



## GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GEMAP

Implemented by: IBI International

# Roberts International Airport— Gateway to Liberia

In 2005, the RIA was operating at a loss, had negative cash balance, lacked essential operational and safety equipment, and was far from compliant with international standards. USAID technical assistance provided through GEMAP, has positively impacted revenues, which have nearly doubled since 2005. The institution now has a steady bank balance and is close to full compliance with international aviation standards.

### ***GEMAP Gets Secretary of State Clinton's Recognition***

Mrs. Clinton visited the RIA to pay tribute to USAID's contributions to reforming the institution through the activities of IBI GEMAP. Together with the IBI GEMAP Advisor at the RIA, Mrs. Clinton cut the ribbon for the airport safety and operational equipment at the RIA, procured with USAID funding. GEMAP has been instrumental in determining the need for and overseeing the procurement and installation of the equipment in accordance with international best practice. The equipment will improve the airport's compliance with international aviation standards, therefore attracting more international carriers, including those from the United States.

At RIA, GEMAP focused on achieving concrete progress through technical assistance which enabled RIA to speed up the documentation, institution, and testing of internal controls, the institution of automated accounting systems, and the building of staff capacity to sustain the systems instituted. This approach allowed the airport to maintain a good bank balance throughout the year, therefore enabling RIA to respond to urgently needed but expensive development items, while continuing to meet its recurring expenses, such as monthly payroll. Strict adherence to the procurement procedures and the credit terms for both customers and vendors helped to improve and maintain financial discipline.

USAID, through GEMAP, oversaw the procurement and installation of USAID-funded airport equipment for the RIA. The items, including rescue and firefighting equipment, power generating equipment, and ground handling equipment totaling \$4.5 million, will help the airport meet international standards, including USG (TSA) standards, which will attract additional international airlines. The new equipment increases airline safety and improves grounds operation services, making RIA a better value for airlines. As the primary international airport in Liberia, RIA is extremely important to economic growth and trade; these upgrades in airport equipment capacity have moved Liberia forward by facilitating general passenger service, tourism and air cargo.