

# Embracing New Partnerships that Advance Locally Led Development through Private Sector Engagement

**April 24, 2023** 







# USAID/Liberia's Agribusiness Incubator is synonymous with Localization

**Progress beyond Programs** 





# USAID/Liberia Agribusiness Incubation and Development Activity Overview

# Liberia at a glance



•Population : 5.2 Million

•GDP per capita : \$676 •Poverty rate (\$2.15/day) : 28% •Undernourishment : 38%

•Agriculture Dependency : 60%

•Agriculture % of GDP : 37%

•Ease of doing Business : 175<sup>th</sup> (2019)

•Main exports: Iron ore, gold, rubber, palm oil, timber, cocoa



# Why the Agribusiness Incubator Activity?



USAID and the Africa Trade and Investment (ATI)
Program created a Liberia Agribusiness
Incubator to support:

- ✓ Job creation
- ✓ Value addition
- ✓ Trade
- Investment
- Strengthen small and start up agripreneurs

### Overview

- 20 Million USD ATI buy-in funding to support the development of the commercial agribusiness sector in Liberia
- All Value Chains
- All Counties

# **Objectives**

Objective 1: Promote trade and investment by unlocking potential in the growth of the private sector across the entire value chain, from on-farm production to the distribution and sale of final goods

Objective 2: Promote agriculture entrepreneurs in Liberia who have good ideas to provide solutions to Liberia's agriculture sector constraints

Objective 3: Address these constraints, improve the business enabling environment, and accelerate the growth of private sector agribusiness firms

### Components



Incubator/Accelerator

\$2.7million

BDS Services & Skills
Development to facilitate
professional development for
Liberia entrepreneurs to
increase trade, investment and
productivity in the
agribusiness sector.



Pitch Competition & Small Grant Awards

\$3 million

Facilitate pitch & reverse competitions to provide seed finance and scale innovations that align with strengthening inclusive commercial agricultural development in Liberia



APS-Call for Grants
Opportunity

\$10.5 million

A grant financing facility that co-invests with Agribusiness private sector firms with a minimum leverage ratio of 1:1 matchmaking



CLA

\$500,000

Conduct a collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) to gather and share evidence on strategies that promote agribusiness development Liberia

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## **The Concept Note**

- ATI/USAID identified barriers for rural applicants including the length of the concept note.
- As a result, the application process was adapted to overcome these barriers.
- The concept note was reduced to six pages with very specific short response questions.

### What Prompted our localization approach

#### Q3 FY 22:APS went live



Nov. 2022: 18 Grants applications were received

- ✓ Lack of awareness to the public
- ✓ Inadequate knowledge on application process
- Lack of Internet access in rural communities
- Mind set



# Localization Approach (Roadshows)



- Purpose: To raise awareness of the new application process, generate local interest, and reach rural communities.
- Recruited a Liberian events and brand awareness company
- Jingles, flyers, banners, promos created in plain English and local languages

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### **Roadshows Engagements**





- 335 SMEs, farmers, and agripreneurs attended indoor events
- At least I/3rd of the population reached in targeted areas via radio and Facebook feeds
- Service centers established through the local government
- Free internet WIFI was available at each service center to facilitate concept submissions
- The service center had a local cell phone number for ease of contact

#### **Roadshow Results**

#### **Before The Roadshows**

Q3 FY 22:APS went live



Nov. 2022: 18 Grant applications received

#### **After The Roadshows**

Feb. 2023: APS first window Closed



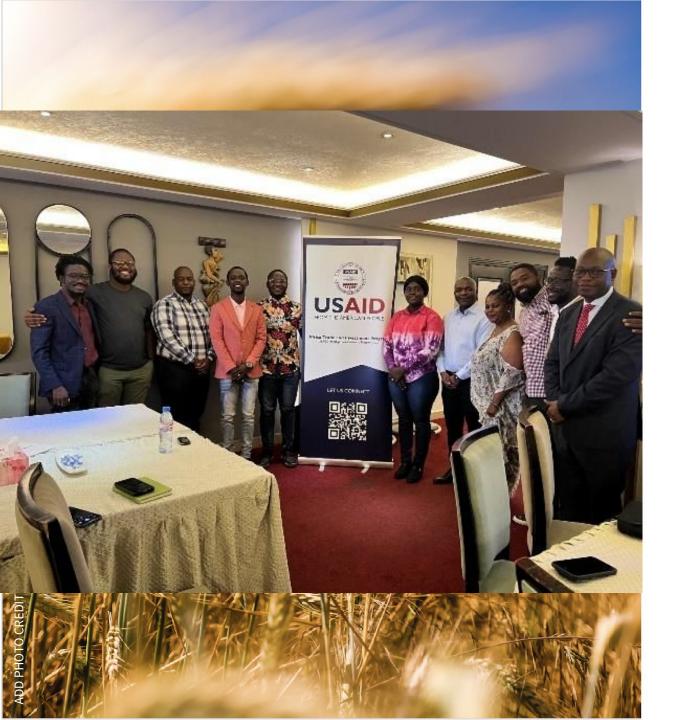
Feb. 2023: 148 grant applications received

# Request For Proposal Co-Design Localization Approach



# RFP Localization Approach

- USAID/ATI decided to do a co-creation exercise of the RFP with local business development firms in the country.
- The rationale was to tap into the expertise of local organizations that have worked on similar interventions in the country in order to incorporate local context.
- The participants shared key insights on the Liberian business context and agribusinesses' needs.



# RFP Localization outcomes

- Together with the participants, the 15 counties in Liberia were divided into three zones for offerors to apply to - one firm per zone.
- Selected firms will run cohorts of 25 small and emerging businesses/entrepreneurs for a 8 months.
- The co-creation provided the opportunity to structure the RFP based on local needs and considerations.
- The RFP took into consideration all the inputs from the local incubators/accelerators, thereby making the RFP more responsive to local needs
- 12 submissions were received and 3 very vibrant local companies emerged as subcontractors



"Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results." ~ Albert Einstein

To sustain development and have impact, we need to localize our approach.

Thank You!

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