

Background

According to the operations manual of the Universal Access Fund, a location must satisfy a number of criteria before it can qualify under UAF. The location must be “underserved” or “unserved” to be considered for selection. Other criteria include but not limited to population density, economic activities, education, healthcare amongst others.

Having signed a service contract with KNET Liberia Inc. for the implementation of the Liberia Rural Telephony Project(LRTP), the Project Implementation Unit(PIU) of the UAF is responsible to set out and identify possible locations for the hosting of the rural sites (base stations) and provide the same for the vendor. Part of the responsibilities is to also negotiate the acquisition of the land on which the towers would be constructed.

The Project Implementation Unit(PIU) formulated a team with a mandate to visit four out of 6 counties; Bomi, Bong, Grand Bassa and Nimba. The remaining two counties, Maryland and Grand Kru will be assess when the road condition improves as we move into the dry season.

The team left Monrovia to the fields on December 2, 2021 and concluded field duties on December 12, 2021.

Purpose

The purpose of the assessment was to identify and select locations for possibility of hosting the rural telephony sites in the 4 counties based on the standards set forth by the operations manual of the Universal Access Fund.

Composition of the Assessment Team

The team set out to carry out such duties included the following personnel

No.	Name	Designation	Institution
1	Elijah G. Glay	UAF Coordinator	LTA
2	James Lynch Monbo	Project Coordinator	PIU
3	Mai L. Dakinah	M&E Officer	PIU
4	Michaeline Kollie	Admin. Assistant	PIU
5	Aaron F. Willie	Chauffeur/Driver	PIU

Bomi County

Bomi County is a county in the western cluster and about 2 hours away from Monrovia. The team set out for Suehn Mecca District and assess a couple of towns and villages. A couple of town stood out relative the criteria set forth in the operations manual. Of the UAF and key amongst them are **Cooper Town** and **Mecca**.

Cooper Town is an unserved location with an estimated population of about 1800 inhabitants. It has the only senior high school in the District. The referral hospital in the region is within 1-mile distance from Cooper Town. The biggest general is also within 2-mile radius of Cooper Town. The District Superintendent Office is also situated in Cooper Town. In terms of security coordination, the security checkpoint in the region is within 2-mile radius from Cooper Town.

There are several economic activities but the key economic activities of Cooper Town are farming and general merchandise.

The coordinates of Cooper Town are as follows: latitude **06°38'42.03" N** and longitude **10°41'38.25" W**. There are several satellite towns located in proximity to Cooper Town.

It must be stated that Mecca (which was also considered in our selection process) also has a great profile for the hosting of the rural telephony site but in comparison to Cooper Town, it falls short of the standards set forth in the Operations Manual of the Universal Access Fund(UAF). For example, Mecca also has a clinic and school but a smaller clinic and an elementary school. The team also discovered that there are spots in Mecca from which one can place telephone calls or send text messages.

Bong County

Grand Bassa County

On December 7, 2021, the team arrived in Grand Bassa County, One of the 5 big counties in terms of population and land space. According to the 2008 national population and housing censor

Nimba County

Recommendations

Challenges

Appendix (Pictures)