

**BEST PRACTICES IN DECENTRALIZED MONITORING  
AND EVALUATION OF POVERTY REDUCTION**

**REPORT ON:**

**A ROUNDTABLE ON EMERGING EXPERIENCES AND PRACTICES**

**AT THE COCONUT GROOVE REGENCY HOTEL, ACCRA**

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## LIST OF ACROYNMS

AC	Area Council
ARCC	Ashanti Region Coordinating Council
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSC	Community Score Card
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DA	District Assembly
DACF	District Assembly Common Fund
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DBO	District Budget Officer
DCE	District Chief Executive
DFID	Department for International Development
DISCAP	District Capacity Building Project
DPCU	District Planning and Coordinating Unit
DPMG	District Poverty Monitoring Group
DPO	District Planning Officer
DSDA	Danish Support to District Assemblies
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
IPA	Institute for Policy Alternatives
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MOFEP	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MOWAC	Ministry of Women and Children Affair
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NGOs	Non- Governmental Organizations
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RCC	Regional Coordinating Council
REPO	Regional Economic Planning Officer
RPCU	Regional Planning and Coordinating Unit
RPMG	Regional Poverty Monitoring Group
UC	Unit Committee
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

## 1 Introduction

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is increasingly becoming an effective and efficient tool for accountability and learning within the development paradigm of poverty reduction. Included in M&E is an emphasis on decentralised M&E that reports on progress of poverty reduction efforts at the district level. Decentralised M&E is usually led and implemented by district administrations. This emphasis on decentralised M&E is critical to the effective implementation and monitoring of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy, which recognizes the critical role that districts have in ensuring that interventions to reduce poverty are successful.

District Based M&E is becoming more relevant for numerous reasons including: the need for coherent data to inform the District planning effort; the increased emphasis on accountability; the recognition that M&E is necessary to determine whether or not development interventions are having an impact at the local level; and the commitment of the Government of Ghana to the decentralization process. This increased relevance has led to a proliferation of M&E interventions being implemented at the district level.

The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) has developed a framework for Decentralized Monitoring & Evaluation of Poverty Reduction, as part of the overall national plan for the monitoring and evaluation of GPRS. After producing a draft framework, NDPC has relied on active projects in the field of decentralization to develop and test operational mechanisms for building capacities and implementing the systems of decentralized M&E. At this juncture numerous mechanisms have been tested and piloted in various regions of the country. While this increased focus on M&E is useful for the above reasons, there is a need for coordination and collaboration, otherwise districts will (and indeed are) overwhelmed with requests for information.

In order to share experiences and learn from one another in the first step towards agreeing on a common system the District Capacity Building Project<sup>1</sup> (DISCAP) and the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) convened a day-long roundtable to facilitate the sharing of experiences on the subject of decentralized monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of poverty reduction initiatives. This paper is a synthesis of the main issues that were shared and discussed among development practitioners and evaluation specialists, during the day-long roundtable.

### *1.1 Objectives of Roundtable*

The roundtable was expected to achieve the following objectives:

- To review the national framework for decentralized M&E of poverty reduction, within an international context;

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<sup>1</sup> DISCAP is a 5 year, \$7 million CDN initiative between the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) whose goal is improved local governance in the 3 Northern Regions with a specific emphasis on water and sanitation.

- To share understanding among national development institutions and development partners on the different, yet complimentary approaches towards implementing the national framework for decentralized M&E of poverty reduction;
- To exchange experiences about the specific results emerging from the initiatives in M&E at the district level;
- To outline an agenda for coordinated action on decentralized M&E that is consistent with the national framework and responding to the demands for accountability and learning at the local and district levels.

## **2 Policy Context – National Realities and Global Challenges**

The Roundtable began by exploring issues related to decentralised M&E in the international and national contexts.

The opening session of the Roundtable incorporated two presentations: Dr. Edward Jackson<sup>2</sup> - ‘Learning to Walk the Talk: An International Perspective on Decentralized Poverty Monitoring’ and Mr. Bruno Dery<sup>3</sup> - ‘Decentralized M&E in Ghana: Framework, Process and Expected Outcomes.’

The full copy of the papers presented in this session are located in Appendix A.

### ***2.1 “Learning to Walk the Talk: An International Perspective on Decentralized Poverty Monitoring” A Summary of a Paper Presented by Dr. Ted Jackson***

While the Ghana efforts reflect an innovation in localizing M&E that is poverty-targeted, this cannot be understood without referring to the global trends. According to Dr. Ted Jackson, ‘the past years have seen governments of developing countries and donor agencies doing more talking on Decentralized monitoring and evaluation than actually implementing it.’ Dr. Jackson defined decentralised poverty monitoring as a system of activities in which local government agencies and civil society organizations assess progress on a nationally established set of indicators of deprivation and assets, and on the effectiveness of public expenditure on poverty-reduction programs.

It has been in the past five years that decentralized poverty monitoring has moved forward substantially within the international circles. International support for the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as core poverty indicators; a shift from stand-alone project funding to program-based approaches in the form of Poverty Reduction Papers (PRSPs) for debt relief and Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs); widespread agreement on strategies and methodologies for policy monitoring; the movement of strategies and methods for participatory monitoring and evaluation from the margins to the mainstream, and from micro to macro level; and the focus on

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<sup>2</sup> Dr. Edward Jackson is a professor at the School of Community and Public Affairs at Carleton University, Ottawa Canada. Dr. Jackson is also a M&E Specialist and the Project Director of DISCAP.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Bruno Dery is the officer responsible for Decentralised M&E at the National Development Planning Commission.

decentralization as the focal point of the governance agenda indicate significant opportunities for decentralized poverty monitoring globally.

However, several challenges continue to exist:

- The narrow role for civil society in program based approaches;
- Practical expressions of the PBA approach have been ambiguous on the role that technical assistance can or should play in the implementation and monitoring of poverty-reduction policy;
- Development actors focus more on horizontal coordination (across donors and central agencies) than vertical linkages that are necessary to facilitate decentralized poverty monitoring;
- The focus on program based approaches and the macro-level policy processes undervalue the micro-level variation in deprivation and assets, which are key components of decentralized poverty monitoring; and
- The complex roles of the local government official in decentralized poverty monitoring in managing negative and positive findings, as well as stakeholder expectations, are not well understood.

Dr. Jackson continued by proposing that Ghana holds much promise as a leading site to advance the practice of decentralized poverty monitoring worldwide. There are several enabling factors in the policy environment as well as substantial lessons being learned from initiatives being experimented with on the ground. He suggested that the main components for a national platform for decentralised poverty monitoring be the following:

- Phase II of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy;
- Multi-donor budget support;
- NDPC's framework, indicators and procedures; and
- Capacity development, especially at the regional and district levels.

In conclusion he stated that in spite of the numerous challenges to the decentralized poverty monitoring, Ghana has gone far with the exercise and therefore holds much promise as a leading site to advance the practice of decentralized poverty monitoring worldwide. Ghana has come far now to walk the talk of decentralized poverty monitoring and a transition from pilots and analysis to full-fledge nationwide implementation is now possible. This will require the full support and corporation from government, development partners and all stakeholders.

## ***2.2 “Decentralised M&E in Ghana: Framework, Process and Expected Outcomes” A Summary of a Paper Presented by Mr. Bruno Dery***

Mr. Dery opened by introducing the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) is the key development policy framework for the country. A National M&E plan forms the basis for monitoring the GPRS. The Annual Progress Reports (APR 2002 and 2003) resulting from the M&E exercises provide a framework for the systematic review of the GPRS programme and project implementation and their impact on the socio-economic development of the country on an annual basis.

Mr. Dery indicated that improved governance through the decentralization of authority and responsibility to the district level is a key element of the GPRS. Increased resources are flowing to the districts and there is a need for the districts to be accountable both to their citizens and to GoG. As the districts are playing a growing role in the implementation of the GPRS the assessment of progress has to start from the local level. He summarized his position on the need for decentralised M&E by stating that it provides district authorities, the government, development partners and the general public with better means for learning from past experience, improving service delivery, planning and allocating resources, and demonstrating results as part of accountability to key stakeholders.

NDPC has produced guidelines for district based M&E to help the DAs develop and institute an effective and efficient system for tracking the programmes, projects and activities that are ongoing in their local areas and to produce timely reports for NDPC and other stakeholders.

Mr. Dery stated that one of the reasons that there is little motivation at the district level to carry out M&E is that there is little demand for results. Yet as was already stated M&E is critical to the effective implementation of poverty reduction efforts. Therefore, Mr. Dery suggested that sustained demand and capacity for M&E should be established and should start from the central government level, from regional authorities, and from stakeholders, including civil society organizations.

The guidelines for district based M&E outline a system to collect, analyse and present data to the GoG. Some key aspects of the system include:

- Identification of 20 core indicators and provision for district specific indicators;
- Utilization of PlanInfo, an M&E software which has been developed to support NDPC's M&E process and incorporates the ability to create and maintain district profiles. This information can be updated on a regular basis and sent to the regional level where compilation and harmonization will take place before it is sent to NDPC;
- Institutional arrangements that call for a Regional Poverty Monitoring Group (RPMG) that would coordinate the M&E process including collating data from the Districts, supporting capacity building on M&E where necessary, review data and verify inconsistencies, ensure gender based analysis is undertaken at all districts, hold bi-annual workshops to involve all DAs within the region for cross district GPRS review and policy recommendations etc; and a District Poverty Monitoring Group (DPMG) that would collect and review data on poverty indicators, liaise with RPMG to agree on goals, indicators and targets, monitor progress of projects and programmes in the districts, provide key input in the policy development process based on the results of M&E etc.; and
- Detailed communication systems that outline roles for NDPC, RPMGs and DPMGs.

Mr. Dery concluded his presentation with the following recommendations:

- Increase demand for M&E by requiring DAs to utilize the information in their planning;
- Conduct citizen assessments of the effectiveness and efficiency of poverty reduction interventions and services; and
- Strengthen the National Decentralised M&E system.

### ***2.3 Summary of Discussion Period on International and National Contexts***

One of the concerns raised by roundtable participants was the apparent lack of concern for gender issues in the decentralized M&E process. It was specifically noted that women's organizations did not constitute a part of the District Poverty Monitoring Group. There is the need to identify which women's organizations are to be included in the District Poverty Monitoring Group. NDPC also acknowledged the absence of gender concerns in the first GPRS document but assured the house that gender issues will be considered to a much greater depth in GPRS II.

A further concern that was raised is that communication systems between sector ministries seem to be isolated. There should be a way to disseminate M&E reports both vertically within sectors and to NDPC/MLGRD. It was also noted that some districts and regions send reports to NDPC and receive no response. It was suggested that feedback to those who sent reports is very important and therefore must be taken note of.

It was noted that civil society groups were marginalized in the government system despite the fact that these organizations are in direct contact with the communities and therefore their role should be recognized as far as information flow is concerned.

The final discussion point related to the creation of structures at the district and regional level. Often structures are established and inaugurated but not resourced to effect positive change? It was suggested that NDPC should make available resources to trickle down to the lower structures to implement the M&E system.

## **3 Lessons Learned from District and Regional Interventions**

The remaining presentations focused on emerging experiences in decentralized M&E in Ghana being carried out by different organizations and stakeholders in the M&E process. This will look at 4 presentations from various regions of the country.



### ***3.1 Decentralized Monitoring and Evaluation of Poverty Reduction – experiences from Northern Ghana<sup>4</sup>***

A decentralized M&E system is being piloted in the three Northern regions of Ghana that was built upon the guidelines for district based M&E developed by NDPC. The implementation of the system is guided by a detailed stepwise manual titled ‘Indicators for Change: Decentralised Poverty Monitoring and Evaluation: An Operational Manual for District Assembly and Regional Staff developed by Regional and District stakeholders with assistance from DISCAP staff.

The purpose of the decentralized M&E system is threefold:

- Enhance planning and programming by tracking results of interventions and identifying gaps;
- Increase resource flow through the demonstration of achievements, needs and other pressing issues; and
- Account to citizens, development partners, and central government on results of poverty reduction efforts.

The components of the decentralized M&E system are:

*Status of Poverty* – collection of district level data on core GPRS indicators, as well as a compilation of a District Profile that will identify trends and needs of the district;

*District Development Management Capacity Assessments* – to gauge performance of DAs and identify performance gaps; and

*Community Assessment of Poverty Reduction Efforts* – to understand the community’s view of poverty, whether or not progress is made and how basic services are being delivered.

Mr. Addah shared the key experiences that were critical to the implementation of the exercise as being:

- A series of preparatory meetings with stakeholders to develop and validate Operational manual;
- A series of workshops and training sessions were organized for both regional and district staffs to undertake the exercise; and
- A pilot in three districts: Savelugu Nanton, Wa and Bawku West.

The primary lessons learned include:

- There are inadequate capacities of DA staff to carry out assignment (including apathy). To address the concern of apathy, there is the need to incorporate an institution such as the NDPC into the exercise and also specify the number of times within a period that the exercise is to be carried out.

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<sup>4</sup> The experiences from the Northern Regions were presented by Mr. Greg Addah of the Regional Planning and Coordinating Unit (RPCU), Northern Region who represented the three pilot districts of each of the three Northern Regions. This experience was support with technical and financial assistance provided by the DISCAP project.

- There are significant gaps in the collection, analysis and storage of data and management of data is poor.
- There are several different players and stakeholders practicing M&E in the field, which results in a lack of an effective and holistic approach to the M&E process. There is therefore the need for collaboration between stakeholders (MLGRD, JICA, MDAs, NDPC, UNICEF, CIDA) in the field for effective feedback into the planning process, including policy formulation which is essential to the process.
- In spite of communities enthusiasm to provide information there is a danger in overwhelming them with requests without demonstrating any change once the information is gathered.

Discussions arising from this presentation were concerned with the high cost involved in implementing M&E activities at the district level. Do the benefits justify the cost involved in the M&E process and what are the alternatives? Other financial concerns were raised related to the percentage of the national budget is set aside for M&E activities. On the question of other alternatives, it was made clear that policy demands that every development partner and donor should reserve a certain part of it funds towards M&E implementation. There was also the mention that resources from DISCAP, DWAP, NDPC and collaboration with other donors takes the lead in providing technical support to M&E implementation

There was also a worry that the lower level structures of the decentralization process (Area Councils, AC and Unit Committees, UC ) are not really represented – the very people who are to be catered for. In view of this the decentralization M&E system still remains a centralized system. There is therefore the need to devolve a decentralization that caters for a bottom up approach.

### ***3.2 Presentation II: “Regional Development Indicators and Participatory Review”<sup>5</sup>***

Mr. Azasoo explained that the demand for review of development status in the three northern regions was created as a result of a request from some Regional Ministers seeking to know the level of development intervention in their area of jurisdiction. This became necessary, as it came to light that most interventions to the districts are not channeled through the RCC therefore making it impossible for the RCC to play it oversight role on development programs in the regions. The DAs are also not able to coordinate programs and projects of all development partners and sectors within the districts and this was as a result of no coordinated district Annual Action Plans. Inadequate capacity of some members of the DA to collect and analyze data is also a setback affecting the development issues identified.

A proposed solution to the above issues was the organisation of a series of meetings facilitated by NDPC to review development programmes in each of the Regions. The Regional Review Meeting brought together all development partners and stakeholders from the DPCUs of each Region. Each district was given a template to guide their

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<sup>5</sup> This paper was presented by Jonathan Azasoo of NDPC who was involved as a moderator of the process.

collection of data. Some of the issues considered were: total cash flow into the districts, breakdown of cash flow into the various sectors, contribution of development partners to various sectors, major development problems in the districts and strategies put in place to tackle these problems.

Mr. Azasoo described the Regional Review process highlighting the following key experiences:

- Introduction of districts to the objectives of the regional review process and to the GPRS indicators that would form the basis of the report on development status of each district and region.
- Mutual agreement for District Development Reports to be presented by District Chief Executives (DCEs).
- Agreement that the Regional Review meetings should be chaired by Hon. Regional Ministers to keep them abreast with development activities occurring in their districts.

Lessons learned from the Regional Review process include:

- The need to build capacity for district staff on data collection and analysis;
- Districts have different formats for reporting on similar issues, which presents the need to develop a uniform format for data collection and presentation at district level;
- Greater collaboration should be encouraged and established between and among donors and other stakeholders at the district; and
- Regional reviews should be held annually to assess the impact of development interventions been carried on.

A critical concern that arose for discussion was the lack of gender analysis in the review process. It was indicated that throughout the presentations gender issues were highlighted although women were underrepresented in the analysis teams. The NDPC acknowledged the fact that the first GPRS document was devoid of gender issues and concerns, it was an oversight which has been taken note of and has been addressed in current programs.

Participants also wanted to know the measures that have been adopted by the institutions responsible for mainstreaming gender into programs? There was the assurance that the Ministry of Children and Women's Affairs (MOWAC) have taken up the issue of gender seriously and have forwarded a report to NDPC.

Lastly, it was mentioned that as a statutory institution, the RCC is mandated to coordinate regional and district development programs and projects. The house also wanted to know the role of the other sub-structures within the decentralized system, and the set of tools been applied. It was noted that there are now specific tools been used to systematically profile poverty interventions.

### 3.3 *Presentation III: “Impact Oriented Monitoring” the example of the Poverty Profiling, Mapping and Pro-poor Planning Exercise*<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Tettey began by indicating that Impact Oriented Monitoring has become necessary as a result of extensive international debate on orienting project implementation to outcomes instead of inputs as well as clearing doubts about ‘results on the ground’ and the effectiveness of bilateral development cooperation. Impact oriented monitoring provides information on whether projects/programs have achieved or not achieved the target.

According to Mr. Tettey impacts can be seen as changes outside a program that have a causal relationship with the outputs of the program. Impacts may be planned or unplanned, expected or unexpected and positive or negative. Impacts happen from the onset of an intervention, continue through implementation and after and are the result of social interaction.

Continuing to describe the process, Mr. Tettey stated that a good impact orientation results in the following:

- Credible accountability,
- Strong lessons on how to be more effective,
- Satisfied customers,
- Enhanced job satisfaction, and
- Big advantage in competing for funds.

An impact oriented monitoring system works in a chain. The general impact chain for development projects leads from *activities* to *outputs* to *use* to *outcome*. The process can be described as follows:

- The Impact Oriented Monitoring project activities and support from development partners train personnel from District level on ‘How to do Poverty Mapping’ (project output).
- District staff elaborate district poverty maps (output use).
- District Assemblies with its Pro-Poor development plan (direct benefit), implements this plan (indirect benefit) which leads to reduced poverty as a result of socio-economic changes.

Impact oriented monitoring has 6 steps:

1. Identification of system boundaries
2. Agreement on objectives and procedures
3. Identification of impact areas and impact hypothesis
4. Examination of indicators and determination of milestones
5. Data collection
6. Utilization of results.

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<sup>6</sup> The above presentation was made by Mr. Immanuel Tettey from gtz.

The lessons learned from this intervention are that Impact Oriented Monitoring:

- Provides information which management needs to steer the programme towards planned objectives;
- Is the basis for reporting on projects/programs progress;
- Is not an additional task but a new orientation of all monitoring activities;
- Orientates all monitoring activities on the follow-up of impacts;
- Does not only follow up what has been done, but tries to find out which changes, activities, and outputs have been induced;
- Observes the environment of the programme from two perspectives:
  - How do framework conditions influence the achievement of the program's objective?
  - How much does the programme contribute to changes in its environment?
- Changes in framework conditions of the programme or activities of other development organizations may have an influence on the achievement of planned objectives.

### ***3.4 Presentation IV: The Experience of the Ashanti RPCU in Developing an M&E systems for the District Assembly Common Fund***<sup>7</sup>

Mr. Egan began by outlining the basis for the District Assembly Common Fund and the framework for its monitoring. He indicated that Ghana's innovative constitutional provision of allocating a minimum of 5% of national budget to metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies to accelerate development efforts has led to: increased revenue to support decentralization and also raised the question of the capacity of local authorities to manage the funds effectively so as to ensure coordinated developments in the districts.

The legal framework for the Common Fund can be found in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana which makes provision for the District Assemblies Common Fund Act- Act 455 under Section 252 of the constitution. Under this Act, parliament is required annually to allocate not less than 5% of the total revenues of Ghana to the district assemblies for development interventions. These revenues excludes foreign loans, grants, non-tax revenues and revenues already collected for or by District Assemblies under any enactment in force.

The Local Government Act, 1993 Act 462 section 142a-d and the National Development Planning System Act, 1994 Act 480 section 8 gives the legal support for the monitoring of these funds.

As a result of this legislation the Ashanti RCC developed a monitoring system to ensure proper use of the Common Fund. The M&E system developed went through the following steps:

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<sup>7</sup> The presentation on the experience of the Ashanti Region Planning Coordinating Unit in developing M&E system for the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) was made by Mr. Pat Egan, the Regional Economic Planning Officer (REPO).

- A call for a systematic monitoring program by the Ashanti Region Coordinating Council (ARCC).
- Organisation of orientation programs between 1994-96 for principal actors at the district level and these included chiefs, because of the important role they play in the communities by the ARCC. Other orientation sessions were organized for the administrator of the Common Fund, Controller and Accountant General, Auditors, Bank Managers, Auditors and lecturers.
- Production of a manual which serves as a guide and reference source for the utilization of the DACF.
- Distribution of the guidelines issued annually by MLGRD and MOFEP (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning) for the utilization of the Common Fund.
- Discussion of the guidelines between the RCC and District Planning Officers(DPOs) and District Budget Officers (DBOs).
- Preparation of supplementary budgets based on guidelines by DAs and defense of this budget at the RCC.
- Endorsement of copies of finalized budgets by Regional Planning Officer and deposited at disbursing bank, with copies to MLGRD, NDPC,MOFEP and the administrator.

Mr. Egan stated that the DACF is meant to ensure that development interventions are carried out within the districts. The RPCU is responsible for monitoring the use of the Common Fund and to this end monitoring teams are formed with membership consisting of the planning and budget officers and the chief local government inspector.

Monitoring indicators have been developed which are based on what the stakeholders expect from the DA. Some broadly used indicators include: contract procedures and administration, income tax deductions and local revenue mobilization, general supervision and monitoring, fair and balanced geographical location of projects, quality of work, disbursement and repayment of loans among others.

The regional monitoring group after monitoring prepares and submits a draft report to the core staff of the MDAs for discussion. A final report is then produced together with recommendations and forwarded to MLGRD and a copy to NDPC.

The most important lessons learned by the RCC in this monitoring process are:

- Routine monitoring has produced high quality work.
- Districts have realized that M&E is part of the planning and budgeting process and so all districts should make budgetary allocations in their Common Fund for monitoring.
- Utilization of the common fund has followed laid down regulations.
- There is greater transparency, efficiency and accountability in the management of the funds.
- The crucial role of the RCC has been fully recognised by the Assemblies and other stakeholders and no longer viewed as a roadblock.
- A participatory M&E system will contribute immensely to the government's poverty reduction strategy and overall development of the country.

- Establishment of data on rate able items in the district leads to enhanced resource mobilization for other purposes.
- This monitoring process has encouraged collaborative effort between the DA and beneficiary communities.

One concern that arose for discussion was the bureaucratic way of administering loans. Since most of the beneficiaries are farmers the delay in disbursement of loans tends to affect them since most of them receive the loans after the rains, which affects their productivity. On the question of repayment of the loans it was realized that most of the beneficiaries perceived the loans as gifts. The issue of ghost names is also a major concern that is been battled with. Women were however recommended for their meritorious role of honouring the loan payments as compared to men beneficiaries. To this effect, a question was raised if it was possible to determine from a gender point of view the percentage of women beneficiaries.

The participants in the roundtable noted that it is commendable that at the community level, MPs, chiefs and Assembly Members monitor the execution of projects thereby complementing the work of the M&E team for good results.

Lastly there was a general concern on making conditions of service very attractive for people to remain in the civil service. Most often than not the DAs send staff for training who then tend to leave the service with the skills acquired for other sectors with better working conditions. It was suggested that a bonding agreement should be put in place so that staff that are sent for training are bonded. It was also agreed that not only graduate holders should be sent for further training, but Senior Secondary School leavers and some key staff of the assembly who can handle and perform basic work at the DA.

#### **4 Synthesis and Way Forward**

Following the presentations a general discussion was held during which the following suggestions were made:

- There is a need for further capacity building in data management, analysis and presentation for core staff of DAs, RPCUs, DPCUs, MDAs and other stakeholders.
- The need to strengthen collaboration among all stakeholders and deepen engagement between regions and national level institutions on M&E to inform policy is critical to the successful implementation of decentralised M&E.
- It is necessary to develop a mechanism for feedback to communities on how information collected is utilized.
- Resources from all stakeholders should be pooled to support the decentralised M&E process.
- Roles and responsibilities of the districts, regions and NDPC within the Decentralized M&E system should be clarified.
- Logistical support for RPCUs and DPCUs will enhance monitoring activities.

#### ***4.1 Participatory Formulation of Proposal for Action***

As an action - oriented roundtable, a number of key issues were identified by the organizers to spark discussion and elaborate actions that participants would be committed to as part of the process of formulating a way forward.

- How do we develop M&E needs and corresponding systems to meet these needs?
- How do we organize and deliver capacity building for decentralized M&E?
- What will the institutional mandate and sustainable funding for an implementation process to support decentralised M&E look like?

In addressing these questions, participants broke up into three working group sessions. Appendix II presents a detailed outline of the group session. Below are the outcomes of the working group sessions.

##### ***How do we develop M&E needs and corresponding systems to meet these needs?***

1. In reviewing the functionality/effectiveness of the DA in M&E the following issues were raised:
  - (a) Traditional authorities should be involved in M&E.
  - (b) Conscious efforts to mainstream gender into M&E must be made.
  - (c) Data management for M&E in decentralized departments and DPCU must be improved. Potential solution would be a centralized databank at district level.
  - (d) Data should be updated on a regular basis.
  - (e) Involvement of sub-district structures (Area, Town, Urban councils and Unit committees) in M&E should be strengthened.
2. National level institutions responsible for M&E should pay more attention to needs of districts (local levels).
3. Project-based M&E systems should be informed by national policy frameworks (e.g.GPRS) with room for additional district specific indicators.
4. Using guidelines from NDPC, the DPCUs should coordinate development partners towards ensuring harmony.



***How do we organize and deliver capacity building for decentralized M&E?***

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Capacity need(s)/requirements</b>
District Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training in community assessment</li> <li>• Training in data collection and analysis</li> <li>• Training in M&amp;E as well as IT training</li> <li>• Logistics support (computers, vehicles and financial resources)</li> <li>• Additional staff</li> </ul>
Regional Coordinating Councils	Same needs as above
Sub-district institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Office accommodation and basic logistics</li> <li>• Training in data collection, analysis and report writing</li> <li>• Human and financial resources</li> </ul>
NDPC/MLGRD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical training e.g. M&amp;E, Policy formulation and analysis and management</li> <li>• Logistics and equipment</li> <li>• Financial resources</li> <li>• Focal person for M&amp;E - MLGRD</li> </ul>
CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training in community assessments- use of CSC</li> <li>• Logistic</li> <li>• Basic technical training</li> </ul>

The institutions that could be utilized to meet these capacity needs include:

1. Institute for Policy Alternatives, Tamale (IPA)
2. Northern Ghana Network for Development
3. GIMPA
4. ILGS
5. ISSER
6. MDPI
7. Universities
8. Local Consultancy firms
9. International Consultancy firms
10. NDPC
11. District Assemblies
12. RPCUs

***What will the institutional mandate and sustainable funding for an implementation process to support decentralised M&E look like?*****Mandate and sustainable funding**

It is the mandate of MLGRD, NDPC, RCC, RPCU, MDAs, DAs (DPCU, Sub-structures) to implement decentralised M&E. Resources required to do so include:

- Logistics
- Personnel

- Non-functional structures
- Lack of commitment
- Making no demand for M&E
- Suspicion

Strategies to promote sustainable funding of decentralised M&E include:

- Involvement of beneficiaries – lower level structures will eventually reduce M&E cost as sub-district staff can be used to collect data.
- Decentralised M&E should be made an integral/core activity of the development process by allocating budgetary support. There is a need to demand a National Budget for M&E.
- Involving communities in the M&E process – CBOs, NGOs, CSOs.
- The timely release of funds/resources will contribute to an efficient system.
- Donors and development partners will get involved into the M&E process having now realized the essential role of M&E in the development agenda.

## **5 Conclusion**

There was considerable agreement across participants for the need for a coherent, coordinated decentralised M&E system. There is much to be learned from the different initiatives that are being tried throughout the country. Increased effort to learn from each other and contribute to a single decentralized M&E system is critical. In addition, the recognition of the need to create demand at the district level for the information generated in M&E will contribute to the effectiveness of any system at that level. However, if decentralised M&E is to work at the district level an emphasis on capacity building of district (and regional) stakeholders is needed. District officers not only need to understand the need for a decentralised M&E system, but they also need to know how to collect, analyse and present data in a useful form. In conclusion, there is a lot of potential for decentralised M&E in Ghana, and a lot of interest. However concerted effort needs to be put into collaboration and organization of a system that is able to meet the needs of a broad cross-section of stakeholders.

## Appendix 1: Detailed Programme for the Roundtable

<b>PROGRAMME FOR WORKSHOP</b>
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9:00 – 9:30am	<b>Introduction – outline of the objectives and process of the roundtable</b> – <i>Dr. Sulley Gariba, Moderator</i>
9:30 – 10:30am	<b>Panel #1: Framework for Decentralized M&amp;E in Ghana and Globally</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mr. Bruno Dery, National Development Planning Commission</i></li> <li>• <i>Dr. Ted Jackson, Professor of Management &amp; M&amp;E Specialist, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada</i></li> </ul>
10:30 – 11:00am	Coffee/tea break
11:00 – 1:00pm	<b>Panel #2: Emerging Experiences in Decentralized M&amp;E in Ghana</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Decentralized Monitoring and Evaluation of Poverty Reduction – Experiences from Northern Ghana- Mr. Greg Addah</i></li> <li>• <i>“Regional Development Indicators and Participatory Review” Mr. Jonathan Azasoo, NDPC</i></li> <li>• <i>“Impact-Oriented monitoring: example of poverty profiling, mapping and pro-poor planning exercise” Mr. Immanuel Tettey, Gtz</i></li> <li>• <i>“The Experiences of the Ashanti RPCU in Developing M&amp;E systems for the DACF” Mr. Pat Egan,</i></li> </ul>
1:00 – 2:00pm	Lunch
2:00 - 3:00pm	<b>Working Group Sessions focusing on Proposal for Action</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group1: M&amp;E Needs and Systems Development</li> <li>• Group2: Capacity Building for Decentralized M&amp;E</li> <li>• Group3: Institutional Mandate and Sustainable Funding for Decentralized M&amp;E</li> </ul>
3:00 – 3:30pm	Coffee/tea break
3:30 – 4:30pm	Synthesis of way forward, workshop evaluations and closing

## Appendix 2: Guidelines for Group Sessions

### Outline of Group Sessions

#### **Group 1: Monitoring and Evaluation Needs and Systems Development**

The national M&E needs for the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) have been determined through a thorough planning exercise, at the national level. Indicators have been developed to guide this process and a work plan has been produced and approved. For decentralized M&E, a framework has also been produced. This notwithstanding, the M&E needs at the decentralized level go beyond that which monitors GPRS alone. In this working group, participants will answer the questions:

- What other M&E needs are relevant at the district?
- How will the systems be developed to meet these needs?
- Are existing project-based systems and tools consistent with national, policy and program-based systems for M&E?
- How can these systems be harmonized?

#### **Group 2: Capacity Building for Decentralized M&E**

An essential feature of a successful M&E system is to have the requisite capacity for undertaking M&E on a regular basis, as well as the capacity to integrate M&E into development planning and budget cycles. Participants in this group will:

- Outline key capacity needs for decentralized M&E, and for which particular institutions in the system of decentralized governance
- Make recommendations for capacity building requirements for decentralized M&E
- Suggest institutions currently available to meet these capacity needs

#### **Group 3: Institutional Mandate and Sustainable Funding for Decentralized M&E**

M&E is fast becoming a specialized mandate, even though its implementation is integral into planning and development process. At the national level, the NDPC has established an M&E division that is coordinating the M&E of GPRS and key national indicators. Other institutions exist at the national and sectoral levels focusing on sector issues in M&E. The MLGRD has an M&E function within the policy Planning Division. How do all these impact on, and influence decentralized M&E at the district, regional and community level? Participants in this working group will focus on:

- Recommending the appropriate institutional frameworks for assuming the mandate of M&E at the regional and district levels with reference to the decentralized M&E framework
- Outlining proposals on how these will be funded on a sustainable basis

Working groups will be focusing on making recommendations, and present these in a 5 minutes plenary for synthesis.

### Appendix 3: Participant Evaluation of Roundtable

<b>Workshop Evaluation by Participants</b>
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Session	Number of respondents and Rating Format <sup>8</sup>		
	High	Medium	Low
National framework for decentralized M&E, by Bruno Dery, NDPC	24	5	
Walking the Talk: Global Dimensions in Decentralized M&E, Dr. Ted Jackson	23	7	
Demonstration of Development Information software for development and M&E data capture, Issah Oadrago, NDPC	5	20	4
Experiences in decentralized M&E from the North, Greg Addah, RPCU Northern Region	22	7	
Regional Development Indicators and Participatory Review, Jonathan Azasoo, NDPC	15	15	
Impact-Oriented M&E – Poverty profiling, mapping and pro-poor planning, Immanuel Tettey, GTZ	14	15	1
DACF Monitoring: Experiences from Ashanti Region, Pat Egan, RPCU A/Region	24	6	
Logistics and Programme	18	10	1
Information before the roundtable workshop	20	9	
Documentation for the workshop	23	6	
Accommodation and facilities during the workshop	25	5	
Workshop moderation	29	1	
Organization and Management of the workshop	23	7	

<sup>8</sup> Thirty (30) out of ??? participants evaluated the roundtable. Based on this the above responses have been generated. There were exemptions. Some participants missed some of the sessions and others were not sure so did not rate at all. This explains why portions of the data that do not correspond to the total number.

### ***Positive Aspects of the Workshop***

- Bringing different stakeholder groups to discuss decentralized M&E
- Commitment of the larger group of membership to stay – high turnover of participants
- Outcomes of group exercises could inform progress
- Excellent facilitation and active participation
- New ways of M&E introduced and shared
- Good accommodation and feeding
- Cross-cutting multi- sectoral participation
- The need to mainstream gender dimensions into M&E processes highlighted
- Good forum for exchanging experiences and critical thinking
- All questions, comments and responses accepted
- Lessons well presented and a lot of handouts given
- The understanding and harmonization of M&E processes across the country
- Shared knowledge from one another as M&E practitioners
- Provision of more and deeper information on various aspects of M&E within the decentralization system
- Different modules and forms of M&E made clear
- The presence of NDPC, CIDA, DISCAP and Northern Ghana was excellent
- Group work and group presentations
- Very relaxed, interactive and informative environment
- Participatory nature and representation from National down to District
- Exposing M&E at the National and Global levels
- The Ashanti RPCU experience

### ***Negative Aspects of the Workshop***

- Programme was too packed
- Presentations dragged on a bit leaving little time for the group work, which in my opinion was key in terms of moving the process forward
- Key stakeholders missed the way forward
- Time factor wasn't conformed to and most participants left after lunch
- Some participants did not switch off their mobile phones
- There was a rush to move on to the next presenter when questions were still to be asked
- The absence of key participants from the policy making and National level
- Some key stakeholders did not sit through the session mostly the Accra participants and representatives from DANIDA, MLGRD, JICA, MOWAC, GTZ, NDPC
- No presentation detailing the community assessment as a component of the DISCAP M&E process
- Lack of participation from Accra based stakeholders
- Low participation during the afternoon session
- No community level experience shared as a presentation

### *Suggestions for Future Discussions*

- A centrally located venue to reduce long distance and travel to and from Accra
- Hold workshops in a location out of Accra so only committed participants will come and stay throughout the sessions
- Development information presentation needed about a day to present so future technical presentations should have more time allotted
- Future work shops should be two days so that more time could be devoted to the presentations
- Gender issues such as presentations should be taken in consideration with very good resource persons
- Keep up the same methodology but give more time for group discussions
- Future work shops should involve DCEs, some Regional Ministers and the minister for MLGRD
- Presentations in power points should be clear and understood by all – some were clumsy and confusing
- Time should be created to deepen discourse and elaborate way forward
- More time and regular workshops on M&E
- Such workshops should be made an annual gathering
- More group working sessions
- The need to adopt measures to better engage national stakeholders
- More donor representation if possible
- There should be district level presentation on field work

### *Expectations Met*

**YES (30)      NO (0)**

Despite the critical comments about the loaded programme for the roundtable, all participants responded that their expectations from the workshop were met, and that it was a worthwhile process of sharing experience on an issue which most development practitioners feel is very technical.