

FOOD AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY (FED)

Mid-month Progress Report: July 1-15, 2016

- As part of an exit strategy to empower the four FED-supported Centers of Excellence (COEs), FED this month contracted a local consultant, Thomas Kanneh, to conduct grants development training. The consultant is working with administrative staff and faculty of the COEs, to include the community colleges in Lofa, Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties, and the Booker Washington Institute in Margibi County. The sessions run from July 12 through August 15. At the same time, a FED Soil Consultant, Emmanuel Lincoln, has been mobilized to the field to conduct refresher sessions on soil testing for laboratory technicians at the CoEs. Those sessions also run from July 12 to August 15.
- Textbooks and reference materials for the four CoEs are scheduled to arrive in Monrovia by mid-July. FED began the pre-arrival customs clearance process in the beginning of the month to speed up the books' release from Liberian customs upon arrival. FED is providing textbooks and other reference materials to support faculty and students of the National Diploma in Agriculture (NDA) program. In total, 144 books will be distributed to the CoEs' newly renovated libraries. The collection includes 12 textbook titles and eight reference guides.
- Top Consultants, Inc. (TCI), a FED-contracted consulting firm providing technical assistance to FED-supported business service providers (BSPs), successfully concluded the Enterprise Service Centers' (ESCs) awareness campaign on July 1. The campaign was part of TCI's efforts to build the capacity of the BSPs as they transition to fee-based ESCs. The awareness campaign included radio jingles, banners, t-shirts, appearances on radio talk shows, as well as traveling road shows to communities, towns and districts of Margibi, Bong, Lofa, Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties. FED has extended TCI's contract to August 5 to allow time for the consultant write a comprehensive report on its deliverables. The five ESCs will be ready for graduation to full-fledged Enterprise Service Centers by the end of August based on previously-established criteria.
- FED consultant Dr. Roland Massaquoi continues his work this reporting period drafting acts for three ECOWAS policies (seeds, fertilizer, agro-chemicals) and the 10 % Cassava Composite Flour Policy. The drafts will incorporate comments and suggestions from three sessions of technical working groups, which included stakeholders from the private and public sectors. Once completed, the document will be presented to FED for review before it is submitted to the working groups for approval and then to the Ministries of Commerce and Agriculture. The ECOWAS draft acts on pesticides, seeds and fertilizer are currently being reviewed by the Law Reform Commission.
- On July 5, the Universal Empowerment Missions (UEM), a local institution hired by FED to provide technical support to 350 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA), presented its final report on the full accomplishments and deliverables of the groups. In June, EDUCARE completed its work with another 373 VSLAs. Because these two NGOs' contracts have ended, FED renewed contracts with independent consultants to continue monitoring the 723 FED-supported VSLA activities from July 1 to August 31.
- Tallobenku Engineering completed conversion work of the Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI) goat quarantine facility in Bong County to convert it into a nucleus breeding herd center during this reporting period. This facility now has ideal space for goat husbandry, including 16 individual quadrants for isolation and an animal crush for examination. FED anticipated that CARI will receive and sign the handover documents in mid-July and fully

assume responsibility for the center's operations, which will include sourcing and breeding 100 animals (20 bucks and 80 does) of superior genetic stock.

- FED-contracted BRAC Liberia, an international NGO, this week sent blood samples from 200 vaccinated goats and sheep to the Ministry of Agriculture for testing. The blood samples are from animals who were vaccinated under a FED-supported campaign against the Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) disease. The campaign ended in June with more than 103,000 animals vaccinated. The blood samples are being tested for PPR antibodies. FED anticipates test results at the end of this reporting month.
- FED's M&E team continued collecting data to complete the smallholder farmer survey by the end of this month. The survey began on June 20 and, by mid-July, enumerators had already interviewed more than 1,330 farmers (1,070 upcountry in rice, vegetables and goat production, and another 262 individual vegetable farmers in Margibi and Montserrado). Data on the cassava value chain will be collected in late-August in order to accommodate the agricultural cycle for that crop. The smallholder survey is collecting FY2016 data on the indicators comprising the gross margin formula. A subsequent enterprise survey will be conducted in August and September to capture FY2016 data on the remaining FtF indicators which FED has been assigned by USAID.
- Planning has been initiated for an Agribusiness Expo to be conducted in September 2016 that will highlight development of agribusiness activity under FED. Planning is being conducted in collaboration with the Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. Moses Zinnah. The focus of the expo will be on value chain development over the past five years and the strengthening of the agribusinesses serving it. It will be an opportunity for businesses serving the agricultural sector to showcase their products and services to potential customers. The target audience for the Expo includes farmers, agribusinesses, the diplomatic community, GoL officials, LNGOs, and other interested parties. Space has been reserved at Monrovia City Hall for this event, scheduled for September 13-14.