

TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE THROUGH EXPATRIATE NATIONALS (TOKTEN)

Introduction

Liberia's fourteen years of civil war and political unrest have resulted in a massive brain drain, which has substantially weakened government capacity to respond to the challenges of national reconstruction and development. Together with UNDP, the Government of Liberia has devised a number of initiatives to strengthen national capacity. The TOKTEN Project is a part of the Government multi-pronged capacity development initiatives. It is intended to facilitate the recruitment of at least 20 expatriate national professionals and 15 local professionals.

These professionals are expected to technically support the Government reconstruction and development agenda and help alleviate the impact of brain drain the country has experienced over the years of conflict and political instability. In essence, expatriate Liberian professionals are facilitated to return to Liberia for a limited amount of time to temporarily fill key posts in different sectors and institutions. During their posting, they build capacity in the receiving institutions and sectors in which they are active.

Objectives and Duration

The project, which has duration of 18 months (2006 – 2008), aims to:

- In the short term: repatriate Liberian nationals to support nation building through the revitalization of government institutions;
- In the long term: consolidate democracy and peace building and ensure the sustainability of government operations through the availability of required manpower in key institutions.

Management Arrangements

The TOKTEN project is being implemented under special arrangement, through UNDP DEX Service Centre. However, the day to day running of the project is done by a Project Coordinator with an Administrative Assistant, both of whom are stationed at the Civil Service Agency (CSA).

To ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation of the project, a Project Implementation Committee (PIC) is in place. The PIC comprises the Civil Service Agency (CSA), as chair; UNDP, co-chair, Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs (MPEA), Ministry of State/LRDC, member; and the Governance Reform Commission (GRC). USAID, as one of the major donors for this project, is expected to be included as a member of the PIC..

Project Status

To date, 17 expatriate Liberians and 5 local professionals have been screened and approved to participate in the project. The duration of service amongst professionals varies, some for a period ranging from one - six months while others have been approved for 18 months. However, in a recently held PIC meeting on 30 August 2007, the PIC agreed as a policy decision to have all newly recruited staff to serve from one – six months initially, with possibility of extension depending on the need of the hiring institution.

Key national institutions being revived through the TOKTEN support include JFK Hospital (the only tertiary health institution in Monrovia), Civil Service Agency, University of Liberia, National Aids Control Programme (NACP), Ministries of Education, Health, State, Planning and Economic, Public Works, and Commerce and Industry.

Budget

Total project budget is estimated at close to \$2,070,600 million out of which UNDP has provided the amount of \$0.2 million while USAID has provided \$1,000,000. The project now has a funding gap of \$870,000. Additional resources are required to bring in more professionals that are critically needed to join the reconstruction and development process.