



Liberia Land Authority (LLA) Monrovia, Liberia

Internal Communication Strategy

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BOC	Board of Commissioners
CNDRA	Center for National Documentation, Records and Archives
CLGS	County Land Governance Structures
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
GoL	Government of Liberia
LLA	Liberia Land Authority
LLAP	Liberia Land Administration Project
LLC	Liberia Land Commission
MLME	Ministry of Lands, Mines, and Energy
NCF	National Consultative Forum
ODR	Organizational Development Report
WB	World Bank

Executive Summary

The lack of an internal information dissemination strategy has been identified within the Liberia Land Authority (LLA) following assessments of internal processes and procedures of the LLA. Towards this end, the World Bank supported Liberia Land Administration Project (WB/LLAP) provided funding for a consultancy to develop an internal communication strategy. This strategy seeks to fill the internal communication gap of the LLA by providing tools and channels that can be used for effective internal communication, and actionable ways to improve communications between management and staff as well as between departments. They are discussed further in this summary.

The development of this internal communication strategy is part of building the institutional capacity of the LLA to help in the effective implementation of its mandate. As noted in the inception report of this consultancy, the development of the internal communications strategy is one of several key recommendations of the LLA's Organizational Development Report (ODR), supported by the WB/LLAP, which revealed that 70% of the LLA's staff is not well informed about developments in the institution and rated the frequency of information received from their managers and other sources as poor.

The process of developing this internal communication strategy was carried out collaboratively by the consultant who worked with relevant technical staff of the LLA, mainly staff of the public relations and communications and outreach sections, as well as the Executive Director and other members of Senior Management. To collect the relevant data for development of the internal communications policy, a qualitative methodology was adopted utilizing desk review of existing LLA policies and current institutional communication as well as key informant interviews (KII) through the administration of questionnaires to staff. The internal communications problems identified at the LLA, during the data collection process, are many, but they are not unmanageable. This internal communication strategy aims to address the identified gaps that exists within the LLA's internal communication mechanism.

Some key findings identified include:

- Various characterizations/description of current internal communications as “disjointed”, “unsatisfactory” and “partially cordial”;
- Inter-departmental communication generally appeared to be non-existent;
- There is no LLA-wide general meetings beside the senior management team meetings;
- There appears to be no clearly laid down reporting channel within the institution;
- Feedback loops is minimal as ways of getting feedback from directors and co-workers very rare to nonexistent;
- There is a lack of approved channels for the flow of information on activities and developments within the LLA;
- There appear no clearly defined lines of reporting and information sharing; and

- There are no clear instructions to employees on how to access or disseminate information.

As mentioned above, the strategy contains tools and channels that will help the staff of the LLA to effectively communicate. These will enable them to communicate both online and offline. The tools and channels are innovative and effective solutions to information sharing within the LLA, and include the following:

- ✓ The establishment of an LLA internal contacts database.
- ✓ The establishment of an LLA institutional identity/culture.
- ✓ The reactivation of the LLA website, which is currently ongoing.
- ✓ Provision of suggestions boxes for feedback from employees.
- ✓ Utilization of existing bulletin boards for information dissemination and information flow.
- ✓ Regular publication of an E-newsletters of LLA activities referred to as “Know or Rights on Land”.
- ✓ Publication of an LLA brochure outlining the basic internal communication channels.
- ✓ Convening of monthly general staff meetings.
- ✓ Holding of bi-weekly departmental staff meetings, and
- ✓ Holding of annual retreats to develop integrated work plans and entertain some work-life balance.

The actionable ways laid out in this Strategy to improve communication between management and staff and between departments include but are not limited to the following:

- Build inter-departmental relationships.
- Have regular inter-departmental meetings.
- Create shared institutional goals.
- Have a functioning LLA website and other tools.
- Place suggestion boxes in strategic areas.
- Place bulletin Boards in strategic areas.
- Regular publication of the LLA’s e-newsletters, and
- Publication and internal distribution of LLA Brochure.

The LLA administration and Senior Management should use these channels and tools as contained in this strategy to improve its internal communication with all tiers of staff-commissioners, senior executive management, and technical and administrative personnel. This will also improve communication between the central office and county land offices, and to a large extent, County Land Boards and the National Consultative Forum, hence creating a harmonious working relationship. The implementation of this internal communication strategy will require funding allocated through the LLA’s annual budget. Such budgetary allocations should focus on the implementation of activities in achieving the goals and objectives of the strategy.

1.0 Introduction

Land as a gift of nature also represents a critical factor of production. The world over state influence in the redistribution of land has always been accepted and legitimized in legal frameworks. Liberia is not unique in this situation where from the earlier period of the establishment of the country, the settlers from North America established a land tenure system that failed to recognize the reality that there were other people living in the area who claimed customary title to the area. This situation served as the basis for many of the land conflicts that exist in the country.¹

Over time the contentious nature of this arrangement necessitated the need to have structures devoted to land administration and management. Over eight agencies of the government had some land function. For example, former Ministry of Lands, Mines, and Energy had the responsibility for survey, mapping, land information, while the Center for National Documentation, and Records Agency had responsibility for land registration as well as repository of land documentation. This fragmentation of land functions was cumbersome, conflict prone, and inefficient in the delivery of land services.

The country's land tenure and administration processes have undergone various reforms. The post-conflict reforms of the country's land tenure/administration system have been crucial. The passage of the Act creating the Liberia Land Commission in 2009 was a significant milestone, as its key policy recommendation on the institutional reform of the land sector paved the way for the establishment of the LLA.

The LLA was established in 2016, with a broad mandate “to develop policies on a continuous basis, undertake actions and implement programs in support of land governance, including land administration and management”. Notwithstanding, an issue that has been identified as a missing link in the organizational development of the LLA is how to effectively communicate internally within the Authority in aiding decision-making processes to among others resolve conflict and provide land services to the public in an effective and efficient way

The consolidation of land administration functions has not automatically made the issue of internal communications to work seamlessly. Like it is usually the case with such new initiatives, especially those that bring together different functions of completely different institutions that

¹ 'Liberia' (*Tenure Facility*) <<https://thetenurefacility.org/timeline/liberia/>> accessed 9 November 2021.

previously did not work together, internal communication problem has emerged as an issue in the LLA. A survey of LLA upper management noted responses like “disjointed”, “unsatisfactory” and “partially cordial” to the question of how the internal working of the institution would be characterized. Generally, respondents also do not think that the various departments of the LLA are informed about the work of other departments. While it seems like some forms of internal departmental meetings are held, the frequency of such meetings varies from bi-weekly, monthly to no specific time frame. From the survey, it appears like there is no LLA-wide general meeting held, though senior staff meeting seems to be regular.

The survey responses seem to lean towards the non-existence of clear lines of reporting within the institution. The existence of an institution-wide organization chart is not clear as the responses noted that it either did not exist or was being worked on. Most respondents believe that the internal communication situation at the LLA negatively impacts staff output at the institution.

The internal communications problems identified at the LLA are many, but they are not unmanageable. This internal communication strategy aims to address the identified gaps that exists in the LLA’s internal communication mechanism. It proposes innovative and effective solutions to information sharing using online and offline tools.

1.1 Background

The Act that established the Liberia Land Authority (LLA) Act in 2016 has been hailed as revolutionary in the history of public policy in Liberia, as it consolidates land functions and staff from different agencies of the Government. With a very broad mandate as mentioned above, the Act in addition to central administration, provides for local land governance structures in each of the fifteen counties – 1) county land boards, and 2) county land offices. A third, Community Land Management and Development Committee is to be established in each landowning community in support of the Land Rights Act (2018). With this type of institutional arrangement, there is need to have an effective internal communication strategy in place.

1.2 Structure of the Internal Communication Strategy

This Internal Communication Strategy is organized and presented in nine sections excluding the Executive Summary, which provides a synopsis of the Strategy. Section 1 presents the Introduction including the background; Section 2 presents the Situational Analysis; the Goals, Objectives, and Expected Outcomes are presented in Section 3, while the Methodology is presented in Section 4. The Target audience and guiding principles of the Strategy are

presented in Section 5. Section 6 covers the Communication Channels and Tool necessary for the successful implementation of the Strategy; Section 7 deals with the Implementation of the strategy. Sections 8 and 9 encompass information on the evaluation of the strategy and the budget to facilitate the implementation of activities related to the Strategy.

1.3 Foundation Elements of the LLA

The LLA's activities are embedded in its foundational elements. These are found in the institution's mandate, mission, and vision statements which defined a set of core values that serve as a guide to the organization's work and its interactions with other institutions. The LLA recognizes that the importance of land tenure puts the institution in a very important position as the institution responsible for land governance and administration in the country. The LLA's mandate makes it compelling to work across the spectrum to promote good land governance and administration principles, policies, and practices in Liberia.

To effectively deliver on its mandate, the LLA has as its mission the contribution to a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Liberia through the effective and efficient delivery of land governance and administration services that ensure equitable access to land, security of tenure, proper land use, and protection of the environment. The vision of the institution is to have a Liberia where sustainable peace, stability, and socio-economic growth and development are enhanced through good land governance and administration.

The LLA also has its core values stated as follows:

- Quality Services: We exist to provide services to our people. We shall strive to provide land services that are effective, efficient, and distinctive.
- Transparency: We pledge that our policies and actions will be clear, consistent, and opened to all stakeholders, in accordance with good governance principles and practices.
- Fairness: We commit to providing land governance and administration services with justice, equality, and impartiality.
- Accountability: We shall be answerable to all stakeholders for the decisions we make, the actions we take, results we achieve, and the resources we manage.
- Integrity: We promise to serve the Liberian people with honor and honesty, cultivating the confidence and trust of our stakeholders.
- Professionalism: We shall implement our mandate in a proficient and skilled manner. We will adopt a proactive, customer-focused approach.

- Respect: In the discharge of our duties and responsibilities, we shall respect our land resources, including the environment, and, above all, our people.

2.0 Situation Analysis of Internal LLA Communication Situation

In the process leading to the drafting of the strategy, it was noted that there exist shortcomings on the internal communication front within the LLA. The desk review of the institution's Organization Development Report found that an astounding 70% of LLA staff "were not well informed about developments in LLA and rated the frequency of information received from their managers and other sources as poor." The development of this strategy forms an integral part of the institutional development of the LLA in its quest to achieve its mandate. At present, there exists no clearly delineated channels of communication set up for the workings of the LLA. The institution also has not institutionalized the hosting of internal departmental or institution-wide meetings. The ODR also noted that there are times that managers refuse to share information.

As noted in the Inception Report that preceded the development of this strategy, a high-level of importance was attached to the development of this internal communication strategy. LLA employees' views reflected in the ODR emphasize the importance of having this strategy in place.

As is currently the case in the LLA, the lack of an effective internal communication strategy within the institution is a cause for concern as it may lead to the lowering of morale among staff and seriously undermines team cohesion. This strategy will address the current problem of information flow within the institution and ensure that information flows through the organization and averts the responses given by LLA staff as shown in the findings of the ODR survey.

As part of the development phase of this plan an internal survey was administered with some of the LLA's senior staffers. Even at that level the impression of the internal communication of the institution was not well perceived with characterizations like "disjointed", "unsatisfactory" and "partially cordial" applied to it. It was observed that inter-departmental communication is generally non-existent. It was also noted that there is not LLA-wide general meeting outside the most senior management that is held. The process also noted that there is not clearly laid down reporting channel within the institution. Ways to getting feedback from employees is also nonexistent.

The internal communications problems identified at the LLA are many, but they are not unmanageable. This internal communication strategy aims to address the identified gaps that

exists in the LLA's internal communication mechanism. It proposes innovative and effective solutions to information sharing using online and offline tools. The existence of this communication strategy will enhance cooperation and coordination among the various departments of the LLA. It will help to keep employees engaged with each other and build an institutional culture. It will also serve as a catalyst for decision making within the LLA and draw staff closer together.

3.0 Goal, Objectives, and Outcomes of the strategy

3.1 Goal and Objectives

The basic goal of the strategy is to create a system and employ online and offline tools for the purpose of facilitating information sharing within the LLA. This strategy is meant to help the Liberia Land Authority deliver on some aspects of its mandate. In addition to the goal as stated above, this internal communication strategy seeks to achieve the following specific objectives:

- Develop a blueprint as an abiding tool to process and share information among relevant internal stakeholders in land administration and management in Liberia
- Build the capacity of internal actors and stakeholders of the Liberia Land Authority to understand and apply the internal communication strategy
- Create the system and process of capturing internal communication feedbacks and evaluation

3.1 Outcomes

The tracking and achievement of set outcomes is key to ensuring the success of endeavors like this. While the baseline study done to identify the LLA's internal communication situation noted some issues, it is worth noting that this is not a fundamental departure from those. This internal communication strategy hopes to achieve the following outcomes:

- A recognizable internal LLA communication culture
- Clear understanding of information gap in the LLA's internal programs
- Increased internal dissemination of information via bulletin boards and emails
- Enhanced internal understanding of LLA's goals and objectives
- Enhanced internal understanding of the LLA's programs, accomplishments, milestone, progress, and status
- Increased staff interest and participation in LLA's processes

4.0 Methodology for the Development of the Strategy

The methodology used to develop the internal communication strategy involved a review of literature of best practice templates and forms. The process of review of literature focused on the work of Land Authority on how they have approached the issue of internal communication especially as it relates to the performance of its core functions. The desk review method employed during the literature review process focused on the need to source baseline data by reviewing literature that are adaptable to the needs of the LLA. To this end, the following documents were reviewed:

- The 1986 Constitution of Liberia
- The Liberia Land Authority Act 2016
- The Land Authority External Communication Strategy
- The Liberia Land Authority Final Organizational Report
- The LLA Strategic Plan of 2018-2020

The methodology employed to develop this strategy also relied on a mini survey conducted with the senior management of the LLA. This survey asked the respondents a series of key questions that sought to determine their perception of the communication processes that is being employed in the LLA. Those who responded to the survey at the senior management level included the Commissioner for Land Administration, the Executive Director, the Public Relations Officer, the Communication and Outreach Officer, the Project Coordinator of the WB/LLAP, Director of Administration/HR and Training, Director for Land Administration, LLA's M&E Officer, Director for Land Use Management, and the Asst. Director for Customer Services.

5.0 Target Audience, Strategic Inputs and Guiding Principles

5.1 Target Audience

This strategy is specifically aimed at LLA's departments, divisions, sections, and units, and the staff who work in these structures. More specifically, the target audiences of the internal communications strategy are the staff and management of the LLA, particularly at the following levels.

- LLA Central office
- County land offices

5.2 Strategic Inputs

While the focus of this strategy is to enhance the internal communication culture of the institution, it is necessary to note that such a goal would not be achievable if certain crucial inputs are not made with the specific and deliberate intention of ensuring the success of this strategy. To yield fruitful outcomes for the LLA's internal communication process, the following inputs would be required:

- Budget for modernizing the LLA's internal communication infrastructure
- Budget for printing and distribution of the internal communication strategy to all key staff/departments
- Budget for the hosting of internal trainings to institutionalize the communication channels
- Budget for internet resources to include website, e-newsletter, mail alerts
- Budget for printing visuals that depict internal communication channels to be posted in each office
- Budget for hosting meetings
- Stationery and supplies
- Training Consultant's Remuneration
- Logistical support

5.3 Guiding Principles

For the Internal Communication Strategy to be effective, the LLA must adhere to certain guiding principles. The guiding principles for the institution's internal communication will be geared

towards buttressing the internal communication culture that this strategy seeks to establish. These principles will encompass but not be limited to the following ethical standards:

- All internal communication, regardless of originator, should take a conflict sensitive posture. This will ensure that information flows in such a way that tension and ill-feelings are avoided. This rule applies to emails, memos posted on bulletin boards, social media postings, and even telephone conversations. It shall apply to communication between two staffers, or a group email sent to groups of staffers.
- All communication should be gender sensitive and consistent with the institutional policy of gender empowerment. Internal communications that demean or denigrate women or men must always be avoided. This consideration is not only for the written and oral wordings but even in the pictorial portrayal of women and men. Nudity and sexually suggestive images must be avoided in the workplace.
- All communication should strive to be ethical in form and substance. Blind copying others on internal communications shall be discouraged. The chain of recipients of an email should be clear from a casual inspection of its.
- Communication that flows through the institution must serve to enhance transparency and accountability of the organization's work. Communication that is not meant for a wider circulation must be thus designated and limited to the people to which it was meant. No one who receives such an email should share it with other that it is not intended for. This principle shall in no way be construed as working against the stated principle of transparency within the LLA.

These guiding principles must be considered in the context of the risks and rewards that are integral to the communication process. Firstly, looking at the risk aspect, it is worth noting that the result of misinforming internal stakeholders about specific issues based on omission of words when texts are not carefully edited. It creates negative feedback and unintended responses. Internal blunders in poor communication leads to reputational damage for the Land Authority in such circumstances. So, it means care must be taken in composing, timeliness, and delivery of internal messages.

The reward of effective communication is a productive Liberia Land Authority- on top of its obligations as provided under the revised Act. Evidence of its effectiveness can be seen in timely sending of carefully composed and designed messages using the appropriate tool to capture feedback and act on it in fairness. Ultimately, management is rated high in terms of performance and institutional stability based on its smart communication approaches using more the right tools, but the elements captured in the guiding principles that consistent with the legal frameworks creating the LLA.

6.0 Communications Channels and Tools and Ways to Improve Inter-Department Communication and Communication between Staff and Management

6.1 Overview of Communications Channels

For this strategy to be successfully implemented, a range of communication channels and tools must be deployed. These should include the establishment of an internal LLA contacts database; and the institutionalization of an identity/culture of the LLA. More specifically the following communication tools/channels will be used to implement this strategy:

- The establishment of an LLA internal contacts database
- The establishment of an LLA Institutional Identity/Culture
- The reactivation of the LLA website
- Suggestions Boxes
- Bulletin Boards
- Regular publication of an E-newsletters of LLA activities
- Publication of an LLA brochure outlining the basic internal communication channels
- Monthly General Staff Meetings
- Weekly Departmental Staff Meetings
- Annual Retreats

6.2 The LLA internal contacts database

The use of email is practically standard practice in most workplaces in the contemporary world. Despite this, it is proposed that the LLA establishes a contacts database of all its staff and internal stakeholders. This database will include email addresses and telephone numbers of everyone that is deemed relevant to the internal communication of institution. Such a contacts database, once its structure and categories have been designed, needs to be constantly updated and managed in a manner which allows for the provision of quick results upon specific requests. All LLA communications should be directed to the relevant target audiences through the contacts database. This will ensure that the LLA can send out “targeted” communications to one or several pre-defined target groups within the institution with ease.

The contact database should also be department specific by having department-wide designations for clusters of email addresses that belong to staff within departments. Such a department-specific sub-database will help facilitate the flow of information within the various departments of the institution. The LLA's information Technology Officer and Communications Officer, who is in charge of managing the website should coordinate this process.

6.3 Institutional Identity/Culture

The LLA must establish an institutional identity/culture that all its staff and internal stakeholders will know, internalize, and use in the daily operations. It is important that such a culture/identity be memorable and easily identifiable. It may be couched in the organization's logo, color, motto, and key messages. The establishment of this institutional identity shall be seen in all aspects of the institution's internal and external dealings. It shall be reflective on all internal memos, letters, documents, etc.

As a means of fostering this culture/identity, each LLA email shall be branded with the organization's moto and logo. Each staff with a .lla.gov.lr email address shall be required to include a signature line to their outgoing emails that will include the institution's logo and mission statement. The ways through which this institutional culture can be inculcated in the staff and other internal stakeholders would be as follows:

The LLA website and the use of other tools

The LLA must reactivate and endeavor to maintain its website. The website shall have the institution's identity/culture permanently displayed on its homepage and other pages. The site must also be constantly updated with important information and changes in policy. It must include links to the institution's social media sites especially, Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp that are widely used in Liberia.

Internal communication can be used enhanced the internal communication of the institution. These social media platforms, if used for internal communication purposes should be secured by making sure that group discussion forums are closed to outsiders. Platforms like Zoom, Teams, etc. are also very important in maintaining an effective communication linkage within the organization. The LLA shall endeavor to provide refresher trainings for all its staff to bring them up to speed with the working of the various communication platforms.

Suggestion Boxes

Suggestion boxes should be utilized in the internal communication repertoire of LLA as this serves as an effective tool for feedback capturing from anonymous sources and those who do not require secrecy. The unanimity of this process will provide an opportunity for the LLA to receive candidate feedback from staff that often have great ideas but lack the confidence to speak in a group environment. The suggestion boxes will also be a tool that allow staff provide valuable feedback or report situations without fear of reprisal. The Director for Administration should designate a staff within the Human Resources Division to be responsible for routinely collating the suggestion box notes and sharing it with senior management for open discussion. The suggestion boxes should be both physically available within the office environment of the LLA and virtually on the institution's website. For the website component, a person much be allowed to make comments or report issues unanimously. These boxes will serve as an effective component of the LLA's internal communication feedback loop.

Bulletin Boards

In addition to the suggestion boxes there must be bulletin boards to provide updates in text in the forms of memos, flyers, posters, and pictorial updates of major events. Each department of the LLA should maintain an internal bulletin board, while the LLA should also maintain a general bulletin board. In each situation, the Director for Administration shall designate a staff within the Human Resources Division to update the bulletin boards. These bulletin boards should be arranged such that older information be routinely moved to the bottom third of the board. The staff responsible for maintaining the board shall ensure that the most recent information is maintained at the top third of the board. The designated staff working with relevant divisions and section shall ensure that information on the board is relevant and current. As part of the feedback loop that will be established, the bulletin boards will be an essential component. Suggestions submitted through the boxes will be responded to via the bulletin boards and other mechanism outlined in this Strategy.

E-newsletters

An e-newsletters will be an effective tool to dissemination information to staff and other internal stakeholders of the LLA. This would be an electronic substitute to the bulletin board. The LLA through the office of the Executive Director should designate a specific department or

individual that will be responsible to collate information from across the institution for the publication of the e-newsletter. This newsletter should be sent out once a month to give time for the collation of the required information.

An LLA Brochure

An LLA brochure that contains relevant information on basic internal communication channels should be published by the public relations officer and distributed to all staff and other internal stakeholders. The brochure will contain an organization chart of the LLA and explain the lines of reporting within the institution. It should include a brief section for frequently asked questions (FAQ) and provide a link to the LLA's website's page. This brochure should be revised once every two years. The purpose of the revision will be to include the most updated information relating to the LLA's operations. This will ensure that all employees are kept updated of changes within the organization.

The use of regular (printed) letters

There will arise situations whereby there will be a need to reach out to internal stakeholders such as those at the County Land Governance or the National Consultative Forum. In such situations, the use of email may not be practical because of technical issues due to internet access challenges. Written letters and citations in hard copies to be delivered and tracked might be the best messaging form to use in such a situation.

Communication Matrix

The following matrix lays out a summary of how the internal communication strategy will be implemented:

Channel / Method	Target	When	How	Staff responsible	Purpose
Contacts database	Senior and middle management	By the end of January of 2022	Every staff will be assigned an LLA email which will be put in a contacts database with a designation for all staff or specific department	IT manager	To send out important information to staff without having to type individual email addresses
LLA website		By the end of the first quarter of 2022	The LLA's website is reactivated	IT manager	First line repository for LLA information
Suggestion boxes	All staff	By the end of the first quarter of 2022	Procure and install suggestion boxes on each floor of the LLA building	Procurement and maintenance managers	Provide an avenue for staff to provide feedback on a variety of issues of concern to them
Bulletin boards	All staff	By the end of February of 2022	Procure and install bulletin boards on each floor of the LLA	Line managers	To serve as an information dissemination tool for information that is of importance for internal use
E-newsletters	All staff	Monthly	Determine a layout format and collect contents	Public Relations Officer	It will contain information that informs the internal audience of important events and changes in policy
LLA brochure	All staff	By the end of the first quarter of 2022	Determine a layout format and collect contents	Public Relations Officer	Crafted to provide clear and cogent information on the internal works of the LLA
Month general staff meetings	All staff	Monthly	Craft agenda, determine and send out automated invites using the contacts database	Director for Administration	To serve as an information dissemination forum and a feedback mechanism
Weekly departmental meetings	All staff	Weekly	Craft agenda, determine time, and send out automated invites using the department specific contacts database	Line managers	To serve as a forum for the exchange of information between line managers and their teams
Annual retreats	Senior and middle management	Every December	Craft agenda, and send out automated invites using the contacts database	Director for Administration	To serve as a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to help revise the communication strategy

6.4 Actionable Ways to Improve Communication within the LLA

In addition to channels and tools laid out in Section 7 and the beginning of this section, the LLA will have to implement the following measures to enhance communication between staff and management and between departments. The implementation of these measures will energize the institution's work environment and enhance its internal culture.

6.4.1 Departmental Silos should be Discouraged

There can be a tendency in institutions for different departments to function like they are independent units. Such work cultures can lead to disharmony and create a culture of unnecessary competition within the institution. The LLA must take measures to ensure that such an individualized departmental culture does not exist in the organization. To combat this, management should do the following:

- Involve departmental leadership in all activity planning to set a foundation of solidarity.
- Ensure department managers see how free-flow communication benefits them.
- Relocate departmental teams to be in closer physical proximity to one another.
- Ensure that directors of departments and their designees sit in other department's meetings.
- Ensure equal access to information across departments.

6.4.2 Set Institution-wide Objectives

To ensure interdepartmental cohesion, the LLA should develop institutional-wide objectives that will require different departments to work together to achieve the mandate of the LLA. This will help make the institution to work as a unit and discourage departments from focusing solely on the narrow departmental goals. To achieve this, the LLA should ensure that the following are implemented:

- Departmental heads will be required to define and communicate institutional objectives to their teams
- Department heads will be required to constantly express the importance of achieving institution-wide goals in addition to the departmental goals to staff under their supervision
- Require department heads and their staff to have a clear understanding of how the institutional-wide goals align with the departmental goals.

- Use emails, newsletters, and bulletin board postings to reinforce a shared purpose.
- Encouraging questions and feedback across departments especially on issues that affect institution-wide policies/goals.
- Hosting regular interdepartmental meetings.
- Encourage departmental heads to find ways to support each other.
- Share good news and departmental successes institution-wide.

6.4.3 Schedule Regular Team Interactions

In addition to the yearly retreats and the monthly inter-departmental meetings, team members from various departments should be encouraged to regularly interact in other social settings. At meetings, team members should be encouraged to sit with someone from another department instead of their own department. Staff should be encouraged to sit with a staff of a different department at every subsequent meeting. This will ensure that staff get to know each other well. These measures will help ensure that departments and their staff interact with one another on a routine basis. Department Directors should put in place the following measures:

- Schedule regular monthly interactions with teams at a set time and place.
- Hold video conferences when teams can't meet in person, encouraging team members to have their cameras on to foster connectivity.
- Hold weekly inter-departmental leadership meetings to discuss common issues and solutions.
- Put in place a mechanism to foster shared interests outside of work.
- Encourage team members to meet as needed without management initiation.

7.0 Implementation of the Internal Communication Strategy

7.1 Summary of Implementation

There is no need to have a communication strategy for internal use if the staff of that institution do not know about it. This strategy provides for the training of LLA staff that will be charged with the duty of implementing or leading specific aspects of the strategy. All such individuals will be required to internalize the strategy so that they are able to fully articulate its intentions to the employees of the LLA. To kick off the implementation of this strategy, each departmental head, and a staff responsible for the implementation process within the department will participate in a weeklong training that will serve as a training of trainers on information dissemination. The training will also focus on the acquisition of specific skills related to some of the communication tools that require specialized understanding.

This suggestion is because some personnel of the Authority are not skilled in using some of the tools outlined in this plan. The management of the website, production of brochures and e-newsletter will require specialized skills that will be offered during the trainings. The internalizing of the communication strategy must therefore leave no one behind. Even drivers and janitors that are at the lowest level should be exposed or oriented to the suggestion boxes so that their inputs are relevant to institutional effectiveness in serving the Liberian public.

To ensure that such a rollout is successfully carried out, the first six months of implementation of this strategy should focus on conducting workshops with different segments of the LLA. These workshops should take the form of training of trainers and should focus on the top and middle managers of the institution. Those individuals who participate in this internal training will then be required to provide step-down trainings to other staffs within their departments. These training sessions will also double as internal outreach sessions for the purpose of making staff familiar with the way this strategy is intended to function.

To build the level of internal harmony desired to make the internal workings of the LAA seamless, the following specific actions are recommended:



Monthly General Staff Meetings

It is crucial that the LLA develops a culture of meetings at different levels internally. At least once a month, the institution will conduct a general staff meeting that will help enhance communication between the upper management and the general workforce. Every employee of the LLA shall be required to attend the monthly general staff meetings. Such a meeting will

help to build cohesion within the institution. These meetings should be publicized within the LLA either by means of emails or postings on the institution's bulletin boards. The meeting should have a standardized agenda that should be as time specific as possible. It shall be the responsibility of the Director for Administration to ensure that the meetings are organized and held. The Executive Director shall preside over the meetings where appropriate, and the Director of Administration will designate a relevant staff who shall be responsible for preparing and disseminating the minutes of all general staff meetings. General staff meetings shall take place on the last Friday of each month. Where the designated meeting day falls on a holiday, it shall be held on the Thursday preceding.

The previous meeting minutes shall be circulated throughout the LLA at least a week before the next meeting to allow for corrections. This will ensure that time is not spent during the meeting reading and correcting the previous meeting minutes.

The monthly meetings shall also serve as the means of fostering inter-departmental communication as each department will be required to provide a briefing on their activities during these meetings.



Weekly Departmental Staff Meetings

To achieve the results of good working relations within the LLA, each department of the institution shall be required to have weekly staff meetings. This meeting shall be attended by all staff assigned with the department. The holding of such meeting will help to strengthen the working relations among staff that they should work closely together on the daily basis. Such meetings should be publicized by means of internal emails or the departmental bulletin board. The agenda should also be standardized and made as time specific as possible. The head of each department shall be responsible to ensure that the weekly meetings are held. The head of department shall preside over the weekly meeting and designate a staff to be the note taker.

The previous meeting minutes shall be circulated to other staff of the department two days after the previous meeting to allow for corrections. This will ensure that time is not spent during the meeting reading and correcting the previous meeting minutes.



Annual Retreats

The hosting of an annual retreat for senior and middle-level staff of the LLA will help enhance internal communication within the LLA. Such events will afford the LLA senior and middle level staff the opportunity to fully engage with each other and discuss issues of importance to the

agency. The retreats should be a mixture of fun exercises and working sessions that will help senior and middle-level managers fully understand their respective communication roles. At the retreat, the LLA's communication strategy should be annually evaluated to determine what is working and what should be changed or modified. The retreat will be held at the end of each calendar year.

7.2 Internal Communication Flows

Best practice dictates that the internal communication process does not require that messages necessarily flow in a bottom to top direction. The flow must be both horizontal and vertical. Communication should flow from top management down to the lower levels and vice versa. Similarly, line managers should adopt the constant habit of communicating with each other to ensure the smooth operation of the institution.

Employees, at all levels should be encouraged by management to express their views on issues of concern to the institution. They should also be encouraged to raise issues that they believe are pertinent to the wellbeing of the institution. To encourage a free flow of information/suggestions within the institution, a discussion forum should be set up. Employees would be encouraged to make their views known via the discussion forum. This discussion forum shall be set up either as a WhatsApp, Facebook or other social media group. Such groups should be set up as closed groups and constantly monitored' to ensure that only genuine LLA staff are included or present. The rules for communication within in such a group shall follow the guiding principles laid out in this communication strategy as closely as practicable.

The LLA management should also allow employees to provide their views on issues and to remain anonymous if they so wish. For this purpose, both an online and offline suggestion forum should be established by the Communications Division with the office of the Director for Administration. The management should endeavor to ensure that confidence is maintained. Also, the management should endeavor to respond to all feedbacks provided through the suggestion forums. These feedbacks shall be provided via the communication of decisions related to them through emails or on the bulletin boards. Employees will be encouraged to continuously make their views known in meetings and through other means, as a means to ensuring that there is an integrated feedback loop within the communication architecture of the LLA.

Senior management should adopt the policy of providing a summary of major institutional decisions and changes to the employees and other internal stakeholders on the weekly basis. Such summary should be provided in a weekly email circular that should be sent to all staff. To

ensure that this is effective, all relevant staff of the institution must have a “.lla.gov.lr” email address. To this end, the management must ensure that the LLA domain is operating effectively.

Information flow within the LLA shall follow the following procedure. For instance, where a communication is initiated by the Commissioners such a message may be generally shared on the bulletin board (in hard copy) or in electronic form to all staffers by email. Other departments may also do likewise by sending a message to the top management. This system, in practice becomes a free flow of information, back and forth. It will create a useful feedback loop that will not only help to enhance the LLA’s internal workings, but also be an effective monitoring and evaluation tool for gauging the implementation of this strategy. This strategy envisions that every member of the LLA has the right to communicate in terms of creating messages for dissemination based on specified guiding principle which create a sense of fairness, openness, and accountability. These shall also apply to interdepartmental communications and reports shared.

If a message warrants a reply, it shall be LLA policy for the individual concerned to reply as quickly as possible. Where the reply of a message is urgently required, the email or letter in question should be clearly marked urgent in the subject line. In addition to these, the LLA shall institute internal policy on sending and replying to internal communications.

To enhance the internal communication flows, each department head will be required to send regular updates of their department’s activities to the heads of other departments. This does not have to be detail reports. Each update, though, should include activities that are being undertaken by the department. An information that is not meant to be shared beyond the senior staffs – heads of departments and higher – shall be clearly designated as such to avert such messages being passed on the others.

7.3 Tailoring the Message

This communication strategy will not be effective, if there are no additional policies around the framing the messages that will flow through the institution. Along these lines, all messages must be well thought out before they are transmitted to the intended recipient. Such messages should follow the institutional culture to avoid misinterpretation. If, for instance, someone wants to draw attention to certain anomalies in specific departments, the person must be clear in stating the specifics of the problem and causation rather than making broad generalization. This will help avoid such messages being misunderstood by the recipient which may make the person take a defensively posture thus ensuring that the underlying problem remains

unresolved. For example, it does not serve any useful purpose to blow issues out of proportion such as imputing corruption that cannot be justified with facts.

All messages should be primed to maximum effect. Message Priming is the emphatic tone that is used to send out the message that influences desired outcome from strategic audience bracket. The consistency and pace of the message that seeks to solve a problem. This principle helps to ensure that a problems solving posture is maintained. This would ensure higher levels of efficiency within the institution.

Whether it is about message that identifies a 'problem', 'seeks a solution' or 'call to action' internal LLA stakeholders must be guided by the elements of fairness, accuracy, timeliness, and conflict sensitivity.

8.0 Evaluation of the Internal Communication Strategy

This is a document to always be used as a reference material to promote effective communications for institutional efficiency. Such a lofty ambition cannot be realized without putting in place systems for measuring the effectiveness of the tools and actors assigned with responsibility of sending, responding, and acting on messages.

So, it is recommended that down the line of using the communication strategy, there must be a time set and a means of evaluating the application of this strategy with keen eye on the goals and objectives set out. To properly evaluate the implementation of this strategy, quantitative data must be capture on the usage of the internal communication systems that are proposed. Such measurement must come out with data with the intention of explaining how many letters/emails related to internal communication that were sent out within a given period; how many memos meant to communicate something internally were displayed on the bulletin boards; how frequently the LLA's website is updated with information relevant to the internal communication of the institution; and the uptake in the usages of .lla.gog.lr email address assigned to staff for the purpose of fostering internal communication.

Other indicators of such measurement in qualitative terms could be the outcome of some of the information shared on institutional growth or otherwise. LLA must make effort to hire an external consultant to do this kind of work from time to time and make recommendations for sustained efficiency of the strategy.

9.0 Budgets

An indicative budget was developed based on recommendations provided in this document. The budget considered all inputs required to make this strategy successful. The budget also include provision for training and outreach. It provides for the setting up and maintenance of bulletin boards and suggestion boxes throughout the LLA. The budget also provides for the hosting of annual retreats. The budget also provides for the hiring of a consultant that will carry out yearly evaluations of this strategy for the first two years. Below is the proposed budget.

Budget				
Items	Qty	Frequency	Unit cost (US\$)	Total Cost (US\$)
Reactivation of website & maintenance	1	1	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Suggestion boxes	4	1	\$ 100.00	\$ 400.00
Bulletin boards	4	1	\$ 300.00	\$ 1,200.00
E-newsletter	100	1	\$ 20.00	\$ 2,000.00
Training workshop	1	4	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 6,000.00
Brochure	500	1	\$ 30.00	\$ 15,000.00
Consultancy for ICS yearly evaluation		2	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
Retreat	1	1	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Stationery	1	1	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00
Misc	1	1	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00
Total				50,600.00

At the time of finalization of this document, it was revealed that some of the items proposed in this budgeted were already executed. For example, it was revealed that the website is undergoing rehabilitation and the number bulletin boards have been increased.

Appendix

Questionnaire

Questions for Key informant Interview for selected staff of LLA, for the development of an Internal Communication Strategy.

1) How would you characterize the internal workings of the LLA?

Response:

2) Do you feel that your department is fully informed about the workings of the other departments?

Response:

3) What is the function of your department?

Response:

4) Do you host departmental meetings?

Response:

5) What is the frequency of staff meetings held within your department?

Response:

6) Are there LLA-wide meetings held?

Response:

7) How often are LLA-wide (general) meetings held?

Response:

8) Are there clear lines of communications within the LLA?

Response:

9) Does an organizational chart exist?

Response:

10) How widespread is this organizational chart available if it exists?

Response:

11) Do you think that the internal communication situation at the LLA affects staff output positively or negatively?

Response:

12) What in your view will be a good addition to an internal communication policy?

Response:

13) Does the LLA have the policy to circulate general information?

Response:

14) Is the LLA website functional? Will the website be a good tool for internal communication in your view?

Response:

15. What are the internal tools and channels of communication have you been using?

Response:

16. Are there defined roles for those you share information from top to down?

Response:

17. Are there internal policies to respond to emails?

Response:

18. Which means of communication do you use to relate to internal stakeholders in the counties?

Response:

19. Do you use social media groups like Facebook or WhatsApp pages to communicate internally?

Response:

20. Do you use the LLA website to communicate internally?

Response:

21. Do you use newsletter from time to time?

Response:

22. Do you use bulletin boards to share memos?

Response:

NAME and Title of

Respondent_____

Liberia Land Authority's General Meeting Agenda (2 hours)

1. CALL TO ORDER/Welcome Remarks (5 minutes)
2. Reading of the Agenda (5 minutes)
3. Correction and adoption of previous meeting minutes (10 minutes)
4. Departmental Updates (20 minutes)
5. Discussion (30 minutes)
6. Question & Answer (30 minutes)
7. Any other business (20 minutes)
8. Adjournment

Monthly meeting minutes

Date of the meeting:

Attendance: First and last names of all those present at the meeting

1. Call to Order/Opening Remarks

- The time that the meeting was called to order and by whom.
- Any opening remarks summarized here.

2. Adoption of the Previous Meeting Minutes

- Motion to approve the prior meeting's minutes.
- Motion: To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as circulated
- Motion By: Name of person who made the motion
- Seconded By: Name of the person who seconded the motion
- Decision on the motion

3. Additions to the Agenda

- If there are additions to the agenda or requests for the next meeting's agenda, these would be bulleted here.

4. Approval of the Agenda

- Motion: to approve the agenda
- Motion By: full name of person who made the motion
- Seconded By: full name of person
- Decision on the motion

5. Business from the Previous Meeting

- Any items from the previous meeting that need to be discussed further

6. Departmental Briefings

- Summarize the briefings provided

7. Discussion

- Summarize discussions that followed the briefings including decisions taken

8. Any other Business

- Capture any other business that was discussed at the stage of the meeting including decisions taken

9. Adjournment

- Record the time the meeting was adjourned