

## 1. Programme Identification Details

<b>GTF Number</b>	309
<b>Short Title of Programme</b>	Developing Good Governance in the Niger Delta
<b>Name of Lead Institution</b>	Living Earth Foundation
<b>Start Date</b>	08 August, 2008
<b>End Date</b>	31 March, 2013
<b>Amount of DFID Funding</b>	£1,567,715
<b>Brief Summary of Programme</b>	A five year programme seeking to build the capacity of local government to deliver needs driven basic services; and of civil society to hold local governments in the Niger Delta to account and demand services critical to the reduction of poverty. LEF will engage with three Nigerian NGOs that have experience of working with stakeholders in the region to bring about change. The results sought include greater functional skills from the local government and engagement with the oil industry to lay a foundation for sustainable development. Practical action will focus on planning and implementation of pilot sustainable development projects in six local government authorities across three Niger Delta States. Also the project will create a platform for LGA and civil society engagement as well as a budget monitoring mechanism at the LGA level. A programme of cultural activities, underlining the relationship between traditional values and good governance, will reinforce outcomes.
<b>List all countries where activities have taken or will take place</b>	Nigeria
<b>List all implementing partners in each country</b>	Living Earth Nigeria Foundation Academic Associates PeaceWorks Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law
<b>Target groups- wider beneficiaries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LGAs for intensive engagement: 6</li> <li>- Rural households made up of women, men, youths, people with disabilities: up to 15,000</li> <li>- LGA staff and politicians: up to 450</li> <li>- Youths: develop new skills and provided “hands-on” experience: up to 60</li> <li>- CBOs active in target area: up to 150</li> <li>- Policy makers/ legislators at State and local levels – up to 500</li> <li>- Educational institutions participate in literary</li> </ul>

	<p>competitions – up to 50</p> <p>- General public – audience at drama performance &amp; cultural festival as well as radio listeners – up to 1 million</p>
<b>Lead Contact</b>	<p>Dara Akala</p> <p>5 Great James Street, London WC1N 3DB</p> <p>Tel: 020 7440 9750</p> <p>e-mail: <a href="mailto:dara@livingearth.org.uk">dara@livingearth.org.uk</a></p>
<b>Person who prepared this report (if different from Lead Contact)</b>	

## **2. List of Acronyms**

AAPW	- Academic Associates PeaceWorks
CBO	- Community Based Organisation
CDC	- Community Development Committee
DFID	- Department for International Development
GGF	- Good Governance Forum
GTF	- Governance and Transparency Fund
IHRHL	- Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law
KAP	- Knowledge Attitude and Practice
LEF	- Living Earth Foundation
LENF	- Living Earth Nigeria Foundation
LGA	- Local Government Authority
M&E	- Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	- Non - Governmental Organisation
PR	- Public Relations
USA	- United States America

### **3. Executive Summary**

The project, which is seeking to build the capacity of local government to deliver needs driven basic services; and of civil society to hold local governments in the Niger Delta to account and demand services critical to the reduction of poverty, has been hindered by increasingly challenging operational conditions in the Delta region. The increase in hostage-taking – Nigerians are increasingly vulnerable to kidnap now that expatriates are less visible – and the increase in armed conflict between militants and the Joint Task Force, has restricted staff movements and particularly constrained the visits of non-Nigerians.

Moreover, personnel and capacity difficulties experienced within the implementing partner organisations has slowed the initially-anticipated pace of project start-up. As a result, Living Earth's initial focus has centred around reinforcing the organisational capacity of partners and, particularly in the case of AAPW, re-establishing their presence and importance in the region. This has enabled the Nigerian NGOs to develop their capabilities and has produced a positive working relationship within and between partners and has contributed to finalising a baseline study for Rivers state.

Once key personnel were recruited, attention has shifted to the core objectives of the project. At this stage, activities dealing with governance and transparency have been limited to preliminary stakeholder engagement at state, LGA and community level. Achievements of the project so far are modest although the accomplishment of putting into place the organisational structure, as well as generating support and participation in the project which, are essential foundations for the future success of the project, should not be underestimated. The project has already successfully mobilised community groups in the LGAs as well as beginning the process of restoring belief in their participation in governance issues. The project has developed the learning modules for three of the planned training course; the review of fiscal laws in Nigeria with a view to summarising and presenting them in an easily understandable format to create awareness has been carried out, and two good governance forums have taken place in 2 LGAs with a promising attendance of officials and citizens. These achievements, combined a perceived attitudinal change in local government, augur well for achieving the main goals of the project in the ensuing years.

At this stage LEF expects to achieve the full purpose of the programme within the funding period provided the political situation and the level of conflict do not deteriorate dramatically.

#### **4. Programme Management**

Managing the implementation of a project in a highly fluid and crisis-ridden environment such as the Niger Delta is often a difficult and challenging task. From the time the project was designed through the inception phase, there have been tremendous changes in the project partners' situation and the project environment, which have adversely affected the rate of project implementation.

Since the inception of the project, hostage-taking as a means of extracting rent from the oil companies and government has become widespread and indiscriminate in the Niger Delta. Allied with that, is an escalation in the conflict between armed gangs or criminal elements and the military, which has made the area increasingly dangerous for foreigners.

This worsening security situation in the region has made it difficult for expatriates to visit in order to provide guidance and direction to the national staff in the process of project implementation. As part of the project's risk mitigation plan, the physical presence of expatriates in the Delta was to be kept to the barest minimum. Even so, in practice many meetings with key project staff and trainings have had to be taken away to safe places outside of the region to avoid unnecessary exposure to risks.

However, in spite of this unpromising context, the programme management team in LEF remains unchanged from what it was at the start of the project and have worked assiduously to strengthen the internal management capacity of LENF. A few changes have been introduced at LENF since the start of the GTF project, namely, the hiring of a new Executive Director, a Director of Programmes and a Director of Finance. These three positions have been constituted into a senior management team to manage the day-to-day project operations as well as manage the finances in an efficient manner. We believe that LENF being the lead partner in Nigeria should be able to set the standard for the other partners to follow in resource and project management.

#### **5. Working with Implementing Partners**

The experience of working with the implementing partners on this project has been mixed. While each partner organisation has been very positive and enthusiastic about the project, there are real challenges, which have constrained their performance in this initial period.

First, the founder and head of AAPW was arrested by state security and held in prison in Abuja before being released without charge. This subsequently led to her departure from Nigeria and this temporary exile caused AAPW to become highly dissipated as an organisation. This

situation occurred shortly before the grant was approved and, therefore, it became necessary for the project to assist AAPW rebuild and re-establish its presence as a key NGO in the Niger Delta while encouraging the Director to gradually return to the country. Efforts in this direction have yielded positive dividends with the opening of a new AAPW office in Rivers State and re-engagement of some of the old staff that are now currently deployed solely for the project.

Another issue of relevance to the project is that competent and experienced staff in the Niger Delta are highly mobile within and outside the country. This is for a number of reasons, one of which is the willingness of donor agencies to invest in human capital development for the region through training, workshops, etc as a key response to the long years of neglect by the government of Nigeria. Whilst taking advantage one of these opportunities, the Executive Director of IHRHL, who was very much involved in the design of the project, had travelled out to the USA just at the point the project implementation was about to begin, leaving behind staff that had little or no knowledge of the project. It therefore became imperative to start by assisting the IHRHL staff develop a good understanding of the project and their expected roles within it.

Finally, the person recruited by LENF to manage the day-to-day project implementation activities at the outset failed to take up the appointment. This was a consequence of the small pool of good quality local staff in the region having the luxury of a number of NGO positions to choose from. This situation has also partly contributed to the decision to re-constitute the senior management team by looking beyond the Niger Delta in recruiting and engaging new staff.

However, despite the various problems, the actual working relationship between the implementing partners has been quite positive. All the partners – LENF, AAPW and IHRHL - have shown great enthusiasm towards the project and they have been proactive in establishing a project steering committee to govern project implementation within the Niger Delta. The committee has established very smooth communication lines between the partners leading to the implementation of some joint activities. A good example of this is the recently concluded baseline study in Rivers State.

Furthermore, although IHRHL's role in the project is limited in scope, specifically, that of reviewing the Nigeria's fiscal laws and reducing it to an easily digestible format for sensitising the citizens on their rights under the law, they have participated actively in activities such as the baseline study and the first set of good governance forums.

## 6. Risk Assessment

The risk assessment at the proposal stage of the project remains relevant and is presented below:

<b>Risks</b>	<b>Probabi- lity</b>	<b>Potential Impact</b>	<b>Mitigating measures</b>
The potential loss of influence and control over funds by Governors and other senior politicians and civil servants at State level causes them to disengage from the programme.	High	High	Strong advocacy at State and Federal levels and the presentation to Governors of the career benefits to them of presiding over a better functioning LGA system
Powerful vested interests, thriving from a weak and unaccountable LGA system, will be alienated.	High	High	Create awareness in politicians that success of project can be used as stepping stone to higher political office
General insecurity in the region occasioned by ethnic conflicts, industry-community conflicts and criminality.	High	Medium	Project design has deliberately reduced the need for expatriate presence. Nigerian NGO staff are well known, not targeted by “rebels” and no more prone to criminality than any other Nigerian.
Sudden changes in policies and development strategies set by Federal Government.	Med	Medium	The focus on basic needs of the majority population will not become redundant in the lifetime of the programme.
The commitment of the oil sector to sustainable development in the Niger Delta will become diluted as PR and License to Operate imperatives are prioritised.	Med	Medium	The quality of project processes and products will provide examples of good practice upon which industry will be keen to build its social investment model.

Poor performance by local government institutions is too ingrained to be reversed.

Med

Low

Project design focuses on only those LGAs with a strong commitment to change. The tangible benefits from the project and the esteem accruing to participant LGAs will serve as an incentive for others to reform.

## 7.0 M&E Arrangements

The design of the project's M&E operational plan considers M&E as an integral part of the project from the outset, starting with the baseline established during the preliminary research at the start of project.

Since the project has just commenced, the current M&E arrangements are functioning well and they are considered adequate. However, the effectiveness of the system is a subject of on-going management review as project implementation progresses and extends into the other two States. This is to ensure that the M&E system provides timely and accurate information for project managers to take corrective actions where things are going wrong, which could ultimately result in project failure.

By design, the project's M&E effort focuses on input-output monitoring by project staff, partner organisations and beneficiaries as well as external impact monitoring and evaluation at the mid-point of project implementation and upon project completion.

A formative evaluation is planned for the Year 3, that is, mid-way into the project implementation and will take place from 15 August through 26 August, 2011 with the report presented to DFID by 15 September. The mid-term evaluation, which will be led by an international M&E expert, will adopt a participatory approach, and will involve primary stakeholders at different levels in reviewing project achievements. The mid-term evaluation team will comprise a local expert on M&E, 3 project staff from LENF and partner organisations, 1 representative from the LGAs and 2 community representatives (1 Male and 1 female).

In terms of approach, the review team will utilise existing data already generated through the regular monitoring process by the implementing partners, which would be supplemented by additional collection. Data collection techniques will include – formal and informal interviews, key informant discussions, community level meetings and focus group discussions. The focus of the evaluation will be on results and accomplishments of the project measured against plans. In essence, the

mid-term evaluation will seek to provide answers to four broad questions – are project activities being carried out and at reasonable costs? Are the outputs being produced as specified at the outset? Are the outputs leading to the desired outcomes? How have the contextual factors influenced project implementation? The analysis of the data collected and the synthesis of the findings in a report should help increase understanding of managers of what has worked, how the project has responded to changing circumstances and if need be, how to adapt the project so that it will be more likely for it to achieve its intended impacts. Such adaptations may entail small changes to activities or larger strategic revisions.

Similarly, the proposed final evaluation will be participatory in approach. The team composition will be along the same lines as that of the mid-term evaluation. The process will be led by an external consultant with considerable international experience in M&E work, especially in evaluating complex projects in a difficult environment such as the Niger Delta. This expertise will be complemented by the local knowledge to be contributed by the local team members (local M&E expert, staff LENF and other partner organisations, LGA and community representatives) in order to ground the findings in local realities. The terminal evaluation will focus a lot more on the impact of the project on governance in the Niger Delta and the lessons learnt in the course of project implementation. The key considerations at the terminal evaluation stage will be – how effective has the project been? Does it represent value for money?

A major aspect of the final evaluation will be the KAP Survey which will generate a variety of data from the citizens in the project area, the analysis of which enable the evaluators to describe the situation with regards to the level of awareness on good governance. This situation at the end of the project will be compared to the situation at the beginning, as captured in the baseline study. Any changes resulting from this comparison would be attributable to the project.

It is planned that the final evaluation will take place in the last three weeks of April 2013 and the report presented to DFID by 15 May 2013.

## **8.0 Logframe Changes**

There has been no fundamental change in the project's logframe though some of the indicators have been strengthened by inserting values or a description of the situation at the start of the project. Also, some indicators were reframed based on the feedback received on the inception report. These changes will enable us to communicate more precisely and with greater clarity, the changes that the project intends to bring about, with regards to service delivery by local government and citizen's participation in governance.

The specific indicators that have been modified were as a result of the feedback on the inception report. Please see Annex 2 for the latest version of the logframe.

## **9.0 Emerging impact on governance and transparency**

The thrust of project activities in these early days has been limited to preliminary stakeholder engagement at the State, LGA and community levels, to stimulate their interest, generate support and encourage participation in the project. Also, there was an analysis of the baseline situation against which project impact will be measured on a periodic basis over the life of the project.

As would be expected, given that Initial project activities revolve around creating structures and instituting systems to affect change, the impact on governance and transparency has not yet clearly emerged. However, these are essential foundations that are critical for the long-term impact of the project.

The local government administration in Nigeria has been labelled as broken by critical observers; often characterised as weak, ineffective and unaccountable. The LGAs are seen as the perfect setting for greedy and corrupt politicians who preside with a devastating effect, and quite often, fail to see their role as managing the LGA resources for the common good rather than one of self-aggrandizement. In this environment of massive corruption, civil servants have become incapacitated by a crippling lack of resources and besides salaries that they receive, have lost any motivation for their jobs, as evidenced by widespread truancy and apathy at work. It is for these reasons, amongst several others, that the upper tiers of government (State and Federal) treat the LGAs with disdain while simultaneously having little or no respect from citizens who do not trust them.

Government policies at the local level have often been top-down and do not take into account the concerns of the local people. Therefore, the fact that the local government officials, politicians and civil servants alike, have agreed to engage in periodic rounds of policy dialogue with the citizens, and have actually started talking to them, is a significant change brought about by the project at this stage, which will help engender pro-poor policies at the LGA level in the future.

Given the inaccessibility of the LGAs to the citizens and their general unresponsiveness and poor performance level, there has been a loss of public confidence in them. The frustrations encountered by the citizens in dealing with the LGAs had pushed them to a feeling of political impotence, to the point where their own loss of confidence in their capacity to bring about change had rendered them inert.

This project has already successfully mobilised community groups (women, men, youths, community elders/chiefs and religious groups) in the LGAs and has restored confidence and belief, which are essential prerequisites for engagement with the local government and demanding good governance. The citizens have also been organised to make their voices heard through adequate representation at the good governance forum, a platform created by the project for engagement with the LGAs.

This attitudinal change on the part of the local government actors and the citizens represents a fundamental shift and constitutes the foundation pillars that will support and sustain future changes to be brought about by the project.

## **10. Learning from GTF**

### **a.) Adapting work methods and approaches**

The key learning from the project at this initial stage of implementation centres on the adaptation of our work approaches in order to get the LGAs interested in the project. The specific learning is that the way a project is communicated to project stakeholders is essential in shaping their understanding and consequently their decision to participate or not to participate in the project. The key issues to be addressed by the project, including; transparency, accountability and good governance are quite sensitive for government officials, especially the politicians.

Therefore, if the project were to be presented as seeking to develop good governance in the LGAs, there is a huge risk of causing unease or apprehension within the top echelons of the LGAs, which could alienate them and result in failure to a part of the project. Given this reality, the project partners decided to present the project as that which strengthens LGA effectiveness in service delivery in the project's promotional materials and official communications with the LGAs. This little marketing nuance produced a tremendous result and helped to generate interest in the project amongst the LGAs.

This lesson should be of particular interest for development practitioners in countries or regions where there is endemic corruption. Development interventions need to be communicated in a non-threatening way for it to be attractive to all key stakeholders, particularly those who are keen to retain the status quo.

### **b.) Risk assessment and management**

Our assessment of risks at the project design stage, though comprehensive and accurate, focused on contextual and external factors; but did not identify the project partners as potential sources of risk to the project. The situation that confronted us at the beginning of the project, whereby one of the partner organisations was virtually non-existent as a result of their key representative being imprisoned and another whose influential leader had disappeared from the scene, was a big lesson. It is important at the project planning stage to go a step beyond the traditional

contextual analysis of risks by looking at the project internal environment to identify where things could go wrong. This would help in designing into the project some coping mechanisms that would make it resilient and able to withstand risks and internal shocks.

However, it is good to note that the situation described above has led to a great increase in risk management capability within the project as we have found a way to cope with these externalities. Though the take off of the project was initially slow, it has now gathered momentum and is making increasingly good progress.

This lesson should be of interest to development practitioners who are designing projects that they'll depend on others, to a large extent, for execution. It is important to be fairly conservative and cautious in setting project goals and targets; and a deliberate choice of a flexible implementation approach is highly desirable.

## **Annex 1 – Achievement Rating Scale**

Please see attached

## **Annex 2 - Programme Logframe**

Please see attached

## **Annex 3 - Annual Financial Report**

Your Annual Financial Report must present actual expenditure against your agreed detailed budget (not the summary budget used for Funding Requests). Expenditure variances in excess of 10% of the agreed budget must be explained as separate notes to your financial report.

### **3.1 Programme Identification**

1. GTF Reference No.	GTF-309
2. Organisation Name	Living Earth Foundation

### **3.2 – Reporting Period**

1. Start of Period	01April 2008
2. End of Period	31 March 2009

### **3.3 – Funds received from DFID during Reporting Period**

<b>Payment No.</b>	<b>Date Received</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Payment 1	17/10/2008	131,312
Payment 2	02/02/09	73,281
<b>Total received during Period</b>		<b>204,593</b>

### **3.4 – Expenditure during Reporting Period**

See attached Excel File

### **3.5 – Expenditure to Date (31 March 20yy) since start of Programme**

See attached Excel File

## Annex 4 – Materials produced during the reporting period

Item	Date	Title or description of material	Access web site (if any)
1.	15 Feb 09	Project Overview	<a href="http://www.livingearthnigeria.org">www.livingearthnigeria.org</a>

## Annex 5 – Web Update

Photo	<p>The project commenced in Rivers State with the conduct of a baseline study and the selection of two target Local Government Authorities (LGA). This was to help provide a clear picture of the situation before project implementation with regards to service delivery capacity and effectiveness in each LGA. The study helped in the identification of community groups from which representatives were drawn to participate in the first Good Governance Forums (GGF). Other achievements included curriculum development for three accredited learning programmes for staff of the LGAs and review of the fiscal laws in Nigeria with a view to summarising and presenting them in an easily understandable format to create awareness in the participants at the GGF.</p> <p>The analysis of the baseline situation in the LGAs has provided benchmarks against which project impact will be measured. Further, the GGFs will provide an on-going platform for a mutually beneficial dialogue and exchange between the LGA officials and the citizens comprising both the elites and the people. The primary beneficiaries of project intervention during this period are the LGA elected leaders and civil servants as well as CBO representatives. For the first time, the LGAs and the citizens had an opportunity to interact and jointly explore the barriers to effective service delivery by the LGAs and the impact on everyone.</p> <p>In the next year, we plan to extend the programme to the remaining two States, conduct baseline research, and in all the three States, support the LGAs to design and implement needs driven development programmes.</p>
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