

## **MCCU Facilitates Capacity Building Arrangement Between EGTC and VRA in Ghana**

Sierra Leone has taken a critical step to build the capacity of Sierra Leoneans to manage one of its critical assets, the Bumbuna Hydro-electric Dam.

Salini Impregilo, an Operations and Management (O&M) contractor has been managing and operating Sierra Leone's largest Hydro-electric Plant, Bumbuna 1 since it became operational in 2009. The Government of Sierra Leone in 2018 expressed interest in soliciting support from the Millennium Challenge Corporation to design a program to build the capacity of its staff at the Electricity Generation and Transmission Company (EGTC) to manage the Bumbuna Dam and others across the country in the immediate future. EGTC expressed a desire to utilize regional expertise to deliver this capacity building to ensure contextual relevance and sustainability.

In 2019, the Millennium Challenge Coordinating Unit entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the Volta River Authority in order to realize this commendable aspiration. The VRA being an established utility in the sub-region with proven experience and expertise in managing Africa's largest hydro plant (The Akosombo Dam) has a generation capacity of over 1,080 MW while the maximum generation capacity of Bumbuna 1 is just around 50 MW.

Following the signing of the MOA, a Framework Agreement was signed between EGTC and VRA on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at the VRA Headquarters in Accra to kick-off the EGTC-VRA Twinning Program.

The VRA Chief Executive, Emmanuel T. Antwi-Darkwa emphasized that VRA would bring expertise and excellence to this partnership and its track record is reflected in the successful management of the 1080 MW Akosombo Dam and others by Ghanaian engineers. He hoped to impart the "we can do it spirit" of the VRA into the EGTC staff as that has been crucial in the transformation of VRA into an enviable energy utility in the sub region.

The Chairman of the EGTC Board, Dr. David Kamara who was part of the Sierra Leone delegation said the partnership came at an opportune time as Sierra Leone prepares to integrate into the West African Power Pool (WAPP) adding that expertise in system dispatch and transmission management is critical to the integration process.

The Acting Director General of EGTC, Engineer John Kabbia said his institution is currently facing capacity challenges and was optimistic that the Twinning Program would aid EGTC to achieve its goal of managing its critical asset, the Bumbuna Dam.

Speaking on behalf of MCCU, the Director of Electricity Reform Project, Sanira Deen expressed delight that the agreement has been actualized. She noted that MCCU is eager to see the

successful completion of the Twinning Program and emphasized the need for ongoing practical assessment of knowledge and skills transferred during the period.

The Training Program makes provision for VRA Academy to train at least twenty-four (24) engineers and technicians of EGTC within a one-year period. The first batch of twelve (12) EGTC engineers have already arrived at the VRA academy in Ghana to commence training for an initial period of three months. The training programme will be implemented in two phases. Phase one: on-site training of EGTC staff in Ghana; Phase two: VRA staff training and assessing EGTC staff at the Bumbuna Hydro Power Station.



**(L-R) Ag. Director General-EGTC, Ing. John Kabbia exchanging a warm handshake with the Chief Executive of VRA, Emmanuel T. Antwi-Darkwa after the signing ceremony**



**Sierra Leone delegation and management of VRA after the signing ceremony**