



**Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE)
Executive Mansion Grounds, Capitol Hill
Monrovia, Liberia**

LACE ANNUAL REPORT-2025

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Official Contact of LACE

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report presents a comprehensive account of the administrative, financial, programmatic, and institutional performance of the Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE) during the year 2025; primarily highlighting quarterly activities covering flagship projects, challenges, recommendations and strategic direction.

It looks in details at the various community development projects carried out in Nimba and Montserrado Counties, respectively as well as the World Bank Funded social Protection (REALISE Project) which includes one of three implementing partners but with LACE overseeing two of the five project components; the Agency was also involved with projects earmarked by three key partners, ArcelorMittal Liberia, the Japanese Counterpart Funds and ECOWAS Trans border Funds.

While these engagements fulfill one of critical mandates of the Agency, the year 2025 had its own challenges, amongst them, the shifting of the annual district development funds by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning(MFDP) from LACE 2025 Budgetary Appropriations to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA). This unexpected action had serious consequences on the annual portfolio of the Agency; additionally, timely staffing replacement to fill gaps created as a result of resignations and death of staffs became an issue with the bureaucratic process established at the Civil Service Agency (CSA).

Most importantly, this Report also highlights the challenges of mobilizing funding domestically. The fact that the international donors, whose support over the years to LACE was significant is no longer, the need for sourcing funds locally remains critical to the survivability of the Agency. In this light, the Board and Management have resolved to recommend the amendment of the current Act of LACE so that it provides for Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) contributions from both State-Owned Enterprises(SOEs) and Concessions to be annually transferred to LACE in order to implement community development initiatives. This is very essential because as an Agency that was receiving annually from government's appropriation during the first tenure of the Unity Party-led government (2012- 2017) of around US\$15M to a negligible amount of less than US\$2M in 2025, impacting communities positively will certainly not be possible.

1.1 Introduction

The Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE) presents its synchronized **Annual Report for the Year 2025**, covering all activities, achievements, financial performance, and institutional operations executed across the four quarters. Guided by the Community Empowerment Act and aligned with the Government's ARREST Agenda, LACE implemented community-driven development initiatives aimed at poverty reduction, social empowerment, and infrastructure expansion.

Throughout the year, LACE strengthened its operational systems, enhanced its Monitoring & Evaluation structure, supported on-going legislative and a few executive projects as well as maintaining its active engagement with the World Bank REALISE Project. Despite challenges including limited budgetary support, outstanding contractor debts, and logistical constraints, LACE made significant progress towards improving community well-being across Liberia.

2.0 Messages

2.1 Chairman of the Board of Directors

It is with great pride and honor that I address you via this Annual Report of the Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE). As Chairman of the Board of Directors, I reflect on the remarkable journey and gains made by the Agency during the course of the year 2025.



The Government of Liberia, under the dynamic leadership of His Excellency, President Joseph N. Boakai, Sr. has set in motion a transformative path to steer the country towards progress. This Agenda, known as ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development (AAID), has provided a clear roadmap for a brighter future, not just for the country, but for every agency involved in its growth, including LACE. The government's focus on community development, sustainable growth, and empowerment has laid the foundation for our actions.

Since the appointment of the Senior Management Team of the Agency, there has been tremendous progress in aligning the Agency's activities with the broader national development Agenda. Under its leadership, and with the guidance of the Board, LACE has embraced the President's mandate and moved forward with energy and purpose.

Our first meeting on March 22, 2024, held at LACE's Office within the Grounds of the Executive Mansion, marked the beginning of a series of strategic engagements. It set the tone for what has been a year of remarkable accomplishments. These achievements are the results of the hard work, dedication, and collaborative spirit of LACE's staff and all the stakeholders involved.

As we continue this journey, LACE remains steadfast in its mission to carry out community development through a participatory approach, where every voice is heard and every action leads to empowerment. It is this community-driven ethics that fuels our vision of making LACE and by extension Liberia, great again. Looking ahead, I am confident that LACE will continue to thrive as we work together to advance Liberia's development goals. The road ahead is challenging, but with unity and dedication, we will continue to realize the shared dream of a prosperous Liberia.

Thank you for your continued support as we move forward in building a stronger and more resilient nation.

Sincerely,

Peter Z.N. Kamei
Chairman

2.2 The Executive Director

Liberia is our common interest therefore, irrespective of our political alignment and or affiliation, it is imperative that we serve with full commitment and diligence. The preferment to serve the people of Liberia, when called upon, should be seen as an opportunity and or privilege and not a right. Today, we are reporting on activities performed under our leadership during the Calendar Year 2025- representing the second time of my return to the leadership of the Agency, having previously served between the periods, July 2015 – January 2018.

My subsequent return to LACE was not as the first, when basic operational structures were in place: key professionals were available and donor-related relationships were active amongst others, culminating into ensuring a smooth start. However, on the contrary, my team and I had to restore the image of the Agency, generally refurbishing the building, furnishing the offices, restoring the dignity of staff by providing the basic hygiene services and most importantly, reaching out to our traditional and new donors for support.



Additionally, with the resilience, energy and determination, we worked successfully to ensure that the enabling environment, though not perfect, was ideal enough for reasonable level of services to commence and be delivered, as usual, without major challenges in 2025. Our services to the communities may have started late, but, most importantly, they were assured that their concerns were key on our Agenda and, generally, as the government's priority especially with the existence of the Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE).

The Agency believes that the communities must continue to be engaged positively because they deserve to be served by the National Government through it. Hence, I want to again thank the President, His Excellency, Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr. for my preferment and to the Chairman and Members of the Board, including the Management and Staff for all their support and cooperation during the last year. We worked together and made it together; I am sure we will be able to do even more in the year 2026.

Yours sincerely,

Julius K. Sele
Executive Director

3.0 About LACE

The Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE) is an autonomous Agency of the Government of Liberia established on July 22, 2004 under the new Executive Law, Title 12 Chapter 50.B of the Liberian Code of Laws, also known as the “Community Empowerment Act”. The Primary Goals of the Agency is engendering national initiatives and strategies geared towards alleviating poverty and towards reaching the Sustainable Development Goals in Liberia through the Community Driven Development Approach (CDDA).

Indeed, LACE was established at a time when the poverty level in the country, just surviving a decade long war, was described as ‘pervasive’. The donor partners, led by the World Bank, then decided to engage the Interim Government to establish an institution or a body through which they would channel most of the post-war community development initiatives. Hence, LACE’s mandate was hatched.

Since then, the Agency has received significant financial and human capacity support aimed at delivering basic services in the areas of post-war infrastructure construction and rehabilitation; social protection support in the form of cash transfers as well as direct small business support to vulnerable communities. Hundreds of projects have been implemented while thousands of vulnerable people have had their households impacted positively, despite the fact that poverty still remains a challenge.

3.1 Mission

LACE’s Mission is to assist in the consolidation of Liberia’s peace process by creating an enabling environment for social-economic revival of war-torn communities, providing basic social services that ensure a healthy and economic inclusive environment.

3.2 Vision

LACE’s Vision is to ensure that almost all communities in Liberia are empowered.

3.3 Core Values

LACE, as a community-based service provider Agency, subscribes to the following Core Values:

- i. **Community Empowerment** – We believe that sustainable development starts with empowering communities to take charge of their own growth.

- ii. **Poverty Alleviation** – Our mission is to uplift marginalized and underprivileged populations by implementing targeted social and economic development programs.
- iii. **Transparency & Accountability** – Integrity and ethical conduct are at the core of everything we do.
- iv. **Inclusivity & Participation** – We recognize the power of diverse voices in community development.
- v. **Sustainability** – Development efforts must be long-lasting and impactful beyond LACE’s direct involvement.
- vi. **Partnership & Collaboration** – We believe in the power of collective action.
- vii. **Innovation & Adaptability** – The challenges faced by communities are ever-evolving, and so are our strategies.

4.0 Institutional Mandate

The Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE) operates as an autonomous government institution with a clear mandate to drive inclusive, people-centered development across Liberia. Its core responsibilities are rooted in strengthening community resilience, expanding access to basic social services, and fostering sustainable local development. In fulfilling its mandate, LACE focuses on the following pillars:

4.1 Key Agency Achievements during the Period

Throughout the 2025 operational year, the Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE) demonstrated significant progress in delivering community-driven development, strengthening social protection systems, and advancing decentralized service delivery across Liberia’s 15 counties.

4.2 Administration & Institutional Management

LACE strengthened internal governance through regular management and staff meetings, enforcement of reporting requirements, vehicle and asset management reviews, and policy compliance (notably vehicle use and service contracts). Office renovations completed, and accountability mechanisms such as fuel logs and mandatory field reports were emphasized. Additionally, working in collaboration with the CSA, a number of management systems was put

in place to ensure that staff reported to work daily; and that absentees were promptly detected and administrative actions taken, among others. Although the issue of low compensation for staff, caused by the harmonization exercise effected by the previous government continue a point of contest, the motivation levels among them remain high. It is, however, our hope that very soon, a national policy decision would be taken to revise this policy to the pre-Weah leadership era.

4.3 Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)

During the FY2025, the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Department actively contributed to institutional strengthening, strategic planning, capacity building, and performance management within the Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment. The department continued to uphold professional standards while supporting both internal and external engagements essential for organizational effectiveness.

The Department worked closely with the Performance Management Compliance System under auspices of the Civil Service Agency (CSA) of Liberia. This advanced appraisal process, relatively unknown in Liberia's public service, significantly aided in aligning staff performance with CSA guidelines and LACE's internal personnel management requirements.

5.0 Financial Management

During the Year 2025, the Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE) received a total of US\$2,000,000.00, largely allocated towards infrastructure development earmarking community development projects. This included funding for projects covering at about US\$1.16 million and compensation for employees put at about US\$594,000 and the rest covered office supplies, stationeries, travel and security services.

6.0 Human Resource Management

During the period under review, the Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE) prioritized effective Human Resource Management as a critical enabler for institutional stability, service delivery, and operational efficiency. Despite fiscal limitations and staff attrition challenges, the Agency recorded notable achievements in staff welfare, compliance, and administrative management.

Thus, LACE successfully enrolled eligible staff onto the Civil Servant Agency (CSA) Legal Power of Attorney (LPA) Credit Scheme. This initiative significantly enhanced staff access to formal credit facilities, providing financial relief and improving employee morale and productivity. The

process was coordinated in compliance with CSA guidelines, ensuring transparency and proper documentation for participating staff across all four quarters.

LACE strengthened internal controls to improve staff attendance and performance management. Regular monitoring mechanisms were reinforced, including attendance tracking and supervisory oversight, which resulted in improved punctuality, adherence to work schedules, and compliance with institutional performance standards. These measures contributed to enhanced accountability and sustained service delivery throughout the year.

In line with its commitment to staff welfare and occupational security, LACE maintained continuous insurance coverage for its workforce with the Insurance Company of Africa (ICA) instead of the National Insurance Corporation of Liberia due to administrative and policy differences. It is hoped that these differences can be resolved as quickly as possible so that the government-owned institution can be supported. In the meantime, it is important to note that with the policy the Agency current has with ICA, the staffs remain protected against unforeseen risks and workplace-related incidents. The uninterrupted insurance coverage underscored management's dedication to safeguarding employee well-being despite prevailing budgetary pressures.

7.0 Logistics, Security & Maintenance

The Logistics Department maintained office cleanliness, serviced vehicles, repaired water and sewer systems, and supported national engagements, including a cleaning campaign at the Executive Mansion. Fixed asset verification was conducted with the General Auditing Commission (GAC), reinforcing accountability. Maintaining the building without adequate financial support is a challenge. Likewise, employing electronic security systems to deter further threats to the Agency's assets, remains also a challenge due to lack of funding; as is the issue of adequate logistics to support routine monitoring and evaluation of projects but basically a decentralization initiative that focuses on opening operational offices across the country is indeed the most of all the challenges. In the event, some and if not all of these rural offices are established, it would ensure effective service delivery to communities without significant costs implications.

8.0 Program Implementation & Partnerships

LACE implemented and monitored nationwide development initiatives, notably:

8.1 Community Development Projects

In the absence of the annual district development projects, LACE received limited budgetary support under the Executive to implement a few infrastructure projects, notably in Nimba, Montserrado and Bomi Counties, respectively:

- Ongoing Construction of the Gbaoulay Health Center
- Ongoing Construction of the Bahn Health Center
- Ongoing Construction of the Zekepa Health Center
- Ongoing Construction of the Butuo Health Center
- Ongoing Construction of the Tappita Youth Center
- Ongoing Construction of the Dinplay Guest House
- Ongoing Construction of the Karnplay Health Center
- Ongoing Construction of a 10-classroom annex at the Nimba Community College

These are all in Nimba County.

Others include the construction of the Kpo Double Box Culverts in Todee, Montserrado County and the ongoing rehabilitation works at the Getrude Yancy High School at Klay, Bomi County.



One of the two box culverts constructed by GoL and implemented by LACE in Kpo Township, Todee District, Montserrado County, Liberia

8.2 World Bank Funded REALISE Project

LACE continued implementation of the Recovery of Economic Activity for Liberian Informal Sector Employment (REALISE) Project, which targets vulnerable households nationwide with agriculture support and small cash support to businesses. The 5-year project which comes to an end in December 2026, is a grant valued at US\$42M with contributions from the Swedish and French Development Agencies as well as the World Bank

Project activities include:

- Small business start-up grants to 4,450 beneficiaries; the grant amount is US\$900 for each business to either be revived or get started. The total spent thus far across the following counties Montserrado and Margibi is US\$4,005,000;
- Temporary Employment Support (productive Public Works) targeting 17,000 informal workers in Montserrado and Margibi within 150 communities; daily labor subsidies at US\$4-\$7/day for up to 60 days for enrollment; The total spent is US\$5,100,000.00.
- Community Livelihood Agriculture Support (CLAS) targets 19,740 rural beneficiaries with each farming group of 28 persons, male and female equivalent receiving US\$1,680 as start-up grants for tools; US\$350 as labor subsidies for each of the 19740 beneficiaries and the community grants up to US\$1,800.00 for each of the Community Organizing Committee (CoC) to decide on any project of their choice. In total, the committees will receiving for all 705 locations, US\$1,269,000.00 while each of the five members per CoC, totaling 3,525 persons will each receive US\$150, totaling US\$528,750.00. To date, this component has expended US\$9,891,150.00. The beneficiary counties are Grand Gedeh, Nimba, Sinoe, Lofa, Bong, Bomi, Cape Mount and Gbarpolu;
- Social cash transfers (SCT) to 16,000 vulnerable households at US\$11 per household in Grand Bassa, Grand Kru, River Gee and Rivercess. US\$176,000 has been expended on the households thus far.

As the REALISE Project comes to an end in December 2026; however, the World Bank is seeking concurrence from the Liberian Government for the approval of a Restructuring Extension Request so that the funds that are likely to be unspent can be realigned to other current on-going activities by increasing the number of beneficiaries. The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) is expected to make the request that would allow additional 6,000 vulnerable beneficiaries to enroll for the duration of the project. The amount at stake is US\$2.0M.

8.3 Japanese Counterpart Value Fund

With support from the Government and People of Japan through its Japanese Counterpart Value Fund, LACE continued to carry out the construction of the Dukpuyee Wood Workshop. The project value is US\$2.7M and proceeds are received through the Rice Donation Program that current exists between the Governments of Japan and Liberia.



**The Dupkuyee Wood Workshop currently being constructed in
Dupkuyee Township, Nimba County, Liberia**

The project's primary objectives are:

- Providing a fully functional workshop facility for wood processing and carpentry.
- Enhancing vocational and technical skills development for youth and artisans.
- Promoting value addition, employment creation, and local enterprise development.

The Dupkuyee Wood Workshop stands as a key intervention supporting skills transfer, self-employment, and sustainable livelihoods at the community level. Therefore, once completed, thousands of Liberians will have access to skills in furniture production of all kinds, thereby boosting employment. The facility is expected to be completed in 2027.

8.4 Corporate and Development Partner Engagements

LACE strengthened strategic partnerships with both corporate and development partners to enhance resource mobilization, technical cooperation, and project impact.

Key engagements included collaboration with:

8.5 ArcelorMittal

ArcelorMittal and the Government of Liberia entered a Memorandum of Understanding for the Construction of two hospitals, located at Sekimpa, Nimba County and Buchanan, Grand Bassa County. The US\$8.5 Million Dollars Agreement, also includes the construction of a Sports Park

in Ganta, Nimba County. The MoU, consummated in 2022, is expected to come to an end in 2026 with the completion of all of the facilities.

The both hospitals are expected to consist of Eight main structures, when completed.



Cross Sections of 2-buildings at the Sekimpa Medical Hospital, Nimba County, Liberia

At the moment, only three of them have been completed, including the Maternity, Medical Emergency and Surgical Wards under the Sekimpa Project:

1. Surgery Department
2. Laboratory
3. Medical Pediatric Unit
4. Male and Female Wards
5. Laundry Facility
6. Maternity
7. Triage
8. Security Booths

The Buchanan Hospital Project is completed with some minor corrections that are to be made based on observations made by the County Health Authorities during a Joint visit to the site that included LACE and ArcelorMittal.

8.6 ECOWAS Cross Border Market Project

The ECOWAS Cross-Border Project at Bo Waterside Market Project was implemented by the Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE). The initiative aims to strengthen cross-border cooperation, improve trade and mobility, and deliver social and economic benefits for communities on both sides of the frontier. The project has long been completed and awaiting dedication



The newly constructed Bo Waterside Market, the Water Tower and the Palava Hut in Bo Waterside Township, Grand Cape Mount County

8.7 Compliance, Legal & Audit Matters

During the year under review, the General Auditing Commission (GAC) commissioned an Audit of the Agency covering the period July 2021 to 31 December 2024. The desk review of the audit is completed but the team is on the second phase of the audit which has to do with the

vetting of the debt claims being highlighted by a number of contractors. The value of the outstanding debts to the contractor is about US\$4.2M covering the period 2016/17 to December 2023.

Additionally, the legal action taken against LACE by some 8 staff members in 2018 has come to a close with the ruling requiring LACE to pay a little over US\$55,000 to the staff. The decision was shared with the Board and the Board directed that Management adheres to the decision of the court. Indeed, once funding is received, LACE would act accordingly.

8.8 Challenges

Certainly, the Board and Management of LACE are now challenged to continue to have series of dialogues and engagements aimed at pursuing additional funding possibilities and opportunities that would help support the survivability of the Agency in achieving its mandate. Indeed, whilst donor funds may not return as during the eras of emergency and post-conflict recovery, the Agency must propose ideas to the Government for review and action. In effect, some of the actions taken may be immediate while others may have to go through a process of legal review and enactment. In whatever situation, what is paramount is that LACE needs to be supported with appreciable funding so that the expectations of the people in alleviating some of their current challenges can be addressed.

Thus, the overall key challenges faced by the Agency are:

1. The absence of legal provisions within its Act allowing for assured yearly budgetary appropriations in support of community-related development projects;
2. The abrupt transfer of budgetary support of one of LACE's core functions to the Ministry of Internal Affairs; since 2013, LACE has been implementing district development projects, on behalf of the Legislature, funded by government through the Ministry of Finance & Development Planning. Despite the experience, competence and capacity of the Agency, redirecting the responsibilities abruptly to another entity of government only undermines our collectively ability to achieving national developmental goals successfully;
3. Agency's inability to have operational offices in the counties. This is a critical component in our vision to modernize the Agency; however, the donors, howbeit limited here, have indicated their desire to partner with LACE but due to its non-permanent presence in the counties, they are unlikely to do so at the moment.

9.0 Recommendations

9.1 Maintaining & Reinforcing the Annual Implementation of District Development Projects

The implementation of the Annual District Development Projects served as a key component in adding tremendous flavors to the regular county-wide tours conducted by then President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Once the town-hall meetings are conducted in each county, the President takes advantage of her presence to visit various project sites to have first-hand understanding of how much the government has done and the level of appreciation expressed by the population. On the other hand, without these projects, it is difficult for the President to gauge feed-backs from the citizenry while touring the various parts of the country; therefore, everything must be done by government to ensure that this process is sustainable.

Unfortunately, during the tenure of President George Weah, district development projects were never carried out; although they are assumed to have been replaced by ‘Presidential Projects’. While Presidential Projects are appreciated, they are unlikely to be implemented equally across all 73 districts of the Republic as would the districts development projects this is why, arguably, ensuring the annual implementation of district development projects, remains uncontestable.

However, what appears to be an abrupt shift in ensuring that the annual implementation of district development projects is carried out by LACE, as per its mandate; and in addition, its unquestionable demonstrated capacity and experience over the years, the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) allocated budgetary appropriations to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) in 2025 and similarly, in the current proposed 2026 Budget for implementation. With this development, LACE did not act swiftly to inquire as to why the transfer of one of its core responsibilities had gone to the MIA due to the then leadership contest that was evolving at the time in the Lower House; but to acknowledge a repeat of this process by the MFDP in the proposed 2026 Draft Budget, obviously provides a timely reason why questions are being raised now by the Agency. If allowed to continue, LACE would technically become significantly redundant, thus undermining the achievements of some critical components of the Rescue’s Development Agenda.

9.2 Approval of the Proposal to Amend the Act Establishing LACE

LACE was established in 2004 in response to the prevailing humanitarian and poverty challenges brought about as a result of the civil war. Enacted, therefore, as a vehicle to be used by donor institutions in providing basic services to the population across the country, the Agency's relevance more than two decades later, needs a review.

9.3 Justification for Amendment

This review will consider the operational context that binds on institutional efficiency. In this light, the Board and Management of LACE deem necessary at this time to request support from the Executive in proposing an amendment to the Act establishing the Agency so that within the current political, social and economic realities, it would remain relevant in helping to deliver on the ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development:

The current Act no longer fully reflects the operational context necessary for LACE to function at peak efficiency. The proposed amendments are therefore designed to:

- Strengthen Management and Oversight for complex, nationwide projects.
- Ensure Financial Sustainability and Accountability for public and private sector development funds.
- Formalize and Streamline Funding Mechanisms to avoid discretion and ensure predictability.
- Enhance Governance and reduce operational costs.
- Solidify LACE's Role as the central, accountable body for managing community development funds on behalf of the Government of Liberia.

9.4 Specific Proposed Amendments

The Board and Management of LACE respectfully propose the following specific amendments to its founding legislation:

9.5 Creation of a Third Deputy Executive Director for Programs/Operations

Proposal: Amend the Act to authorize the appointment of a third Deputy Executive Director dedicated to Programs and Operations.

Justification: The increasing complexity and geographic spread of LACE projects necessitate dedicated senior-level leadership for field operations. This role will:

- Design and supervise all field-related projects.
- Liaise directly with donors during project implementation.
- Represent the Agency at technical meetings in the Executive Director's absence.
- Enhance coordination and oversight of all field offices, ensuring efficiency and accountability.

9.6 Centralization of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Funds

Proposal: Mandate that all State-Owned Enterprises channel their annually appropriated CSR funding through LACE.

Justification: This will ensure proper accountability, transparent management, and standardized reporting of public CSR funds to the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) and the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP). It prevents fragmentation and ensures these resources achieve maximum developmental impact.

9.7 Centralization of Concessionaires' Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Funds

Proposal: Mandate that all concessionaires operating in Liberia allocate their annual CSR contributions to LACE for management and implementation.

Justification: LACE, with its nationwide presence and project management expertise, is ideally positioned to ensure these contributions are used effectively and accounted for transparently. This amendment standardizes the process and holds concessionaires accountable for their social commitments to host communities.

9.8 Institutionalization of an Operational Cost Caveat

Proposal: Stipulate a mandatory 10% caveat on all Funding Agreements entered into by LACE (with donors, government, or concessionaires) to cover the costs of monitoring, supervision, and administrative oversight.

Justification: This is a standard practice for project implementation agencies. It ensures LACE has the necessary resources to robustly monitor projects, guarantee quality, prevent misuse of funds, and report accurately to partners, thereby safeguarding the integrity of every investment.

9.9 Mandatory Annual Allocation for District Development Funds

Proposal: Require the explicit allocation of District Development Funds in each annual national budget, to be managed and implemented by LACE.

Justification: This eliminates discretion and ensures predictable, continuous funding for grassroots development. It strengthens the social contract between the Central Government and rural populations by creating a reliable mechanism for identifying and addressing local needs, directly supporting the decentralization goals of the ARREST Agenda.

9.10 Re-composition of the Board of Directors

Proposal: Replace one of the two Donor Representative positions on the LACE Board with a qualified Legal Professional.

Justification: The inclusion of a legal expert on the Board will provide immediate, high-level guidance on contracts, compliance, and regulatory matters. This will significantly reduce the Agency's reliance on external legal counsel, thereby cutting annual operational costs and improving governance.

9.11 Re-designation of the Finance Director

Proposal: Change the title of "Finance Director" to "Deputy Executive Director for Finance."

Justification: This change clarifies the role's seniority within the executive management team, eliminates internal conflicts over hierarchical status and responsibilities, and aligns the position's authority with its critical function of managing public funds.

9.12 Additional Consideration: Board Incentives Policy

Proposal: The amended Act should authorize the development and approval of a formal policy to govern incentives for non-statutory Board Members.

Justification: To attract and retain qualified, high-caliber individuals to provide strategic governance, a clearly defined incentives policy is necessary. It is understood that such incentives would be contingent upon the availability of funds within LACE's budget, ensuring fiscal responsibility. This formalizes a process that was previously managed on an ad-hoc basis through the MFDP.

10.0 Conclusion

Despite the challenges encountered during in 2025, the Agency has remained formidable with its next key action plan is to develop a Strategic Plan for the next 10 years. However, in developing its Strategic Plan, the Agency is to provide a critical review of its past 24 years of existence with emphasis on its mandate as derived from the Act establishing it in July 2004.

The Board and Management remain confidence that LACE will be able to become stronger as before once the up-coming review process is done, notwithstanding the request to the Office of the Presidency to ensure that the outcome of the process is supported, especially when it comes to the proposal for the amendment of the Act.

As 2025 comes to an end and a brand new 2026 comes in, we envisaged a more vibrant LACE that will be able to aggressively deliver on the ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development. The people across the country are yearning for empowerment and livelihood improvements, therefore as the Agency responsible, our leadership will do all it can, engaging with all stakeholders and branches of government to ensure that the expectations of the citizenry are not shattered.

It is important to conclude this Report by thanking, particularly the President, His Excellency Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr for continuing to support the Board and Management of the Agency and for his vested interest in ensuring that we succeed in our work. It is also important to recognize the support from the World Bank, the Japanese Embassy, the Government of Liberia as well as ECOWAS for their support during the period under review. It is our hope and expectations that we will continue such spirit of engagement and collaboration during the next year.