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

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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: 175th (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

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

   **$2.7 million**

2. **Pitch Competition & Small Grant Awards**

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

   **$3 million**

3. **APS-Call for Grants Opportunity**

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

   **$10.5 million**

4. **CLA**

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

   **$500,000**
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

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

Nov. 2022: 18 Grants applications were received
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
Roadshows Engagements

- 335 SMEs, farmers, and agripreneurs attended indoor events
- At least 1/3rd 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.
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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