



**Access to Broadband Connectivity in Liberia
in the Post Ebola context:
A Roundtable with Public and Private Sector Stakeholders**

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NETHOPE

Roundtable Objectives

- To convene under the auspices of the GoL (MoPT and LTA), a half day workshop of public and private sector stakeholders related to connectivity in the post-Ebola context
- To present key findings from the review of the impact of Ebola on the national digital infrastructure and associated services
- To support the policy framework to ensure improved affordability and access to broadband infrastructure and related services to all citizens
- To identify the short term network investments to improve network performance and services, and to build the attractiveness of inward direct foreign investment in the sector
- Consensus for action, policy commitment, co-investment in shared infrastructure

Anticipated Outcomes

- Raised awareness of NetHope network assessment and the Partnership for Digital West Africa (PDWA);
- Increased political will and consensus around a common investment plan and harmonized approach;
- A shift in policy stance toward people-focused connectivity based on shared public good investments, affordability and accessibility; and
- The development of an action plan with concrete commitments/ agenda.

Agenda

- 08:30 - 09:00 Opening Remarks
- 09:00 - 09:15 Country Overview
- 09:15 - 09:30 Impact of Ebola on Digital Infrastructure -
- 09:30 - 09:50 Global Overview of Trends Toward Expanded Access
- 09:50 - 10:00 Tea Break (working)
- 10:00 - 10:30 Scenario Planning
- 10:30 - 11:30 Sectoral Analysis/Breakout Sessions
- 11:30 - 12:30 Report Back
- 12:30 - 13:30 Lunch & Event Conclusion

Breakout Groups

Participants formed four groups and developed positions on four topics:

- Policy alignment required to ensure a conducive policy environment for broadband development in Liberia;
- The development of e-Government and shared services in Liberia;
- Last mile connectivity in Liberia and how it might be improved; and
- Digital backbone Infrastructure and how this might be developed

Recommendations: Affordability and Consultation

- MoPT), LTA and and stakeholders will strive to affordably connect all our citizens.
- Multi-stakeholder consultations like the Roundtable to be held regularly



Recommendations: National Backbone

- The development of plan to stimulates strong public/private sector collaboration to build out the national backbone to better utilize ACE
- Undertake feasibility study for the development of the backbone. This study should resolve continued ambiguity concerning the development and management of the Libtelco backbone.
- Libtelco backbone and any other backbone infrastructure developed through PPP to be managed with Open Access Framework

Recommendations: Last Mile

- In Liberia the last mile solutions that are used must be context-specific and the last mile should be defined as the final stage in the delivery of broadband services to the user.
- Opportunities to use the full range of wireless technologies, including licensed, unlicensed and dynamic spectrum technologies must be seized. In some cases, even Fibre To The Home/Neighbourhood may be appropriate in some urban environments like Monrovia.
- Measures must be taken to reduce the capital investment and time needed to roll out fixed and wireless last mile solutions. The benefits of using these measures must be assessed, and where feasible, undertaken in the shortest possible time.

Recommendations: Last Mile

- GoL must incentivize infrastructure sharing and where these incentives do not work, the GoL should have the option to use other measures to increase sharing.
- The GoL, national and international private sector stakeholders must do their utmost to develop PPPs, without crowding out private sector investment.

Recommendations: E-Governance

- Actions must be taken to stimulate the development of, and demand for, commercial services such as mobile money and e-Government services, which have the potential to create benefits for government and citizens by, amongst other things, saving time and financial resources.
- The GoL, in collaboration with stakeholders from the private, civil society and the international community, should build upon efforts such MoPT's to mainstream e-government services so that, where feasible, each Ministry is able to provide interactive services that are beneficial to citizens.

Recommendations: E-Governance

- Stimulating demand for e-Government services is important, but low levels of ICT Literacy pose a significant challenge. GOL must develop a holistic communication strategy that uses a range of media - Internet, radio, television, and print - to educate citizens about the benefits of using such services and how to use the services.
- Public institutions, most notably schools, should be given the necessary resources to become centers of learning in efforts to train citizens on how to use services and improve ICT Literacy. Liberia's Universal Service/Access Fund (UAF) should be used to support this effort.

Recommendations: Policy Alignment

- MoPT must develop a new National ICT policy that prioritises broadband.
- The new ICT policy must be developed through deep stakeholder consultation.
- MoPT must develop a comprehensive Broadband Plan with time-bound targets.
- The new National ICT Policy and the new Broadband Plan must reflect the ways in which ICTs are used in all stages of emergency response.

Recommendations: Policy Alignment

- A draft PPP strategy has been developed and presented to cabinet and the legislature. GoL must now develop the appropriate legal framework for the development of PPPs.
- GoL and Liberian stakeholders must do their utmost to establish partnerships with the international private sector and development community, including USAID.
- It is imperative that USAID and other international stakeholders make known, through concrete commitments, the support they are prepared to provide to Liberia's effort to increased broadband access and usage.

Thank You!

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