

# Challenging expectations

James Harding is Seli Hydropower's General Manager, developing the **Bumbuna Hydro II project** in Sierra Leone. He attended InfraCo Africa's Business Integrity training in early 2023.

James joined the business in 2016 and was promoted to General Manager in 2022. He says, "Bumbuna Hydro II is an exciting project to be a part of as it will improve access to energy at a national level. Sierra Leone is currently reliant on imported energy - predominantly Heavy Fuel Oil - and this project will help to fill the renewable energy gap." James expects the project to attract foreign direct investment and to generate employment, increasing revenue for both the country and communities.

After taking part in training delivered by InfraCo Africa's Business Integrity team, James said, "Here in Sierra Leone, there is some expectation of facilitation payments or 'brown envelopes' as being a normal part of doing business, there is a need to change that mindset." Since starting as the General Manager, James has built relationships with stakeholders, reiterating that Bumbuna Hydro II will not make such payments.

He says, "Some topics we covered today were new to me - for example anti-money

laundering and combating the financing of terrorism - and I was surprised to learn about the consequences and high costs of corruption."

James is committed to putting the training into action. "It is important to deepen understanding of integrity commitments in the company. I will include Business Integrity as a regular agenda item for my team meetings." He also feels that he now has greater confidence to explain to communities why his team cannot accept gifts.

He concludes, "Alongside its investment, InfraCo Africa is supporting our staff and building our capacity around HSES, Business Integrity and Human Resources, bringing additional value to the project."

