



WESTERN HIGHLANDS FINANCIAL INCLUSION STEERING COMMITTEE INDUCTION MEETING REPORT

This report is compiled by Mr. Tobias Toumne (CEFI Special Projects Coordinator) and Mr. Busa Jeremiah Wenogo (CEFI Special Projects Manager)

Attendees

Western Highlands Provincial Government/Administration

Mr. Joseph Mangbil, Provincial Administrator - Western Highlands Provincial Government

Mr. Pius Mon, Manager Planning - Western Highlands Provincial Government

Mr. Steven Moka, Executive Officer - Western Highlands Provincial Government

Mr. Stanley Konga, PEC Member - Western Highlands Provincial Government

Mr. James Wakapu, Executive Manager Commerce - Western Highlands Provincial Government

Ms. Maria Tai, Cabinet Secretary - Western Highlands Provincial Government

Financial Institutions

Mr. Pati Kingal, NDB Branch Manager - Western Highlands Province

Mr. Ted Were, Branch Manager - Western Highlands Province

Ms. Theresa Pilamp, Manager BSPFG - Western Highlands Province

Mr. Busa Jeremiah Wenogo, Manager Special Projects - CEFI

Mr. Tobias Toumne, Coordinator Special Projects - CEFI

Mr. Paul Maina, Project Field Officer - CEFI MVF

Introduction

The following report provides a summary report information in reference to the Western Highlands Financial Inclusion Steering Committee Induction Meeting held in Western Highlands Province on May 4th 2023. The meeting was spearheaded by the Special Projects Unit of CEFI as part of its "Provincial Government Engagement Roll-Out Program" for Western Highlands Province. Prior to the Steering Committee Meeting a preparatory meeting was held between Mr James Wakapu and Mr Wenogo and Mr Toumne on the 3rd of May 2023 to finalise the arrangement for the steering committee meeting.

Purpose of the meeting

The purpose of the meeting was to formally induct the members of the Western Highlands Financial Inclusion Steering Committee with a large focus on educating them on the following;

- The content of the signed MOU and what it entails.
- Their role and responsibility as members of the Western Highlands Provincial Financial Inclusion Steering Committee.
- The importance of financial inclusion and why it needs to be promoted and supported by the provincial government.
- To discuss and map out the key activities for the Western Highlands Provincial Government in relation to financial inclusion.
- To prepare the provincial government to take ownership of the financial inclusion agenda starting with identifying financial inclusion as one of the province's key development priorities and incorporating it into their planning and budgetary process.

Key Discussion Points from the meeting

Mr Mangbil officially opened the meeting. In his speech he said that the meeting was timely & vital to lay the ground work for the roll out of Financial Inclusion activities in the province. He further stated that the signing of the MOU between CEFI/BPNG and WHP Provincial government will pave for financial inclusion to take off in the province.

He urged his team to speed up the implementation of the signed MOU noting how critical financial inclusion is to the development agenda of WHP. He gave assurance that the Provincial government is willing to support and partner with CEFI to rollout financial activities in the province. He extended an invitation to other financial institutions who were not present to come on board and partner with CEFI and the provincial government.

Mr Wenogo provided a brief overview of the National Financial Inclusion Strategy (2023-2027), the status of financial inclusion in Western Highlands Province, the content of the recent MOU, Provincial Government Financial Inclusion Rollout Strategy. In addition, he explained the TOR for the Provincial Steering Committee.

Besides the above he provided an overview of the financial inclusion status in the province and the challenges that has to be dealt with improve financial inclusion in the province. He mentioned that the new strategy aims to reach 2million additional accounts opened in which 50% should be women. On the other hand, 400,000 people should be trained of which 50% should be women.

In terms of the MOU he stated the establishment of the Provincial Steering Committee and a coordinating desk for coordinating financial inclusion is important before

implementations takes effect. The membership for the steering committee is on a voluntarily basis. There is no monetary benefits such as sitting allowance will be paid to the members of the committee.

Mr Wakapu commented on the recent signing of the WHPG MOU notifying the members that two new LLGS that were recently created will have to be included in the MOU. In relation to monitoring and evaluation he stated that trainings conducted should be monitored and evaluated to ensure that there is a positive impact on programs and people in rural communities.

In reference to Steering Committee Meeting, he suggested that allowance should be provided to participants in order to motivate them. In response, Mr Wenogo stated that, this matter should be considered by the provincial government as CEFI's view is that participation is voluntary. This he said is the case with the other provinces. Mr Wakapu advised the members that the matter of allowance will be brought to the attention of the Provincial government.

Ms Pilamp provided an update to the members on their work in the province. She stressed that it is a must to train people on how to manage and save money as the saving culture is lacking in WHP. BSP she said is willing to support any initiative to drive the financial inclusion in the province.

Besides the above she also expressed her concern on Chinese operated businesses which she claims never bank their daily takings with any banks. This she alleged is the reason why ATMs run out of money as most Chinese businesses tend to withdraw large cash from the ATMs and not bank them. She urged CEFI and BPNG to look into this and work with relevant agencies such as IPA, ICCC, Law enforcement agencies to address this.

Mr Vere gave an update on MiBank's operation in the province. He touched based on the Market for Village for Village Farmers Project that MiBank is working with CEFI and the Fresh Produce Development Agency (FPDA). MiBank is currently providing agriculture loans to the fresh produce farmers. Besides he urged CEFI and BPNG to include financial literacy as a subject in the National Education curriculum.

Besides the above he proposed for the telecommunication providers and NICTA and the media to be considered for inclusion in the Steering Committee.

Mr Moka raised a concern for lack of funding from the government which affect the implementation of the government's own plans and policies. He said lack of funding resulted in no positive outcome achieved from plans and policies.

He proposed for both CEFI and the WHP Provincial Government to roll-out financial inclusion awareness/advocacy in the rural districts and LLG's given the high illiteracy rate. He further supported the suggestion for financial literacy to be incorporated in the Education Curriculum due to the fact that the Savings culture in the province is lacking. He mentioned that it is about time the provincial government take on board the Financial Inclusion agenda as a priority in tackling many of the provinces' social and economic challenges through a coordinated approach.

Proposed Key Action Item

From the meeting the following key action items were noted;

- Mr Wakapu to liaise with the provincial government regarding the Chair of the Committee. The committee to be chaired by one of the Deputy Provincial Administrator. In the absence of the Deputy, the Commerce Executive Manager to chair the committee meeting.
- Additional members (other financial institutions)
- The steering committee to have two (2) meetings each year.
- Special meetings to be convened in between either through zoom or physical meetings.
- The first proper meeting to take place in the month of July. Date to be confirmed in due course.
- WHP Provincial Administration and CEFI to consider the request by the members of the committee to provide sitting allowance during meetings.
- Targets in the MOU to be revised with two new LLGs that were created to be included. It was agreed that an addendum be attached to the MOU to facilitate this.
- The draft Annual Workplan should be developed by CEFI and WHP Provincial Administration and tabled in the next meeting. Members of the committee particularly financial institutions to be provided a copy to provide their input.
- Market for Village Farmers Project to be considered as a key activity for WHPG and should be incorporated into the Annual activity plan.
- School Kids Savings Campaign to be implemented in WHP next year.
- Training Plan for this year to be developed by WHP Provincial Administration Commerce Division with assistance from CEFI.
- CEFI to conduct ToT Training
- CEFI to map out the presence of financial institutions and the products and services that they offered in WHP.
- WHP to conduct an audit of the Minimum Priorities and Key Economic Impact Projects in the districts.
- BDO's to identify a pool of people and recommend to Bank Institutions to be their agents in rural communities.
- CEFI and WHP Provincial Administration through the Commerce Division to develop an Awareness and Advocacy plans to be developed by WHPG

Conclusion

The Western Highlands Financial Inclusion Steering Committee Induction meeting was a success. Most of the committee members stressed the importance of partnership and collaboration. It was noted that this was the key to making the financial inclusion agenda in Western Highlands Province a success. All members have expressed their commitment to participate in the meeting and support the roll-out of the financial inclusion activities in WHP.

Western Highlands Financial Inclusion Steering Committee Induction meeting in pictures

Image 1: Representatives from the Western Highlands Provincial Government & Financial Institutions during the meeting.



(Left Row): Mr Joseph Mangbil, Provincial Administrator (Center standing), Mr James Wakapu Manager Commerce (Front seated left) Mr Paul Maina, Project Field Officer (Seated second left) Mr Pati Kingal, NDB Manager (Seated third left) Mr Pius Mon, Manager Planning (Seated fourth left) Ms Theresa Pilamp, Manager BSPFG (Seated fifth left)

(Right Row): Busa Jeremaih Wenego Manager Special Projects (Seated front) Ted Were, Manager MiBank (Seated second right) Steven Moka, Executive Officer (Seated third right) Stanley Konga, PEC Member (Seated fourth right)

Image 2: CEFI's Special Projects Manager Busa Jeremiah Wenogo making his presentation during the meeting.



Image3: CEFI's Special Projects Manager Mr Busa Jeremiah Wenogo in a meeting with Mr Ted Were and Mr Paul Maina on the MVF project.

Seated Center -Mr Busa Jeremiah Wenogo

Left - Mr Paul Maina,MVF Field Officer

Right- Mr Ted Were,Manager MiBank,Mt Hagen





Image 4: Members pose for a photo after the end of the meeting.

Front Row: (Mr Pati Kingal, Manager NDB, Mr Pius Mon, Manager Planning).

Center Row: (Mr Steven Moka, Executive Officer, Ms Theresa Pilamp, Manager BSPFG, Mr Ted Were, Branch Manager MiBank).

Back Row: (Mr Busa Jeremiah Wenogo, CEFI Special Projects Manager, Mr Stanley Konga, PEC Member).