

Brief Report on Meeting held with the Technical Team of the Delegation of the EU
Mamba Point, Monrovia Liberia
9:30 am, 11th September 2017

A scheduled meeting was held on the 11th September 2017 at 9:30 am with **the Technical Team at the office of the Delegation of the EU**, Mamba Point Monrovia Liberia. The meeting was requested by the National Technical Coordinator of the West Africa Quality System Program-Liberia for the purpose of following up with the Eleventh European Development Fund (11th EDF) program activities in Liberia. The EU technical team was represented by Pia Buller, Attaché, international aid and cooperation officer (economics and trade) and Hubert BLOM (consultant on the 11th EDF). The West Africa Quality System Program (WAQSP) was represented by the National Focus Person, Mr. Sam Monger, Industrial Advisor at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Mr. Stephen Y. Mambu, National Technical Coordinator, WAQSP.

At the inception of the discussion, Mr. Stephen Mambu gave a brief background of the WAQSP and activities implemented at the national level. He also spelt out some significant achievements of the WAQSP including the drafting and validation of the National Quality Policy, Standard Act creating of the national standard board (Liberia Standard Authority) and the National Food Act creating of the national food authority. The NTC reported on the recent assessment of the EU evaluation of the WAQSP conducted at the national level. He noted that responses of beneficiaries of the WAQSP were overwhelming while most of the stakeholders recommended to the WAQSP for more capacity building opportunities in the management systems. He acquainted the meeting with current steps taken by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in addressing standardization by the establishment of four (4) national technical harmonization committees for the purpose of standards adoption. The NTC also elaborated on the re-activation of the National Codex Committee in other to support the food safety regime of Liberia. Mr. Mambu linked these efforts to indicators showing growing commitment by Liberia in building a vibrant quality infrastructural and food safety regime.

During the meeting the EU technical team also raised concerns over specific roles and needed more clarity on responsibilities of competent authorities of government agencies assigned in the areas of quality and food safety, optimal use of donors resources as there are still evidence of duplications of projects/programs, effective coordinating and collaborating by stakeholders, and the enhancement of roles of the private sector in the framework of quality and food safety.

On the 11th EDF, Mr. Mambu made inquiry on the status of implementation of the 11th EDF. He noted that the major concern was that quality infrastructure services, which are key to value chain processes, be incorporated into the components of the program. He said that the national quality policy has an implementation matrix with activities that are essential to the entire process of value chain, especially in agriculture sector. He concluded that it is the keen interest of the WAQSP-Liberia stakeholders to see how this could form part of the 11th EDF implementation.

Mr. BLOM Hubert, in response, noted the concern and informed the meeting that currently the project is awaiting approval within two months period. However, he emphasized that it is only a component that will be implemented for now (cocoa). He confirmed that once the program receives the approval subsequent engagement would follow with the implementing partners and there and then issue of the QI activities as outlined in the national quality policy would be further considered.

The EU technical team further suggested a follow up meeting of an engagement session with development partners in which the national quality policy implementation matrix and other issues on quality and food safety could be presented. The team stressed that it was important that interest and support be generated from amongst the development partners for the implementation of some of the activities. At the close of this meeting both sides agreed to work together in organizing the engagement.