Excellency and the Government of Liberia for your perusal and action.

Please accept the assurances of our highest esteem.

Sincerely yours,

The People of Maryland County

FOREWORD FROM THE MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

I join other professional colleagues within the Ministry of Internal Affairs to work earnestly with colleagues in other ministries, agencies, and commissions (MACs) in addressing the numerous challenges impacting our governance structures and processes. Many days, I spent hours reflecting on how our work as policymakers translates into actions that impact on our citizens' well-being, remove them from abject poverty, and ensure transformative change that underpin individual and collective economic growth and development. What drives me to these issues and gives them great importance is a concern about how the governance systems in the past have not created the enabling environment and necessary conditions for citizens to take full charge of their development and make decisions that positively impact on their lives. Citizens feel that previous political systems have failed them – and more broadly, their lives in communities remain unchanged year after year with limited opportunities in sight.

During the last decade that I worked at the Legislature, I always envisioned having the opportunity to engage in issues of broader citizens' engagement through a well-structured and organized framework. The opportunity has now availed itself, and I must seize the moment. That moment is now here! The Local Government Act of 2018 provides perfect opportunities for Liberia's citizens, residents, and me. In addition, the Revenue Sharing Law and its attending regulations propel citizens to become champions of their development, and they should no longer be spectators. But the key question is, are we all ready for the transformation engendered by the different intrusive frameworks for radical change? I, however, do not doubt that this regime of His Excellency Joseph Nyuma Boakai, President of the Republic of Liberia, and his ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development (AAID), will compare us all to do what we have come to do in the best interest of the citizens.

Let me join the Minister of Finance and Development Planning and other well-meaning professional policymakers, including members of the Legislature, to make the AAID and the County Development Agenda (CDA) living documents that create a far broader set of opportunities for accurate decisions about development priorities and resource allocations and management to be made at the local level if we genuinely care about Liberia's development and its citizens. While we may have a long way to go to narrow the inequalities between the local and national level development, let's stand together in building a strong foundation under the vibrant leadership of President Joseph Nyuma Boakai because the AAID, CDA, Revenue Sharing Law, and the Decentralization frameworks offer the most significant opportunities.

I thank you.

Hon. Francis Sakila Nyumalin, Sr.
Minister of Internal Affairs

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PREFACE BY THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Fellow Liberians and all Development Partners

On behalf of the Ministry of Finance, and Development Planning I am honored to present to you this County Development Agenda which is fully aligned with the ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development (AAID), our National Development Plan (2025-2029). The CDA is a development instrument which provides a localized framework that aligns the county-level priorities with the broader AAID priorities while ensuring that every county contributes to and benefits from Liberia's development efforts.

Government adopted a participatory approach to planning to ensure that the citizens voices are heard during the planning process and that no one is left behind. The CDA formulation process involved extensive consultations of the citizens and their leaders such as local authorities, traditional leaders, civil society, the private sector and the development partners.

This visionary plan focuses on harnessing the opportunities in agriculture, roads, and other infrastructure development, enhancing the rule of law, restructuring the education sector, improving sanitation, and unlocking the potentials of tourism. This is in line with H.E President Joseph Nyuma Boakai Sr. inspiring vision for the ARREST Agenda, which identified as a top priority, the need for investment in critical areas to boost economic development in Liberia.

The objectives of the CDA are to: (i) improve the quality of life for all the people across counties; (ii) foster sustainable and inclusive economic growth within the county; and (iii) support Liberia's march towards achieving a lower-middle-income country status by the year 2030. It is a strategic document guiding local and national participants in making smart policies, allocating resources, and effectively implementing programs and projects. The CDA is an action-oriented document providing a list of development interventions and projects whose implementation by all stakeholders is expected to contribute to the desired development outcomes such as lessening the multi-dimensional poverty burden, uplifting household incomes, sustaining livelihoods, and improving physical infrastructure among others.

Realizing the vital role of various stakeholders including the private sector in spurring economic development through contributions to job creation, economic growth, infrastructural development, poverty reduction, and export-led growth, various unique opportunities in each county have been identified to enable various players to make their contributions. The CDAs represent a promise to harness each county's unique strengths- its vibrant communities, rich natural resources, and the resilient spirit of Liberians- to unlock opportunities for all. From improving infrastructure and healthcare to empowering our youth and supporting local economies, this agenda charts a course toward transformative change. Over the next five years (2025-2029), this agenda will serve as a strategic transformative roadmap setting clear goals, objectives, approaches, programs, and projects and key interventions to drive the Districts and County toward sustainable growth and significantly improved livelihoods for all its citizens.

Implementation of the CDA requires strong partnerships between the national and county governments, development partners, private investors, and community stakeholders. The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning is committed to ensuring transparent resource allocation, effective monitoring, and reporting so that development efforts truly translate into improved livelihoods as we endeavor to leave no one behind.

As we move towards the implementation phase, I extend my gratitude to county authorities, community leaders, civil society, development partners, and every citizen who has contributed to the formulation of the CDAs. It is now time to turn plans into action and action into lasting impact. It is our duty to build a more prosperous, inclusive, and resilient Liberia for all. As His Excellency always say "Let our actions not be because of the next election but for the next generation.

Thank you.

Hon. Augustine Kpehe Ngafuan
Minister of Finance and Development Planning

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning and the Ministry of Internal Affairs would like to extend their immense gratitude to His Excellency President Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr., for entrusting us with the enormous responsibility to coordinate the crafting of the Maryland County Development Agenda (CDA) 2025-2029 and his farsighted leadership and guidance throughout the plan formulation process.

We wish to extend our sincere thanks to the Maryland County Legislative Caucus for their guidance and motivation during the formulation of the CDA. We are also grateful to the county superintendents and other county stakeholders for their leadership and support during the Districts and County Consultations.

We acknowledge the enormous contributions of all stakeholders who worked towards on the preparation of the CDA, and would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all development partners, particularly the United Nations Country Team, the Government of Sweden, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, for their invaluable technical and financial support throughout the CDA formulation process. Your commitment to the development of the county is deeply appreciated and has been instrumental in formulating this action-orientated plan.

Additionally, we owe a debt of gratitude to our consultants from the Africa Development Management Associates, Dr. Mario Caetano Joao, and Dr. Patrick Olowo, and the technical teams led by technicians from the Ministries of Finance & Development Planning and Internal Affairs for their invaluable contributions to the formulation of the CDA.

Finally, we would like to recognize the inputs made by the private sector on moving the County Development Agenda forward. Many thanks to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), faith-based, youths and women organizations, our citizens with special needs, the media, and all other national private sector institutions for their unflinching support to the Maryland County Development Agenda.

The Government of Liberia looks forward to a more successful collaboration, driven by stronger partnerships, during the implementation of the CDA to ensure Maryland County citizens' aspirations are met.

Thank you.

Hon. Tanneh G. Brunson
Deputy Minister for Budget and Development Planning

ACRONYMS

AAID	ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development
AfT	Agenda for Transformation
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Agreement
AfDB	African Development Bank
ARREST	Agriculture, Roads, Rule of Law, Education, Sanitation, Tourism
AU	African Union
CAP	County Action Plan
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CCs	County Councils
CCS	Carbon, Capture, and Storage
CDAs	County Development Agendas
CDF	County Development Fund
CDSC	County Development Steering Committee
CEO	County Education Officer
CNDRA	Center for National Document Records and Archive
CSCs	County Service Centers
DEF	Donor Engagement Forum
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ESP	Education Sector Plan
FCRM	Feedback, Complaints, and Response Mechanism
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FLR	Forest Land Restoration
FMIS	Financial Management Information Systems
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Products
GOL	Government of Liberia
GSA	General Service Agency
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

IDA	International Development Assistance
IFC	International Finance Cooperation
IMCD	Inter- Ministerial Committee on Decentralization
JSF	Joint Stakeholder Forum
LGA	Local Government Act
LISGIS	Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services
LNP	Liberia National Police
MACs	Ministries, Agencies, and Commissions
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MPW	Ministry of Public Works
NDP	National Development Plan
NDSC	National Development Steering Committee
NGOs	Non- Governmental Organization
NIC	National Investment Commission
NPDLG	National Policy on Decentralization and Local Governance
NSFP	National School Feeding Program
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PM&E	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PWDs	People With Disabilities
R&D	Research and Development
RSA	Revenue Sharing Act
RSSI	Remote Sensing and Satellite Imagery
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TWGs	Thematic Working Groups
UN	United Nations
VUCA	Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025-2029 County Development Agenda (CDA) is a powerful and results-oriented instrument for the growth and development of Maryland County. The agenda aims to address the critical needs, aspirations, and priorities of the people of Maryland. The primary development objective is to contribute to Liberia's progress toward becoming a lower-middle-income country by 2030, ultimately improving the lives and living conditions of the people in Maryland. There is a solid connection between the Maryland County Development Agenda and the National ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development. This linkage is evident in two ways: First, it incorporates parameters, indicators, and insights that guided the development of both the ARREST Agenda and the County Development Agenda (CDA). And second, the structure, content, and strategies of the CDA align with those outlined in the ARREST Agenda.

During the consultations, the people of Maryland expressed challenges that could hinder efforts to achieve desired economic growth and sustained development. The socio-economic outcomes of Maryland County heavily rely on agriculture, mining, and the extractive industry, particularly iron ore mining. Most economic activities for the population involve agriculture, while youth often engage in commercial motorbike riding and petty trade. Living conditions remain substandard, and unemployment rates are high. Gender exclusion is a significant issue, with women facing fewer employment opportunities and spending more time on domestic work compared to men. The educational sector faces challenges, including late or non-payment of public-school teachers and declining academic completion rates. Additionally, healthcare and sanitation facilities urgently require improvement.

The people also articulated their development aspirations for the next five years. They focused on enhancing access to essential services, improving living conditions and welfare, and fostering community development and social cohesion. They identified and ranked five strategic priority areas for substantial public and private investment over the next five years: (i) constructing, revitalizing, and maintaining roads; (ii) expanding and modernizing agriculture and agribusiness productivity; (iii) reinforcing the rule of law; (iv) expanding and modernizing education; and (v) enhancing health and sanitation outcomes.

These priorities address the county's fundamental challenges while promoting sustainable economic growth, improving livelihoods, and enhancing good governance. The people's desire to unlock the existing potentials in the county as a development drivers, shall supplement the dividends from the priorities identified. These include tourism, fisheries, mining, forestry, and animal husbandry.

A total of five (5) sectors, fifteen (15) programs and twenty-five (25) interventions are prioritized by the people of Maryland County. However, given their complementarity with other programs and interventions in the AAID, a total of twenty (20) strategic policies, thirty-four (34) programs, and ninety-six (96) interventions were selected for implementation between 2025 and 2029. These targeted efforts are clustered around the six pillars of the AAID, distributed as follows:

1. **Economic Transformation:** seven (7) programs and twenty-four (24) interventions
2. **Infrastructural Development:** six (6) programs and thirteen (13) interventions
3. **Security and Rule of Law:** two (2) programs and seven (7) interventions
4. **Governance and Anti-Corruption:** Four (4) programs and ten (10) interventions
5. **Environmental Sustainability:** four (4) programs and four (9) interventions
6. **Human Capital Development:** eleven (11) programs and thirty-three (33) interventions.

The likelihood of successfully implementing the agenda is high. The 2018 Local Government Act (LGA) provides the necessary legal framework and outlines achievable provisions to enhance effective local governance. County Councils and County Administrators are expected to collaborate in managing county affairs effectively. Under the LGA, county authorities can now collect revenues, undertake public works, allocate resources, and implement programs to benefit residents. Additionally, three constituency steering committees have been established to advise and guide program and project management teams. Regular meetings will be held monthly by district committees, quarterly by the County Steering Committee, and semi-annually by the National Steering Committee. In addition, periodic reports will be prepared and submitted to these committees to track progress, identify risks early, and manage the budget with greater transparency.

Despite the high likelihood of success, several risks and constraints could lead to financial setbacks, cost overruns, budget deviations, resource wastage, or even project failure. These risks may arise from four possible sources: (i) within the county; (ii) national and sub-national policies and institutions; (iii) the international donor community; and (iv) natural causes. If not adequately mitigated, these risks could derail the implementation of the CDA and jeopardize efforts to generate rapid, inclusive, and sustainable growth and development in Maryland County.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Objective of the CDA

President Joseph Nyuma Boakai unveiled a bold vision for Liberia's development with the ARREST (Agriculture, Roads, Rule of Law, Education, Sanitation, Tourism) Agenda in his inaugural address. This visionary plan focuses on seizing opportunities in agriculture, roads, and other infrastructure development, enhancing the rule of law, restructuring the education sector, improving sanitation, and unlocking the potentials of tourism. The President's inspiring vision for the ARREST Agenda, identified as a top priority, the need for investment in critical areas to boost economic development in Liberia. To fulfill this commitment, the President advanced the creation of a new national development plan, dubbed the ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development (AAID). An integral component of the AAID is the County Development Agendas (CDAs) for each of Liberia's 15 counties.

This County Development Agenda is specifically tailored to address the unique needs, aspirations, and priorities of the people of Maryland, aiming to foster inclusive growth, sustainable development, and improved effective governance. It is a strategic document guiding local and national participants in making smart policies, allocating resources, and effectively implementing programs and projects. The CDA is action oriented and provides a list of development interventions and projects with associated costs, to guide the resource mobilization and allocation process; and to ensure the effective realization of the objectives of, and deliverables within, the CDA. The intended objective of this County Development Agenda is to contribute to Liberia's move toward becoming a lower-middle-income country by 2030, which would uplift the lives and living conditions of the peoples of Maryland.

Specifically, the agenda:

1. Articulates the development needs, aspirations, and specific challenges in Maryland, providing the associated justification as well as key interventions to address the challenges.
2. Provides a clear and robust sub-national strategic direction for the county's development in the medium term.
3. Specifies priority public and private investment programs and projects that derive value economically, socially, and environmentally within the county.
4. Highlights feasible interventions to achieve the ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development, towards Liberia's Vision 2030, and other regional and global development priorities and goals.

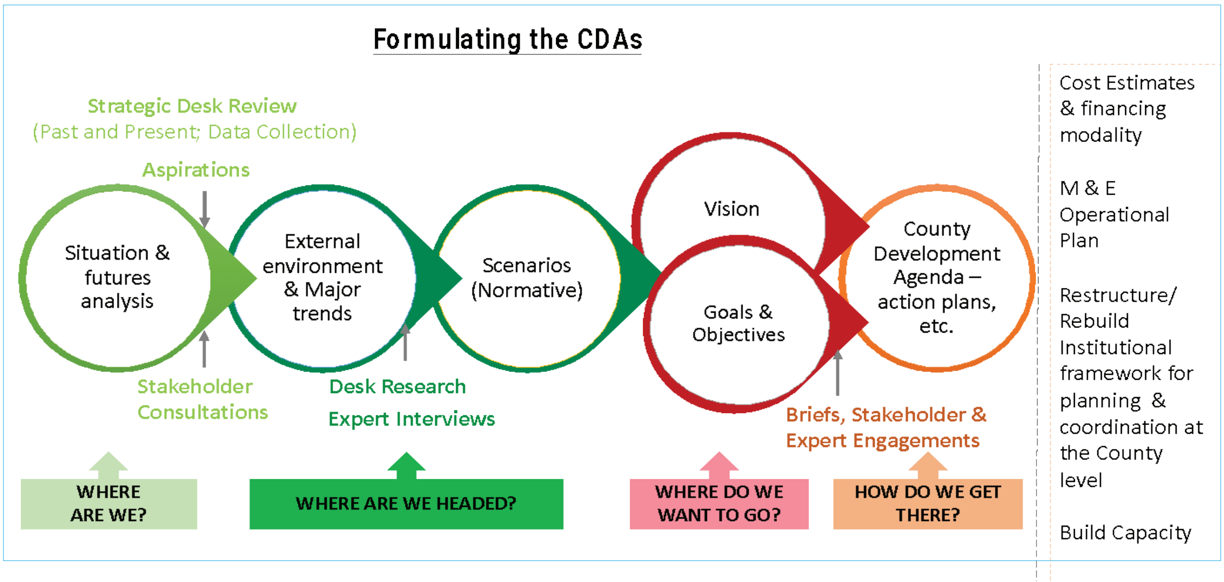
At the heart of this agenda is a commitment to improve agribusiness productivity, construct, revitalize and maintain roads, reinforce the rule of law, expand and modernize education, enhance health and sanitation outcomes, and unlock the potentials of tourism as development drivers. The agenda also emphasizes the critical value of securing effective implementation of development filters such as children and youth, gender, employment, formalization of the informal economy, climate change, and vulnerable groups so that no one in the Maryland development process and outcomes is left behind.

Over the next five years (2025-2029), this agenda will serve as a strategic transformative roadmap setting clear goals, objectives, approaches, programs, and projects and key interventions to drive the Districts and County toward sustainable growth and significantly improved livelihoods for all its citizens.

1.2. Approach

This CDA was developed through a participatory bottom-up approach involving a series of consultations at the districts and then county levels. Two days were spent engaging stakeholders from each administrative district in Maryland. Outcomes of the district consultations were presented, analyzed and consolidated at another two-day county consultation session, that was held in Harper City, where the people of Maryland identified and ranked their overall development priorities, programs and projects. At both consultations, various stakeholders, including county administrators, students, youth leaders, business communities, women's organizations, persons with special needs, religious and traditional leaders, farmers, teachers, health workers, and local community members, were constructively engaged. These two sessions were followed by a consultative working session with the Maryland Legislative Caucus, where the people's report was considered and strengthened. The resulting draft was submitted to, and adopted at, a two-day county validation session, with the active participation of all county stakeholders. In compliance with the Local Government Act of 2018, the County Council convened an extraordinary session, approved the Maryland County Development Agenda 2025-2029, and issued the associated resolution exhibited in Annex I. The adopted approach, as illustrated in Figure 1, included a broad futures analysis around four basic strategic questions: Where are we? Where are we headed? Where do we want to go? How do we get there?

Figure 1: Sequential Approach in Formulating the CDA



1.3. Methodology

Quantitative and qualitative methods were utilized to gain a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of current challenges and future opportunities within the county. The quantitative approach involved structured surveys to gather demographic and socioeconomic data, while qualitative data was gathered through focus group discussions, interviews, and consultative working sessions. The exercise also encompassed a detailed desk review of relevant research and policy documents, including reports from various organizations including ECOWAS, UN, AU, the Bretton Woods Institutions, and the Government of Liberia (GOL) official documents. The methodological framework for formulating and developing this CDA was future-oriented, participatory, and strategic. It considered integrated context analysis, prioritized participation, and involved various stakeholders

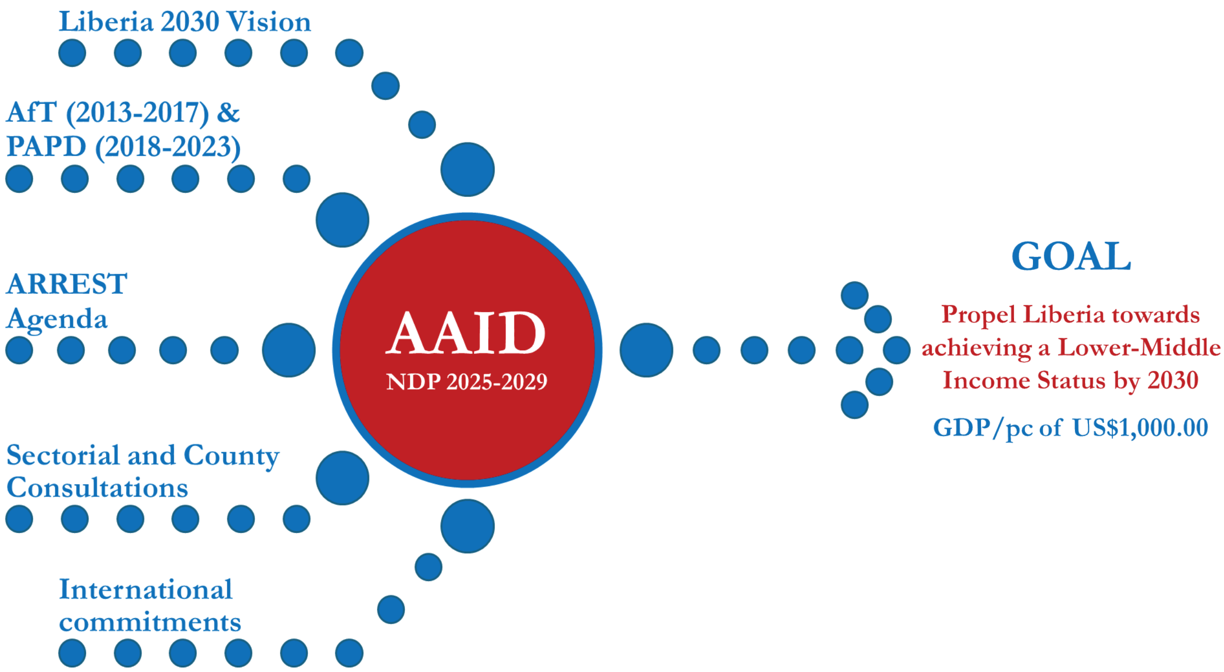
PART 2: AAID AND CDA LINKAGE, FEATURES AND LESSONS LEARNT

2.1. Context and Linkage

2.1.1. AAID Objectives, Structure and Contents

The primary objective of the AAID is to propel Liberia towards achieving a lower- middle-income country status by 2030. The structure of the ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development (AAID) has been defined in accordance with:(a) the need to achieve Liberia's Vision 2030; (b) lessons learned from previous national development plans; and (c) the main elements from the strategic development pillars set out in the 2025-2029 political platform of the Unity Party, "the ARREST Agenda". The AAID contents are informed by several interrelated factors, shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Factors that Influence the AAID Contents



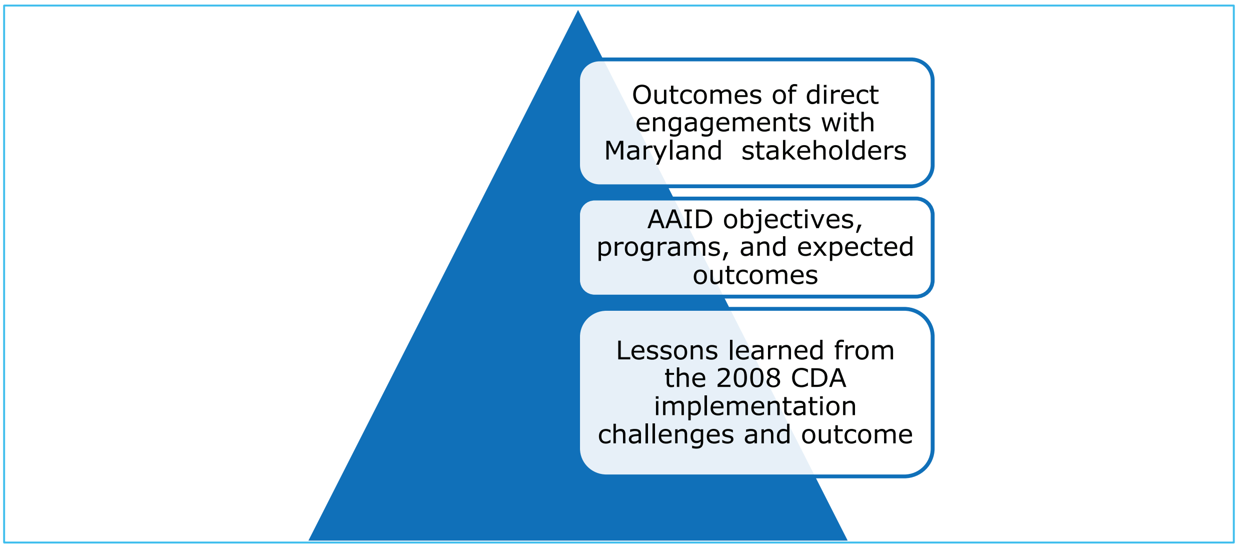
Source: AAID

The AAID contains six (6) pillars, twenty-three (23) strategic policy areas, fifty-two (52) programs, three hundred seventy-five (375) interventions, six (6) development drivers and ten (10) development filters.

2.1.2. CDA Objectives, Structure and Contents

The objectives of the CDA are to: (i) improve the quality of life for all the people of Maryland; (ii) foster sustainable and inclusive economic growth within the county; and (iii) support Liberia's march towards achieving a lower-middle-income country status by the year 2030. Accordingly, this CDA intends to deliver the intended results by pursuing thirty-four (34) programs and undertaking ninety-six (96) interventions during the planned period. The nature and scope of these programs and projects are informed by current development challenges in the county; aspirations and priorities as expressed by the people of Maryland during the consultations; and the need to them synchronized with the goals of the national development agenda. The structure mirrors the six pillars and expected deliverables of the AAID. The contents are largely informed by three factors indicated in Figure 3 below.

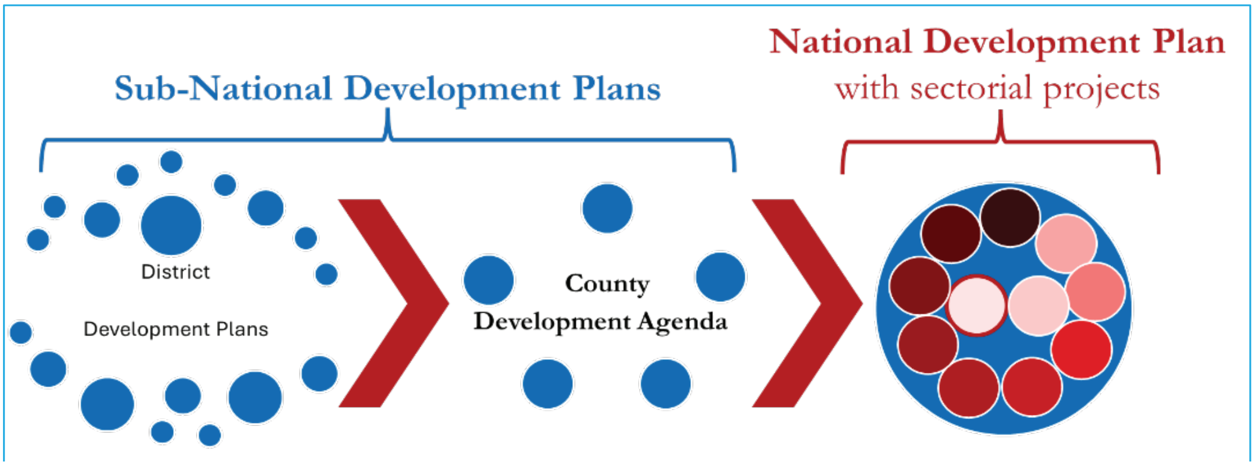
Figure 3: Factors that Influence the CDA Contents



2.1.3. Linkage Between the CDA and the AAID

A strong connection exists between the Maryland Development Agenda and the national ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development. This linkage manifests itself in two ways. First, it incorporates parameters, indicators, and inferences that informed and guided the construct of both the AAID and the CDA. And second, the structure, contents, and strategies of the CDAs are designed in harmony with those stipulated in the AAID. Figure 4 exemplifies the inter-linkage relationship between the CDA and the AAID.

Figure 4: CDA & AAID Linkage and Relationship



Source: AAID

2.2. Shared Features and Operational Differences Between the 2008 and 2025 CDAs

The 2008 County Development Agenda for Maryland comprised part of the first CDAs ever developed in Liberia. It represented a transformative shift in how Liberia approached development planning to address the nation's longstanding challenges in national and sub-national development efforts. Similarly, the 2025 paradigm presents a viable strategic instrument to address development challenges and needs at the sub-national level. They both aimed at achieving sustained and inclusive national and sub-national economic growth and development as outlined in the National Development Strategic plans. Secondly, the Maryland 2008 and 2025 CDAs share similarities in their bottom-up approach and data triangulation. Both were developed through a comprehensive consultative process involving citizens from local communities, government representatives, and development partners. Finally, the stakeholders identified their pressing needs and priority action areas for sustained development that are captured in both agendas. The people's choices of priority sectors in the 2008 and 2025 CDAs are similar, as shown in the following table.

Table 1: Comparison of the 2008 CDA and the 2025 CDA

Broad Development Priority Areas	2008 CDA	2025 CDA
Agriculture	Yes	Yes
Roads	Yes	Yes
Rule of law	No	Yes
Education	Yes	Yes
Health	Yes	Yes
Tourism	No	Yes

Both CDAs differ in several aspects. The 2008 CDA was formulated four years after the civil war, while the current CDA is developed 20 years after the war and after the Ebola epidemic of 2014-2016 and the succeeding COVID-19 pandemic of 2019-2023. Secondly, the 2008 CDA was released prior to the 2008 Population Census, while the current CDA follows the 2022 Population and Housing Census. There was no County Council representing the various county stakeholders to oversee the implementation of the 2008 CDA as currently present to assume such responsibility in the current CDA.

2.3. Lessons Learned

Three key lessons were learnt from the formulation and implementation stages of the 2008 CDA that informed the 2025 CDA formulation and shall impact its implementation.

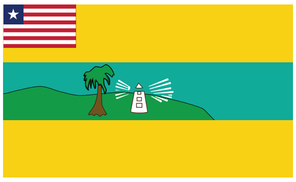
First, the 2008 CDA had a limited linkage with the extant national development plans, the "Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) of 2008", "Lift Liberia" National Development Plan, and annual national budgets. Given that Liberia is a unitary state and decision-making has always been centered in Monrovia, it would have been more effective to more strongly link the Maryland CDA to the national PRS and other development frameworks. Unfortunately, having a limited linkage contributed to the ineffective implementation of the CDA. The lack of a stronger operational linkage between the national and the sub-national plans further led to inadequate political will associated with the CDA by the incumbent presidency, which was a critical necessity for implementation. To avoid the recurrence of this weakness, the current CDA has a much stronger connection to the corresponding national development plan, the AAID as an imperative strategy towards achieving a comprehensive and inclusive approach to development.

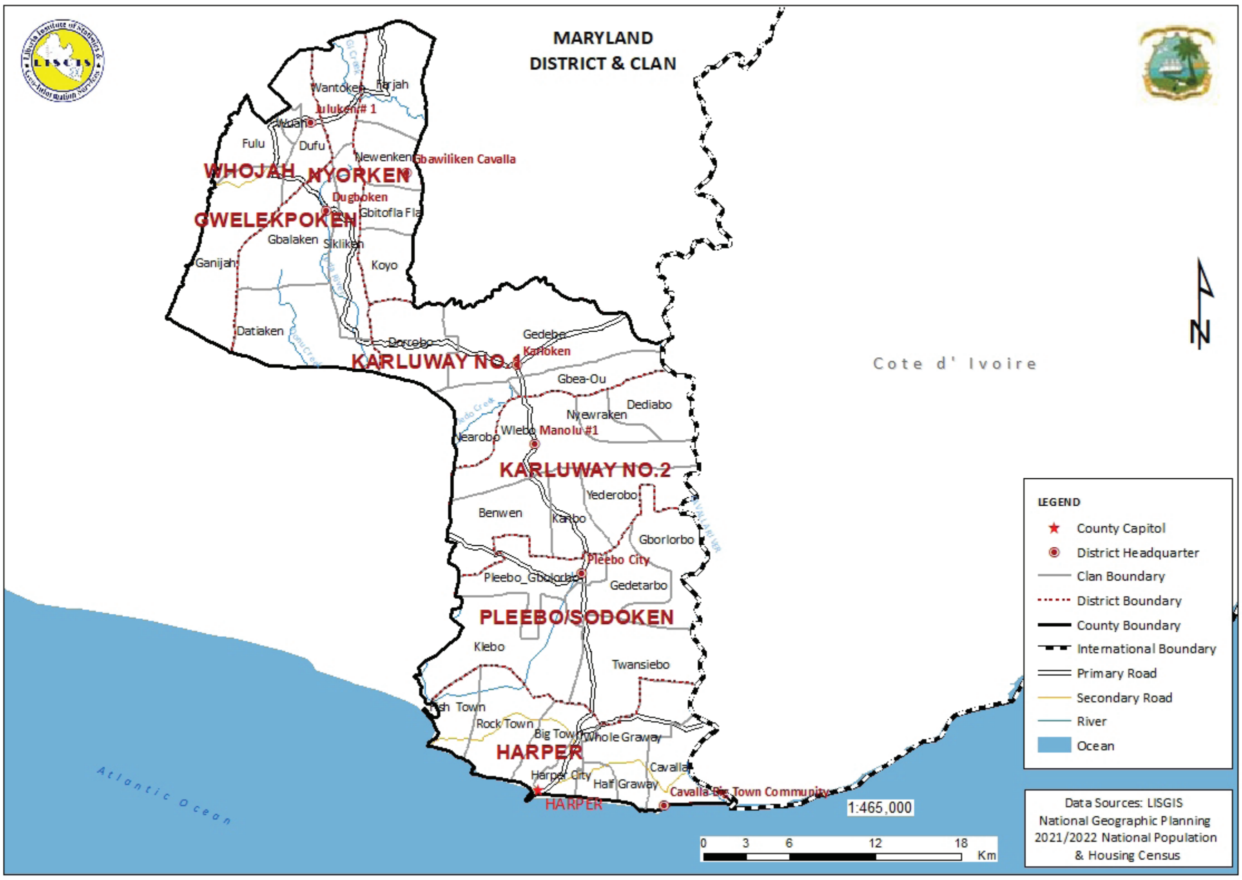
Second, the absence of a comprehensive legal framework to adequately support the operations of an effective local governance system, resulted in the apparent neglect and poor performance of the 2008 CDA. A stronger local government policy and procedure was needed to effectively craft and execute the sub-national development plan. Delegating some of those centralized powers to local government is only possible where the necessary legal frameworks exist. Fortunately, the 2018 Local Government Act contains doable provisions that would, to a larger extent, affect local governance, and subsequently drive a successful implementation process of the current CDA.

Third, the robust local governance system needed to adequately facilitate the bottom-up inclusive and participatory planning and execution of the sub-national plan for better results was absent. Unfortunately, political, financial, administrative, and all other important factors of the government have been concentrated in the country's capital city, Monrovia, since the founding of Liberia in 1822. While a National Policy of Decentralization and Local Governance (NPDLG) was in place by 2011, it was not a law then. Thus, the NPDLG was inadequate to devolve political and administrative powers to local governments to drive the implementation of the 2008 CDA. As a result, some pressing cross-cutting issues were not appropriately addressed or included, at the time: security, reconstruction, reconciliation, and internal displacement. The existence of the County Council, coupled with other provisions of the LGA shall hopefully make the necessary difference, this time around, to achieve better results.

PART 3: COUNTY PROFILE & SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

3.1. County Characteristics and Profile





3.1.1. Political History

Maryland County's history dates back to 1834 when the Maryland State Colonization Society of the United States established the area as a settlement for freed American slaves. During the early days of its existence, Maryland was not a part of Liberia but a separate state. In 1857, Maryland became one of the original four counties of the Republic of Liberia. The county's political capital is

Harper, which is also known as "Cape Palmas." The flag of Maryland County features green, blue, and yellow colors, representing natural vegetation, sunshine, and bravery, respectively. The design also includes a palm tree and lighthouse, symbolizing guidance and protection.

3.1.2. Geography

Maryland County is located in the southeastern part of Liberia, bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the south and the Cavalla River to the east, which serves as the international border with the Republic of the Ivory Coast. Its total land area is approximately 5,351 square kilometers (2,090 square miles), about 6% of Liberia's total area. The elevation of Maryland County ranges from sea level along the Atlantic Ocean to 826 feet (248 meters) at Wuluke village. The county comprises seven administrative and four electoral districts, 15 chiefdoms, and 26 clans.

3.1.3. Climate

Maryland County, located in a region with an annual rainfall of 2,227.15mm, experiences high relative humidity and favorable sunshine hours, supporting the growth of various crops. The area has two distinct seasons – the rainy season from May to October and the dry season from November to April. The warmest recorded temperature in the region is an average of 26.95 ºC in March, with temperatures in the month ranging from 22.140C to 31.450C. The coolest temperature occurs in August, with an average temperature of 24.21°C, ranging from 21.70°C to 26.80°C. September has the lowest rainfall during the rainy season at 268.19 millimeters, while June has the highest rainfall at 350.30 millimeters.

3.1.4. Topography

Maryland County's landscape consists of gently rolling terrain with expansive, shallow valleys. The northern and central areas have hills, valleys, and swamps. The county is home to major rivers such as the Cavalla in the east, the Gee River in the northwest, the River Nun in the west, and the Ni Dellor in the west. The Gee River features numerous waterfalls fed by the flow from the swamps and tributaries, which ultimately drain into the Atlantic Ocean.

3.1.5. Geology

The county's soil is reddish-brown to black and can range from gray to black in some areas. These soil variations suit cultivating tree crops like rubber, oil palm, coffee, corn, and rice. The soil type is predominantly sandy in the southern region of the county.

3.1.6. Vegetation

Maryland County in Liberia is in the tropical rainforest zone and is characterized by various vegetation, including primary and secondary forests and savannas. In the northern part of the county, the primary forest has been partially depleted by logging activities, transforming it into secondary forests. Additionally, the practice of shifting cultivation contributes to the degradation of the forests in the region.

3.1.7. Demography

According to the most recent national population census of Liberia in 2022, the population of Maryland County was estimated to be 172,587. It was observed that 59% of household heads were male, while 41% were female. The predominant ethnic group in the county is the Grebo, which is also found in River Gee County, eastern Grand Kru County, and south-eastern Sinoe County. Surveys estimated that approximately 98% of the county's population was Christian, 1% was Muslim, and another 1% practiced Traditional Religions.

Apart from Montserrado, Maryland has the highest urbanization rate, with 61.5% of its population residing in urban areas. Maryland is the third most densely populated County after Montserrado and Margibi, with a density of 195 people per square kilometer, higher than the national average of 140 people per square kilometer (District Population Data Liberia Census 2022 Report). Maryland is classified as a medium-sized county, accounting for 3.3% of the total population. The average household size in Maryland is 4.6, which is higher than the national average of 4.4. About 26.6% of households are involved in agriculture, compared to 30.2% at the national level.

Table 2: Maryland County Population Distribution by Administrative Districts

	Total	Male	Female
Maryland	172,587	86,867	85,720
Whojah	4,424	2,365	2,059
Gwelekpoken	4,366	2,296	2070
Nyonken	6,658	3,375	3,283
Karluway Number 1	7,391	3,845	3,546
Karluway Number 2	11,370	5,985	26,339
Pleebo/Sodoken	85,287	42,249	43,038
Harper	53,091	26,752	26,339

LISGIS 2022, National Population and Housing Census

3.2. Socio-Economic Conditions: An Overview

Maryland County relies mainly on subsistence farming, fishing, and rubber tapping. Like other regions in Liberia, the overemphasis on facilities and services in Monrovia has led to underdevelopment in Maryland County. The lack of basic infrastructure has lowered the quality of life and, certainly, contributed to the civil crisis. The county's essential human development indicators are limited, requiring a new urgent attention. The county faces challenges such as poor road infrastructure, limited market access, and rising poverty levels. Unemployment rates, especially among the youth, are also high. Social dynamics are influenced by rural settings and traditional cultural practices, leading to traditional gender roles and limited economic opportunities for women as well as higher Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) rates. The education sector struggles with a literacy rate below the national average and a shortage of trained teachers. Access to quality healthcare remains a challenge as well. The following table depicts an overview of the socio-economic reality in Maryland County, with detailed indicators found in Annex III.

Table 3: Socio-Economic Situation in Maryland County: Overview

Areas	Indicators	Descriptions / Definitions	County	National
Employment	Employment Rate	The proportion of working-age people employed in an economy	34,129 21.8%	1,307,872 27.8%
Poverty	Extreme Poverty Rate	The percentage of the population whose total food and non-food consumption falls below the minimum food requirements of 2400 kilocalories per day.	47.5%	16.5%
Education	Literacy Rate	The percentage of the population (5 years and above) who cannot read and write a simple sentence in any language	81,701 60.7%	2,447,612 59.9%
Health	% of children who receive all age-appropriate vaccination	The percentage of children who receive all the vaccines needed from 0 – 5-year-old.	38%	39%
Gender Base Violence	Domestic Violence Rate	Percentage of the female population that experience physical or mental abuse.	69%	55%

Source: Official statistics of the Government of the Republic of Liberia, particularly the Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS), the education statistic report of 2015-2016, as well as data from development partners such as the World Bank, other Brookings Institutions, and the United Nations

3.3. Driving Forces and Uncertainties

A key factor that has profound implications for Liberia's socioeconomic trajectory in shaping the future of Liberia is its demography. Libeira's demographic landscape is characterized by a young and rapidly growing population, presenting both opportunities and challenges for the nation's future development. As of 2023, Liberia's population is estimated at approximately 5.3 million, with a median age of 19.4 years. The country exhibits a high fertility rate of 4.2 children per woman and a population growth rate of 2.4% annually, significantly above the global average. This demographic structure is further accentuated by the fact that nearly 60% of the population is under the age of 25, creating a substantial youth bulge.

Planning is about creating the desired or a better future for all. The reality is that the world has changed, and it is constantly changing. This has led commentators to suggest that we are now living in a world characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA). In a world in which change is the only constant, one cannot expect the future to be a mere continuation of the past. It is therefore essential that as the authorities and citizens of Maryland contemplate on pushing economic growth and development within the county, they should incorporate in their strategies, comprehensive exploration of future possibilities, challenges and opportunities. This forward-looking strategic approach will enable authorities and people of Maryland to develop more robust, adaptable, and innovative strategies and programs that can effectively leverage emerging opportunities, and combat challenges to drive sustainable development. Dealing with several critical emerging global factors, including those listed in Figure 5, underscores the importance of adopting a comprehensive exploration of future possibilities, challenges and opportunities.

Figure 5: Global Driving Forces and Uncertainties for Growth

The Rise of Multi-polar World: Disruptions are happening in various spheres and would drive future outcomes around the world, including in Liberia, over the next 5 years of the CDA. Whatever programs that are instituted could invariably suffer from the negative impacts on supply chain, rising prices and the subsequent inflationary trends across the world.

The Rise of Non-State Actors: Transformative evolution of the activities of trans-national firms, terrorist and narco-terrorist groups, and drugs infested youth hinders the ability of the county and national authorities to effectively guide and deliver the desired development dividends.

Rapid Technological Change and Innovations: This phenomenon is driving not just the Liberian economy but various aspects of the society, reshaping decisions in unprecedented ways. The "Internet of Things" has transitioned from concept to reality, with innovations once confined to science fiction now becoming commonplace. Key actors must strategically position themselves to harness these advancements for sustainable development and economic growth within Maryland.

Rising Climate Impacts: Liberia's environmental landscape is poised to play a crucial role in shaping the socioeconomic future of Maryland. Climate change poses a substantial threat, with projections indicating rising temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns, and increased frequency of extreme weather events. These changes are likely to impact agricultural productivity, water resources, and coastal areas, potentially exacerbating food insecurity and economic vulnerabilities.

Changing Economic Landscape: Among the major trends in the global economy that are relevant to Liberia are: increasing commodity price fluctuations; shift towards green economy; rising digitization and technological advancement; changing patterns of foreign investment; and increasing complexity of global value chains; and increasing regional integration. Adapting to these trends while addressing fundamental development challenges will be crucial for Liberia's economic future, and correspondingly the Maryland economy, in a highly competitive global economy.

3.4. Implications and Prospects for the Future: An Overview

There are several factors that provide basic building blocks for a cautiously optimistic future for the people of Liberia. Notably, reforms instituted in various spheres such as decentralization of governance and social facilities, digital economy, and a vibrant productive private sector. If properly instituted, these building blocks shall provide the people of Maryland with a real chance at potentially seizing the emerging global opportunities to promote growth and development within the county. The challenge is that the world is at the cusp of radical shifts, which could lead to two plausible mid-of-the-way scenarios of the future. Either a new collaborative and green economy emerges, or the people of Maryland and Liberia could end up in an uncertain and fragmented future.

The broader question is how does Liberia respond, given the many opportunities at hand to foster national and county growth and development? There is an opportunity to move away from traditional resource extraction economies. For Liberia, this could mean opportunities to diversify its economy beyond raw material exports, potentially developing value-added industries and services. This will require political will, smart policies, investing, partnerships and capability upgrading. It will also require strengthening the country's institutions, reducing corruption, reinforcing the judiciary and reforming security services, and improving public services through technologies like e-governance.

It's important to note that realizing the opportunities presented in a changing world for a brighter future, would require significant investments in infrastructure, education, institutional capacity as well as in building the ecosystem for innovation. It would also depend on the people of Liberia ability to effectively navigate and maximize their benefits from the growing and shifting global economic and political trends.

3.5. Maryland County Private Sector Investment Potential

Realizing the vital role the private sector plays in spurring economic development through contributions to job creation, economic growth, infrastructural development, poverty reduction, and export-led growth, the citizens of Maryland County aspire to work with the national government to attract private sector investment in their County. To this end, the people of Maryland County have identified their county's potential for private-sector investment, which are contained in the table below.

Table 4: Maryland County Private Sector Investment Potential

Areas	Opportunities	Required Actions
Agriculture	Maryland County is endowed with vast fertile soil variations suited for cultivating tree crops like rubber, cane, oil palm, coffee, corn, and rice	Create an enabling environment to attract private investments in mechanized agriculture (with value addition) to produce rice, cassava, maize, cocoa, coffee, rubber, oil palm, plantains, banana, etc.
Animal Husbandry	Maryland County has vast grazing lowlands, natural vegetation, and wetlands	Explore and take advantage of massive animal production farms and meat processing and marketing with focus on cows, goats and sheep
Tourism	Maryland is home to breathtaking lake Shepard, coastal beaches, and the Gee River which features numerous waterfalls fed by the flow from the swamps and tributaries, and into the Atlantic Ocean	Identify and market tourist attractions and create an enabling environment to attract investment in tourism
Commerce	Maryland is strategically located near the border with Cote d'Ivoire. This location is ideal for cross-border trade	Provide incentives for investments in cross-border trading in agricultural products and semi manufacturing consumer goods

PART 4: COUNTY CHALLENGES, ASPIRATIONS AND PRIORITIES

4.1. Nature of the Challenge

During the consultations, the people of Maryland County highlighted several significant challenges hindering progress in the prioritized sectors within the Government's ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development. The identified challenges are not unique to Maryland but were similarly expressed across the country. Table 5 below synthesizes the nature of the identified challenges that are associated with each prioritized sector.

Table 5: Nature of the Challenges

Sectors	Nature of the Challenge
Agriculture	Farmers have limited access to finance, farmland, knowledge on climate change, basic farming tools and equipment, and are faced with low prices for their produce; and the people of Maryland are vulnerable to persistent food insecurity due to poor agricultural practices, difficult access to markets, and inadequate storage facilities.
Roads	Inadequate basic roads network within the county and road connectivity with other counties; and poor or non-existing farm to markets roads.
Rule of Law	Limited security presence within the county, compounded with the lack of logistics for security personnel to perform their jobs; poor access to justice in many parts because of fewer courts, limited prison and correction facilities; and growing drug addiction, and illicit mining.
Education	Limited access to basic formal and vocational education in rural areas; and shortage of adequate resources, qualified teachers, and good facilities in most schools within the system.
Sanitation	Poor waste management system; lack of an organized structure for sanitation purpose; limited hand pumps, toilet facilities, and insufficient waste sites.
Tourism	Several historical sites are not developed appropriately to attract tourists and investments.
Gender	Persistent gender-based violence against women compounded with rising cases of murder of women; limited access to farming due to laws which prevent women from owning land; rising teenage pregnancy; and limited women gaining access to education and economic opportunities.
Climate & Environment	Uncontrolled environmental degradation, with deforestation and pollution threatening the county's natural resources.
Governance	Weak governance and accountability mechanisms; and lack of needed capacity, technical expertise, or administrative ability of local governments to effectively plan and manage projects.
Power & Communication	Limited electricity supplies.
Jobs and Employment	Limited income generating opportunities for youth in rural areas.
Health	Limited access to quality healthcare services due to poor state of health facilities, shortage of health workers, too many volunteers in the health system, shortages of drugs; inadequate ambulance services in rural areas; and shortage of affordable medical supplies.

4.2. The Peoples Aspirations

During the consultations, the people articulated their aspirations for achieving the desired economic growth and sustained development. These aspirations, like those expressed in other counties, focus on enhancing access to essential basic services, improving the people's living conditions and welfare, and fostering community development and social cohesion. Targeted interventions that would ably address the county's aspirations were also specified and recommended for action. The expressed aspirations and suggested actions are listed in Table 6 below.

Table 6: The Peoples' Aspirations

Aspirations	Proposed Actions
Sustained economic growth and development	Target investments in agriculture and small businesses development including capacity building in the sectors.
Availability of appreciable infrastructure services to support development efforts	Target investments in prioritized roads, energy and communication projects with public-private partnership arrangements.
Availability of adequate and affordable basic social services	Increase investments in healthcare and educational facilities aimed at building the necessary capacities to improve the quality of social services.
Smart environmental sustainability policies and programs ongoing	Design and implement policies and programs aimed at promoting effective practices in climate change mitigation, reforestation, sustainable land usage, and waste management.
Gender equality in the economic and political arena	Invest in girls' education, intensify awareness on gender issues, and provide economic empowerment opportunities for women and girls.
Youth empowered and positively participating in the development process	Provide skills training and entrepreneurship programs and engage young people in development initiatives.
Good governance regime with accountability and transparency	Develop and execute appropriate instruments for promoting and ensuring transparency and accountability in decision-making processes.

4.3. The Identified Priorities

The people of Maryland identified and ranked five strategic priority areas against which the government will endeavor to allocate substantial public and private investments over the next five years. Table 7 below lists the identified Districts' and the county's critical strategic priorities by sectors. These priorities focus on addressing the fundamental challenges the county faces, while at the same time promoting sustainable economic growth, improving livelihoods, and enhancing good governance. At the county consultation, the citizens of the districts and other key stakeholders from the county reviewed and agreed on the priorities listed under the county column in Table 7.

Table 7: Districts and County Strategic Priorities

Rank	Districts				County
	Whojah	Nyonken	Karluway	Pleebo Sodoken	
1st	Roads	Agriculture	Agriculture	Roads	Roads
2nd	Agriculture	Roads	Road	Rule of Law	Agriculture
3rd	Education	Rule of Law	Health	Agriculture	Rule of Law
4th	Health	Health	Education	Education	Education
5th	Rule of Law	Education	Tourism	Health	Health

PART 5: PROGRAMS AND INTERVENTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

5.1. PRIORITIZED PROGRAMS AND INTERVENTIONS

A total of five (5) sectors, fifteen (15) programs, and twenty-five (25) interventions are prioritized by the people of Maryland County. However, given the complementarity with programs and interventions in the AAID, the total of twenty (20) strategic policies, thirty-four (34) programs, and ninety-six (96) interventions are selected for implementation between 2025 and 2029. The respective numbers of programs and interventions as distributed amongst the six pillars of the AAID are shown in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: Programs and Interventions Distribution Per Pillar

Pillar 1	Pillar 2	Pillar 3	Pillar 4	Pillar 5	Pillar 6
4 Strategic Policies	6 Strategic Policies	2 Strategic Policies	2 Strategic Policies	1 Strategic Policy	5 Strategic Policies
7 Programs	6 Programs	2 Programs	4 Programs	4 Programs	11 Programs
24 Interventions	13 Interventions	7 Interventions	10 Interventions	9 Interventions	33 Interventions

5.2. PILLAR 1: ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

The Strategic Goal of the Economic Transformation pillar is to build a competitive, diversified, inclusive, and resilient private sector-driven economy for sustainable economic growth. To drive the economic transformation process in achieving this goal, the citizens of Maryland have identified Four (4) strategic policies, (strategic policies 3, 4, 5, and 6), eight (8) programs, (programs 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13) and twenty-four (24) interventions prioritized under the Economic Transformation pillar from the AAID for the next five years.

5.2.1. Strategic Policy 3: Commerce and Industry

Strategic Objective: Foster industrial development and domestic production and trade through diversification, modernization and competitiveness, and promoting entrepreneurship in Maryland County

Program 6: *Economic Diversification and Value Addition*

Objective: Enhance the growth of diverse sectors, such as agriculture, low-emissions manufacturing, and technology, to promote local value-added for the domestic and regional markets using the economic zones model, thereby driving sustainable growth and generating productive jobs and wealth for the people of Maryland County.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Increase capacity building of 10 farmers' cooperatives
2. Support investment in 1 shared processing facilities.

Key interventions:

- Provision of training for local producers
- Supporting investment in shared processing facilities and infrastructure such as logistics centers with cold storage and packaging units.

Program 7: *Business Enabling Environment*

Objective: Reform and modernize business and regulatory frameworks to create a transparent, predictable, and supportive environment for businesses and investors, enhancing overall economic efficiency and competitiveness.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Strengthen the institutional capacity with training of at least 20 county officials
2. Increase inclusive microfinance support to the Liberian-owned businesses by 5%.

Key interventions:

- Strengthening of institutional capacity in business practices and digital compliance tools
- Supporting the rehabilitation and expansion of the County Service Center.

5.2.2. Strategic Policy 4: Agriculture and Fisheries

Strategic Objective: To leverage the sector to drive growth through private sector resilience and determination, enhance livelihoods, and promote sustainable development.

Program 8: *Food and Cash Crop Production*

Objective: Enhancing food security, promoting agricultural productivity, creating jobs, and ensuring sustainable agricultural practices in Maryland.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Increase rice, cassava, and maize production by at least 15%
2. Increase cocoa, oil palm, rubber, coconut, sugarcane, and oil palm production by 15%
3. Formalize at least 5 farmers' cooperatives.

Key interventions:

- Supporting the increase in food crop production (Rice, Cassava, and Maize),
- Supporting the increase in cash crop production (Cocoa, Oil Palm, Rubber, and sugarcane)
- Promotion of climate-smart agriculture and irrigation
- Formalization of farmers' cooperatives
- Supporting capacity building of extensionists and local farmers.

Program 9: *Livestock and Poultry Production*

Objective: Increase the production and productivity of livestock and poultry, thereby boosting local economies, providing employment opportunities, and ensuring a stable supply of protein-rich foods in Maryland County.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Support the increase in livestock production by at least 10%
2. Support the Increase in poultry meat production by at least 10%
3. Support the increase in animal feed production by at least 10%.

Key interventions:

- Supporting the increase of livestock production (Pig, sheep, goat, and cow)
- Support the increase in poultry meat and eggs production (Chicken, duck)
- Supporting animal feed production
- Strengthening the county veterinarian service delivery system.

Program 10: *Fish Production*

Objective: Harness the potential of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors to drive sustainable economic growth, create jobs, ensure food security, and promote environmental sustainability in Maryland County.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Increase sustainable fish captures by at least 15%.
2. Implement blue economy initiatives.
3. Formalize at least 2 cooperatives of fishing operators
4. Rehabilitate 1 fishing pier with a storage facility in Harper.

Key interventions:

- Supporting the Increase in sustainable fishing farms.
- Supporting the development of the blue economy
- Supporting the establishment of commercial fish processing
- Formalization of the informal operators into cooperatives
- Rehabilitation of the fishing pier with a storage facility in Harper.

5.2.3. Strategic Policy 5: Mineral Resource Management

Strategic Objective: Promote sustainable economic growth, attract foreign investment, and create jobs, while ensuring environmental sustainability and community engagement.

Program 11: *Extractive Industry*

Objective: Leverage the extraction of natural resources to drive sustainable economic growth, create jobs, and contribute to national development, while ensuring environmental sustainability and community well-being.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Formalize at least 10 artisanal and small-scale mining operators into cooperatives
2. Issue at least 5 new exploration licenses (Class A, B, C) for mining operators in the county.

Key interventions:

- Formalization of artisanal & small-scale mining production
- Support to climate-responsive mineral production and value chains.

5.2.4. Strategic Policy 6: Tourism, Culture and Creative Economy

Strategic Objective: Leverage the county rich cultural, ecological, and natural resources heritage to promote sustainable economic growth.

Program 12: *Tourism Development, Branding and Marketing*

Objective: To make Maryland County one of the attractive counties for travelers' destinations by promoting its unique cultural heritage.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Brand and commercialize the county's touristic destinations
2. Develop at least 2 eco-tourism sites across the county.

Key interventions:

- Branding and marketing of tourism, with a focus on nature and culture tourism
- Development of eco-tourism sites in the county.

Program 13: *Culture and Creative Economy*

Objective: Harness the potential of arts, culture, and creativity as drivers of economic growth and social development.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Promote Maryland Cultural Heritage
2. Develop the county's creative economy.

Key interventions:

- Promotion of cultural heritage
- Development of the creative economy.

5.3. PILLAR 2: INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Strategic Goal: Develop modern, reliable, inclusive, and climate-resilient infrastructure to support sustainable socio-economic development. To expand and improve infrastructural services, the people of Maryland County have identified six (6) strategic policies, (strategic policies 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12), six (6) programs, (programs 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, and 21) and thirteen (13) interventions for implementation under the Infrastructure Pillar from the AAID for the next five years.

5.3.1. Strategic Policy 7: Roads and Basic Infrastructure

Strategic Objective: Develop and modernize essential roads to enhance connectivity, promote economic growth, and improve access to essential services to improve the county's overall productivity and competitiveness.

Program 14: *Road Network and Safety*

Objective: Expand and modernize road infrastructure by undertaking construction of climate-resilient roads, upgrading of roads and bridges, and maintaining the existing stock in order to enhance accessibility and connectivity of rural and urban areas, while strengthening social inclusion.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Pave at least 75km of primary road from Pleebo to Barclayville, 20.9 km from Harper Junction to Cavalla River
2. Expand, rehabilitate, and maintain at least 90km of secondary road from Karloken through Glofaken to Tartuken
3. Expand, rehabilitate and maintain at least 150 km of feeder roads, especially in Barrobo, Karluway, Pleebo and Harper
4. Upgrade, pave and maintain at least 25 km of urban and community roads from Maryland City Hall junction through Stadium Road to Tubman Road.

Key interventions:

- Expansion, rehabilitation, and maintenance of primary roads in the county
- Expansion, rehabilitation, and maintenance of secondary roads in the county
- Expansion, rehabilitation, and maintenance of feeder roads throughout the county
- Expansion, rehabilitation, and maintenance of urban and community roads.

5.3.3. Strategic Policy 8: Transport and Logistics

Strategic Objective: Enhance the efficiency and reliability of the transportation network in Maryland County to facilitate the movement of goods and people.

Program 15: *Transport Services and Safety*

Objective: Create an efficient, reliable, and sustainable transportation system that supports trade, and development by facilitating the movement of goods, services, and people.

Key target by 2029:

1. Availability of mass transport services in Maryland County.

Key interventions:

- Improvement of road safety in the county
- Expansion and modernization of inclusive mass public transport services.

5.3.2. Strategic Policy 9: Water & Sewage

Strategic Objective: Provide the region access to water for the population and businesses and effective sewage management systems, while improving public health.

Program 16: *Water Resource and Sewage Management*

Objective: Ensure access to clean, safe, and reliable water supply and adequate sewage facilities.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Expand water supply in selected communities in Harper and Pleebo Cities
2. Expand, rehabilitate, and modernize water & sewer services to major cities in the county.
3. Improve fecal sludge management in Harper and Pleebo.

Key interventions:

- Expansion and modernization of sustainable water supply to major cities in the county
- Expanding, rehabilitating, and modernizing water & sewer services to major cities in the county
- Improvement of fecal sludge management in the county.

5.3.4. Strategic Policy 10: Energy

Strategic Objective: Ensure sustainable energy access for the people of Maryland County as well as businesses in the county, while guaranteeing energy security.

Program 17: *Energy Resource Development and Management*

Objective: Ensure that reliable, affordable, efficient, and sustainable electricity is accessible to all sectors of the economy, to facilitate economic growth, and improve quality of life, and social equity.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Expand electricity distribution to households in Harper, Pleebo, Barabo, Karluway, Cavalla, and other cities in Maryland County
2. Support the provision of reliable, cost-effective, and sustainable electricity in the county.

Key interventions:

- Expansion of electricity distribution to households
- Supporting the provision of reliable cost-effective and sustainable electricity in the county.

5.3.5. Strategic Policy 11: Communication Technologies and Digital Economy

Strategic Objective: Enhance access to and use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to drive economic growth and improve service delivery.

Program 20: *National ICT Eco-System and Digital Societies*

Objective: Create a robust digital infrastructure that fosters innovation, economic growth, and social inclusion.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Increase ICT coverage in Maryland by 25%
2. Increase broadband coverage in the county.

Key intervention:

- Expansion of ICT and broadband coverage in the county.

5.3.6. Strategic Policy 12: Housing Development

Strategic Objective: Provide affordable, safe, and adequate housing for citizens, thereby improving living conditions and promoting social stability.

Program 21: *Modern and Affordable Housing Opportunities for All*

Objective: Offer affordable housing, promote home ownership and empower citizens to build their own homes.

Key target by 2029:

1. Construct at least 100 inclusive housing units.

Key intervention:

- Provision of housing for public servants, especially security, health and education officers.

5.4. PILLAR 3: RULE OF LAW

The Strategic Goal of the Rule of Law pillar is to establish a just, equitable, and accountable legal framework that ensures the protection of rights, promotes good governance, and fosters a stable environment conducive to development. To dispense non-discriminatory laws and protection for the people of Maryland County, they have identified two (2) strategic policies, (strategic policies 13 and 14) two (2) programs (programs 22 and 24) and seven (7) interventions which are prioritized under the Rule of Law Pillar from the AAID for the next five years.

5.4.1. Strategic Policy 13: Justice and Human Rights

Strategic Objective: Focus on strengthening legal institutions, promoting human rights awareness, ensuring access to justice, holding violators accountable, fostering reconciliation, and supporting civil society to build a just and equitable society.

Program 22: *Justice Policy Reform and Decentralization*

Objective: Enhance the effectiveness, accessibility, and fairness of the justice system across the county.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Alternative dispute resolution mechanism available in the county
2. PWDs and other vulnerable groups have access to justice services.

Key interventions:

- Expansion, modernization, and decentralization of justice services with a focus on GBV, juvenile, and family courts
- Strengthening traditional/community justice mechanisms
- Strengthening access to justice services for PWDs and other vulnerable persons.

5.4.2. Strategic Policy 14: Public Safety Readiness and National Defense

Strategic Objective: Strengthen law enforcement, enhance emergency response, combat gender-based violence, improve judicial access, promote youth engagement, combat trafficking, and foster interagency collaboration for comprehensive security and stability.

Program 23: *Public Safety Readiness*

Objective: Establish a comprehensive framework to prepare for and respond to emergencies effectively.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Construct, renovate, equip, capacitate and upgrade at least four existing facilities for security and public safety agencies
2. Increase access to security and judicial services.

Key interventions:

- Renovating, equipping, and upgrading existing facilities for security and public safety agencies (LNP, LIS, LNFS, BCR, LDEA)
- Construction of a new Judicial and Security Complex with office spaces for the judiciary and joint security.
- Construction of a new prison facility
- Increasing the number of joint security personnel (LNP, LNFS, LIS, LDEA, BCR and NSA) in the county and providing logistical support to facilitate effective operations.

5.5. PILLAR 4: GOVERNANCE AND ANTI-CORRUPTION

The Strategic Goal of the Governance and Anti-Corruption pillar is to build accountable and effective institutions that can promote value for money service delivery, prevent and combat corruption, and deepen decentralized governance. To expand and improve governance and anti-corruption services to the people of Maryland County, they have identified two (2) strategic policies (strategic policies 15, and 16) four (4) programs (programs 27, 28, 29, and 30) and ten (10) interventions under the Governance and Anti-corruption Pillar of the AAID to be implemented over the next five years.

5.5.1. Strategic Policy 15: Transparency and Accountability

Strategic Objective: Foster a governance environment supported by digital technologies where public officials are held accountable for their actions and decisions.

Program 27: *Sustainable Democratic Governance Reform*

Objective: Strengthen democratic institutions and practices to ensure long-term stability and inclusivity in the county.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Improve civic and voter education through public engagements
2. Enhance local government technicians' capacities
3. Decentralizing anti-corruption services in the county.

Key interventions:

- Enhancing civic and voter education and public engagement
- Decentralizing anti-corruption services.

5.5.2. Strategic Policy 16: Public Administration

Strategic Objective: Promote equitable county growth and strengthen central and local governance.

Program 28: *Land Governance and Management*

Objective: Sustain peace and enhance community social cohesion through effective and efficient land governance and management services in the county.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Demarcate and harmonize local government boundaries
2. Support capacity building of local government administrative structures.

Key interventions:

- Supporting the demarcation and harmonization of local government boundaries
- Supporting capacity building of Local government administrative structures.

Program 29: *Public Service Decentralization*

Objective: Enhance local governance and empower communities by transferring decision-making authority and resources to local governments and improving service delivery and responsiveness to community needs.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Provide capacity-building support to all local government administrative structures in the county
2. Implement the Revenue-sharing Act in the county
3. Renovate the Superintendent and Commissioner compounds.

Key interventions:

- Capacity building of Local Government Administrative Structures
- Construction/modernization of conference facilities in the county
- Rehabilitation and expansion of local government facilities in the county.

Program 30: *Peace and Reconciliation*

Objective: Foster social cohesion and healing in Maryland County.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Improve civic education and awareness
2. Improve social cohesion and reconciliation in the county.

Key interventions:

- Improvement of civic education and awareness
- Enhancement of social cohesion and peaceful coexistence
- Strengthening community engagement in non-violence.

5.6. PILLAR 5: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Strategic Goal of the Environmental Sustainability Pillar is to promote responsible management of natural resources, protect biodiversity, and enhance resilience to environmental and climate changes, while fulfilling the Country's Nationally Determined Contributions, supporting economic growth and improving the quality of life for citizens. To achieve this goal, Maryland County prioritized one (1) strategic policy (strategy policy 18), four (4) programs (programs 33, 34, 35, and 36), and nine (9) interventions under the Environment Sustainability pillar from the AAID for the next five years.

5.6.1. Strategic Policy 18: Climate Change

Strategic Objective: Develop strategies that enhance climate resilience while reducing GHG emissions from all sources, increasing carbon sinks, and promoting sustainable development.

Program 33: *Environmental Governance*

Strategic Objective: Create a sustainable energy future for Maryland by increasing access to safe and affordable energy and fuel sources, while reducing GHG emissions and reducing the risk and vulnerability of climate change impacts on the energy sector.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Decentralize the Environmental Protection Agency Services
2. Achieve full compliance of at least 25% of registered corporations to sustainable production patterns.

Key interventions:

- Expansion, decentralization, and modernization of environmental services
- Construction and equipment of institutional facilities and Climate Change Early Response Center.
- Sustainable management of coastal erosion, such as sea walls, mangrove restoration, and the construction of drainage systems.

Program 34: *Forestry Ecosystem Conservation and Restoration*

Objective: Ensure sustainable management of forests including their productive utilization for economic gains, the effective conservation, and restoration of Maryland's ecosystems prioritizing those most vulnerable to climate change impacts and recognizing their role in providing crucial ecosystem services for the economy, supporting livelihoods, promoting biodiversity, mitigating and adapting to climate change, and contributing to economic development.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Reduce the deforestation rate by at least 20%
2. Restore at least 200 ha of degraded forestlands, including coastal wetlands and mangrove ecosystems
3. Catalogue 100% of water catchments in forest areas
4. Increase urban canopy cover in 2 cities (Harper and Pleebo) to 50%
5. Plant at least 20,000 trees along major roads in the county.

Key interventions:

- Provision of capacity building for local businesses on producing value-added wood products such as furniture, paper, or other wood-based items.
- Restoration of degraded forestlands and increasing urban canopy, and the planting of additional trees in green corridors
- Train forest rangers, police, and judicial officers in forest regulations and enforcement techniques.

Program 35: *Renewable Energy*

Objective: Create a sustainable energy future for Liberia by increasing access to safe and affordable energy and fuel sources, while reducing GHG emissions and reducing the risk and vulnerability of climate change impacts on the energy sector.

Key target by 2029:

1. Increase rural renewable energy supply by 25%.

Key intervention:

- Increasing rural renewable energy supply.

Program 36: *Solid Waste Management*

Objective: Improve the sustainability and efficiency of the solid waste management system to minimize environmental impacts and promote alternative uses for waste, including recycling and reuse.

Key target by 2029:

1. Identify and prepare at least 2 sites for waste disposal.

Key interventions:

- Identification and preparation of sites for waste disposal.
- Improvement of healthcare waste management practices and reduction of waste incineration.

5.7. PILLAR 6: HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

The strategic goal is to develop a skilled, knowledgeable, healthy, and empowered population to drive sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development. To assist in ensuring the effective development of the requisite human capital in Maryland County, they have identified five (5) strategic policies (strategic policies 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23), eleven (11) programs, (programs 37, 38, 39, 40, 43, 44, 46, 48, 49, 50, and 51) and thirty-three (33) interventions under the Human Capital Development pillar from the AAID for the next five years.

5.7.1. Strategic Policy 19: Education

Strategic Objective: Ensure access to equitable, gender-responsive, and disability-inclusive education, improved quality and relevant teaching and learning, and enhanced efficiency and management capacity of all education stakeholders.

Program 37: *Educational Institution Management*

Objective: Ensure that educational institutions operate effectively and efficiently, provide high-quality education including technical and vocational training, and foster a conducive learning environment.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Enhance all managerial staff capacity
2. Train at least 50 school principals and administrative staff in leadership, management and accountability.

Key interventions:

- Enhancing schools' management capacity
- Equipping TVET centers and HEIs with IT infrastructure, including internet connectivity and computers.

Program 38: *Teacher Capacity*

Objective: Ensure the deployment of a functional, qualified, and motivated teaching workforce. This entails the enhancement of teachers' professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions that enable them to plan, deliver, and reflect on effective instruction.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Provide in-service training to 60 teachers (continuous professional development –CPD)
2. Construct at least 50 units for teachers
3. Provide incentives to at least 70 teachers in rural areas
4. Professionalize 100 teachers through certification and licensing.

Key interventions:

- Undertaking teachers' continuous professional development
- Constructing teachers' quarters
- Provision of incentives to attract and support the deployment of qualified teachers in underserved areas
- Development and rolling out a system for teacher licensing.

Program 39: *School Facilities*

Objective: Create a safe, inclusive, and conducive learning environment to enhance access and equity in education service delivery. This is also intended to improve teacher productivity and effectiveness when imparting skills and knowledge to the learners.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Build, renovate or expand 10 inclusive and climate-resilient school infrastructure, including Science, computer labs, and auditorium in Harper, Pleebo, Karluway, and Barrobo
2. Support WASH and menstrual hygiene interventions in 30% of schools in Maryland County
3. Increase the rate of enrollment of learners with disabilities by at least 20%
4. Support 20 children with learning disabilities
5. Exempt 40 PWD learners from school fees and provide school uniforms and bags.

Key interventions:

- Building, renovating or expanding inclusive and climate-resilient school infrastructure, including science, computer labs, and auditorium
- Establishing and modernizing TVET institutions to cater to nontraditional learners and the vulnerable population
- Supporting WASH and menstrual hygiene interventions in Schools
- Expansion and acquisition of instructional materials for PWDs
- Supporting children with learning disabilities.

Program 40: *Student Learning Capacity*

Objective: Enhance the ability of students to acquire, retain, and apply knowledge and skills effectively at the foundational level through the provision of gender-responsive teaching and learning materials (TLMs) that are aligned with the reformed national curriculum and inclusive of quality STEM, TVET, and digital programs that assess students on new curricula contents.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Provide at least 5 schools with home-grown school feeding
2. Provide all ECE schools with validated age-appropriate/play-based ECE curriculum
3. Achieve student-to-textbook ratio of 1:1
4. Place volunteer teachers on GoL payroll.

Key interventions:

- Provision of open-access, non-copyright textbooks for every child
- Expansion of the school feeding using locally produced food items and school health initiatives at foundational levels
- Increasing the number of qualified teachers and placing qualified volunteer teachers on GoL payroll.

5.7.2. Strategic Policy 20: Health System

Strategic Objective: Create a robust health system that addresses immediate health needs and promotes preventive.

Program 43: *Health Sector Reforms*

Objective: Promote equity, efficiency, quality, financing, and sustainability in the delivery of healthcare services through an enhanced policy environment. A stronger health system can reduce healthcare costs and improve workforce productivity by keeping the population healthier.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Increase the coverage of community pharmacy from 20% to 85% in all public health facilities
2. Provide health insurance coverage for all citizens.
3. Place at least 25 qualified volunteer health workers on GoL payroll.

Key interventions:

- Development and implementation of community pharmacy and cost-sharing schemes in public health facilities
- Placement of qualified volunteer health workers on GoL payroll
- Enhance the regulatory environment for health services, facilities, and professionals.

Program 44: *Health Services*

Objective: Ensure that health services is accessible, equitable, safe, and responsive to the needs of the users.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Upgrade at least 2 health care facilities to comprehensive health centers including: J.J. Dosen Annex, Pleebo Health Center Operating Theater, Yediaken Clinic, Old Sodoken Clinic, Rock Town Kunukudi Clinic; and renovation of 18 health facilities
2. Provide essential drugs, medical equipment, and supplies to all health facilities in the county
3. Provide at least 3 new ambulances to enhance emergency medical care
4. Improve health workers capacity by 10%
5. Delivering quality Reproductive Maternal Newborn, Child and Adolescent (RMNCAH+N) and SGBV services.

Key interventions:

- Build, Expand, upgrade, and modernize public healthcare facilities
- Provide essential drugs, medical equipment such as, X-Ray, Ultrasound, Chemistry Machine, and Microscope to health facilities
- Construct stafåf quarters for remotely located health facilities
- Providing new ambulances to enhance emergency medical care
- Delivering quality Reproductive Maternal Newborn, Child and Adolescent (RMNCAH+N) and SGBV services.

5.7.3. Strategic Policy 21: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Strategic Objective: Ensure the availability of safe, clean, and adequate Sanitation facilities and promote good hygiene practices to improve public health, environmental sustainability, and overall quality of life.

Program 46: *Sanitation and Hygiene*

Objective: Improve access to safe and adequate sanitation facilities and promote good hygiene practices among the population.

Key targets by 2029:

1. End open defecation practices
2. Increase safely managed access to sanitation to 50% and basic access to sanitation to 65%
3. Increase coverage of basic water service in health facilities to 90%.

Key interventions:

- Eradication of Open Defecation practices
- Implementation of the WASH in healthcare facilities roadmap 2024 to 2029.

5.7.4. Strategic Policy 22: Inclusive Social Development

Strategic Objective: Promote gender equality and empowerment of women, girls, and vulnerable groups, enhance social protection systems, and ensure that all individuals, especially the most vulnerable, have access to opportunities, resources, and protection.

Program 48: *Sexual and Gender-Based Violence*

Objective: Strengthen preventive measures and coordination mechanisms to foster accountability, shift social norms, and enhance support services in addressing SGBV.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Reduce the incidence of SGBV by 20%
2. Increase access to SGBV services by 10%.

Key interventions:

- Strengthening community engagement and social behavior change
- Expansion of SGBV prevention and survivor support services.

Program 49: *Inclusive Integrated Social Protection and Welfare Services*

Objective: Increase access of women and vulnerable groups (PWDs, children, girls, youth) to quality regular and special education, ensure their basic human rights and access to a dignified quality of life, and to improve the safety and welfare of children and the elderly.

Key target by 2029:

1. Construct, equip, and operationalize at least one (1) safe home with capacity to host at least 50 SGBV survivors, victims, and children as well as drug-affected youth.

Key intervention:

- Construction, equipment, and operationalization of safe home with capacity to host SGBV survivors, victims, and children as well as drug-affected youth.

Program 50: *Economic Empowerment of Women and Vulnerable Groups*

Objective: Increase women and vulnerable groups' access to productive resources and business services, and opportunities to improve their economic status and well-being.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Establish at least 5 women's agribusiness and entrepreneurship cooperatives
2. Support at least 10 agribusiness and entrepreneurship enterprises for women and vulnerable groups
3. Capacitate at least 50 PWDs in agri-business and entrepreneurship
4. Increase capacity and leadership of women in climate-resilient eco-tourism services
5. Support the increase of financial inclusion coverage by 20% of women, PWDs, and vulnerable groups.

Key interventions:

- Development of PWDs' productive capacity for agribusiness
- Strengthening support for children with special needs
- Development of women's leadership capacity in climate-resilient eco-tourism services.

5.7.5. Strategic Policy 23: Youth Development

Strategic Objective: Empower young people, increase their economic opportunities and enhance their contribution to sustainable development.

Program 51: *Inclusive Youth Empowerment*

Objective: Expand opportunities for youth by providing an enabling environment and appropriate incentives that provide access to leadership, training, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.

Key targets by 2029:

1. Capacitate at least 200 youth in agri-business and entrepreneurship
2. Secure at least 200 internship, apprenticeship, and volunteerism placements for youth and PWDs
3. Increase the capacity and leadership of 75 youth in climate-resilient eco-tourism services
4. Ensure that about 500 youth benefit from TVET.

Key interventions:

- Provision of internships, apprenticeships, and volunteer work opportunities for social development of young people and PWDs
- Development of youth leadership and capacity in climate-resilient eco-tourism services
- Supporting the reintegration of rehabilitated youth and preventive awareness campaigns against substance use among adolescents and youth in Maryland County.

PART 6: CDA IMPLEMENTATION AND THEORY OF CHANGE

6.1. CDA Implementation Governance

6.1.1. Three Branches of Government County Authorities

The holistic governance framework for taking full responsibilities in the implementation of the CDA calls for effective collaboration between the three branches of the Liberian government operating in Maryland County. Functionaries within the executive, judiciary, and legislature are all clothed with portfolios of authorities and governing powers that have direct responsibilities in the implementation of the CDA. Those with the responsible portfolios are listed in Table 8. The quality and speed at which the Maryland CDA is executed depend on the level of commitment devoted to the process by those serving in these county governing positions, as well as the citizens of Maryland.

Table 8: County Statutory Portfolios to Manage the CDA

Executive			Judicial	Legislature
Superintendent	District Commissioner	County Education Officer	County Judge	Senators
County Council	Commerce Inspector			
County Development Officer	Youth Coordinator	Labor Commissioner	County Attorney	Representatives
County Administrative Officer	Resident Engineer, MPW	County Health Officer	Public Defenders	
County Finance Officer	County Joint Security Commanders	Registrar, CNDRA		
Project Planner	Mining Agent	Coordinator, GSA		
Sta. District Superintendents	Agriculture Coordinator	CSIO, LISGIS		
Gender Coordinator		RDO/CMO, MFDP		

6.1.2. County Authorities Mandates

In accordance with the Local Government Act of 2018, County Council and County Administrators are expected to carry out stipulated mandates in managing the county affairs to enhance the general living conditions and welfare of citizens and non-citizens residing within the county. For effectiveness, both the council and the administrators are expected to work in unity in the collective interests. Their respective mandates are listed in Table 9, and the county administrative structure shown in Annex IV.

Table 9: Mandates of County Authorities

County Council	County Administrators
Fiscal Responsibilities: to impose local taxes, rates, duties, fees, and fines within limits prescribed by the Legislature. Budget & Development Plans Approval: approving annual county budgets and development plans. Certificates and Permits: to issue appropriate certificates and operating permits as designated by the Legislature.	Service Delivery: to deliver basic public goods and services consistent with the law. Development Planning: to play a crucial role in the implementation of county development plans. Coordination: to work with various county-based institutions to ensure effective governance and development.

As designed, these mandates enhance the road towards the implementation of the Government's decentralization policy, giving local authorities more control over their administrative, fiscal, and political affairs. Given the autonomy devolved to the county and resources allocated, the Government and people of Maryland County are expected to take direct ownership of their own development process and outcomes. The CDA is thus a powerful and results-oriented instrument for the growth and development of the county. The 2018 Local Government Act (LGA) provides the requisite legal operational framework and contains achievable provisions needed to enhance effective local governance. Under the LGA, county authorities now have the authority to collect revenues, determine and undertake public works, allocate resources, and implement programs for the benefit of their residents. As such, adequate attention must now be paid to development planning structures and processes within the county. The importance and relevant provisions of the Act are highlighted in Annex V.

6.1.3. Requirements and Benefits of a Coordinating Mechanism

Coordination between local actors of Maryland, including authorities and central government institutions and actors, is crucial for ensuring the successful implementation of the agenda. This call demands a well-structured, yet flexible and adaptable, coordinating mechanism to ensure that the agenda is implemented effectively, resources are used efficiently, strategies are adaptable, and all stakeholders are aligned and engaged. Ensuring such an appropriate mechanism requires (i) an adaptable management structure capable to effectively monitor progress, identify emerging issues, and promptly address them to keep the implementation on track; (ii) targeted strategies that would ensure efficient resource mobilization, allocation and management; and (iii) forging meaningful partnerships with private sector actors, county stakeholders and development partners for maximum results. There are several benefits that could be realized from establishing and operating a well-functioning agenda coordinating mechanism including the following::

1. **Enhanced Efficiency:** Helps streamline activities, ensuring that tasks are logically sequenced, and dependencies are managed effectively. This reduces delays and bottlenecks, leading to improved overall efficiency.
2. **Resource Optimization:** Through coordination efforts, resources such as time, money, and personnel are used more effectively. This prevents duplication of efforts and ensures that resources are allocated where they are most needed.
3. **Stakeholder Engagement:** A coordinating mechanism facilitates better communication and collaboration among stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector. This consolidates ownership and commitment.
4. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Provides a structured approach to monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes. This helps in identifying issues and making timely and necessary adjustments to stay on track.
5. **Accountability and Transparency:** Coordination mechanisms promote transparency and accountability by clearly defining roles and responsibilities. This helps with tracking progress and ensuring that all parties are held accountable for their contributions.
6. **Adaptability:** It allows for flexibility and compliance in the implementation of the CDA. This enables quick responses to changing circumstances or unexpected challenges.

6.1.4. County Development Agenda Coordination Framework

Chapter 5 of The Local Government Act 2018 suggests a coordination framework/ mechanism for implementing the County Development Agenda (CDA). Like the CDA of 2008, which had a County Development Office (CDO), the LGA proposes setting up a County Development Planning Unit. According to 5.1 of the LGA, the County Development Planning Unit shall be responsible for development planning, which shall be linked with the central government development planning and aid coordination entities and shall coordinate development planning units to be established in Administrative Districts. Given this summary, coordination within the County Development Planning Unit at the county level will comprise the following:

1. Functions of the unit
2. Key actors/stakeholders within the unit
3. Layers of coordination
4. Institutional representation

Functions of the Unit

The following shall comprise the function of the County Development Planning Unit

1. Plan Development and Coordination
2. Project Development
3. Monitoring and Evaluation
4. Reporting

5. Data/statistics, information management
6. Research

Key Actors/Staff within the County Development Planning Unit

The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) is represented by the County Development Officer who is the head of the County Development Planning Unit. The CDO is responsible for the following:

1. Leading on the development of the County Development Plan
2. Coordinating all development planning functions in the county
3. Carry out monitoring and evaluation in line with MFDP and other stakeholders
4. Lead on project development in collaboration with other stakeholders, on behalf of the county
5. Co-chairs the County Development Steering Committee Meetings

Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) represented by the Regional Development Officer. The RDO and staff are responsible for the following:

1. Facilitate the crafting of the County Development Agenda (CDA) and the National Development Plan (NDP) at the county level.
2. In collaboration with the office of the County Development Officer (CDO) carry out M&E functions of programs and projects at the sub-national levels.
3. Report on the implementation of the national development plan at the county level as well as furnish the county with reports on implementation of the County Development Agenda.
4. Conduct research on development at the county level
5. Serve as Secretary to the County Development Steering Committee

Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) represented by the County Statistics and Information Officer (CSIO). The CSIO is responsible for the following within the County Development Planning Unit:

1. Compilation and organization of relevant information required to report in the implementation progress of the CDA and the national development plan
2. Manage all statistical information and data at the county level

District Development Officer (DDO). The DDO shall for a part of the County Development Planning Unit. However, the DDO will work at the district level to organize and coordinate development planning activities. The DDO shall furnish the County Development Planning Unit through the County Development Officer, with information regarding development planning implementation at the district level.

Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection represented by the County Gender Coordinator. The Gender Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that issues of gender are mainstreamed into the development planning processes at the county level.

Layers of Coordination

There shall be established the following layers of coordination at the county level

3. **County Development Steering Committee (CDSC):**

The CDSC shall be the highest decision-making body at the county level, particularly regarding development planning. The CDSC shall be chaired by the County Superintendent with the County Development Officer (CDO) serving as the Co-Chair. The head of the County Council shall serve as an ex-official on the CDSC. The CDSC shall meet quarterly to discuss issues regarding the implementation of the CDA and the AAID and take action to resolve any development-related challenges. Reports from the CDSC meetings shall be forwarded to the national coordination unit at the national level to inform the implementation of the NDP at the sub-national levels. Members of the CDSC shall include the following:

- **A.** Heads of Spending Entities (SE)/MACs within the county
- **B.** Development Partners
- **C.** Heads of NGOs in the county
- **D.** Heads of CSOs
- **E.** Head of the traditional council
- **F.** Head of County Council
- **G.** Youth Representative on the County Council
- **H.** Representative of PWDs
- **I.** Women representative on the County Council
- **J.** Two representatives from the religious community
- **K.** Private Sector

4. Working Group Forum

The Working Group Forum mimics that of the Pillar or the CDSC Working Committee in the 2008 CDA coordination framework. The working committee shall meet once a month to discuss progress and challenges at the pillar level of the CDA. There shall be four working Group forum Meeting comprised of

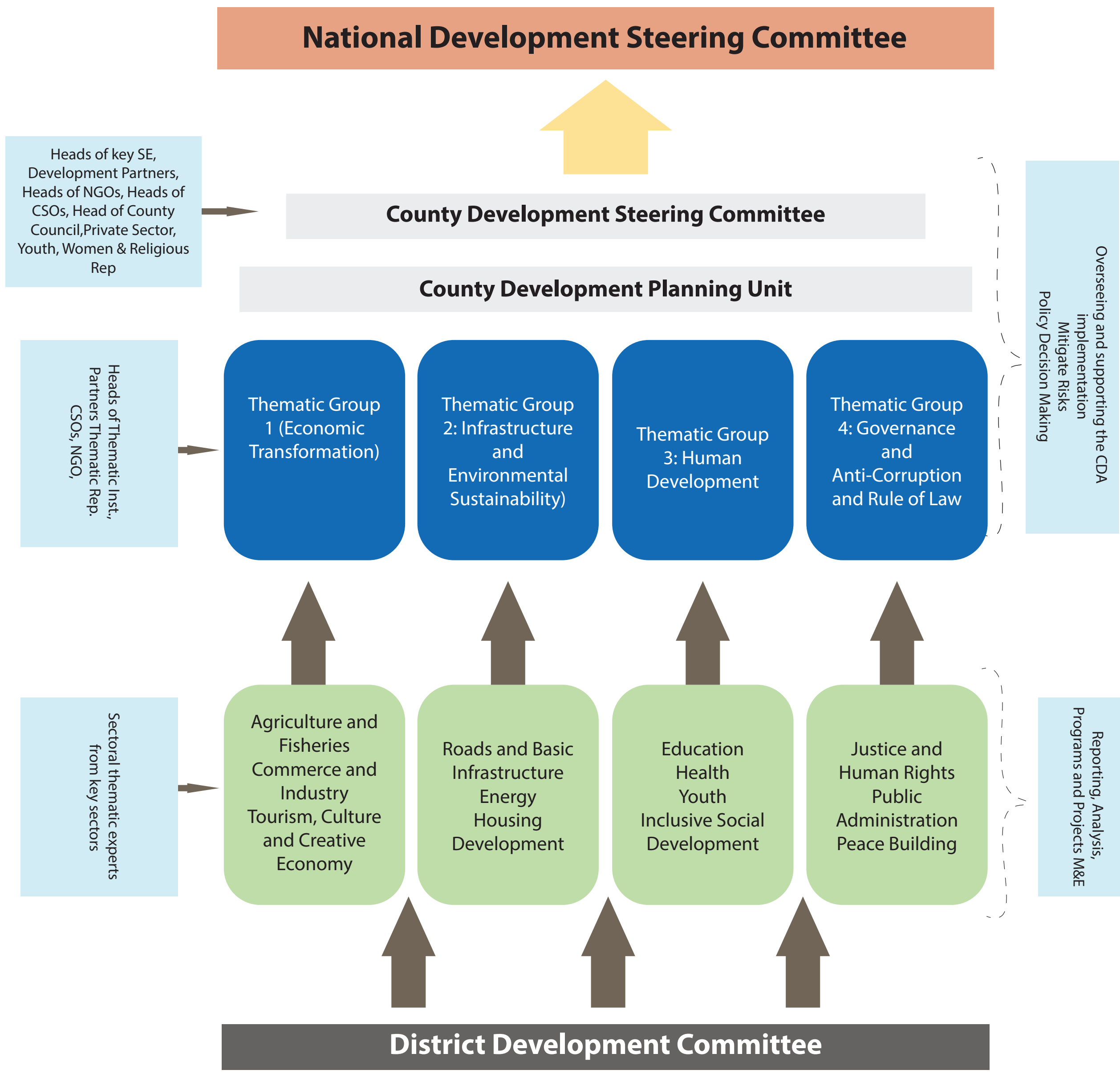
- **A.** Human Development Working Group Forum
- **B.** Economic Transformation Working Group forum
- **C.** Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability Working Group Forum
- **D.** Governance and Anti-Corruption and Rule of Law Working Group Forum

District \Development Committees:

The DDC shall be the coordination body of the CDA at the district level and shall mirror the function of the CDSC. The District Superintendent/Commissioner shall chair the DDC.

Figure 7 presents the Coordination Structure for the County Development Agenda.

Figure 7: Coordination Structure for the County Development Agenda



6.2. The Theory of Change

The AAID's Theory of Change (ToC) prescribes changes on the road towards Liberia becoming a middle-income country in by 2030, where more than half of the working population will be employed in the formal sector, with a per capita income of more than US$1,000. Attention is therefore paid to the unbending linkages of the AAID pillars and priority sectors, along with their various goals, objectives, and interventions. The Theory of Change provides an understanding of the vision and shows the upward cascading elements that contribute to its achievement, within a strategic framework, holding public actors' accountability for results. It allows for adjustments based on changing circumstances, especially in a world that is rapidly challenged by climate change, weak global growth, falling commodity prices, wars, and supply-chain disruptions. Key Components of the Theory of Change, that signify its importance, are highlighted below.

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE THEORY OF CHANGE

Inputs: Prioritized human capital development programs; good national governance policies and regulations from competent and motivated public servants; sound policies and regulations from competent and motivated public servants; sound infrastructural development and maintenance programs; sound environmental policies and practices; growing revenues; public-private partnerships; international financial and technical assistance. All of these will produce desired outputs.

Outputs: An educated and healthy population; capable public sector institutions; well-built and maintained public infrastructures; a sustainable environment adept in attending the hazards of climate change; and macroeconomic growth with a strong private sector creating jobs. These outputs will lead to planned outcomes.

Outcomes: These will lead to a prosperous and inclusive development outcome towards achieving Vision 2030.

Impact: Vision 2030 - Liberia becomes a lower middle-income country. Socioeconomic development is achieved as reflected in a better quality of life of the people confirmed by better human development performance indices.

The effective implementation of the Maryland Development Agenda shall make the necessary contribution to Liberia becoming a lower middle-income country by 2030. Three (3) drivers and (2) enablers of change shall be prioritized and pursued to add value to the county's contribution to the overall AAID. The first driver, Human Capital, is the preeminent determinant, and its development shall be high on the county agenda to drive the needed positive and progressive change. A strong and successful human development program will drive the other two key drivers: (i) macroeconomic stability and growth; and (ii) environmental sustainability. A competent and healthy population will create an enabling environment that attracts private sector investments. This will lead to the expansion of both public and the private sectors enterprises, the creation of jobs for a largely youthful population, and an increment in the Liberia's gross domestic product and income. Additionally, a learned and productive population will be environmentally conscious and will ensure that socio-economic developments are environmentally friendly and sustained, especially as it relates to climate change adaptation. For effectiveness and greater impact, the three drivers should be enhanced through the practice of good governance. This calls for strong public sector institutions capable of prudent policymaking and regulations development and well-built and maintained national infrastructures. The realization of this noble change vision and aspiration depends greatly on much of what happens at the county level.

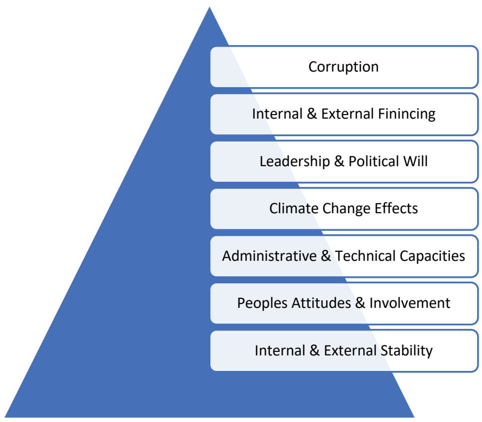
6.3. Risks Mitigation and Management

6.3.1. Origin of Possible Risks and Risk Factors

Several risks and constraints could possibly derail the implementation of the CDA and frustrate efforts toward generating rapid, inclusive, and sustainable growth and development.

These risks usually come from four possible sources: (i) within the county; (ii) national and sub-national policies and institutions; (iii) the international donor community; and (iv) natural causes. The major risk factors, which must be guided against and managed effectively to ensure the successful implementation of the CDA, are shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Potential Risks Factors



6.3.2. Managing Potential Risks

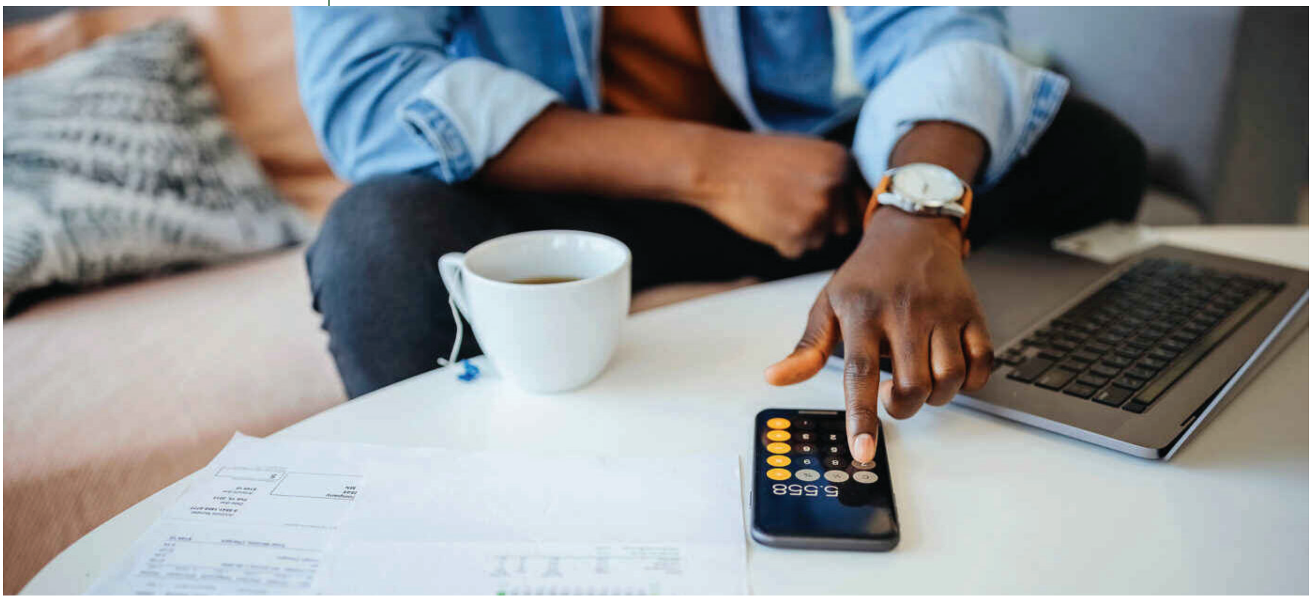
Effective risk management is an ongoing process that requires proactive identification, assessment, and mitigation strategies. Risk management is essential to balance risks, constraints, and opportunities to ensure successful implementation of the CDA. It is important to regularly revisit and refine the adopted strategy and approach as circumstances evolve. The consequences could be significant if risks are not properly managed during the CDA implementation stage. Poor risk management can lead to financial setbacks, cost overruns, budget deviations, or resource wastage and eventual project failure. Failing to adequately address potential risks could harm Maryland County officials' reputation, leading to negative publicity, people dissatisfaction, disrupted program timelines, or program/project failures. The required actions to mitigate the identified risks are listed in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Risk Mitigation Actions

Corruption
• Ensure swift investigation and prosecution of alleged corruption cases. • Implement the CDA with a high level of transparency and accountability. • Establish a whistleblower and other reward and deterrence program for the CDA implementation.
Internal and External Financing
• Take a strategic approach to donors' fundraising, such as organizing a donor conference for the CDAs. • Ensure all development activities (governmental and non-governmental) in the county are channeled through the CDA and apply their funding against the CDA budget. • Ensure effective implementation of the CDAs and share positive monitoring and evaluation reports with development partners and donors. • Explore creative and sustainable revenue generation in the county.
Leadership or Political Will
• The national development plan implementation unit should leverage the coordination mechanisms for the development plan formulation to support increasing and maintaining stronger political will and leadership
Climate Change
• Construct infrastructure that can withstand climate shocks (e.g., floods, rising sea levels) and develop an early warning system and community-based disaster preparedness mechanisms. • Provide Farmers with awareness training on the effect of climate change on agriculture to enable climate-change-resistant and environmentally friendly farming
Technical and Administrative Capacities
• Based on the results of an adequate countywide capacity needs assessment of administrative and technical staff, plan and execute appropriate capacity-building interventions
People's Involvement and Ownership
• Continue to create awareness for the CDA implementation. • Ensure cross-representation of stakeholders in the CDA implementation unit and open CDA periodic monitoring and evaluation meetings to the public
Internal and External Stability
• The GoL should ensure good governance and other positive governance programs to reduce the risk of internal instability. • The local government should strictly adhere to the public financial management laws to effectively utilize the available resources for the implementation of CDA. • Increase security and the rule of law to protect investors, businesses, and the people of Maryland.


HARPER CITY HALL

PART 7: FINANCING THE CDA AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION



7.1. Financial Requirements for Implementing the CDA

The minimum amount needed to finance the Maryland Development Agenda is approximately US$ 53,550 (Fifty-Three Million, Five Hundred Fifty Thousand United States Dollars) over the planned period. The mobilized funds shall be allocated against the six pillsrs as shown in Table 11, with the detailed annual breakdown by program shown in Annex VI. Mobilizing funds effectively from the possible sources and efficiently managing the required funding envelope present major challenges to both public sector and private sector actors in implementing the CDA.

Table 11: Minimum Financial Requirements to Finance the CDA Per Pillar (in Thousands of US$)

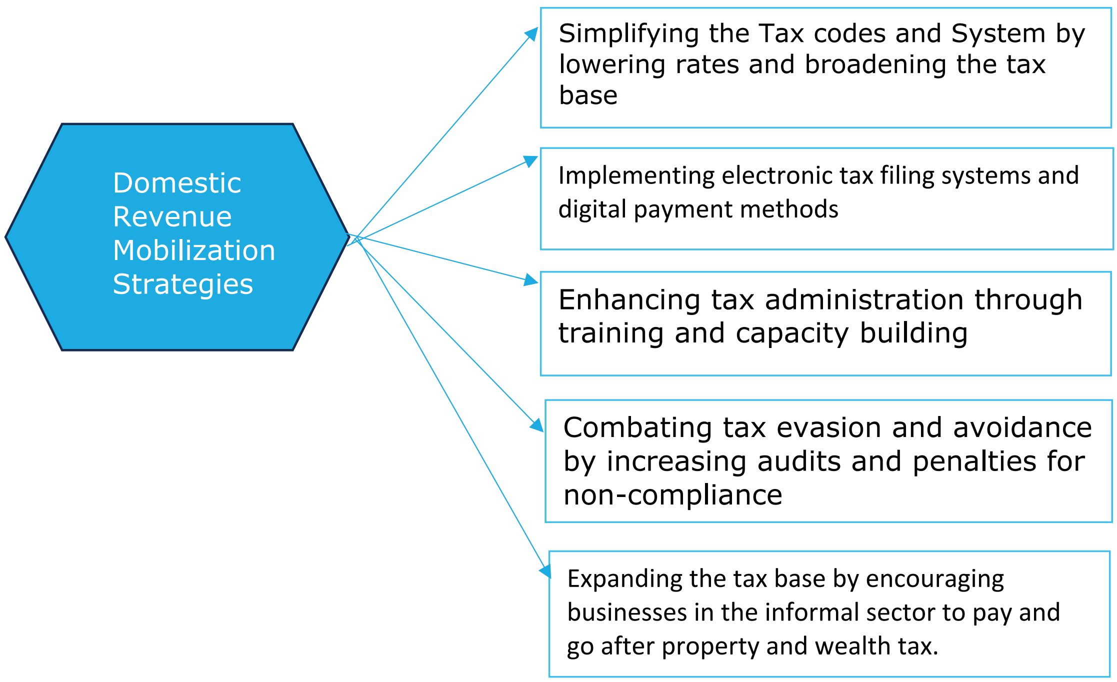
	Pillars /Programs	Total	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
1	Economic Transformation	17,596	1,144	2,510	3,928	6,089	3,925
2	Infrastructure Development	18,120	4,230	7,700	3,200	1,690	1,300
3	Rule of Law	1,900	100	400	600	500	300
4	Environmental Sustainability	1,350	175	275	300	350	250
5	Governance and Anti- Corruption	2,350	300	472	590	627	361
6	Human Capital Development	12,234	1,181	3785	3985	3965	1445
	Grand Total	53,550	7,130	13,967	12,243	12,314	7,896

7.2. Sources of Funds to Support the CDA Implementation

7.2.1. The Liberian Government

Central Government shall allocate to counties each year, between 3-5 million United States Dollars, in the national budget during the planned period, based on population size and the comparative advantage in a particular strategic sector within the county. The Central Government's allocation includes but not limited to the "County Development Fund" and the "Social Development Fund" which have been the sources of funding for county development prior to the 2025 - 2029 CDAs. Both central and local governments shall enhance their respective domestic public resources mobilization strategies and approaches to meet the annual budgetary requirements for the county. Figure 9 illustrates effective strategies available to increase domestic revenue. If it becomes necessary, a well-managed domestic borrowing program shall be instituted and executed through loans from domestic banks, and/or the issuance of bonds to supplement domestic revenue.

Figure 9: Effective Strategies for Mobilizing Domestic Revenue



7.2.2. Other Major Sources

Additional funds are certainly needed to supplement the domestic revenue mobilized, in support to the national budget, if the county programs and projects contained in this agenda, are to be adequately funded. The additional funds needed shall be mobilized tapping into various other sources, including the following:

1. **International Development Cooperation:** Grants, low-cost interest loans, technical assistance, and concessionary interest loans shall be negotiated and secured by Official Development Assistance (ODA) through several regional and global sources. Notably, from Multilateral Development Institutions (MDIs) like the European Union (EU); International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD/World Bank); International Monetary Fund (IMF); African Development Bank (AfDB); and the Ecowas Bank for Investment and Development (EBID), etc. Financing shall also be sought from Liberia's international development partners. The last, but not insignificant, source to support the overall national budgetary requirements to finance the CDA in the county, are national and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and philanthropic organizations mainly through grants and donations.
2. **Private Sector Investment:** Effective Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) arrangement shall be pursued, nurtured and facilitated, building business collaboration and partnership between central or county governments on one side, and private sector actors, particularly Liberian actors, on the other side. The National Investment Commission (NIC) shall put in place appropriate policies to attract private sector funds aimed at funding approved projects in the CDA. The GOL shall take the necessary steps to ensure the availability of a skilled and productive workforce to man private sector enterprises.
3. **Innovative Financing:** Concerted efforts shall be made to explore new innovative financial instruments to finance the CDA. Sources such as green bonds, social impact bonds, and Diaspora bonds can attract investment funds for specific projects, which should be explored as best as possible. Climate financing specifically aimed at addressing climate change, from the Green Climate Fund (GCF); and remittances sent back home by citizens of Maryland working outside of the county and/or out of Liberia, shall be explored equally.

7.3. Resource Mobilization Framework and Strategy

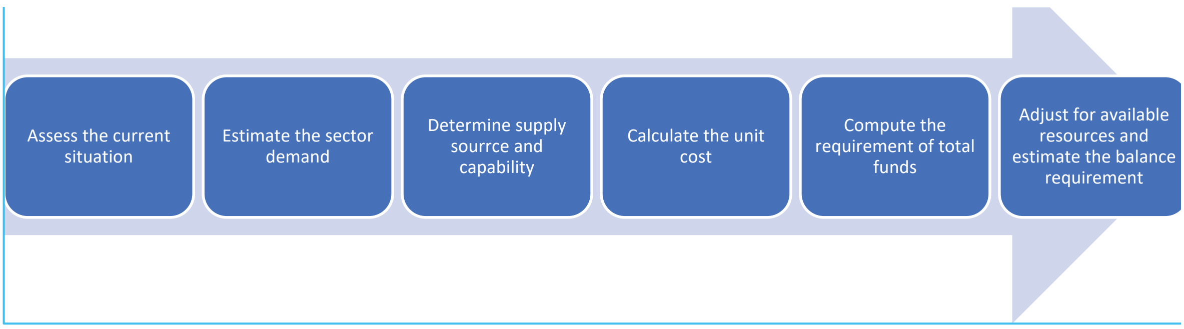
The overarching goal of the Resource Mobilization Strategy is to mobilize adequate and quality resources to carry out the programs and projects outlined in Maryland Development Agenda, and to situate the process on a pathway to sustainable financing and enhanced impact. To get maximum results from the adopted resource mobilization efforts, a mixture of smart policies and strategies shall be used, including the revenue-sharing formula in the LGA. Various avenues such as grants, donations, corporate sponsorship, and government subsidies shall also be explored. GOL shall establish and maintain strong relations with donors, partners, and stakeholders, keeping regular communication and engagements to build trust and long-term support, as an integral part of the strategy.

For greater impact, the framework shall contain several effective approaches including the following:

1. Strengthening partnerships
2. Capacity building in fundraising, project management, and financial management
3. Robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track the use of funds and demonstrate impact
4. Innovative fundraising
5. Enhance transparency and accountability.

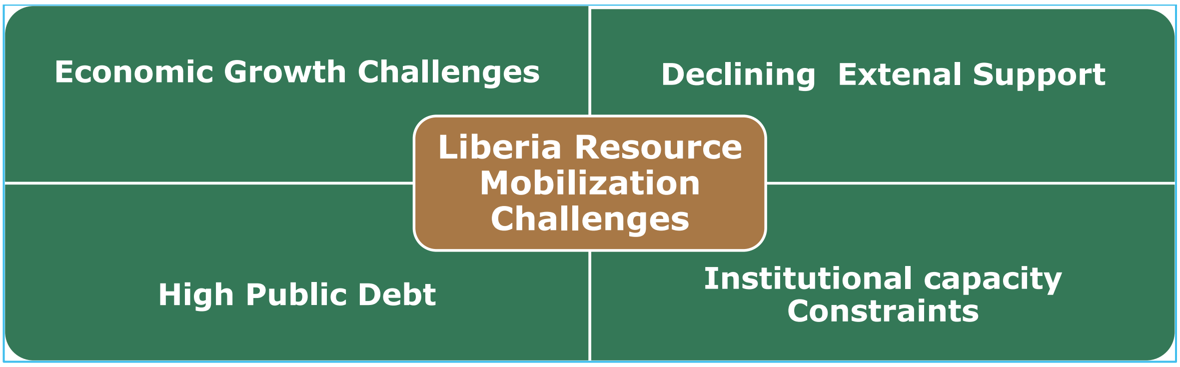
One of the critical required actions in formulating a resource mobilization strategy is estimating the resource needs for a particular sector. The main steps involved in resource mobilization are identification of resources and providers, mechanisms to receive resources, expanding relations with providers, proper use of resources, developing knowledge and skills, seeking new resources and ensuring institutional sustainability. A workable resource mobilization framework shall be put in place to guide the process of computing resources involving six successive steps as shown in Figure 10 below.

Figure 10: Steps in Computing Needed Resources for the CDA



The Government of Liberia's resource mobilization efforts have been faced with different challenges at home and abroad, which if not minimized, could derail the successful implementation of the Maryland County Development Agenda. The key challenges are presented in Figure 11 below.

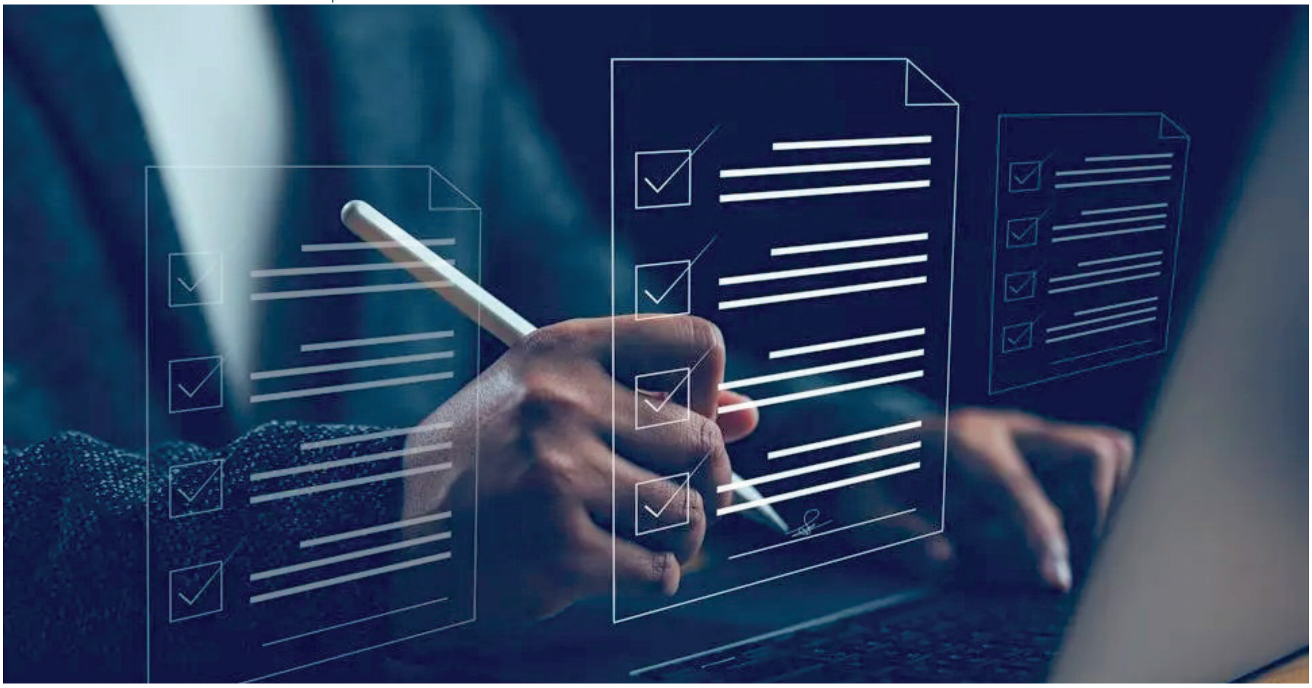
Figure 11: Liberia's Resource Mobilization Challenges



7.4. Managing Allocated Public Funds

Authorities and program managers shall ensure that the mobilized and allocated funds are managed responsibly, ensuring that allocated resources are used efficiently, effectively, and transparently. Capacities of relevant officers shall be built in the use of modern systems such as Financial Management Information Systems (FMIS) to track and manage expenditures. A simplified auditing and reporting system shall be put in place and a summary report on how the funds were spent, prepared at the end of each year. Managing public funds comes with several challenges that can impact the efficiency and effectiveness of public financial management. These include corruption and misuse of Funds, transparency and accountability, inadequate financial controls, limited expertise and capacity, and political pressure.

PART 8: MONITORING AND EVALUATION



8.1. Rationale for Monitoring and Evaluation

The Local Government Act (LGA) 2018 of the Republic of Liberia outlines the legal framework that requires the County Government to develop and operationalize appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems. An effective M&E system is instrumental in tracking progress and in taking corrective actions if performance should fall below expected targets. The rationale is to ensure that the policies, projects, and programs outlined in the CDA are successful and impactful. In addition, the M&E system serves as a vital tool in providing stakeholders with a regular flow of information throughout the implementation of the CDA. This ensures continuity, transparency and the detection of changes in the status and utilization of resources allocated to CDA priority areas. The exercise will indicate whether the resources spent on implementing CDA investment programs and projects lead to the intended outcomes, impacts, and benefits for the citizens.

Beneficiaries play a crucial role in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) as they are the individuals or communities directly affected by the project or program being assessed. The involvement of beneficiaries in the monitoring and evaluation process is essential for several reasons: accountability, validation, empowerment, learning, resistance and disengagement. They are the ultimate recipients of the services or interventions the project or program provides. Their experiences and feedback offer valuable insights into the success or challenges of the initiative. Involving beneficiaries in M&E activities helps ensure that programs and projects meet their needs and address their concerns. This allows program managers and evaluators to gain insights into the impact of the program or project on their lives and livelihoods, identify areas for improvement, and ensure that programs are responsive to the needs of the people they aim to serve.

A major output of the M&E exercise shall be the county's quarterly and annual progress reports, indicating progress made in achieving stipulated development goals and targets, and challenges encountered.

To ensure that monitoring of the CDA is effective, the process should focus on results that will identify progress and areas needing improvement in achieving the intended results of the CDA. A clear framework including clear and appropriate indicators, baseline data, and realistic targets should be used. A second major output is the evaluation report on CDA deliverables, outcome and impact.

As per the Local Government Act, Maryland County is responsible for implementing its County Development Agenda and

8.3. Responsibility for Monitoring and Evaluation

Action Plan. Therefore, with the support of the National M&E System based at the MFDP, Maryland County Authorities will oversee the monitoring and evaluation of the CDA on the ground. The County Development Office will lead countywide monitoring and evaluation of CDA projects, coordinating with M&E offices at sector MACs and County Levels to collect periodic data for routine monitoring. The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) is the leading agency responsible for coordinating monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities across all sectors. MFDP shall use the established M&E methodologies, ensuring consistent data collection and reporting, and synthesizing information to inform policy decisions.

Monitoring and Evaluation at sector MACs, including those at the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, and Education, carry out M&E activities tailored to their respective sectors. Each MAC collects data, analyzes results, and reports findings to the MFDP. Local governments will lead M&E at the county level, supported by the national M&E system. Development partners and NGOs provide essential financial and technical support to ensure the effective implementation of M&E efforts.

8.2. Monitoring and Evaluation Dynamics

Monitoring involves plotting progress in meeting implementation goals or measuring outputs and process. Monitoring programs and projects of this CDA will therefore involve tracking resource allocation, utilization, and the delivery of goods and services. Evaluation, on the other hand, takes a broader perspective, determining if the course is the best one, or assessing overall outcome or impact. This process shall consist of making judgments about the CDA development programs and projects before, during, and after their implementation. The assessment will include a systematic and objective collection and analysis of data and information related to effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, sustainability, and impact on the target population in Maryland. The respective M&E dividends are shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Dividends of Monitoring and Evaluating the CDA

Monitoring the agenda shall	Evaluating the agenda shall
Provide justifications for resource allocation, improve service delivery, and demonstrate results for accountability.	Provide decision-makers with vital information on the performance of development programs and projects.
Assess progress towards achieving desired results and support management decisions by providing data for comparison of actual performance with the original intentions of policies, plans, programs, and projects.	Identify strengths and weaknesses of development interventions thus enabling managers to improve future planning, service delivery, and decision-making.
Provide program or project managers and other stakeholders with information on progress towards achieving the stated objectives.	Assist program and project managers, staff, and other stakeholders in objectively and systematically assessing the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of activities considering specified objectives.
Provide regular feedback to enhance learning and improvements to the planning process and the effectiveness of interventions.	Validate the results of initial assessments obtained from project monitoring activities.
Increase program or project accountability to funders, target population, and other stakeholders.	Determine the success of program interventions in terms of impact and sustainability of results.
Enable managers and staff to identify and reinforce initial positive results, strengths, and successes.	Help managers to thoroughly review and consider their programs and projects in relation to their goals and objectives and the means to achieve them.
Enable managers to make timely adjustments and take corrective actions to improve the program or project design, work plan, and implementation strategies to ensure successful implementation and sustainability.	Generate detailed information about the program or project implementation process and results which could be used for public relations, fundraising, improving service delivery, and identifying ways to replicate interventions.
Evaluate conditions or situations affecting target groups among the citizens of Maryland as well as changes brought about by program or project activities guaranteeing the continued relevance of the project.	Improve the learning process by documenting and explaining the causes of success or failure thus making future activities more relevant and effective.

8.4. Targeted Indicators to Measure Success

Critical elements of monitoring and evaluation are the targeted indicators that are measurable and achievable in terms of input, output, outcome, and impact. Input indicators are specific and time-bound statements that quantify the employed financial, human, and material resources in the implementation of programs and projects within the CDA. Output indicators determine the extent to which the allocated inputs have led to the desired outputs. During the planned period, the level and magnitude of the changes that have occurred resulting from the execution of the CDA, shall be measured and the nature, form and substance of the outcome determined. The appropriate logical framework against which the CDA success would be measured and evaluated, and its impact on the lives of the people of Maryland would be assessed, shall be incorporated in the CDA M&E Framework to be developed at a later date.

8.5. Data Collection and Analysis

Data shall be gathered through surveys, case studies, interviews, observations, group assessments, questionnaires, expert and peer reviews, testimonials, photographs, videos, journal logs, document reviews, and analysis. The collected data shall be analyzed using simple statistical methods and tools. A robust feedback system will be established to provide the county with high-quality and timely monitoring and evaluation information on the progress of development projects and programs.

8.6. CDA Periodic Review Meetings

Several review meetings shall be held and be guided by a well-crafted agenda to ensure productive committee meetings. Specifically, monthly meetings shall be held by district committees, quarterly meetings by the National Steering Committee, semi-annual meetings to be held by the national steering committee. The agenda will not only provide directions but will also keep the meeting within the allocated time. All efforts shall be exerted for productivity of the project management meetings, by ensuring clarity, prioritizing the topics, and promoting active participation. The aim is to help participants stay focused and ensure practical discussions. Using a project management meeting agenda not only promotes efficiency but also fosters a sense of clarity and direction. It aids in keeping team members aligned, informed, and accountable for their respective roles, ultimately driving the project toward successful completion. Project committee review meetings serve as crucial checkpoints for project progress and decision-making.

8.7. CDA Reporting Frequency

In addition to the holding of review meetings, periodic reports will be prepared and submitted to the various steering committees. These reports shall allow all those involved to track the project's progress, identify risks early on, and manage the budget with greater visibility. Reporting increases visibility in all aspects of the project, including team performance, providing greater control for the project manager to act on progress, stagnation, regression, team performance, or quality of work. Project reports also serve as sources of learning. Reporting is a process that requires completeness and accuracy, promoting thoroughness and ensuring all aspects of the project are covered. This includes a discussion of progress against the work plan and the development of a revised work plan. For the purpose of this CDA, periodic M&E reports shall be generated along with annual progress reports. Generally, the reports will summarize efforts made that are related to mobilization, staffing, and progress on technical activities and results derived during the reporting period. The following reports shall be prepared:

1. **Monthly Report:** Summary of activities, tracking progress towards implementing the CDA and any immediate and rising issues.
2. **Quarterly Report:** Preliminary review and updates on the CDA's progress, outcomes, and emerging lessons and constraints. These reports indicate the status of implementation of the CDA delivery performance. Based on feedback obtained, priority will be given to the County Monitoring and Evaluation Units to ensure sufficient budget allocation for the effective and efficient delivery of M&E reports.
3. **Annual Report:** Comprehensive updates on the CDA's progress, outcomes, and emerging lessons and constraints. These reports indicate the status of implementation of the CDA delivery performance. Based on feedback obtained, priority will be given to the County Monitoring and Evaluation Units to ensure sufficient budget allocation for the effective and efficient delivery of M&E reports.
4. **Mid-term Evaluation Report:** Detailed review assessment of the CDA delivery status mid-way into its implementation stage with focus on assessing the progress of program implementation against planned activities. The mid-term report also covers an assessment of the progress made toward the achievement of program objectives and emerging lessons and constraints.
5. **End-Term Evaluation Report:** Detailed assessments of the CDA's impact, effectiveness, and sustainability. The final evaluation is focused on (a) assessing if the program met the stated goals and objectives; (b) the effectiveness of the technical approach; and (c) development of the overarching lessons learned from the project.

PART 9: ANNEXES

ANNEX I : County Council Resolution

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF MARYLAND COUNTY, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, VALIDATION AND APPROVAL OF THE COUNTY'S DEVELOPMENT AGENDA (CDA) UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA's ARREST AGENDA FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT (AAID) INITIATIVE

WHEREAS, the Government of Liberia has supported the counties in crafting the 2025 - 2029 County Development Agenda (CDAs), which foster the development of Liberia's 15 counties;

WHEREAS this CDA is tailored to Maryland County's needs, outlining development priorities that are viable economically, socially, and environmentally;

WHEREAS, a participatory approach involving consultations with various stakeholders, including students, youth leaders, business communities, women's organizations, individuals with special needs, and local leaders, across different districts in the County;

WHEREAS, in consideration of the above, the Government of the Republic of Liberia will allot an appropriate budget as well as explore alternate funding sources to implement the **County Development Agenda (CDA)** to advance the development of Maryland;

WHEREAS, in compliance with the Local Government Act of 2017/2018, participants comprising citizens from all parts of Maryland County headed by the County Superintendent, Hon. Henry B. Cole, Jr requested the County Council of Maryland County to convene in the city of Harper, Maryland County on November 13–14, 2024 to approve the Maryland County 2025 - 2029 CDAs;

WHEREAS, in recognition of the Four (4 Statutory Districts of Maryland County represented by Fifty Two (52) accredited delegates, including Members of the Maryland County Council, four (4) senior members of the County Administration, Seventh Statutory District Superintendents, representatives of the Youth, Woman, CBOs, CSOs, City Mayor, People with disability and Heads of Line Ministries, Agencies and Commissions (MACs) operating within the County attended a validation session to validate the 2025 – 2029 Maryland County County Development Agenda (CDA);

WHEREAS, the County Development Agenda Validation session, in its sitting on November 13–14, 2024 in the city of Harper, unanimously endorsed the following facilitators in line with best practices for the validation:

1. Shad David: Lead Facilitator, MFDP
2. Dr. Vafolay M. Tulay: ADMA, Lead Consultant
3. Mr. Fred Hinneh Bartoe: Co-Facilitator and CDO of Maryland County,MIA
4. Mr. Abraham B. Jackson: City Mayor of Harper
5. Mr. Focus Wilson: Senior Rapporteur
6. Mr. Moses N. Doe: Rapporteur
7. Samsum Weah: Rapporteur
8. Mr, Philip Toe-Member: Rapporteur
9. Mr. Roselvert S. Doe: Rapporteur
10. Kunue B Massally: Facilitator, MFDP
11. Hawa Sonnie: MIA
12. Levi G.V. Yousee: MPW
13. Klon Wah: MOG CSP
14. Jerome K. Dligler : Agriculture
15. Hendrix Saah: Consultant Green Life

WHEREAS, the Superintendent, Hon. Henry B. Cole, Jr, presented a detailed overview of the County, outlining the prospects and challenges of the County Administration, stressing the need to support the government agenda and expressing thanks and appreciation to the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning as lead government agency for the validation process;

WHEREAS, the Legislative Caucus, represented by its Chairman Hon, P. Mike Jurry with spotlights on the Local Government Acts, appealed to all participants to support the Government headed by H. E. Joseph Nyumah Boakai.

WHEREAS, All participants at the CDA Validation Session unanimously agreed that the following 25 projects shall constitute the best priority projects to propel the development of Maryland County for a five (5) years period: 2025 to 2029:

ADOPTED ON THIS DAY 14th OF NOVEMBER 2024
in the city of Harper, Maryland County, Republic of Liberia.

Signed by:

Names of Council Members	Signatures
1. Mr. Thomas B. Mawolo	14/11/24
2. Chief Nelson Neal	11-14-2024
3. Joseph T. K Barfeh	14/11/2024
4. Mrs. Phelicia Towalid	11-14-2024
5. Mr. Melvin T. Weah	11-14-24
6. Ms. Beatrice Siryeh	14/11-2024
7. MS Annie Sleweon	14/11/24
8. Thomas Nyemah	14/11/24
9. Chief Gray Elliott	

ANNEX II : Climate Change Trends and Circumstances in Maryland

Climate Change Circumstances

Annual Average Mean Surface Air Temperature in Maryland, 1901 - 2022

The observed annual average mean surface air temperature of the county from the year 1901 to 2022 is presented in two categories: the annual mean temperature and the 5-year smooth

temperature. From the early 1900s to the mid-1920s, the annual mean temperature remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 25.12 and 25.69 degrees Celsius. However, from the late 1920s to the early 1940s, there was a slight decrease in the temperature, with the lowest point reaching 24.77 degrees Celsius in 1928. The temperature then gradually increased from the 1940s to the 1960s, reaching a peak of 25.49 degrees Celsius in 1969.

In the 1970s, there was a noticeable decrease in the annual mean temperature, with the lowest point occurring in 1971 at 24.62 degrees Celsius. However, from the late 1980s to the early 2000s, there was a significant increase in the temperature, reaching a peak of 26.04 degrees Celsius in 1998.

From the early 2000s to the present, the temperature has remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 25.31 and 25.96 degrees Celsius. The most recent data point in 2022 shows a decrease in the temperature to 25.45 degrees Celsius. The 5-year smooth temperature line provides a smoother representation of the temperature trends over time.

Observed Annual Precipitation of Maryland County, 1901 – 2022, Figure 8: data allows recognition of the patterns and trends in rainfall over the past century.

The observed annual precipitation from 1901 to 2022 in Maryland County exhibits both fluctuations and smooth trends in rainfall patterns. The period from 1920 to 1927 experienced substantial rainfall, reaching its peak in 1927. The annual mean precipitation remained relatively stable from the mid-1930s to the early 1940s, with a spike in 1943. A gradual decline in rainfall was observed in the late 1940s to early 1950s, followed by a significant increase until 1955. From the late 1950s to the mid-1960s, the annual mean precipitation remained relatively stable, and a noticeable decline occurred from the late 1960s to the early 1970s. There was a slight increase in precipitation from the mid-1970s to the early 1980s, followed by stability until the mid-1990s. Another notable increase occurred from the late 1990s to the early 2000s, with a peak in 2010. Since then, there has been a gradual decline in annual mean precipitation.

The 5-year smooth trend line generally follows the fluctuations in annual mean precipitation, providing a clearer understanding of long-term trends.

Climate Change Hazards Identified at the Districts and County Levels Consultations

- **River and urban flood:** heavy rainfall and upstream water flow
- **Coastal flood:** high tides, storm surges, sea-level rise damage to landing sites for boats and canoes
- **Landslide:** hilly terrains and areas with deforestation and prone to movement of earth materials
- **Wildfire:** prolonged dry periods and high temperatures leading to uncontrollable fires during the dry spells.
- **Extreme heat:** extreme high temperature causing heat stress.

Recommended Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Actions

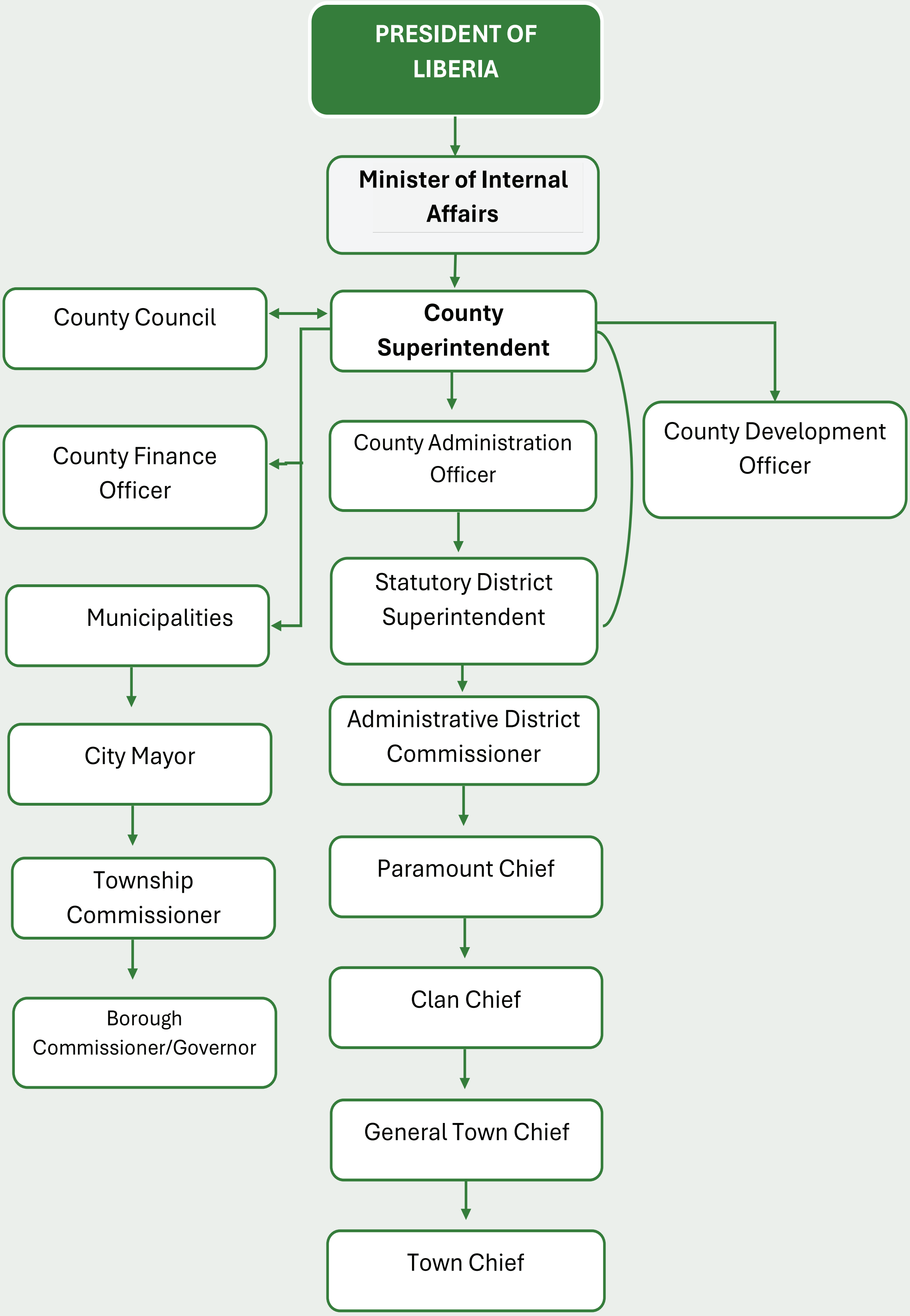
- Consider the development of a county physical zoning plan to ensure informed land use mapping, siting of landfills, cemeteries, industrial zones, recreation areas, etc.
- Establish county-level disaster emergency preparedness and response structure
- Ensure project planning decisions, project design, and construction methods take into account the level of river flood, wildfire hazards, and storms
- Put in place flood management infrastructure; and adequate drainage systems
- Invest in coastal defenses beginning with continuing and promoting cultural practices of planting coconut orchards along the beach and restricting beach sand mining;
- Consider a feasibility study for tourism investment at Wedabo Beach in Grand Cess-Wedabo District
- Develop strategies for efficient water resource management, including rainwater harvesting, water conservation practices, and the construction of small-scale water storage systems
- Prioritize sustainable land management

ANNEX III : Detailed Socio-Economic Situation in Maryland County

Factors	Descriptions / Definitions	County		National
		Female	Male	National
1. Population				
Population	The total number of people.	85,720 49.7%	86,867 50.3%	5,250, 187 100%
2. Employment				
Employment Rate	The proportion of working-age persons employed in an economy	34,129 21.8%		1,307,872 27.8%
Agricultural Employment Rate	The percentage of households engaged in agriculture	26.6%		30.2%
Informal Employment Rate	The percentage of the workforce outside of the formal employment system	74.8%		79.9%
Vulnerable Employment Rate	The percentage of the workforce employed on their own accounts or working as a contributing family worker for either the family farm or the household's non-agricultural business.	75.4%		79.5%
Absolute Poverty Rate	The percentage of the population who cannot meet their minimum food and non-food needs	84%		50.9%
Extreme Poverty Rate	The percentage of the population whose total food and non-food consumption fall below the minimum food requirements of 2400 kilo-calories per day	47.5%		16.5%
Food Poverty Rate	The percentage of the population who cannot meet their basic food needs. The minimum benchmark for those food needs is established through a food poverty line.	71.5%		39.1%
3. Education				
Literacy Rate	The percentage of the population (5 years and above) who cannot read and write a simple sentence in any language	81,701 60.7%		2,447,612 59.9%
Illiteracy Rate	The percentage of the population (5 years and above) who can read and write simple English in any language and over 5 years.	52,803 39.3%		1,638,019 40.1%
High School Completion Rate	Percentage of students who complete upper basic and secondary education / senior secondary education	36,711 22.3%		1,147,629 23.2%
Primary School Completion Rate	Percentage of students who completed lower basic secondary education	43,878 26.7%		1,189,418 24%

Factors	Descriptions / Definitions	County		National
		Female	Male	National
TVET	Number of students who complete a Technical / Vocational Education and Training (TVET) program	N/A		11,871
College / University	Number of enrolled students who completed a four-year college	4,969 3.1		215,766 4.3%
4. Health				
Fertility	The average number of children born to women during their reproductive years	4.2		4.2
% of Children who received all basic vaccination	The percentage of children who took all the vaccines needed from 0 – 1 year old.	44%		51%
% of children who received all age-appropriate vaccinations	The percentage of children who received all the vaccines needed from 0 – 5 years old	38%		39%
Access to Insecticide Nets	The percentage of the population that has access to treated mosquito nets.	43%		40%
% Hospital Births	The percentage of births in a medical facility.	80%		80%
% of birth assisted by a skilled health provider	The percentage of women, who give birth outside of a health center but assisted by a health professional, nurse, or doctor	84%		84%
Maternal Mortality	The number of maternal deaths divided by the number of live births multiplied by 100,000	997		854 deaths per 100,000 births
Infant Mortality	The probability of an infant dying between births and age one. This is expressed per 1,000 live births	72		63 deaths per 1000 births
Under-5 Mortality	The probability of a child dying between birth and exact age of five. The rate is expressed per 1,000 children.	102		93 deaths per every 1000 births
5. Sex and Gender Based (SGB)				
Household Heads Distribution	Percentage of households headed by either gender	15,251 41%	21,980 59%	1,1,87,514 100 %
Domestic Violence Rate	Percentage of the female population that experienced physical or mental abuse.	69%		55%
Sexual Based Violence Rate	Percentage of the female population that experienced physical or mental abuse. That experienced physical and sexual abuse	9%		9%
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	The percentage of women who practiced FGM	3%		38%

ANNEX IV : County Government Organogram



ANNEX V : Importance of the LGA and Relevant Provisions for Strengthening Local Governance

While upholding the constitutional affirmation that Liberia is a unitary state, the Local Government Act of 2018 establishes a framework for local governance in Liberia. The Act empowers local authorities to manage their affairs, deliver services, and engage citizens in the democratic process, ultimately aiming to foster development and improve the quality of life for all Liberians. The 2018 Act provides a framework for citizens' participation in governance and ensures more equitable decision-making regarding natural resources. More importantly, the Act promotes local ownership and accountability for decisions affecting communities. This legislation empowers citizens to tackle long-standing socio-political issues, including inequality and poverty.

Powers of Local Governments in Liberia

The 2018 Act provides for the devolution of certain administrative, fiscal and political powers from national to local governments. Among the specific powers delegated to local governments by the Act are:

Local Administration: Responsible for the overall management and development of their respective jurisdictions, including counties, cities, and districts.

Service Delivery: Manage and deliver essential services such as education, healthcare, roads, and utilities, tailored to the specific needs of their communities.

Revenue Generation: Authority to raise local revenues and manage budgets to support their operations and development initiatives.

Local Policy Implementation: Tasked with implementing national policies at the local level and formulating local policies and laws that align with national legislation.

Monitoring and Oversight: Monitor the performance of institutions providing services in their areas and oversee the implementation of central government projects.

Community Representation: Represent local interests in dealings with the central government and advocate for the needs and concerns of their communities.

Promotion of Good Governance: Expected to promote good governance practices, including transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in local administration.

Local governments accordingly play crucial roles in development, impacting various aspects of community and regional growth. Local governments serve as the primary interface between citizens and the state, facilitating access to essential services and fostering community engagement. This level of governance can bring the government closer to the governed and facilitate service provision for the people. It can facilitate inclusion and provides mechanisms for the engagement of the citizenry in the process of socio-political and economic development. Among the key roles and impacts of local governments are:

1. **Economic Development:** Local governments can stimulate economic growth by creating favorable conditions for businesses, providing infrastructure, and offering incentives for investment. They often collaborate with private and civic sectors to boost local economies.
2. **Community Development:** By engaging with residents and encouraging community participation, local governments can address local needs more effectively. This includes improving public services, building small-scale infrastructure, and enhancing livelihoods.
3. **Sustainable Development:** Local governments are pivotal in implementing policies to combat climate change and promote sustainability. They develop and enforce regulations that protect the environment and promote sustainable practices.

4. **Social Welfare:** Local governments often manage social services such as healthcare, education, and housing. By tailoring these services to the specific needs of their communities, they can improve overall quality of life.
5. **Public Participation:** Encouraging citizen involvement in decision-making processes helps ensure that development projects meet the actual needs of the community. This participatory approach can lead to more effective and accepted policies.

This localized approach not only empowers communities to participate in decision-making processes but also strengthens the social contract between the state and its citizens, promoting accountability and transparency. Furthermore, local governments can become instrumental in mobilizing domestic resources, as evidenced by the revenue generated from CSCs, which can be reinvested into local development initiatives. By implementing policies such as the Revenue Sharing Act, local governments can retain a portion of generated revenues, ensuring that resources are allocated to meet the specific needs of their communities. Additionally, local governments can utilize their power to generate revenue. Ultimately, the effectiveness of local governance is vital for achieving sustainable development, as it fosters inclusive participation, enhances service delivery, and promotes local economic growth, all of which are essential for building resilient and thriving communities.

Relevant Provisions

Liberia has made significant progress on local governance and putting in place a legal foundation for decentralization over the last few years. The establishment of County Councils (CCs) and the support for building local government capacities are aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of local governance and ensuring that local authorities can fulfill their responsibilities. The LGA established a clearer pathway for decentralization in Liberia, reinforcing the nation's commitment to local governance. Other actions include the formation of the Inter-ministerial Committee on Decentralization (IMCD) to address current and emerging challenges.

While there is progress in the implementation of Liberia's Local Government Act), several key provisions are necessary to strengthen the performance of local governments and decentralization in Liberia. These provisions are critical to ensuring a more decentralized, inclusive, and accountable system of local governance in Liberia, with increased capacity for local development planning and fiscal management. Synthesis of the significance and major contributions of these key provisions are as follows:

1. **Establishment of Local Government Structures:** The effectiveness of the decentralization and local governance agenda requires effective structures at the local level to drive policy formulation and implementation, as well as to coordinate with central government while also serving he needs of the constituents. In this regard, it is imperative that the organs of the local government act be established and empowered for delivery. The bodies to be created for each county include Constitution of County Councils, Sub-County Advisory Councils, County Administrations, District Administrations, Chiefdom Administrations, Clan Administrations, Town Administrations, and Municipal Councils and Administrations.

2. **Fiscal Decentralization:** Another area where the local governance must be strengthened is power to tax and manage resources. Amending the Public Financial Management Law to enable fiscal decentralization is key. There has been some progress in this area as local governments are now allowed to keep 40% of the revenue collected through the County Service Centers. However, there will be a need to go beyond this to ensure true fiscal decentralization empowering local governments with the authority to levy, collect and manage their own tax revenues. To ensure success, it will be important to establish a local government fiscal and financial management framework, constitute a local government fiscal board, organize county and municipal finance offices, as well as develop a framework for mobilizing and coordinating external resources. In short, there is a need for instruments to strengthen the capacity of local government with respect to financing.

3. **Development Planning and Management:** Local governments are critical elements of the development process. It is the level of governance that is closer to the people and the first level of service delivery. As such, it is important that they have the capacity for development planning and management, including ensuring that each has a development planning and management unit with the capacity for formulating and implementing county economic development plans, including local government development agendas at the county and municipal levels. This will require robust programs to build and strengthen the capacity of local governments in the areas of strategy formulation, policy making and implementation, as well as planning. A key element in the process of upgrading the capabilities of local governments will include proper organization of local governments with the establishment of critical departments for Planning, Revenue and Budget; Administration and Personnel; and Health and Social Welfare at the county level.

4. **Inclusiveness and Accountability:** The effectiveness of the local governments in Liberia over the long term will depend on their ability to be inclusive and to be accountable. It will be necessary to ensure that local government structures and decision-making include women, youths, and people with disabilities. This will require a policy framework to ensure inclusivity, including developing gender policies at the county level. Also, transparency and accountability are key to ensuring successful prosecution of the development agenda at the local level. There must be transparency and accountability in decision-making and in local government management and operations.

ANNEX VI : Minimum Required Funding to Execute the CDA (in Thousands of US$)

Pillar, Strategic Policy and Program	Total	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION:	17,596	1,144	2,510	3,928	6,089	3,925
Strategic Policy 3: Commerce and Industry	3,578	143	594	969	1,022	850
Program 6: Economic Diversification and Value Addition	1,431	67	237	395	382	350
Program 7: Enabling Business Environment	2,147	76	357	574	640	500
Strategic Policy 4: Agriculture and Fisheries	9,468	301	1,366	2,059	3,017	2,725
Program 8: Food and Cash Crop Production	3,534	115	556	843	1,020	1,000
Program 9: Livestock and Poultry Production	3,165	90	420	705	1,050	900
Program 10: Fish Production	2,769	96	390	511	947	825
Strategic Policy 5 Mineral Resource Management	800	400	100	150	100	50
Program 11: Extractive Industry	800	400	100	150	100	50
Strategic Policy 6: Tourism, Culture and Creative Economy	3,750	300	450	750	1,950	300
Program 12: Tourism Development, Branding and Marketing	3,100	200	300	600	1,800	200
Program: 13 Culture and Creative Economy	650	100	150	150	150	100
INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT	18,120	4,230	7,700	3,200	1,690	1,300
Strategic Policy 7: Roads and Basic Infrastructure	14,510	4,010	6,500	2,400	900	700
Program 14: Road Network and Safety	14,510	4,010	6,500	2,400	900	700
Strategic Policy 8: Transport and Logistics	640	50	300	100	90	100
Program 15: Transport Services and Safety	640	50	300	100	90	100
Strategic Policy 9: Water and Sewage	570	70	200	100	100	100
Program 16: Water Resource and Sewage Management	570	70	200	100	100	100
Strategic Policy 10: Energy	450	50	100	100	100	100
Program 17: Energy Resource Development and Management	450	50	100	100	100	100
Strategic Policy 11: Communication Technologies and Digital Economy	800	50	200	200	250	100
Program 20: National ICT Eco-System and Digital Societies	800	50	200	200	250	100
Strategic Policy 12: Housing Development	1,150	-	400	300	250	200
Program 21: Modern and Affordable Housing Opportunities for All	1,075	100	400	300	75	200
RULE OF LAW	1,900	100	400	600	500	300
Strategic Policy 13: Justice and Human Rights	950	50	200	300	200	200
Program 22: Justice Policy Reform and Decentralization	950	50	200	300	200	200
Strategic Policy 14: Public Safety and National Defence	950	50	200	300	300	100
Program 24: Public Safety Readiness	950	50	200	300	300	100
GOVERNANCE AND ANTI-CORRUPTION	1,350	175	275	300	350	250

Pillar, Strategic Policy and Program	Total	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Strategic Policy 15: Transparency and Accountability	560	60	100	150	150	100
Program 27: Sustainable Democratic Governance Reform	365	60	80	75	100	50
Strategic Policy 16: Public Administration	790	115	175	150	200	150
Program 28: Land Governance and Management	325	50	75	50	100	50
Program 29: Public Service Decentralization	240	40	50	50	50	50
Program 30: Peace and Reconciliation	225	25	50	50	50	50
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	2,350	300	472	590	627	361
Strategic Policy 18: Climate Change	2,350	300	472	590	627	361
Program 33: Environmental Governance	223	50	20	65	40	48
Program 34: Forestry, Ecosystem Conservation and Restoration	652	50	102	175	212	113
Program 35: Renewable Energy	1,075	150	250	250	275	150
Program 36: Solid Waste Management	400	50	100	100	100	50
HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT	12,234	1,181	2,610	3,625	3,058	1,760
Strategic Policy 19: Education	4,005	400	925	1,075	855	750
Program 37: Educational Institution Management	625	125	175	125	100	100
Program 38: Teacher Capacity	705	75	150	175	155	150
Program 39: School Facilities	1,325	100	250	375	300	300
Program 40: Student Learning Capacity	1,350	100	350	400	300	200
Strategic Policy 20: Health System	6,059	506	1,250	2,020	1,553	730
Program 43: Health Sector Reform	2,309	206	500	520	653	430
Program 44: Health Services	3,750	300	750	1,500	900	300
Strategic Policy 21: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	295	50	60	55	100	30
Program 46: Sanitation and Hygiene	295	50	60	55	100	30
Strategic Policy 22: Inclusive Social Development	1,175	175	225	275	50	150
Program 48: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence	375	50	50	75	150	50
Program 49: Inclusive Integrated Social Protection and Welfare Services	400	75	75	100	100	50
Program 50: Economic Empowerment of Women and Vulnerable Groups	400	50	100	100	100	50
Strategic Policy 23: Youth Development	700	50	150	200	200	100
Program 51: Inclusive Youth Empowerment	700	50	150	00	200	100
Grand Total	53,550	7,130	13,967	12,243	12,314	7,896

MARYLAND COUNTY

County Development Agenda (CDA)

2025-2029