



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

USAID/JAMAICA COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND TRANSFORMATION PROJECT - PHASE II (COMET II)

Startup Report

December 20, 2013

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Tetra Tech DPK.

INTRODUCTION

On December 2, 2013, USAID awarded Task Order AID-532-TO-14-00001 under the Rule of Law Indefinite Quantity Contract to Tetra Tech DPK for the implementation of the Community Empowerment and Transformation Project – Phase II (COMET II).

Tt DPK submitted a mobilization plan to USAID on December 4, 2013 following initial discussions with Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) Allan Bernard. Revisions were made to the mobilization plan based on the COR's feedback and the plan was approved on December 6, 2013. Tt DPK proposed a two phase mobilization plan: 1) an initial trip during December 9-20, 2013 to meet with USAID and initiate our administrative, financial, registration, and logistical processes, and 2) technical start-up during January 6 – February 6, 2014 with the technical team mobilization and commencement of annual work planning and Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) development will commence at the beginning of 2014.

The following sections summarize the main activities and results achieved during the first phase of the mobilization plan during the period December 6-20, 2013.

I. TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES

Introductory Meeting with USAID, partner organizations and counterparts

On December 10, Tt DPK Home Office support personnel met with USAID/Jamaica Supervisory Program Officer Jeanette E. Vail and COR Allan Bernard to introduce COMET II COP Melanie Peyser and start discussions on technical expectations, clarify roles/responsibilities, and get recommendations on staffing, and office location. Thanks to the COR, Tt DPK visitors had the opportunity to tour the Mission's building and meet USAID personnel. Tt DPK participants included Director Robert Page Jr., Senior Technical Advisor Robert Dean, Senior Business and Contracts Manager Nidia Trujillo, and Senior Program Officer Sergio Zegarra.

Chief of Party (COP) Melanie Peyser and Senior Technical Advisor Robert Dean conducted introductory meetings with the following organizations and individuals to establish working and reporting relationships:

- University of Technology
- University of West Indies
- Youth Crime Watch
- EWA Communications
- Social Development Commission (SDC)
- Assistant Commissioner of Police (JCF), John McLean
- Professor Trevor Munroe, Executive Director, National Integrity Action (NIA)

COR Allan Bernard accompanied Tt DPK staff to all of these meetings with the exception of the meeting with EWA Communications.

Ms. Peyser, Mr. Dean, and Mr. Bernard provided brief overview of COMET II goals, objectives, and components. Additionally, Ms. Peyser explained the planned schedule for startup activities, workplanning, and stakeholder input into activities planning. Partner organizations and counterparts were invited to provide feedback and also discussed the current context for COMET II interventions, including for example, the current level of integration of community-based policing practices within the JCF; SDC community safety planning and community development programming with CDCs and CBOs in CRP communities, and NIA progress on public awareness campaigns and generation of commitment to transparency.

Introductory calls were also held with Cure Violence and YouthBuild, U.S. partner organizations.

Follow up with each partner organization and counterpart is underway.

Post-award Conference

Based on USAID and Tt DPK officials' availability, it has been agreed to schedule the start date of the Post-Award Conference for January 8, 2014. Tt DPK shared a draft agenda for the conference, which received good feedback from the Mission. USAID is reviewing the agenda and will send a revised version for comments by the end of December 2013.

Grants Manual

Director Robert Page Jr. hand-delivered a copy of the Grants Manual for USAID's review and approval at the December 10th meeting with the COR. An electronic copy of the manual was submitted to the COR and Acquisition Specialist Margot Francis on December 11. The COR completed his first review of the manual on December 13 and submitted it to the Acquisition Specialist for subsequent review. Tt DPK is looking forward to receiving USAID feedback on the manual to address any observations and submit a revised version, if necessary, for USAID's final review and approval.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Senior Business and Contracts Manager Nidia Trujillo and Senior Program Officer Sergio Zegarra dedicated efforts to carry out the following administrative activities:

Registration, Bank Account, and Meeting with other USAID projects

Met with local law firms and financial institutions to get guidance on:

- Registration options and pros and cons for each
- Required filings to the Jamaican Tax Administration
- Analysis of US-Jamaica bilateral agreements and definition of coverage and exemptions extended to USG contractors implementing projects in-country
- Statutory and optional fringe benefits as required by Jamaican law
- Requirements and process for obtaining a work permit for COP Melanie Peyser
- Opening bank accounts for the project

Met with COPs of other USAID projects to introduce the project and get insights regarding fringe benefits, registration, banking, and overall operations. The visits included the following:

- PRIDE Project being implemented by Carana and led by expat COP Debra Wahlberg
- JaREECH Project being implemented by ACDI/VOCA and led by local COP Karyll Aitcheson

The meeting were also an opportunity to establish a relationship with other sister projects and expressing our desire to have periodic "community of practice" meetings amongst the COPs. In our conversation with JaREECH, we also identified a possible area of collaboration as they do work in the Clarendon area with at-risk youth including summer camps and training of "Climate Change Action Agents".

Human Resources

- Met with key personnel Civil Society Specialist Ian McKnight and Grants Manager Nardia Pessoa-White
- Finalized hiring package for local personnel. Offer letters were issued to Civil Society Specialist Ian McKnight, Grants Manager Nardia Pessoa-White, Finance and Administration Manager Macrena Bennet, Administrative Assistant Ann Marie Carnigie, and Component 3: Alternative Sentencing & Youth Ruth Carey

- Identified candidates for the following positions: Grants Assistant, Civil Society Coordinator, Component 2: Public Engagement lead, Component 4: Community Policing Coordinator, and Accountant. Per the COR's recommendations, Tt DPK did not publish an ad to recruit the project's five community coordinators but used Senior Technical Advisor Dough McCaffery's local network of contacts to identify suitable candidates. Three strong candidates have been identified to fill these positions and interviews with COP Melanie Peyser are being scheduled for January 2014.

Office Space

- Secured a 2,000 sq. ft. office space at the 2nd floor of the Courtleigh Corporate Center after scouting many properties and conducting extensive negotiations. Tt DPK will sign a 5-year lease at a negotiated \$3,650 per month rate and 3.5% annual increase that will cover rent and maintenance costs. Tt DPK is reviewing the lease and expects to sign it by early next week.