



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

Public Sector Management development projects: What are the key implementation issues?

Overview

Public Sector Management (PSM) programmes/projects are financed by both Government of Uganda (GoU) and development partners to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.

By the end of the first half of FY 2014/15, some activities implemented in PSM development programmes achieved above 50% of the annual target, while others did not.

This briefing paper highlights the key challenges faced in implementation of PSM development programmes and provides policy recommendations.

Key Issues

- Late receipt of funds resulted into late implementation of activities. This was partly due to late submission of work plans and reports from local governments and municipalities.
- Lengthy procurement processes were main contributory factors for under performance. This was worsened by late initiation of procurement processes thus a major contributory factor for under performance.
- Outbreak of animal diseases also delayed implementation of activities

Introduction

Government of Uganda has a number of agencies in the PSM sector that oversee the implementation of programmes and ensure establishment of mechanisms that promote coordinated and harmonized policy, planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation at national and local government levels. The implementing agencies work hand-in-hand with spending agencies to align planned activities and work plans on a quarterly basis.

The PSM half-year monitoring for FY 2014/15 covered the following projects: Support to Luwero Rwenzori Development Programme,

Post-war Recovery and Presidential Pledges-PRDP, Humanitarian Assistance project, Resettlement of Landless Persons and Disaster Victims, Support to Ministry of Public Service, Community Agriculture Infrastructure Improvement Programme-2 (CAIIP-2), and the Markets and Agriculture Trade Improvement Project-1 (MATIP-1).

Reviews of the half-year performance reports from various programmes/projects within PSM sector, progress reports and field monitoring visits showed various challenges in implementation of programmes.

The consequences of delayed implementation include, low funds absorption and non-achievement of planned objectives, as well as rollover of planned programme outputs to next Financial Year among others. The following were the key challenges.

Key challenges

1. Late disbursement of funds

For example the Dry Lands Integrated Development Project had no activity implemented by the end of December 2014 due to delayed disbursement of funds by the International Development Bank (IDB). Similarly, in Nakasongola district the Support to the Luwero Rwenzori Development Project (LRDP) activities had not yet been implemented due to late disbursement of funds.

The late disbursements were partly due to late submissions of work plans and reports from local governments and municipalities. This was evident in the Support to LRDP project where local governments (LGs) received funding for implementation of activities in the last month of the quarters one and two.

This was also the case in beneficiary LGs where PRDP projects received funds towards the last month of quarter one and two.

In other instances the late disbursements were because of failure to access Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS) data owing to the intermittent Internet connectivity. For example the Support to LRDP project where some LGs such as Mubende could not access funds for implementation through the IFMS.

2. Slow and long procurement processes

This was characterized by administrative reviews directed by the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority- (PPDA).

This affected the implementation of pacification and development outputs such as distribution of agricultural supplies. For example in the PRDP programme, procurement process for the oxen, maize mills, rice hullers, ox-ploughs and 10 tractors to upscale tractorization in Northern Uganda were still ongoing by 31st December 2014.

This was also evident in the Support to LRDP project where implementation was not carried out by 31st December 2014 as the procurement process for spray pumps was still on-going. The appraisal process for 17 beneficiary groups to benefit under micro projects was also still on-going by end of December 2014.

In some projects, the slow procurement was due to lack of contracts committees. There was laxity by the Ministry of Local Government to approve district procurement committees. This resulted into delays in implementation of activities. For example the Support to LRDP project in Nakasongola district had not implemented any project activities by 31st December 2014 because of absence of the procurement committee.

3. Land wrangles

This was evident within the traditional institutions (Owitong) that affected the implementation of planned activities and outputs - Government Buildings and Administrative Infrastructure. In the PRDP programme where the chiefs complex (palace, offices and cultural centre) in Lango and 33 low cost houses for vulnerable groups (former IDPs) in Northern Uganda were not constructed due to uncertainty of land ownership.

Likewise, the completion of the National Archives and Records Centre building-NARC under the Support to Ministry of Public Service Project was delayed due to compensation issues for a piece of land near the NARC building site

where florists demanded compensation before vacating the land.

4. Inadequate funds

Under the Resettlement of Landless Persons and Disaster Victims project, motor vehicles and other transport equipment were not purchased due to inadequate funds.

On the other hand, the Strengthening Ministry of East African Community Affairs project did not procure four motor vehicles because of inadequate funding.

For the Support to Local Government Finance Commission Project, funds were insufficient to meet costs for the commission's function of providing feedback to local governments on budget analysis and monitoring of local governments revenue performance as of 31st December 2014.

5. Poor Planning

There were some critical activities omitted: This resulted into non-implementation of planned activities and outputs. For example, the Support to LRDP project quarterly planned output-training in the use of hydraform technology was inadvertently omitted.

The funds for procurement of tractors were used to conduct training in the use of hydra form technology. Likewise, under the PRDP project, the quarterly planned outputs such as the procurement of 160 motorcycles, 400 Tool Kits for bicycle and motorcycle repairs were also omitted.

6. Inadequate capacity of suppliers/contractors

This tends to slow the implementation of projects. For example under the PRDP programme in Gulu district, the supplier M/s Rohi Servives Limited

delayed to supply the cattle for the FY 2013/14 until November 2014 (FY 2014/15).

Likewise, the LGs benefitting from the Support to LRDP faced the same challenge where suppliers failed to deliver procured items such as goats, cattle to beneficiaries for the first half of the financial year.

In other instances, inadequacy was due to contractor change of company name. This was noted under the National Archives and Record Centre building where the change of company name resulted into delayed completion of works.

7. Political interference

This was common in the PRDP where the distribution processes for presidential pledge items was delayed as the district was still awaiting commissioning by the political leadership. This resulted into late distribution of items to beneficiaries.



Bags of spoiled maize flour kept in stores in Kapchorwa district waiting commissioning, February 2015

This was also evident in the Support to Humanitarian Assistance Project where political leaders of the district had convened locals illegally to allocate acres of land in Bulambuli district.



Landless persons convened for a meeting by LC chairman regarding distribution of plots in Bulambuli district

8. Outbreak of animal diseases

The Outbreak of the Foot and Mouth Disease delayed implementation of PRDP activities in beneficiary local governments. This led Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) to impose quarantine on movement of cattle in Northern Uganda thus affecting the restocking exercise for the region.

Conclusion

The key challenges affecting implementation were the late receipt of funds; slow and long procurement processes, inadequate capacity of suppliers, as well as political interference. These issues can all be addressed effectively to improve implementation.

Policy recommendations

The districts should submit work plans and reports on time so that funds for project activities are released early enough to ease implementation of activities.

1. The respective Local Governments should initiate procurements early enough to avoid delay in implementation of activities.

2. The Ministry of Local Government should fast track the approval of procurement committee members to allow early procurements
3. The implementing agencies and respective LGs should verify ownership of land and enforce compensation before activities are implemented.
4. The Ministry of Public Service and Office of the Prime Minister should contract competent contractors and suppliers for effective implementation of project activities.
5. The implementing agencies should allow districts to handle actual distribution of items.

References

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2. The MFPED Annual Performance reports FY 2014/15
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4. BMAU Half- year monitoring report FY 2014/15
5. MoLG Ministerial Policy Statement, FY 2014/15
6. MoPS Ministerial Policy Statement, FY 2014/15

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