

General Data Dissemination System, (GDDS phase 2)

Socio-Demographic Statistics Project for Anglophone Africa: Provision of technical assistance as the expert for the topic Management of Statistical Systems

Second Mission to Liberia: 16 to 27 June, 2008

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Contents

PART 1 -INTRODUCTION:	2
1. Background	2
2 Terms of Reference	2
3 Other Donors involved.....	3
4 Organisation of Mission	3
PART 2 – MAIN REPORT.....	3
1 Review of recommendation from January 2008 mission	3
2 Task 1 - County Statistics Units	5
3 Task 2 - New HQ Building for LISGIS.....	9
4 Task 3 - NSDS.....	10
5 Task 4 - Strengthening the NSS	11
6 Development of Economic Statistics.....	11
7 Recommendations	12
8 Next Actions.....	14
ANNEX 1 – Acronyms and Abbreviations.....	15
ANNEX 2 – List of Persons Met.....	16
ANNEX 3 – Draft MOU with Ministry of Agriculture.....	17

PART 1 -INTRODUCTION:

1. Background

The Liberia Statistical System (referred to as NSS in this report) and the Liberia Statistics Office (LISGIS) have made a good start towards re-establishing a functional statistical system.

The first census of population for 24 years was conducted in March 2008 and provisional results published on 20 June 2008 (during the mission). Prior to this, two major household surveys were conducted and the results fed into the PRS published in April 2008. Economic statistics are still a major gap (mainly obtained from the Central Bank at present) and some of the statistics units of government ministries are starting to produce usable statistics (e.g health and education). The main problems are a lack of funds, lack of trained statistical staff; and lack of infrastructure including a system of coordination and mutual support for official statistics.

A National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) is being developed with funding from the AfDB, which will address all of these issues. The first draft of the NSDS report was produced in March 2008 and a third draft was handed to the GDDS mission consultant on arrival. The GDDS mission was asked to assist with production of a final draft.

2 Terms of Reference

The three priorities originally identified by Liberia for the three GDDS management missions were:

- Priority 1 Organisation of the national statistical system
- Priority 2 National Statistical Strategy
- Priority 3 Capacity building and training

The specific objectives for mission 2 were agreed with the DG in advance as follows:

Task 1 – Decentralisation

This is a part of original priority 1

The expert will hold meetings with the relevant officials in LISGIS and government and develop the ideas into a costed project proposal and make suggestions on from where the funds might be sourced to implement the proposal. A visit to one or more of the countries will be arranged by LISGIS as part of this task. The tasks and staff and other resources requirements of a system of decentralized offices for LISGIS will be defined.

Task 2 – New Home for LISGIS

This is a part of original priority 1

The consultant will examine the options and costs of construction of a new home for LISGIS head office and will also examine alternatives such as leasing and reconstruction of an existing building.

Task 3 – Draft NSDS

This is a part of original priority 2

The consultant will carefully review the draft NSDS draft document and insert comments using the tracking notes for discussion and consideration by LISGIS during the mission.

Task 4 – Documenting and strengthening LISGIS and Statistics Unit links

This is a part of original priority 1, but will only be undertaken insofar as time permits. Tasks 1, 2 and 3 are the agreed priorities for this second mission.

One of the stronger and more cooperative statistics units of ministries (sectors within the NSDS terminology) will be chosen by LISGIS as a prototype for development of a Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement (MOU).

The following information will be collected and assessed for this Ministry:

- Identification of statistical links with other agencies and with policy makers
- Description of statistical activities (main indicators required, main concepts used, kinds of data collection methods, description of statistical domains).
- Number of staff and their academic/professional qualifications
- Statistical budget
- NSDS strategy and work plan
- Statistical data flows between LISGIS and the Units

Discussions will be held with senior staff responsible for the statistics unit to identify what support and assistance they need from LISGIS and what data and assistance LISGIS needs from them. An implementation plan to achieve their NSDS strategic objectives would also be discussed.

On the basis of these discussions, a prototype “Memorandum of Understanding” or “Memorandum of Agreement” between the selected (statistical) government unit and LISGIS would be drafted. The new Statistics Council proposed in the draft NSDS would probably need to endorse or agree such MOU’s for them to be fully effective.

3 Other Donors involved.

AfDB have funded the NSDS (to February 2008) and UNDP are funding NIMAC (which provides support to LISGIS). Many agencies support particular statistical surveys and the census, but it is not clear at this stage who will assist with the funding of the NSDS implementation and M&E unit.

4 Organisation of Mission

Both the GDDS coordinator and the NSDS coordinator were absent from head office during my mission, working on the Census post enumeration survey. A young graduate from the socioal statistics team (Ohyndis Slewern) was therefore appointed to work with me during the mission. I held meetings with the DG on the first day and on several other occasions, even though he was still pre-occupied with the recent Census of Population.

A visit to Bong County where one of the first CSU’s are planned was conducted on Friday 20 June after first checking with the local security office of the WB. The Economics team of the WB were briefed on my visit on 23 June 2008.

PART 2 – MAIN REPORT

1 Review of recommendation from January 2008 mission

R1 The current NSDS process will be completed in February 2008. This version should be the basis for an extended consultation period should to June 2008. This would allow a 3-month consultation phase on the February 2008 draft and a 2-month finalisation phase. A high level

statistical awareness-raising seminar is proposed as part of the launch of the final NSDS. This might usefully be linked to the planned publication date and events for the final PRSP.

The first draft was produced in March 2008 and the drafting process has been extended to July 2008. A launch event is now planned for July 2008 after the Cabinet has approved the final draft.

R2 The Statistics Act should be amended to strengthen the coordination role of LISGIS and narrow its functions to statistics only.¹ Mapping of statistical information using GIS systems would be one such statistical activity, but not the coordination of all spatial data. A change of name for the Institute would be appropriate at the same time, providing an opportunity for the office to re-launch itself using the NSDS as its core business plan.

R3 Some other changes to the Statistics Act are also proposed, including being less specific about the organisational structure and statistical outputs. An expert on statistical legislation and UN recommended best practice should be asked to undertake a mission under the GDDS program.

The NSDS draft endorses these recommendations, but no further action has yet been taken.

R4 NIMAC provide logistic and technical support to LISGIS and the NSS but report to UNDP and have their own priorities. NIMAC will be phased out over the next 2 years and their work integrated within LISGIS. In the short term direct and better value support from them would be facilitated by the temporary loan of staff members to LISGIS to undertake the following priority functions:

- a. Professional and administrative support to the DG for NSS coordination and NSDS implementation.*
- b. Development and continuous updating the LISGIS website (and integrating relevant parts of their own website with it).*
- c. Support to the DG to plan and set up a network of local statistical data collection offices at the county level (15 counties in Liberia)*

NIMAC continue to provide support for LISGIS and have loaned one member of IT staff to work within the LISGIS office. They are also planning assistance with the establishment of CSUs.

R5 A revised proposal for grant funding from the WB TFSCB should be submitted by LISGIS to cover: an extended consultation phase for the NSDS; implementation of the NSS aspects of the NSDS; and the training and development of staff. Further support may be needed from the trust fund at a later date.

A revised proposal to TFSCP will be submitted once the NSDS is finalised.

R6 LISGIS should explore with Ministries the pooling of county based data collection staff and support infrastructure, or even the centralisation of all such local activities under the new proposed LISGIS County Statistics Offices. A professional statistical function at sub-national level is not a priority until such time as more political and policy autonomy is created below national level. The proposed County statistics offices should therefore be limited to non-professional data collection staff and associated logistics. However an office manager will be required.

Pooling of staff is not envisaged for the new CSUs, but coordination of work and mutual support arrangements at county level are envisaged.

¹ The Function of coordination of spatial referencing data under the Act could be transferred to the Cartography Unit of the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy. GIS statistical activities would continue at LISGIS.

R7 Staff training and development issues to be examined, as part of the second GDDS mission should include:

- a. A program consisting of a series of induction and in-service short courses for professional and non-professional staff of the NSS should be organised by LISGIS, but using expertise and resource persons from other organisations within LIBERIA as well as LISGIS. Topics to be covered would include statistical software; report writing; sampling as well as specific statistical topic areas such as the Census and National Accounts.*
- b. A modular in-service programme of qualifications in official statistics aimed at the staff of the NSS to be run by the University of Liberia. This would consist of a modified version of the existing Certificate (post high school); Diploma (2nd year) and at a later stage a Bachelors degree level programme (requiring the Diploma as an entry qualification).*
- c. Programs of staff interchange between LISGIS and other members of the NSS.*
- d. Attendance at international short training courses (e.g. IMF institute) and study visits to neighbouring countries.*

This was not part of the TOR for the second mission due to other LISGIS priorities at the present time. It will now be examined during mission 3.

2 Task 1 - County Statistics Units

Background

The final and published Liberia Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) commits LISGIS to establishing 15 county Statistics Units (CSUs). The end of the PRS planning period is June 2011, but the target date is the first half of this period (December 2010). Selected text from the PRS is reproduced below:

(P149) As Liberia moves towards decentralizing political authority, it is becoming increasingly important for county officials to have quality data at their disposal. This will begin during the PRS period through the generation of county-by-county reports based on county-disaggregated data emerging from line ministries and LISGIS survey instruments. This will be a collaborative effort of the LRDC Secretariat and LISGIS, with support from the UN's county-based Information Management Offices (IMOs), which will eventually evolve into County Statistics Units (CSUs).

(P151) Although just two County Statistics Units (CSUs) have been established to date (currently known as Information Management Offices or IMOs), the Field Supervisors, Senior Monitors and Database Clerks who will comprise these offices are already working in similar capacities in their respective counties. Field Supervisors are currently serving as data collection supervisors for UNHCR and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in each county. LISGIS will soon deploy County Statistics Officers to these Units in coordination with UNHCR/NRC and UNDP/NIMAC. Arrangements are being made between LISGIS and these partners to have the Senior Monitor and the Database Clerk (both NRC staff in the IMOs) to transition into LISGIS and to be an integral part of the data collection and management team within the county. Also, the Field Supervisor (currently in the IMO) will transition into supporting the Project Planning Unit within the County Superintendent's Office. This is envisaged to happen as soon as the infrastructure for these CSUs is ready.

(P153) CSUs (currently known as Information Management Offices or IMOs) are fully functioning in two counties. Seven more are scheduled to be fully operational by June 2008 and all 15 counties are slated to have CSUs by the end of 2008. The infrastructure for these

CSUs, including offices, computers, and staffing has funding through December 2008. Hence, for 2009 and beyond, it will be necessary to identify funding for IMO implementation to ensure the continued operation of the CSUs. LISGIS has planned a two-phased decentralization strategy. Initially it will move into seven existing IMOs and later transition into the remaining eight counties. NIMAC, in coordination with UNHCR and LISGIS, is finalising a funding strategy to support the staffing component of the initial seven CSUs in 2009.

(P154 – action list, target date July 2008) Establish and equip County Stats Units (CSUs) with a LISGIS County Statistics Officer in place in 7 Counties initially and in the rest of the counties within the first half of the PRS period.

County Development Councils have been appointed by the national government, and they will have a small County Development Fund to allocate locally. A bill to establish electoral devolution to county level has been drafted, but is not envisaged that it will be implemented until well after the PRS period. A Superintendent appointed by the President administers each county. Line ministries each have staff based in the counties and the Superintendent coordinates their work via a County Development Committee This structure is supported by Technical Assistance and funding by UNDP.

Discussions with UNHCR and Bong County IMO (Gbarnga town)

Since the end of war, field staff funded by UNHCR, but administered and employed by the Norwegian Refugee Council, have conducted humanitarian monitoring. Currently 250 Monitors are employed earning \$80 per month plus 15 Supervisors and 15 database managers (1 per county). I was told that these 250 locally based staff cover every village/community in Liberia.² The supervisors and database managers worked until recently from the 7 UNHCR local field offices and covered the 15 counties from there.

The humanitarian monitoring data consist of three forms:

- Incident report (one per incident but reported monthly). These contain confidential information about each incident including child protection; violence against women and land disputes. Statistics are produced monthly and the raw data are now passed to the Ministry of Gender and Welfare and to other official government agencies for follow up as appropriate.
- Returnees list (monthly), these reports contain the names of each returnee, and is now passed to the official government agency concerned with resettlement. Again statistics are produced monthly.
- Community facilities (6 monthly). Based in interviews with selected community residents the form contains information on population estimates by age and sex (but accuracy and source is not clear); facilities available to the community such as water electricity etc. plus access to markets and education and health facilities

Two of these humanitarian monitoring units were given enlarged responsibilities in May 2007 and renamed Information Monitoring Units (IMOs). Five further IMOs were created in May 2008, with the intention to expand to 15 in the future when office facilities become available. The wider IMO tasks include assembling all available data for the County and briefing and supporting the new PRS related structure at County level, described in the previous section. They therefore physically

² With a Liberian population of 3.5 million this would mean each monitor covering several villages/towns adding to 140,000 people (on average).

moved office from UNHCR to the County Administrative Buildings, where the County superintendent and most government ministries are based.

LISGIS survey field work is currently organised from Monrovia, but they employ locally based field staff on a temporary basis and the IMO staff and monitors have often been involved with these data collection activities. Involvement with LISGIS has now expanded due to the need to compile more comprehensive databases of statistics at County level.

Each database manager has only one stand-alone desktop computer and during the visit to Bong County his PC was not operational. They have no electronic links or Internet access and therefore the entered data are physically carried to Monrovia each month.

UNHCR funding for the monitoring program terminated this year. However two further years of financial support are being provided by UNDP as part of the County Support Team programme. After that is envisaged that LISGIS or other GOL agencies would take over the work. A transition plan for the IMOs to convert to CSUs under LISGIS, as envisaged in the PRS, is in preparation.

Salaries of the IMO staff are higher than the corresponding grades at LISGIS (which pays government rates). Unless the LISGIS salaries are increased substantially, there would be a need to pay an additional allowance to the new CSU staff, otherwise existing key IMO staff might not accept the new jobs on offer. NIMAC have a funding proposal currently with the EU, part of which would provide for such allowances.

The Bong County superintendent emphasised the need for authoritative statistical briefing for himself, the new county Development Committee and the County Development Council. He did not think there would be an elected council at County level before 2010, but the new structure needed professional statistical input. He could probably house the new CSU in the administrative building temporarily, but it was already overcrowded and a new building (on the same site) should be planned for the medium term.

The IMO supervisor and the UN County Coordinator emphasised the need for training and awareness raising on the importance of statistics, what was available and how to use and present the data. This was particularly important for the new planning officer, who should be co-located with the IMO to assist his/her training and development and to ensure access to relevant data.

The county coordinator produces a 6 monthly county information pack (using data supplied by the IMO). Responsibility for this report needs to be handed over to the new CSUs or someone else within the county government structure.

Options

There is a very wide range of differing sub-national structures and practices for the organisation of a national statistical office around the world. Two common themes are that household survey data collection requires a local presence; and that the need for professional posts at sub-national level depends on the extent of devolution of political authority and budgets below the national level.

In the context of Liberia the following 4 options can be considered. Combinations of these options are also possible (e.g. 5 larger offices supporting 10 smaller LISGIS offices)

Option 1 – No sub-national LISGIS office

This is workable in a country of only 3½ million, especially if the road network is improved. Survey supervisors are sent out from head office and survey enumerators are recruited locally. A new unit is established at LISGIS head office to produce and disseminate county data and brief the County Superintendent and associated committees.

The advantages are that this would be the lowest cost option. Disadvantages are no local presence to assist the County administration and no links with other government agencies collecting data at the local level.

This option is however ruled out by the PRS commitment.

Option 2 - A LISGIS data collection office in 5 regions (groups of Counties) or all 15 Counties

An experienced survey supervisor and database manager would be appointed for each of the 15 Counties. They would recruit local survey enumerators (and if necessary temporary data entry staff) and provide a first stage quality check on the survey data before transmission to head office. These staff would also be trained to measure grid references for mapping purposes. A confidential computer link to head office would be essential to gain the full benefits of local data entry and processing. Each office would have a library of hard and soft copies of all LISGIS publications accessible to the local administration and to the general public.

As with option 1 a head office unit would produce and disseminate county data and brief the County Superintendent and associated committees

The advantages of this option are that a local LISGIS presence is established; data is disseminated at local level and data survey quality is improved. The disadvantage is higher cost than option 1 as with that option is that there is no direct local LISGIS support for the county development planning process.

Option 3 – A LISGIS office in 5 regions or 15 counties headed by a County Statistical Officer.

This is the option envisaged by NIMAC and UNHCR as a mainstreaming of the UN supported IMOs. A statistical briefing function would be added to the data collection and dissemination functions of option 2.

In addition to the 2 posts of option 2, a LISGIS County Statistical Officer (CSO) would be appointed to head the office. The CSO would be the staffed at the most senior non-professional post within LISGIS with sufficient training in statistics and induction at LISGIS head office to provide statistical briefing to the County Superintendent and the associated development committees. The six-monthly County Development Pack would be the main additional published output. Some professional support for the CSO staff would be required from LISGIS head office.

The advantages are a local LISGIS presence for statistical briefing and for representing LISGIS at the County level. LISGIS would also be well placed to support any future political devolution to county level.

Option 4 – A LISGIS office in 5 regions or 15 counties headed by a County Statistician.

The functions are the same as for option 3, but the head of the office is a professional statistician. The advantages are a higher-level capacity to support the county development agenda and undertake other LISGIS representative functions at County level.

The disadvantages are a higher cost and a concern that the skills of a professional statistician would not be fully utilised. Furthermore irrespective of cost, Liberia has a serious shortage of qualified professional official statisticians, and they may be more profitably employed at national level.

Conclusion

A variant of option 3 above seems to be best fitted to the current situation in Liberia, including the need to minimise additional costs and meet the commitments in the PRS. LISGIS County Statistical Units (CSU) would be established in all 15 Counties, but with initially only 5 of these being headed by a County Statistical Officer. Each CSO would be in charge of three CSU's and

would travel between them for meetings and local staff supervision. The number of additional CSO posts required (if any) would be evaluated after the first year or so of the new system.

The tasks and functions of the new CSUs would include the following:

- Direct supervision and quality control for all LISGIS data collection at County and district level (recruitment, training, field work, data entry, quality control etc.).
- Coordinate and support other statistical data collection activities at the county level;
- Dissemination of all available official statistics for Liberia and the counties (eg from census, CWIQ etc) by using hard copies, soft copies, LiberiaInfo or any other relevant tool for dissemination of statistics
- Coordinate dissemination of data collected at county level by other organisations; serve as clearing house for information at the county level; support information sharing with all relevant actors in the county (information board, county coordination meetings, county working groups etc.).
- Mapping update activities at county level: maintaining/ updating of county GIS database with support of GIS unit at LISGIS HQ;
- Maintaining/ updating the population, household and business registers (sampling frame) for the county.
- To brief and assist the M&E requirements for the PRS and the FSNMS (Food security and nutrition monitoring system) at county level. Including production of a comprehensive 6 monthly data-pack.
- Provide technical trainings and support to the line ministries and county administration in the area of statistics and information management
- Continue on as temporary basis with protection monitoring in the communities and plan hand over to responsible Ministries and Agencies. In that way insure that review committee for referral and follow up of protection cases (GBV, Child protection etc.) is operational- Maintain the simple database for tracking of the protection cases · Compile statistics and information on GBV and other protection cases

3 Task 2 - New HQ Building for LISGIS

Background

The existing LISGIS building at Tubman Boulevard, Sinkor, Monrovia is in very poor condition and overcrowded. There are 107 permanent staff and many extra temporary staff crowded into a floor area of about 1,600 square meters of floor space. Census forms (in locked boxes) and furniture are stored in the corridors and on the stairs.

It is on a short-term 5-year lease from a private landlord, and although this can be extended there is no change of the owner renovating the building.

An additional building with about 400 square meters of floor space has also been acquired on a short-term lease to house an overflow of staff and to create a training room. This is just 3 minutes walk across the road from the main office. Funds to renovate this to habitable standard are being sought.

Options

Three basic options for the future can be considered in order of cost. Their advantages and disadvantages are set out in the following table. Possible sites for the new build option have been identified at the new University Campus (Fendel) and at Bensonville, both of which are less than 1 hour's drive from central Monrovia.

	OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION3
Summary of option	Patch up the existing buildings and extend the leases for another 5 years	Renovate an existing unused government owned building in central Monrovia	New build on a site out of the city (40 minutes drive time)
Likely capital cost (guess only)	\$200,000	£2,000,000	\$4,000,000
Advantages	Low cost. Staff near to Ministries Keeps options open for a move to the new Capital City (if that goes ahead).	Cheaper than new build. Staff near to Ministries for better informal contact. More space. Better office facilities. Permanent home for LISGIS.	Highest quality office facilities. More space. Own accommodation (for training field staff) and catering on site Permanent home for LISGIS.
Disadvantages	Continuing poor quality office facilities Overcrowding Short lease does not justify extra improvements	Field staff on training seminars must stay in private guest hoses. Suitable building not yet identified, and there is a shortage of government owned properties in central Monrovia.	High cost. Travel time to Monrovia meetings. (40-50 minutes each way). Lower level of informal contact with Ministry staff.

4 Task 3 - NSDS

The mission provided drafting suggestions on the third draft and worked on the NSDS costs. A short presentation was also prepared for the DG to present the NSDS to the Economic Reconstruction Committee (ERC) chaired by the Minister of Finance. This committee is part of the PRS monitoring and evaluation structure.

The initial bids from LISGIS and ministry statistics functions added to \$77m over 5 years, which was considered too high. Policy officials in government suggested a reduced top-down fig of \$16m, but this was clearly inadequate and excluding ongoing regular funding. The Mission prepared a new bottom up costing of \$48m with assistance from the DG and other the local NSDS consultant.

External funding will be required for the statistics programme of the NSDS, for training and development of staff and for setting up the implementation, monitoring and evaluation team within LISGIS. One option might be a bid to the World Bank Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building (draft provided during my last mission in January).

The GDDS project may also be able and willing to fund a study tour to a neighbouring country, which is also developing its NSS and or working on a NSDS. Sierra Leone was suggested as a possibility as they a similar recent history of recovery from civil war and are currently implementing their own NSDS.

5 Task 4 - Strengthening the NSS

Based on advice from Dr. Liberty a draft MOU was prepared with the Ministry of Agriculture. A copy of this is attached at Annex 3. LISGIS (with help from the next GDDS mission) propose to extend this model to Health and Education and if successful, subsequently to other key ministries and the Central Bank.

A new monthly rural household survey has been suggested by some as part of the M&E of the Food Nutrition and Health Monitoring system (FNHMS). Such a survey is beyond the capacity of the MOA or LISGIS at the present time and would take vital resources away from the agreed NSDS survey programme.

As a contribution to documenting the statistical system, the following figures were supplied on current LISGIS employees.

Qualification level	Male	Female	Total
Masters or above	6	0	6
Bachelors degree	20	12 *	32
College qualifications	14	5	19 **
High School Diploma	30	14	44 ***
Other	6	0	6
Total staff	76	31	107

* Of which 8 are heads of statistics units

** Of which 14 with Certificate in Statistics

*** Of which 6 currently studying for higher qualifications.

6 Development of Economic Statistics

The mission expert is concerned that inadequate priority and funding is being given to the development of national accounts and associated economic statistics such as prices, and external trade. There is little sign of progress at present in marked contrast to the success of the population census and household survey programme. The Central Bank is still temporarily producing the national accounts and the Monrovia price index. Rival versions of trade statistics are produced by different organisations.

It is essential for the development of LISGIS as a credible national statistics office that it takes full responsibility for these statistical series and publishes them to a fixed and acceptable timetable. If

necessary salary allowances should be paid to ensure that the best staff are retained to work in this area (where opportunities for field trips and associated allowances are limited).

7 Recommendations

The following recommendations were discussed and agreed with the Director and Senior staff of LISGIS on the final day of the mission.

Task 1 – Country Statistics Units

1. County Statistical Units (CSUs) to be established in all 15 counties. All would have a minimum of two permanent LISGIS staff consisting of field supervisor and database manager. A computer should be provided to each office (15).
2. County Statistical Officers (CSOs) would be appointed initially in 5 of these CSUs and take charge of all 15 CSUs (3 counties each), plus responsibility for the functions of the existing IMOs. A vehicle plus driver will be required for each of these plus a network data link to head office.
3. A new sub-national statistics unit headed at professional statistician level would be established at LISGIS head office to assist and support the CSUs.
4. The new structure should be implemented over 2 financial years starting from July 2008. The need for further CSO appointments (perhaps up to 10 in total) should be evaluated at a later stage after experience with the initial organisation. The new appointments of 40 staff³ should be made as soon as possible and no later than July 2009.
5. All new LISGIS county posts would be advertised, but with all existing IMO staff automatically short-listed for the new posts. Additional salary allowances would be paid to avoid any substantial drop in salary for the existing staff, until such time as LISGIS salaries are realigned with the market rates.⁴ Induction training should be provided for the new staff. The new CSO appointees should spend the first three months at LISGIS head office in Monrovia and with Statistics Units of Ministries.
6. Responsibility for the three UNHCR monitoring forms currently collected by the IMOs should be handed over to the appropriate government ministry or agency as soon as possible. They are not statistical forms as they contain confidential details of incidents and names. However they do generate statistics as a by-product. They might continue temporarily under the CSU/IMO structure as a transitional arrangement if funding were available.
7. The community facilities form completed every 6 months for every village/community in Liberia might be worth continuing as a simple means of updating census data (including inter-census population estimates). UNHCR data should be examined against the benchmark of the Census to validate it, and to ensure the data actually cover the whole of Liberia as claimed by UNHCR.

³ 5 CSOs; 5 drivers; 15 field supervisors and 15 database managers.

⁴ The posts will be advertised as requiring a first degree qualification in a relevant subject, However some flexibility should be allowed to cater for those who have extensive relevant experience and training, even without a formal first degree qualification.

8. Some or all of the 250 UNHCR/IMO field monitors could become part of the LISGIS part-time field enumerators, and continue temporarily with the humanitarian monitoring forms if funding is available.

Task 2 – New home for LISGIS

1. Option 1 (staying in the existing building) should be rejected as it does not provide a permanent home; leaves LISGIS and its staff with inadequate accommodation; and any move of government out of Monrovia might be 15 or more years into the future.
2. Options 2 (renovation of a government building) and 3 (new build) should be developed into firm costed proposals for discussion with the LISGIS Board and with funding partners.
3. Some spending on the existing building and the new annex will however still be necessary to cover the next two years of more while the new building is being renovated or built.

Task 3 – NSDS

1. LISGIS to finalise the NSDS document in July, and circulate it to all stakeholders, after endorsement by the Cabinet. Discussions can then start on funding and arrangements made for a high profile public launch event.
2. External funding will be required for the statistics programme of the NSDS, for training and development of staff and for setting up the implement, monitoring and evaluation team within LISGIS.
3. LISGIS to submit a revised application to the World Bank TFSCB to cover some of the above costs.

Task 4 – Strengthening the NSS

1. LISGIS and MOA to finalise the MOU and commence implementing its articles
2. LISGIS to discuss similar MOUs with Health and Education and if possible prepare first drafts.
3. Further MOUs with key Ministries and the Central Bank to be considered as part of the third GDDS mission.
4. A specialist mission on drafting a new statistics law (or amendments to the existing law) should be requested from the IMF, UN or the World Bank.
5. Data requirements of the FNHMS should be integrated within existing survey plans for agriculture, health and nutrition.

Economic statistics

1. Equal weight must be given to economic statistics in the NSDS programme of statistical improvements.
2. Technical assistance and training on national accounts, prices and external trade are required by LISGIS, as well as funding for the proposed annual national accounts business survey.
3. LISGIS should approach potential providers of the above assistance (e.g. IMF and the European Commission). They should also speak to the Central Bank about nominating LISGIS staff for suitable IMF Institute training courses

8 Next Actions

1. LISGIS to consider and implement the recommendations above.
2. LISGIS to request funding from the World Bank Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building (based on an update of the draft prepared during the last mission in January 2008).
3. LISGIS to request funding from the GDDS project for a study tour of the DG plus 3 staff to Sierra Leone to compare experiences and progress with implementing a NSDS and a strengthened NSS.
4. The third GDDS mission should take place at end August or early September. The key objectives would be (i) development and planning of a statistical training and capacity building programme (original objective 3 for GDDS); and (ii) extending the MOUs to other Ministries and the Central Bank.
5. The GDDS team at the World Bank should consider allocating extra funds to Liberia to fund a short additional expert mission (5 working days in Liberia) on drafting statistics laws and to prepare detailed proposals for a revised Statistics Act.
6. World Bank to consult IMF about a scoping mission to Liberia to advise on actions needed to transfer full responsibility for national accounts, prices and external trade statistics to LISGIS.

ANNEX 1 – Acronyms and Abbreviations

AfDB	African Development Bank
CSO	County Statistical Officers (of LISGIS)
CSU	County Statistics Units (of LISGIS)
DG	Director General (of LISGIS)
FNHMS	Food Nutrition and Health Monitoring System
GDDS	General Data Dissemination System
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	Information Management Office (at county level)
LISGIS	Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Systems.
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding (or Agreement)
NIMAC	National Information Management Centre (of UNDP)
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NSS	National Statistical System
TFSCB	Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building (of World Bank)
UNDP	United National Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	UN Humanitarian Committee for Refugees
WB	World Bank

ANNEX 2 – List of Persons Met

<u>Name</u>	<u>Job Title</u>
LISGIS	
Dr. T Edward Liberty	Director General
Francis Wreh	Deputy Director General
Johnson Q Kei	Deputy Director General, Information and Coordination
Looming Geering	Deputy DG, Administration
Ohyndis Slewern	Acting NSDS Coordinator
Debbie Garpou	Statistician (Agriculture and Environment)
MINISTRIES	
Kehlebee Gongloe	Assistant Minister, Ministry of Labour
Steven Radelet	PRS Advisor, Presidents Office
Hon. Ranney B Jackson	Superintendent, Bong County
Borkai A M Sirleaf	Deputy Minister (Administration), Ministry of Agriculture
James Logan	Deputy Minister (Planning), Ministry of Agriculture
Quan Dinh	Advisor (USAID), Ministry of Agriculture
Reginald Fannah	Head of Statistics. Ministry of Agriculture
OTHERS	
Abdulai Jallow	Head of NIMAC, UNDP
Emanuel Fiadzo	Economics Cluster, World Bank, Liberia
Yeyea Kehleay(Ms)	Administrative Assistant, World Bank, Liberia
Geegboa A Geegboa	Head of Economics, University of Liberia (local NSDS consultant)
Livingstone Kariuki	Civic Affairs Expert, Bong County, UNMIL
Ramany Choun	County Coordinator, Bong County, UNMIL
Snjazana Hansen	Director, UNHCR, Monrovia
Sely Williams	IMO Supervisor, Bong County
Josuah Kbelewah	IMO Database Manager, Bong County
Isaac Sulonteh	IMO Senior Monitor, Bang County

ANNEX 3 – Draft MOU with Ministry of Agriculture

Title: Agreement between the Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Planning, and Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo Information Systems (LISGIS)

Project name: National Statistical System

Agreement number: MOU 01

Parties involved:

	LISGIS	Ministry of Agriculture
Signatory	T Edward Liberty, Director General	Minister of Agriculture
Responsible officer	Francis Wreh, Deputy DG	James Logan, Deputy Minister

CONSIDERATIONS

This document contains a specification of the statistical work being undertaken in the area of Agriculture statistics, and of the expectations of each party to the agreement.

As both the Ministry and LISGIS are part of the Government of Liberia (GOL) a legal contract between the two would not be appropriate. However both parties agree to treat the commitments in this document as if they were legally binding.

The Ministry is the lead agency for commissioning statistical work in this subject area, with help and support from LISGIS. LISGIS is responsible under the Statistics Act for classifications and coordination of all statistical work in the country.

The objective of this document is to clarify working relationships and narrow areas of misunderstanding between the signatory parties. It will not be used as an excuse by either party not to respond to new demands and needs of the GOL that might emerge after signature.

This MOU will be reviewed and updated every two years or more frequently if necessary.

AGREEMENT

The signature parties to this MOU have reached agreement to each of the following articles.

Article 1 Topic of Agreement

This agreement concerns all official statistics in the field of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry and Food Security.

Article 2 Roles of parties and way of working together.

The parties involved hereby appoint the following MOU officers, who will manage the details of this agreement on a day today basis.

	LISGIS	Ministry of Agriculture
MOU officer	Debbie Garpou, Statistician	Reginald Fannah, Head of Statistics Division

Regular progress and liaison meetings will be held at MOU officer level and written records kept of these meetings. The responsible officers to this agreement will both attend meetings of the Statistics Coordination Committee and raise any major issues of difficulty at these meetings.

Failure to publish and/or supply statistics to the timescale specified in this agreement would be discussed and remedial action taken as necessary.

Article 3 Planning of work and coordination

Annual statistical work plans will be jointly prepared in the framework of the 2008 NSDS; the PRS, and any updates subsequently issued. A strategic sector statistics plan in the field of Agriculture will also be prepared, agreed by both parties and updated as necessary. A sector statistics strategy design committee chaired by the Ministry will be set up to develop this sector plan including representatives from LISGIS, and major users of the statistical data in this subject area.

Both parties agree to use their best endeavours to ensure that these plans are achieved by providing mutual support to each other as relevant and as necessary.

Data collection and other statistical work at county level will also be coordinated between the County Statistics office of LISGIS and the County office of the Ministry. County-based statistical staff will mutually support and assist each other in their data collection and statistical briefing responsibilities.

The formal mechanism for coordination will be via the Statistics Coordination Committee, chaired by the DG, and the sector strategy design committee established under the NSDS. However this should not prevent bilateral discussions from taking place between meetings as necessary to solve bilateral problems.

For the present time the agreed statistics strategy of the Ministry is to concentrate on assembling and analysis of available data and to leave LISGIS to collect new data, with advice and assistance from MOA as appropriate. This reflects the need to build up expertise in its core activities, prior to taking on any future new statistical data collection functions.

MOA has the lead responsibility under PRS for monitoring and evaluation the agricultural sector, and for the Food Nutrition and Health Monitoring system. They intend to commission LISGIS to collect the data required for these purposes.

Article 4 Periodicity and timeliness of outputs

Statistics collected by Ministry of Agriculture will be published to the following timetables on their website and in 'title'

1. None at present.

This same data will be supplied in aggregate to the same timetable to LISGIS for inclusion on their website and in summary publications such as the Annual Abstract of Statistics.

FAO/WFP conducted a survey of agricultural production in March 2008 (Post Harvest assessment Survey) on behalf of the MOA, but the involvement of MOA staff was minimal and FAO still house the database. Many other small-scale ad-hoc agricultural surveys have been conducted by international agencies and NGOs, but there has been little dissemination of data.

Statistics collected by LISGIS relevant to the topic of Agriculture will be published to the following timetables on their website and in the Annual Abstract of Statistics.

1. Annual estimates of output and value added of the agriculture sector (part of national accounts) by the end of the year following the reference year.

2. Monthly consumer prices of agricultural products (part of the CPI) by the end of the month following the reference month.
3. March 2008 Census data relevant to agriculture by [March] 2009.
4. Monthly imports and exports of agricultural produce by the end of the month following the reference month.

This same data will be supplied in aggregate to the same timetable to Ministry of Agriculture for inclusion on their website and in summary publications.

The Ministry and LISGIS will both publish an annual advance release calendar for the forthcoming year for statistics in their respective areas of responsibility.

Article 5 Quality criteria

The Ministry will follow established international standards in its statistical work, and will consult with LISGIS before departing from these standards, and on all its survey plans. Classifications used will also be based in international classifications with any variations specific to Liberia agreed with LISGIS.

Full descriptions of methodology and definitions used by the Ministry and by LISGIS in their statistical series (metadata) will be made available on their respective websites and/or provided to users on request.

An occasional self-assessment or external assessment of quality of the statistics collected by Ministry of Agriculture will be conducted. These assessments will make use of the IMF's Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF).

Permission is hereby granted by LISGIS to the Ministry of Agriculture to use the term "official statistics" for the following series:

1. None at present.

The following series require further development and improvement work before they can be termed 'official statistics'. If they are published then they should be described as "Ministry Statistics"

1. Agricultural Market Information System.

Article 6 Plans for Improvement

The Ministry of Agriculture has the following plans for expansion and improvement in Agriculture statistical work. They intend for the next few years to commission LISGIS to collect and compile the data, with assistance from their planned new County M&E units.

1. Crop Production Survey (Annual). A regular post harvest national survey of farming households.
2. *Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) Survey*. This system will include price data for agricultural products at various levels, from farm gate to final consumer. The current data will be expanded to cover all Counties of Liberia and to collect farm gate/wholesale prices.
3. *Crop Monitoring and Early Warning System (CMEWS)*. This is a pre-harvest survey of farming households. The objectives are to (a) provide early periodic indications of expected size of crops to determine desirable import levels to meet production shortfalls; and (b) provide periodic forecasts of supply and demand of Liberia's staple diet (rice and cassava),

4. *Development of Fishery and Agriculture Database.* The MOA will work with LISGIS and NIMAC to build the capacity necessary to create this long-overdue database. Pulling together in one place all available information relevant to the agricultural sector.
5. *Fishery and Livestock Surveys.* There is an increasing demand for fishery and livestock statistics, including for providing critical data for the national accounts.
6. A household based *Census of Agriculture* in 2010 Or 2011 (jointly and with household survey fieldwork by LISGIS).

Items 1, 3 and parts of 3 and 5 could be covered by a panel survey of a sample of agricultural households based on three interviews per years – pre-planting, post planting and post harvest. This might be supplemented by an annual or quarterly survey of large and medium commercial farmers.

MOA and LISGIS will examine the consumer price data collected on agricultural produce by both organisations (2 above for MOA, CPI for LISGIS) with a view to eliminating duplication. New data on wholesale/farm gate prices are needed by both organisations.

MOA and LISGIS will also examine the available data and information needs of the Forestry sector, responsibility for which falls to the independent Forestry Commission, but which is chaired by the Minister of Agriculture.

LISGIS plan the following new surveys and improvements relevant to the topic area of Agriculture statistics and food security:

1. Improved annual national accounts, including estimates for the agriculture sector
2. Improved CPI covering the whole country.
3. Improved and agreed monthly external trade data
4. *Annual Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire (CWIQ) Survey.* Important for monitoring poverty and food security.
5. *Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) in 2009.* This will identify households producing food for own consumption and or sale and will also measure the numbers living in poverty (based on actual consumption).
6. *Demographic and Health Survey (LDHS) in 2010.* This will include nutritional information.
7. *LiberiaInfo.* LISGIS will maintain this database developed to store data and produce maps for all surveys, censuses, and related statistical products in the country. It will be updated as frequently as possible beginning 2008.
8. *Census.* The field enumeration for the March 2008 Census has been completed, and provisional results were published in June 2008. Final and full data will be available by March 2009.
9. *Decentralization.* LISGIS plans to open statistics units by the end of 2009 in the 15 counties for the collection and dissemination of official statistics.

In addition the Ministry of Labour plan to run a small scale Labour Force Survey of households in 2009 followed by a larger scale survey in 2012. This will provide more detail than the Census on numbers and hours engaged in agricultural activities by household members.

Article 7 Staff and other Resources

Numbers of staff by qualification and job title working on the statistics function of the Ministry of Agriculture are shown below

Professional (Analysts)	2
Database staff	1
Data collection staff	9

These staff currently work within the Statistics Division, Department of Planning. However in the near future it is planned to merge their work with the M&E Division to create a unified Monitoring, Evaluation and Statistics Division. It is also planned to set up one post in each of the 15 Counties with M, E and S functions.

Within LISGIS one statistician is designated to support the work of the Ministry of Agriculture for half of her time [Debbie Gapou, Economic Statistics Division]. Other staff of LISGIS will also support the work of statistics on Agriculture as necessary and depending on the topics being covered in the household census and survey programme.

Staff of the statistics function of the Ministry of Agriculture will be invited to participate in relevant training and development seminars and workshops organised within LISGIS. They will also be offered opportunities for gaining formal qualifications in statistics. Should they wish to make a longer term career in official statistics, then LISGIS will try on a best endeavours basis to arrange for a career move to another statistics subject area in LISGIS or in another Ministry at a time that is judged suitable by both the individual concerned and by their line management in the Ministry of Agriculture.

Article 8 Intellectual ownership

The Ministry of Agriculture will own all rights to statistical data collected or commissioned by the Ministry (copyright). The data will be shared with LISGIS who will be free to republish it provided the source is always quoted.

All rights to statistical data collected directly by LISGIS will be owned by LISGIS (copyright). The data on the topic of Agriculture will be shared with the Ministry of Agriculture who will be free to republish it provided the source is always quoted.

Disclosive confidential micro data will also be supplied to LISGIS if requested, on strict conditions that it will be protected under the Statistics Act and no confidential data about individual respondents published without the permission of the respondent and the Ministry.

Article 9 Period of duration of the Agreement

This agreement will remain in force from the date of signature below until replaced by an updated MOU. Updates are currently planned to be on a 2-year rolling basis.

END

Agreed by the parties below in Monrovia on this day of 2008

	LISGIS	Ministry of Agriculture
Name	T Edward Liberty, Director General	Minister
Signature		
Date		