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LIBERIA COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT II

QUARTERLY REPORT JANUARY – MARCH 2009

JUNE 1, 2009

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by LCIP prime contractor, DAI, under Contract 632-I-00-03-00050-00 Task Order # 10.

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INTRODUCTION

This report covers the Liberia Community Infrastructure Project II performance period of January, February and March 2009, and is the fifth Quarterly Report submitted under LCIP II. This Quarterly Report includes a brief narrative of the project achievements, including a report on beneficiary targets versus actuals, and an explanation of the results including reasons for achievement or difficulties experienced. The targets are based on the November 1, 2008 Year II Annual Work Plan and Fiscal Year 2009 Targets submitted in October 2008 to USAID. This report does not provide a detailed list of progress and challenges on technical deliverables, grants, or other project activities; these are provided in the monthly technical progress reports.

The report provides a list of the 16 required performance indicators that are contained within the LCIP II Year II Work Plan. A brief narrative on the quality of the data, how it was obtained, and how project performance is being monitored is provided. This report contains an update to the Economic Baseline Survey findings, which were implemented to gather community-level data for planning purposes.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2009, project management continued to focus on Year 2 Work Plan revisions for the Economic and Social Reintegration portfolio, while it began major infrastructure projects. In particular, the Economic and Social Reintegration (ESR) team focused on Work Plan development and commenced the evaluation, review and selection process for potential local implementing partners for the new grant phase. Advertisements for Expressions of Interest and subsequent dissemination of Requests for Applications were conducted. The new wave of ESR grants is expected to begin in late March 2009. Also, during this period many of the 2009 National Infrastructure (INF) dry-season deliverables were designed, tendered, and were begun.

During this quarter the following major accomplishments were noted:

- Continued progress towards the completion of the rehabilitation of the Buchanan to Greenville national road;
- Completion of designs and tenders for off-road Todee Road Development Corridor activities (Note: road works, culverts/drainage works and bridge works were 90 percent completed last quarter);
- Official dedication and turnover of the Sinoe County Administration Building in Greenville;
- Official dedication and turnover of the Ministry of Public Works National Headquarters Compound;
- Groundbreaking and commencement of National Elections Commission, TNIMA, and Robertsport to Medina Road Rehabilitation projects; and
- Approval of Year 2 Infrastructure Work Plan for LCIP II, and instructions to proceed with submission of Year 2 ESR Work Plan activities.

In February, the COP, DCOP and M&E expert travelled to Bethesda to attend a week long DAI conference. The conference is held once every two years with the intent to bring in representatives from each project to share experiences, improve technical delivery, and develop innovative development approaches across all of DAI's areas of technical expertise. The conference consisted of several workshops for staff to participate in, ranging from food security to the role of public private partnerships

in development. LCIP's COP headed a panel on public private partnerships discussing the pairing and partnering of local rubber producers with international organizations, the challenges and benefits of such relationships. The M&E expert, Boima Bafaie, was also asked to participate in GIS workshops, the goal of which was to bring together local GIS counterparts to attend training sessions, share expertise and meet other members of the GIS team. Boima discussed his data mapping experiences with LCIP and ETOA, sharing the various ways in which data could be manifested and mapped to convey information in a more visual way.

EMPLOYMENT DATA

The following table depicts the current list of LCIP II activities, November 1, 2008 – April 30, 2010, the original workforce and Person Days of Employment (PDE) targets (see draft Year II Annual Work Plan dated November 2008) and actual results (cumulative to date), including data from any currently active or recently closed grants that occurred within the reporting period. This data is not based on FY OP indicators/dates, but on **activity-level** details.

Type	Activity	Status	Target Workforce (A)	Oct – Dec 08 (B)	Jan – March 09 (C)	Actuals to Date (D)	% of Target Achieved to Date E = (D / A)	Target PDE (F)	Oct – Dec 08 (G)	Jan – March 09 (H)	Actuals to Date (I)	% of Target Achieved to Date J = (I / F)
ESR	Activities within Private Sector Development Component	N	915	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	62,370	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
ESR	Activities within Agriculture Production Component	N	1645	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	11,550	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
ESR	Activities within Small Scale Community Infrastructure Component	N	100	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2,888	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
ESR	Activities within CPMR Component	N	250	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	NA	n/a 0	n/a	n/a	n/a
INF	Rehab of Ministry of Public Works	C	*180	58	46	298	166%	*31,680	3,660	2,002	51,269	162%
INF	Rehab of Todee Road	C	*180	173	67	280	156%	*23,760	9,894	3,090	33,213	140%
INF	Rehabilitation of Maryland County City Hall	N	71	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	13,044	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
INF	Rehabilitation of National Elections Commission	O	91	0	37	37	41%	16,951	0	703	703	4%
INF	Rehabilitation of TNIMA	O	115	0	107	107	93%	23,019	0	2,457	2,457	10.7%
INF	Rehabilitation Four Border Posts	N	36	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6,906	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
INF	Rehabilitation of Engineering Building – Fendall Campus	N	103	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	19,113	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
INF	Rehabilitation of Robertsport Medina Highway	O	344	0	0	0	0%	15,102	0	0	0	0%
INF	Rehabilitation of Sannquin River Bailey Bridge	O	115	0	0	0	0%	5,034	0	0	0	-0%
INF	Rehabilitation of a Feeder Road Development Corridor	N	306	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	13,424	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
INF	Rehabilitation and Maintenance of Buchanan to Greenville Road	O	*120	208	221	639	533%	*7,920	8,416	8,190	140,916	1,779 %

INF	Rehabilitation of Sinoe County Administrative Building	C	*30	42	25	42	140%	*1,980	1,766	1,239	5,694	288%
TOTAL			4,091	481	503	1,403	34%	189,401	23,736	17,681	234,252	24%

N = Not yet begun, C = Complete, O = Ongoing, D = Delayed

* =Project activity from Year I Annual Work Plan, in process of being completed during this reporting period.

NA – Not Applicable

NOTES

Most of the LCIP II grants associated with the first Annual Work Plan were closed prior to this quarter or were completed during the current reporting period. Employment and performance data for this quarter was generated through project grant activities that were continued from the first Annual Work Plan.

It should be noted that many of the projects that are reported on in the summary table above were not completed within the First Year of LCIP II, therefore the employment **targets** are based on the FY08 targets and are now carried through to FY09. These projects include the near completion of the following major infrastructure activities:

- a. Rehabilitation of the Ministry of Public Works Compound
- b. Rehabilitation of the Todee Road Development Corridor
- c. Rehabilitation of the Greenville to Buchanan Highway
- d. Rehabilitation of the Sinoe County Administration Building

Many of these projects are either close to completion or were completed during this quarter; therefore employment figures are lower than during peak performance.

The Greenville Buchanan Road is currently divided into 5 segments with 6 subcontractors all working simultaneously. Due to the success of the 2008 implementation strategy, this year the DAI Engineering team will once again directly hire and supervise rented heavy-duty road construction equipment that is critical to exceeding the target of the repair of 50 major road surface spots. The team continues to install the labor intensive cross-drainage structures, through subcontracts, small and medium sized construction companies and technical NGOs. These subcontractors employ the large majority of employment reported above. WAIS, TECURD and MESA, the three main subcontractors on the road, provided a combined total of 141 persons labor force generating 6,162 person days of employment due to their labor intensive approach on the road. This accounts for 62% and 75% respectively of total labor force and person days of employment achieved this quarter.

During this period, several infrastructure projects were begun, including:

- a. Rehabilitation of the Tubman National Institute for Medical Arts (TNIMA)
- b. Rehabilitation of the Robertsport to Medina Road
- c. Demolition of the National Elections Commission Building in preparation for reconstruction.

Because many of these activities were only begun during this quarter, the subcontractors are mobilizing to site and gearing up their labor force. As a result of this, lower than peak-performance actual results for employment were achieved.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The following tables show the **required** performance indicators (including USAID Annual Report data), as per the November 2008 LCIP II Draft Annual Work Plan.

Type of Indicator: Required

Project Strategic Objective: Restore and Improve Basic Economic Activity and Livelihoods

#	Indicator	Component	Target FY 2009	Current Reporting Period	Cumulative to Date	Types of LCIP Activities included
1	Number of additional hectares under improved technologies or management practices (<i>FY 2009/10 OP indicator</i>)	ESR	2,333	N/A	New grants not yet started	Agricultural productivity
2	Number of persons participating in workforce development program (<i>FY 2009/10 OP indicator</i>)	ESR, INF	2,910	N/A	New grants not yet started	Agricultural productivity, Workforce development, Microenterprise productivity
3	Number of persons completing workforce development program (<i>FY 2009/10 OP indicator</i>)	ESR, INF	200	N/A	New grants not yet started	Agricultural productivity, Workforce development, Microenterprise productivity
4	Number of persons gaining employment or more remunerative employment as a result of participation in workforce development program (<i>FY 2008 OP indicator</i>)	ESR	100	N/A	New grants not yet started	Agricultural productivity, Workforce development, Microenterprise productivity
5	Number of farmers trained in agricultural sector productivity (<i>Proposed new FY 2009/10 OP custom indicator</i>)	ESR	2,970	N/A	New grants not yet started	Agricultural productivity
6	Number of micro enterprises receiving business development services(<i>FY 2009/10 OP indicator</i>)	ESR	1,110	N/A	New grants not yet started	Agricultural productivity, Workforce development, Microenterprise productivity
7	Number of micro enterprises linked to larger-scale firms as a result of assistance (<i>FY 2009/10 OP indicator</i>)	ESR	45	N/A	New grants not yet started	Agricultural productivity, Workforce development, Microenterprise productivity
8	Number of producers organizations, water associations, trade and business associations, and community-based organizations (CBOs) receiving assistance (<i>FY 2009/10 OP indicator</i>)	ESR & INF	30	N/A	New grants not yet started	Agricultural productivity, Workforce development, Microenterprise productivity, Community infrastructure,
9	Value (in US\$) of community contribution to LCIP II activity	ESR & INF	Min of \$USD 200/ community	N/A	New grants not yet started	Agricultural productivity, Workforce development, Microenterprise productivity, Community rehabilitation

#	Indicator	Component	Target FY 2009	Current Reporting Period	Cumulative to Date	Types of LCIP Activities included
10	Number of person days of employment generated (<i>FY 2009/10 OP custom indicator</i>)	ESR & INF	176,000	17,681	41, 417	All INF Activities, RAP Apprentices, PIP interns, Rubber Rehab, SSCI, Fisheries, POTUS Furniture
11	Kilometers of transport infrastructure constructed or repaired (<i>FY 2009/10 OP indicator</i>)	INF	75 km	18	18km	Greenville to Buchanan Road Robertsport to Medina Road Todee Road was already reported
12	Number of bridges rehabilitated or reconstructed	INF	7	5	7	7 bridge repairs on Todee Road
13	Number of person days of training to improve local capacity for management and implementation of infrastructure activities (<i>FY 2009/10 OP custom indicator</i>)	INF	600	0	400	Training of subcontractors on road maintenance in Buchanan
14	Square feet of buildings rehabilitated (<i>revised</i>)	INF	59,000	0	Year II building activities not yet completed	TNIMA, NEC, Fendall, Maryland County Admin, 4 Border Posts
15	Number of classrooms repaired (<i>USAID FAF Standard Indicator – Program Element Basic Education</i>)	INF	18	0	New grants not yet completed	Fendall Campus, TNIMA
16	Number of sub-national government entities receiving assistance to improve their performance (<i>USAID FAF Standard Indicator – Program Element Local Government and Decentralization</i>)	INF	12	6	7	Buildings (ministries, including line ministries at border posts) and Roads (county governments) JFK Medical Center, MPW, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Montserrado County, Grand Cape Mount County, NEC,

List of IRs

1. Employment and skills development opportunities for unemployed youth expanded;
2. Community infrastructure and essential services strengthened
3. Public infrastructure rehabilitation and reconstruction links communities to government

ANALYSIS OF IMPACT DATA

For most of the indicators listed above, actual results can be explained by understanding project implementation methodology.

INFRASTRUCTURE - ROADS

The achievements outlined above for road infrastructure, include two major activities during the this reporting period, specifically the ongoing rehabilitation of the Buchanan to Greenville Highway and the completion of the rehabilitation of the Todee Road (both activities were also included in the LCIP II Annual Work Plan for year one).

The **Buchanan to Greenville Road** rehabilitation about 85% completed in March 2009. During this reporting period, DAI continued to engage the services of seven (7) small subcontractors, each employing their own workforce, providing emergency and routine maintenance. DAI measures the total kilometers of road distance completed based on the completion of the scheduled cross-drainage works.

The following progress was achieved on the road under this grant to the Ministry of Public Works:

- 2 bridges and 42 miles of culverts were completed along segment C by WAIS, REDES and SMD
- 10 km of road was reshaped and 2 bridges repaired along segment D1 by REDES, TECURD and SMD
- 11 road spots were filled along segments D1 and D2 by REDES, TECURD and SMD
- 221 construction workers were employed during the quarter, generating 8,190 person days of employment.

The **Todee Road** rehabilitation of 31.25km of road, in Montserrado County, was 100 percent complete in March, and included a total of 7 bridges. The handing over ceremony is scheduled for May 2009. Although the road rehabilitation is complete, a number of activities are planned to provide ongoing support and sustainability, including labor based maintenance training to 8 Community Based Organizations (CBO) and off road infrastructure.

The following progress was achieved on the Todee Road through this grant to the Ministry of Public Works:

- 3,090 laborers were employed this quarter, generating 67 person days of employment;
- 4 bridges were rehabilitated this quarter in addition to 3 bridges which had previously been completed.

As part of the “Development Corridor” activities for the Todee Road, community access infrastructure projects previously identified during integrated access planning sessions with the 8 CBO groups resulted in the following activities being selected for future implementation:

- Improving access to elementary education facilities through the future rehabilitation of 3 classroom blocks in Nyehn, Manjoe and Yoa public elementary schools;
- Improving access to health services by providing 7 accommodation facilities/rooms (nurses quarters) at the Nyehn District Health Clinic;
- Improving access to safe water by rehabilitating 16 wells and providing 20 hand-dug wells fitted with lift pumps;
- Improving community access roads through the rehabilitation of minor bridges, removal of bottle necks, foot bridges etc.

The design and preparation of these off-road projects were tendered this quarter, and activities will begin next quarter.

INFRASTRUCTURE - BUILDINGS

During this reporting period two LCIP II rehabilitated buildings were dedicated and reopened, however, the majority of the rehabilitation work occurred before October 1, 2008 (therefore employment data is not reported against targets). The two buildings included the Ministry of Public Works Compound and the Sinoe County Administration Building – both summarized below:

The **Ministry of Public Works** rehabilitation project was completed, dedicated, and turned over to the Ministry of Public Works on March 27. The major challenge in completing this project was the inability of the contractor to schedule supplies due to cash flow. As a result LCIP took over some of the process for large purchases and their installation. The MPW has assumed all ongoing works as a part of their own maintenance budget and control. The results of this Final Completion are significant in that all sections of the MPW are now housed in the same facility, the international organizations with ongoing activities as part of the MPW also have space, and the facility functions.

- During this quarter, 104 people were employed to complete the project, with a total of 2,442 Person Days of Employment generated as a result.
- During the entire project (July 2007 – March 2009) a total of up to 2,350 people were employed during the works generating 51,269 person days of employment.
- 5 buildings were turned over to the Ministry
- Electrical distribution and water supply/distribution were restored to all the designated areas of the compound under USAID funding.

The **Sinoe County Administration Building** rehabilitation project was completed, dedicated, and turned over to the Sinoe County Officials on March 24, 2009. The ceremony took place in the entrance lawn of the administration building and was attended by the USAID Chief of Mission, US Ambassador to Liberia, Minister of Information, as well as members of the local authority and legislature.

During the rehabilitation, the following was accomplished:

- During this quarter 25 people were employed to complete the project, with a total of 1,239 Person Days of Employment generated as a result.
- During the entire project (April 2008 – January 2009) a total of 42 people were employed during the works.
- Electrical distribution and water supply/distribution were restored to all the designated areas of the compound under USAID funding.
- 19 new offices were provided through office partition and expansion in the basement of the existing structure.

The County Administration building provides an opportunity for assigned central-level government officials to have suitable local offices. In order for the GOL to provide effective central services to urban and rural communities, they need to have adequate working conditions at the county level. This rehabilitation project is one of 10 grants to the GOL in support of the rehabilitation of 10 county administration buildings including those in Grand Bassa (completed Jan 08), Bomi (completed April 08), Sinoe (completed in Jan 09), and Maryland County (2009 Dry Season deliverable). 5 were completed in 2005/2006 through LCIP I activities.

The **demolition of the National Election Commission** was awarded to Global Building System Inc, an American/Liberian firm, and executed over a period of 19 days in January of 2009.

The purpose of the demolition came as a result of a structural analysis made by RCT Engineering a US-based engineering firm, on the existing building. The findings indicated that the building was structurally unsound and recommended that the building be demolished.

During the demolition exercise, temporary jobs for 37 semi and unskilled laborers were created, of which 35 were men and 2 were women.

At the time of the exercises, several factors were taken into consideration, such as the suppression of building particles from spreading, and the identification of a defined garbage dumping site. Additionally, the enclosure of the entire fence, noise protector and safety boots for the employees were employed and used as safety measures.

CAPACITY BUILDING: INFRASTRUCTURE

Following the previous quarter's completion of a three week (21 days) training course which was designed to provide theoretical and practical application for small engineering firms and technical NGOs, the DAI team received approval to award **\$239,758.01** value of new contracts to 3 of these firms, while the completion of **\$232,279.7** (REDES, AAA) is still ongoing. The awards of these new contracts are testament to their increased knowledge, skills and business management.

These small training trial contracts on the Greenville-Buchanan will help develop the technical skills of the labor force, managers, etc. and it is planned that upon completion of the Greenville to Buchanan Road project, many of these well-trained and now experienced contractors will submit bids and be awarded additional contracts on one of the upcoming feeder road projects.

After the successful first training of subcontractors participating in the rehabilitation efforts, several community based organizations have applied for inclusion in the upcoming labor based routine maintenance training program. The training of the routine maintenance CBOs will form the last part of this training grant and is scheduled for July 2009 after completion of the rehabilitation works. LCIP staff have been in dialogue with the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) to encourage them to use these trained sub-contractors and CBOs to achieve ongoing maintenance of these roads. LCIP has also been meeting with GTZ, a German based NGO, who is funded by their Government to build road maintenance capacity at the MPW. GTZ will include these groups in their program design.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REINTEGRATION ACTIVITIES

The new US Ambassador and USAID Mission Director are reorganizing the USAID Mission's focus toward Sustainable Development. As a result, LCIP's ESR team carefully evaluated which partners had the capacity to manage increased financial and technical responsibilities, and the 34 original grant proposals were consolidated and reduced to a total of 24. No technical content was removed, but selected implementing partners have been asked to assume more financial, technical, and managerial responsibility. Along with this shift, the LCIP grantees are increasing their financial reporting to meet requirements developed in conjunction with USAID Finance. With a simultaneous increase in responsibility and financial reporting requirements, these local organizations will be challenged. For that reason, in order to avoid overextending these groups, LCIP will work closely with each organization to provide financial, managerial, and technical capacity building, as well as increased supervision, during grant implementation.

Recognizing that financial management support would be critical from the onset, LCIP's ESR and Finance departments each assigned one member to a team which visited the grant partner offices to work with their financial management staff. The intent was to review existing accounting systems, to identify areas for improvement, and to outline steps required for grant partners to make those improvements. A detailed report of the results of this financial review was included as supporting documentation for each grant proposal submitted to USAID -- which praised these reports, awarding the team an "A+" for their efforts. Additionally, in March, the finance officers for two implementing partners, along with LCIP's finance director, participated in a workshop hosted by USAID on financial management, reporting, and auditing. These financial officers, in conjunction with the ESR team, will conduct a financial reporting workshop for all of ESR grant partner finance officers, accountants, directors, and project management staff.

Additionally, the ESR team now includes an orientation workshop and training of each grantee staff in each grant. The ESR technical team will participate actively in these workshops to verify that all grant partner staff members comprehend the project objectives and detailed implementation strategy.

In March, 12 grant proposals were submitted to USAID for approval, including the following:

1. POTUS furniture
2. 2009 "Made in Liberia" trade fair
3. Rehabilitation of Artisans/ Apprenticeship Program: microenterprise and workforce development in Liberia's northwest region
4. Rehabilitation of Artisans/ Apprenticeship Program: microenterprise and workforce development in Liberia's southeast region
5. Intern program
6. Inland fish farming
7. Cash food crop: Bong
8. Cash food crop: Grand Gedeh
9. Cash food crop: Monserrado (Todee)
10. Food processing and preservation
11. Business incubator and startup
12. Cottage industry: value added to coconuts

LCIP ASSISTS WITH WOMEN'S COLLOQUIUM

Leveraging LCIP's event planning experience gained after organizing two successful trade fairs, LCIP offered organizational management support to the 5-day International Women's Colloquium that took place in conjunction with the International Women's Day -- March 8th, 2009. The Colloquium organizers utilized part of the approach LCIP used in organizing the previous trade fairs, including bringing fair exhibitors to a central location to receive business development, technical, and other relevant workshops prior to the fair. The event was well received and enjoyed by both Liberian and international participants.

In addition to providing organizational support, LCIP hosted a booth, at which many "Made in Liberia" products were displayed and sold, including coffee, cocoa powder, tea, honey, rice, cassava, and other processed and preserved foods. The packaging of LCIP products allowed international visitors to purchase products that they could reasonably and safely fit in a suitcase. The 2008 "Made in Liberia" business directory which lists over 200 businesses and farming associations from over 30 trade sectors was disseminated. In addition to LCIP's booth, 12 LCIP supported businesses hosted individual booths to promote their enterprises, including country cloth weavers, beekeepers, tea producers, cobblers, tailors, wood carvers, rattan furniture producers, and restaurants.

UPDATE ON POTUS FURNITURE

LCIP's 29 carpentry shops in 7 counties adhered to their production schedules and, during this quarter, 95% of the furniture production was completed -- employing over 180 carpenters in the process. The remaining balance of 5% was delayed, however, as a result of the bottleneck created by challenging delivery of the furniture; smaller carpentry shops have limited storage, and their production became subject to available space. LCIP requested that the carpentry shops prioritize safe furniture storage, and a temporary halt in production was authorized until the stored furniture could be retrieved. A request to UNMIL for logistical support was not approved, and as a result LCIP requested that USAID authorize use of grant funding to outsource the transport. Upon receiving approval, a transport company was selected through a competitive bidding process, and delivery is expected to begin in April and be completed by mid-June.

GENDER ASSESSMENT

In February, Marcia Greenberg, a short-term technical expert, conducted a 2 week gender assessment of the LCIP project. The objectives of the assessment were two-fold: (1) to **identify "lessons learned"** from LCIP that would enable DAI and USAID to incorporate attention to gender more effectively in future projects, and (2) to **build local capacity** among the LCIP staff and partners for gender analysis so that they might apply their understanding to future work in Liberia.

The assessment had four main tasks: (1) Consult with program staff to understand LCIP's work and their perspectives, (2) Review program documents, (3) Visit the field (Bong County with Cynthia Mahoney and Macon Tubman; and Gbarnga, Ganta and Todee Road with Jetty Carter and Philip Zoryu) and (4) Deliver two gender workshops (one for all LCIP staff and ESR partners, and the other particularly for infrastructure staff and partners).

At the end of the assessment, Marcia Greenberg submitted a final report with her findings. LCIP is currently reviewing this document.

DATA QUALITY

The following is a brief narrative about how the project's performance information has been gathered, how indicators have been monitored, and any field visits and spot-checks efforts that were made.

As part of the function of the M&E Unit, among others, information was gathered and reported, including the key performance indicators. The information gathering process is two fold:

1. Information gathered directly by the LCIP M&E Unit through random site visits, as a result of questionable data reported directly by the implementing partners, analysis of performance indicator data trends which require further verification, and/or at the request of LCIP II Senior Management or by other project stakeholders; and
2. Information gathered and reported directly by the project's partners (Liberian NGO grantees) and subcontractors (for-profit construction companies).

The M&E Unit gathers performance information during field visits, spot checks and from reports received from partners and subcontractors. Partners and subcontractors are requested to report information collected on indicators during their monthly milestone and final reports. The information reported is then verified during the M&E unit's field visits and spot checks to authenticate the reported data from these secondary sources.

Field visits and spot checks are done as regularly as possible depending on the number of activities being implemented in relevant communities or counties. Field visits are conducted at least twice a month (at most three times per month) to validate information provided by partners and subcontractors. If the field visit or spot checks reveals that information provided by any of the partners or subcontractors is inaccurate or questionable, it is not utilized until further authenticated, after which it is either included in the final report or rejected. In the event the information provided directly from the Implementing Partners or sub-contractors through milestone reporting is inconsistent, inaccurate, or not understood, a "validation visit" is conducted prior to inclusion in any report.

Ongoing communications with partners and subcontractors is maintained via phone calls to collect information and to also do preliminary verification on information received. However, information received from partners and subcontractors through phone calls is considered preliminary until it is verified or authenticated by documentary evidence, field visits, and/or spot checks.

For the period under review, the Monitoring and Evaluation Team completed the uploading of information collected from the communities into the LCIP TAMIS for the economic baseline survey. Also during this period, the team reviewed and screened eleven grants and three subcontracts for potential environmental impacts in compliance with the amended Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) recommendations. The grants and subcontracts were screened using an environmental review form and checklist adapted from the Environmental Capacity Building Program (USAID Africa Bureau) Environmental Guidelines for Small-scale Activities in Africa.

Below is a list of grants visited during this quarter:

No.	Grant Name	Grant/ Sub-contractor #	Grantee/Sub-contractor	Location	Date of Field Visit
Grants					
1.	Cottage Industry Development:(Food Processing & Preservation)	MPA024/C/03	COSDO	Bong, Lofa, Grand Bassa & Cape Mount	March 4, 2009
2.	Cottage Industry Development: Processing Coconut	MPA024/C/01	CSET	Sinoe, Rivercess & G. Bassa	March 5, 2009
3.	Cash Food Crop: Bong Mines	MPA025/C/06	ODAFARA	Bong	March 6, 2009
4.	Cash Food Crop: Todee	MPA025/C/04	TECURD	Montserrado	March 6, 2009
5.	Rural Artisan/Apprenticeship Program	MPA024/C/06	ODAFARA	Montserrado, Bomi, G. Cape Mount & Gbarpolo	March 6, 2009
6.	Rural Artisan/Apprenticeship Program	MPA024/C/07	ECREP	Sinoe, G. Gedeh & River Gee	March 6, 2009
7.	Workforce Development Internship	MPA024/C/02	ME	Montserrado, Bong,Bomi,Mar gibi,Cape Mount & G. Bassa	March 6, 2009
8.	Small Business Incubator	MPA024/C/04	RCG	Montserrado, Bong, Lofa, Nimba & G. Bassa	March 12, 2009

9.	Inland Fish Farming	MPA025/C/07	Faimba Fishery Development Cooperative (FFDC)	Bong & G. Gedeh	March 13, 2009
10.	Trade Fair	MPA024/C/05	ODAFARA	G. Cape Mount	March 17, 2008
11.	Cash Food Crop: Gwein Town	MPA025/C/01	PNO	G. Gedeh	March 18, 2009
Sub-contracts					
1.	Rehabilitation/Renovation of TNIMA	MPA019/A/01	SEACON	Montserrado	February 4, 2009
2.	Sanquin Bridge Rehabilitation	MPA007/A/01	LCIP	Sinoe	March 5, 2009
3.	Design & Build National Election Commission Building	MPA020/A/01	LRDC	Montserrado	March 9, 2009

In addition, the team conducted several site visits to the Tubman National Institute of Medical Arts (TNIMA) Rehabilitation Project in Sinkor, the J.F.K. Compound and the Todee Road Rehabilitation Project to conduct an assessment of the projects from the M&E and environmental perspective. The purpose of the assessments was to gather some firsthand information on the project, enlighten contractors to act in accordance with the environmental guidelines of Liberia, educate communities about the restoration of borrowed pits, and to conduct spot checks as a way to verify workforce data reported from these sites. The team also emphasized the role of M & E in achieving LCIP project objectives, the importance of data quality and the timely reporting of employment data.

ECONOMIC BASELINE SURVEY

Informal economic baseline surveys are conducted by the M&E Unit as part of our routine tasks to gather anecdotal data in communities in which LCIP is currently working. The survey is to be carried out in two phases:

1. An initial survey is conducted in targeted communities in order to establish a baseline from which to measure impact
2. A follow up survey, in the same communities, is then conducted to document any changes that occur in the intervening time

The information gathered focuses on the following areas:

- Village infrastructure – roads, schools, health centers, commercial establishments and water sources
- Financial Access – loans and savings institutions, access to credit, interest rates
- Modes of income – main sources of income, reliance and importance of particular income generating activities (particularly, importance of agricultural produce)
- Social needs of the community – *top* priorities for the community.

During the initial phase of the informal survey, the LCIP M&E unit, accompanied by other LCIP staff, visited several communities in Bong, Lofa, Sinoe, and Grand Gedeh Counties. The number of communities to be visited was determined based on the level of ongoing activities in each county. To date, the team has conducted initial surveys in:

- Bong-8 communities,
- Grand Gedeh-4 communities,
- Lofa-7 communities,
- Margibi-1 community,
- Nimba-21 communities.

The M&E team has successfully concluded conducting the initial phase of the survey in the outstanding communities. Information from the survey has been loaded in the LCIP TAMIS, (which is the DAI information system and database used to store and report grant information).. The team plans to complete the follow up surveys by December 2009.

In analyzing the data, it was found that the majority of communities had very similar responses on all four areas that the survey addressed. The data was able to provide valuable insight into the resources available in and around the communities.

Village Infrastructure

Community members were asked to report on the infrastructure available within their surroundings and to rank their condition.

- The majority of communities had one major road passing through or near their villages. The majority of roads were in need of major repairs but still functional. A few areas, however, reported that parts of their main roads were partially damaged and unusable.

- Each community surveyed had at least one school operating in the area. The majority of schools were partially equipped but in need of more teaching materials and supplies such as desks, chairs, books and chalk.
- Health centers within walking distance were rare. The few that did report having a health center within walking distance stated that the facilities were lacking adequate supplies to meet the community needs.
- The main access to water was through open wells or wells with hand pumps. While a large proportion of the areas surveyed reported that the majority of the water sources were fully functional, there were still a significant number of communities reporting that half or less of the water infrastructure set-up was functional.

Finding: It seems that community infrastructure in mostly rural areas continues to either deteriorate or remains barely functioning, suggesting that increased resources are needed to upgrade community infrastructure to support the economic recovery of a majority of Liberians.

Financial Access

- Susu collectors and Susu savings clubs/credit associations were the main means used by community members for savings and loans. Each community reported using susu collectors, while 98% of the areas surveyed reported having an active Susu savings club/credit association.
- Susu collectors are individuals who collect money on a daily basis from community members to hold for a predetermined period of time, usually a month. At the end of that time period, contributors come and collect their funds for a fee ranging between 15-30%. Susu collectors are used as a savings mechanism, no loans are provided through this service.
- Susu savings clubs/credit associations are formal organizations comprising of a group of individuals and are registered with the government. Members contribute a certain amount each month. From the funds collected, loans are disbursed with interest ranging between 20 – 35%. Members receive discounted loans compared to non-members. The typical loan period is between 30 – 90 days. At the end of the year, members collect their dividends from the interest earned from their contribution.

Finding: Basic financial services – both loans and savings – are available in the rural and peri-urban areas surveyed, which was not the case during war time. This is a good indicator of a recovering economy.

Modes of Income

- The community members were asked to rank their top three sources of income. For almost every community, the top source of income was Agricultural production. Seasonal labor, during the harvesting period, and trade were ranked as the second and third most important form of income generation.
- Cassava, bananas and palm oil seemed to be the staple harvested crops in all the communities. Rubber, cocoa, coffee and rice were other popular agricultural goods grown, but these varied depending on the region surveyed. For example, communities in Lofa County reported more cocoa and coffee production, while Nimba County produced more rubber.
- Other industries mentioned as major sources of income were carpentry, tailoring and mechanical repair shops. Each community has at least one of each shop operating in the area. Tailoring and carpentry shops were the more common.

- Most of the communities surveyed reported high levels of underemployment. The communities relied mainly on agriculture as their mode of employment, however, these industries are not developed enough to accommodate large labor forces.

Finding: Agriculture and small trade industries, such as carpentry and tailoring, were the main sources of income for community members. Supporting the development of these industries would aid in alleviating unemployment and increase income generation.

Community Social Needs

Survey participants were asked to rank the top 3 critical needs for their community. Responses ranged from schools to clinics to market halls and pit latrines. The overwhelming majority, approximately 90% reported an increase in the capacity of the schools, road repairs, clinics and access to safe water supplies as the most critical.

Overall, the informal LCIP II survey suggests that agricultural support and more community infrastructure projects would be greatly beneficial in improving the economic conditions within these areas. The LCIP Phase II Work Plan will be complementary in helping to achieve these objectives. The economic and social reintegration projects, such as the cash food crop grants, will aid in building capacity amongst the agricultural farmers to enhance their crop production. This coupled with the infrastructure projects, such as the feeder roads, will help in facilitating better access between communities to help promote greater freedom of movement which will promote agricultural trade and labor movements.