



## SABI Learnings Review

### 1. Background and Rationale

SABI is a multi-year citizen-led accountability programme funded by UK aid being delivered by Sierra Leonean partners led by international development agency Christian Aid. The programme commenced in July 2016 and was scheduled for completion in June 2020 but has been extended through an Accountable Grant Arrangement to March 2021 on a reduced scale and scope. A key part of the extension is to generate learning on what works and share with Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), FCDO sister programmes and other interested parties in the wider sector such as the World Bank.

SABI is a national programme working in all 16 districts of Sierra Leone, in 94 wards, 57 chiefdoms and 610 communities. Annual citizen perception surveys (CPSs) are undertaken in each community to gather citizens experiences of using government services. Survey findings are reported back, discussed with communities and used to develop action plans to address the service delivery challenges prioritised. Community action plans in turn are used as the basis for ward action plans developed by the 94 ward development committees supported by SABI. Capacity building and awareness raising activities are undertaken to inform citizens of the services that government has committed to deliver and to build capability of a range of stakeholders to address the weakness in service delivery identified. CPS data is also utilised to communicate local service delivery challenges to district and national government, and SABI provides forums for dialogue and collaboration between citizens and government on key findings. SABI works directly with approximately 350,000 people but has the potential to impact citizens across the entire country through improvements in service delivery.

The summary programme Theory of Change is annexed.

Key assumptions included:

- a) Citizens will be able to find necessary resources to engage if capability and motivation factors are adequately addressed
- b) Local government interventions, which are beyond the mandate of SABI, are delivered
- c) SABI prioritisation of Ward Development Committees (WDCs) and Local Councils (LCs) is appropriate and other actors' behaviours do not significantly impede change
- d) Civil Society Organisations (CSO)s want to hold Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) to account for improved service delivery
- e) CSOs have minimal basic standards for managing grant funds

SABI has worked towards strengthening community-led accountability, increasing awareness of and demand for improved delivery. This has led to improved services in health, education and social protection for citizens in SABI operational areas. SABI has built relationships between citizens and the state and encouraged citizens to fulfil their own responsibilities for social amenities.

Gender equality and social inclusion are central to the programme. SABI ensures vulnerable and excluded groups have the skills and support they need to become active agents of change in their communities.

SABI has sought to contribute towards creating a more informed and empowered citizenry which is holding effective, ongoing dialogue with better engaged and more accountable state service providers. Key actions included:

- Generating and widely sharing evidence of citizens' perceptions of accessing and using state services (more information is available at [www.sabi-sl.org/community-data](http://www.sabi-sl.org/community-data))
- Promoting the participation and leadership of women, young people, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups in decision making



- Supporting the strengthening of national, district and local governance structures for effective state-citizen engagement
- Using a 'systems of behaviour' approach<sup>1</sup> to guide implementation and programme adaptability
- Working with media and directly informing citizens about their rights and entitlements to services
- Strengthening the capacity of citizens in target communities to effectively engage their service providers and decision makers for improved services
- Promoting positive stories of change brought about by effective citizen-state engagement, helping to shift negative citizenry attitudes that change will not occur as a result of engaging with state structures
- Sharing lessons with state actors and other accountability programmes on what does and does not work well in strengthening citizen-state relationships to improve service delivery
- Working with CSOs to lead implementation at regional and national level

The last FCDO Annual review is annexed. This draws out a number of outcomes and this review should accept those outcomes and the evidence for them. These include:

- building the awareness and capacity of citizens and service providers and bringing them together to address service delivery challenges.
- greater transparency and trust between citizens and service providers leading to improvements in service delivery at local level.
- Women, youth and persons with disabilities are being included and empowered
- there is evidence from interviews conducted during fieldwork and from reports and stories of change gathered by SABI, of wider attitudinal and behaviour change towards these groups as a result

SABI has also supported innovative and locally led solutions to improve service delivery through citizen-led accountability. The strategically targeted grants programme aimed to see SABI's impact and approaches replicated and extended through the funding of high-quality projects designed, owned and delivered by organisation with an understanding of the Sierra Leonean context.

**The SABI programme is in its last six months of implementation and is commissioning a review to ascertain key learnings in relation to what has worked and what has not. This review will test assumptions and will assess understanding of SABI approaches and methods, challenges and lessons to date to inform strategic thinking for uptake by FCDO sister programmes and the wider sector.**

For more information regarding the programme, please visit the website: [www.sabi-sl.org](http://www.sabi-sl.org)

## 2. Objectives

The overall purpose of the assignment is to conduct a comprehensive review of the SABI programme, processes and methods to determine what has contributed to outcomes generated, where a different approach would have improved outcomes, and the potential for incorporating the SABI methodology as part of wider governance approaches in Sierra Leone (whether led by GoSL, Development Partners or other).

Specifically, the review will:

- a. Assess the effectiveness of the SABI design and approach to create change as envisioned in the programmatic Theory of Change, thereby answering section 4. In so doing, the supplier will interrogate existing SABI learning products and data as well as Christian Aid and Partner staff, key stakeholders and citizens. The supplier will help establish the why as well as how changes have been achieved vis-à-vis assumptions upon which the Theory of Change is premised to determine if they are holding true.

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<sup>1</sup> COM-B, Power Mapping etc – see Christian Aid website



- b. The supplier will also importantly, consider challenges in programme implementation and any reasons why expected changes were not brought about (if that is the case).
- c. Identify key lessons and assess the potential for replicability and scaling up in seeking to apply SABI approaches and processes in future in Sierra Leone.

### 3. Audience and Use of Findings

The findings of this lesson learning exercise will be shared widely, in different formats, with: FCDO, Christian Aid, and delivery partners - both past and present - Restless Development, FOCUS 1000, SEND Sierra Leone, Rehabilitation and Development Agency (RADA), Sierra Leone Social Aid Volunteers (SLSAV), Social Development Direct (SDDirect), Sierra Leone Union for Disability Issues (SLUDI), and Democracy and Development Agency (DADA), and other agencies operating in the accountable governance sector at national, regional and international level, such as World Bank, EU and UN. The report will be shared externally, as well as condensed into digestible learning points and shared through SABI's communication channels. External sharing mechanisms will be decided in consultation with FCDO.

### 4. Evaluation or Research Questions

The main research questions for this Learnings Review are:

1. To what extent is the theory of change for SABI valid and justified based on the available evidence? What assumptions in the theory of change hold or do not hold and why? What were the successes and critical linkages for SABI to reach its outcome? What are the strengths and what needs to be improved? How could the Theory of change be strengthened for future programming?

In considering this question, for each of the following outcomes which SABI approaches/processes/strategies/activities (See section 1) have been most effective? What approaches to generating this outcome have worked well and why and which have not worked well and why?

- a. building the capability, opportunity and motivation of targeted citizens to engage in processes that hold their District Councils and Service Providers to account in terms of the delivery of services
  - b. building the capability, opportunity and motivation of Local Councils, Ward Development Committees and front-line service providers to better understand and effectively respond to the needs of citizens, and challenges being faced by citizens in accessing quality services?
  - c. influencing the opportunity and motivation of national Government to better respond to the needs of citizens?
  - d. enhancing accountable relationships between citizens and state service providers; and leading to improvements in service provision within target communities?
  - e. facilitating enhanced inclusion of youth, women, persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups in social accountability processes?
2. Which SABI approaches/processes/strategies/activities will be most effective in ensuring sustainability such that communities and government/service providers are likely to continue to drive citizen-led accountability following the end of the programme?
  3. What ways of doing things (processes) are apparent and are likely to be sustained? This should draw on data being collected in the final phase of the programme. Which SABI approaches/processes/strategies/activities can be taken up by other programmes as well as



the wider sector? Would there be any benefits of including the SABI methodology in similar programmes?

Some detailed questions to be considered within these headings are appended.

### 5. Methods

All programmatic data collected and held by SABI will also be provided for review along with all learning pieces and evaluations. The consultant shall propose the overall framework and structure that works best to respond to the questions proposed.

The below methods are examples for the consultant and / or service provider to consider but not limited to these alone. The supplier will take into consideration the current pandemic and provide a clear plan on working within COVID-19 restrictions.

Research Method	Reason for choosing the method	Research Question(s) it responds to
Literature review of all relevant programmatic documentation	To provide a thorough understanding of the programme aim, theory of change, approaches, and implementation.	All
Semi-structured interviews with a sample of SABI Team members and partner staff, FCDO staff and FCDO sister programme representatives and other development partners such as the EU and World Bank	To a) attain a deeper understanding of the programme aim, theory of change, approaches, and implementation, b) ascertain key staff member views on programme achievements and reasons for such achievements, c) ascertain what would be useful for the wider sector.	All
Literature review of relevant quantitative and qualitative programmatic data and literature including monitoring data, stories of change, learning pieces, evaluations and citizen perception survey findings	To understand and verify the changes reported and processes/strategies used.	All
Semi-structured interviews with a sample of citizens in SABI communities	To ascertain the views of the respondents on the programme delivery, and change brought about because of the programme in terms of what worked well and what didn't.	All
Semi-structured interviews with a sample of District Council representatives, Ward Development Committee representatives, Ministerial representatives (MBSSE, MLGRD, MOHS, NCPD, MSW <sup>2</sup> ), and front-line service providers	To ascertain the views of the respondents on the programme delivery, and change brought about because of the programme in terms of what worked well and what didn't	All

<sup>2</sup> MBSSE (Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education), MLGRD (Ministry of Local and Rural Development), MOHS (Ministry of Health and Sanitation), MSW (Ministry of Social Welfare), NCPD (National Commission for Persons with Disability)



## 6. Ethics

SABI works with children, young people, women, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. The supplier will be obliged to adhere to Christian Aid's safeguarding policy, confidentiality policy and code of conduct when carrying out this piece of work. The supplier should be considerate of issues of power and discrimination between the actors involved and including the researchers themselves.

Christian Aid will provide the SABI Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) strategy, which includes a thorough analysis of risks involved in working with SABI's target groups. The supplier will produce a risk and mitigation matrix before the work commences.

## 7. Managing Data

Before the work commences, the supplier will state what data will be created, how data will be documented and described, how data and those associated with the research will be protected, and which data will be kept after the Learnings Review is completed. The supplier will be General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliant.

## 8. Expected Outputs

The supplier will produce the following outputs:

- A plan and Inception report detailing a proposed methodology (including ways of obtaining perceptions from multiple stakeholders), risk and mitigation strategy, and approach to managing data, to be approved by SABI and FCDO
- A draft report for review by SABI and FCDO
- Any raw data and notes for the interviews
- A final Learnings Review report (no more than 30 pages in length, excluding annexes) To include:
  - Detailed executive summary
  - Introduction
  - Detailed evidence for conclusions
  - Description of the methodology
  - Findings
  - The findings should include sound evidence for conclusions
  - Conclusions
  - Recommendations going forward
- Annexes – should include a 2-pager per audience type with the key findings, learnings and recommendations that would be relevant for them. Presentation of findings to CA and FCDO staff
- Production of briefs for dissemination to different audiences

## 9. Timeline

The following table reflects the general timeframe for the assignment.

Activity	Deadline
Supplier recruitment	January 13 <sup>th</sup> 2021
Initial literature review, Inception report, including methodology (interview structures, any data collection tools developed) reviewed and approved	January 25 <sup>th</sup> 2021
All document reviews, interviews of multiple stakeholders (CA and partner staff, FCDO staff, etc)	5 <sup>th</sup> February 2021
Learning Review report drafted, reviewed and feedback provided	17 <sup>th</sup> February 2021
Learning Review report finalised, reviewed and approved	19 <sup>th</sup> February 2021



**10. Logistical Support**

SABI will provide the supplier with the following logistical support:

- Provision of requisite programmatic documentation and data in a timely manner
- Linking the supplier with key respondents and support in arranging meetings
- Arranging meetings with key staff and partners

**11. Budget**

Interested suppliers are required to submit a full financial proposal detailing consultant's itemized fees, and all costs generated by the work to be carried out including transport, translation (if required), printing, communication and accommodation costs.

**12. Management and Roles**

SABI will provide time and inputs from staff as outlined below:

Staff member	Responsibilities
SABI Team Leader (working closely with CA Head of Service Contracts and FCDO SRO)	Oversight of the process, induction of supplier and final approval of deliverables  The Team Leader will be the primary contact for the supplier
SABI Senior Programme Officers	Support to set up meetings with research respondents
SABI Finance and Administration Assistant	If required, support with vehicle movement
Christian Aid Monitoring and Evaluation Unit	Support the Team Leader as necessary in quality assurance and the exercise
CA Head of Service Contracts/FCDO SRO	Final review and sign off

Christian Aid seeks an experienced supplier who meets the following specifications:

- Significant experience and skills in capturing learning in similar projects like SABI, including interviewing relevant stakeholders and synthesising findings for the purpose of understanding what worked and what didn't
- Experience using either of the following methodology for evaluations or learning papers: Contribution analysis, Outcome Harvesting, Process tracing and working with Theories of Change.
- Significant experience in reviewing learning products, evaluations and datasets for consolidation and providing a comprehensive summary
- Demonstrable technical expertise and working knowledge of community-led accountable governance initiatives
- Technical expertise in gender and social inclusion analysis is desirable
- Experience of working in West Africa, preferably with someone based in Sierra Leone included within the team. The ideal team/individual would be a mix of Sierra Leonean and international experience.
- Excellent communication and writing skills including ability to present complex information in a conscious format that is understandable to the general public
- Ability to be flexible with time and work schedule
- Attention to detail and ability to meet tight deadlines
- Fluency in English. Working knowledge of Krio is desirable.



Interested Candidates should email their expression of interest including the Technical and Financial proposal to [sbah@christina-aid.org](mailto:sbah@christina-aid.org) copying [mvyner@christian-aid.org](mailto:mvyner@christian-aid.org) by 29<sup>th</sup> December 2020 COB.

The technical proposal no longer than 8 pages (excluding CV and example of another report) should include:

- Description of any previous similar experience,
- The applicants' CV
- A description of how the work will be conducted, methodology proposed, involvement of the different stakeholders (including sample sizes), timeframe proposed, etc.
- Example of a report of a similar consultancy conducted
- 3 references

The financial proposal should include all costs:

- The consultant's cost
- Any cost associated to the consultancy (field data collection, meeting attendance, transportation travel, accommodation, etc).



#### Annex 1: Detailed questioning to be considered:

- 1 The value (or not) of the **implementing partners being civil society organisations** at all levels. Did this affect the programme and if so how? Would it have worked as well if, for example, the lead was a commercial supplier, and the YAVs were hired by them but the other partners were all NNGOs?
- 2 The role of **data** – how necessary was the data collection set of activities to achieving the programme outcome, as written in the logframe? How important was it in getting MDA engagement? To what extent was did SABI's data collection mechanisms diminish pressure for Gov to improve its own data and M&E systems? Was it well understood that the data was meant to reflect citizen perception not substitute for routine gov data collection mechanisms?
- 3 What assumptions did the ToC make about **government ability to respond** to increased citizen demand and awareness, and were these assumptions valid? If not, what does this mean for the programme and the ToC? Are there lessons from working primarily on the demand side of the accountability equation without equal effort through the same programme / mechanism on supporting government to respond. It was decided through SABI implementation not to increase support to councils; was this the correct decision? What significance was there for the ToC for SABI when the Presidential Delivery Team (PDT) (and FCDO's support to it) ended?
- 4 Consequences of **raising awareness and demand when these went unmet** – did we see this resulting in decreases in trust and a further breakdown in relationships (and potential implications for cohesion and stability)?



Annex 2: ToC Diagram

