

FROM MANIFESTO PROMISE TO POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT'S INFRASTRUCTURE FOR POVERTY ERADICATION PROGRAM

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Key points

The Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) with funding support from the Department for International Development (DFID) under its Strengthening Action Against Corruption (STAAC) program has initiated a project to track the implementation of the government's flagship Infrastructure for Poverty Eradication Program (IPEP)

The IPEP program—predicated on the government's economic vision that systematically decentralising infrastructure development would spur economic growth, create jobs, and reduce poverty—would see government allocate US\$1 million for each of the 275 constituencies annually for four years

The CDD IPEP Tracker project focuses on the assessment and monitoring of the processes for the implementation of IPEP at the national, regional and district/constituency levels.

Introduction

Ghana halved its poverty level and reduced the level of extreme poverty by 25% between 1992 and 2013. This celebrated achievement in poverty reduction coincided with a period of sustained growth, including the extremely high growth rate of 14% in 2011 when the country became a producer of hydrocarbons in commercial quantities. From 2014, Ghana suffered a deceleration of growth to a low of 3.7% in 2016. The low growth coincided with a general increase in the incidence of poverty and extreme poverty in absolute terms. According to the Ghana Living Standard Survey (GLSS), Round 7 (2016/2017), the average number of people living in poverty increased by 200,000 from 6.4 million in 2012/2013 to 6.8 million 2016/2017 while those living in extreme poverty also increased by 200,000 from 2.2 million in 2012/2013 to 2.4 million¹ in 2016/2017.

Partly as a response to tackling poverty, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) proposed the development of constituency based infrastructure to stem poverty and promote inclusive economic development. The party promised in their 2016 manifesto to allocate an equivalent of \$1 million dollars to each of the 275 constituencies every year to enhance their capital infrastructure base—accelerate growth, create jobs and reduce poverty particularly in rural and deprived communities. The government has taken steps to actualize the IPEP policy by setting up the Ministry of Special Development Initiatives (MSDI), three (3) Development Authorities (DAs)² with their governing Boards and an inter-Ministerial Oversight Committee. In addition, the government set up a ten-member ad-hoc committee to undertake constituency infrastructure needs assessment in all 275 constituencies. In 2018, the MSDI started with procurement processes for the infrastructure projects across all the constituencies.

The Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), with funding from the Department for International Development (DFID) under its Strengthening Action Against Corruption (STAAC) project, is implementing the IPEP Tracker project. The project seeks to monitor the implementation of IPEP to ensure that mistakes of the past including mismanagement and corruption of such large public programs are not repeated. The project has the following objectives:

¹ Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), Ghana Living Standard Survey Round 7 (GLSS 7): Poverty Trends in Ghana, 2005-2017.

² The three Development Authorities established to oversee the implementation of IPEP include the Northern Development Authority (NDA), Middle Belt Development Authority (MBDA) and Coastal Development Authority (CDA).

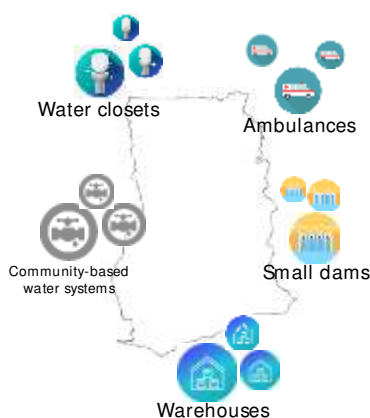
- Strengthen the framework and performance of institutions set up to govern and manage the IPEP program
- Eliminate corruption and misuse of public resources by ensuring transparency and accountability in allocation, disbursement, expenditure, accounting and auditing of public funds allocated and disbursed to IPEP
- Ensure efficient and good corporate management of public funds allocated to the IPEP program through sustained monitoring of the implementation of the IPEP program by CSOs

CDD-Ghana undertook regional and constituency monitoring exercises across all the ten regions in Ghana to assess the IPEP policy implementation. The monitoring exercise took place between November 27 to December 11, 2017, and October 29 to November 8, 2018. Twenty constituencies were purposively selected—two from each of the ten regions based on the following indicators: district poverty profiles from the 2015 poverty mapping report, a mix of urban and rural districts based on Ghana Statistical Service classifications and the presence of local media and civil society organizations (CSOs).

This paper shares the key findings from the Center's monitoring of the implementation of the IPEP policy till date. It identifies some areas of progress in implementation and highlights persisting structural and implementation challenges that are likely to impact negatively on the quality of delivery and the overall success of the policy.

Findings and Analysis

The government, through the Ministry for Special Development Initiative (MSDI), has two approaches for the implementation of the IPEP policy. The first approach is to provide for all constituencies, projects which are classified as government priority projects. The government priority projects include: community-based water systems, ten-seater water closet institutional toilet facilities, provision of small dams and dug-outs, construction of warehouses for farm produce and provision of ambulances for all the 275 constituencies. The second approach is the delivery of projects classified as constituency specific projects. The constituency specific projects are the peculiar needs of each of the 275 constituencies which were collated through the constituency needs assessment undertaken by the 10-member regional ad-hoc committees. The government priority projects and the constituency specific needs are currently being implemented by the MSDI.



GOVERNMENT'S PRIORITY
PROJECTS UNDER IPEP

Assessment of constituency infrastructure needs

Information about the IPEP policy is lopsided between members and appointees of the ruling political party and local level bureaucrats. Bureaucrats at the regional and district levels have very little or no knowledge about the project areas under IPEP, and how they fit into the regional/district medium term development plans. The party executives and political appointees at the regional and district levels, on the other hand, appear to have deeper knowledge of the IPEP program than any other group of stakeholders. This does not show progressive management of information.

The President inaugurated 10-member regional ad-hoc committees to assess constituency specific infrastructural needs in consultation with relevant stakeholders at the various constituencies. First, we found that party members from the NPP dominated the ad-hoc committees while information about the selection criteria was limited to only a few party people (Regional Minister and NPP Regional and Constituency Executives). Second, local level stakeholders including; traditional authorities, community opinion leaders, local CSOs, local radio stations and bureaucrats were either unaware or not consulted by the ad-hoc committees. The inability of the committees to adequately consult stakeholders can be explained by the lack of proper arrangements to finance the activities of the Committees and the short period given to complete the needs assessment.

Key informants stated that they had limited knowledge about the criteria the committees used for selecting and prioritizing infrastructure needs. Only a few stakeholders such as; ad-hoc committee members, regional ministers, and, in some cases district chief executives had knowledge of the selection criteria. Further, reports from the assessments of the infrastructure needs of constituencies were not validated with constituents before they were submitted to the MSDI. Thus constituents did not have information to demand accountability from government.

Set-up and activities of the Development Authorities (DAs)

The Development Authorities are designated as the main implementing agencies for economic development and specific constituency infrastructure projects in their respective geographical areas. Though political appointments were quickly made to demonstrate the commitment of the President to fulfilling his campaign promises, the actual work of setting up the DAs to take full charge of the implementation of the policy took a slow pace. Thus the President appointed Chief Executive Officers for the three DAs, and constituted their respective governing boards in accordance with Article 70 of the 1992 constitution; however, administrative staff for the DAs have not been employed and no departments have been established.

Apart from the Northern Development Authority (NDA) which operated from the old offices of the defunct Savanna Accelerated Development Authority, the remaining two (2) DAs did not have offices at the Regions—they were in the process of securing operational offices at the time of the study. With the exception of the NDA, none of the other two (2) DAs had developed any work/activity program towards the implementation of activities under IPEP.

To be able to carry out their mandates, the DAs need the administrative set-up, operational guidelines, legislative instruments (LIs) and the seed money to undertake initial activities of the Authorities none of which had been done.

Level of inter-sectoral/agency collaboration and coordination in the implementation of IPEP

To ensure effective coordination of the implementation of the IPEP intervention, government is required to provide the Legislative Instruments that will define the relationships of all agencies and development actors within the jurisdictions of the DAs. The level of collaboration between the Ministry for Special Development Initiative (MSDI), Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs), and the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in monitoring and certifying of the infrastructure projects remains poor and unstructured.

A Senior Bureaucrat in one of the northern regions described how they were engaging contractors working on IPEP projects:

“A few certificates have passed through this office. What we saw was that, most of them are constituency based. They will issue an award letter to the contractor and...when they bring the certificate and we are not sure of it, we call the Assembly and they give us the status report of the certificate they have brought after which we endorse.”

Another Senior Bureaucrat in Middle Belt Development Authority noted as follows:

“Monitoring is done by a consultant. We have a problem with their payment system. It is such that the MSDI, Chief Director and the Consultant sign. They sign contracts for two regions and bring the certificate to the Regional Minister to sign. It is difficult to ascertain work done (especially in different regions) but the Minister signs the certificates.”

Key bureaucrats at the regional and district levels reported that they were not consulted in the selection of project locations except with the construction of dams. Again, local level bureaucrats lacked information about the terms and conditions of contracts awarded for the projects and the monitoring framework for the infrastructure projects.

In one of the districts in the Volta Region, a bureaucrat expressed his frustration with the lack of knowledge and involvement in the IPEP:

Status of implementation of government priority projects

The status of implementation is crucial considering the financial arrangement under which the IPEP module operates. Each constituency is entitled to an equivalent of \$1 million every year to undertake specific government priority interventions and constituency infrastructure needs.

We find evidence of ongoing government priority projects (water systems, institutional toilets, dams and dug-outs and warehouses) across all the 20 CDD-Ghana project constituencies. The projects we observed were at various stages of completion: while some constituencies have almost completed their projects, others are at the foundation level. It is not clear what is causing the huge disparity in completion rates.

There was very limited information on IPEP projects at the project location sites. Apart from the warehouses, many of the projects lacked public information boards detailing key information about the projects (name of contractor, funding agency, project design, project completion date etc.). This made it difficult for community members and other development stakeholders to monitor the projects and demand accountability from the appropriate authorities or individuals.

Stakeholder/community awareness of IPEP projects in the constituencies is very low. Majority of the informants in the beneficiary communities indicate they are not aware of the projects been provided under IPEP in their constituencies.

"We were not involved. I didn't know about it until someone came looking for the DCE and told me about it...I got to know him (the contractor) last month. He came to introduce himself when the Coastal Development Authority was coming."



Low utilization rate of IPEP funds

In the 2017 budget, government allocated GH¢1,045 million for the implementation of the IPEP activities. Total amount released as at September, 2017 stood at GH¢41,555,509.00 out of which GH¢1,781,913.00 was disbursed representing 4.3% of the amount released³. The failure to utilize monies released for IPEP projects was due to the non-existence of the required structure to oversee the implementation of the IPEP activities. Again, in 2018, total budget of GH¢1,239,409,969 was allocated for the implementation of IPEP activities.

4.3%

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³ Ministry of Special Development Initiative, 2017. Medium Term Expenditure Framework for 2018-2021: Program Based Budget for 2018, p7. See full copy at <http://www.mofep.gov.gh/sites/default/files/pbb-estimates/2018/2018-PBB-MSDI.pdf>

At the end of 2018, a lot of projects which started under IPEP by the MSDI were not completed. The non-implementation and delayed completion of planned projects affected the utilization of funds released for the program. Unfortunately, monies that are not disbursed at the end of the financial year are returned to the chest of government –since allocations to IPEP are not earmarked.

Conclusion and policy recommendations

Key conclusions

The provision of water and sanitation under IPEP is consistent with the President's vision to promote good sanitation as captured in the Coordinated Program of Economic and Social Development Policies 2017-2024 (see pages 115-116). Certainly, Ghana's ranking as the country with second highest incidence of Open Defecation in Africa (2017), makes the intervention in this area critical. However, it is not clear why the toilet and water facilities are evenly spread in all constituencies as opposed to focusing on areas with the high incidence of Open Defecation and or low access to sanitation facilities.

There is no clarity on coordination among other agencies providing similar public goods –toilet and water facilities. Again, the role for MMDAs and beneficiary communities in the implementation of the policy is not defined. This has the potential to affect the quality, monitoring and maintenance of projects being implemented under IPEP. The failure to integrate and coordinate project delivery at the local level will undermine quality, maintenance, cost and ownership. Currently, the arrangements for monitoring ongoing IPEP projects through consultants and the Regional Coordinating Council is weak.

The DAs have not been set up to take charge of the implementation of the IPEP intervention even though they have been in existence over six months. The DAs do not yet have the basic administrative and financial requirements such as operational guidelines, legislative instrument and the seed money required to start operation.

The lack of adequate information about the ongoing IPEP projects limits community awareness, involvement and ownership of IPEP projects in the constituencies. The many abandoned projects littered across the country are a testament to failure to invest time and energy to build and foster community ownership.



A borehole at Nsumia, Nsawam in the Eastern Region, November 7, 2018



A warehouse at Hill Top, Bole in the Northern Region, November 1, 2018



A toilet facility at the Adoagyiri Presby Basic School, Nsawam in the Eastern Region, November 8, 2018

Policy recommendations

We recommend that the mandate of the Development Authorities: implementation, coordination, or both must be clearly defined. Clarifying the role of the DAs is useful for inter-institutional settlement at the regional and district levels with actors/institutions who have similar responsibilities in the provision and management of public infrastructure. Since the law establishing the DAs have already been passed, the government must do this through the Legislative Instruments for the DAs. The DAs must also develop clear guidelines elaborating on their mandate.

We propose that government and the MSDI share widely information about IPEP projects, particularly revised processes of execution and monitoring. Political actors like regional ministers and district chief executives who currently have more access to information should lead this process of information dissemination. As a matter of urgency, the MSDI must operationalize its website and provide relevant information on projects, location, progress of work, cost, among others.

To ensure that there is value for money, propriety in the design of infrastructure projects and impact on poverty reduction, there should be strict adherence to the Public Financial Management Act. This means that responsibility for the execution and contract monitoring must be clearly assigned. The MSDI, the DAs and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning must take immediate steps to sanitize the procurement and contract monitoring process. This will ensure that the allocation, disbursement and usage of the funds are done effectively and efficiently. Information sharing about IPEP and the work package of the Development Authorities will facilitate citizens' demand for accountability.

The success of IPEP depends on citizens' ownership of the projects. Therefore, conscious attempts should be made to involve citizens in the process of execution, monitoring and maintenance of infrastructure projects. The implementing agencies must work with media houses, non-governmental organizations, faith based organizations and community-based organizations to sensitize the public about the IPEP projects and how they can contribute to the sustainability of the projects.

Government must institute regular performance reviews of the DAs. This would allow a periodic assessment of the impacts of the investments under each DA and their contribution to the overall goal of poverty reduction.



CITIZENS' OWNERSHIP
OF PROJECTS BY
MONITORING AND
EVALUATION

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