

LOCALIZING MDG'S BY IMPROVING INFORMATION DEMAND AND SUPPLY IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE

A UNDP-SNV country engagement plan for Tanzania

Summary

This AA4 project will cover a period of 24 months in pilot settings in five Districts, two of which will be implemented by UNDP, and three by SNV. The project will increase Access To Information (ATI) for improved local governance and service delivery. The project will make use of the opportunities that present itself by the recent operationalization of local government information systems such as Planrep2 and the Local Government Monitoring Database. The pilot project will focus its work on the 5 main sectors that receive Block Grants at district level: Water, Education, Health, Roads and Agriculture. The project is based on the paradigm that improved basic service delivery reduces poverty.

It is recognized that policies and programs at the national level may not always translate into effective interventions at the local level. Thus the successful implementation of the MDG-led Poverty Reduction Strategy, MKUKUTA and its related monitoring system relies on focused implementation and adequate monitoring of interventions at the local level. It is therefore imperative for local authorities and the public to have access to relevant, up to date, and timely information to guide the efficient allocation of resources and monitoring of results especially with regard to MKUKUTA/MDG targets. There is need of availability and access of quality data and information to the non-state actors and the general public. This will facilitate informed dialogue, discussions, monitoring, and evaluation around development issues at the local level and enhance good governance and accountability for improved delivery of services.

This project intends to improve the quality of local governance by increasing access to and use of relevant local government information by the public, the **demand side of information**. For this purpose the project will facilitate the setup of an Information Centre in each of the 5 Districts. These IC's will make it their purpose to access LG information, translate that into understandable and relevant format and disseminate it to the citizens of the District. The project will indicate to the Prime Ministers Office Regional And Local Government (PMORALG) the type of information the public would like to be informed routinely.

The project will also support the local governments in their relatively new role of supplier of information to the public. With the introduction of the new local government information systems a wealth of easily accessible information has become available. Practically none of

this information finds its way to the general public, nor is it effectively used within the government bureaucracy. The project will make available expertise and modest funds to **facilitate the supply of information.**

Lastly, the project will inventorize what **already collected routine data** can be incorporated in the Local Governments Management Information Systems (MIS). For years, routine data has been collected from service delivery level in large quantities and aggregated manually. The project will take stock of what data is being collected and will advise what data could be usefully fed into the Local Government Monitoring Database (LGMD).

PART I.

1. Context: Brief summary of national IPS programme and related MDG initiatives:

As one of the countries that subscribed to the MDG's in 2000, Tanzania committed itself to develop strategies and mobilize necessary interventions for the achievement of the goals come 2015. Attendant to that, Tanzania reviewed its first Poverty Reduction Strategy (2001-2003) in 2004 and came up with a comprehensive National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty, MKUKUTA in Kiswahili acronym. MKUKUTA is a fully MDG based, national owned strategy which is results oriented. It underscores partnerships in its formulation and implementation involving all key stakeholders. Consequently, Tanzania qualifies and accesses the Integrated Package of Services (IPS) offered by UNDP. This project forms part of the third essential IPS pillar related to the MDG-based national development strategy: Strengthening the country capacity to deliver. In Tanzania this coincides with pillar 3 of Mkukuta: Governance and accountability.

The IPS services in Tanzania have mainly involved support to the needs assessment (costing) exercise for the MKUKUTA, as well as support to the strengthening of national capacity to implement the growth and poverty reduction strategy. At this point, costing of five key sectors i.e. Agriculture, Education, Health, Water and Roads is complete while costing for the others is underway. On the other hand, UNDP national capacity development programs have focused on capacity to coordinate and implement the Poverty Monitoring System (PMS) and dissemination of its results, strengthening the institutional capacity of the Government (particularly the Poverty Eradication Division) for effective policy influence, support for rationalization, harmonization and alignment of key national processes and frameworks around the MKUKUTA, and support to non state actors for effective participation in national development processes. All these interventions aim at enhancing national capacity to implement and attain the millennium development goals.

UNDP Tanzania is also engaged in local level MDG related initiatives which include support for the formulation of district MDG based development strategies on a pilot basis, and the Millennium Villages Project (MVP) in Uyui District, Tabora region. The MVP involves comprehensive community based, science based integrated multi-sector interventions that aim at demonstrating attainability of the MDG's in a rural setting.

SNV is providing a wide range of capacity strengthening services to Local Government Authorities (LGA's) and non-state actors in 21 Districts in eight regions in Tanzania with the aim to localize the MDG's. SNV support is centered around improved basic service delivery and stimulating local economic development through more responsive and accountable governance systems. SNV supports the Government in its effort of decentralization by devolution, under the mandate of the Prime Ministers Office Regional and Local Governments and implemented by the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP) which is aimed at streamlining local government structures and processes for enhanced quality and access to public services. To optimize the 'localization' effect of the project, this proposal attempts to find leverage by connecting to these and similar ongoing localization processes in Tanzania and maximize compatibility for both UNDP and SNV building on the existing local structures. The on-going 'Localization' processes for which the project will link up include the localization of the MKUKUTA and its (Poverty) Monitoring System, and the interventions under the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP), which both have considerable momentum in Tanzania.

2. Strategic and Operational Linkages with IPS national programme

UNDP and SNV together already maintain active relationships with the key strategic partners for this project namely the Ministry of Planning, Economy and Empowerment (MPEE), the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), PMORALG, LGRP and Civil Society Organizations (CSO's). UNDP interacts with MPEE to strengthen its capacity to undertake its central responsibility of coordinating policy & planning, poverty and MKUKUTA issues including the poverty monitoring system. UNDP also supports the NBS in the management of the Tanzania Social Economic Database (TSED) which is the central repository of development related data for Tanzania and is a user friendly tool for dissemination and presentation of data. TSED contains disaggregated data down to the district and ward levels useful for local level analysis.

SNV has been active at national level in stimulating broad Civil Society engagement in the PRS process through its advisory role to the NGO network, the Policy Forum. To support LGA's in improving their basic service delivery, SNV advises the LGRP in their roll out of national systems. SNV is active in 24 districts in Tanzania, providing advisory services to local governments, CSO's and private sector organizations. Especially concerning Local Governance, SNV works in close collaboration with the Royal Netherlands Embassy in the Capacity Building of Local Government Authorities (CBLGA) programme.

3. Overall Objectives and success indicators.

The Overall Objective of this proposal is to stimulate evidence based governance at district level by improving access to information both by government and non-state actors.

The use of newly available valid and reliable information is meant to stimulate healthy public debate and subsequently improve governance. All stakeholders in this process need to have access to relevant and understandable information. Since it is generally accepted that 'informing the public' forms one of the key elements of accountability by local governments (see amongst others *The World Development Report 2004, WB 2004*) the information will need to be provided to the public domain.

The LGRP over the past few years has introduced a number of computer based information systems to be used at district level. Two of these systems are most relevant to this project. Planrep2 has integrated planning and reporting in one package and contains detailed information, including budget and expenditure, disaggregated to village level. Since 2006 all 128 districts have submitted their plans in the Planrep format. Planrep will dramatically increase the available information related to the planning and implementation cycle.

The Local Government Monitoring Database holds over 100 centrally formulated indicators. The LGMD with its renewed list of indicators, including indicators based on Mkukuta and MDG's, will be rolled out in all districts in the coming year and has an annual cycle. Data for most of the indicators will need to be collected and entered by the local governments specifically for this purpose.

These systems will undoubtedly increase upward accountability and transparency, that is from village level to the district, and from district level to national. Little attention is given, however, to downward and horizontal accountability. It is unclear how reports generated by Planrep and the LGMD will be made available to the citizens in the districts and to the village governments, and whether the standard reports contain meaningful information for citizens and their organizations ("*...communication focuses on what the government wants to disclose, not necessarily on what the people want to know*", *Idasa 2004*). Recently PMORALG has decided to make all district Planrep databases available on the internet, which again is a huge step towards transparency. But capacity at district level, both within the government system and in civil society, to access and analyze such database is at the most limited and usually absent.

Parallel to these systems, in each sector much detailed information is being collected routinely at sub-district level and processed manually. Unfortunately the use of this valuable information at district level is minimal, and is at risk to be ignored even more with the introduction of more easily accessible systems as Planrep and LGMD.

It is here that the project will localize its effort: Minimizing the gap between demand for information and the big potential to supply, and inventorize what already collected routine data can be usefully integrated in the current system. This is in line with the recent guidelines adopted by the central government on ATI, based on the recommendations of the research by IDASA (Institute for Democracy in South Africa) in 2004: Citizens Access to Information, and it's use for greater government accountability and responsiveness.

Determination of success of the project has a district and national component. Naturally improved basic services are the key results to be measured. However, the lifespan of the project is likely too short to measure significant change. Success of the project at district level therefore will be measured in terms of increased access to information and increased use of evidence in governance processes. The preliminary survey will propose a set of district specific indicators to measure progress during and at the end of the project. At national level, the success of the project will be judged on the degree to which the project has been useful to national processes and systems within the LGRP and the Mkukuta Poverty Monitoring System. For this reason institutions as MPEE, NBS and LGRP are involved from the start.

PART 2

4. Overview of proposed actions and time involvement.

I. Preliminary survey

Prior to activities in the districts, in each selected district under this programme a survey will be conducted in all five districts. In each district at least one village will be visited. The survey will map in each district the current public access to information and the usefulness of the information presented to citizens. The survey will also describe the use of the newly available information from Planrep and LGMD within the government system, and lastly it will describe routine data that is already collected in the five key sectors and its use in the district and advise on inclusion in Planrep and LGMD. The results of the survey will be shared with the LGRP immediately and will contain recommendations on 'what the people want to know'. The survey will also formulate indicators for this project to measure the progress of the project and its effect on the local governance process.

II. National activities

At national level technical work needs to be done, in collaboration with the Management Information System department of PMORALG and with NBS, to integrate the desired sector specific parameters in the LGMD and TSED. UNDP is already involved in an advisory capacity to NBS on TSED and will coordinate this activity. NBS's role (specifically the Regional Statistical Officer) will be to provide technical support and advise to the district authorities in the management of the database and data for new indicators identified by the district as relevant. Once the databanks are updated, available selected historical data will be entered for the five districts. This will allow for the districts to start off the project with the possibility to analyze trends in the sub-districts. A consultant will be hired to coordinate this activity. In order to stimulate the exchange of experiences between the five pilot districts, an annual exchange visit will be organized that carries the characteristics of an action research. At the end of the project the results will be publicised to a wider community.

III. District level activities

a. Access to information, the demand side.

To facilitate access to information, in each district an Information Centre will be set up. The project specifically aims at bringing relevant information in the public domain: to allow the public to inform themselves. The project will identify existing organizations in the districts with the capacity to access, analyze and disseminate information and build on such existing capacity. Depending on the specific district context, the project will pilot with different options. Alternatively, the project will bring together interested non-state actors such as representatives of the media, NGO's and Faith Based Organizations (FBO's) and stimulate the formation of an independent district level Information Centre. Another possibility to pursue is an information centre under shared responsibility of the government and civil society. Particularly at Regional level this can be effective, since the regional secretariat will increasingly play the role of information provider.

The Information Centres will be equipped with the necessary computer hardware and staff. The centre will be able to access and analyze information, for which its staff will be trained in the use of TSED, LGMD and other LGA management information software that will be made available to them. The recent decision by PMORALG to publish the full content of Planrep2 on their website provides potential to make huge progress on this. CSO's (and citizens), if organized, will now be able to inform themselves in great detail on planning and implementation down to village level.

The Information Centres need the technical and financial capacity to disseminate information using local print, radio and TV. The centres will propose to UNDP/SNV on how to operate in detail and the AA4 project will financially support them for 2 years and assist them in finding a longer term source of financing.

b. Supply of information; informing citizens and (sub-district) governments

Despite the availability of the new information systems, in practice their introduction and use at district level encounters many delays. The reason vary from technical problems such as computer breakdown or lack of capacity of staff, to resistance by managers to change towards a more transparent and accountable way of working. Moreover, there is little incentive for LGA's to be generous with information. In districts where the software is working, the systems are mostly used to fulfil accountability requirements upstream and not all government staff is fully aware of the potential the information systems hold at district level. Supplying the ward and village governments with information, therefore, is minimal and providing the general public with information is almost non-existent.

The LGA's have assigned technical staff (statistician, logistics officer) within the LGA sector offices and the project will build on this present capacity. The project will provide hand-on support to LGA's to incorporate the use of Planrep and LGMD in daily work, of course making use of the existing support structure that exists in PMORALG. As a standard service, UNDP will provide training in use of TSED and LGMD, as well as in statistical literacy to relevant actors in all five districts. The project will, together with LGA personnel, explore and stimulate internal use of information within LGA's, including to Lower LGA's, councillors as well as the general public. The technical staff will be supported by SNV to be able to perform specific analysis on demand from within the LGA. For the duration of the pilot, the project will make funds available to print and send written information within the districts, to use local radio broadcast, or to try out other ways to disseminate information.

Given the logistical problems and cost involved, information dissemination from district to village communities is a chronic problem. The project will make modest funds available for this, with which it hopes to stimulate the creative use of information channels. Possible interventions:

- a. One of the best options for this is radio e.g. special programmes such as 'Today in our Council'. Councils are usually reluctant to make use of this channel, but CSO's could be interested.
- b. People like to read newspapers and to read news about their own area. In Tanzania there used to be local newspapers e.g. 'Masasi Leo'. It might be useful to facilitate interest in developing small local newspapers through press clubs.

At village level, simple village databases are lacking. Trials were done on a household database using one card per household. It would be important to understand how decisions are made at village level in reality. To what extent is decision making based on village data and information, vis-à-vis individual opinions?

Possible interventions:

- a. Village notice boards can be a simple and effective means to disseminate information provided they are kept up to date. Anyone who can read has access and information can be passed on by word of mouth.
- b. Some Council staff are interested in civic education (from their point of view - getting people to understand their roles and responsibilities in development). It could be a useful entry point to this issue (right to access information).
- c. Once the community is more aware of their possible influence: Improvement in the use of village level data would need to be linked to the Opportunities and Obstacles to Development (O&OD) process.

Although data of all five sectors are entered in the databank, concerning information dissemination, SNV limits its support to the LGA and the Information Centres to the sectors Education and Water. Where possible, other actors more knowledgeable in Roads, Agriculture and Health will be requested to provide necessary support if required. UNDP will support all five sectors in its district work.

c. *Incorporating routine data in LGMD*

This part of the project departs from the notion that much routine management and poverty related information is already being collected at sub-district level. Such information is supposedly used to inform the district government on the status and trends in terms of quantity and quality public services. In reality this information is processed manually and passed on to national level and hardly accessible for district level actors. Usually district governments are fed back their data only in an aggregated form which is far from useful for district consumption.

The project will tap selected, relevant routine data (as indicated by the preliminary survey and in agreement with the LGRP) at district level, and integrate it in the LGMD. Much of the routine data is collected quarterly which can be useful for district management and governance. However, the LGMD uses an annual cycle. The project will experiment with entering these selected indicators on a quarterly basis. Actors will be supported to analyze, interpret and use the information effectively. The preliminary survey will advise on the feasibility of, as a one-time effort, entering historical key routine data, stored in national databases, such as the one at the Ministry of Education, to allow historical analysis.

d. *Stimulating the use of evidence in District and Sub-District Governance*

SNV and UNDP will support government and non-government actors in the District in maximizing the use of evidence in the governance processes. For SNV this type of service will be integrated in the services already provided to its clients. Once information is available to the different development actors it will enrich the various existing fora where the LGA enters into dialogue with its citizens or with their representatives. “For participation to be meaningful – in the sense of giving poor people an active voice in the decisions that are being taken that affect their daily lives – accurate information about for examples local budgets and policies and the decision-making processes is vital”, Idasa 2004. For any of the events where public participation is required, such as the Village Assembly, O&OD exercises, Ward Development Committee meetings, Full District Council Meetings, meetings between councillors and their constituency, the quality of such dialogue will improve if the participants are informed and prepared better. The project will monitor the quality of such events and stimulate where possible the use of information. Specific cases on how people were able to use such information and influence their local governments will be documented as case studies and offered for wider distribution.

SNV and UNDP will specifically support district councillors in obtaining necessary information for decision making at their level by helping them understand and interpret the information. This will prepare them for effective participation in council committees and the full council meeting, and will help them demanding full accountability and transparency from the executive.

5. Process of consultation and stakeholder participation in design and implementation

In preparation to the project, consultations have been taking place with the LGRP, some district sectoral and planning offices, NGO's, the National Bureau of statistics, MPEE and the Foundation for Civil Society (FCS). During the inception phase of the project, more discussions will take place with district level stakeholders which will form the base for district selection.

6. The focus on gender interests and issues

SNV will ensure that gender aspects are generally integrated into the project. In particular during the preliminary study attention will be given to find out whether and how gender indicators can be distilled from routine data and how they can be made specific in the databank system. Equally during the training and capacity building support, guidance will be provided on the importance of inclusion of gender issues in governance processes and therefore the need of gender specific data in the whole process: collecting, analysing and using the gender specific data for decision making and prioritising purposes.

Total budget and time investment

The pilot has a national component and will run specific activities in five districts. UNDP will pilot in two districts and SNV will select three districts located in its Portfolio's.

Total budget for the two year programme in USD:	451,500
Total Direct Advisory Days UNDP:	195
Total Direct Advisory Days SNV:	270

PART 3.

7. Risk analysis

A number of risks that can negatively influence the outcome of the project:

a. *Limited motivation of key actors*

The project requires a number of key actors at LGA level who believe in the usefulness of the project and who are willing to invest time and effort. The actual benefits of improved information are likely to take a while to materialize. Should such ownership fade, the project will not succeed. Mitigation: the districts will be chosen based on motivated actors. SNV and UNDP staff present in the districts will actively try to maintain motivation

b. *Sustainability*

It is important that the project activities continue and take root beyond the project life. If the local government authorities do not progressively take charge of the project activities in terms of consciously allocating resources and staff time, the activities will not last. Similarly, the non-state actors need to successfully seek

alternative own and other sources to support the Information Centre sustainably. Mitigation: Much will depend on the quality of UNDP's and SNV's advisory services at district level. It is likely that extra funds for the IC will be easier to obtain through the FCS, which already has expressed interest. Local authorities will have to find additional funds in their own budget.

c. *A technical solution for a political or cultural problem*

Lack of transparency at LGA level is sometimes, as has been described in the past, the result of a political choice to hide details about government operations. In Tanzania the culture of confidentiality is strong and widespread, due to the general feeling that knowledge is power; whether one uses the knowledge or not, it is better to sit on it. The complexity of newly introduced technical solutions can be used as an excuse for inability. Mitigation: the role of the IC and media are vital; SNV and UNDP to convince all actors that sharing data and information in the interest of each and everyone, for which the backing of PMORALG will be important; the technical contributions need to be simple and robust.

PART 4

8. Results and Resources Framework

The project will be directed by a Management Committee formed by UNDP and SNV staff. UNDP will appoint a Project Coordinator responsible for administering the project. The Project Coordinator will report to the Management Committee.

SNV and UNDP will organize Bi-annual learning sessions in which involved UNDP, SNV, NBS and selected participants from the districts will meet to exchange experiences and adjust the project accordingly.

PART 5

9. Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements

The project will measure the effect of improved availability and use of routine data at various levels and on different moments and the M&E system will be moulded around the outline of the project:

Process: Key indicators will be established that follow the "gain" in each phase. Likely the flow of each phase into the next phase will provide opportunities to measure progress. The preliminary consultancy will propose a list of indicators for this.

Outcome: In the lifespan of the project only the effect of the use of routine data on the planning process can be measured. This will be measured against the findings of the initial assessment in each district.

Effect: Should the project be extended with another two years, it will be possible to measure improved service delivery.

Impact: Not possible to measure reduced poverty during the lifespan of this project, but possible by 2009.

Towards the end of 2008 an external evaluation is planned. To promote up scaling, at the beginning of 2007 possibilities will be explored to identify control districts, which will allow comparison in terms of outcome and possibly effects and build a strong case for ATI initiatives like this.

