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LRA/PR-005/18-19

EU Technical Support Boosts Revenue Collection

As LRA Applauds Departing Ecorys Team



From left-right: LRA Commissioner of Customs Mr Saa Saamoi; Oliver Rogers Deputy Commissioner General for Administrative Affairs, LRA; Mr Peter Bennett, Ecorys Team Leader; Mrs Decontee King-Sackie, LRA Deputy Commissioner General for Technical Affairs a

(Monrovia, August 8, 2018): The Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) has hugely commended Ecorys for its outstanding technical support to the Authority over the years.

Ecorys is a leading European research and consultancy that was hired by the European Union (EU) to strengthen and support the development of LRA customs operations.

The support which was directed to the Customs Department of the LRA helped grow domestic revenue by over one million dollars and covered the training and capacity building of over 300 staffs of the Authority in specialized skills development in customs operations.

“Today, the LRA is very excited for this milestone accomplishment which has substantially improved our mode of doing business, standardized our procedures with the overarching goal of improving Trade Facilitation a major priority of the Government of Liberia,” LRA Officer-In-Charge and Acting Commissioner Decontee T. King-Sackie said recently at the close of the program.

As a result of these accomplishments, the Customs Department has maintained revenue targets despite the decline in international trade, she noted, adding, “We would like to thank ECROYS Project Team and Customs Department for being committed to ensure that the project was fully delivered.”



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The Acting CG thanked the EU for its continued support and the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning through the National Authorizing Office.

LRA Commissioner of Customs Saa Saamoi, whose department directly benefitted from the project, praised the Ecorys team for the massive assistance in boosting the LRA technical capacity and for enhancing the Authority's transformation and modernization agenda.

"We are very grateful to the project team of Ecorys, who have helped our Customs administration over the last two years to identify elements of fraud in Customs and weaknesses in the existing legislations which have the potential to undermine the authority of Customs to collect the needed revenue and manage our borders with the required efficiency," Commissioner Saamoi noted at a recent gathering in Monrovia.

He reported that a very strong working relationship was established with the project team, which often brought about a common view and approach in tackling existing problems in Customs.

Commissioner Saamoi made the statement on Monday, July 24, 2018 during the presentation of results of the operational phase of the EU-funded two-and-a-half-year 'Long Term Technical Assistance to the LRA Customs Department.

The presentation event also marked the end of the project and brought together representatives of project implementer Ecorys, the European Union, the LRA, government entities, development partners and the private sector among others.

In its final presentation, the Ecorys project team demonstrated that the project was successful as the three vital expected results were achieved with more than one hundred outputs delivered under the three components.

The report highlights that the project had a significant impact across component one which directed Support to the LRA Headquarters, while component two provided Support to the Compliance and Enforcement Division. This included enhancing management capacity through training and capacity building, and establishing and building the capacity of a Customs Modernization Unit.

The project also developed and implemented an intelligence function to support risk assessment, Post Clearance Audit and anti-smuggling operations, and trained a total of 349 LRA staffs. Under Component three, support to the urban and rural ports, the project laid the foundations for a Centre of Excellence, created a Central Assessment Unit, and provided extensive training for its staffs.

Ecorys Team Leader Peter Bennett said, "This message of overall progress is reflected in the revenue collection figures, which through the life of the project grew by one million per year – highly impressive in a context where other global trade has decreased," he pointed out.

He thanked former LRA Commissioner General Elfrieda Stewart Tamba and Customs Commissioner Saa Saamoi for providing excellent support throughout the project period.



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For his part, European Union Head of Section and Acting Head of Cooperation Ioannis Tzartzas described the EU's contribution as a pleasing accomplishment.

"The European Union contributed more than two million dollars to support Customs, because we believe in the importance of domestic revenue mobilization and first results show that the project has helped generate much-needed revenue for the Government of Liberia," the EU senior official said.

Tzartzas said more efficient customs procedures such as the Central Assessment Unit makes it easier for Liberian and international businesses to trade in the years to come, urging the 349 Liberians who were mentored and trained by the consultants to put what they have learned into daily practice now that the experts are leaving Liberia.