



## ECONOMIC GROWTH FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

USAID Liberia’s economic growth portfolio is designed to spur community and market revitalization through cross-cutting initiatives in infrastructure, energy, agriculture, food security, and natural resource management. Additionally, road repair, building renovation, and renewable energy installations contribute to other USAID-supported education, health, and local governance projects around the 15 counties of Liberia. Complementing project implementation, the Mission also provides technical assistance and policy strategy support to government partners to promote rapid, sustained, broad-based growth.

### CHALLENGES

The devastation wrought by 14 years of intermittent conflict on roads, electricity, and buildings (clinics, schools, government buildings), and the depletion and misuse of agricultural lands and livestock, forests, minerals, and other natural resources requires a massive effort in reconstruction and renewal-from the ground up.



Roads and electricity are essential to restoring commerce, delivering health and education services, and operating public safety and security measures but of the 6,000 miles of roads in Liberia only about 300 miles are pliable year round and the years of strife collapsed the entire electricity infrastructure. Agricultural production is vital to food security and to employment for 70% of economically active Liberians but access to pricing and marketing information is limited and a regulatory framework is needed to support free market competition. Commercial and community forestry is critical to income generation and government revenue as well as biodiversity

conservation but depends on building enforcement capacity and resolution of volatile land tenure and property rights disputes.

Poverty reduction strategy (PRS) consultations conducted nation-wide by the Government of Liberia in early 2008 indicated that roads and access to schools and health services are priorities for the vast majority of the population more than four years after the end of conflict. Roughly 45% of the population is under 18 and largely unschooled and unskilled. GDP per capita estimated at \$190 is one of the lowest in the world. Progress on equitable economic growth is instrumental to keeping Liberia’s peace and reinforcing security.

### USAID PROGRAMS: REDUCING POVERTY AND BUILDING MARKET ECONOMIES THROUGH COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

In 2007 the economic growth programs started evolving from transitional post-conflict initiatives to longer term economic development programs and projects. In FY 2008, USAID Liberia’s economic growth programs represent the largest of the four Mission

ECONOMIC GROWTH PROGRAM	
FY2008 ESTIMATES	US\$ (MILLION)
Infrastructure	8,835,000
Agriculture	8,801,000
Private Sector Competitiveness	5,399,000
Economic Opportunity	3,077,000
Environment	1,963,000
Social and Economic Services and Protection for Vulnerable Populations (PL480)	2,979,000

program areas with an operating budget of over \$31 million USD. Current and future objectives focus on addressing the issues of land tenure, renewable energy access, revitalizing agricultural markets, workforce training, micro-enterprise development, creating a business enabling environment, trade facilitation as well as infrastructure rehabilitation.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

Roads, and particularly feeder roads and bridges for farm to market access, and rehabilitation of government buildings, schools, clinics, and training institutions are the targets of USAID infrastructure support.

From 2006-2008 USAID provided over \$25.8 million through the Liberia Community Infrastructure Program for the reconstruction or renovation of public buildings, schools, teacher training institutes, clinics, roads and bridges. Road repair equipment valued at USD \$2 million was given to the Ministry of Public Works along with renovation of its headquarters in Monrovia. These projects enabled the start of badly needed operations and capacity building in education, health, and governance.



In 2008-2009, USAID will complete rehabilitation and renovation of the National Elections Commission headquarters, the Tubman National Institute of Medical Arts (TNIMA) for training health workers, the University of Liberia's Fendall Campus, and 150 miles of all-weather roads.

## WORKFORCE AND MICRO-ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT



An emphasis on economic and social reintegration through work on community rehabilitation projects in the immediate post war years has shifted to a focus on micro-enterprise development, a private sector apprenticeship program, and vocational skills training for youth and young adults (18-35) who lost years of schooling during the war that created a dearth of skilled workers in Liberia.

The Rural Apprenticeship and Artisans Program provides an opportunity for participants to learn a trade and business skills, gain experience by apprenticing in a business, and receive business incubation support. In 2008, over 90 businesses in three counties are participating with more than 900 apprentices. A private sector internship program in the Monrovia capital area places youth who have completed schooling or vocational training in large and medium-size enterprises. Some 230 youth are gaining practical experience that will enhance their prospects for regular employment. Women and disabled youth in rural areas benefit from business skills and technical training in cash crop farming, food processing and preservation techniques, for example beekeeping (honey) and snail-raising, which are not labor, time or land-intensive and for which there is local demand.

## ENERGY

Restoration of the country's main source of energy, Mt. Coffee hydro-dam, will take years. Until then, electricity provided by the public utility will reach only 360,000 people in the capital area, roughly 10 per cent of the country's population.



In early 2006, USAID joined a multi-donor Emergency Power Program (EPP) initiative to bring 3 MW of electricity to areas of the capital city, Monrovia, which has an estimated demand of 25 megawatts (MW). In 2008, the second phase of the EPP is expanding electricity from 3 MW to 10 MW and extending to three additional areas important for commercial activity in Monrovia.

USAID technical assistance also is helping to build the financial sustainability of the LEC through interventions that have decreased theft of electricity and increased revenue collection to cover fuel and operations and maintenance. A prepaid meter pilot project, much like prepaid cell phone service, is testing delivery of electricity to the urban poor.

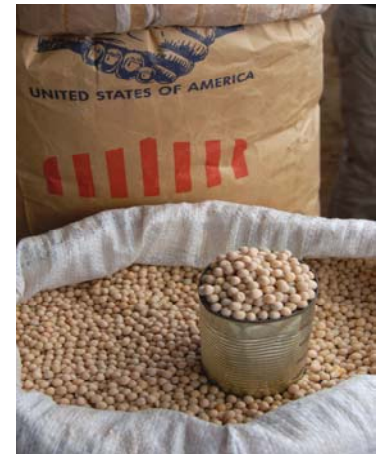
The Liberia Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) has installed rural solar power systems at 22 sites in six counties ranging from schools and clinics to small businesses and street lights. Additionally 60 portable solar lanterns have been distributed to adult literacy programs, health clinics, and craft persons and market sellers, extending business hours and enhancing personal safety. Rooftop solar installations operate outlets for small appliances like cell phones, hand tools, radios, and computers.

USAID contributions have been instrumental in building consensus for a National Energy Policy which the Government of Liberia is expected to adopt in 2008.

## **AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY**

USAID Liberia's agriculture program is working with communities to increase food production, restore smallholder farming and generate income. The program is restoring smallholder livestock and food crops including cocoa, oil palm, rubber, rice and cassava. In 2008, USAID also provided three advisors to the Ministry of Agriculture to build policy planning and institutional capacity to implement the government's new Food and Agriculture Strategy.

USAID's Sustainable Tree Crop Program begun in 2005 trains farmers in improved agricultural techniques through Farmer Field Schools and farmer-to-farmer training and seed distribution. The project also supports farmer cooperatives in three counties. To date, the most success has been in rehabilitating small cocoa plantations. Cassava is one of the most popular staples in the Liberian diet and another USAID-funded project is working to multiply and distribute improved varieties of cassava in ten counties.



Food for Peace (PL480) funding complements USAID community-based agriculture programs and provides support to two projects designed to distribute food rations, reduce food insecurity and relieve malnutrition among the poorest and war-affected segments of the rural population. The Liberia Integrated Assistance Program operates across six counties and in addition to training in food production and nutrition conducts rehabilitation of damaged community infrastructure including markets.

## **NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

Liberia contains over 40% of the remaining Upper Guinean Rainforest making it the prime territory in the region for the protection and conservation of this critically threatened ecosystem. Timber, diamonds and gold, iron ore deposits are some of the natural resources that have often spawned or financed conflict, having benefited a small part of the population throughout Liberia's past. In collaboration with the US Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USDA/FS), USAID Liberia is supporting the development of commercial, community and conservation forestry policies and practices.



The five-year, multi-donor Liberia Forest Initiative began in 2004 and USAID support has focused on governance of commercial forest management leading to the enactment of the Forestry Reform Law of 2006 and a new regulatory framework providing the foundation for transparency, accountability and fair access in commercial forestry. USAID also, through the Governance and Economic Management Program (GEMAP), is providing capacity-building support to Liberia's Forest Development Authority which issued the first timber sale contracts under the new system in 2008.

In 2008, USAID started the LRCFP to test approaches to community forestry in two counties and to support the establishment of a Land Commission and land tenure policy development. The project will assist communities in developing marketable products and sustainable natural resource uses.

USAID's pilot Civilian Conservation Corps, started in 2006, engages six out of 40 communities bordering Sapo National Park— a nearly pristine rainforest established in 1983 and spanning Sinoe, Grand Gedeh, and River Gee Counties— to raise awareness of the importance of protecting biodiversity and to provide alternative livelihood activities that do not degrade the Park's resources.

### **Key Partners in FY 2008**

**Government of Liberia:** Ministry of Agriculture, Forest Development Authority, Governance (Land) Commission, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Internal Affairs

**Donors:** The World Bank (Agriculture, Forestry and Electricity), European Commission (Electricity and Forestry), Government of Norway, Upper Volta River Authority (Electricity), USDA Forest Service

### **Projects:**

#### **Infrastructure and Employment**

- Liberia Community Infrastructure Program (LCIP) (2004-2009): Development Associates Inc. (DAI)

#### **Energy**

- Emergency Power Program (EPP) (2006-2009): International Resources Group (IRG)
- Liberia Energy Assistance Program (LEAP)(2006-2008): International Resources Group (IRG), Energy and Security Group

#### **Agriculture**

- Cassava Improvement and Multiplication (2006-2008): UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- Sustainable Tree Crop Production (2005-2009): International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)
- Technical Assistance to Ministry of Agriculture (2008-2009): Associates for Research in Development (ARD), Inc.

#### **PL 480 Food for Peace**

- Liberia Integrated Assistance Program (LIAP) (2007-2009): Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Africare and Samaritan's Purse
- West Africa Proactive Relief and Recovery Program(2007-2009): World Food Programme (WFP)

#### **Forestry**

- Liberia Forest Initiative (2005-2009): USDA Forest Service
- Land Rights and Community Forestry Program (LRCFP)(2008-2010): Associates for Research in Development, Inc. (ARD),
- Civilian Conservation Corps (2006-2008): ActionAid, Conservation International (prime)
- Sustainable and Thriving Environments for West African Regional Development (STEWART)