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Mobile birth registration in Liberia

CMI project mid-term review

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Title Mobile birth registration in Liberia CMI project mid-term review		
Abstract <p>This mid-term review (MTR) has been undertaken in order to review how CMI has conducted the project, to evaluate it against the MFA Evaluation Guidelines (2007) and other international criteria, as well as to provide perspectives and development suggestions for CMI and other stakeholders for the continuation of the MBR project.</p> <p>The Mobile Birth Registration (MBR) project should be commended and its actual expansion from the pilot county to other Liberian counties should follow as planned. The evaluation team has identified a number of issues or concerns, the consideration of which may be helpful in planning and implementing future activities. Regarding the ambitions of MBR to facilitate the broader Liberian government process to build a modern population information system, the evaluation team recommends CMI to look into the issue of bringing together the relevant governmental actors to discuss a broader civil registry, and advocating the MBR solution as one possible data gathering and registration model.</p> <p>Finally, the success and importance of MBR to its intended beneficiaries, Liberian families and civil society, raises the broader question of ICT4D's status and place in CMI strategy. CMI is currently reviewing its ICT4D experiences, and the process should lead also to reconsideration of ICT's role as enabler of CMI objectives.</p>		
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Executive summary

Birth registration provides a person with a name and identity, and usually enables access to a wide variety of basic rights and services through e.g. acquisition of a driving licence, passport, and voter registration. The absence of birth registration may lead to the deprivation of such rights and services, contributing to the emergence of different forms of poverty and under-development. As such, birth registration and well functioning population information systems are essential institutions of democracy and civil society, especially in developing and post-conflict countries.

In Liberia, birth registration rate among children under 5 was estimated to be about 5% in 2007. Besides small children, large cohorts of people, who were born or small children during the civil war, remain without a birth certificate.

The Government of Liberia has identified the development of a national population information system and especially improved birth registration as its national priorities listed in the Liberian Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) has undertaken to support the building of the Liberian population information system, and especially to develop a mobile phone based birth registration service to be deployed in rural areas of Liberia in its Mobile Birth Registration (MBR)-project. Its stated objectives have been to:

- Create a mobile birth data collection system in one pilot county and scale it up to all Liberian counties.
- Establish and facilitate an inter-ministerial collaboration process in support of developing a population information system in Liberia.
- Document and review the MBR project with the aim to consolidate lessons learned and to make them available to the international community and other post-conflict countries recovering from crisis.

At the practical and technical core of MBR project is the use of the Nokia Data Gathering (NDG) Solution to collect birth registration information through tailor-made information collection software forms, and to transmit this information via GPRS to the main birth registration service. This allows also the printing of actual birth registration certifi-

cates in rural counties. Erection of necessary technical infrastructure and training of required Liberian staff have been key elements of practical implementation of MBR.

MBR's key accomplishment is the building of a working scale MBR system and its piloting in Bomi County, where it has provided actual birth registration services. This pilot also establishes the platform for its expansion into other Liberian counties.

After the initial CMI planning phase, the MBR project was launched in 2009 with the financial support of the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) as a development cooperation project, and it is expected to run until 2012. MBR is implemented in close cooperation with the Liberian government, especially with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW), Nokia Group, Idean Ltd and other stakeholders.

Mid-Term Review Mission

This mid-term review (MTR) has been undertaken in order to review how CMI has conducted the project, to evaluate it against the MFA Evaluation Guidelines (2007) and other international criteria, as well as to provide perspectives and development suggestions for CMI and other stakeholders for the continuation of the MBR project.

The evaluation team has been headed by Dr. Hannes Toivanen from VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, and has included Mr. Jukka Hyvönen from VTT, Mr. Matthias Wevelsiep from University of Helsinki/CMI, and Mr. Mika Metsäniemi from CMI. The evaluation has been conducted between October 2010 and January 2011.

The evaluation team has undertaken its work through a desk research phase in Helsinki, followed by a week-long field mission to Liberia in November 2010.

Observations, conclusions and recommendations

The Mobile Birth Registration project is an ambitious and relevant project, which is being implemented in the challenging environment of post-conflict Liberia, neighbouring fragile states such as the now increasingly unrest Ivory Coast. The project has been implemented successfully and according to good project management principles. Considering the challenging environment, the project has made considerable progress in its stated objectives, especially in result area A, although the implementation plan has had to be changed considerably up to now. Nevertheless, and as the project staff and other stakeholders have recognized, there are several areas of activities or individual issues, which require CMI or the MBR project management team to revisit the existing project plan and implementation practices.

The MBR project should be commended and its actual expansion from the pilot county to other Liberian counties should follow as planned. The evaluation team has identified a number of issues or concerns, the consideration of which may be helpful in planning and implementing future activities.

Regarding the ambitions of MBR to facilitate the broader Liberian government process to build a modern population information system, the evaluation team recommends CMI to look into the issue of bringing together the relevant governmental actors to discuss a broader civil registry, and advocating the MBR solution as one possible data gathering and registration model.

Finally, the success and importance of MBR to its intended beneficiaries, Liberian families and civil society, raises the broader question of ICT4D's status and place in CMI strategy. CMI is currently reviewing its ICT4D experiences, and the process should lead also to reconsideration of ICT's role as enabler of CMI objectives.

Table 1 presents a condensed summary of observations and recommendations from the evaluation team. All observations and recommendations are derived from the work and evaluation framework detailed in this report and they are discussed in detail in the subsequent sections of the report.

Table 1. Summary of observations and recommendations.

Outcomes and impacts
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation of a working mobile birth registration system on pilot scale, which allows the scaling up of the infrastructure and service to other or all Liberian counties. 2. Building necessary local capacity (infrastructure and human resources) to operate and maintain the MBR system. 3. Provision of official birth registration services in the pilot county. 4. MBR is delivering on its intended core objectives in the Result area A, though not yet at the planned scale, but with the potential to do so within the project life-cycle. 5. Operable pilot scale MBR is a valuable demonstration of the possibilities of ICT in Liberia, and in general in the post-conflict development context. 6. The original MBR objectives included objectives shaping more broadly the Liberian population information system strategies and systems. This has not really taken place yet, but should be put on the agenda for the following years of the project. 7. It is recommended that MBR project revisits the result area B, whose stated goal was to facilitate this inter-ministerial collaboration process.
Project administration and management
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. The project is well managed and documented. 9. Project planning and documentation has been taken undertaken with care. 10. The project management structure appears to be appropriately designed and work well. CMI Helsinki and Liberia staff communicates well and effectively. 11. Working through the Government of Liberia is essential, but it is also time consuming and it is somewhat difficult to predict necessary action even in the short term. For this project to be functional it needs constant coordination and adjustment. 12. As a multi-stakeholder partnership, MBR needs to have a good enough understanding of roles, responsibilities and commitments, and change in perception needs to be constantly re-communicated.

13. Broad enough annual planning should continue to anticipate events that might negatively affect implementation.
14. It is recommended to identify and use management tools and minimum standards for monitoring of the activities. These tools might also contribute to other CMI projects elsewhere.

Best practice in post conflict situation

15. CMI appears to hold different roles in Liberia: 1. a consultancy or advisory role, 2. advocacy role, and 3. facilitator role.
16. It is important to continue to work on the fine line between those roles and understand the implications of overemphasizing one of the roles over another.
17. CMI should be clear about the role mix in the specific contexts and communicate its role, mandate and purpose actively to avoid being challenged as an illegitimate actor.

Ownership

18. National stakeholders on different levels have confirmed the relevance of this project.
19. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, which is responsible for reinstating birth-registration, recognizes MBR to address national priorities within the Poverty Reduction Strategy, and coordinates the broader context to which MBR contributes.
20. Maintenance of the current level of government ownership is necessary, and strengthening is required in regard of capacity building and preparing for the long-term sustainability of MBR.

Donor and stakeholder coordination

21. Donor coordination in the MBR project has been undertaken at the national planning level and at the project implementation level.
22. MBR planning was initiated within the broader Liberian reconstruction and planning effort, and thereby demonstrated good coordination with other donors as well as with the Liberian government, as well as situated it well on broader national population information system building agenda.
23. On the project implementation level, coordination needs are taken care through cooperation, as well as through membership on the Universal Birth Registration task force, headed by the MoHSW.
24. It is essential that IT technology and software acquired in the MBR project is compatible with and in support of existing and possible future IT systems at MoHSW and other critical public information management systems.
25. Donor and stakeholder coordination in MBR project has evolved in tandem, and logically, with project's leap from planning to implementation, and it has been undertaken in manner that allows the broader, national and sectoral synergies between different projects and initiatives to emerge.

ICT4D within CMI strategy

26. MBR project and GooB initiative were undertaken as conscious moves by CMI to develop, or even experiment, new arenas to carry out the core mission of CMI, as they undertook the employment of ICT in support of post-conflict state building, as well as carrying out a project to develop effectively an ICT application.

27. How well and with what strategy CMI is best able to harness ICT and other new technologies to fulfil its core mission should be carefully considered.
28. In several regards, the MBR experience has been positive for CMI, donors, as well as cooperation partners and intended beneficiaries.
29. From the vantage point of advancing credible and high-quality ICT4D initiatives, the issue is to recognize how the MBR experience is being evaluated and reviewed by CMI management and organization, and how this process may shape the way CMI approaches and defines ICT4D within its agenda.
30. It is recommended that CMI steps up its internal evaluation and stock-taking of the MBR experience, and reviews thoroughly the place and potential of ICT4D activities within its strategy. Furthermore, CMI strategy should outline clearly the organization's approach and intended objectives with ICT.

ICT4D lessons learned and diffusion of knowledge

31. It is recommended that CMI, and especially its ICT4D experts, the MBR project team and the GooB team undertake more active engagement in the national and global ICT4D community by sharing its own experiences and lessons learned, as well as by taking stock from similar or related initiatives and by learning from the latest trends and developments in the field. Active participation in the right technological and professional community is likely to strengthen CMI's activities and credibility in the ICT4D arena, as well as to widen its partner network.

Approach to ICT capacity building

32. MBR approach to ICT capacity building has by and large been very positive, and MBR project has created a solid platform to expand and continue the birth registration work.
33. MBR Liberia staff and Country Coordinator have played a critical role for success. On the other hand, CMI needs to demonstrate how it will build the local ICT and project management capacity to take over the critical responsibilities currently held by the MBR country coordinator.
34. Cooperation with private companies has fared relatively well in MBR. Yet there appears to be conflicting expectations about the roles and contributions by different stakeholders about the role of private companies. It is recommended that the roles and expectations of different project implementation partners are clarified further.
35. The MBR project has required the development of tailored software and other solutions, and has done so by making use of Liberian ICT expertise and entrepreneurs when appropriate and possible. Continued use and activation of local technical expertise is recommended.
36. The MBR solution is based on the availability of trained and skilled staff in rural communities, who are able to collect birth registration data with mobile phones equipped with NDG and send the data to the main server. This has been accomplished in the pilot county, but heightened attention must be paid to how to provide comprehensive and high quality training to local staff when the project implementation is scaled up to other counties.

Sustainability

37. MBR is closely linked with and coordinated by MoHSW. Up to now it shows good potential for some level of institutional sustainability.
38. Currently, the project can demonstrate cost effective ways of operation with some level of sustainability. However, the system will not run forever on the same mobile phones,

which means that there must be financial resources for maintenance and replacement investments.

39. The project has chosen simple outreach functionality, using District Health Officers (DHO). The advantages of MBR solution model should be communicated very clearly to the relevant stakeholders within the Government of Liberia.
40. Inclusion of new services with the existing mobile service platform is critical for sustainability, to make sure devices deliver useful functionality to the largest possible extent. The MBR solution could be recognized to establish a generic data gateway that is suitable to multiple purposes.
41. Decentralization – as in other developing countries contexts – is high on the development agenda and the Government of Liberia and other stakeholders and decision-makers debate about different ways of achieving decentralized services on a large scale. In terms of ICT it is important to highlight the difference between decentralization of services and access and decentralization of infrastructure. A full decentralization of ICT infrastructure would not only be not sustainable, it is simply not necessary.
42. As CMI is a temporary actor in the Liberian post-war development, it is recommended to start working on a plan for the gradual transfer of responsibilities to government actors on different levels.

Cross-cutting issues

43. Birth registration is a basic step in the process of issuing citizenship, a fundamental human right and a critical step in building democratic civil societies. As such, the provision of universal birth registration services has clear and significant development impacts across the board, but especially in areas identified as priorities in the Finnish development policy, such as the promotion of rights and status of women, children, and other groups that are easily excluded and discriminated. Liberian Poverty Reduction Strategy has also placed birth registration among the concrete steps in improving the health and living conditions for families and small children.
44. In summary, MBR project has addressed some of the cross-cutting issues emphasized in the Finnish development policy and the MFA guidelines for ICT in development co-operation, and has heightened potential to do so in the future.

Foreword

Issuance of citizenship usually begins with birth registration, a small and often little noticed step when it is easy to do. Its absence, due to lack or cost of service or for some other reason, can deprive a person from several key human rights and possibilities, thus establishing another factor possibly maintaining poverty and its different forms.

For a person, birth registration provides an official name and identity, and is in Liberia required when obtaining a driver's license, a passport, and the right to vote, and some public services as well. In a post-conflict society, the issue of inclusion is important too. In Liberia, large cohorts of people born during the prolonged conflict have never been able to obtain a birth certificate due to the unrest, and now lack the above-mentioned rights.

Conflict and war disrupt the basic institutions of civil society. This has been the reality in Liberia, where many basic services are still unavailable following the conflict. However, the country and its people have mounted the reconstruction effort after the traumatic events. One aspect of this endeavour has been the government's efforts to revise and reconstruct its civil registries. Although some paper-form records exist from the period before the war, overall civil registration systems are dysfunctional and incomplete.

A key aspect of this challenge has been birth registration. In 2007, a demographic survey concluded that the birth registration rate in Liberia among children under five years was about 4%. Raising the birth registration rate was identified as one concrete action within the broader Liberian poverty reduction strategy and within the future development of a comprehensive civil registry. Based on these observations a strategy and action plan for reinstating birth registration was developed.

Linking up with this process, the Mobile Birth Registration (MBR) project by Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) was introduced to develop a concrete method for conducting birth registration services in Liberia. Its core idea is to use mobile phones and communication technologies to provide free birth registration services in the whole of Liberia, especially in commonly neglected rural areas. Its basic components have been the provision of training to staff, building and installation of the necessary technological

infrastructure, and the actual carrying out of birth registration in selected locales. CMI has undertaken the project in cooperation with the Government of Liberia, especially the MoHSW, as well as the Nokia Group, a Finnish telecommunication equipment and software manufacturer, as well as with some other partners.

The planning of MBR was initiated in 2007, and in 2009 the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) granted funds to launch the implementation of the project.

This mid-term evaluation (MTR) has been undertaken following the evaluation guidelines of the MFA, and its goal has been to review the implementation of the process and its effects, to provide perspectives to CMI to continue the project in the future, as well as share the lessons learned with all stakeholders and the wider development cooperation community.



Mother with her child at the Beafine Community Clinic, Bomi County.

CMI approached VTT and University of Helsinki as possible evaluation organizations in the fall of 2010, and Terms of Reference (Appendix 1) were concluded in September 2010.

The evaluation team has been led by Hannes Toivanen from VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland. The team has included Jukka Hyvönen, also from VTT, Matthias Wevelsiep from the University of Helsinki, and Mika Metsäniemi from CMI. As of January 2011, Matthias Wevelsiep transferred to CMI. The evaluation team was notified

in advance about his changed employment and the evaluation process was adjusted accordingly.

The evaluation team would like to extend their thanks to all interviewees and all other parties that have facilitated the evaluation process. Special thanks go to CMI's Country Coordinator Gama Roberts, who was instrumental in making the November field trip of the evaluation mission a success. We would also like to acknowledge the support of Kirsi Joenpolvi and Hannu Kotipelto from CMI, who have been readily accessible throughout the process.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Terms of reference

Appendix 2. Field trip program

Appendix 3. People interviewed

Appendix 4. Documents used in desk research

Appendix 5. Interview questions template

List of abbreviations

BPHS	Basic Package of Health Services
CMI	Crisis Management Initiative
DHO	District Health Officers
EC	European Commission
e-Government	Electronic government
GPRS	General package radio service
GooB	Governance out of a Box concept
ICT	Information and Communications Technologies
ICT4D	Information and communications technologies for development
IT	Information technology
LRDC	Liberia Reconstruction and Development Committee
LISGIS	Liberia Institute of Statistics & Geo-information Services
MBR	Mobile birth registration project
MFA	Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs
MoHSW	Liberian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MTR	Mid-term review
NDG	Nokia Data Gathering-solution
OECD	Organization for the Economic Cooperation and Development
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
UBR	Universal Birth Registration
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia

1. Objectives and scope of the mid-term review

The aim of the Mid-term Review (MTR) for a Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA) funded development cooperation project is defined in the Guidelines for Project Planning by the MFA. According to them, the aim is to provide analytical information for further planning of the project. Moreover, the evaluation should focus on both the desired and the unintentionally created effects.

Thus, the Mid-term review of *Governance out of a Box – Population Registration in Liberia* -project (GooB) conducted by Crisis Management Initiative ry in Liberia since 2009, aims to provide:

- Analytical information for planning and implementation of the project in the following two years in Liberia.

By focusing on, at least, the following aspects:

- Relevance, effectiveness, success, efficiency and sustainability of the project, bearing in mind the project is only at its midpoint and conducted in challenging post-conflict environment.
- Assessing desired and undesired effects of the project so far, including how and if the project has been or will be able to contribute to peace consolidation in post-conflict Liberia.
- Capturing lessons learned on implementing a challenging ICT project in post-conflict settings in general and particularly in the context of Liberia.
- Generating recommendations on how to continue project implementation based on gained knowledge on the ongoing project and the implementation context in Liberia and thus, assist in determining modifications to the implementation, if required.

1.1 Methods and Review Criteria

Departing from established evaluation methodology, we propose to employ the methodological evaluation tradition defined in the Development Cooperation Evaluation. Constituting its own tradition, methodology, and approach identified in OECD/DAC principles and MFA Evaluation Guidelines 2007, it plays particular emphasis upon the principles of *effectiveness, efficiency, compatibility, complementarity, and impacts*. We also align our approach with the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda, and seek to involve all stakeholders from the beginning of the evaluation process.

In addition, and in order to fully appreciate the technological novelty and innovativeness of the GooB-project in Liberia, we propose to employ traditional *science, technology and innovation* evaluation practices when applicable. Developed in Finland especially under the aegis of Tekes – Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation, Academy of Finland, and the three ministries of Employment and the Economy, Communication, as well as Education, this approach is best suited to understand and evaluate the GooB project as a technology and innovation project.

Particular attention in this methodology is paid to *networking, spill-over effects, knowledge circulation*, as well as broader contributions to *organizational capabilities in science, technology and innovations* and to different sectors and sub-components of *national systems of innovation*. This approach is further anchored in broader and established ICT4D tradition, which looks at the implementation and use of ICT in the context of development.

Evaluation of *activities* includes the direct evaluation of project activities within the context of project defined objectives. In the absence of explicit *logical framework*, we compare project *activities* and *results* within the broader set of CMI defined *objectives*. Particular attention is paid to the issues of *enabling impacts* of the project, as well as to *relevance* and *efficiency*, but also other aspects are considered.

The desk study constituted a major preparatory phase of the evaluation. During the desk study, we analyzed and situated the project within the broader context of ICT4D and state-building, as well as within the Finnish development cooperation policy. This phase is based on extensive analysis of project documentation and other relevant documentation obtained by the evaluation team. The preparatory phase also included select interviews with key stakeholders in Finland.

The field study established the core of the evaluation mission and assessed in particular *complementarity, impacts, efficiency*, but it cast also relevant light on *relevance* and *sustainability*. During the field mission, a 3 person team visited first-hand the GooB case, the project facilities, and all relevant stakeholders in Liberia during one week. The evaluation team undertook a series of semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 5 for interview template) that were recorded by taking notes. Moreover, direct observation and further collection of evidence was done.

1. Objectives and scope of the mid-term review

Evaluation of *clients and beneficiaries* includes qualitative assessment of how objectives have been achieved and modified, as well as of the perceived results. This is observed as direct actions benefitting people and organizations or the like, as well as indirect benefits. Also the feasibility and flexibility of chosen implementation strategies was analyzed. Of particular importance, especially under Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda, is to analyze how local ownership is realized, and how local capacity building within the programmes translates into sustainable long-term development contributions.

Review criteria within the evaluation mission has been detailed in the Table 2. Review criteria presents in fully how the team has approached different aspects of the project and what type of standards and criterial for the evaluation have been defined by the team.

Finally, the evaluation team as a whole looked at the actual and potential contributions of the MBR project on broader societal, economic, and governance development of Liberia.

The mid-term evaluation was launched in October 2010 and concluded in January 2011. The field visit was undertaken in November 2010.

Table 2. Review Criteria.

Criteria	Definition	Core questions	Project objective specific questions
Relevance	Relevance concerns whether the results, purpose and overall objectives of the intervention are in line with the needs and aspirations of the beneficiaries, and with the policy environment of the intervention.	Is the intervention consistent with the needs and priorities of the target group and the policies of the partner country and donor agencies? Has the situation changed since the approval of the intervention (e.g. programme/project) document?	Is civil registration (birth/death registration) and computerization of registration a priority in line with country/donor policy and expression of beneficiary needs/demands?
Efficiency	The efficiency criterion concerns how well the various activities have transformed the available resources into the intended outputs (sometimes referred to as a result), in terms of quantity, quality and time.	Can the costs of the intervention be justified by the results?	What are the intermediate results/against costs? How about the anticipated results and costs of the overall intervention?
Effectiveness	Effectiveness describes how well the results have furthered the attainment of the purpose of the intervention.	Has the intervention achieved its objectives or will it do so in the future?	Was the process to re-establish birth registration functional? Is the MBR model functional and is it likely to function in the future? Did the training achieve its learning objective? What is the status of the inter-ministerial cooperation? Has the generic model been created?
Effect/Outcome/Impact	<p>Effect: Intended or unintended change due directly or indirectly to an intervention.</p> <p>Outcome: The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's Outputs.</p> <p>Impact: Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.</p>	<p>Has progress been made towards achieving the overall objective(s) of the intervention?</p> <p>What are the overall effects of the intervention, intended and unintended, long term and short term, positive and negative?</p>	<p>A. Is the process for birth registration in place? How is birth registration demand on different levels developing?</p> <p>B. What is the status of the inter-ministry collaboration process for achieving a common vision on population information system in Liberia?</p> <p>C. What are the interim elements of a generic model?</p>
Sustainability	In terms of a single intervention, sustainability can be described as the degree to which the benefits produced by the intervention continue after the external support has come to an end.	Will the benefits produced by the intervention be maintained after the termination of external support?	<p>A. What are the plans for BR process continuation towards end of the project? How likely is it that the process will be fully developed by the end of the project? What is the community demand for birth registration?</p> <p>B. How will the joint vision be reflected in policy development and action?</p>

			C. Assessing the generic model: what are the elements that function well, what are the elements that need improvement?
Finnish value added	In terms of a single intervention, how the intervention related to Finnish development policy does (is it in support of) and does the intervention take advantage of specific Finnish actors or expertise.	What is the added value provided by the Finnish support? What Finnish actors are involved in the intervention? How does the intervention take advantage of Finnish expertise?	How did the private – public partnership function? How were private partners selected and on what criteria? How is the project utilizing Finnish expertise?
Cross-cutting issues	According to the Finnish Government Resolution of February 2004, the cross-cutting themes in the implementation of the Finnish development policy are: - The promotion of the rights and the status of women and girls, and the promotion of gender and social equality. - The promotion of the rights of groups that are easily marginalized, particularly children, the disabled, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, and the promotion of equal participation opportunities for them. - Consideration of environmental issues.	How does the intervention take into account cross cutting issues?	How is the MBR affecting other cross-cutting issues? (Women's rights, children's rights, taking into account special / marginalized groups)
Compatibility	Compatibility measures the extent to which the goals of Finland's development cooperation policy or partner country's development policy are taken into account in the planning and implementation.	How has the relevant policy context been taken into account for planning and implementation?	How has Finnish development policy, ICT4D guidelines and Liberian development policy, especially PRS been taken into account for project planning and implementation?
Complementarity	Complementarity measures how well the interventions support one another and what specific skills and benefits the various partners in an intervention can bring to achieving the desired outcomes.	Are there areas in which partners add value to each other in support of the overall aims?	How do public, private and NGO actors complement each other in support of the overall aims?

Sources: MFA evaluation guidelines based on OECD evaluation standards.

1.2 CMI defined project objectives

CMI defined project objectives establish the anchor point for the mid-term evaluation. Project objectives and mission statement are defined in the CMI Project plan 2010–2012, which follows largely ones provided in project plan 2009–2010. The motivation behind the project is formulated as follows:

“Reviving key functions of civil administration builds a stable base for transparent, effective and inclusive administrative processes, which both serve the post-war reconstruction phase and provide a basis for long term development. Countries need to know how many people are born and die each year in order to make informed policy and resourcing decisions. The only way to count everyone and to track all births and deaths is through civil registration. Furthermore, civil registration is needed to safeguard individual rights to social status and benefits.”

Thus, at the request of the Government of Liberia:

- CMI will support Liberia to reinstate civil registration.
- *The immediate objective of the Project is to strengthen population data related information management capacity of the Liberian state administration.*
- This is to be achieved through rolling out the mobile technology based data collection and entry process to all 15 counties (building on CMI’s 2009 pilot in Liberia) as well as:
 - Facilitating inter-ministerial dialogue for a common vision on a population information system in Liberia resulting in commonly agreed criteria for a technological solution for the system
 - Documentation and analysis leading to the development of generic criteria for population information management suitable for state administrations in countries recovering from crisis.

The Project plan 2009–2010 makes also explicit that the project is to collect lessons learnt for a nation-wide system, and was more explicit in its immediate objectives:

- *The immediate objective of the Project is to re-establish the system of data collection and entry for birth and death registration in one pilot county (Bong) which will create a model for County-level data collection for the nation-wide civil registry.*

These broad objectives are reiterated also in the section 5.2. of the Project Plan 2010–2012, and they are to match with the result areas, which are presented as follows:

Result area A (2010–2012): Consolidated nation-wide data collection and entry process (expanding the 2009 implemented activities).

1. Objectives and scope of the mid-term review

- a. Mobile birth data collection up and running in all 15 counties of Liberia (in the pilot phase the system is tested in one county).
- b. All 300 monitors (in the pilot phase there were 25 monitors) are equipped with mobile phones running the Nokia Data Gathering software and trained to use the tool.

Result area B (2010–2011): An informed inter-ministry plan for integrating population related data management processes under one population registry (building on the 2009 implemented activities).

- a. Establishing and facilitating inter-ministry collaboration process for achieving a common vision on population information system in Liberia, identifying commonly agreed criteria for a population information system. The criteria enables tendering and procuring a population information system and also functions as basis for evaluating tenders from private sector on providing a population information system for Liberia.

Result area C (2010–2012): A generic model of a population registration tool and generic criteria for a population information system suitable for state administrations in countries recovering from crisis.

- a. Documentation of the process in Liberia and identification of lessons learnt for a population registration tool to be included in the Governance out of a Box toolkit and thus, to be available for other post-conflict countries recovering from a crisis.
- b. A generic criteria for population information system to function as basis for procurement as well as evaluation criteria for a population information system suitable for post-conflict countries recovering from crisis.

2. The evaluation process

The mid-term evaluation process has been initiated in the fall of 2010 between CMI, VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, and the University of Helsinki. The parties concluded Terms of Reference (Appendix 1), and the evaluation process was initiated.

Evaluation process has unfolded in three separate phases: 1. Desk Research; 2. Field Visit; 3. Summary and Conclusions.

2.1 Desk research

The desk research phase was initiated in September–October 2010. The evaluation team negotiated a division of labour as well as agreed upon reporting formats. The central objective was to establish a preliminary idea of the MBR project background and implementation through the analysis of documentation, and through a handful of selected interviews.

Most of relevant documentation was obtained through CMI and is listed in Appendix 4, “Documents used in desk research“. This material constituted the evidence base for the team to arrive at a revised evaluation plan and a field mission plan. This documentation was also used as the basis to arrive at major observations, conclusions and recommendations. The documentation base is not cited in this report separately, unless a direct quote or other direct reference is made, yet they form the written documentation basis for this evaluation mission.

2.2 Field visit

During the month of November 2010, a three-person evaluation team visited Liberia for a duration of 5 days. On the field trip the team met with people from mainly three groups: the end users of the mobile birth registration system, staff from ministries and agencies working on population-registration related efforts as well as people with relevant knowledge on the general environment in Liberia and the current state of peace building and state building efforts.

2. The evaluation process

The goal of the trip was to gain insight into how the MBR solution works in practice, what is its current status and remaining challenges, as well as to understand the relevance of the project to the Liberian people and to the overall efforts to consolidate peace in the country.

Before the actual field trip the evaluation team prepared a shortlist of people and instances that would be valuable interviewees. Based on this list CMI's Country Coordinator made contact with these people and set up meetings and accompanied the evaluation team. The meetings were based on a semi-structured interview format (see Appendix 5) which was adapted in each interview to match the situation. Recording of the interviews was done in written form, by taking notes on paper and laptops.

A summary of the programme of the field visit can be reviewed in Appendix 2 and the list of interviewees in Appendix 3.

The field trip included interviews in the capital city of Monrovia with staff from the UN Peace building Office, UNMIL (United Nations Mission in Liberia), LISGIS (Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services), MoHSW (Ministry of Social Health and Welfare), Plan Liberia, CSA (Civil Service Agency) as well as UNICEF.

In addition to the meetings in Monrovia, a day visit to Bomi County was made. During this county visit, the team met with county registrar's office staff that is conducting the birth registration in practice. Moreover, in the village of Beafine the team met with the real end user of the MBR project, namely one of the District Health Officers.

3. Governance out of a Box concept (GoodB)

The Governance out of a Box concept was first conceived in high-level seminars and discussions starting in 2004. There the consensus was that modern, existing information and communication technologies could be valuable in supporting the critical reconstruction period following conflict. The initial range of potential tools identified spanned from supporting security and poverty programs to health and education. Crisis Management Initiative has since continued to develop this concept further under its own ICT4Statebuilding program. Based on analyses and discussions on the best entry point for the toolkit development, CMI has refined the focus of GooB to target the civil administration of a state, which is all too often neglected in the time period following the end of conflict.

In short, the Governance out of a Box (GooB) initiative aims to provide national governments recovering from crisis a set of tools for quickly and effectively reinstating priority functions of civil administration in the immediate post-conflict reconstruction phase. The functions for the initial toolkit have been identified in the context of international policy dialogue on the priorities and sequencing in state-building.

While GooB recognizes the priority of providing security, ending violence and the provision of basic services in most post-conflict contexts, it can be argued that these processes cannot be effectively undertaken without the support of some civil administrative functions. Therefore GooB primarily focuses on civil administration and good governance for effective reconstruction.

The ultimate goal of GooB is to provide the international community and national governments recovering from crisis flexible and mobile tools with which to support the re-establishment of key governance functions. GooB tools are, depending on the country specific conditions, ideally based on quickly deployable communications infrastructure, collaboration tools and software applications developed jointly with national stakeholders and with key international reconstruction and ICT experts.

The GooB tools are required to allow scaling and linking up with broader systems and processes of civil administration development occurs.

3. Governance out of a Box concept (GoodB)

The Governance out of a Box -toolkit development is guided by the identification of special contextual requirements that proposed and planned solutions must meet. The requirements can be divided into three groups by their type:

- generic (true in every case)
- specific for post-conflict/fragile states
- requirements that are always case-specific.

According to the goals of the GooB concept, the special interest here lies in the second group of requirements, since the aim is to develop replicable tools for post-conflict environments. These requirements can then be further categorized:

- those related to the conflict/weak stability
- those related to the particularly weak/destroyed infrastructure (as often is the case immediately following a war)
- those related to the particularly weak human capacities (again as often experienced in the post-conflict situations, especially when combined with extreme poverty).

As these requirements are gathered through analysis and lessons learned, they are to be shared with the international community, the private sector and governments recovering from conflict.

4. Mobile birth registration case description

The aim of the Mobile Birth Registration (MBR) -project is to create a functioning mobile birth registration data collection system in Liberia. The project supports the computerization of the birth registration process and complements the manual process of birth registration in Liberia.

NDG consists of two basic modules, the NDG server and the mobile phones. The Server Module is used to create and send surveys to mobile phones, receive interview results, administer users, devices, questionnaires and responses, map data using GPS-based data, and export data. The data received from the field personnel is stored in a MySQL database.

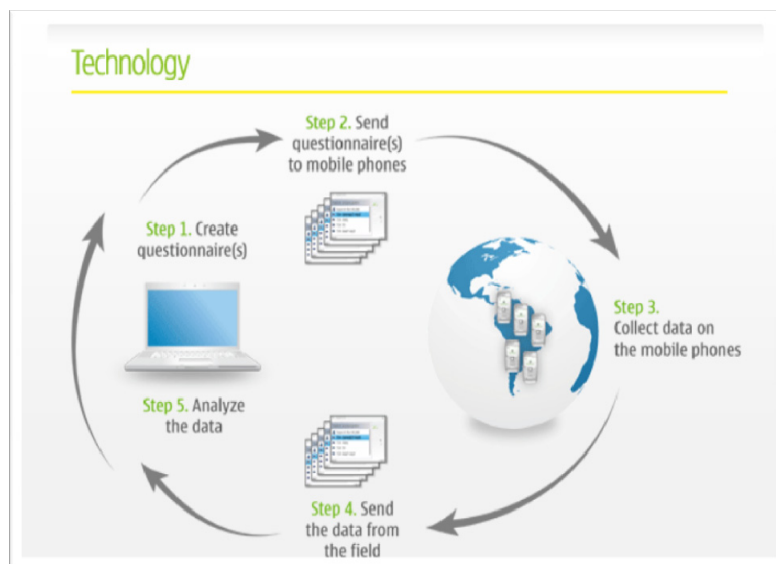


Figure 1. Data gathering process in NDG solution. (Source: Nokia)

The mobile phones are used to collect the data and to transfer the collected data to the server. Mobile devices are certain Nokia smart phone models. The open source software for data collection is developed by Nokia and it is free to download and use. At the

4. Mobile birth registration case description

moment the application allows five different types of questions (descriptive, numerical, multiple choice, exclusive choice, date) in questionnaires and in addition the attachment of images. NDG uses the GPRS data network in the transmission and in the case that there is no network available, the data can be stored e.g. on a memory card to be later transferred to the server.



Servicing and accessing the NDG server at the LIBTEL premises.

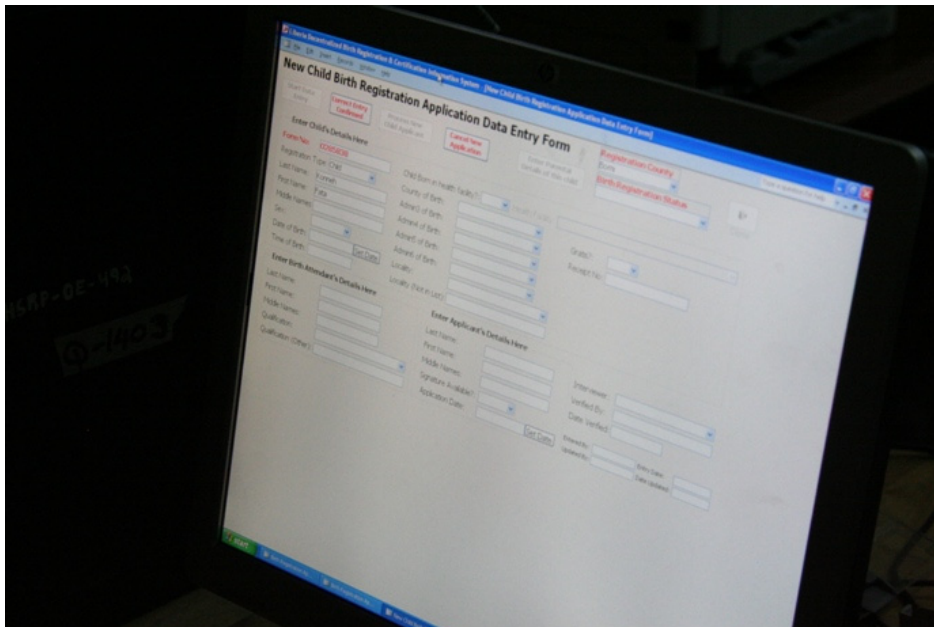
Since 2008 NDG has been applied in various projects related to health, agriculture, and population census and child welfare. In Ecuador NDG is used in the collection of demographic and epidemiological data from the rural regions. The spread of dengue fever is followed up in Amazonas region with NDG solution and in the Philippines it is utilized in the following up of the crop production. In Indonesia NDG is used in the collection of information of sponsored children.

Idea generation of the MBR-project started already in June 2007 when CMI undertook a fact finding mission to Liberia. The aim of the mission was to start the discussions on the needs of the government of Liberia to become a GooB-pilot partner country and about the possible administrative function for a tool to develop during this kind of a project. Discussions were held with all the relevant stakeholders in Liberia including the Liberia Reconstruction and Development Committee (LRDC) and the UN Mission in

4. Mobile birth registration case description

Liberia (UNMIL). The result of this mission was to assess in more detail three possible functions: civil service payment system, land and property registry and citizen registry.

In December 2007 a needs assessment mission was made to Liberia. CMI with consultants from Helsinki University of Technology, TeliaSonera, Oracle and Omnix International decided jointly with LRDC and Ministry of Health and Social Welfare Liberia (MoHSW) to design a pilot project for computerization of the birth registration process. The Poverty Reduction Strategy of Liberia was also launched in April 2008 and the birth registration issue was raised up by several groups during the process. The need for de-centralized handling of the issue was perceived as a priority.



Data Entry Form and keyboard entry at the Bomi County Registrar's Office.

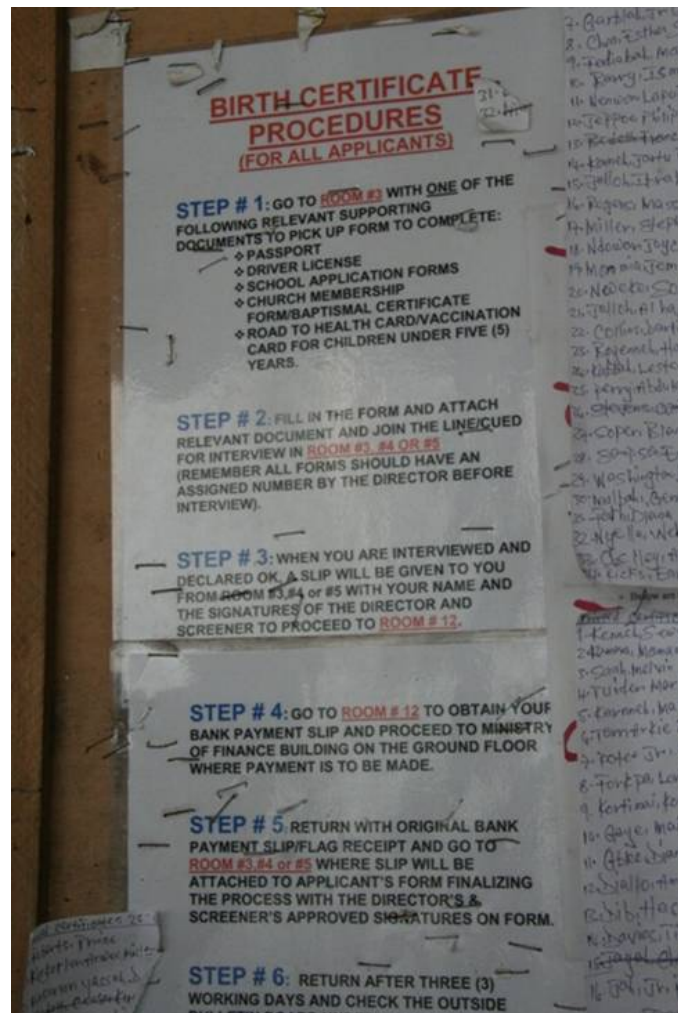
In February 2009 the project was granted funds by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. In April 2009 CMI conducted in cooperation with Idean Ltd a user requirements study in Liberia. The aim was to collect information on administrative process for birth registration both at national and county level and the user and technical requirements for a data collection and entry tool. User requirement study included five workshops in national level held in Monrovia and two regional level workshops in Montserado and Grand Bassa.

Later Bomi County replaced these two counties as a pilot county for MBR. In 2009 the first training session was conducted for approximately 20 users and administrative personnel of the MoHSW. The trainees were taught how to use the survey software in the mobile phones for registering a birth of a child, how to transmit the data and also how to administrate the mobile BR system. In Monrovia, training continued with intro-

4. Mobile birth registration case description

ducing the mobile BR solution to around 20 representatives from local IT companies. The purpose was to build local capacity to maintain the mobile BR system and assist the MoHSW with training the next set of users when the roll out of BR into counties takes off and if the human resources of the MoHSW are not sufficient to do all the training by themselves.

In the fall of 2010 the birth registration server was installed in MoHSW. Nokia contributed on the fine tuning of the software in mobile phone and server modules and the whole MBR-process started to run in the Bomi-county. The server was later moved to the premises of a local telecom operator LIBTELCO since they were able to provide continuous electricity and acclimatization needed in order to run server properly.



Registration process explained at the MoHSW in Monrovia.

5. Liberian context – the post-conflict environment

After decades of economic mismanagement and fourteen years of brutal civil war, the country is on its way to recovery. While recent developments are encouraging, the country is still considered to be in a fragile state.

Until the 2005 elections and the inauguration of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as Liberia's first post conflict democratically-elected president as well as Africa's first elected female president, Liberians were forced to live under various forms of oligarchic, autocratic, militaristic and authoritarian governments:

"In spite of the challenges of a verdant republic, the unsavoury character of its various regime types, as Africa's first Republic and one of only two independent nations in Africa [...] throughout the colonial era, Liberia also served, among other things, as a sanctuary for Africans seeking to escape colonial oppression, [and] an activist African nation while holding the presidency of the UN General Assembly in 1969" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission)

Since the 2003 signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which ended the 1989–2003 civil war, the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) peacekeepers and UN international police (UNPOL) have had primary responsibility for maintaining security. UNMIL has an extensive mandate, which extends its authority over an important part of the national infrastructure, including airports and ports. The re-establishment of the rule of law, protection of human rights and the disarmament of combatants are some of UNMIL's major roles. Through its civil affairs arm it has in many regions de facto assumed the role of local administrations.

"Seven years of unbroken peace – the longest in decades – has allowed Liberians to begin to believe, to be optimistic about the future, and to day by day start taking charge and shaping the direction of their country," Ellen Margrethe Løj, the Special Representative and head of the UNMIL, told the Security Council in her latest report. She also believes that positive developments tempered by the fragile peace relies heavily on the

5. Liberian context – the post-conflict environment

presence of UNMIL military and police and that Liberia will continue to require substantial international support and assistance for the foreseeable future.

As UNMIL plans to draw down, the Government of Liberia is facing the challenge to take over. The transition concerns not only security, but also administrative functions as mentioned above. This transition can have effects on the Governance out of a Box pilot.

Even with UNMIL present security threats and sources for instability need to be noted. According to external assessments (European Commission and The Economist magazine), sources of instability include former members of the Liberian armed forces and members of the security agencies who are dissatisfied with payment benefits, the vast number of unemployed ex-combatants, ex-combatants who are occupying and continue to illegally exploit the country's resources, political groups marginalized by the changes in the Liberian political landscape, and those who lost influence as a result of the inauguration of President Johnson-Sirleaf.

On the positive side, Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf is a strong leader who has continued support from the donor community for the rebuilding of post-civil war Liberia. Her government faces a major task in consolidating peace and democracy, as well as in the reconstruction and development of the economy. Although the president enjoys widespread support, it has decreased since she came to power because of her perceived failure to deliver tangible improvements in the standard of living. Patience with the government is starting to run out over the issue of corruption and the prosecution of concrete cases, an indicator for improvement in the rule of law (Economist 2010). The government is expected to step up its efforts in this area, prioritizing judicial reform and improving the implementation of existing mechanisms.

Political pressure for faster delivery of tangible economic results has increased and is itself a result of slower-than-expected economic growth, job losses in some sectors, and delays in infrastructure provision.

The controversy surrounding the publication of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which recommended the prosecution of the worst war criminals and the lustration of others, including the president, continues. Despite public support for the TRC's findings, the challenge they present to the president's political future and to former factional leaders under threat of prosecution will undermine the process of implementation (Economist 2010). Members of the legislature have held consultations with their constituencies on the report, which have shown that Liberian society is deeply divided on the main issues, even within small districts and rural communities.

“With the release of the final report, political actors have become increasingly vocal, with some having called on the President to accept and fully implement the recommendations, and others, some of whom are recommended for prosecution by the Commission, publicly denouncing and rejecting them.” (UNMIL Interviewee)

5. Liberian context – the post-conflict environment

The presence of a peacekeeping force, the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), will remain important, including as a deterrent to those threatening violent retaliation to any attempts at prosecution. The presidential elections scheduled for November 2011 are widely seen as a pivotal event in Liberia's post-conflict reconstruction. The UNMIL force decrease and government transition, the TRC report follow up and presidential elections will together set the scene for 2011, and need to be taken into account for the review recommendations.

6. Relevant policy

In the spirit of the Paris declaration and Accra Agenda for Action¹, this chapter briefly reviews the policy context. Highlighting the national development and policy context, yet recognizing the joint respective accountability of Liberia and Finland together, this chapter starts with national policy and continues with donor policy. This is essential to establish the background for assessing the relevance of a project, especially in terms of national prioritization and ground for joint partnership between countries.

Altogether the potential for aid effectiveness is seen as weak in the Liberian context. It has been suggested on the basis of Paris declaration monitoring that government and donors would direct substantial efforts to improve ownership, alignment of aid with national priorities, aid predictability, results-oriented frameworks and mutual accountability. Liberia should continue its reforms for institutional development and improving capacity. (OECD 2008).

Relevant Liberian policy context is best viewed through the recent Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) as well as County Development Agendas as more specific country frameworks. The PRS was finalised in 2008 and covers the three-year period from 2008 to 2011. The strategy articulates the Government's overall vision and major strategies for moving towards rapid, inclusive and sustainable growth and development. It consists of four pillars: security, economic revitalization, governance and rule of law and infrastructure and basic services. Built on broad consultations and based on the 150 day action plan and Interim PRS the strategy establishes a framework for action between Government, civil society, the private sector and the donor community.

¹ See Paris declaration on aid effectiveness, I 3 II and III: "Increasing alignment of aid with partner countries' priorities, systems and procedures and helping to strengthen their capacities" and "enhancing donors' and partner countries' respective accountability to their citizens and parliaments for their development policies, strategies and performance. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/30/63/43911948.pdf>. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness recalls that principles of harmonisation, alignment and management-for-results must be adapted to environments of weak governance and capacity.

According to IMF the PRS approach is by now well established in a substantial number of countries and has been associated with notable advances in country ownership, making poverty reduction more prominent in policy debates, and facilitating more open dialogue.

Some authors question though if PRSs deliver sufficient frameworks for the post-conflict situation: *“A focus on state building, security and the gradual institutionalization of the state society contract is arguably at least as important as poverty reduction as a framework for engagement”* (OECD 2008). From that point of view, the PRSP process may be inappropriate, or at least insufficient, in framing strategy. If properly developed, an alternative model (for instance the Integrated Peacebuilding Strategy process) might serve as a more appropriate locus of strategy and co-ordination – framing and supporting the PRSP’s focus on poverty reduction. (OECD 2008). The project itself might be able to contribute within a limited scope on commenting on the appropriateness of PRS in post-conflict scenarios.

Having said that, it is evident that that the current PRS will provide useful entry points for national project justification. Birth registration itself is part of the Strategic objective 2: To expand access to the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS). It aims at reaching 70 percent of health facilities in each county to be providing BPHS by December 2010. The BPHS focuses on six national health priorities: maternal and newborn care, child health, reproductive and adolescent health, communicable disease control (including HIV and AIDS), mental health, and emergency care. As for birth registration the objective more specifically aims at establishing birth registration centres in all health facilities and 300 communities nationwide. This target is a precondition to increase the national level of birth registration. On the operational level the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare scorecard matrix shows more concrete objectives with regards to birth registration (90% of children registered).

Other PRS level registration targets include land ownership, property, voter and business registration. While these are very different processes and have their own sets of challenges across sectors and implementation levels, lessons from the pilot might be valuable also for other registration processes, including computerization.

On county level the health objective is also reflected, but it does not mention civil registration or birth registration specifically (for example Bomi County Objective 3: To expand access to basic health care of acceptable quality and establish the building blocks of an equitable, effective, efficient, responsive and sustainable health care delivery system). However, the MoHSW decentralization plans might cover county level objectives.

Major donor frameworks are aligned with the PRS, but also provide further guidance on external development views. To complement the PRS, the UN Country Team has formulated the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which sets out how the UN will support national PRS pillars between 2008 and 2012. The project level col-

6. Relevant policy

laboration for example with UNICEF might be enabled through this joint policy background.

The EC country strategy for Liberia provides strong references to the interim PRS and features sector health engagement high on the agenda. (page 45: program purpose: To expand access to basic healthcare of acceptable quality; to support restructuring, rationalization, development of human resources and management capacity of the public health system). Under the Governance, Institutional Support and Capacity-Building Cross-Cutting Programme EC and Liberia aspire to restore the capacity of the public administration to collect process and manage data and information essential for policy definition, implementation and monitoring.



T. Reginald Wanley, County Registrar, Bomi County, Tubmanburg explaining the registration process.

The Governance out of the Box pilot is aligned with both programmes (birth registration /health and the capacity development component).

As for Finnish development policy, none of the long-term partner countries are in West-Africa. Thematically however, the project under review has relevance for the Finland's development goal:

“Finland promotes economically, socially and ecologically sustainable development, and places particular emphasis on the importance of issues relating to climate and the environment. At the same time, [the authors] stress crisis prevention and support for peace processes as an important element in promoting socially sustainable development.” (MFA). Please refer to the chapter on ICT for development for more specific policy related comments.

According to Finland's framework for Africa, Finland channels its development co-operation into fields in which the potential for creating Finnish added value is strong – exploiting Finnish expertise and experience in supporting the development programmes of partner countries. The role of the private sector and trade as the engine of economic development is the focus of increasing emphasis. The project under review has selected an interesting model of cooperation, using corporate and institutional donors and implementers, being able to demonstrate Finnish added value on those levels. As a testing ground for innovative registration software, Finnish companies might even be beneficiaries on some level, noting the high competition of mobile phone services in Africa and elsewhere.

7. ICT4D and e-Government approach

Information and communication technologies for development (ICT4D) focus explicitly in harnessing ICTs for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. ICTs are recognized as pervasive general-purpose technologies, which have wide societal and other effects in addition of improved technological infrastructure. The broader context of ICT4D is provided by the MDGs, as well as the World Summit on Information Society principles in 2003, which specified the closing of the digital divide between rich and poor nations as one of its central objectives. (MFA 2005, Unwin 2009)

Specifically, ICT4D tackles the issues of income equality, poverty reduction, and democracy building. These activities take place usually in concrete initiatives removing deprivation barriers in education, health, citizen participation, communication, as well as gender equality and fostering entrepreneurship. (MFA 2005).

Promotion of better governance and government through ICT is also one of the main-streams of ICT4D, as governments of the least developed countries are typically best positioned to leverage ICT-based services to citizens, as well as to adopt and implement new ICT and ICT-based services.

7.1 e-Government

e-Government is essentially the use of information and communications technologies to provide and leverage different level of government services to users, citizens and organizations alike. The interaction may be in the form of obtaining or providing information, making payments and a host of other activities via the Internet. Generally, e-Government is about transactions enabled over ICT technologies. (Palvia and Sharma 2007).

The leading motive to develop e-Government is its economic and social impact, especially in the context of development. Information and communications technologies lie at the heart of e-Government, and its contribution to economy and society unfolds in several ways. The use of ICT, as a tool for meeting the Millennium Development Goals or for poverty reduction and vis-à-vis e-Government, is essentially a multidimensional

challenge, including socio-economic, political, institutional, and technical aspects. ICTs allow the transformation of routine behaviour and decision-making processes of people and organizations, something of particular potential for e-Government. Yet, e-Government is no panacea and its contributions to economic and societal development are a function of technological infrastructure, capabilities to use electronic services and the consequent implementation of these services.

While definitions of e-Government vary by different sources they have a common theme: e-Government involves using information technology, especially the Internet, to improve the delivery of government services to citizens, businesses, and other government agencies. The UN e-Government Survey (2010) compiles the essential characteristics of e-Government to the model below (Figure 2).

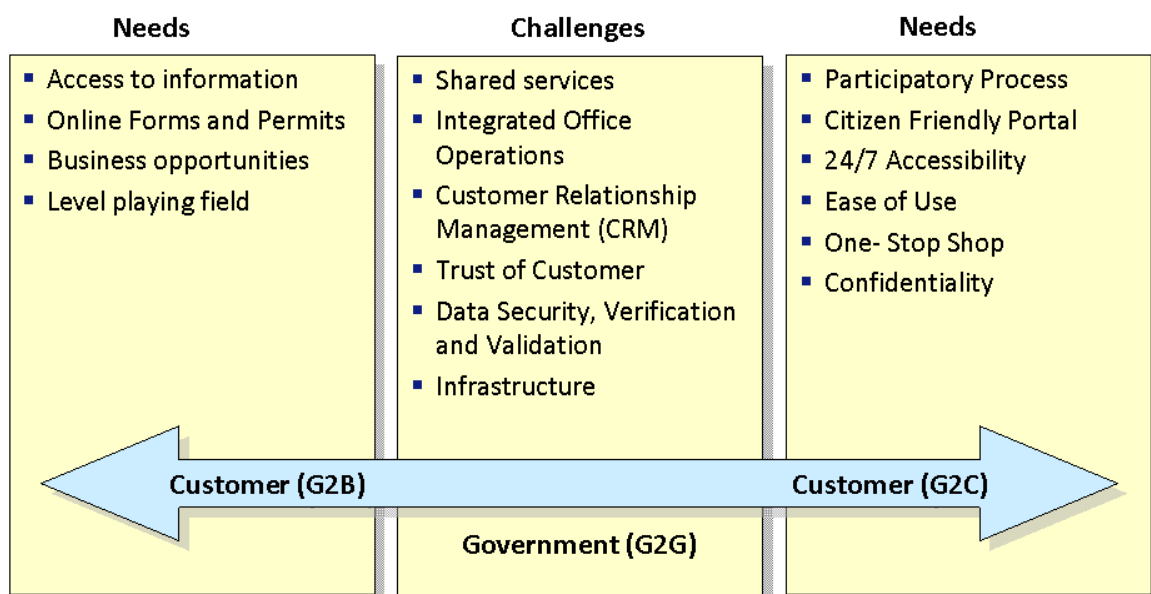


Figure 2. e-Government model by UN e-Government Survey (2010).

In the e-Government model by UN, e-Government serves businesses for example by giving access to information, by providing on-line forms and permits, by informing of business opportunities. e-Government meets the needs of citizens through participatory process, citizen friendly portals, and through ease of use and one-stop shop of government services. e-Government enables both businesses and citizens to interact and receive services from the federal, state or local governments twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

The concept of e-Government is easy to break-up into sub-components through an analogy with e-Business and e-Commerce. E-business infrastructure is accounted usually as the total economic infrastructure to support electronic business processes and conduct electronic commerce. It includes hardware, software, telecommunication net-

7. ICT4D and e-Government approach

works, support services, and human capital used in electronic business and commerce (Mesenbourg 2010). In a similar fashion, the impact of e-Government is premised on implementation of electronic information processing within government, and by offering public services through electronic transactions to citizens and businesses.

7.2 e-Government in Africa and Development Cooperation

Current understanding of how ICT contributes to economic growth is inadequate, and is especially so in the context of Sub-Saharan economies. The difficulties are magnified when it comes to the relationship between poverty alleviation and ICT, where the economic and social processes are highly distinct and specific. Without doubt ICT is somehow positively correlated with GDP growth at aggregate level, but in order to foster improved ICT policies, there is clear need to go beyond the assumption of ICT benefits trickling through the economy. Much more is needed to assess through what processes direct and indirect benefits of ICT unfold in Sub-Saharan economies, whether it is a case of capital intensive ICT infrastructure building, education of technologically advanced work force, erecting eServices for improved civil society, or employing ICT in support of pro-poor initiatives. (Toivanen 2011).

There are several regional, national and continental initiatives to improve the state of ICT and e-Government in Africa. Perhaps the most up-to-date listing of ICT and STI-related major coordination efforts and initiatives in Africa is offered in the *OECD African Economic Outlook 2009*, which details an impressive number of initiatives. Instead of reproducing those here, may it suffice to say that indeed ICT and Information Society are increasingly drawing attention in Africa. United Nations, World Bank, African Union, African Development Bank, European Commission and other donors are all introducing new, even rivalling, ICT related programmes and funding schemes. There is also on-going consideration of the best approaches to ICT4D. (OECD 2009).

The over-arching movement is to make every effort not to see ICT as an insulated sector, and integrate it more deeply to on-going processes of development and cooperation. If ICT has been bearing something of a symbol of development, today the concern is mostly how it can be mobilized in support of development. As the *OECD African Economic Outlook 2009* special issue on ICT noted, development challenges set the context for defining the objectives of ICT.

There are different approaches in how to mobilize ICT for development cooperation. Recently, majority of donor countries, such as Sweden or Britain, have chosen to embed ICT as cross-cutting technology into other development cooperation sectors, such as health or education. Some, like Finland, see a point of keeping the sector as specific arena of action and maintain separate action lines. Each strategy has its own benefits and drawbacks. The first recognizes ICT as only means to deliver ends, whereas the

latter one is often better suited to improve insufficient infrastructure and raise awareness of ICT's possibilities and special challenges. (Toivanen 2011)

Both approaches make explicit the need to start from the development challenges and deliver on them, despite of differences in positioning the place of ICT in relationship to other sectors of development cooperation.

These changes reflect another major transition beginning to take place in Africa. For more than a decade the Digital Divide framed ICT in Africa. Witnessing how the OECD countries leaped forward with new technologies, poor countries appeared to stay even further behind. Today, with Africa announcing major achievements in infrastructure and posting one of the world's highest ICT growth rates, this fear is diminishing. It is also directing attention to the effective implementation and deployment of ICT, which is mobilization of a genuine information society. (Toivanen 2011).

A central policy objective of the Finnish development cooperation in the area of ICT is that the belief in its broad societal benefits, and relation to implementation of ICT with Finnish development cooperation resources that:

“A sustainable information and knowledge society cannot be created merely by exporting technology to developing countries; the countries must be helped to develop a knowledge society strategy suited to their own conditions.” (MFA 2007).

One objective in the Finnish development policy in the area of information society is to mainstream ICTs, that is, to foster the adoption of ICT across key societal and policy sectors. Increased use of ICTs to improve the government's internal efficiency and provision of public services constitutes a natural arena for this objective, and also provides the development cooperation context for GooB case in Liberia. (MFA 2005).

8. Evaluation findings and recommendations

This section will present in condensed format the essential evaluation findings, as well as possible recommendations and other observations. The findings and recommendations are structured under major themes and presented in summary format.

8.1 Project administration and management

MBR is a well documented and managed project, a critical feature for a project with its size, complexity and challenges. CMI has managed well a multi-stakeholder project consortium, which includes several parties from different sectors of the society and different countries.

Project planning and documentation has been taken undertaken with care. MFA reporting and other documentation establishes a concise and logical picture of the unfolding of the project. Project planning documents are written clearly and provide good support for implementation.

Project management structure appears to be appropriately designed and work well. CMI Helsinki office and Liberian MBR staff appear to have effective communication and shared perception of the project, its challenges and future needs.

It is challenging to plan and adjust a project with rapid changes and a high degree of uncertainty. Long-term development tools are not necessarily functional. Working through the Government of Liberia is essential, but it is also time consuming and it is somewhat difficult to predict necessary action even in the short term. For this project to be functional it needs constant coordination and adjustment (Interview Gama Roberts 22.11.2010).

In a fragile and changing environment, a multi-stakeholder partnership needs to have a good-enough understanding of roles, responsibilities and commitments, and change in perception needs to be constantly re-communicated. There is risk of an imbalance of necessary ad-hoc actions on the ground and structured planning and reporting.

While standard logical frameworks and detailed implementation planning tools might not be appropriate, other tools might be helpful. In both humanitarian post-conflict work

and in long-term development cooperation minimum standards and management tools could be identified to support the monitoring of the activities. Broad enough annual planning should continue to anticipate events that might negatively affect implementation (such as political campaigning and national elections).

It is recommended to identify and use management tools and minimum standards for monitoring of the activities. One source for comparison and ideas could be the field of humanitarian relief and disaster response that inherently has to cope with rapidly changing environments. These tools might also contribute to other CMI projects elsewhere.

8.2 Best practice in post conflict situation

CMI's role in the MBR project in Liberia can be observed as three-fold: 1. a consultancy or advisory role, 2. advocacy role and 3. facilitator role. CMI takes the role of advising the Liberian government to some extent. Through the UBR tasks force CMI is also an advocacy actor. Bringing actors from national and international level together, CMI is also contributing through a (neutral) facilitator role. CMI is not registered in Liberia and has as a peace mediation and post-conflict actor a short to medium term aspiration to remain in Liberia. It is important to continue to work on the fine line between those roles and understand the implications of overemphasizing one of the roles over another. While all three roles can be justified on grounds of sustainable peace building, a strong advocacy role can be easily challenged questioning for example CMI's mandate to work in Liberia.

CMI has a specific niche and clear focus as an organization and entering into a country at short notice. The organization should be clear about the role mix in the specific contexts and communicate its role, mandate and purpose actively to avoid being challenged as an illegitimate actor.

8.3 Ownership

National stakeholders on different levels have confirmed the relevance of this project. Government ministries as well as UN country team representatives have seen the project high on the development agenda. Many civil society actors agree on the importance and indeed advocate making it a national priority to reinstate birth registration. (Interview 22.11., 23.11. and 24.11.2010: UN Peacebuilding Fund, UNICEF, MoHSW, UN country team)

MoHSW is responsible for reinstating birth registration and has been working with multiple donors to make progress. Ministry representatives have indicated the project to contribute to a national priority, but at the same time keeping a coordination role.

8. Evaluation findings and recommendations

While different actors implement components regarding birth registration, it is important to sustain government ownership of the process. For example UNICEF has procured secure birth registration certificate templates from international suppliers [Interview 23.11.2010: Bomi County]. While there is a sufficient stock of certificates for many years to come, government agencies have not been involved in the procurement and they are not aware of the source. This raises questions in terms of sustainability and local capacity.

While the reinstating of birth registration has strong national demand and ownership, the national ownership related to the MBR project needs still strengthening (see also observations on sustainability). Barriers concerning technology use still exist partly because of capacity gaps. The project is encouraged to continue capacity development. Technology related ownership also demands some degree of being comfortable with the use and maintenance of technology. Capacity levels, ownership readiness and local and national sustainability reinforce each other.

MoHSW works with donors and international partners on the improvement of the birth registration system. While it is coordinating the efforts, it is important not to move towards short-term outsourcing of full implementation, which would have negative implications on achieving both implementation ownership and process ownership. Rather, it should be ensured that the ministry is involved in all BR-related processes in order to increase the sustainability and ownership.

9. Donor and stakeholder coordination

Donor coordination in the MBR project has been undertaken at the national planning level and at the project implementation level. This two-level donor coordination has placed the project well within a broader reconstruction agenda in Liberia and ensured its synergies at national level, especially during the initial planning and idea-phase. Against this backdrop, donor coordination during the project implementation phase has been served partially different, more practical, needs, and been based effectively on cooperation with other organizations.

Donor coordination is an essential mechanism for development cooperation projects, especially when they address central institutions of the civil society, something that working civil registry and birth registration undoubtedly are.

MBR planning initiated within the context of Liberian reconstruction, and one of its initial contacts was with the Liberia Reconstruction Development Committee (LRDC), which at the time was under the Presidential Office. This allowed CMI to craft out the action plan and objective, which was well aligned with the broader Liberian post-crisis planning and reconstruction effort. CMI also recruited a Country Coordinator, who had recently left the LRDC and therefore had close contacts with and understanding of Liberian reconstruction efforts and donor initiatives. (HT Interview 15.12.2010)

As CMI identified the area of UBR as potential activity area, and planning issues evolved more practical and detailed, the issues of donor coordination also changed, and it was more difficult to gain overview of on-going and planned activities. Cooperation and discussions with other NGOs, and especially with the Health Ministry and UNICEF, allowed CMI to identify the MBR as a potential project. (HT Interview 15.12.2010)

Thus the project was initiated within the broader Liberian reconstruction and planning effort, and thereby demonstrated good coordination with other donors as well as with the Liberian government.

When MBR moved to implementation, the aspects and mechanisms of donor coordination changed. National synergies secured, primary challenges involved more practical and detailed issues.

9. Donor and stakeholder coordination

Another aspect reinforcing donor coordination in the project has been its implementation within the (UBR) -civil registry project, led by the Liberian Health Ministry and includes also UNICEF and Plan Liberia. CMI has also been member at the UBR-Task Force, led by the MoHSW, thereby intimately linked to all civil registry issues in Liberia and other closely related developments. MBR has also undertaken other cooperation with the Liberian Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services, UNMIL, and Plan Finland, and several others.

As an information technology (IT) project, it is essential that technology and software acquired in the MBR project is compatible with existing and possible future IT systems. MoHSW, for example, is implementing several IT-projects, often involving different donors and implementation partners. MBR project has paid attention to these concerns, and MoHSW has also advanced its own ICT strategy that will provide a backbone for IT coordination in the future. It is advisable that the donor coordination involves technical coordination in the future and that this coordination aims to ensure the interoperability of systems through e.g. open interfaces.

In summary, donor and stakeholder coordination in MBR project has evolved in tandem, and logically, with the project's leap from planning to implementation, it has been undertaken in a manner that allows the broader, national and sectoral synergies between different projects and initiatives to emerge.

9.1 ICT4D within CMI strategy

Although CMI has a history of exploring the possibilities of ICTs in crisis management, the MBR project introduced a new line of work to the activities of CMI. It undertook the employment of ICT in support of post-conflict state building, as well as carrying out a project to develop effectively an ICT field application, that is, to use mobile communication technologies to build a civil registry. These concerns were raised also in the early statements and reviews by MFA, when it formed its opinion of the project. The issue at stake is that how well and with what strategy CMI is best able to harness ICT and other new technologies to fulfil its core mission.

The core mission of CMI is to resolve conflict and build sustainable peace. Although ICT4D may appear distant to conflict resolution and post-conflict state building, ICT and other new technologies have a recognized role in concrete building of key civil society institutions, as well as in providing key public services in challenging environments.

MBR project and GooB initiative were undertaken as conscious moves to develop, or even experiment, new arenas to carry out the core mission of CMI. In several regards, the experience has been positive for CMI, funders, as well as cooperation partners and intended beneficiaries.

From the vantage point of advancing credible and high-quality ICT4D initiatives, the issue is to recognize how the MBR experience is being evaluated and reviewed by CMI management and organization, and how this process may shape the way CMI approaches and defines ICT4D within its agenda.

CMI is currently undertaking a review of the MBR process and considering how the experience fits in its conflict resolution and post-conflict state building activities. The MBR experience has also been reviewed by CMI's board.

It is recommended that CMI steps up its internal evaluation and stock-taking of the MBR experience, and reviews thoroughly the place and potential of ICT4D activities within its strategy. Furthermore, CMI strategy should outline clearly organization's approach and intended objectives with ICT. These actions, when reflected in organizational structure and resourcing, would provide enhanced credibility and quality to the future ICT4D activities of CMI.

9.2 ICT4D lessons learned and diffusion of knowledge

Over the past decade, ICT4D has evolved from relatively small group of pioneers into a massive movement within the development community. ICT4D today is a huge and diverse community of practitioners, ranging from academia to civic organizations to small start-ups to globally leading ICT companies, as well as key international development cooperation and funding organizations. ICT4D projects are also implemented in wide array of conditions and countries, ranging from conflict and post-conflict situations to peaceful societies, and the areas and possibilities of different applications are too many to count. In effect, ICT4D embodies today a mature community that represents one important line of activity in the development community.

This pool of expertise holds produces and circulates the best, recognized and latest skills and knowledge in the area of employing ICT for development. CMI has engaged relatively weakly in this global ICT4D community.

It is recommended that CMI, and especially its ICT4D experts, MBR project team and GooB team, undertake more active engagement in the national and global ICT4D community by sharing its own experiences and lessons learned, as well as by taking stock from similar or related initiatives and by learning from latest trends and developments in the field. Active participation in the right technological and professional community is likely to strengthen CMI's activities and credibility in the ICT4D arena, as well as to widen its partner network.

9.3 Approach to ICT capacity building

The MBR project is essentially a capacity building project involving the establishment of local technological hardware and software infrastructure, as well as training and education of skilled staff for the project. As a project involving many aspects, and in particular strong technological components, special attention must be paid to the capacity building in ICT. The experience has been by and large been very positive, and MBR project has created a solid platform to expand and continue the birth registration work.

A critical component in this accomplishment has been the local implementation team, especially the Country Coordinator, whose central role in securing success was emphasized by all stakeholders. On the other hand, overly relying on one person or small team poses also a challenge for the continuation and sustainability of the project. CMI and MBR have demonstrated plans how to gradually shift responsibilities and ownership to the local partners, yet it is recommended that CMI pays heightened attention on how to maintain the performance of its own staff and gradually broaden the group of people shouldering responsibility for the project's technological components.

The project was initiated in close cooperation with Nokia Group, one of the world's leading telecommunication equipment companies, and its expertise, technology and service have been instrumental for the launch of the project. The whole MBR concept is based on the Nokia Data Gathering (NDG)-solution, which enabled the creation of specific data collection forms and the transmission of data from hand-held input devices to central databases over GPRS connection. Technology, know-how, and training provided by Nokia have been critical aspects of the project, and have undoubtedly strengthened local capacity. Yet, as some local interviews and observations showed, there were also questions and unmet expectations about its involvement, as well as about that of the other major private company, IDEAN. The public-private partnerships in MBR have worked well by all criteria, but it is a question if all involved parties have had the right expectations about each other, as well as of their own roles.

MBR project has required the development of tailored software and other solutions. It has made good use of Liberian ICT expertise and entrepreneurs when appropriate and possible, and thereby contributed to the building of local expertise. This highly advisable approach and it is recommended, the MBR emphasizes in its planning and reporting the potential use of local ICT expertise. Yet, as the MBR system is a sensitive and important governmental service, involving the registration of citizens, it should be made sure that when completed, the data security of the system is guaranteed. This could be done through e.g. an external security audit.

MBR solution is based on the availability of trained and skilled staff in rural communities, who are able to collect birth registration data with mobile phones equipped with NDG and send the data to the main server. To this end comprehensive training programme has been undertaken by the MBR project staff and Nokia in the pilot county

Bomi. This has included the training of local end users about the using and maintaining the NDG system, as well as other aspects of the birth registration process. Thus the critical steps in building capacity necessary for shifting ownership to local organizations have been done. The essential challenge for MBR will be how to provide comprehensive and high quality training to local staff when the project implementation is scaled up to other counties. Another hurdle is the fact that MoHSW has currently contracted the county registrar staff on a 6-month basis. Rapid staff turnover could present problems in terms of having to retrain staff as well as potentially losing institutional memory. This should be brought up in discussions with MoHSW.

In summary, it appears that MBR approach to local capacity building has been positive and sufficient to meet the needs of the existing project. However, it is recommended that CMI demonstrates in its planning how it will maintain this momentum during the project continuation, and in particular CMI needs to demonstrate how it will build local ICT and project management capacity to eventually take over the critical responsibilities currently held by MBR country coordinator.

9.4 Sustainability

On the country level, the efficiency and sustainability of interventions are in danger if the funding available to the country is higher than the absorption capacity: this includes coordination of development priorities, capacity to manage interventions and reporting. The MBR project has taken these external factors successfully into account, and is working on improving sustainability. The project team demonstrates a high level of awareness of donor agendas and activities and managed to adjust own actions accordingly. The project is closely linked with and coordinated by MoHSW. Up to now it shows good potential for some level of institutional sustainability. Liberia is still dealing with political power struggles, and the UBR task force in principle is a good way to find collaboration for it having a mandate to take birth registration matters forward. However, participation in the task force is mixed and there is a risk when development priorities are changed, the sustainability might also be in danger.

There is a strong link between technological and financial sustainability. It can be argued that on capital city as well as county/district level technological (development, support, maintenance) sustainability could be ensured; while services and capacities might be available, those services might be costly and therefore affect the financial sustainability of the project. Some kind of a long-term sustainability assessment should be conducted for the years following the end of CMI's project.

Currently, the project can demonstrate cost effective ways of operation with some level of sustainability: The project has chosen simple outreach functionality, using District Health Officers (DHO). It is a recommendable strategy to use available resources and a cost effective and flexible outreach mechanism to reach citizens in villages or in

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small cities on market days. This might indeed enable reaching vulnerable groups of society without the transport means to get to the city for registration. Using a light mobile infrastructure is commendable; its advantages against other setups (servers at district level, laptops) should be clearly communicated. From the GooB point of view, a comparison with other possible models for the data gathering system could be beneficial.

Inclusion of new services with the existing mobile service platform might prove critical for sustainability, in order to ensure the devices deliver useful functionality to the largest possible extent. MBR could be seen as a pilot for other services as well, generating a generic data gateway for transmitting data between rural areas and urban centres. It is important to demonstrate and advocate to relevant parties within the Government of Liberia that the MBR model can be applied to a number of data gathering needs. To set an example, the easiest way to expand the repertoire of services would be to add e.g. health surveys, since the MBR solution is already being used by health officials.

Decentralization – as in other developing country contexts – is high on the development agenda and the Government of Liberia and other stakeholders and decision-makers debate about different ways of achieving decentralized services on a large scale. In terms of ICT it is important to highlight the difference between decentralization of services and access and decentralization of infrastructure. A full decentralization of ICT infrastructure would not only be not sustainable at this point, given the poor state of supporting infrastructure in the counties, it is simply not necessary with the model that MBR exhibits.

All of the above indeed strengthens demand for ICT capacity development on all levels. An important check point for sustainable interventions is not to co-create non-sustainable structures in the first place. It is useful to check current and future activities and plans against potential for sustainable continuation.

As CMI is a temporary actor in the Liberian post-war development, it is recommended to start working on a plan to gradual transfer the responsibilities to government actors on different levels. CMI has achieved with limited human resources a lot, but on the other side of the coin too many activities in need of support refer back to CMI as primary support function. For a medium-term exit the government ministries need to be fully aware of the complexity and costs to keep up the system, for them to be able in principle to plan human and other resources accordingly. An ICT policy at MoHSW, currently under development, would provide guidance and assist in avoiding non-sustainable, counterproductive efforts (Interview 24.11.2010: MoHSW). Similarly, the UBR taskforce continues to be a relevant actor for ensuring civil society perspectives are visible and providing positive pressure to keep up birth registration in general.

9.5 Cross-cutting issues

Birth registration is a basic step in the process of issuing citizenship, a fundamental human right and critical step in building democratic civil societies. As such, provision of universal birth registration services have clear and significant development impacts across the board, but especially in areas identified as priorities in the Finnish development policy, such as promotion of rights and status of women, children, and other groups that are easily excluded and discriminated.

Liberian Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008) placed birth registration among concrete steps in improving the health and living conditions for families and small children. Under the broader framework of Basic Package of Health Services, improvement of birth registration was listed as one of the key means to deliver improved public services to all Liberians, but especially to children, women and in the rural areas.

PRSP listed under its "Strategic objective 2: To expand access to the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS)" as a concrete action to "Establish birth registration centres in all health facilities and 300 communities nationwide" by December 2010. As obstacles to this, PRSP identified "limited supply chains and population tracking systems are worsening the health situation." (Republic of Liberia 2008)

MBR is one of the key initiatives aimed at concretely improving the state of birth registration in Liberia, and concretely providing capacity building (training and equipment) and actual registration services. The MBR outreach possibilities, for example through reaching potential clients at the local market, are clearly in support of vulnerable groups: It builds on women and children's life realities; from that point of view, daily survival and making a living is more important than registration of children. (Interview 22.11.2010 Wilfred Gray-Johnson, UN Peace building Fund Office: "*BR is not a bread and butter issue, but it is still important to people*").

In summary, the MBR project has actually already provided a number of actual birth registrations, but its essential impact thus far has been in establishing an infrastructure and trained staff capable of providing birth registration services in challenging conditions to expanded population base, and thereby enabling the scaling up of service provision in the future. As such, it has addressed some of the cross-cutting issues emphasized in the Finnish development policy, especially those related to women's and children's rights, and has heightened potential to do so in the future.

9.6 Outcomes and impacts

MBR is without a doubt an effective project with both considerable positive effects and high future potential for positive outcomes and impacts. The major concrete accomplishments of the project are:

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- Implementation of working mobile birth registration system on pilot scale, which allows the scaling up of the infrastructure and service to other or all Liberian counties.
- Building necessary local capacity (infrastructure and human resources) to operate and maintain the MBR system.
- Provision of the official birth registration services in the pilot county.

As such, MBR is delivering on its intended core objectives in the Result area A, though not yet at the planned scale, but with the potential to do so within the project life-cycle.

Moreover, operable pilot scale MBR is a valuable demonstration of the possibilities of ICT in Liberia, and in general in the post-conflict development context. In Liberia, MBR experience has certainly influenced the MoHSW perception of the value and potential of ICT as an implementation vehicle for its own poverty reduction objectives. MoHSW is currently developing its own ICT policy, and the MBR experience, along with other recent ICT projects, that have undoubtedly impact on how the ministry and the government look at the strategic value of ICT.

The original MBR objectives included objectives shaping more broadly the Liberian population information system strategies and systems. This has not yet really taken place. One reason for this, is that MBR has been implemented under the MoHSW, whose mandate covers only birth registration, and other critical areas, while population information system fall under the mandates of other ministries. Thus, the challenge is to bring together people from the different governmental ministries and agencies that are working on some sort of population registration, be it voter registration, civil service worker registration or national census. CMI's role would be to act as a facilitator, while its credibility is now backed by the existence of a working registration and data collection solution.

Clearly, MBR has had the effects of providing improved birth registration services to the residents of the pilot county and it has increased the overall capacity of the Liberian government and counties to provide birth registration services.

The project has the potential to influence perceptions of the state as a positive service provider for its citizens as well as inform service providers' decisions on using sustainable, innovative and lightweight ICT infrastructure models. These potential impacts are possible if the project manages to cover result areas A and B well and if communication about the result areas is taken care of.

The impact of the GooB model can only be assessed when citizens are fully aware of the government service (communication function and sequencing needed) and when they have been exposed to the benefit (100% process completion needed).

Because of sensitive areas of a full scale civil registration system and with elections upcoming in October 2011, there is a considerable risk of negative effects and even im-

pacts. In the light of that risk, close monitoring of project activities and resulting stakeholder response is therefore recommended.

More significantly, it has facilitated increased awareness at different levels of government about the significance of birth registration and the practical value of mobile birth registration. This not only facilitates the future implementation of MBR project, but fosters an innovative and future-looking approach in employing ICT for fundamental public services in Liberia.

10. Conclusions

The Mobile Birth Registration project is an ambitious and relevant project which is being implemented in the challenging environment of post-conflict Liberia, neighbouring other fragile states such as the now increasingly unrest Ivory Coast. Upon completing its mid-term evaluation, undertaken within the evaluation guidelines of the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and other international evaluation standards, the evaluation team concludes that the project has been implemented successfully and according to good project management principles.

Given the challenging environment, the project has made considerable progress in its stated objectives, especially in result area A, although the implementation plan has had to be somewhat changed up to now. Nevertheless, and as the project staff and other stakeholders have recognized, there are several areas of activities or individual issues, which require CMI or the MBR project management team to revisit the existing project plan or implementation practices.

MBR demonstrates the potential of employing ICT as vehicle to strengthen the concrete realization of basic civil rights in a post-conflict society. Moreover, in providing improved birth registration services and thereby potentially enabling people access to passport, driving license and voter registration, as well as improved access to health services and other rights, MBR has addressed in particular the needs of women, children, and those displaced by the preceding Liberian civil war. As such the MBR project addresses core aspects of the Finnish development policy, as well as Finnish guidelines about ICT development cooperation.

The MBR project should be commended and its actual expansion from the pilot county to other Liberian counties should follow as planned. The evaluation team has identified a number of issues or concerns, presented above, the consideration of which may be helpful in planning and implementing future activities.

Regarding the ambitions of MBR to facilitate the broader Liberian government process to build a modern population information system, the evaluation team recommends CMI to look into the issue of bringing together the relevant governmental actors to discuss a broader civil registry, and advocating the MBR solution as one possible data

gathering and registration model. A population information system is essentially an inter-ministerial issue, involving a high number of stakeholders, whereas CMI and MBR have limited themselves largely to the mandate of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. That said, MBR has had a function to improve the ICT capacity – technical, human resource, and strategic – of MoHSW, and as such, MBR may have a role to play as a policy process facilitator with regard to more comprehensive registries.

Finally, the success and importance of MBR to its intended beneficiaries, Liberian families and civil society, raise the broader question of ICT4D's status and place in CMI strategy. CMI is currently reviewing its ICT4D experiences, and the process should lead also to reconsideration of ICT's role as an enabler of CMI's objectives. CMI has developed an excellent stakeholder community with ICT companies, but it would probably benefit also from improved linkages to the more diverse global ICT4D community and its pool of expertise.

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Appendix 1: Terms of reference

Mid-term review of governance out of a box – Population registration in Liberia

Terms of Reference

Background

Sustainable peace and resilient functioning state, particularly in post conflict settings, necessitates a state to be able to provide basic services to citizens and thus, rebuild a functional public administration and operational basic state functions. By providing basic services for citizens a state recovering from a conflict shows dividends of peace and rebuilds social contract between citizens and state. A stable peace and development can be built only on a functional state apparatus and administration.

One of the basic services of a state is birth registration and issuing birth certificates. At the same time as the birth registration serves needs of citizens and fulfil their right to be recognized as citizens, it also provides vital information on population within state borders and therefore, enables state governance to make informed decisions on, for instance, how to allocate efficiently scarce resources.

CMI's *Governance out of a Box* concept aims to identify and offer both the international community and national governments recovering from crisis, analytical tools with which to plan evaluate and acquire ICT based solutions enabling efficient and swift reinstating of key governance and basic service delivery functions of state.

As the first field pilot of the concept, CMI and its private sector partners have been supporting reinstatement and decentralization of birth registration in Liberia with information and communication technology (ICT) since 2008. In the mid July of 2009, Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) and the Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) signed an MOU agreeing for the piloting of the Governance out of a Box project as a complement to the reinstating and decentralization of birth registration in the country. CMI and its technology partner Nokia aim to support the Ministry of Health in its effort to meet the PRS objective of registering close to 90% of all children by utilizing mobile devices to collect and transmit birth registration information to a centralized database.

The immediate objective of the Governance out of a Box – Population Registration in Liberia (MFA code 25101801) Project is to re-establish the system of data

collection and entry for birth registration in close cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) in one pilot county and thereby, create a model for county-level data collection and also provide baseline data for a civil registry in Liberia. Through the system of data collection of birth registration data CMI supported the MoHSW in its efforts to meet the PRS objective of registering close to 90% of all children under the age of 5 and sought also to contribute establishment of civil registry in Liberia.

Thus, the broader aim of the project is two-fold: Firstly, to strengthen state capacity to revive birth registration as one of the basic services of state and thus, through strengthening state capabilities contribute to consolidation of peace and development in Liberia. Secondly, create a replicable model of ICT supported birth registration which is sustainable, robust but swift to set up.

Aims and Objectives

In general level, an aim for a Mid-term Review (MTR) of a project funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA) and according the Guidelines for Project Planning by the MFA, is to provide analytical information for further planning of the project. Moreover, evaluation should focus on both the desired and the unintentionally created impacts.

Thus, the Mid-term review of *Governance out of a Box – Population Registration in Liberia* –project (GooB) conducted by Crisis Management Initiative Ry in Liberia since 2009, aims to provide:

Analytical information for planning and implementation of the project in the following two years in Liberia,

By focusing on, at least, the following aspects:

- Relevance, effectiveness, success, efficiency and sustainability of the project, bearing in mind the project is only at its midpoint and conducted in challenging post-conflict environment;
- Assessing desired and undesired impacts of the project so far, including how and if the project has been or will be able to contribute to peace consolidation in post-conflict Liberia;
- Capturing lessons learned on implementing a challenging ICT project in post-conflict settings, particularly, in the context of Liberia;
- Generating recommendations on how to continue project implementation based on gained knowledge on the ongoing project and the implementa-

tion context in Liberia and thus, assist in determining modifications to the implementation and in formulating the intervention, if required.

Methodology

As the first deliverable of the Mid-term review study, the evaluation team is expected to provide to CMI a detailed evaluation plan on how the review will be conducted. Furthermore, in order to achieve the aims of the Mid-term Review, the evaluators conducting the review are expected to conduct a 3–5 days field mission in Liberia. The purpose of the field mission is to gain the first hand knowledge on the project by visiting some of the project sites and interviewing key stakeholders of the project (duty bearers, rights holders, intermediaries).

Tentatively the Mid-term review study is comprised of four main elements:

Preparing and delivering an evaluation plan including distribution of work among the evaluators, tentative table of contents for the evaluation, and identifies relevant interviewees and other evaluation documentation;

Desk study/preparatory work to gain the required knowledge before the field mission;

The field mission of 3–5 days in Liberia;

Synthesising the findings from the preparatory work and the field mission, and delivering draft Mid-term Review report to CMI for commentary;

Finalizing and delivering a Mid-term Review report on Governance out of a Box – Population Registration in Liberia.

Timeline with Outputs

<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Output</i>
September – October 2010	Preparatory work	Evaluation plan (2–5 pages)
October 2010	Desk study	Refined evaluation plan regarding the field mission (10–15 pages)
End of Oct – Beginning of Dec 2010	Field Mission in Liberia	
December 2010	Composing and finalizing the Mid-Term review report	Final Mid-term Review Report (15–25 pages)

Team Composition, Roles and responsibilities

The evaluation team of the Mid-term Review is composed of as follows:

Technical Research Centre of Finland (VTT)	Dr. Hannes Toivanen
	Jukka Hyvönen
University of Helsinki	Matthias Wevelsiep
Crisis Management Initiative	Mika Metsäniemi

The same team, excluding Mr. Hannes Toivanen, shall also conduct the aforementioned Field Mission in Liberia.

Roles and responsibilities of the evaluation team:

Hannes Toivanen, Team leader: Overall coordination and summary of the evaluation; Evaluation ICT4D practices and policies (international and MFA guidelines), Evaluation of e-Government approaches, Evaluation of sustainability of the adopted approach; Evaluation of the innovation management of the project.

Jukka Hyvönen, Team member. Evaluation of e-Government approaches; Evaluation of sustainability of the adopted approach; Evaluation of the innovation management of the project. "Collection of evidence and documentation, implementation of interviews, participation to the field mission;

Matthias Wevelsiep, Team member. Evaluation of development policy relevance (Liberia and MFA), development project design /plan (objective, expected results, monitoring and indicators, logical framework) and its level of implementation to date; relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, outputs/outcomes/impact and sustainability; Collection of evidence from duty bearers (state), rights holders (citizens), and intermediaries (NGO, business, other), participation to field mission, commenting on connection and interdependence of development cooperation, ICT4D, and e-Government

Mika Metsäniemi will coordinate practical arrangements such as travel arrangements and setting up meetings with key project stakeholders for the field mission in Liberia assisted by CMI Country Coordinator in the country. His focus in the study will be:

- To analyze the project from the point of view of the overall Governance out of the Box -concept: how does the project fit the original concept and what kinds of improvements or modifications can be drawn from analyzing the implementation and the context of the project? How does this project contribute to future GooB implementations?

- To gather material and conduct analysis for the ICT4Statebuilding portal, which is an integral part of sharing the experiences and lessons learnt of this and possible future GooB projects.
- To provide support and expertise in conducting the technical evaluation of the project.

In addition, the CMI Country coordinator in Liberia, Gama Roberts, will be assisting the team with the arrangements of the field visit practicalities and meetings and interviews with relevant stake-holders and other representatives in Liberia.

Documentation and access

CMI will furnish the evaluation team with full documentation (when trade secrecy or confidentiality agreements do not prevent this) to the evaluation team. This will consist at least all project planning and other documentation etc, as well as other possible material. CMI also makes relevant personnel available for interviews and facilitates contacts with interviewee candidates outside CMI.

Costs

CMI shall bear the travelling costs of the Field Mission to Liberia such as: Flight tickets, VISA fees, courier service for VISAs, hotels and transportation in Liberia as well as workshop(s) costs (if applicable) in Liberia. Moreover, CMI will reimburse transportation costs from a residence to a departure airport for the Field Mission and from an arrival airport to a residence, respectively. These costs will be reimbursed up to 70 euro per leg per evaluator.

Appendix 2. Field trip program

Mon 21.11.2010

11:00 Crisis Management Initiative

Gama Roberts, Country Coordinator, CMI

15:00 UN Peace building Fund Office

Wilfred Gray-Johnson, Executive Director

Edward Mulbah, Senior Technical Advisor on Peace building

Tue 22.11.2010

10:00-12:00 **The County Registrar's Office**, Bomi County, Tubmanburg

T. Reginald Wanley, County Registrar

Willie Z. Taweh, Data Manager

Benjamin Tuago, IT/Data Clerk

13:30 **Beafine Community Clinic**, Bomi County, Beafine

Yei N. Magbinne, DHO - Suehn Mecca District

20:30 **UNICEF**

Isabel Crowley, Country Representative

Wed 23.11.2010

10:00 **Ministry of Health (MoH)**

Minister Varpilah, Deputy Minister for Health and Vital Statistics

Minister Wesseh, Assistant Minister for Vital Statistics

Ms. Beatrice Lah, IT Director

Mr. Solo Barton, National Registrar

15:00 **United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)**

Moustapha Soumare, DRSRG

Ariano Cassandra, Civil Affairs Officer

Baffour Agyeman-Duah, PhD, Senior Special Advisor, Office of the DRSRG

Thu 24.11.2010

10:00 **LISGIS**

Dabah Varpilah, Deputy Director General for Administration

Gus Fayiah, Coordinator for County Statistics and Information Office (CSIO)

John Byrant, CSIO Regional Coordinator

Dorothy Johnson, Senior Demographer (Senior Executive Service Professional)

12:00 LISGIS

Ounzuba Kemeh-Gama, National Data Specialist, LISGIS (Senior Executive Service Professional)

14:00 LIBTELCO

Visit to the server room housing the NDG server

15:00 Plan Liberia

Morris W. Gbessagee, Program Manager

Dorothy Smith, Child Rights Advisor

16:30 Civil Service Agency

Mr. Shadi Baki, CSA Director of HR MIS and Biometrics / Information and Records Management Specialist (Senior Executive Service Professional)

Appendix 3. People interviewed

Crisis Management Initiative

Gama Roberts, Country Coordinator
Hannu Kotipelto, MBR Project Manager
Kirsi Joenpolvi, Head of Africa Programme

UN Peacebuilding Fund Office

Wilfred Gray-Johnson, Executive Director
Edward Mulbah, Senior Technical Advisor on Peacebuilding

The County Registrar's Office, Bomi County, Tubmanburg

T. Reginald Wanley, County Registrar
Willie Z. Taweh, Data Manager
Benjamin Tuago, IT/Data Clerk

Beafine Community Clinic, Bomi County, Beafine

Yei N. Magbinne, DHO - Suehn Mecca District

UNICEF

Isabel Crowley, Country Representative

Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW)

Minister Varpilah, Deputy Minister for Health and Vital Statistics
Minister Wesseh, Assistant Minister for Vital Statistics
Ms. Beatrice Lah, IT Director
Mr. Solo Barton, National Registrar

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

Moustapha Soumare, DRSRG
Ariano Cassandra, Civil Affairs Officer
Baffour Agyeman-Duah, PhD, Senior Special Advisor, Office of the DRSRG

LISGIS

Dabah Varpilah, Deputy Director General for Administration
Gus Fayiah, Coordinator for County Statistics and Information Office (CSIO)
John Byrant, CSIO Regional Coordinator
Dorothy Johnson, Senior Demographer (Senior Executive Service Professional)
Ounzuba Kemeh-Gama, National Data Specialist, LISGIS (Senior Executive Service Professional)

Plan Liberia

Morris W. Gbessagee, Program Manager

Dorothy Smith, Child Rights Advisor

Civil Service Agency

Mr. Shadi Baki, CSA Director of HR MIS and Biometrics / Information and Records
Management Specialist (Senior Executive Service Professional)

Nokia Siemens Networks

Mika Skarp, Manager

Appendix 4. Documents used in desk research

Project planning, reporting and other project communication

Project Plan 2009 GooB – Liberia data collection – MFA Application – latest.doc
Project Plan 2010-2012 CMI_Governance out of a Box Liberia_ Project Plan_NGO support Final.doc
Annual report 2009
Response to MFA enquiry on GooB report 2009
Selvitys hankkeen tilanteesta vuodelta 2009, CMI, Governance out of a Box
APPENDIX 2 Project Summary and Next Steps in 2010.doc
Mid-Term Review 2010, Report on Governance out of a Box - Liberia (25101801).doc
MFA Statements on the project (helm138-6.doc 14.08.2008, hel5179-40.doc 25.08.2008, CMI Lausunto Goob_vika.doc 10.08.2009)

Policy level documents

Liberia Poverty Reduction Strategy April 2008
Liberia Participatory Poverty Assessment August 2008
Liberia County development agendas (Bong, Grand Bass)
Draft Strategy Framework on Reinstating Birth Registration in Liberia.pdf
EC Country Cooperation - Country Strategy Paper for Liberia (2008-2013)
MFA Finland Development policy programme 2007 – Towards a Sustainable and Just World Community
MFA Finland Africa in Finnish Development Policy - Finland's development policy framework programme 2009
MFA Finland Development Policy Guidelines for ICT and the Information Society 2005
MFA Finland Development and Security in Finland's Development Policy 2009
MFA Finland Evaluation Guidelines 2007.

Background and academic papers

Conference paper 2010 BRinLiberia_Resubmission_Final.doc
Uses of Mobile Phones in Post-Conflict Liberia.pdf
Economist: Country Report Liberia June 2010
Twentieth progress report of the Secretary-General on the UNMIL.pdf
Liberia >> Comprehensive Peace Agreement
Amos Sawyer - Violent conflicts and governance challenges in West Africa: the case of the Mano River basin area
The human rights based approach to development – UN

Appendix 5. Interview questions template

Interview template

Case Mobile Birth Registration in Liberia

Field trip 21.–26.11.2010

Interviewer/s:

Interviewee:

Date & Place:

- 1. Description of the Mid-Term Evaluation of MBR and the motivation for the interview, max. 3-5 mins**
- 2. Background of the interviewee**
 - 2.1. Could you describe (shortly) your educational and professional background?
- 3. The implementation of the MBR project**
 - 3.1. Could you describe the state of the art of population/birth registration when the project was started?
 - 3.2. How the idea of mobile population/birth registration in Liberia emerged?
 - 3.3. Who were the main actors behind the idea?
 - 3.4. What has been your/your organisations role/contribution in the MBR project?
 - 3.5. How has the basic idea been refined since the beginning and for what reasons? (Narrowed from national to regional or county)? Why is that?
 - 3.6. Is civil registration (birth / death registration) and computerization of registration a priority in line with country / donor policy and expression of beneficiary needs / demands?
 - 3.7. (Only for some interviewees, depends on cost transparency): What are the intermediate results / against costs? How about the anticipated results and costs of the overall intervention?
 - 3.8. Is the process for birth registration in place? How it birth registration demand on different levels developing?
 - 3.9. At this point in time, do you perceive that the process of birth registration is functional? Is the MBR model functional and is it likely to function in the future? Did the training achieve its learning objective? What is the status of the inter-ministerial cooperation? Has the generic model been created?
 - 3.10. What is the status of the inter-ministry collaboration process for achieving a common vision on population information system in Liberia?

- 3.11. What are the interim elements of a generic model for MBR? Assessing the generic model: what are the elements that function well, what are the elements that need improvement
- 3.12. (Local authorities: Could you describe the MBR process in practice? What is the share of children born in hospitals? Where are the children registered? Who does it?)

4. Cooperation during the project

- 4.1. Which organisations have been the most significant partners for you and your organisation during the project? What sort of cooperation have you had?
- 4.2. Successes in cooperation?
- 4.3. Challenges in cooperation?
- 4.4. Have you cooperated with private companies during the project? (Nokia, Idean, local telecom company etc.)
- 4.5. What sort of cooperation have you had?
- 4.6. What has been the role of private organisations in the project?
- 4.7. How did the private – public partnership function? How were private partners selected and on what criteria? How is the project utilizing Finnish expertise?
- 4.8. How is the MBR affecting other cross-cutting issues? (Women's rights, children's rights, taking into account special / marginalized groups)

5. The impact of the project

- 5.1. How would you describe the relevance of the project for Liberia so far?
- 5.2. For your organisation?
- 5.3. For counties?
- 5.4. And for the citizens/individuals & families in Liberia?
- 5.5. What are the biggest successes/strengths of the MBR project?
- 5.6. Why?
- 5.7. What are the biggest challenges/obstacles of the MBR project so far?
- 5.8. Why?
- 5.9. What sort of competencies has the project fostered in Liberia? (national & regional & organisational level)
- 5.10. What have you learned during the project?
- 5.11. (End-users: Why is it important for you to register your child? What does it mean for you and your child?)

6. The future of the project

- 6.1. What will be status of MBR in Liberia in 5 years?
- 6.2. What are the biggest challenges in order to achieve this goal (assuming that there is a goal to achieve)?
- 6.3. What are the plans for BR process continuation towards end of the project? How likely is it that the process will be fully developed by the end of the project? What is the community demand for birth registration?

- 6.4. One result is to achieve a joint inter-ministerial vision (result area B) on a population information system: How will the joint vision be reflected in policy development and action?

7. The project and its relevance within the larger programme of Governance out of a Box?

- 7.1. How has the project contributed to the goals of the GooB initiative? Is the project still in line with GooB's stated objectives?
- 7.2. How have the lessons learned been captured and how will they be shared with relevant stakeholders?
- 7.3. What do the experiences from the project suggest as some of the requirements/challenges of implementing technological projects in a post-conflict environment?

8. Liberian context & near future

- 8.1. What is the current situation in Liberia?
- 8.2. What have been key events and key factors in the last two years affecting the recovery and progress in Liberia, positive and negative?
- 8.3. Forward looking, what are anticipated key events in 2011 and how would you assess the effects of those events (such as presidential election, Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations, UNMIL reduction, other)?

VTT Working Papers

- 147 Juhan Viitaniemi, Susanna Aromaa, Simo-Pekka Leino, Sauli Kiviranta & Kaj Helin. Integration of User-Centred Design and Product Development Process within a Virtual Environment. Practical case KVALIVE. 2010. 39 p.
- 148 Matti Pajari. Prestressed hollow core slabs supported on beams. Finnish shear tests on floors in 1990–2006. 2010. 674 p.
- 149 Tommi Ekholm. Achieving cost efficiency with the 30% greenhouse gas emission reduction target of the EU. 2010. 21 p.
- 150 Sampo Soimakallio, Mikko Hongisto, Kati Koponen, Laura Sokka, Kaisa Manninen, Riina Antikainen, Karri Pasanen, Taija Sinkko & Rabbe Thun. EU:n uusiutuvien energialähteiden edistämisdirektiivin kestävyyskriteeristö. Näkemyksiä määritelmistä ja kestävyden todentamisesta. 130 s. + liitt. 7 s.
- 151 Ian Baring-Gould, Lars Tallhaug, Göran Ronsten, Robert Horbaty, René Cattin, Timo Laakso, Michael Durstewitz, Antoine Lacroix, Esa Peltola & Tomas Wallenius. Wind energy projects in cold climates. 2010. 62 p.
- 152 Timo Laakso, Ian Baring-Gould, Michael Durstewitz, Robert Horbaty, Antoine Lacroix, Esa Peltola, Göran Ronsten, Lars Tallhaug & Tomas Wallenius. State-of-the-art of wind energy in cold climates. 2010. 69 p.
- 153 Teemu Tommila, Juhani Hirvonen & Antti Pakonen. 2010. Fuzzy ontologies for retrieval of industrial knowledge – a case study. 54 p. + app. 2 p.
- 154 Raili Alanen. Veneiden uudet energiajärjestelmät. 2010. 86 s.
- 155 Maija Ruska, Juha Kiviluoma & Göran Koreneff. Sähköautojen laajan käyttöönoton skenaarioita ja vaikutuksia sähköjärjestelmään. 2010. 46 s.
- 156 Jussi Lahtinen, Kim Björkman, Janne Valkonen, Juho Fritz & Ilkka Niemelä. Analysis of an emergency diesel generator control system by compositional model checking. MODSAFE 2010 work report. 2010. 35 p.
- 157 Tero Sundström, Ari Kevarinmäki, Stefania Fortino & Tomi Toratti. Shear resistance of glulam beams under varying humidity conditions. 2011. 125 p. + app. 12 p.
- 158 Hannes Toivanen. From ICT towards information society. Policy strategies and concepts for employing ICT for reducing poverty. 2011. 38 p. + app. 1 p.
- 159 Hannes Toivanen, Jukka Hyvönen, Mathias Wevelsiep & Mika Metsäniemi. Mobile birth registration in Liberia – CMI project mid-term review. 2011. 56 p. + app. 13 p.
- 160 Maiju Aikala, Anne Arvola, Raija-Liisa Heiniö. Tuntutestausmenetelmän kehittäminen pakkauksille. 2011. 24 s. + liitt. 9 s.
- 161 Sebastian Teir, Toni Pikkarainen, Lauri Kujanpää, Eemeli Tsupari, Janne Kärki, Antti Arasto & Soile Aatos. Hiilidioksidin talteenotto ja varastointi (CCS). Teknologiakatsaus. 2011. VTT, Espoo. 103 s. + liitt. 6 s.