RESEARCH REPORT

Monitoring and evaluation arrangements for the Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme: a case study

By Peter Albrecht

1.   Introduction

This report assesses the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) arrangements put in place by the UK's Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme (SILSEP), which ran from June 1999 until 31 March 2008. It is one of five case studies carried out as part of the Saferworld project, 'Evaluating for Security: Developing specific guidance on monitoring and evaluating security sector reform (SSR) interventions'.[1] Together with a wider desk review and supplementary research into the broader M&E systems used by the major SSR donors, the case studies provide an evidence base from which specific guidance on monitoring and evaluating SSR can be developed.

The initial focus of the SILSEP programme was to build civilian oversight of the armed forces, establish oversight of an already-existing Ministry of Defence (MoD) and establish co-ordination for the security and intelligence sectors. This was done by establishing an Office of National Security (ONS) and by strengthening the capacity of the Central Intelligence and Security Unit (CISU). These core components existed throughout the life of SILSEP, but others were added in the latter stages of the programme.

The research for this report was carried out between May and July 2008 using a combination of: semi-structured interviews with SILSEP stakeholders;[2] analysis of SILSEP Output to Purpose Reviews (OPRs) – particularly the most influential one carried out in 2005; interim project monitoring reports, and a draft project completion report from July 2008.[3] Additional background material for the research was drawn from a draft narrative on the entire SSR process in Sierra Leone from the mid-1990s until today, which has since been published.[4]

This report consists of seven sections, each sub-divided when necessary to highlight issues relevant to the study of M&E. The M&E terminology used throughout is consistent with that of the UK Government. Footnotes have been used to elaborate some specific terms in more detail.

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[1] Other case studies include the Irish/Dutch backed *Justice, Law and Order Sector* in Uganda, the Australian backed Law and Justice Programme in Papua New Guinea, the SDC backed *Implementation of Community-Based in Bosnia Herzegovina* and UNDP backed *Support to the Security Sector Reform* Programme in Albania.

[2] There is no list of interviewees attached to this report. Relatively few people (9) were interviewed for this particular piece of work, which makes it difficult to ensure some degree of anonymity. Furthermore, some of the points made in this report are based on other work that the author has carried out in other capacities, both while working for the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre and International Alert.

[3] Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme III (SILSEP III), *Output to Purpose Review*, September 2005; Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme, *Output to Purpose Review*, April 2007; Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Project II, *Output to Purpose Review*, 25 June – 5 July 2002. See also, 'Workshop on Evaluating Security Sector Reform Programmes', Birmingham, England, 18-19 September 2006 for early reflects on SILSEP.

[4] Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007, P. Albrecht and P. Jackson, University of Birmingham, February 2009.

1.1   The Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme (SILSEP)

SILSEP (1999-2008) was initially financed by pooling funds from both the Department for International Government (DFID) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), but has more recently received support through the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP).[5] It is important to note that SSR programming in Sierra Leone has primarily been led and funded by the UK Government.

SILSEP is generally regarded as a ground-breaking attempt to bring together the resources of three UK Government departments to deliver sustainable SSR in Sierra Leone.[6] The fact that the programme was a reaction to circumstances in Sierra Leone is also significant because it affected the design and management of the programme until its closure in 2008. Therefore, as noted by the 2002 OPR, 'any review … must take into account both the individuality of [the] endeavour and the impact of events in-country during its implementation, [as these] had a significant influence over the environment in which SILSEP personnel sought to bring about positive change.'[7]

As the UK Government had not previously established a programme such as SILSEP there was no applicable methodology to guide the design of the programme during its start-up phase. Instead, immediate needs demanded immediate responses. As one adviser noted: "[SILSEP] was never a project set up with log-frames; people prepared them, but after the event. There was never a clear programme design. SILSEP evolved out of a need rather than design."[8] This inevitably raises questions about the process through which the programme was developed.

For those working in Sierra Leone at the time, it was immediately obvious that the armed forces, as exemplified by their role in Sierra Leonean politics (including two coups during the 1990s), were going to be a continual destabilising factor. As a consequence, it was assessed that appropriate actions, such as training the armed forces and building up civilian oversight, were necessary. SILSEP's overarching priorities were therefore to: develop the capacity of the Sierra Leone MoD to establish civil and political management of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF); and to build a functional Office of National Security (ONS) and increase the capacity of the Central Intelligence Support Unit (CISU). In order to achieve these ends, SILSEP was established with separate components for 'security' (concerning ONS/CISU) and 'defence' (MoD). This ensured that SILSEP was able to support the Government in controlling and directing the RSLAF in the context of a National Security Policy (produced by the National Security Council with support from ONS and CISU).

In theory SILSEP was cross-sectoral, albeit in a limited sense. In reality however it was quite compartmentalised. For example, up until mid 2005, the UK supported police reform in Sierra Leone through the CCSSP project (Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project). Then from mid to late 2005 onwards, the CCSSP was terminated. Support was no longer to be given to the SLP alone, but to the justice sector as a whole. The programme that replaced the CCSSP was called the 'Justice Sector Development Programme' (JSDP). A split now emerged in the support given to the police, with JSDP catering for the more justice-oriented issues and 'security' components being taken over by SILSEP, specifically enhancing the organisation's ability to gather and analyse criminal and security intelligence and deal with operational planning, event management and public disorder.[9] This split has been criticised in view of the fact that UK support to the security sector appeared more disjointed as a result.

Within the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD), from the late 1990s and early 2000s a civilian advisor and defence finance specialist mentored Sierra Leonean counterparts, advising on: the

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[5] Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme, *Output to Purpose Review*, April 2007, p 5.
[6] Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Project II, Output to Purpose Review, June-July 2002, p 1.
[7] *Ibid*.
[8] Interview with UK justice and security expert, London, 19 June, 2008.
[9] Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme, *Output to Purpose Review*, April 2007, p 14.

development of a realistic national defence policy; staff management; defence management and the establishment of effective civilian management structures over the armed forces.[10] By 2005, 'significant progress' was noted in the OPR produced that year, with the MoD having 'moved from a mere clearinghouse to a more effective organisation, under visible and identifiable civil control. The MoD is fully integrated with civilian and military staff working alongside each other.'[11] Progress was further highlighted by the production of a Defence White Paper and an ONS-co-ordinated security sector review. [12] The MoD was also active in contributing to the production of the national Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), published in 2005.

Nevertheless, challenges remained, not least in terms of limited top-level internal management and oversight of MoD dealings, financial management, and so forth. One interviewee linked this to the lack of a strategic approach to the sector. However, in the 2007 OPR, it was concluded that a 'self-confident, civilian-led team with a clear and well-co-ordinated line of argument' was in place.[13] Yet, the issue of sustainability and affordability was a continuing concern, for the MoD, and for the Sierra Leone civil service in general. One interviewee felt that these gaps would have been addressed sooner and more effectively had there been a more coherent approach between UK MoD and DFID.

Under the ONS and CISU component of SILSEP, a specialist advisor was initially seconded to offer guidance on the development of office structures, information management, staff recruitment and basic training (the latter supported by two additional short-term consultants).[14] This enabled DFID to legitimise its funding of security-related structures because it was able to focus on non-operational activities. This is an important distinction to make for a development agency, but was difficult to practice during implementation. This was particularly the case in the early years of SILSEP (until 2002), for Sierra Leone was at war.

Over time, the ONS became the central body for improving the co-ordination and effectiveness of the security sector. This was the result of it being empowered to possess many core executive functions. These included the preparation of joint assessments; oversight of security organisations; co-ordination of disaster management; co-ordination and implementation of a security sector review (published in 2005); and the provision of security policy advice to the President. In addition to this executive role, ONS provided a secretariat function for a network of security co-ordination committees that extend from the President down to the grassroots level (including Provincial District Security Committees (PROSECS) and District Security Committees (DISECs). In the 2005 OPR, it was concluded that 'ONS functions much more effectively compared to almost all other Government departments in Sierra Leone.'[15] Indeed, it was noted that ONS was conversely facing problems because of its relative success, for example taking on or being allocated new tasks, such as disaster management, because no other Government department was able to do so.

By the time of the OPR produced in 2007, it was concluded that the 'Office of National Security (ONS) and associated British advisory support is a success story.'[16] In fact, it had become clear that ONS was evolving into a Cabinet Office with a much wider remit than intelligence assessment and national security co-ordination. It will be interesting in the years to come, to see how ONS is consolidated and with what type of a mandate.

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[10] Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Project II, *Output to Purpose Review*, 25 June – 5 July 2002.
[11] Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme III (SILSEP III), *Output to Purpose Review, September 2005*, p 13.
[12] Following the security sector review an implementation plan was designed in anticipation of the PRSP. The programme projected a spend of in excess of $200m over a four-year period (2006-2010). However, funding was not secured, and while some of the main recommendations were taken onboard, by the first half of 2008 the plan was no longer seen to be relevant by security sector actors as a road map for reforms or a base line for future planning. End of project report, May 2008 (draft).
[13] Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme, *op cit*, p 12.
[14] Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Project II, *op cit*.
[15] Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme III (SILSEP III), *op cit*.
[16] Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme, *op cit*, p 12.

Aside from the actions of SILSEP, other major SSR-related programmes were implemented with support from the UK Government. These to varying extents have had a direct impact on, or have been impacted by, SILSEP. RSLAF has been – and continues to be – supported by the International Military Assistance Training Team (IMATT). IMATT's link to SILSEP has been one of close proximity, due to the latter's work in Sierra Leone's MoD and in ONS (with Commander IMATT having been the primary adviser on military matters to the President). The SLP was from the late 1990s supported by Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project (CCSSP), overtaken by the Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP), and focusing on policing, correctional services, the judiciary and to a lesser extent the Ministry of Internal Affairs. JSDP broadened the somewhat narrow focus on the SLP to the justice sector more holistically. Unlike SILSEP and JSDP, IMATT has not been subject to an external evaluation, a consequence of the methodology of the UK armed forces when deployed abroad. It is an important point to make, because SILSEP OPRs effectively became the only 'outside' view on IMATT.

Despite there being a number of UK-backed programmes, there was never overarching management of the major SSR programmes in Sierra Leone. In principle, the High Commissioner, as the highest in-country political figure, outlined the direction of UK activities. In practice, however, SILSEP, IMATT, CCSSP and subsequently JSDP remained relatively discreet programmes with different decision-making structures, which has important implications for both monitoring and evaluation.

1.2   The Political Context for SSR in Sierra Leone

When SILSEP was first conceived in the late 1990s, Sierra Leone was experiencing continued conflict and state collapse, due to a recent military coup by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). With a conflict still ongoing, the government, returning from exile in Conakry, Guinea, was at the same time receiving support from a number of external agencies, which were scrambling to assist in stabilising the country and making peace. It was in this context that the UK began to develop an extensive response. It was recognised that any long-term development strategy would be futile without a secure environment. The support given to the ONS and CISU was therefore being delivered in time of war.

2002 was a pivotal year for Sierra Leone, for although there were significant areas of the country that were not under the direct control of the government, the conflict officially ended in January. Apart from the issue of prioritising and balancing the differing needs of important issues, such as SSR and economic development, two important hurdles characterised the period from 2002-2005. The first was that there was often a 'perception trap', whereby principal stakeholders up to the Presidential level agreed with SSR as a concept, but had differing views as to what it meant in practice, and how it was to be implemented. The previous years had been about winning a war and stabilising Sierra Leone, but in the new context, with intelligence being turned into an instrument to deal with corruption, for instance, the vested interest of certain individuals was inevitably exposed, and SSR resisted. The second, quite simply, was that there was a loss of interest by the government in the SSR process because Sierra Leone had been stabilised.
As a key actor from ONS noted: "By 2003 there was some attention [to the SSR process], in 2004 less, in 2005 they were so comfortable [with the security situation] that they didn't listen at all. Defence Councils were postponed several times. The NSC [National Security Council] had not been convened for two years until we pushed for one major meeting, where we said that the government needed to be aware of the issues. By 2007 most ministries cared less about security."[17] A situation thus arose where the various security-providing agencies prepared for the 2007 general elections with only limited interest or involvement from the executive. However, in technical terms, the fact that elections in 2007 were free from violence, speaks to the success of the SSR process.

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[17] Meeting with high level ONS official, 7 May, 2008.

1.3   The 2005 Output to Purpose Review (SILSEP III)

The motivation behind the 2005 OPR (SILSEP III) was an awareness that developments on the ground required a change in the direction of the programme. This understanding was linked to the formal approval of a security sector review by the Government of Sierra Leone, co-ordinated by the ONS, and the fact that the review had been embedded in the national Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The OPR was produced at a time when the recommendations from the security sector review were to be operationalised, in the form of a Security Sector Review Implementation Plan. In the OPR Terms of Reference (ToR) it is thus noted that '[w]e … need to both provide support to this ongoing process as well as develop our plans for future activity around this document, which is currently in a rather embryonic state.' The evaluation should therefore be seen as a direct response to developments on the ground. On a more general level the OPR also noted that planning activities should take into account the UN Mission in Sierra Leone's (UNAMSIL) withdrawal (by early 2006), elections in Liberia, and potential political tensions from the Presidential Elections in 2007.[18]

There was also a programmatic motivation for carrying out the review: SILSEP III was due to conclude in April 2006, which called for a 'visible step-change … to take note of progress but also to acknowledge the increased responsibility about to be undertaken by the GoSL … in security terms.'[19] While it was recognised that SILSEP should continue, it was also ascertained that '[a]ny new programme will need to encompass the existing institutional components of SILSEP III (ONS, CISU, MoD & RSLAF), as well as [bring] in new organisations or activities.'[20] Those activities which were considered as additionally necessary included: support for police intelligence gathering and analysis; development of Critical Incident Command (CIC); formulating the means by which the military would support the police, irrespective of the nature of the incident and measures to address deficiencies in police accountability and oversight.

2.   Scope, method and approach

2.1   Review / Evaluation

The SILSEP III review focussed on SILSEP's two main components, the MoD and the ONS/CISU. Links to other programmes and institutions, such as IMATT, JSDP and RSLAF were touched upon but not explored in any depth, nor considered as a core evaluation matters. The review team was tasked to conduct a number of activities, including:

- An output to purpose review of the SILSEP III programme, by assessing progress against Objective Verifiable Indicators (OVIs) and activities listed in a logframe;
- Assess the role of programme advisers;
- Provide a general assessment of the level of co-ordination between UK-funded security sector programmes and broader issues of co-ordination across the development field;
- Provide advice on the preparation of a costed logframe for future UK support to the SILSEP group of institutions.[21]

Relative to SILSEP, all the institutions funded through that programme were evaluated. Desk reviews of relevant SILSEP documentation formed part of the preparation with reference to relevant legislation, policies, plans and other project material. For instance:

- SILSEP III Submission and Logframe;
- SILSEP II Output to Purpose Review;
- Sierra Leone Security Sector Review 2005;

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[18] Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme III (SILSEP III), *op cit*, p 39.
[19] *Ibid*, p 4.
[20] *Ibid*, p 20.
[21] *Ibid*, p 10.

- Draft ONS SSR Implementation Plan (which had not been produced by the time that the OPR was being produced);
- National Security Architecture & Standard Operating Procedures;
- Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP) Project Memorandum;
- JSDP Inception Report;
- IMATT 2010 Plan.[22]

Other than a desk review, the research method used was basically that of semi-structured interviews with key SILSEP stakeholders, including advisers from DFID (defence, intelligence, security, MoD finance and administration), IMATT, RSLAF, JSDP, SLP and the judiciary, the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defence, National Assembly, ONS, CISU, civil society, UNDP and UNAMSIL. Meetings during the first week of the visit were either carried out jointly or linked with those being conducted by a UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) mission, which visited Sierra Leone to explore possible activities in the country around security and justice sectors.

There is no doubt that the evaluation was carried out to support the UK's effectiveness in managing SILSEP and was therefore not directly aimed at advising relevant Sierra Leone agencies. Explicitly, the review team was requested 'to produce a written report evaluating the progress made or otherwise against the outputs and activities outlined in the SILSEP III logframe'. The basic approach was to assess progress against indicators at different levels (output, purpose, goal and super goal).

The logframe included an overarching 'super goal', a subsidiary goal and a number of outputs and activities – each of which is linked to Objective Verifiable Indicators (OVIs). Progress at each level is commented on in the logframe, drawing upon qualitative and quantitative data and referring to relevant changes in the political situation as an explanation for why certain decisions were made/activities were not implemented.

A summary of the indicators at the goal, purpose and output levels, as outlined in the SILSEP III logframe, is as follows:[23]

GOAL/PURPOSE/OUTPUTS	OVIS
Goal 1: A sustainable policy, institutional and legal framework for the creation of acceptable National Security and Defence Policies enshrining the principles of civil control, accountability and transparency.	- Threats from attempted military coups are minimised. - RSLAF and security services personnel respect human rights; (see 1.4 below). - Containment of external threats, prevention of incursions into Sierra Leone territory through armed forces action. - Reported/suspected cases of theft or corruption involving Royal Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) and security sector personnel are minimised.
Purpose: to establish effective and appropriate civil control structures and efficient army command and management arrangements, working within National Security and Defence Policies and to agreed budgets.	- Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence and National Security Council able to direct the RSLAF and security services. - RSLAF and security services command structures under civil control. - RSLAF and security services playing an effective part in SL National Defence Policy. - Budget for combined armed forces and MOD agreed with the Ministry of Finance in line with national

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[22] *Ibid*, p 40.
[23] Taken from *ibid*, Annex A.

	• Defence Policy; budget for security services agreed with the Ministry of Finance in line with National Security Policy.
Output 1: Ministry of Defence institutional capacity sufficient to efficiently direct, manage and ensure accountability of RSLAF.	• RSLAF operating within approved budget, subject to GOSL accounting, audit guidelines and procedures. • Clear subordination of Defence HQ to civilian, political control through dual command structure in MOD. • Build-up of MOD staff and institutional capacity. • Effective reporting of anticipated/actual MOD performance. • Training Needs Analysis, reflecting realistic core and functional training requirements.
Output 2: Well trained staff, line managers and junior/senior line officers in RSLAF, demonstrating efficient and effective command/management.	• Armed forces effectively performing agreed functions in SL National Defence Policy/National Security and Intelligence Act. • Maintenance of strong discipline at all levels of the armed forces.
Output 3: Office of National Security capable of effective support to National Security Council; formulation of secondary legislation; coordination of security activity.	• Office staffed and equipped to play its role.
Output 4: Central Intelligence and Security Unit coordinates intelligence gathering	• Coordination machinery working efficiently in intelligence assessments. • Misuse of intelligence is prevented by creation of CISU safeguards
Output 5: Detailed National Defence and Security Policy developed and implemented.	• Policy implemented as intended, consistent with National Security Policy.
Output 6: Civil control and democratic accountability built into the constitutional and legal framework	• Effectiveness of civilian control and accountability buttressed by required constitutional and legal framework. • Parliamentary oversight mechanisms established for both Armed Forces and Intelligence Services. • Civil society and media understand the role of the defence and security apparatus and develops its own position to influence these.

As the above examples demonstrate, the OVIs of the SILSEP III logframe focussed heavily on the internal functioning of central-level security institutions. Although, at the goal level, the specified indicators did relate to higher-order changes such as reduced threat of military coups and respect for human rights. Given this focus the logframe conspicuously marginalised the general population's perceptions of security threats or service delivery. This meant that the review team – and to a large extent the project team – had limited focus on these areas. In a country where the majority of the population lives outside the capital, relying heavily on non-state security and justice providers, one might argue that greater emphasis should have been placed on beneficiary perceptions of change in the programme and review. Relevant indicators could have been developed around some of these questions, looking for example at how people in different locations of the country reacted to, or perceived the presence of, uniformed personnel in their local communities; or whether they were familiar with Provincial Security Committees and District Security Committees (the ONS co-ordinated institutions outside Freetown and the Western Area). Civil society organisations could also have been involved more to support a better understanding of how the population experienced the benefits of the SSR process.[24] That said, some of these issues were covered briefly in the 2005 OPR, which considered how well SILSEP and the then

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[24] In fact there was initially a plan to include a civil society expert on the review team but because in the end the review was carried out at the same time as a UNDP mission the idea was dropped. Other areas where this might have proven beneficial include better in the review and/or review team might have been those of gender, ethnicity and youth – all key issues in Sierra Leonean society, but not integrated into the SILSEP logframe.

emerging UK policing/justice programme were linked. However, it is only fair to note that awareness of the importance of non-state security providers is very recent within the SSR community.

Although baseline data was not used as such, from the point of view of the 2005 and 2007 OPRs, an earlier OPR from 2002 provided an implicit baseline. In fact, in a fast-changing context, any baseline study dating back to the programme's origins in 1999 would have been quite out of date six years later.

2.2   Monitoring

SILSEP monitoring reports were generated by UK advisers working in the institutions that they supported. For example, in the case of CISU/ONS, these reports (referred to as updates) were produced on a monthly basis by the Intelligence and Security Adviser and focused on the activities of these two organisations, in line with logframe objectives and immediate challenges faced. Similar monthly reports were produced by the Civil Adviser to the MoD. The conception that no structured monitoring mechanisms were in place,[25] possibly because the monitoring reports did not feed into an overall strategy, is therefore somewhat of a misrepresentation. They were also descriptive of issues and events rather than a measure of progress; thus, they are rich in detail but not necessarily clear on overall progress. Finally, a rather mundane reason could be that, simply, people forget.

In general, there is no evidence that national staff were engaged in producing monthly monitoring reports. This was somewhat different in the MoD, both due to the Department's size and its financial difficulties, which meant that discussions around progress were fairly continuous. When SILSEP was managed from London, discussions took place through email and during regular visits. When DFID set up a field office in Sierra Leone in 2005, informal communication and discussions intensified (though this was very much dependent on the programme manager involved). Nowhere in the 2005 or 2007 OPRs is reference made to the monitoring of SILSEP (or the above-mentioned monitoring reports). This is in spite of the crucial role considered to be played by the monitoring of security sector actors. Until DFID established a field office in Sierra Leone, their ability to monitor progress was restricted. However, a central record of reports from Civil Advisers to the MoD, ONS and CISU Advisers did exist. In addition, at least from 2005, monthly SILSEP meetings were held. Similarly, a SILSEP committee was set up in the MoD, which held regular meetings.

At the same time, DFID's Sierra Leone programme had no overarching M&E framework up until 2006 when a Joint EC/DFID Country Strategy for Sierra Leone (JCSP) was drafted.[26] The strategy articulated a shift in programming from the security sector to basic services, such as healthcare and education, but interestingly did not make a link between the two. It is thus evident that SILSEP was not set within a clearly articulated M&E framework, or an overarching strategy. The later 2007 OPR labours the point in detail:

> 'At present there is no single programme management document, containing details of activities to be conducted, timelines, budgetary allocations, objectives, performance indicators etc (DFID project cycle management compliant). There are also no qualitative, quantifiable or time bound (QQT) means of verification, nor is there a risk matrix. Any revised log-frame would benefit from a series of nested log-frames, addressing activities to be conducted within each sub-component e.g. ONS, CISU, MOD, SLP etc. During the initial phase of SILSEP the clear need was for immediate support to be provided to the security

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[25] The point came up again and again both during interviews and in the most recent review carried out by DFID's country office.
[26] Country Programme Sierra Leone, April 2008, *Evaluation Working Paper/Evaluation Report* (draft).

institutions and the flexible approach adopted is to be applauded. But the time is now ripe for the programme to fall in line with standard programme management arrangements.'[27]

Recommendation 20 then follows on:

> 'We recommend that a SILSEP programme Management (DFID project cycle compliant) programme document is prepared, containing activities to be conducted, timelines, budgetary allocations, objectives QQT performance indicators, risk matrix etc. This may best be managed by designing an overall SILSEP log-frame which contains a set of sub-sector nested log-frames.'[28]

Equally, there was little in the way of analysis of risks in support of the country programme as a whole (though two were produced at the level of DFID's regional programme in 2002 and 2005). The absence of one overall programme management document obviously has considerable consequences for both monitoring and evaluation. It is therefore to the credit of UK and national staff that they produced significant results in such an ill-defined management environment. Although the 2005 OPR recommended that an overall programme steering committee, composed of both Sierra Leonean counterparts and Whitehall departments, be established as a priority for the improvement of programme management and monitoring, this step was not taken by the time of the September 2007 OPR.
An unintended consequence of the absence of overall strategy or higher-level programme management was that programming drew upon lessons learned from the OPRs produced in 2002 by the Defence Advisory Team (DAT) and in 2005 and 2007 – as summarised in the recommendations included in the OPR reports – and not from the outcomes of monitoring.

3. Inputs

3.1 Review / Evaluation

The 2005 OPR team was diverse in some senses, bringing together specialists on different sub-components of SSR; the evaluation was carried out by experts on programme planning, defence, intelligence and police matters from DFID and the UK Government's Security Sector Development Assistance Team (SSDAT). However, team members with experience on matters relating to civil society and economic development were not included. Nor were evaluation specialists or Sierra Leonean nationals represented, although several team members did possess significant in-country experience. In total, the team spent ten days in Sierra Leone and had been pre-briefed by relevant Whitehall departments before being deployed. Funding came from the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP). Although no exact figure was available on the total budget of the 2005 OPR, interviewees conducted with the UK Government indicated that the resources made available were generally about right.

Ultimately, in-country staff facilitated the evaluation by setting up meetings and providing substantial input, but remained outside of the review team. Their ToRs were formulated by the Deputy Programme Manager at the time on behalf of the Country Office. It appears that it was up to in-country staff to ensure that the political context was taken into consideration by the review team.

4. Participation and information sharing

4.1 Review / Evaluation

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[27] Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme, *op cit*, p 19.
[28] *Ibid*, p 19.

When asked for their recollections on past OPR exercises and the nature and quality of Sierra Leonean Government involvement in them, most interviewees found it hard to distinguish OPR requests for information from others they received, or in some cases to differentiate the OPRs as distinct exercises. This is understandable and does not mean that there was zero participation in the review exercise. In fact, given that SILSEP was such an intense and complex process, it required continuous interaction between foreign advisers and national personnel, especially ONS, RSLAF and CISU. As a consequence, requests for information or advice and reviews of smaller issues were quite commonplace, with new faces often asking for information. However, just as the 2005 evaluation was carried out in support of effective SILSEP delivery, it was also clear that the OPR was produced and owned by the UK, the review team and DFID Sierra Leone, specifically. In fact, some interviewees stated that that the donor (UK Government) requirements for data collection, analysis and reporting had been overwhelming – leading to capacity constraints and little time to focus on implementation.

But given the time-spent in-country by the whole review team, even if there had been a wish to consult with UK agencies or Sierra Leonean departments on OPR findings, there would have been no time to do so. However, some interviewees felt that the overall process could have been better managed, and point to examples from other evaluations – such as the 2006 UK Government African Conflict Prevention Pool – where the review team allowed for further consultation through a report-back session.

During the evaluation some tension was caused between IMATT and DFID, due to findings such as: 'There are high-level perceptions that the level of IMATT support is a purely UK or international community matter, upon which they do not expect, or even want, to be involved.'[29] (This specific comment on IMATT caused some tension with the DFID Country Office, feeding at the time into a strong, but generally uneasy relationship between the development and military arms of the British Government. In the UK, the implied criticism of IMATT caused something of a stir in the MoD). One interviewee felt that this tension reflected a conflict of values, cultures and objectives between different departments – highlighting the poor evaluation culture within the military and MoD in comparison to DFID. Yet this reflects the need for an evaluation to be a balancing act between addressing important issues that can lead to enhanced implementation and the need to not alienate those actors, both national and international, that are meant to do so.

With regard to SILSEP's Sierra Leonean counterparts, apart from in providing data, little *formal* engagement was sought in terms of refining recommendations.[30] However, informally data was discussed with trusted personnel from national institutions. It was noted by one of the key Sierra Leonean figures in ONS that the final output, a report, was not formally shared with Sierra Leonean counterparts. However, DFID's Deputy Programme Manager at the time did note that "letters were sent to ONS, CISU, MoD, SLP etc. enclosing the report." In the Sierra Leonean MoD this does not appear to have been the case.[31] Former UK advisers also noted that the OPR was discussed at a SILSEP committee meeting.[32] It may be argued that to deepen ownership across donor and national institutions, more balanced involvement could have been sought (the difficulties of doing so are discussed in greater detail below in the section on challenges). It is likely that the informality of sharing findings across UK and Sierra Leone institutions has to do with the, at times, critical tone of the OPR, particularly of IMATT and the political leadership in Sierra Leone.

In terms of producing a costed logframe for future UK support to the organisations encompassed by SILSEP, a member of the review team – DFID's SSR advisor in London at the time – stayed in-

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[29] Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme III (SILSEP III), *op cit*, p 17-18; Interview with UK intelligence expert, Freetown, 24 June, 2008.
[30] Interview with Sierra Leone intelligence practitioner, 24 June, 2008.
[31] Discussion with senior RSLAF officer, 14 March, 2008.
[32] Correspondence with DFID's former Deputy Programme Manager, September 2008.

country to work with relevant staff in DFID's Country Office. Thus, it was ensured that effective links were established between London and the field office in Freetown. During this process, the OPR noted: '[c]onsultations were to be conducted on how to involve appropriate Sierra Leonean officials and HMG policy and programme staff in the Logframe design for the new programme to achieve sustainable local buy-in and oversight of the new programme.'[33]

4.2 Monitoring

As suggested above, monitoring tended to consist of ongoing rounds of meetings with key stakeholders which then fed into routine progress reports. Participation in the reporting process appears to have been essentially limited to DFID.

5. Outputs and application

5.1 Review / Evaluation

The final output of the 2005 OPR exercise was a 45-page report, including an overview of: the security context in Sierra Leone and most recent achievements; SILSEP-supported institutions (ONS, CISU, MoD), RSLAF and the role of IMATT; the links to JSDP and UNAMSIL/UNIOSIL [United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone/United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone]; new programme arrangements and new areas to be addressed (policing and security, police accountability and oversight, the mining sector, parliament, district-based activity); co-ordination issues and concluding remarks. Attached to the report were also a number of annexes, including: Annex A, an Output to Purpose Review and logframe; Annex B, terms of reference for the review team; Annex C, contacts; Annex D, institutional framework for implementation of SSR recommendations and Annex E, SSR implementation trust fund structures. The report was silent on the question of links between the security sector work and more 'traditional' development areas such as healthcare and education as well as the broader economic context. Furthermore, no explicit links were made to evaluations of other DFID programmes, security-related or otherwise.

Given the significance of the security sector review as a strategic document and its integration into the PRSP, it was recommended that the programme which replaced SILSEP III be focused on supporting the development of an enabling environment in which the security sector review could be implemented effectively. Apart from the components already included in SILSEP, it was suggested that a number of additional institutions be encompassed into the programme, including:

- Police security and criminal intelligence;
- SLP/RSLAF collaboration and coordination;
- Ministry of International Affairs capacity-building;
- Research into the precious stone industry;
- Parliamentary capacity-building.

In the period following the 2005 OPR, and on its recommendation, SILSEP did expand its portfolio into new areas. These included support to particular areas of the SLP, specifically the gathering and analysis of criminal and security intelligence and operational matters. SILSEP also provided limited support to the Ministry of Internal Affairs by conducting a review of the Immigration Department (further work pending outcomes of a management and functional review). Both SLP and Ministry of Internal Affairs also received support from the British Council run JSDP. In addition, and not on the recommendation of the 2005 OPR but through the initiative of individual DFID staff, a project focusing on the inclusion of civil society in the SSR process was established.

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[33] Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme III (SILSEP III), *op cit*, p 8.

As noted in the OPR, this expansion required additional management staff. However, in hindsight this recommendation does not appear in accordance with availability of funding, project closure (August 2006), political will within the Government of Sierra Leone at the time, or absorption capacity of national institutions. Equally, the issue of sustainability of support cannot be underestimated given the limited availability of state funds. Related to this latter issue, 33 recommendations were proposed in the OPR. However, these were not organised in to contextual priorities.

Examples of the recommendations made include:

- **'Recommendation 2**. *We recommend* that GOSL [Government of Sierra Leone] members of the NSC [National Security Council] (and NSCCG [National Security Council Coordinating Group]) fulfil their responsibilities as laid down for these constitutionally approved bodies in terms of business practice, decision making and attendance. We also recommend that the head of ONS briefs Cabinet and receives guidance from them on a regular basis, although it may not necessarily be appropriate for him to attend every Cabinet meeting.'

- **'Recommendation 6**. *We recommend* that UK should fund the ONS to provide secretariat support to the two priority DISECs and, over time, to the remaining DISECs. The ONS should be asked to submit a funding proposal.'

- **'Recommendation 9**. *We recommend* that the SL MOD and GOSL research ways of applying a security sector wide career plan for civil servants, to increase the likelihood of retention.'[34]

Because of the sheer number and lack of priority among the recommendations, the OPR may be said to set overambitious benchmarks for the future of SILSEP, considering the political context and economy in Sierra Leone.

5.2   Monitoring

Deficits in the area of monitoring have been highlighted above in some detail. However, it may be appropriate to point out here that the March 2008 termination of SILSEP apparently came as a surprise to programme staff. To what degree failures in monitoring contributed to this, it is hard to say. Nevertheless, the 'sudden' termination of SILSEP in March 2008 was the result of lack of funds and a re-prioritisation by DFID Sierra Leone. This outcome left the FCO and MoD feeling that the closure of the programme was a unilateral decision, despite forewarning having been given within the country team in 2006. Indeed, the evaluation team conducting the OPR was assured that SILSEP would continue until 2012 (hence the recommendation on establishing a proper SILSEP management structure).

With the production of the JCSP in 2006, DFID had altered its priorities to emphasise support for the delivery of 'basic services' such as education and healthcare. This shift was in spite the possible argument that the provision of security is arguably a basic public service; a point that challenges the division of security from other more 'traditional' development activities. One can only speculate as to whether better monitoring arrangements, perhaps with an impact focus and greater participation, would have helped to better manage the strategic direction of the different elements within SILSEP.

While SILSEP was terminated in March 2008, it was also recognised that it was dangerous to suddenly stop SSR activities, and that there was a need for the UK to develop a cross-governmental strategy. Consequently, the UK Government submitted a (cross-departmental) bid to be implemented by DFID to the African Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP). The bid was successful and secured GBP1.3 m in support of the first year of the exit strategy (April 2008 – March 2009).

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[34] Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme III (SILSEP III), *op cit*, p 5.

The ONS also submitted a plan for how it would prioritise resources, and the UK Government is at the time of writing finalising its cross-governmental security sector exit strategy.

A related and critical issue, which was starkly put into perspective in the 2007 OPR was the turnover of staff. As noted by one of the team members who was involved in producing both the OPR in 2005 and 2007: "When we did the 2007 review, it was clear that very few in post had read the 2005 one. Everyone was new-ish and that [the 2005 OPR] was yesterday's news. IMATT again had completely changed staff – no one even knew that [two] previous OPRs had taken place."[35]

6. Challenges

The challenges identified in this section reflect the views of the author. The challenges presented here focus mainly on the OPR exercise – which has been the focus throughout this report – rather than monitoring. This is due to the poor availability of documentation and information on monitoring, making it difficult to draw any conclusions on the challenges faced.

- *Limited availability of data:* In the absence of a robust programme management and monitoring mechanism, the OPR itself was the only tool used for analysing data and measuring progress against the logframe outlined by SILSEP. However, as a result of poor monitoring, the availability of data to draw upon in these reviews was poor. In the specific case of Sierra Leone – and many other post-conflict contexts – moving outside the capital to collect data was complicated by the condition of the country's infrastructure. However some interviewees felt that this difficulty was overrated and linked the lack of data collection outside of the capital purely to the fact that the programme was designed to be capital-centric and focussed more on capacity building of national institutions as opposed to service delivery in local areas. This meant that data to support the OPRs was generated primarily from key institutions in Freetown, rather than balanced between urban and rural-based actors.

- *Local ownership*: As outlined above, some interviewees felt that the OPRs should have promoted local ownership and greater participation of programme stakeholders and communities (beneficiaries) in the review process. The fact that the OPRs did not do this largely reflects the fact that the programme was designed to build the capacity of central agencies and not to deliver security at the local level (see section 3.1 above). However, there is still a question around the extent to which programmes that are not designed to focus explicitly on service delivery at the local level should use a participatory approach and draw upon the perceptions of people in M&E – thus promoting local ownership. Some interviewees felt that this is essential in terms of determining the impact of the programme. However, some interviewees linked the failure to employ participatory approaches to data collection: difficulties of accessing rural areas as a result of damaged infrastructure, time/resource constraints and poor budget planning.

- *Time limitations:* A generic challenge of any evaluation exercise is the time made available to a review team in-country. Insufficient time can make it difficult to build up sufficient rapport with relevant actors or a comprehensive understanding of what is realistic and achievable through a programme. One helpful factor in this case was that several of the team members had previous experience of Sierra Leone.
- *Co-ordinating inputs from a large review team:* The review team, being diverse, found it challenging to achieve consensus and to integrate their findings into a single report.

- *Writing for many clients*: It was a challenge for the OPRs to effectively respond to the needs of four different organisations: the MoD, FCO, DFID and the Government of Sierra Leone.

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[35] Correspondence with Senior Evaluator, email, 2008.

- *Tensions arising from a single departmental lead:* In the case of SILSEP, a number of different implementing actors operated side-by-side. Yet the 2005 OPR was more a DFID than cross-government owned exercise. Criticisms of IMATT in the OPR understandably spawned tension between the military advisors and DFID. This was not as much a challenge for the review team, but it was for the implementing agencies. It touches upon another key challenge: that of finding the correct balance between providing constructive criticism and being sensitive to the possible implications of this action.

- *Lack of overall strategy or management:* As cited elsewhere in this report, though credited for its flexibility, SILSEP ultimately suffered from want of a clear strategy, overall project document, logframe or combined management arrangement.

7. Lessons and conclusions

The lessons outlined in this section reflect the views of the author.

- *Underpin all programming, monitoring and evaluation, with agreed strategies:* Given DFID's inexperience of SSR in 1999, and conditions in Sierra Leone, a country in conflict, one might not expect an elaborate strategy to have been formulated until a more stable environment had been established. However, one interviewee linked the failure of IMATT and DFID to establish a strong country office, from an early stage, to DFID's approach of improvising in response to the situation. Therefore, an SSR strategy was not linked into a consistent HMG strategy for Sierra Leone. For the UK's review exercises to have been of greater value to SILSEP, it should have been framed in terms of an overall strategy some years into the programme, with reference to a single over-arching project document.

  Lack of strategy is probably one of the main reasons why SILSEP logframes proved to be unrealistic. Without strategy, and in particular an exit strategy, programme staff and evaluators alike had no real understanding of fundamental elements of SILSEP, including longevity, desired outcomes etc. This meant that much of the work of the later 2007 review team was in effect wasted with the programme's termination in March 2008. At the same time, it is worth keeping in mind that the concept of an exit strategy is based on the notion of having reached a level of stability. Strategy and sustainability are not mutually dependent, and the former has to be adjusted against the latter or failure is inevitable.

- *The need to factor socio-economic issues into evaluation:* The issues of how the peace dividend could be used to link up with economic development, or what constraints underdevelopment placed on SILSEP, were not appropriately addressed by the review. This is an important point given the still precarious position of SSR in its broadest sense within the development world (indeed, many DFID staff in Sierra Leone were reluctant to engage with SILSEP, ultimately seeing the work as too political and distant from DFID's core business) and the contrary claim that is sometimes made for the contribution of SSR to socio-economic development. While the OPRs discussed above focussed understandably on the performance of targeted security institutions, not looking at these core questions within the broader development and security context, or even (2005 OPR apart) other relevant programmes ongoing in-country, inevitably limits the scope of the analysis and recommendations. However, if such issues are to be incorporated into evaluations, the need to do so must be clearly stated in ToRs and the relationship between SSR, other programmes and wider socio-economic issues dealt with intelligently, including perhaps via the involvement of mainstream development specialists or economists.[36]

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[36] *Ibid*.

- *Complementing measures of institutional change with measures of external change:* As outlined above, the SILSEP programme and its reviews focussed predominantly on tracking the internal performance of the security institutions (ONS, CISU, MoD and SLP), particularly at the central level (for an example see the table in section 3.1). Given the programme's design and priorities this focus is necessary and appropriate. However, the implications of the programme for its ultimate beneficiaries in Sierra Leone could be better tracked if a more serious attempt was made to supplement these measures with information on the changing security situation and changing perceptions of broader stakeholders. Even without challenging the institutional focus of the programme, monitoring and reviews could have sought the views of lower-ranking security personnel from outside Freetown or of members of the public who came into contact with them concerning their performance and behaviour.

- *Participation and ownership:* A related issue is that of directly engaging national actors and programme stakeholders in producing a strategy, logframes and indicators, and thereafter in conducting M&E. While the routine nature of information exchange among the UK and Sierra Leonean side has been noted above, this was never formalised for management or monitoring purposes. The extent to which a review team, present in-country for a short period, can overcome participation problems that are entrenched in programme management is probably limited. However, this may represent a lost opportunity to build local capacities and enhance programme ownership. It raises the question of whether SSR programmes should follow the example of many other development interventions in seeking to build national capacities for M&E as part of their programme.

- *The need for evaluations to interrogate implementation logic:* All evaluations, indicators and recommendations must be calibrated carefully against the political context to which they are applied. None of the indicators or outputs of the two OPRs analysed above actually deal with how to ensure political buy-in (and what to do if this is not achieved), despite broad agreement that this is a prerequisite for national ownership and ultimately sustainability. However, one interviewee felt that this was attributed to the fact that the IMATT Officers were brought in on six-month contracts and focussed only on short-term outputs. Of equal importance are indicators – and outputs – on resourcing the state (for example through direct budgetary support). OPRs should not only say what needs to be done in technical terms, but also what can be done within the confines of what is available from the donor and more importantly how finances are managed by the recipient state. It is commonly noted in Sierra Leone that the state is bankrupt, which constitutes a threat not only to the sustainability of the SSR process, but to security and development as a whole. Lastly, such indicators must be both technical (how to strengthen institutions) and social (provision of security to people and people's perception of this).

- *Attend to human resource and project management issues:* Human resource availability on the donor side could be evaluated through appropriate indicators. It is likely that the lack of an overarching strategy for SSR in Sierra Leone was dictated by limitations on staffing. The management load that was placed on DFID staff was significant, precisely because SILSEP was capable of responding to shifting needs across the sector. Many management hours were spent on dealing with advisers/consultants involved in SILSEP, in addition to paperwork and administrative tasks.

- *Prioritise and contextualise recommendations and tie to management planning:* The 2005 OPR covered issues of human resources, project management and many others. It achieved some successes in terms of influencing future programme direction. However, the overly long list of recommendations offered, apparently without due account of the political and economic context, coupled with an absence of priority or any link to management planning, meant that recommendations would likely be cherry-picked and some issues forgotten. Firstly, recommendations that revolve around the technicalities of processes do not explain why implementation has not taken place: understanding the *why* is a pre-requisite for

understanding the *how*, and both must be calibrated against what is realistic at any given time in a particular context. Secondly, comparatively little attention was given to the internal dynamics of DFID's Country Office in Sierra Leone, and its capacity and will to manage SSR-related programming. It is touched upon in the OPRs, but worth mentioning here that it is not enough to point out what needs to be done – one also needs to allocate responsibility for remedial action.

- *Ensure adequate inputs to evaluations:* DFID probably provide reasonable resources for its OPRs, though as noted, time spent outside urban areas was excluded. Most important of all in terms of improving the inputs in the case of both the 2005 and 2007 OPRs, the review teams could have included members with broader expertise from outside the security sector: civil society and oversight issues, economic development and financial management, gender and ethnicity questions were not as well addressed as they could have been.