

## MCA-Liberia Hires TATA Power to Strengthen LEC's Technical Capacity



Monrovia – In a bid to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC), the Millennium Challenge Account-Liberia (MCA-L) has hired master trainers from Tata Power to provide on-the-job training to at least 100 technical and non-technical staff of the utility. Tata Power is part of a 150-year-old Tata Group of Companies, which is based in India and operates in more than 100 countries across the Asian and African continents.

Tata Power will also assess staff capacity and develop a medium to long-term master and strategic plan for training and capacity building at LEC. The exercise will indirectly impact 60 percent of LEC's entire workforce, while improving the effectiveness of utility operations.

LEC has still not yet fully recovered from a significant decline in the quality of its human resources caused by the civil war. This nine-month program, along with other interventions by MCA-L, will help place LEC on a path to becoming a well-functioning electric power utility that can provide affordable and reliable electricity to the Liberian people.

Tata Power will directly train LEC's supervisors, engineers, and technicians in core technical areas such as transmission and distribution, generation (hydroelectric and thermal), health, safety, and the environment. Non-technical and soft skills training will cover areas such as customer relationship management, inventory control and logistics management, revenue cycle management, revenue mobilization and revenue protection.

As part of its obligations, Tata Power will supervise the construction of an outdoor training center at the Mt. Coffee Hydro Power Plant that will consist of an electrical network to train linesmen in constructing and maintaining power lines and associated infrastructure.

Tata Power's team lead, Vijay Chourey, said the on-the-job training approach selected by MCA-L is effective for the trainees because it minimizes time away from the job. While there will be limited theoretical training where necessary, he noted that the vast majority of the training would enable LEC staff to gain hands-on, practical experience in a real work setting.

"We bring in more than 100 years of experience in the power sector operations and training," Chourey said about Tata Power's background.

The trainers working with LEC staff are specialists in the power sector, each with over 30 years of experience in generation, transmission, distribution, safety, and training.

Dele Shobayo, MCA-L's technical assistance manager for the Energy Project, says the training will result in tangible benefits to consumers.

"We are expecting the availability and reliability of the network to improve in the long term. Additionally, the training will result in a safer environment for technicians and consumers," he said.

The on-the-job training complements MCA-L's past investments in LEC's physical assets and ensures that LEC will become a more sustainable and viable public utility. Over the past seven months, MCA-L has transferred US\$1.78 million worth of equipment to LEC, including light poles, meters, specialized trucks, and spare parts for thermal generators.

In addition to funding US\$148 million of the total cost of rebuilding the Mount Coffee Hydropower Plant, the compact has also paid for a three-year management services contractor to manage LEC and turn it into a more efficient and profitable company.