



EU Project (FED/2019/413-963 CSO Monitoring of Infrastructure

Budgeting at the District Level Rumphu District

Final Report

contact

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Acronyms

1. ATI.....Access to Information
2. CDF.....Community Development Fund
3. CAG.....Community Action Group
4. CSO.....Civil Society Organisation
5. DDF.....District Development Funds
6. DPD.....Director of Planning and Development
7. FGD.....Focus Group Discussions
8. LDF.....Local Development Fund
9. ICAD.....Initiative for Climate Action and Development
10. MIDCT.....Mzimba Institute for Development Communications Trust
11. KII.....Key Informant Interviews
12. PET.....Public Expenditure Tracking
13. PPDA.....Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets

Final Budget Monitoring Report

Introduction

The understanding is the Budget Monitoring project aims at strengthening the capacity of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to have the capacity to monitor infrastructure public infrastructure project in Malawi. Understanding the infrastructure project monitoring also strengthen the community stakeholders including CSO so that it supports the continued Monitoring of the infrastructure project after the budget monitoring project comes to halt. Furthermore, the understanding is that the project is to be implemented within the period of 12 months that is starting from December 2022 to November 2023. The project will involve two key experts that is the Civil Engineer and Data analyst for enhance monitoring in public infrastructure project. The Civil Engineer will be responsible for monitoring in order if the designs are being adhered to while the Data Analyst will be responsible for analyzing all that data that will be collected. The data collected and analyzed will be used for advocacy, media, and community engagement.

Here is a list of the proposed tasks considered necessary to achieve the contract objectives.

1. Engagement meeting with Rumphi District Council Officials on the initiative, & collection of project information to be monitored
2. Training of **CAGs** in **PET**, rights lobbying skills, decentralization policy, guidelines on local development resources, Public procurement & Disposal Act (**PPDA**) access to information Act (**ATI**).
3. Project sites monitoring & verification visits (data collection).
4. Conduct desk literature review (Conduct project & budget analysis and document)
5. Solicitation of technical expert opinion from Civil Engineers
6. Data analysis on the project compliance (Report compilation)
7. Conduct validation meeting
8. Publish & disseminate the survey results to the stakeholders.

Overall Objective

To contribute towards transparency and accountability in the management of CDF at Rumphi district Council

Specific Objectives

- By December 2023, there is enhanced compliance to contract agreements
- By December 2023, Rumphi district in particular Jalawe communities access

to quality education is enhanced.

- By December 2023, empowered communities surrounding Jalawe to monitor infrastructure projects
- By December 2023, in Rumphu district information sharing is improved on infrastructure projects

Outcomes

- Citizens become more active in tracking the allocation and utilization of CDF/DDF/LDF and local revenues in Rumphu district council.
- District duty bearers consistently follow laid down financial systems and procurement procedures and are transparent in the allocation and utilization of development resources.
- Citizens’ access to quality services is enhanced.

Main Deliverables

- An inception report detailing approaches to achieve the assignment.
- Quarterly progress reports on the performance of the assignment
- End of the assignment report indicating its achievements.
- Briefly summarize key monitoring approaches

The initial design of the budget tracking project Study Design

The initiative employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches to analyze the data collected. We set an empirical observation, seek patterns in them (observations) and then theorize the pattern. While the latter approach with figures then quantitative analysis was employed.

Data Collection methods

The sources of budget tracking used data of both primary and secondary as provided in the table.

No	Evaluation Objective	Proposed Data Collection Method	Tools
1	Comparison of the designs and the implements	1. Document Review	Document review questions
2	Soliciting input from the stakeholders on the performance of the project	1. Key Informants Interviews (KIIs) 2. Focus Group Discussions	KII Checklists FGD Checklist

4	Review and confirm documented findings	1. Document Review	1. Document review questions
5	Identification of project issues	1. Key Informant Interviews 2. Focus Group Discussion	1. KII guide 2. FGDs guide

Note: The approach used unstructured questionnaire to capture the data/information

We conducted desk review prior to the activity, where we solicit information from the District Development Plan (DDP), project design, budget, policies, progress, and final reports. The assessment determined whether there is compliance in implementation with Public Finance Management laws and regulations in public infrastructure procurement.

MIDCT and ICAD based the outcomes to engage Rumphu District Council in areas that seek attention as far as accountability issues are concerned to improve performance and budgeting expenditures in public infrastructure procurement.

Data Analysis

In this approach, qualitative data was recorded and transcribed based on 100% discussion between the interviewers and the informants.

Budget Tracking

- Provide an overview of budget allocation, utilization, and expenditure for infrastructure sectors

Project Name	Intended Use	Project Budget
Health center Guardian Shelter	To provide lodging of expectant women and their guardians	MK2,730,800.00
Office block	To enlarge the office to accommodate all staff members	MK2,016,700.00
CDSS Girls Hostel	To protect girls from travelling long distances to school	MK717,500.00
Teacher's House	To increase accommodation of teachers close to school.	MK7,337,660.10

- **Compare budgets and spending to previous years**

This information was not provided by the Rumphu District Council.

- **Detail stakeholder engagement and capacity building**

There have been engagement meetings with various stakeholders starting from the community and at district levels. The budget tracking project also

had a capacity building component where members of the community and CSOs were targeted. The following are some of the capacity building training areas that the project delivered:

1. public expenditure tracking,
2. Advocacy
3. Decentralization policy, guidelines on local development resources, Public procurement & Disposal Act (PPDA) access to information Act (ATI)

Key Findings and Achievements

The following are the key findings and achievement of the budget tracking over the project:

1. It was discovered that Constituency Development Fund supported projects do not have proper procedure in identifying contractors since it solicits local artisans.
2. It was found out that handover notes by the council officers i.e. Procurement officer, Finance, Director of Public Works and Director of Planning and Development was not clearly done. This affected MIDCT/ICAD to get the actual much information/Data needed for analysis.
3. During data collection we found out that the infrastructure projects at Jalawe i.e. Health Centre, Teachers Houses, Classroom Blocks and Girls Hostel did not have plans (building Plans) that outline the way structures will be constructed.
4. We found out that delivery notes of the construction materials and equipment's was shared to individual person which lacked transparency and accountability
5. It was found out that Rumphi District council doesn't have all the records required for some projects at Jalawe e.g Girls Hostel
6. It was found out that there is little coordination between the council and community people and within the council officials themselves. This was observed during data correction process.
7. It was found out that constituency Development Funds projects are not captured in the IPP portal for records
8. It was found out that there is no sharing of information between the MP and community and Council Officials. This was seen when MIDCT and ICAD was conducting document review process
9. It was found out that during project construction the workers did not have protective gear from any accident. At the same time issues of gender were not taken seriously considering that within the construction site there should be toilets indicating Male and Female.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

The following are Major challenges encountered during project implementation:

10. Resistance by the Rumphi council official to provide information regardless of writing them siting Access to Information Act.
11. The infrastructure projects at Jalawe didn't display the baseline data to be captured and recorded
12. Rumphi District is very far from Mzimba and Lilongwe where it affected the budgeting since we were supposed to be travelling a long distance in this case 300 Kilometers one way.

key lessons learned to inform future efforts

1. We have learnt that Constituency Development Fund does not follow the proper procurement procedures in as far engaging contractors in concerned.
2. We have learnt that some council officials do understands their roles in their positions i.e. The Rumphi District Commissioner who showed his compliance during the budget tracking project implementation
3. The engagement of the Engineer was another adventure since we have a better understanding of the nature of the projects we are implementing.
4. We have learnt that funds disbursement flow was not consistent hence brings implications and pressure to the implementers

Recommendations

1. Constituency Development Fund should take proper procedures in employing the contactors as per the PPDA.
2. The Council Official should make clear handover notes from procurement, Office of the Director of Public Works and Director of planning and Development.
3. Civil Society Organizations in the District should be engaging the Council to enhance transparency in procurement and infrastructure projects implementation
4. There is need for that the Council to be conducting citizen engagement forums/meetings with citizens i.e. CSOs and Community stakeholders on citizenry budget. This will enhance transparency and accountability. This will also minimize issues of coordination between the duty bearers (Council) and citizens.
5. There is need for the council to have physical plans for all infrastructure project mainly for Constituency Development Funds.
6. We suggest that CDF should have a special Desk Officer to be handling the records
7. We suggest that the CDF guidelines should be redefined in order to provide a conducive environment for all parties.

Conclusion

The impact of the infrastructure project tracking has been felt and needs to be a continued process since it provides checks and balance, shake ups for improved transparency and accountability of rights holders and duty bearers.

It is imperative to note that the CDF guidelines needs to be revised since it gives much power to the member of parliament to make decisions. There is also need to redefine the budget tracking approaches in order to incorporate are crucial areas such as community mobilization and information sharing.