

## **Empowering the Media to Play Active Watchdog Role over Mining Oil and Gas Revenue and Resources in Liberia Project**

Implemented by Penplusbytes in association with National Black Programming Consortium with support from Humanity United

### **BASELINE SURVEY OF MINING, OIL AND GAS REPORTING IN LIBERIA**

#### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Duration of the Assignment: 26<sup>th</sup> August to 16<sup>th</sup> September 2013

##### **A. Introduction**

Penplusbytes is a leading training organization in Africa working in 3 areas: governance and accountability, new media and innovations and oil, gas and mining. Since 2007, Penplusbytes has been working in Ghana's oil, gas and mining and in 2010 working with Revenue Watch Institute expanded its work in this area to Uganda and Tanzania. Recently it launched coverage of oil, gas and mining sector in Liberia in partnership with National Black Programming Consortium with funding from Humanity United. As part of our Liberia project implementation activities we are seeking to recruit researchers to conduct a month baseline survey of oil, gas and mining sector in Liberia with specific reference to how Liberian Media and Journalists are covering the sector. The insights gained from the study will guide in the development of the content and direction of a training program as well as to implement other project components such as mentoring, monitoring and evaluating the post-training output of the selected participants.

##### **B. Background**

Liberia is endowed with a significant amount of natural resources notably iron ore, diamonds, gold, timber and rubber. The Liberian Basin now has a proven petroleum system with discoveries announced in February 2012, which intensified interest in Liberia oil and gas sector, although commercial production is yet to begin, the country is working at ensuring its petroleum resources are managed in an environmentally responsible manner, to optimize returns for Liberia and ensure equitable benefits to the people of Liberia now and in the future as articulated in its petroleum policy

Before Liberia's 14 year civil war, the country's economy relied heavily on the mining of iron ore and was a major exporter on the world market, accounting for more than half of Liberia's export earnings. During the civil war which ended in 2003, all major mines were closed and the mineral sector's contribution to the economy was reduced to a negligible level. The mining sector has been slow to recover after Liberia's civil war. However, in recent years (2005 - 2012), foreign investments from Mittal Steel, BHP Billiton, and China Union is aiding the revitalization of the iron mining sector. According to the Liberia Extractives Transparency Initiative, in 2010, Liberia made significant progress in reviving the mining sector and represents an important economic activity.

Extractive resources are public assets and decisions about their use should be subject to public oversight. The media is perhaps the single most important arm of society that can help protect these public assets on the people's behalf. However a look at the media in Liberia today's, shows there is either very little capacity or appetite to cover the extractive sector. Also the extractive sector news usually follows the typical officialdom- type of coverage, what officialdom says is taken on its face-value and is uncritically reported verbatim as fact and at times, without any background or investigation or breaking it down to the understanding of the ordinary citizen. Furthermore, not much is done by the Liberian media to undertake in-depth and investigative stories about the sector.

This proposed project will therefore seek to address the challenges faced by Liberian journalists through a series of intensive learning opportunities including:

- Face-to-Face orientation workshops,
- Mentoring processes
- Study Field trips to Mining community

### **C. Methodology**

This assignment will involve desk study, interviews and primary data collection. The researchers are expected to adopt a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches in delivering the outcome of this assignment:

- i. **The quantity** (i.e. amount, number of) of coverage of oil and gas content.
  - a. The news stories and feature articles will be separated and counted.
  - b. The authorship of feature articles will be established i.e. is the author a journalist (a media practitioner who works for the media institution as the first line of work) or is an independent contributor e.g. an expert.
- ii. **Qualitative** : Focusing on the nature and type of coverage, it will entail reading the published oil and gas content and an analyses of, among others, whether the media content on oil and gas are investigative, probing, depth, 'he/she said', event-driven, independent work by an individual journalist that is driven by self-motivation, etc.

### **Sample size**

The content of the three leading newspapers will be used for the study covering a (3) months period. Content from radio, TV and online will form selective secondary input for the study

### **D. STUDY TEAM**

The team is expected to make up of 2 researchers

- Lead Researcher with in-depth knowledge of Liberian Media sector
- Associate Researcher with knowledge of Liberia Media sector and basic knowledge of Liberian oil, Gas and Mining sector will be preferred

Penplusbytes mining, oil and gas team and external evaluators will work hand in hand with the 2 researchers during the finalization stage of the report

## **E. REPORT**

The final report is expected to provide in-depth analysis and insight and organized as the following chapters:

1. Overview of oil and gas sector
2. Overview of mining sector
3. Situational analysis of Media and Journalists coverage of oil and gas sector focusing on quality and quantity
4. Situational analysis of Media and Journalists coverage of mining sector focusing on quality and quantity
5. Assessment of knowledge and skills set of 7 pre-selected journalists in mining, oil and gas reporting. Assessment of their motivation and capacity to carry their work, the nature of issues they cover and the depth or its lack thereof of their work.
6. Recommendations on how reporting can be impactful.

**For more information send an email to [claudia@penplusbytes.org](mailto:claudia@penplusbytes.org)**