

Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection

REVISED GUIDELINES AND STEPS FOR OBTAINING SECTOR CLEARANCE



April 2024

Acronyms and Abbreviations

CBOs - Community Based Organizations

DRPP - Department for Research, Policy and Planning

INGOs - International Non-Governmental Organizations

MFDP - Ministry of Finance and Development Planning

MGCSP - Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection

M&E - Monitoring and Evaluation

NGOs - Non-Governmental Organizations

Definition of an NGO

In accordance with the National Policy on Non-Governmental Organizations In Liberia, a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) is defined as: an organization functioning within the territory of Liberia as an independent, nonprofit making, non- partisan and charitable organization, established in accordance with the Associations Law of Liberia, having the primary goal of enhancing the social, educational, professional, scientific, athletic, cultural and economic well-being of communities; and it may operate nationally or locally on a non-discriminatory bases.

Categories of NGOs for Sector Clearance

Community based Organizations

- They are organizations that operate within the scope of few communities within a county
- Provide social services at a small scale with little or no external support to address community needs.
- The majority of the governing body and staff consists of local residents,
- The main operating offices are in the communities

National Nongovernmental Organizations

- These organizations operate in one or more counties that are driven by community residents.
- They receive funding from international donor organizations including the UN, international charitable support, but do not have branches or offices outside Liberia
- They have predominantly Liberian staff and are well structured.

International Nongovernmental Organizations

- They are well structured in terms of operations, support, staff, etc...
- Have their headquarters or other offices abroad and have both national and international staff.
- They have one or more local offices in Liberia.
- They are mainly funded from international sources, but are likely to also be supported by multinational organizations operating in Liberia.

Background

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection(MGCSP) has the mandate to promote the development, empowerment and protection of women, girls and children, as well as the welfare and integration of persons with disabilities, the vulnerable, extremely poor, excluded and disadvantaged. Specifically, the Ministry will initiate, develop and implement and/or coordinate policies and programs aimed at women, girls, and children, as well as those physically challenged, marginalized, disadvantaged and excluded, to ensure that their rights are protected and that they are integrated, and contribute to, and benefit from, the peace, stability and socio-

economic advancement of the country.

In order to achieve these goals in development and as per the mandate of the MGCSP, the processes will require a joint effort by all partners. It becomes important to enhance this partnership with Community Based Organizations (CBO), Civil Society Organizations (CSO), National and International Non-Governmental Organizations (N/INGO) that are credible and capable of ensuring the rights of women, children, persons with disabilities, the vulnerable, extremely poor, excluded and disadvantaged are protected and that they create opportunities that will help them realize their full potential in order to address issues of accountability and transparency. To do this, processes need to be clearly laid out, data collected and the importance of monitoring and evaluation cannot be overemphasized for reporting on national and international instruments.

Also, as a way of ensuring this, the Ministry issues sector clearance to these organizations that authenticates that they are registered, have the relevant staff and skills to conduct the affairs of gender in all or specific areas and reporting to the Ministry in order to inform decisions. Expenses are incurred during the process by the Ministry which poses a challenge and delay in the issuing of these clearances.

The levying of fees will help to alleviate some minor burden on Government and will help the Ministry generate funds to respond to some of these challenges. It will also ensure relevant reports are submitted towards the National Development Plan indicators, the Sustainable Development Goals and other international instruments which Liberia is obligated to report on.

Methodology

- The Ministry shall have both United States and Liberian Dollars accounts with relevant signatories
- Will ensure that all financial transactions are handled by the Division of Finance for transparency and accountability
- Will issue application forms to generate data on the organizations
- Will issue the MGCSP official payment slips after deposits are made

Based on the above, the MGCSP has embarked on this process intended to provide the relevant steps and processes aimed at achieving the following:

- To ensure better coordination between the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social
- Protection and non-governmental organizations whose work and operations are in line with its mandate
- To ensure a coherent process for the acquisition of sector clearance to NGOs
- To provide a conducive environment and ensure the smooth operations, accountability, and transparency of NGOs within the Social Development Sector
- To put in place a systematic approach to the building of requisite capacities and a stronger framework within which both local and international NGOs can work together to achieve gender equality in Liberia and provide basic social services to the vulnerable, marginalized, excluded in society.
- To ensure that the Government through the MGCSP, tracks and reports accurately on gender issues both nationally and internationally

A. Processes For New Non-Governmental Organizations

For those organizations applying for sectorial clearance for the first time are required to do and submit the following:

1	Address a letter of application to the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Ministerial Complex, Congo Town.
2	The following documents are to be attached to the letter of application and delivered to the office of the Minister: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Current Liberia Business Registration Certificate<input type="checkbox"/> Notarized Articles of Incorporation<input type="checkbox"/> Current work plan<input type="checkbox"/> Financial strategy (how the organization gets funding to operate)<input type="checkbox"/> Bank statement or a letter from the organization's bank<input type="checkbox"/> Child Protection, Gender, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse policy, ETC... (depending on the organization area of intervention)
3	The Minister reviews the application and attentions it to the Department for Research, Policy and Planning (DRPP) to begin the process.
4	The Legal Unit will convene a brief acquaintance meeting with each and every applicant and recommend to the DMRPP for appropriate action.
5	Following the acquaintance meeting, application letter, including all other required documents, are forwarded to the Sector Clearance Focal Person by the DMRPP
6	Sector Clearance Focal Person reviews the documents and invites the applicant to pay a non-refundable processing fee to the Division of Finance, where they will obtain an official MGCSP receipt.
7	The Sector Clearance Focal Person will then give the organization the application and MFDP forms to fill out and submit within maximum three (3) working days
8	The M&E Team will then schedule a verification assessment visit with representation comprising of the respective Departments and make recommendations
9	Based on the endorsement/rejection by the Deputy Minister concerned, the applicant will be notified and if endorsed, will then be asked to make a deposit of the sector clearance fees by obtaining a deposit slip from the Division of Finance and proceed to the bank or be notified of reasons for rejection
10	Following the deposit of the required fees at the bank, applicant proceeds to the Division of Finance at MGCSP and obtains official receipt and submit a copy to the M&E Division.

Sector Clearance is then printed and sent for signatures and issued within five (5) working days after the payment of sector clearance certificate fees. I I.

B. Processes For Renewal Of Non-Governmental Organizations Sector Clearance

For those organizations reapplying for sectorial clearance are required to do and submit the following:

- 1 Address a letter of reapplication to the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Ministerial Complex, Congo Town.
- 2 The following documents are to be attached to the letter of application and delivered to the office of the Minister:
 - Current Liberia Business Registration Certificate
 - Current work plan
 - Financial strategy (how the organization gets funding to operate)
 - Copy of annual report (if NGO has operated one year or more);
 - Copy of last sector clearance certificate
 - Copy of last MFDP Accreditation certificate
- 3 The Minister reviews the reapplication and attentions it to the Department for Research, Policy and Planning to begin the process.
- 4 The Legal Unit will convene a meeting with each applicant and recommend to the DMRPP for appropriate action in compliance with the guidelines.
- 5 Following the meeting, reapplication letter, including all other required documents, are forwarded to the Sector Clearance Focal Person
- 6 Sector Clearance Focal Person reviews the documents and invites the applicant to pay a non-refundable processing fee to the Division of Finance, where they will obtain an official MGCSP receipt and submit copy to the M&E Office.
- 7 The Sector Clearance Focal Person will then give the organization the application and MFDP forms to fill out and submit within maximum three (3) working days
- 8 The M&E Team will then schedule a verification assessment visit with representation comprising of the respective Departments and make recommendations
- 9 Based on the endorsement/rejection by the Deputy Minister concerned, the applicant will be notified and if endorsed, will then be asked to make a deposit of the sector clearance fees by obtaining a deposit slip from the Division of Finance and proceed to the bank or be notified of reasons for rejection

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Following the deposit of the required fees at the bank, applicant proceeds to the Division of Finance office at MGCSP and obtains official receipt and submits copy to the M&E Office.

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Sector Clearance is then printed and sent for signatures and issued within five (5) working days after the payment of sector clearance certificate fees.

Fees For Sector Clearance Are Paid As Follow:

Application fees for all applicants (new or old) is	LD\$1,500.00
Certificate fee for a Community Based NGO is	USD\$75.00
Certificate fee for a National NGO is	USD\$100.00
Certificate fee for an International NGO is	USD\$200.00

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

- ✔ Applicants are advised to attach all required documents to the letter of application before delivery and make sure to immediately fill out and submit your application form after you have received it.
- ✔ Applicants operating in counties other than Montserrado will be assessed by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection County Teams.
- ✔ Applicants who receive sector clearance are to attend the MGCSP coordination meetings both central and/or county levels.
- ✔ Applicants are to submit quarterly reports throughout the year and an annual report at the end of the year to be incorporated into the Ministry's annual report, Presidents Annual speeches and other national and international reports related to gender, children and social protection. Failure to do so is subject to a fine.
- ✔ Organizations applying for renewal are to do so two (2) months prior to expiration dates to ensure due process and evaluation is carried out.
- ✔ Deposits are made at Central Bank of Liberia (\$200.00USD) and the Guaranty Trust Bank-Liberia (\$75.00 and 100.00 USD).

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Hon. Curtis V. Dorley
DEPUTY MINISTER

Department for Research, Policy and Planning