

# LISA Monthly Newsletter

June 2026

## Liberian Swedish Access Driven Rural Development Programme (LISA)

### Key Points

- LISA brings together the Ministry of Public Works (MPW), Technical Assistant (TA), three Track Management Consultants (TMCs), County and District officials, Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) and Community Management Committees (CMCs), and workers from the communities
- Work activities include:
  - Capacity building of CBOs and CMCs
  - Construction of new VARs
  - Maintenance of VARs from LSFRP
  - Improvement of Feeder Roads
  - Enterprise, agriculture, gender inclusion and leadership support for communities
- USD440,000 has been generated to date for rural economies
- VARs have been completed and turned over to the CMCs in:
  - Bong County (2 VARs; 7.1 km)
  - Lofa County (10 VARs; 20.9 km)
  - Nimba County (13 VARs; 14.0 km)

### Background

The LISA project was established within MPW and with Sida support to construct long-lasting VARs in Bong, Lofa and Nimba counties.

The LISA project has the following objectives:

- Establish **55** CMCs at community level and **16** CBOs at District level
- Construct **195.0 km** of new VARs
- Maintain **174.6 km** of VARs from LSFRP
- Support **18** CBOs from LSFRP
- Spot improvements of **12.3 km** on Feeder Roads linking to VARs

MPW, the TA, County and District staff and the three TMCs work as a single LISA team. Together they

ensure that the CMCs and CBOs are trained and resourced, the VARs are well designed and constructed, long term maintenance plans are in place, the communities are supported with good quality guidance, and advice is provided on gender and inclusion, agricultural development, and opportunities for the VARs to enable sustainable and economic growth for all in the community.

### Progress

#### VAR maintenance

Maintenance continues on all VARs constructed under LSFRP. The current focus of the work is on making sure that drains and water channels are

clear and resistant to blockage and erosion during the rains which have recently started.



All LSFRP VARs will have undergone three complete maintenance cycles by the end of LISA's site activities in August.



**VAR construction**

The TMCs continue to expand their programmes, with work now complete or underway on the entire planned programme of 75 VARs. The full list of VARs:

**Bong**

- Salala District
  - **Moipata-Buteisue**
- Suakoko District
  - Nunetulamue-Tomkpolore
  - Ballamah-Claymue
- Jorquelleh District
  - **Whomgbeh-Dankpasue**
- Zota District
  - Naamai-Jarkai
  - Gbansuesulonmai-Boyanquelleh
- Panta District
  - Gbaita-Wumeh

- Foequelleh-Gbaita
- Foequelleh-Vayanhin
- Gbarnga Siaquelleh-Moses Village
- Gbarnga Siaquelleh-Gbaota
- Yealiquelleh District
  - Voloblai-Gbaito Ta
  - Gwenikalay-Kolliekaju
  - Pleemue-Jorker

**Lofa**

- Foya District
  - **Sadu-Farmah**
  - **Sadu-Sayma**
  - **Fassapoe-Farm 1**
  - **Farmah-Farm 2**
  - **Farmah-Farm 3**
  - **Borliloe-Kolochoe**
- Voinjama District
  - **Vezela-Ballah**
  - **Bazagizia-Zayea**
  - **Jallamai-Kuyamai**
  - Lawalazu-Kpakacongozu
- Kolahun District
  - Fassavulu-Hilgbelahun
  - **Fassavulu-Mowulahun-Taninahun**
  - Fassavulu – George Village
- Zorzor District
  - Zelemai-Kpannazu
  - Zelemai-Popowuzu
  - Zelemai-Zeawutu
  - Kpassagizia-Dorlorzu



**Nimba**

- Gbehlay-Geh District
  - Kpolay-Gboalay
  - **Zualay-Gopea (Mobula)**
  - **Zualay-Nentepea**
  - **Zortapa-Kapia**
  - **Kailay-Prince**
  - Kailay-Nalah
  - Larpea #1-Tontenpea

- Larpea #1-Larmie
- Larpea #2-Tonpea
- Larpea #2-VOSIEDA farm
- Zoe Gbor District
  - Korsein-Cowpea
  - Korsein-Yarpea 1
  - Korsein-Yarpea 2
  
- Sanniquellie Mahn District
  - Gborpa-William Dokie
  - Sehyi Gueh-Josephus Gbato
  - **Sehyi Gueh-Prince Dolo**
  - Mankinto-Mark Village
  - Mankinto-Bessonor
  - **Bleemain-Gartain**
  - Boapea-Nahla
  - Boapea-Osaka
  - Mao-Jallah Quor
  - **Borsonnor Town-VOSIEDA farm**
  - **Duo-Tiayee Town-VOSIEDA farm**
  - **Sopea-VOSIEDA farm 1**
  - **Sopea-VOSIEDA farm 2**
  - Kintoma Town-VOSIEDA farm
- Zoe Gbao District
  - Zaglay-Voaplay
  - Zaglay-Gbopea
  - Zehplay-Gotuo
  - Zehplay-Clepea
  - Troupoe-Fredrick
  - Troupoe-Pa Moses
  - Duowine-Tarpor Siah
  - Duowine-Gbopoa
- Bain Garr District
  - Whynor-Jefferson Wuo
  - Whynor-Kamawee Village
  - Whynor-Alphonso Canada
  - Yelekorlee-Fongowee
  - Tundi-Payepea
  - Tundi -Zumba
- Doe District
  - Keinpea – Manlor
  - Nuopea – Toepea
  - Nuopea - Barpea



The construction activities on these VARs include clearing, grubbing, de-stumping, formation, drain opening and bridge construction.



#### Embassy of Sweden Results Event

An event was held on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June to close the Sida development cooperation programme in Liberia and celebrate the work carried out together over many years. Sida projects, their stakeholders and other partners spent the day in panel discussions, sharing experiences and onward plans, and visiting project stalls. The LISA Project Director spoke in one panel discussion and the results from LSFRP and LISA were noted. The LISA team hope that contacts made at the event may yield future VAR opportunities.

[Swedish Embassy/Instagram/Facebook](#)

[Liberian Investigator/Liberian Observer](#)



each group, according to the nature of their land and their normal farming approaches. Where possible, return visits will be made to go into more technical detail.

### County Administration meetings and site visits

Coordination meetings and site visits with county authorities continue to go ahead. They enhance the level of ownership and understanding at county, district and community levels.



### VAR turnovers

The May newsletter detailed the final steps in the completion of a VAR. There are three levels of VAR turnover successively transferring responsibility from the LISA team to the CMC, then to the District, and finally to the County.

1. **Turnover to the CMC**, after which the CMC is in charge of the VAR
2. **Turnover to the District**, following district-level training sessions in management and leadership, after which the District will coordinate its VARs
3. **Turnover to the County**, after which the County takes responsibility for all its VARs

The LISA team is focused on CMC turnovers. District and county turnovers will start in late June. The VARs **in bold** in the lists above have been turned over to CMCs.

### Work plans

With the August deadline approaching for project activities, TMC work plans are being closely monitored, and revised with reallocated resources if required. The LISA team remains confident of timely completion.

### Feeder road improvements

The LISA project budget includes an allocation to improve the feeder roads that connect LSFRP and LISA VARs to the wider road network. Without this connection, agriculture production may not arrive at market and Government services may not reach the communities.

These improvement works (referred to as ‘spot improvements’ as they are located intermittently along the roads) have been carried out by TMCs and community workers in parallel to VAR construction and maintenance.

A small number of sites remain to be improved and the work is expected to complete before the end of June.



### Agricultural training

After initial coordination with district officials and lead farmers in the communities, the agricultural field assistant is giving one-day training sessions along each VAR. The training focuses on sustainable practices but is tailored to specific issues raised by

## Case Study: Zorkadoe Development Association

A VAR between Zortarpa Town and Kordeh Village in Gbelay Geh District in Nimba County was constructed in 2022 under LSFRP.

From its construction until the start of LISA the CBO – Zorkardoe Development Association – carried out some maintenance but with no funds being raised, the tools wore out, materials were not bought, and the VAR deteriorated.



In early 2025, the LISA team decided to provide additional support to the CBOs managing LSFRP VARs.

Hand tools were bought, maintenance cycles were part-funded to get the VAR into good condition, and training was given to the CBO to help them reactivate. The Zorkardoe Development Association responded well.

Now the community is generating funds, work is being done on the VAR, and there is strong support from all in the community.

A savings scheme has been set up and plans are being made to start a community soap making business. In due course the community want to extend the VAR to Tiayee-Kpoah Village.



In addition to LISA support, district and county officials visit the VAR, meet the community and give guidance and encouragement.

The main lesson that the CBO wants to pass on is that communities should organise themselves, and show commitment through voluntary work, rather than waiting for a project to come. Without this commitment, projects tend to fail; but with this commitment, projects are almost certain to succeed.

### Future Plans

#### VAR turnovers

As shown above, twenty two out of seventy five VARs have been turned over to the CMCs. Fifty three remain, followed by the turnover of all to the districts and counties. CMC turnovers will be completed by the end of July.

#### Closing event

The LISA launch on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 2025 brought all parties together and got the project, and specifically the TMC training, off to a good start.

A closing event is tentatively planned for the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2026. This will be used to present the initial findings of the endline survey, discuss how the work has gone and how it might be improved next time,

thank all those who have supported the work, and express the hope that further VAR support will follow soon.



## Research

### Research projects

There are many stakeholders in a VAR project, from the farmers in a community who will help to construct and maintain it, to the senior Government and Development Partner officials who decide on policy and allocate funds.

Motorcycle riders are also key, as they will do most of the haulage along the completed VARs.



One recently completed research project has looked at the ways in which these riders can get involved in, and support VAR projects. Potential roles from initial route selection to long term management are suggested for the three key groups of resident motorcycle owners, local motorcycle taxis (this being an important distinction) and unions.

The research report is under review. The recommendations will be passed on to those running future VAR projects.

VAR route selection, which will benefit from motorcyclists’ understanding of gradients and ground conditions, is the focus of another research project. This project will propose procedures that will guide a project team from sharing an initial budget between counties and then districts, to making a final selection that will take all views into account and give maximum benefit to the people in isolated communities.

Final research projects, soon to start, include the strength and durability assessment of the many timber species available, the desk-based assessment of measures to prevent erosion on steep slopes, and the revision of the social and technical VARs manuals to incorporate everything that has been learned during the last two years, including lessons from the completed, ongoing and imminent research projects.

## Challenges

### LISA end date and the arrival of the rains

All in the LISA team are focused on the completion of all project activities before the end of August. These activities include construction and maintenance work, as well as the structuring, training and support of the CMCs and other parties for whom the VAR turnovers are not the end of their work, but the beginning of their time as VAR managers, maintenance workers, and beneficiaries.

Rain has started across Bong, Lofa and Nimba, but work plans have been made with spare days for rain delays and the deadline remains safe.

### Bridges



TMCs focused on carriageway construction during the early months while bridge techniques were refined. TMCs are now planning their workers and materials to be able to complete all bridges by the end of July. Where necessary teams are moving to increase capacity in areas where more bridges remain.



### Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

#### Baseline and endline surveys

The endline survey is due to start during June. Where possible, it will survey the same roads as in the baseline in order to identify the impact of the paid construction work and the improved access along the VAR, noting of course that it often takes some months for the impact to be fully felt.

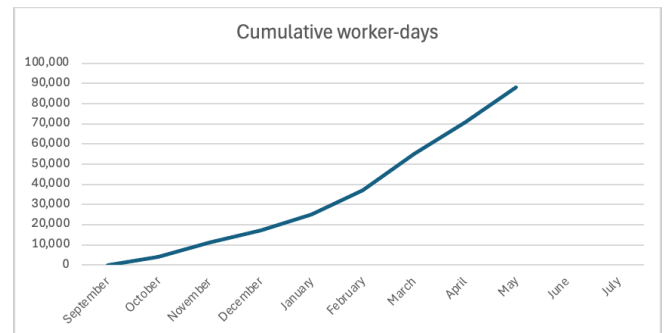


#### Final evaluation

A national consulting company has been awarded the contract to carry out the final independent evaluation of LISA. The field work is expected in July and August, with the final report ready in September.

### Worker-days

With work underway on all VARs, the cumulative number of worker-days is rapidly increasing, with a total to the end of April of 88,000 with just under half by female workers, and generating around \$440,000 for rural economies.



### Person of the month

Victoria N Ricks lives in Taylor Town in Yealliquelleh District, Bong County.

She had previously been active in her community, organizing susu clubs and running small businesses, but when the LISA district-level CBOs were asked to choose candidates for the new Business and Finance Assistant role, she was nominated by the CMCs from across the district.

Victoria joined the first BFA training session in November 2025 and has learnt quickly. She is proving very effective at supporting CMC and CBO business plans and managing worker payments.



This support has given the community confidence in the project. If tools are delivered late or become damaged, they use their own tools, rather than just sit and wait. If payments are late, albeit very rarely so, they continue working, knowing that the payments will arrive soon.

When asked what she brings to the role, Victoris says:

“I use my drive and motivation to work more because I’m learning more and more on the LISA project, and the wages I earn help me to improve my business.”