



353 370 Evaluation of the EU Visibility in the
World Bank-administered contract 238 644
Liberia Reconstruction Trust Fund (LRTF)
and Recommendations

Final Report
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Evaluation carried out on behalf of the European Commission

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**SERVICE CONTRACT FOR EUROPEAN UNION EXTERNAL ACTIONS
n. 353 370
FINANCED FROM THE EDF**

PROJECT: 21 344 Support to the Liberia Reconstruction Trust Fund (LRTF)

**This evaluation is mandated by
The DELEGATION of the EUROPEAN UNION to LIBERIA**

The opinions expressed in this document represent the views of the author,
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or by the authorities of the countries concerned.

TABLE of CONTENT

1 . Introduction	1
<hr/>	
2 . Preliminary considerations	2
<hr/>	
2.1. The need of visibility	
2.2. The EU's approach to visibility	
2.3. EU visibility achievements in Liberia	
3 . Evaluation of the EU's general visibility in Liberia	4
<hr/>	
3.1. Description of the evaluation process	
3.2. Evaluation of the EU Delegation's internal visibility procedures	
3.3. EU Visibility materials	6
3.4. EU External visibility	8
3.5. EU Online visibility	11
3.6. Online visibility of other Donors operating in Liberia	11
4 . Evaluation of the EU's on-site visibility	12
<hr/>	
4.1. The Red light – Gbarnga – Ganta Highway	
4.1.2. Awareness assessment	
4.2. The Harbel – Buchanan Highway	14
4.2.1. Local Awareness	18
4.3. The EMUS project	20
4.4. Results and Issues	22
4.5. Conclusions/evaluation on the EU visibility perceived under LRTF	23
5 . Proposals for the enhancement of the EU on-site visibility	24
<hr/>	
5.1. Major obstacles to the implementation of an efficient visibility action	
5.2. Creating awareness	
5.3. Indirect visibility	25
5.4. The theme of Road Safety	25
5.5. Display of EU colors	26
5.6. Indirect display of EU's role	27
5.7. The interest in branding projects	28
5.7. The interest in branding projects	28
5.8. Re-branding Liberia	34

6 . Graphic proposals for The BlueWay

6.1.	Proposal for the BlueWay banners	38
6.2.	Proposal for the Road Safety billboards	39
6.3.	Alternative Proposal for Road Safety Totems	44
6.4.	Proposal for Road Safety ‘Across-the-Street’ Banners	46

7 . Way forward

7.1.	Parallel actions	48
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8 . Outcomes

8.1.	Result of the “BlueWay” branding strategy	50
8.2.	The Inauguration Day	51
8.3.	The Media Response	52
8.4.	Online Response	53
8.5.	Follow-up	53

9 . The Seminar

9.1.	Lessons Learnt	57
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10. General Proposals for the enhancement of the EU visibility in Liberia

10.1.	Proposal for Delegation-generated Visibility Actions	58
10.2.	Adopting a Tone	59
10.3.	Adapting the Promotional Items	60
10.4.	Boosting online visibility	62
10.5.	Adapting the Official Logo	63

11 . Conclusions

12 . List of Acronyms

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This consultancy was done to learn lessons for future EU visibility actions in Liberia.

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the EU's visibility relatively to the support it provides within the Liberia Reconstruction Trust Fund (LRTF), and recommendations on how to improve such visibility.

Methodology

The evaluation was conducted by examining the Delegation's internal visibility procedures, by interviews with the staff, stakeholders, Government officials and beneficiaries, by field visits and local media analysis.

The recommendations relate to both the general perception of the EU in Liberia and its specific role within the LRTF.

1. Introduction

1.1. This document describes the nature of the consultancy in terms of services required, methodology applied by the consultant, final proposals and outputs requested by the contract.

1.2. The consultancy is concerned with the visibility of the EU relatively to its support to the Liberia Reconstruction Trust Fund (LRTF) signed with the World Bank in September 2010. The need of the consultancy stems from the perception that the visibility of the EU funding under this contract (EUR 60.2 million) is low; the consultancy should determine whether anything can be done to improve the EU visibility in the future.

1.3. The specific objective of this contract is to evaluate in detail the visibility results and perceptions in terms of visibility of the EU in these flagship projects, and to propose recommendations on how to improve the impact in terms of EU visibility actions in ways that are contextualized for the Liberian scenario.

1.4. The services provided are divided into two parts: Evaluation and Recommendations. The evaluation of the visibility procedures and achievements of the Delegation in its normal activities as well as the evaluation of the visibility achievements of the projects, which was conducted by assessing their effectiveness by means of field visits and interviews with selected informants.

The recommendations describe which visibility actions/instruments would be more appropriate to enhance the visibility of the present projects with a view to similar projects in Liberia, as well as the visibility of the Delegation's work in general.

1.5. Besides this concise report on the visibility results of the LRTF, this consultancy provides recommendations on how the visibility of the EU can be improved in Liberia and describes 4 main actions specifically designed as a support of the visibility of the ongoing LRTF project. It also provides suggestions aimed at improving the general perception of the EU in Liberia.

2 . Preliminary considerations

2.1. The need of visibility

The primary function of visibility within the provision of aid, as is the case of the EU funding of the LRTF, is to ensure transparency; the Liberian people have a right to know where their assistance is coming from as well as the European taxpayers have a right to know where their Euros are going.

2.2. The EU's approach to visibility

The "Communication and Visibility Manual" for EU external actions has been designed to ensure that actions that are wholly or partially funded by the European Union (EU) incorporate information and communication activities designed to raise the awareness about the EU support for the action in the country or region concerned, as well as the results and the impact of this support.

The manual mainly covers the written and visual identity of the EU. It sets out requirements on how to highlight EU participation and how to implement the compulsory requirements for all contractors and implementing partners under contracts and financing agreements.

Contractors, implementing partners and international organizations are indeed required to develop a communication and visibility plan that will highlight in a dynamic way the impact of the EU support.

The guidelines are not a legal instrument but are meant to offer tools designed to enable the development of a dynamic communication strategy and to provide concrete advice to assist the Delegations in selecting the type of visibility activity best suited to specific actions and contexts. The guidelines also include information concerning the correct use of the EU logo and identity.

2.3. EU visibility achievements in Liberia

Upon field observations and interviews with Liberians, the results obtained - in terms of EU general visibility - are contrasting: on the one hand, the EU's presence is visible in the form of the EU flag being correctly positioned upon project signboards or donated materials (vehicles, buildings, infrastructures); on the other hand, the average Liberian citizen seems unable to associate the symbol with the institution. More dramatically, the very nature of the EU is ignored, and very often confused with other aid donors.

The following section describes in detail such findings.



3 . Evaluation of the EU's general visibility in Liberia

3.1. Description of the evaluation process

The evaluation was performed on three levels.

The first was concerned with the assessment of the internal procedures of the Delegation to Liberia by performing a concise examination of the Press and Communication practices, the availability of visibility supports (branded items and allocated budget) and the online visibility. The second was concerned with the assessment of the external instances of the EU visibility, both static and dynamic; this examination was performed mainly in the Capital City of Monrovia, where – because of the presence of the headquarters of most of the other aid donors and charity organizations – a comparative assessment was possible.

The third was concerned with the assessment of the EU visibility on the LRTF projects.

3.2. Evaluation of the EU Delegation's internal visibility procedures

Several meetings with the the Delegation's Press Officer were held in Monrovia, with the following achievements:

- analysis of press releases produced in the last year
- analysis of press clippings collected in the last year (Liberian weekly media review)
- analysis of visibility materials available in the Delegation
- analysis of internal procedures related to dissemination of information
- assessment of additional visibility instances

Activities carried out by the joint actions of the Delegation's Press Office and the Political Section correspond with the general expectations:

Press releases conform to the expected standards, by providing timely, concise and clear information concerning EU statements on both the advancement of programs carried out in the country and the EU's longer-term advocacy goals at large.

The topics (up to the date of the assessment) concern:

Crimes against journalists – Forestry (PUPs) – Sustainable Fisheries Partnership - Death Penalty – 2017 Elections Sensitization – Liberia MDG efforts (praise) – Feed Yourself (Roads) – City Mayors Visits (Women's role) – EU, UNDP, GoL Agreement (elections) – Microfinance (UPANI) – Cassava Center (Praised by EJS) – Strengthening Urban Agriculture – Sanitation & Hygiene (TigerWorm Wcs) – Fight Ebola (450 M. €) - Ebola Recovery Conference (BXL, 3/3/15) – State-building Contract (29 M.) - WTO Accession – Support to West Africa (29 M.) - ECOWAS/EU on Small Arms Proliferation (marking machines) – Climate Diplomacy Day – Forest Governance – Safe Drinking Water – Non-lethal support to AFL – EU/GoL dialogues (Schengen Visas) – Investment on Education (WASH/529 schools) – Maintenance of Roads (J. Taylor/NAO) – Cotton Tree/Buchanan Road (2,5 M.) - Europe Day (Ebola Victims Commemoration) – People to People Interaction (EJS) – Action Plan 2015/2020 – Crime against children Prevention (early marriages) – LRTF pictorials (8 M. \$) - Decentralization Program (with UNDP) 10 (EU-branded) cars pictorials

Activities undertaken by the Press Office rely on an updated list of contacts in Liberia (approximately 150), which includes practicing journalists and media houses.

Press reviews are undertaken on a regular and timely basis, the number of media considered being limited to the 5 major newspapers (The NEWS – NEW DEMOCRAT – The ENQUIRER – DAILY OBSERVER – FRONTPAGE Africa) and few specific radio stations on the occasion of direct involvement (such as interviews, mainly with HOD).

The related press clippings are well collected and sent to EEAS headquarters in Brussels on a regular basis (apparently, though, this does not activate consequent actions).

Additional visibility outputs (such as project-related pictures) are limited to spontaneous initiatives by the internal staff, and lack a central coordination as for what concerns the creation of an electronic database conceived for general communication purposes; the Press Office relies on a single consumer-level digital camera while most of the images are generated via smartphone-cameras; no online galleries have been set up. No videos are been made, nor is a videocamera available.

Up to date, no specific program-related web pages have been considered, nor have publications, brochures, leaflets, or information campaigns been planned in the last year.

It is understood that the absence of such activities mainly depends on the lack of an adequate budget, implying the unavailability of professional photographers, videographers, graphic designers or other external communication professionals.

The lack of means to register and disseminate information weakens, on a certain degree, the effectiveness of visibility actions such as press conferences, group visits and field activities in general, which are – nonetheless – undertaken by the Delegation on a regular basis. The delegation has low a budget for visibility (as specified in the internal note quoted below) which is managed through undeniable constraints:

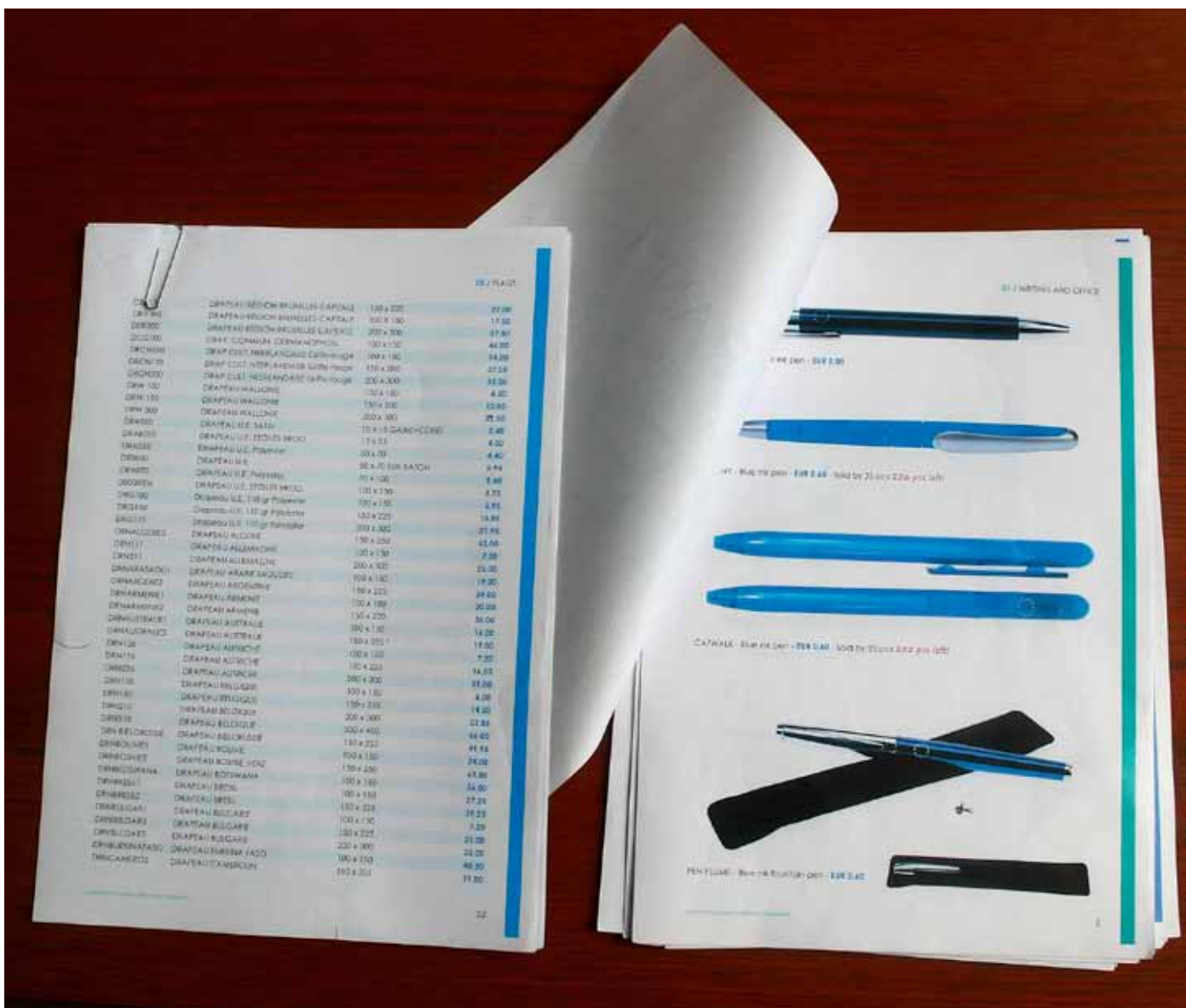
“ The scale of the Press & Information budget (approx. €5000 p.a.) certainly suggests it is intended for smaller activities, rather than big-project linked ones, but the process involved in spending it works against that. Apart from the 10% petty cash, all spending requires the provider to first be registered in ABAC (which means they must have a business registration certificate among other things), then the process of quote, commitment, purchase order, invoice, payment. Even here, our counterparts are only going to be willing to do all that for a certain level of financial return.”

The budget for newspaper ads is merely sufficient to publish announcements concerning job vacancies or tenders for services; there is none for awareness-raising campaigns or visibility enhancement.

3.3. EU Visibility materials

Upon examination, the promotional items available in stock at the political section appear to conform with the general expectations, whereas no specific country-oriented items are available, other than a provision of Liberia-EU pins; such a visibility kit does not seem to have been conceived for the the final beneficiaries of the EU-funded projects, but rather for particular individuals ranging from high-ranked officials in the Government's institutions, agencies and partnering organizations to professionals involved, such as journalists and collaborators.





3.4. EU External visibility

An assessment of additional visibility instances was undertaken by searching signs of the EU around the Capital; two sorts of instances appear: the display of the EU flag/logo on fixed structures and on vehicles.



The first instance is rather disappointing (starting with the main gate of the embassy): none of the structures observed delivers the correct colors of the flag, and often the stars are upside-down (not to mention the poor quality of the execution, generally hand-painted). Almost all appear to be in need of a new layer of paint, as the tropical weather and the proximity of the ocean have seriously compromised what seems to have been made several years ago.



The second Instance appears acceptable, especially if compared to the visibility of other organizations acting in Liberia (including some commercial entities conducting intense operations in Liberia). The observation took place in Monrovia, at the crossroads between Benson Street and Newport Road, from 1:30 to 2:30 PM. of a Monday of November 2015 (of course, the evaluation is incomplete, and biased by the proximity of a certain number of NGO headquarters, whereas others are located elsewhere; nonetheless, some interesting data emerged).

On an indicative number of 500 vehicles (Taxis, trikes, commercial trucks and government cars were not counted) transiting in both directions, 50 bore a visual identification of some sort (a 10% percentage indicates – in itself – a very high rate of ‘noise’, meaning a visual competition among different agencies operating or providing aid in the country).

The detection of the branded vehicles is listed below:

NAO+EU (donated by)	1	USAID	4
Save The Children	2	Médecins Sans Fr.	1
WHO (1 donated by)	4	ESIA	1
Woman’s Program	1	IPFMRP	3
UNDP	3	UNDP (Stop Small Arms)	3
LEC	5	BFS	1
PCI	3	Oxfam	2
RedCross+RedCrescent	1	INKLEF	1
MFDP	1	UN (2 Women’s Campaign)	3
CHICO	2	WB (donated by)	1
German Cooperation	1	Natl. Housing Authority	1
UNCHR	1	Firestone	1
AFL	1	EU (Decentralization Supp.)	1
EduCARE	1		

The EU flag was visible on two separate vehicles (whereas sightings of several of the other logos concerned second passes) thus suggesting that the frequency of appearance is fair, when compared to the trend, and effective.

Other instances of the display of the EU flag have occurred during transfers outside the Capital; most were seen on roadside signboards being erected in the proximity of specific projects such as schools and farms; on the road towards Cape Mount County, in particular, many boards deliver information on the Cassava Market Promotion, a project which was also widely covered by the local media.

3.5. EU Online visibility

Assessment of online visibility was initiated prior to arrival in Liberia, and was undertaken on two main levels: a direct evaluation of the Delegation's activities and a comparative observation of those by other main aid-related organizations operating in Liberia.

The Delegation relies on a standard page within the broader website of EEAS.

<http://eeas.europa.eu/>

http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/liberia/index_en.htm

Overall, the site effectively delivers what is promised on the Welcome page:

“We hope that our newly designed website will make it easy for you to access information about the EU and our relations with Liberia, as well as more general information about the EU, its policies and the activities of its various institutions.

I hope you will find this website informative, interesting and user-friendly.”

Web searches based on the terms EU+Liberia provide the expected result providing links to the official page, followed by links to FLEGT page on Liberia, the news site AllAfrica.com, the Liberian Embassy in Brussels, UNDP, DFID etc.

Similarly, searches based on the terms Liberia+Intelmann provide the expected results, i.e. the related Wikipedia page and the HoD's Facebook page.

The latter successfully adds a human dimension of the EU's activity in Liberia, filling the unavoidable gap that the Delegation's official web page delivers in its institutional form.

3.6. Online visibility of other Donors operating in Liberia

As expected, the majority of other Actors delivering aid in Liberia display online manifestations, the degree of these corresponding to their specific importance: among these, the highest results are WB, WHO, AFDB, HRW, UN, IMF, WFP, IRC, (EEAS), USAID, Mercy Corps, ReliefWeb, Global Witness, Crisis Group, PLAN International, Save the Children...

Not surprisingly, when the terms Liberia+Aid are used, highest results displayed are OECD, Action Aid, USAID, DEVEX, UNAIDS, IrishAid, Christian Aid, AHO, EU, Orphan Aid, Water Aid Concern...

Some other Actors, though physically well visible in Monrovia, do not seem to perform as well in terms of search results: UNMIL, UNCHR, UNICEF, FAO, GIZ, IFRC, MSF, ZOA, NORAD, SIDA, DFID, DRC, China Aid...

The conclusion is that The EU's online results, as far it relates to visibility, is rather satisfying (although project-related mini-sites could certainly enhance the visibility outcome).

4. Evaluation of the EU on-site visibility

Several field visits were conducted on both the road projects, as well as on the sites concerned by the waste-management program, or EMUS.

The purpose was to assess the degree of visibility, specifically related to the role of the EU as the major LRTF donor; the aim was to verify the EU's passive visibility as well as the results of any eventual active action.

4.1. The Red light – Gbarnga – Ganta Road

The visit was conducted within the framework of a routine inspection trip held by the head of IIU, its managing staff and a team of consultants on behalf of the EC; Lot 1 and Lot 2 were visited in December 2015, each visit guided by the team leaders of the respective consulting entities (ICM Worldwide and OPUS) and representatives of the contracting entities.

The works on Lot 2 of the road were not yet terminated, and the shipment of the standard signboards hadn't arrived yet. As for Lot 1, we were informed that most of the signboard which had been placed were stolen by some locals, and had to be re-installed.

On-site EU visibility is limited to the presence of the EU flag on the construction site billboards, at the beginning and at the end of the two Lots. These billboards are essentially informative, delivering project data and defining the roles of those involved (GoL, MPW, contracting entity, consulting firms and donors). The EU is listed among the donors, with no particular emphasis, in the form of its flag (on Lot 2, the wrong one is used: the correct flag – as on the Lot 1 billboards – is the 'moving' version).

The billboards are sufficiently wide and readable (though not from a moving vehicle, for the text is rather small in size), and are correctly placed on the side of the road, though a better placement could have been agreed.

In terms of visibility, these billboards are basic and anonymous, failing to deliver whatsoever emphasis on the importance of the project or the benefits it provides to the beneficiaries. This comes as no surprise, their purpose being a purely formal obligation.

4.1.2. Awareness assessment

The question, that was posed to locals dwelling next to the road, was "are you aware of the origin of the funds that allow the rehabilitation of this road?"

The general answer being "no", some say "the Chinese", followed by "the World Bank".

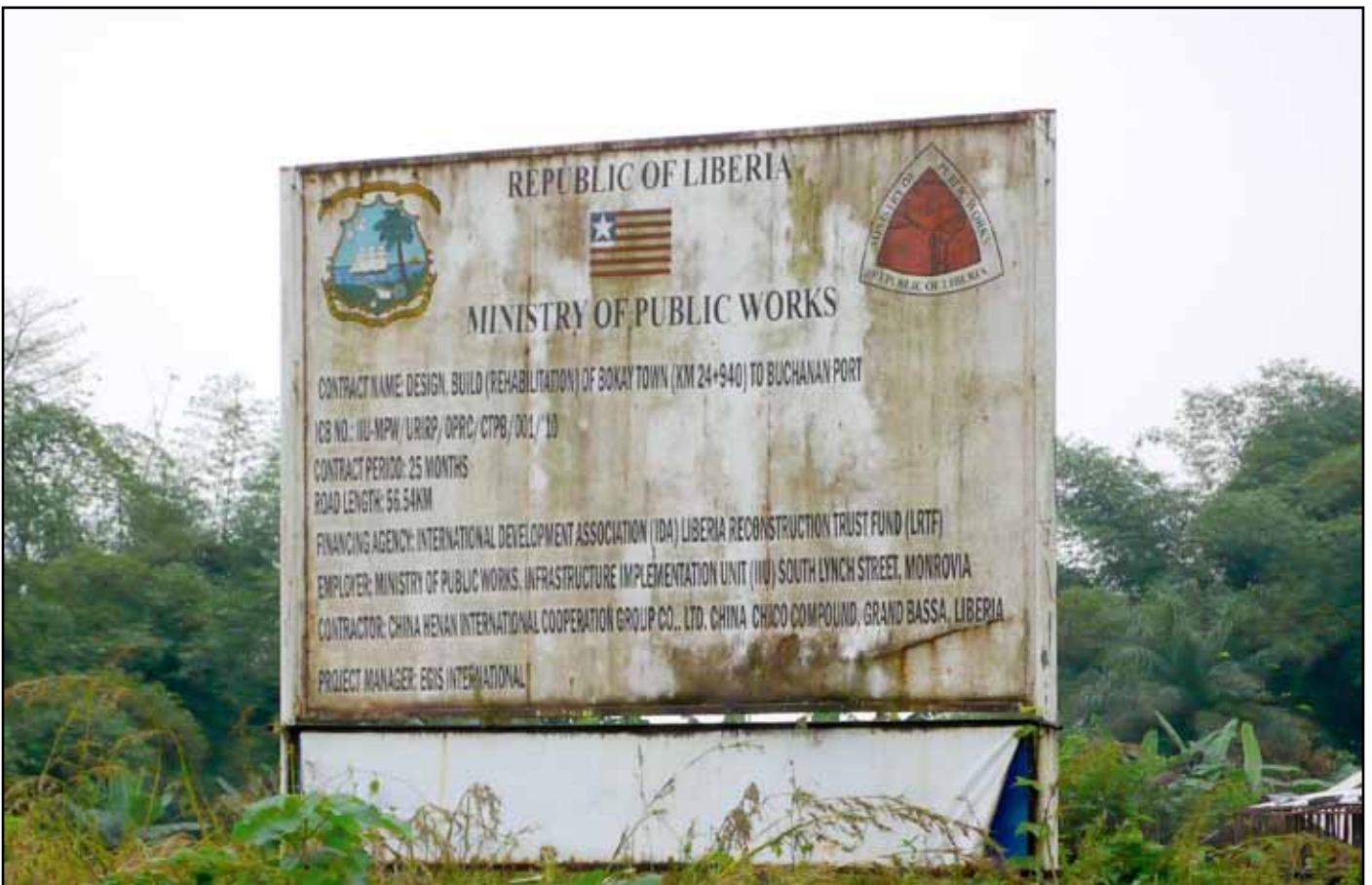
4.2. The Harbel – Buchanan Road

This field-trip was undertaken in December 2015.

Again, the only visibility actions undertaken are the erection of standard construction site billboards bearing project data, with the difference that the EU is not mentioned at all.



Upon investigation, it appears that the EU's role was actually mentioned by means of an extension to the billboards, otherwise described as a white stripe (bearing the EU flag and – supposedly – a related text) added on the bottom of the main panel; the stripe still exists, whereas all graphics have faded to white.





CONTRACTOR : CHICO
CONSULTANT: EGIS INTERNATIONAL
DONOR : IDA & LRTF
DESIGN LOAD : HS20 44
DESIGN SPEC : AASHTO-HB 2002




MECHLIN BRIDGE
CONSTRUCTED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA
DEDICATED BY HER EXCELLENCY ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
ON JUNE 5, 2013
HON. SAMUEL KOFI WOODS, II
MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS
VICTOR B. SMITH EMMANUEL K. BAKER
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR TECHNICAL SERVICES DEPUTY PROGRAM DIRECTOR FOR IUU

CONTRACTOR : CHICO
CONSULTANT: EGIS INTERNATIONAL
DONOR: IDA & LRTF
DESIGN LOAD: HS20 44
DESIGN SPEC: AASHTO-HB 2002



4.2.1. Local Awareness

Despite the fact that the “Buchanan Highway” (as the road is commonly referred-to) has been used since two years, it appears to still be in a very good condition: drivers appreciate the fact that no “potholes” (potholes) have formed, thus having the opportunity to drive with ease also during the rainy season. Eventually, the horizontal midlane paint has faded, while most signboards still stand and are well visible; as on the Red Light-Ganta project, the only remark seems to be the about the curves, which force vehicles to slow down (seemingly, drivers have never been told that long and straight roads lead to a fall in concentration or, worse, to drowsiness); this results in a general opinion of wrongful planning and design, leading to a vague criticism. On several occasions, maintenance teams were seen, in the act of cutting the herbs spreading over the emergency lanes on both sides; the presence of these were signaled (as is commonly done over the country in the absence of adequate props) by laying grassy turfs on the middle line, before and after the operating groups. Because of the absence of any whatsoever means of identification, brief interviews was held at the height of Jamba Camp, particularly with the teachers of the local elementary school, in order to understand the nature of these maintenance teams. They are community-based groups of self-organized citizens whose main purpose is to provide grass-free pedestrian lanes, used by students and general population, by clearing the emergency lanes alongside the road; though such use of the emergency lanes is not actually appropriate, the “sidewalks” are perceived as a safe area to walk upon, avoiding contact with sharp grasses and snakes that it is said, invade the sides of the road.



The interviewees indicate the asian contracting entity and the WB as main donors, followed by a generic "America" (almost always, all caucasians in the country are identified as U.S. Citizens); when asked about which other foreign-funded projects they are aware of, the answers relate to agricultural initiatives, such as palm and sugarcane farming, followed by charcoal production. If asked to recall the means by which such projects were made public, the answers are 'bill-boards' and awareness-raising initiatives:held among communities; in the particular case of teachers being interviewed, considerable importance is given to the role of the P.T.A., or Parent-Teacher Association. P.T.A. has been organizing meetings between Aid donors and communities in order to update and inform about ongoing projects in the area. In the case of the road, no particular event is recalled, not to speak of lectures on road safety issues (considered to be quite important: many settlements lay across the road, but no crosswalks have been seen), supposed to be held by the police.



4.3. The EMUS project

The Emergency Monrovia Urban Sanitation (EMUS) project bears similar problems, when it comes to visibility of the European contribution: despite a solid communication and public awareness campaign has been set in place among communities and schools, the general public ignores whence the funding of the initiative originates from, nor does the documentation produced refer to the EU.

The LRTF Projects clearly appears to be based on a grant managed by the WB, while MCC is recognizable as the actual implementer of the project, with technical assistance by the MPW. The solid waste collection and recycling activities carried out in Monrovia and its environs fail to acknowledge the origin of the funding both at the collection sites and at the landfills, as confirmed by field-visits at both the Fimah Transfer Station (Primary Waste Collection) and the Whein Town Disposal Site undertaken during the month of December 2015.

An action that could be taken in consideration is to provide the waste-collecting teams (in several cases formed by community volunteers) with tools, protective clothing and equipment bearing the EU symbol, as well as placing it on the waste-containers distributed around the town; both instances would represent a strong means of delivering the EU's visibility and underlining its efforts in making the capital city cleaner.





4.4. Results and Issues

It is interesting to see how the same observations are being summarized – and kindly shared – by the EC consultant John Murphy, as quoted below:

“Visibility of the EU is limited. Signboards noted on the LIBRAMP roads display the logos of the contributing donors. Signboards noted on the URIRP roads (and bridge plaque) make mention of LRTF without explaining who the donors are (in any case many of these signs should now be removed). The EMUS project uses the logos of the cooperating donors in all signs and appropriate acknowledgment is given in the project documents, however there is no real visibility at the transfer stations or landfill sites.

*The Financing Conditions make reference that the AA will make provision for the EC’s Communication and Visibility guidelines, however this has not been clearly stated in the AA. There are examples of projects that are co-financed that are required to have a communication and visibility plan, however the LRTF is lacking in this respect. The lesson seems to be that if you want to have real visibility then it has to be planned and budgeted for in the design stage. ---
The general public have little awareness of the source of funds.”*

This situation of deep unawareness among the general population is the reason behind this evaluation, as it is well felt within the Delegation

Such phenomenon also touches some of those directly involved in the project, as testified in a statement by a Monitoring Consultant involved in the environmental issues on the implementation of Lot 2:

“To be honest I did not even know EU was involved in the project till now and I have been on it since the beginning. We have a WB OPRC contract.”

The alarming level of non-cooperation encountered in this World Bank-administered project also emerges clearly where, in relation to a proposal to have the contracting entities cover the placement of road safety-related billboards, he states that

“... the nominated Team Leader for the maintenance phase has made it clear to me that implementation of what is being proposed will require that EU fund not just design but production of the suggested signs.”

The proposals the Environmental consultant refers to will be seen more in detail further on in this report, where the recommendations to improve EU’s visibility on these specific projects are considered; these were presented during meetings on the above-mentioned inspection trip, at two separate meetings. The participants, including IIU head managers, were invited to view and comment on an initial approach to the issue of road safety, which is thought to be a major problem touching both the users of the highways and the residents along its full development. The main issue about the poor visibility of the EU on the projects it funds and supports in Liberia seems to be the consequence of a weak planning of the visibility actions; contractual obligations alone do not seem to produce positive results because of the lack of preliminary agreements: therefore, understandably, contractors limit their efforts to the placement of the EU flag on the generic site-construction billboards, among the logos of other donors and stakeholders, and nothing more.

5. Proposals for the enhancement of the EU on-site visibility

5.1. Major obstacles to the implementation of an efficient visibility action

The first problem, relatively to the projects being studied, is represented by timing: the Buchanan Road (URIRP road) has been completed a couple of years ago, and the EMUS project is in an advanced stage of development; it is unlikely that visibility actions undertaken now may bear any appreciable results, as is the eventuality of the contracting entities being willing to support whatsoever initiative at this stage.

Therefore the recommendations of this consultation shall inevitably refer to the Red Light-Gbarnga-Ganta Road, or future projects.

The Red Light-Gbarnga-Ganta road is next to completion, so the proposals were designed in view of its Inauguration and of the 8-years maintenance period; it is still unclear whether there will be any support by the contracting entities, while it is certain that the EU cannot emerge among the group of donors, as stated in the terms of the partnership and by the WB.

There are two main alternatives that are worth being considered for the enhancement of the EU visibility on this project: one is to adopt a wide-angle approach meant to build awareness and consensus among the beneficiaries and the other is to adopt an indirect visibility strategy.

5.2. Creating awareness

As a general rule, direct involvement of the final beneficiaries appears to be the most appreciated means of communication and dissemination of messages and information: communities are more familiar with this form of direct contact, intended as simple lecturing as well as deeper education. The lack of access to conventional Media – especially in rural areas – makes sensitization campaigns the most effective means of conveying messages, and thus to boost visibility. This is, also, a time-consuming method, which implies the energy of many individuals in terms of planning and execution, not to speak of the economic pressure.

As a matter of fact, large actions such as the rehabilitation of a major road can support the organizing of an information campaign during the lifetime of the action. Such campaigns can raise the visibility of the action and the EU by promoting discussion of the issues around an action.

It is agreed that 'working in partnership' is an intrinsic part of the image of EU external action and a key message for communication.

At the same time it should be accepted that some reduction of the visibility is a by-product of such partnerships, that can even - in itself - be positive. EU senior management should provide clear leadership on the balance of the trade-off they expect in this area.

In the case of parallel co-financing, governments are the implementing agencies for the purposes of the EU Manual and have a direct obligation to the EC to carry out communication and visibility activities in the field. While the WB has no formal role or responsibility regarding communication and visibility-related activities in such cases, the WB should make a strong effort to make it easier to recognize EU financing, for example, by means of public events, the publication of press releases, etc.

The types of communication and visibility activities selected should focus principally on the achievements and impact of the financed action.

All press releases should incorporate the EU flag and mention that funding was provided by the EU (also mention the amount of EU funding in Euro and in the local currency).

If a press conference is planned, the press release should include the name of an EU personality who will be present at the press conference.

Group visits by journalists to project sites may offer additional visibility opportunities.

Publications such as leaflets, brochures and newsletters can be useful in communicating the results of an action to specific audiences.

Publications should always be tailored to the audience in question, and focus on the intended results of the action, not the financial and administrative details. Texts should be short and simple, and photographs used - where possible - to illustrate the action and its context. If possible, photographs should be of the people involved in the action, rather than the officials responsible for its management.

Again, most of the above-mentioned techniques and actions seemingly imply additional funding by the EU and are time-consuming; planning and implementation of whatsoever action among the ones described involves human resources that are not constantly available.

5.3. Indirect visibility

Among the actions that could be implemented by the contracting entity, the most likely to be executed under the contractual obligations appears to be the installation of billboards along the road, therefore a communication campaign pertaining Road Safety has been proposed and submitted to the Delegation's top management; billboards have the advantage to speak for themselves, bear a variety of visual elements and be relatively convenient to produce (and to replace, once damaged or worn out).

The strategy, in the making of the billboards proposed, is to use them for the dissemination of subliminal inputs associated to the EU: indirect visibility is intended to work by delivering messages from the European People, using the colors of the European flag and by giving a European touch to the project by branding it.

5.4. The theme of Road Safety

A common fear concerning the provision of a new road, and shared by most of the stakeholders involved in the implementation of the project, is that drivers will abuse of it, in particular by driving too fast: The general bad condition of vehicles and the disputable driving skills of many users, lead to fear that the number of accidents will increase, perhaps dramatically.

According to a recent article published on the online edition of The Economist,

“Road accidents kill an estimated 1.25m people a year and injure 50m: a bigger killer in poor countries than malaria or tuberculosis. Africa scores worst, with 26.9 fatalities, and rising, for every 100,000 people in 2013 compared with 9.3 in Europe—which has ten times more cars per person. Poor countries, unsurprisingly, are the worst at enforcing speed limits and vehicle standards, or designing roads safe for drivers (and pedestrians).[...] The Sustainable Development Goals target of halving the casualty rate by 2020 looks increasingly distant.”

Liberia, according to a 2013 WHO survey, averages the third position in a list of countries that score the highest road traffic deaths, behind Thailand and Malawi.

It is on the basis of these facts that the proposal contemplates a series of billboards to be erected along the whole length of the road from Red Light to the Guinea border – at regular intervals – bearing a variety of messages meant to discourage drivers from driving at excessive speeds and to adopt, in general, a sharp attention while on the road.

As on the standard construction site billboards, all information concerning the entities involved remains visible, though in a smaller dimension (the length of these wouldn't allow – anyway – a complete reading while transiting on a vehicle), while the larger part of the panels is meant to create impact by bearing the road-security messages. These are not intended to substitute the standard road signs, which should certainly be placed – as is world-wide customary – in correspondence of critical tracts of the road (intersections, low-visibility points, inhabited areas, dangerous curves etc.); they should integrate the signboards by rather being placed along tracts with no particular issue, and eventually 'awaken' drivers and stimulate them to look forward for the upcoming panels; the tone is meant to be bold and direct. Though referring to the dramatic consequences of careless driving, the messages are intended to be slightly humorous; a possibility being considered is to employ the Liberian English in addition to standard English, as a way to involve users further more. Whenever the contents of the messages offer a chance, it would be reminded that road safety in Liberia is a mayor concern of the People in Europe who, incidentally, are the those who provided the funds to rehabilitate the roads. This sponsorship would be underlined by the combination of colors and branding.

5.5. Display of EU colors

The billboards (and all related materials to be eventually produced in the future) would be used as a medium to convey, by means of subliminal communication, a few main elements of the EU's corporate image, though maintaining the low profile imposed by the co-existence of other donors and by the impossibility to enhance it's image, no matter it is – de facto – the main donor in terms of financial contribution.

The graphic materials are thus designed according to existing corporate EU outputs; specifically, each panel bearing the road-safety message displays a dominating image (of a section of the road, in these first proposals, but meant to be changed, according to the subject of the message itself) rendered in shades of the institutional **Reflex Blue**.

The main text is set in a recurring typeface, which matches – as closely as possible – the one recently seen in other EU communication actions (particularly within the EU's participation at the 2015 Milan EXPO).

The secondary text is contained within giant parenthesis signs, rendered in the institutional **Process Yellow**.

(The display of the crown of stars is deliberately avoided, as they undoubtedly convey the signature of the EU! Their abstractness is substituted by the use yellow parenthesis.)

The overall perception is that of a EU-generated message, though none of its symbols appear, unless in the form of the EU flag, displayed among the logos of the other donors, in a size that is respectful of the compulsory balance, in lower part of the lateral band containing all informations about the project.

Where possible, because of the specific message, the use of the terms 'Europe' and 'Europeans' will appear, conveying messages about the combined efforts of the different donors (actually all from Europe) intended as a partnership between the people of Europe and those of Liberia.

It is evident that **such strategy will gain force and efficacy if the same treatment will be then used in messages deployed exclusively by the Delegation**, be it in the form of publications (leaflets, brochures and printed material in general concerning projects), or in the form of paid advertisements on local newspapers; in these cases the identity of the EU will be clearly stated, both through text and display of the EU flag.

5.6. Indirect display of EU's role

The second element of this strategy is to display an undeclared sponsorship of the project by naming it, and inherently branding it.

Since the main element of the EU's visibility is the predominance of the color blue in its flag, the term 'Blue' will be used to indirectly speak of the Union itself, as it has been done in the past relatively to other instances of visibility; in Liberia, for example, it appeared in the form of the BlueBook, a publication that was widely distributed in the country to inform the general public and stakeholders – in an institutional manner – about the role and activities of the Delegation in Liberia.

In continuation of this action, the name proposed for the road (or, more extensively, for all roads funded by the European countries, as well as for other projects) shall be **'The BlueWay'**.

The name proposed derives from the combination of the term 'Blue' (standing for 'Europe') and 'Highway', as most Liberians tend to define these major paved roads connecting the country. (The name is also meant to recall the idea of a river (typically, water is symbolized with the color blue), as the road runs smoothly across the country, the way most of the main rivers in Liberia do, allowing a flowing movement of people and goods across an otherwise very intricate rainforest.)

Once the name has been graphically rendered in a solid form, it becomes a veritable brand, to be used as signature on all visual materials, beginning with the road safety billboards previously described.

Of course, this remains a pure proposal and, though it has been appreciated by both the top officers of the EU Delegation to Liberia and those of the Infrastructure Implementation Unit at the MPW, the final decision, in this regard, lies in the hands of the Head of the Ministry of Public Works and of the State; it is most likely that, whereas the graphic style proposed will be adopted, the name – on the other hand – may not; the only assurance for this to happen – in the case of future funding of similar projects – is to define a communication plan prior to the funding, and to include actions such as Naming and Branding (managed by the Delegation) in the contractual conditions.

The following point describes the nature of this approach, whilst a detailed description of four actions designed for the road project is the object of section 6.

5.7. The interest in branding projects

The general attitude towards visual communication, in Liberia, is still rather basic: the limits imposed on all entities, be it Government Agencies, private companies or small and medium enterprises, by underdevelopment, reflects on the arts and the means to communicate clearly and efficiently. Visual design is not understood as a tool, but is still associated with heraldry, rather than art. On the internal market, and more so on the international stage, the lack of solid brand identities becomes a major challenge.

Coincidentally, it is extremely interesting that the EU, as a matter of fact, carries on activities to support European regions on these issues in the interest of good governance and trade.

The following example helps understand the interest in extending such practices beyond the European borders and, eventually, in Liberia:

Co-financed from the European Social Fund and the State Budget of the Czech Republic, Regional branding is one of several ways to promote rural regions and support development of socially, culturally and environmentally oriented economies in areas that are interesting due to their natural and cultural heritage. The group that is provided most of the support includes local business people, i.e.



handicraftsmen, farmers, small and medium-sized enterprises, whose skills and proficiency help to spread the region's renown, and, at the same time, identification with the region represents a great marketing opportunity for them. <http://www.regional-products.eu/>

Even more Interestingly, the EU is behind another project which presents some common links to the Liberian scenario:

After a long joint preparation journey the **Atlantic Area 2014-2020** is finally shaped! The Programme was designed over the last two years by the working group composed by Member State representatives from five countries (France, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom), supported by the Managing Authority, the Joint Technical Secretariat and ECORYS and Regio+ consultants respectively in charge of OP drafting and ex-ante evaluation. The draft Programme was subsequently submitted to the European Commission for approval. Atlantic Area 2014-2020 focuses on a limited number of challenges and needs, particularly those that can be best tackled through transnational cooperation to contribute to economic, social and territorial cohesion in the Atlantic region. <http://atlanticarea.ccdr-n.pt/>



*AT.Brand focuses on innovation and management in **integrated city branding**. Looking beyond individual city branding, it will also explore the feasibility of a long-term strategy to co-brand the Atlantic area, **building on recent developments in the Nordic countries and the Baltic Sea region**. It will capitalize on best practice developments in place branding as well as and learning from past initiatives. A strong partnership of core cities will develop a suite of concrete actions including: a cross-learning programme of innovative city-brand management*



(development of methodological guidelines, thematic workshops, partner profiles and peer-review exercises); innovative pilot actions at local level with high potential for transferability; a complementary web-based toolkit for the Atlantic brand, highlighting core brand messaging; and creating a draft roadmap for co-branding the Atlantic area. AT.Brand will reinforce and complement local and regional strategies while showcasing the effectiveness of developing a coherent place branding strategy across the Atlantic area. - <http://atbrand.eu/>



In parallel, the EU is developing programs aimed at creating greater awareness and knowledge about the role of the Atlantic Ocean in the lives of multitudes; Atlantic Ocean Literacy is a EU campaign that aims to educate coastal populations on the means and reasons to protect their environment.

The creation of networks of protected marine reserves can help contrast the damage caused by cheap fishing licences. (<http://atlanticoceanliteracy.wp2.coexploration.org/>)

EMSEA is dedicated to facilitate the exchange of success stories and good practices in marine education, to provide a networking directory for marine educators and to co-organize annual conferences for educators throughout Europe. (<http://www.emsea.eu/>)



Liberia has more than 600 km of tropical atlantic coast, mostly untouched by urbanization or industry: it is a huge potential, both in terms of scientific interest and touristic potential. Sand-mining, pollution and mangrove harvesting are three risk factors the country should urgently deal with. The latter, in particular, is detrimental for fish reproduction; the paradox is that mangrove wood is illegally cut and used to smoke the same fish whose reproduction eventually depends on healthy mangrove forests..

This appears to be a unique chance to assist a nation in re-branding itself; as for the Atlantic Area in Europe, the EU in Liberia could offer technical assistance in this process, which should necessarily include Ministries, National Authorities and Corporations. This support can eventually be enhanced for specific areas which have a strong need of communication such as tourism, education and health.



atlantic, together.

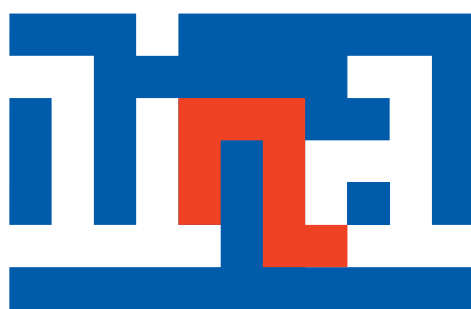
nowledge about
lives.

5.8. Re-branding Liberia

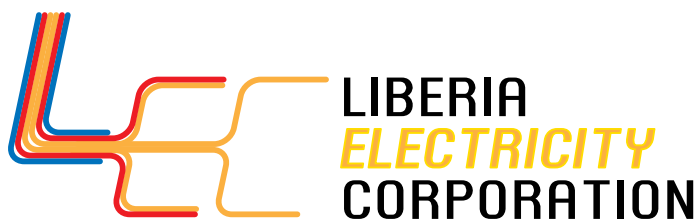
The previous examples are meant to clarify the philosophy behind the naming and branding of the road project which goes beyond conveying a mild visibility to the role of the EU; this approach offers the country a first opportunity to experiment – for free - the benefits of a solid institutional image: but the messages concerning road safety will obtain a larger effect if the entity conveying them appears robust. After all, it must be recalled that Liberia is really facing a major identity issue:



REPUBLIC of
The love of Liberty brought us here
LIBERIA



LIBERIA NEWS AGENCY



LIBERIA
ELECTRICITY
CORPORATION



LWSC
Liberia
Water & Sewer
Corporation



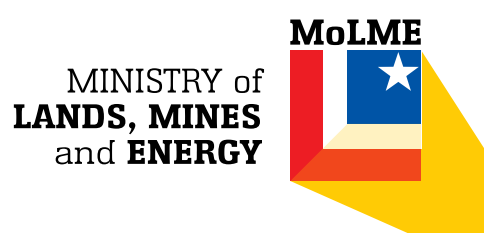
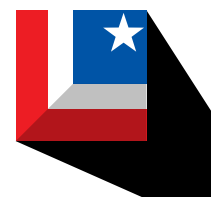
NATIONAL MUSEUM of LIBERIA

According to the media, President Sirleaf launched the **national symbols review project** aimed at reviewing Liberia's symbols – flag, seal, and national anthem. At the launch event, she called on the Governance Commission (GC), to reach and consult with all Liberians on the project. President Sirleaf stressed the critical need for a review in the national symbols to reflect on nation identity and unity. There have been long running debates in Liberia over the country's national symbols, especially the motto "The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here", reflecting the divide between the natives and Americo-Liberia (settlers).

LIBERIAN MEDIA REVIEW – 03-07 February 2014.

REPUBLIC of LIBERIA

THE LOVE OF LIBERTY BROUGHT US HERE



Another way of seeing this approach to aid is represented by the more traditional relation between branding and trade.

In Europe, the EU enhances policies of this nature with www.iprhelpdesk.eu (Intellectual property Rights), a program to support beneficiaries of EU funded research projects and EU SMEs involved in transnational partnership agreements, especially within the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN); again, a form of advanced help that could apply to Liberia as well.

The Conference held in Rome in february 2014 on the theme Agriculture in an Urbanizing Society also dealt with this topic:

*This is an expression of the fact that agriculture is not only valued for its contribution to food and fibre production and the economic development of agro-industry, but that it also needs to be assessed according to a much wider range of social, environmental, economic and ethical criteria. At the farm level, multifunctional agriculture is characterized by a **variety of entrepreneurial strategies and activities**, such as processing and direct marketing of food products, energy production, care for the elderly and disabled and tourism.*

(Organizer: AiCARE – Italian Agency for Responsible and Ethic Countryside and Agriculture - Rome, Italy)

The article quoted below considers this topic in deeper detail:

Regional branding initiatives are more and more spread as a mean for reconnecting agrifood products to places and, by this way, for creating value in rural areas. Regional branding encompasses several types of initiatives, ranging from very formal ones – such as geographical indications protected under EU quality policy schemes (PDOs and PGIs) – to umbrella strategies where links between products and place are very weak. Regional branding initiatives differ in many respects, in particular as regards degree of formalization, governance and institutional arrangements, role of farmers, existence of written rules and of control systems, geographical scale of the initiative (from very localized initiatives to big regions), strength of the connection with local resources.

Regional branding initiatives are expected to support the development of local agrifood systems and to exert positive impacts on rural development, both directly (income, employment) and indirectly (activation of other local economic activities like tourism). *However so far little has been done to evaluate and compare the many types of impacts, which depend inter alia on the type and design of the regional brand, the level of use*

by firms, the collective initiatives aiming at linking producers and consumers. The few available studies show a scattered and uneven picture. For this reason this working group aims at sharing empirical evidences, thoughts and methodologies on the economic, social, agronomical and environmental effects of regional branding, with a special focus on the resilience of local agri-food production systems, multifunctional agriculture, and rural areas.

February 8, 2015

<http://www.agricultureinurbanizingsociety.com/?p=631#HH7qhacA7Y2zjlpB.99>

In this framework, another important EU policy which could benefit Liberia's private sector is exemplified by a Workshop on Geographical Indications held in Kampala (Uganda), on 10-11/11/2011.

*A joint African Union Commission and European Commission event brought together about 60 practitioners and experts from all over Africa and Europe in order to disseminate knowledge and enhance skills and the capacity of African producers, to identify and **adding value** to potential African GI products as well as create market opportunities for non-identified products. (http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/gi-africa-2011_en.htm)*

Europe and Africa have both chosen the route of regional integration to facilitate peace, stability and economic growth. Regional integration, trade and investment are vectors of economic stability and inclusive and sustainable growth. Well integrated regional markets with efficient infrastructure will attract investment and facilitate business, enhance employment creation and revenues as well as enhance access to improved quality goods and services. - www.africa-eu-partnership.org

*The strategic objective of this area of cooperation between Africa and Europe is to stimulate economic growth that reduces poverty, create decent jobs and mobilize the entrepreneurial potential of people, in particular the youth and women, in a sustainable manner. This includes support to the development of the private sector; small and medium-sized enterprises as well as **support to the continental integration process**, notably through accelerated infrastructure development, energy, industrialization and investment.*

Visibility thus appears to be a key integration factor in trade and enterprise: the EU Delegation to Liberia could provide support in this areas too.

The BlueWay should represent a first step in this direction.

6. Graphic proposals for The BlueWay

In view of the official opening of the Red Light-Guinea Border highway, and of its inauguration, four actions have been conceived, meant to introduce the BlueWay brand and to use it on the field.

6.1. Proposal for the BlueWay banners

The Banner is designed to be displayed as a stage background during the official inauguration of the road. It has a horizontal format of 4 meters in width and 2 meters in height; the upper section bears the symbols and logos of all stakeholders, on white background. The lower section bears the BlueWay brand in large format on a blue background, the pay-off “A Road with Benefits”, the headline “The successful result of Europeans and Liberians working together” and the signature of the implementing entities (IIU and MPW).

The design aims at having the brand and the logos of all stakeholders appear in pictures and videos that will be taken during the official declarations by Government officials and stakeholders, which will stand in front of the banner.

During the on-site event(s) it has been suggested to install the banner on a low-bed truck, which would become a moving stage: this seems a particularly appropriate location, for it offers the opportunity to link the road rehabilitation to the benefits it bears: the truck, as a means of transportation for goods, symbolizes the entirety of the vehicles that will enjoy the smooth new road.



This design has been shown in preview within the Delegation and the IIU in Monrovia, and during meetings with the contractors and consultants during the field-trip; the general feedback was positive, and the contractors declared full acceptance of the implementation effort on their behalf.

6.2. Proposal for the Road Safety billboards

The billboards, meant to encourage a cautious use of the rehabilitated road, have been partially described in section 5/5 (the only remark to add is that the vertical white side-band bearing the technical information is not essential, whereas the display of the symbols and logos of all stakeholders is meant to be kept, eventually in another form); the horizontal format designed is 4 meters in width and 3 meters in height.

They shall be printed on flex banners, which are said to last about 5 years before showing signs of fading; they should then be replaced, offering a chance to be updated with new messages. The large, self-supporting ground-based structures should also prevent theft and vandalism.

**NOW THAT IT'S
SO FAST,
WE CAN DRIVE
MUCH
SLOWER.**

(Protect your life and that of your People. Drive Carefully!)

BlueWay

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPLEMENTATION UNIT
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS

Works and services under
**Output and Performance-based
Road Contract (OPRC)**

for the
**Design, Rehabilitation
and Maintenance**

of Lot 2
**"Gbarnga-Ghanta-
Guinea Border" Road**

ICB NO: LIBRAMP-MPW/LRTF/OPRC/GGG/002'13

Contract Period
May 8, 2013 - May 7, 2015

Road Length
68.81 Km

Financial Agency:
**International
Development
Association (IDA)**

**Liberia Reconstruction
Trust Fund (LRTF)**

Contracting Entity
CHICO
**China Henan International
Cooperation Group Co., Ltd.
China (CHICO)**

Monitoring Consultant
IMC Worldwide Ltd. UK

Donors
European Union, Norad, USAID, SIDA, UNDP, UNICEF

Who's chasing YOU?

Why risking your life by driving too fast? Slow down, and get safely back home.

BlueWay

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
 INFRASTRUCTURE IMPLEMENTATION UNIT
 MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS

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Output and Performance-based Road Contract (OPRC)
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Contracting Entity

China Henan International Cooperation Group Co., Ltd. China (CHICO)

Monitoring Consultant

IMC Worldwide Ltd. UK

Donors

 European Union, KfW, UKaid, Sida, Irish Aid

Speed can KILL!

Slow down, enjoy the New Road, and get safely back home.

BlueWay

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
 INFRASTRUCTURE IMPLEMENTATION UNIT
 MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS

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Monitoring Consultant

IMC Worldwide Ltd. UK

Donors

 European Union, KfW, UKaid, Sida, Irish Aid

Don't RUN!

Speed kills more than heavy rain, potholes or mud. Enjoy the new road safely!

BlueWay

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
 INFRASTRUCTURE IMPLEMENTATION UNIT
 MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS

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Monitoring Consultant

IMC Worldwide Ltd. UK

Donors

 European Union, KfW, UKaid, Sida, Irish Aid

**Run like the Devil,
and you will meet him
SOON!**

**Reckless Driving
is a bad thing:
you can kill yourself
and hurt
innocent people.**

BlueWay

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPLEMENTATION UNIT
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS

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Monitoring Consultant
 IMC Worldwide
IMC Worldwide Ltd. UK

Donors
 Norad
Irish Aid
Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

**SLOW
DOWN!**

**A friendly reminder
from the Europeans
who fixed this road.**

BlueWay

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPLEMENTATION UNIT
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS

Works and services under
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Monitoring Consultant
 IMC Worldwide
IMC Worldwide Ltd. UK

Donors
 Norad
Irish Aid
Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

**Take a
REST!**

**Don't Drive when
you are too tired:
falling asleep
is one of the main
causes of car
accidents.**

BlueWay

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPLEMENTATION UNIT
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IMC Worldwide Ltd. UK

Donors
 Norad
Irish Aid
Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

**NOW THE ROAD IS
VERY FAST,
so NO NEED
TO RUN!**

**Protect your life and that of your People.
Drive Carefully!**

BlueWay

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPLEMENTATION UNIT
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS

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Donors
 Norad
Irish Aid
Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

The following lines illustrate some of the possible texts to be displayed on the billboards (as well as alternative names, in the case BlueWay encounters some opposition); in the framework of reminding the population of the benefits delivered by the project, and in consideration of the 7-years period pertaining the maintenance phase, the proposal is to consider different areas of advantages (some of the examples are also drafted in Liberian English):

Generic Brand & Signature, underlining the good quality:

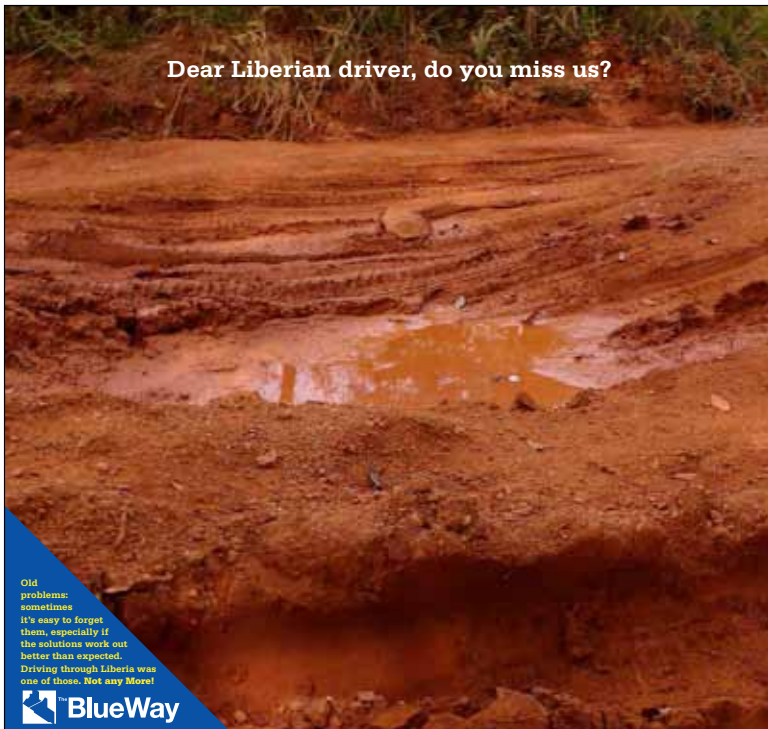
- Have a Smooth Day on the BlueWay
- Liberia has a new river: the BlueWay.
- Take the Blueway, the only river in Liberia that flows in both directions.
- Be Happy and Enjoy the BW (acronym for BlueWay)
- Go Quickly on the BlueWay
- Take de BlueWay and Relax-o!
- The BLUEWAY – Funded by the European People
- Oh! De Blue Road can be Smooth-o!
- The BLUEWAY – Making Life Smoother

New Road & Cautious Driving:

- Na da it faster, you mo go slower
- The road is good, so no need to run
- Be careful and Enjoy the B-Double-EU (BW, acronym for BlueWay)

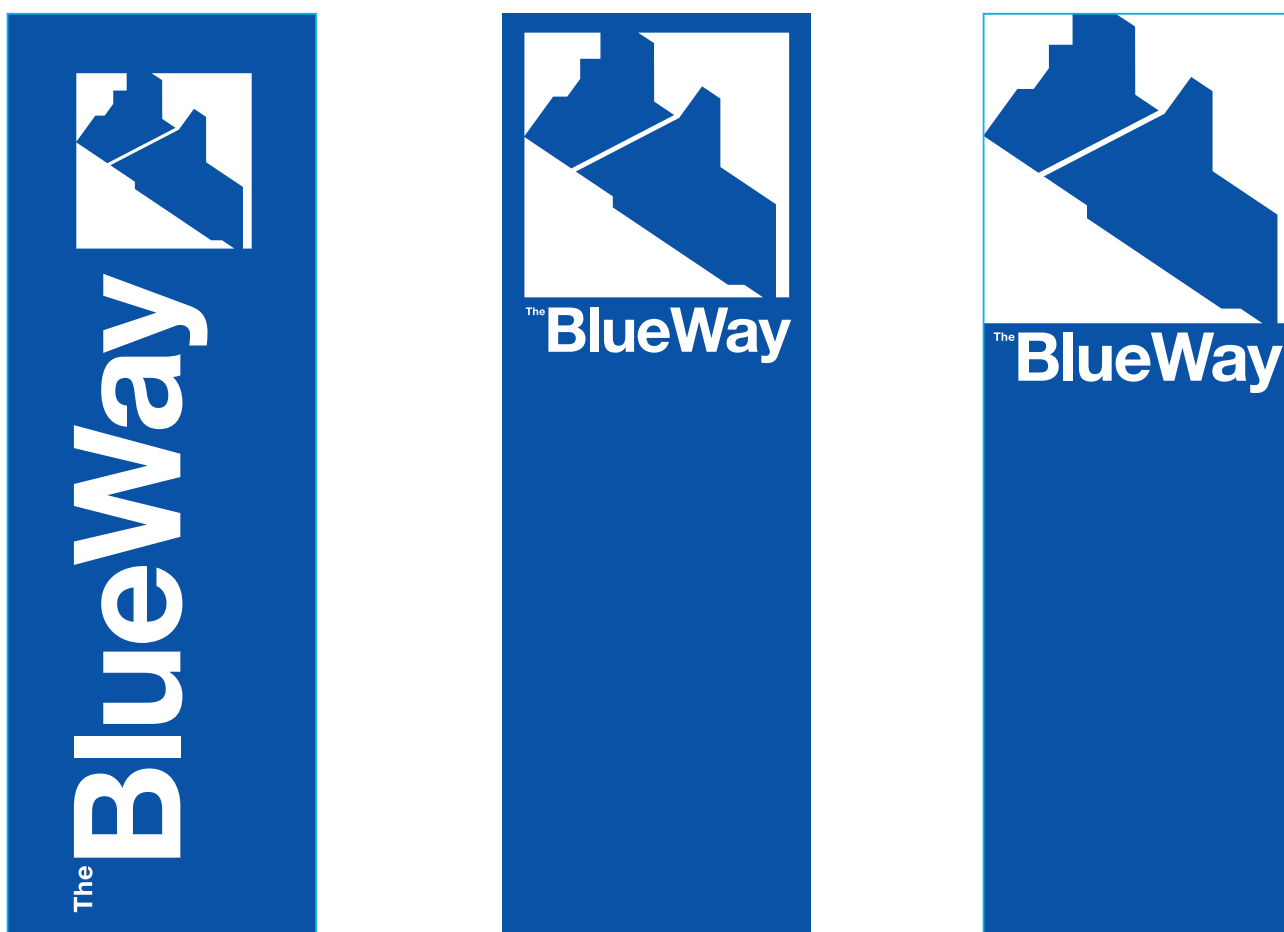
New Road & benefits

- New Road & Connecting Liberia
 - Making the Capital and the Country Closer
 - Connecting de Country
 - Smaller Distance, Bigger Nation
 - Giunee? Straight Across the Country!
- New Road VS Old road
 - Remember the Mud?
 - Missing the Potholes?
 - (only) Mechanics hate the BlueWay
- New Road & Access to Markets
 - Business loves the BW
 - Bringing Markets Closer
 - Fresh Vegetables love the BeeDoubleEU!
- New Road & Access to Health facilities
 - Thank You, BluWay! (Doctor depicted + Getting to the Hospital Faster can Save Lives)
 - Thank You, BW! (Patient depicted + Reaching the Doctor in Time Saved my Life)
- New Road & Access to Education
 - Now the road is fine, and it is Mine :) (depicting a student as testimonial)
 - Speeding Up Progress
 - Move faster so you can study longer
 - Learn more by traveling less

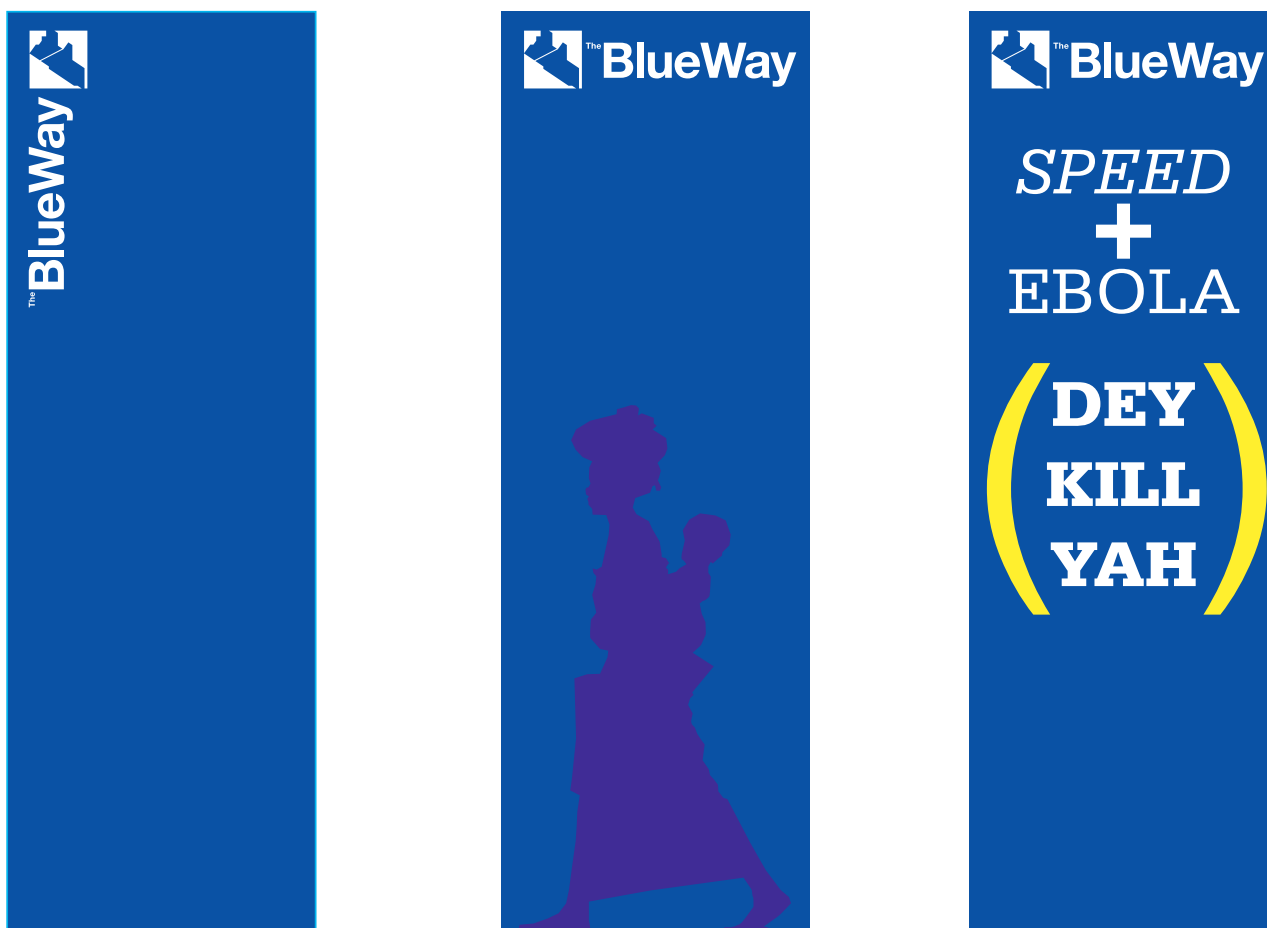


6.3. Alternative Proposal for Road Safety Totems

Upon careful evaluation of the costs of production, an interesting alternative to the billboards would be the use of large concrete totems, positioned with the same criteria and bearing the same messages; the advantage of such solid supports is that they would last very long and basically be impossible to steal or ruin. In the consultant's opinion, they would also prove to be a



much more elegant and distinctive feature, if compared to to the billboards (which, essentially, are similar to those commonly used for road-side commercial advertisements). These are designed to be vertical concrete slabs measuring 1 meter in width and 4 meters in height, with an overall blue paint bearing the BlueWay logo and the road safety messages on both sides.



6.4. Proposal for Road Safety ‘Across-the-Street’ Banners

A last solution, delivering the highest visibility, are the so-called “Over the Street” Banners, as those placed high above roads on occasions such as celebrations, competitions or just simply to advertise. As flex banners, they perform well for 3-5 years in sunlight, are relatively cheap and easy to produce but require the installation of solid road-side poles to be installed.



DON'T RU



Enjoy



The **BlueWay**

Don't Run

Bearing an overall blue background, they would display the BlueWay logo and the road safety message on both sides. As in the case of the billboards, they offer the opportunity to change the messages in time, as they should inevitably be replaced over time.

Theoretically, any of these visibility actions, once chosen, should be implemented within the contractual obligations of the contracting entities; as seen earlier, this is an issue to be discussed more thoroughly within the appropriate settings.

JN-O! (Speed can
kill you)

Speed can kill you!

Enjoy the Smooth Road and Take it Easy



! Nobody's
Chasing You



7. Way forward

7.1 Parallel actions

The visual display of the BlueWay brand along the road should be a first inevitable action, which links the object and its identity; there are other actions which are meant to reinforce such link, on one hand, and to create a relation between beneficiaries and the newly rebuilt road on the other.

Taking for granted that the brand is accepted and adopted, the second step would be to provide the Road Management with a kit of visual tools (multi-purpose logos, standard stationary, basic guidelines to deal with print and web instances) and instructions for a correct use of the brand; typically, this is attainable by means of a workshop with the staff that will be in charge of external relations at MPW.

By actions meant to build a relation, a sense of ownership and pride, carefulness and concern is meant to be created; the more the users understand the value of the intervention, the more they will take care of it, and this - considering the general lack of workpower dedicated to maintenance in Liberia - represents the best means of its conservation on the long run.

Such a result can only be obtained through direct involvement of the communities along the track of the road, with a particular attention to the younger generations: students can be involved in creative contests - on the wider spectrum - which could be tailored on specific aspects of living near a new road, security being obviously the first issue to consider.



The benefits of connecting places, the independence from weather conditions and the safety of driving on a proper surface are other subjects that could inspire further initiatives, rather than public events.

Also public events are powerful tools to involve the communities on a wider range (that goes beyond the youth), though they work differently: an interesting, educating and entertaining event can create awareness and stimulate behavioural changes.

Large events may need a specific fact to celebrate, whereas smaller happenings may be more suited for a itinerant campaign, led by a team of spokespersons/educators/entertainers touring the communities with the mission to educate locally on the chosen issues.

Under a certain point of view, radio broadcasts enter into this group of public actions: most of the country is covered by local radio stations, which are the most widespread form of mass media available. By buying time on-air at these local radio stations along the track, and using it to inform, educate, entertain and involve the listeners on the chosen issues, the BlueWay can successfully be introduced into everyday's speech (as an example, "De BlooWé, da fine road-o!").

Any of the above actions implies further investments: human energies, production of printed material, branding of items, renting spaces and services, transport and - eventually - spaces on mass media, are all possible solely within an appropriate budgetary framework.



8. Outcomes

8.1. Result of the “BlueWay” branding strategy

As a matter of fact, the branding proposal was not adopted by the final decision-makers. In view of the Inauguration of the road (held on the 7th of march 2016, during a an event starting in Gbarnga and ending in Ganta) a new banner was designed according the requests of the local counterpart, in which most of the elements remained unchanged, unless for the absence of the BlueWay Logo.



Three pieces were printed: one to be placed as a background on the stage prepared for the Authorities near the guinea Boarder in Ganta, and two placed on a low-bed trailer pulled by a truck along the whole length of the road, in the meanwhile “blasting” the roadside communities with popular music to attract their attention on the convoy.



8.2. The Inauguration Day

Despite the missing BlueWay branding (and the visibility results it was meant to bear), the EU's visibility during the Inauguration was very strong, as many EU flags could be seen displayed around the main sites of the celebrations, starting from the Authorities' stage in Ganta. The purpose of the BlueWay not being a secret, it is likely that - fearing the major donor's disappointment - the local counterpart had given instructions for the EU's visibility - in the form of flags - to be evident.

Interestingly, several of the argumentations provided to the MPW to explain the meaning of the catch-phrase "68,61 Km of Benefits" were actually adopted by certain important speakers.



In particular, the road safety issue was also addressed by a few speakers, most certainly moved by the sorrow for the premature death of a Deputy Minister involved in a road accident two days earlier.

(on a side-note, two days later the Minister of Public Works himself was hit by a car while jogging in town)

8.3. The Media response

Because of the importance of the event, a fair number of press workers were on site to document and report to the media, as clippings from the following day's newspapers testify.





Of course, this was also possible thanks to the efficiency of the Press and Communications Office at the Delegation, starting from its timely dissemination of event-related press-releases.

8.4. Online response

Of course, the Delegation's page related to the event, within the EEAS website, was rapidly online, providing main highlights of the role and participation of the EU.

Other web pages covering the event were those of the Government, the African Press Organization, Global News Network/Liberia, The Daily Observer.

8.5. Follow-up

According to the contractual terms, the contractor will manage the maintenance of the road till 2024; because of the contractual obligations concerning the EU's visibility, it was proposed that a series of billboards be erected every 20 km along the entire length of the road, bearing the road manager's number for emergencies etc. on one face, and a road-safety message on the other, as will be done on other sites in Liberia. Unfortunately, it seems that the contractor refused to do so because of the costs implied.

Quite appropriately, the new projects include specific terms related to the visibility obligations, and the placement of billboards has begun.

Though these billboards are being implemented under a separate contract, the two following pages display them as examples of the EU identity that is meant to be gradually built in Liberia.

Plaque at the Ministry of Public Works



Test Sections



*ELWA - RIA Road
 (Both sides shown)*



Road to Bo Waterside



The sign features a blue background with the European Union flag (a circle of twelve yellow stars) on the left. To the right of the flag, the text reads: "Please call the Road Manager on 0776 117 468 / 0880 541 158 / 0770 022 222 to report any maintenance problem." Below this, in larger white text, it says: "The European Union and the United Kingdom pay for the maintenance of this road till 2021." At the bottom, there is a white wavy border containing logos for the Republic of Liberia, European Union, Department for International Development (UKaid), WEST AFRICA Construction Inc. (Contractor), and the Ministry of Public Works.

Please call the Road Manager on
0776 117 468 / 0880 541 158 / 0770 022 222
to report any maintenance problem.

The European Union and the United Kingdom
pay for the maintenance of this road till 2021.

    
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA **European Union** **Department for International Development** **UKaid** **Contractor: WEST AFRICA Construction Inc.** **MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS**



The sign features a blue background with the European Union flag (a circle of twelve yellow stars) on the left. To the right of the flag, the text reads: "Please call the Road Manager on 0886-993 415 / 0776-602 372 / 0776-854 023 to report any maintenance problem." Below this, in larger white text, it says: "The European Union and the United Kingdom pay for the maintenance of this road till 2021." Underneath, in yellow text, it states: "This road was completed in 2013 with European money." At the bottom, there is a white wavy border containing logos for the Republic of Liberia, European Union, Department for International Development (UKaid), BMC GROUP (Contractor), and the Ministry of Public Works.

Please call the Road Manager on
0886-993 415 / 0776-602 372 / 0776-854 023
to report any maintenance problem.

The European Union and the United Kingdom
pay for the maintenance of this road till 2021.

This road was completed in 2013 with European money.

    
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA **European Union** **Department for International Development** **UKaid** **Contractor: BMC GROUP** **MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS**

Harbel to Buchanan Road

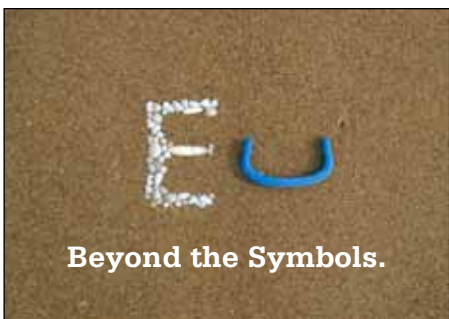
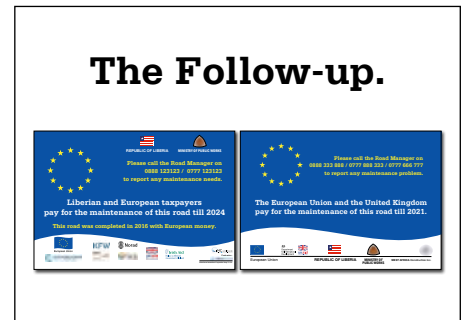
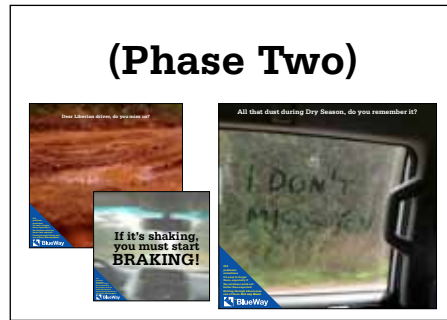
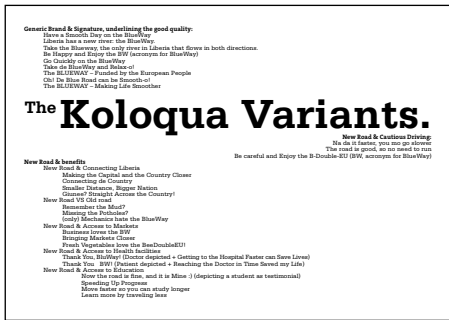
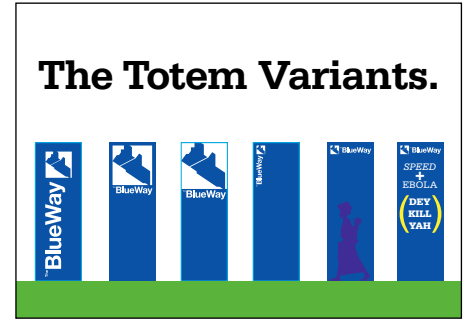
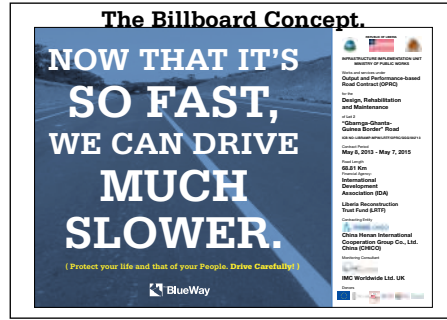
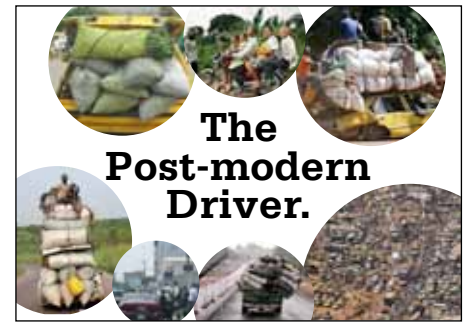
9. The Seminar

On May 2, a seminar was held at the Delegation with the purpose of sharing the information collected and explaining the actions undertaken.

(see annexed pdf of the visual presentation supporting the seminar)

The most interesting outcome was the internal discussion (the seminar was particularly meant for those - within the Delegation's staff - who would most likely have a role in matters of visibility) that followed, on the importance of developing a variety of projects/campaigns on the topic of enhancing road safety in Liberia.





9.1. Lessons Learnt

Considering the serious lack of financial resources available to face the visibility issue, the EU's role within the much-needed rehabilitation of one of the country's main transport corridors was certainly communicated, though the main issue appears to be the general unawareness of the population in the regards of the nature of the EU: what and where is Europe is a main obstacle.

10. General Proposals for the enhancement of the EU visibility in Liberia

10.1. Proposal for Delegation-generated Visibility Actions

Provided an adequate budget is available, any action financed by the Delegation itself is more likely to obtain the visibility it aims to: besides the community awareness-rising rallies mentioned in section 5/2, there are other actions that appear to promise successful outputs in terms of visibility in the Liberian scenario. These have not been defined in detail within this consultation, but deserve to be mentioned in view of future decisions concerning a stronger effort towards the attainment successful visibility results.

Radio spots, print campaigns and the organization of public events all appear to promise good results on the Liberian scenario; eventually, a few annotations can be given relatively to general approach that would prove to be successful.

The visibility of the EU can be improved regardless of specific actions, not only by facilitating a better understanding among partners about program progress, but also by strengthening the emotional relation between the Delegation and the Liberians and choosing those strategies that make the most sense for soul-centered projects.

The nature of the EU is complex to grasp, being that it consists of peoples, languages, and cultures that are extremely different one from the other. Therefore, it is perceived as an abstract entity instead of a group of people (or not perceived at all!). From the communicative point of view, the function of the delegation could be to remind Liberians of this complexity, by showing the EU's human face and introducing Liberia to the culture(s) and values of Europe, and by choosing a visibility strategy that matches the EU's strengths (huge variety of cultures).

The delegation needs to speak directly and personally to its audience. Viewers, readers, and press will be much more likely to walk through the EU's door if it reveals itself through its voice and speaks directly to their hearts and souls, not just to their minds, or pockets.

The other way around could prove to be an even better solution: encouraging the growth of Liberian culture and introducing it in Europe. Liberia needs to rebuild its national pride by going beyond the plain right to receive aid and by rather nurturing its regional culture versus basic nationalism.

The Delegation could promote the idea of an ongoing exchange between EU and the People of



Liberia by displaying its different cultures, finding links with the local traditions and facilitating actual exchanges between common arts, crafts, sounds, cuisine etc. (occasionally, taking Liberians to Europe would be the best way of achieving true exchange).

Additionally, small group-visits from Europe could offer opportunities to stimulate interest in the different cultures of Europe and improve the perception of a European Identity.

10.2. Adopting a Tone

Liberians, as everybody else, love to laugh. Laugh is the expression of happiness, which is a sign of well-being; if the well-being of the Liberian People is among the purposes of EU's presence in the country, then it can be said that EU's operations are, in a certain way, aimed to raise general happiness: they should generate smiles.

Many Liberians don't perceive the benefits meant to be delivered by the projects, and smiles are rare. Perhaps the benefits are on scales so wide to be almost invisible to people, especially those who don't enjoy them (see infrastructure-related programs within the urban area of the Capital); also, the rare Europeans in sight are mostly taken for Americans! This is funny and sad at the same time.

Joking in Liberia can be a delicate matter, satire and sarcasm are badly tolerated and a morbid seriousness poisons the fluid workings of the nation; this is felt from the top to the bottom, where poor mothers violently grow the next generation. Bending the Liberian approach to life towards a happier day would do great benefit and smiles are the easiest way, as they are already buried inside the human being; it's just a matter of letting them come out.

The safest way to operate with humour is self-irony.

EU could consider a mild dose of self-irony when addressing the liberian public, in order to generate surprise, catch attention, be recognized and build an identity that means smiles; communication should be seriously funny and involving (perhaps with more radio broadcasts, printed ads and billboards showcasing the human face of the Union).



10.3. Adapting the Promotional Items

It is suggested to put into production specific country-oriented promotional items*, meant to have both a strong visual impact and an actual usefulness, in consideration of the particular environmental conditions: extreme heat and heavy rainfalls.

The first item could be a pocket hand-held fan: circular in form, cast in Reflex Blue plastic, it should bear a single-color (Process yellow) silkscreen print of the circle of stars, as to recall the EU flag.



The second item to consider could be an umbrella, as well made of Reflex Blue fabric bearing - as for the fan - the circle of Process yellow stars along the perimeter.

When deployed (more so in large numbers) these two items will provide an extremely high visibility of the European symbol.

** The production of such items should ideally be made within Liberia.*



10.4. Boosting online visibility

Eventually, changing the background picture in the header of the Delegation's official page with a more country-related one could be an option to consider, in order to customize the site beyond standard style.

Provided the human resources are available, a Delegation's Twitter page could help to inform those interested about new initiatives, projects and achievements, as well as displaying links to the official page or to the HoD's Facebook page.

Provided photographic material is produced on a regular basis, a Flickr page would be useful to collect and display images related to ongoing projects and events; the same use could be made by opening an official YouTube account for what concerns video contributions, to be uploaded following the same criteria.



10.5. Adapting the Official Logo

Corporate Identity branding is compared to a dictatorial environment, and the EU is no exception: tools like the Visibility Manual forbid all modifications of the approved graphic elements, sometimes working against the scopes of optimal visibility.

Open quite frequently if special events require so; for example, every time the EC, a special logo is designed; the same happens on the occasions, etc.

Application to Liberian could obtain the permission to design a special logo for a particular scenario; such an adaptation could contribute to bring the EU into the context of particular programs and projects or as a general logo for exchanges rather than donations.



11. Conclusions

The evaluation undertaken under this contract has led the author to agree with the Contracting Authority that - up to October 2015 - little had been done to improve the EU's visibility in the country, whereas a higher visibility of its operations in Liberia would have certainly contributed to the EU's international relations in terms of its commitment to peace, development, human rights and democracy and thereby facilitated the dialogue between the EU and the people of Liberia. Over the last months this has changed, drastically: during the next two years, a european consortium - awarded through a tender - will overlook and direct all actions related to the visibility.

The evaluation indicated that the obstacles are (1) the lack of resources for communication that the Delegation can count on and (2) a general unawareness, in the country, about the nature and role of the EU. Additionally, the agreements with partnering donors and institutions do not generally contemplate any sort of hierarchy in favor certain actors.

Relatively to the specific actions planned within this contract - and within the limited options available - the proposal to enhance the EU's visibility by providing the MPW with a brand identity (meant as a tool to deliver, for example, road-safety messages) was accepted by the Delegation but not by the Liberian counterparts, limiting the purpose and effectiveness of the planned action.

The recommendations herein proposed do imply a stronger support of the Delegation in terms of resources deployed for visibility, as a recognition of its role as a major development actor in Liberia. They are focused on building a stronger awareness of the nature and purpose of the EU in Liberia, with the support a carefully-managed visual identity. The main target group being the youth, it is recommended to address it by narrowing the cultural gap through the organization of popular events meant to inform and entertain. The arts at large are considered to be the specific domain to be explored and encouraged, as they act to build self-respect in the first place.

12. List of Acronyms

ABAC	Accrual Based Accounting
AFDB	African Development Bank
AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
AHO	African Health Observatory
BFS	Bridgestone/Firestone
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRC	Danish Refugee Committee
EC	European Commission
ECOWAS	Economic Community Of West African States
EEAS	European External Action Service
EJS	Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
EMUS	Emergency Monrovia Urban Sanitation
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
EU	European Union

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GOL	Government of Liberia
HoD	Head of Delegation
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IU	Infrastructure Implementation Unit
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPFMRP	Integrated Public Financial Management Reform Project
IRC	International Rescue Committee
LEC	Liberia Electricity Corporation
LIBRAMP	Liberia Road Asset Management Project
LRTF	Liberia Reconstruction Trust Fund
MCC	Monrovia City Corporation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MFDP	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Development
MPW	Ministry of Public Works
MSF	Médécins Sans Frontières
NAO	National Authorizing Officer
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OPRC	Output and Performance Based Road Contracts
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
PCI	Project Concern International
PUP	Private Use Permits
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNCHR	United Nations Refugee Agency
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPANI	Urban and Peri Urban Agriculture, Nutrition and Income
URIRP	Urban and Rural Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WFP	World Food Program
WTO	World Trade Organization
ZOA	Zuidoost-Azië (NL)

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The a [REDACTED] ted at



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