



DFID CNTR: 00 0512A

State and Local Government Programme Summary of the Programme

Contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Purpose and Objectives of the Programme.....	2
1.2	This Paper – An Companion to the Knowledge Repository	3
2.0	BRIEF SUMMARY OF PROGRAMME TRENDS	3
3.0	THE STORY OF SLGP.....	7
3.1	Before the Start.....	7
3.2	Early Lessons	8
3.2.1	The Approach to Process Adopted.....	8
3.2.2	Poor Partnership Relations	8
3.2.3	The Choice of States and Lack of Political Understanding	9
3.3	Formulating Changes in Approach.....	10
3.3.1	NEEDS and SEEDS Related Changes	10
3.3.2	Changes Intended to Achieve Better Political Commitment.....	11
3.4	A Period of Consolidation.....	11
3.4.1	Demand-Side Working	12
3.4.2	Local Government.....	12
3.4.3	Are Issues-Based Projects Working?	13
3.4.4	Co-ordination Between Programmes	13
3.4.5	Standardising Advice	13
3.4.6	DFID Programme Management	14
3.5	A Concluding Comment on Impact.....	14

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The State and Local Government Programme (SLGP) was a long programme. Originally designed to run for seven years, it was shortened during 2003 so that DFID could increase the pace of expenditure through the programme. But later the programme was extended again (including additional funding) so as to consolidate the perceived gains in Nigeria. Eventually it ran from November 2000 to May 2008 (7 years and 7 months).

This paper is a supporting overview of the knowledge material (mostly consultancy and review reports) produced during the Programme's life. Initially a stand-alone web site compiled at the closure of the programme, it will later be possible to navigate between this and the web site for the new programme replacing SLGP. This is call State Partnerships for Accountability, Capacity and Responsiveness (SPARC).

1.1 Purpose and Objectives of the Programme

The SLGP Programme's Purpose was to that, "The capacity and effectiveness of federal, state and local government to manage resources and support service delivery in response to the interests of poor people is enhanced." The reference to federal government was introduced to this purpose statement in 2004, following the 2003 review. Its objectives also changed slightly in 2004. They were:

- A. Federal level institutions including pilot federal ministries reform areas of policy, fiscal budget management and service delivery. (The outputs with the Federal level institutions will be based around those being achieved under SEEDS.)
- B. SEEDS / LEEDS – type benchmarks of performance are achieved in partner states. (Partner states selected based on evidence of performance track record and of political commitment to pro-poor growth and MDG achievement.)
 - Policy process produces policies that are: responsive to needs, participative, targeted on MDG achievement and growth, promoting effective use of human and financial resources, and engaged with civil society.
 - Fiscal and Budget management is improved. The improvement is based on the following: proper financial discipline, resource allocations reflecting strategies for policy achievement, project and programme evaluation
 - Service delivery improved, with performance indicators and targets set, systems for monitoring, HR strategies established and implemented, partnership agreements and contracts established as necessary.
 - Civil Society/Government interface is strengthened. The demonstration of transparent public management is improved.
- C. Issues Based Projects
 - Selected services improved, including the service of providing an environment for investment and growth;
 - Institutional barriers to service improvement are highlighted and broken down;
 - Sufficient public interest is mobilised for change;
 - Acceptance widened of new ways of working.
- D. Programme core management and coordination
 - Experience and best practice of NEEDS, SEEDS, LEEDS and IBPs disseminated
 - Drivers of Change –Political structures and civil society analysed
 - Programme progress monitored and evaluated
 - Programme Coordinated
 - Programme financial management



1.2 This Paper – A Companion to the Knowledge Repository

When the Programme ended in May 2008, the accumulated knowledge of the Programme was collected together, organised and placed in web-page and CD forms for viewing and download. The material is categorised under five headings:

- 5 *formal reviews* of the programme undertaken by DFID;
- 104 *reports produced by consultants*;
- 4 *success stories*;
- 9 *lesson learning reviews* (completed towards the end of the programme); and
- 5 sets of *formalised training material*.

In order fully to understand or interpret this material, it is necessary for the reader to know about the context of the thinking in DFID Nigeria (and in the Programme) at various stages through its life. It is also necessary to understand the context of changes in Nigeria itself during the period of the programme's implementation.

This then is the main objective of this summary paper – to provide a guide and interpretation, in a sense to “tell the story”, so that readers may:

- Be better able to interpret what the knowledge available from the programme's efforts; and
- Understand better why the reports and the reviews took a particular position, and accordingly why the programme evolved in the way that it did.

Two sections follow.

- The first gives a quick glance at the main issues, covering just a little over three pages.
- The second expands the story into an eight page summary. However, the contents of the brief version (section 2 below) are not merely a cut back version of the main part of the paper (section 4), and so it is recommended that if you have time you might read both sections.

Throughout these two sections reference is made to the five reviews that were undertaken during the Programme. These are more or less markers – points at which the Programme approach was reflected upon, and in some cases therefore the points at which decisions were made to change direction.

2.0 BRIEF SUMMARY OF PROGRAMME TRENDS

- When SLGP was designed (late 1999 to 2000) Nigeria had just replaced its military government with a civilian (elected) one. The programme's heavy emphasis on “process” was based on the belief that the new government would (naturally) be committed to achieving improvements in governance and service delivery.
- DFID opted at first for a state (as opposed to a federal) level focus for all its programmes because it was felt that it could have an impact there. (The size of the Federal budget was thought to make it more or less impregnable to DFID influence.) The selection of four “focal” states was still in process as the programme began, but was based more or less on previous knowledge and



engagement, upon the level of poverty in each state, and upon a perception of reform-mindedness.

- Because of the rigour of the “process” approach taken by the early implementers of the programme (in agreement with DFID advisors) there was no formalised base-line.
- The initial inception review, in mid-2002, focused on questions about the decision not to engage at federal government (which it was felt was difficult to justify) and with the tendency for the implementers not to engage for the time being at local government. It endorsed the latter decision, owing to the perceived decrepit capacity at that level and the need first to sort things out at State level.
- The inception review also questioned the purity of process adopted at the outset, and called for more understanding of political interest. Following the review the programme took the decision (again together with DFID endorsement) to relax the use of process approaches, and introduce more direction in programme interventions.
- By the time of the Joint Inception Review (JIR) in 2003 (so called because at this stage DFID reviewed each of its major programmes at the same time), some greater understanding of the politics had been obtained. This was done partly by the programme, but also through a significant Drivers of Change study commissioned by DFID Nigeria. The political understanding had led, amongst other things, to a growing questioning about the approach used to choose the states for engagement. It was felt that some other states would actually provide better opportunities for change, and following the JIR the painful process of withdrawal from two rural states (Benue and Ekiti) and eventual engagement with three other predominantly urban ones (Lagos, Kano and later Kaduna) was initiated.
- The political assessments also contributed to the view that the programme was too captured by state governments, and that more visible service delivery improvement demonstration was required to bring relevance to, and to help mobilise public support for, the reforms being attempted. From this the idea of Issues-Based Projects was born.
- Also at the time of the JIR, the second Obasanjo government had just been elected. A more radical programme of reform instigated at Federal level (the NEEDS and later the SEEDS initiatives) was on the cards, and DFID needed to manufacture a rapid response to these efforts. Accordingly “spare” money in SLGP was mobilised to provide quick support, which brought the programme at last into engagement at the federal level. It also gave the programme a leading role in providing direction through its support to the SEEDS process in states.
- At this time also the DFID programme became more closely linked with that of the World Bank, which led to closer relationships in most of the engagement states, and to a progressive sharing of responsibilities. A particular area of progress was in agreeing between donors, and with the federal government, the implementation of SEEDS benchmarking. This provided for the long-sought-after baseline, and was one of the inputs to a more joined-up approach to state engagement.



- Following the JIR the programme log-frame was revised, especially to include support to NEEDS and SEEDS (with additional inputs applied), and to provide for the implementation of IBPs. The length of the programme was reduced from June 2007 to June 2006 to allow for extra expenditure to be focussed within these lines of engagement.
- By the time of the November 2005 Annual Review therefore, the programme was quite different from the way it looked at its inception. Many of the new initiatives were underway, and the Review focussed on assessing progress with these. The Review also saw itself preparing for the end of the programme, which was thought to be only 8 months away.
- According to the Review some teething problems with IBPs were encountered, not least because of the short amount of time remaining in the programme. It was felt that this had impinged upon the choices of issues. Indeed it was becoming evident that fluctuations in programme length projections and the resulting uncertainty had, by this time, become a negative factor in programme performance. Expenditure had not been as rapid as anticipated, and the OPR recommended the no-cost extension of the programme from June through to October 2006.
- There was also concern about the general performance of all states against the SEEDS benchmarks. It was felt that SLGP would achieve its outputs OK, but there remained concern about the contribution of these to the programme purpose. This was because there remained a continued apparent lack of commitment by state governments to allocate budget resources on the basis of pro-poor policies. The programme evaluation awarded a score of 3 at the purpose level.
- In early 2006 the programme was extended again, this time up to the end of 2007, but with a cost increase (up from £21 million to £28 million). In fact the fluctuations in programme expenditure speed, and the projections of programme completion date (which changed in four times during the programme's life) were also in part a reflection of changes in DFID's own expenditure priorities over the years. As described above, a large increase was required in 2003/4 following the advent of NEEDS and SEEDS strategies by the Nigerian Government, but by 2005 the programme was under pressure to cut back on its spending as the overall DFID allocation to Nigeria was restricted. By 2006 the pressure to spend was on once more and the programme received the additional funding extension described above. And then finally expenditure was once more slowed as (amongst other things) the period around the national elections in 2007 led to uncertainties. These changes had an impact both on the reviews conducted, and upon the approach the programme was able to take.
- An OPR was conducted later in 2006 (the report is dated September). The new review raised the purpose level score of the programme to 2, maintaining that good progress was being made and that with realistic objectives for the remaining 15 months of the programme it stood every chance of being able to consolidate the gains made. There was also a key requirement to ensure that the lessons of the programme (which were considered to be many) needed good capture and feed in to the design of the new generation of programmes slated for 2008.



- Some of the main lessons were in areas that had been issues of debate throughout the life of the programme. This included:
 - Engagement with local government, the difficulties SLGP encountered and the need to find a way of overcoming this problem;
 - IBPs, their growing contribution, and their potential usefulness for strengthening links between sector programmes;
 - The difficulties in working with “the demand side” in a programme that is close to state governments, while at the same time needing to maintain a working link between the two (thus avoiding demand-side programmes which work with civil society alone);
 - The need to improve synergy between DFID’s major programmes (and with the work of other donors); and
 - The need (reflecting in particular upon the experiences of engaging with and then leaving some states, and the need to be clear about development objectives) to improve the clarity of partnerships.
- In addition the review raised the question of consistency in messaging. Differences between states, the early process-laden approach at the beginning, and a growing degree of decentralisation in management through much of the programme, had led to a variety of messages being delivered. This also meant that there existed a discernable inconsistency between approaches in different states. The OPR suggested that, while SLGP had increasingly used SEEDS as a standard template from which to select related areas for focus, there were other frameworks available (such as PEFA for example) which could further enhance the consistency of advice proffered.
- In fact many of these issues then became core aspects of the challenge in designing the suit of programmes that DFID developed for commencement in early to mid-2008.
- The annual review carried out in August 2007 would also have constituted the End of Programme Evaluation, but once more the programme had been extended (partly because of under-spending and partly because of delays in the process of design and tendering for the next programme) until June 2008.
- The review produced similar results to the one a year before, but of course including assessment of progress against the recommendations of the OPR. The purpose level score was also set at 2, and again progress with SEEDS support, and the high illustrative value of IBPs was noted. Progress was recorded with specification of a structured approach to PFM, as called for in the OPR.
- There was also a perception that new governments, recently elected, were generally more positive about change than their predecessors had been. Especially at Federal level, there were moves to implement significant fiscal responsibility legislation that had been delayed by the previous government, and then moves to cancel and re-run some state elections where allegations of malpractice were verified. One of these was an SLGP-state (Enugu), but at the time of review it was far too early to speculate whether this new pressure on the electoral strategy that aspirants might follow might be discerned in government behaviour later.



- On the negative side, a general continued resistance to Civil Service Reform, and a difficulty in achieving any up-take of efforts to get government to engage with civil society, were also evident. Meanwhile some apparent improvements in attitude to reform amongst state governments had yet to bear fruit in the form of new positive action. It remains to be seen whether these improvements are superficial, or whether they reflect deeper changes in the political and economic structure of some places in the Country.
- Recommendations from the Review regarding the design of the new programmes were similar to those from the OPR.

3.0 THE STORY OF SLGP

One thing stands out as a key trend identified by the series of reviews. This is the notable improvement in the scoring of the programme's achievements during its life. Especially the scores averaging 4 at the point of the JIR improved notably to an average of 2 by the programme's conclusion. The improvement almost certainly needs to be viewed against the significant re-structuring of the programme undertaken following the JIR, but it needs also to be seen against the changes in the operating environment. The Programme did, after-all, span a period of very nearly eight years, during which time Nigeria went through some significant changes itself.

This core section aims to tell the story of the Programme – the backdrop against which the results of the reviews, and the progress of changes in the programme's work and results, may be better understood.

3.1 Before the Start

There may be no written record, but it is known that the decision in DFID in 1999 to engage in Nigeria through a governance reform programme was not taken lightly. Indeed there were those who felt that to attempt such a thing given the levels of corruption prevalent in the country would be a mistake. Apparently there was a narrow margin in the informal vote to commence with the programme at all.

At the pre-mobilisation meeting held between senior DFID advisors and the implementing team in September 2000, the advisors made it clear that while the log frame was a serious attempt to describe what it was felt might be done, there remained considerable uncertainty in DFID and it was envisaged that the inception phase was to be used to test the waters and to help to define a more reasonable set of objectives.

On reflection this position seems to have been well thought through. Certainly the first two reviews show how initial efforts were not successful, and especially between the first review and the JIR some considerable thought and extra work, both by the programme and by DFID, went in to re-thinking and re-designing the programme in order to take advantage of new experiences and knowledge.

At the JIR the SLGP received a relatively positive evaluation compared with the other major programmes, and it was felt at the time that this was a reflection of the programme's willingness to recognise initial problems and to work on devising realistic alternative approaches to deal with them. Certainly the ensuing measured success of the programme *might* be seen as a testament to this effort. But really this reflects positively on the designers of the programme, because they *never*



maintained that they had got the design right in the first place. The expectation had always been that changes would need to be made, and indeed given the extremely high risk that the programme might not have succeeded at all.

3.2 Early Lessons

Probably there were a large number of errors or mistakes at the outset, and they may not all have been to do with the lack of certainty at the time the programme was designed. Drawing on the review documents it is reasonable to identify three key aspects of the programme start-up which proved to be problematic.

3.2.1 The Approach to Process Adopted

Based upon World Bank findings regarding the failure of conditional institutional change programmes, the original programme design for SLGP placed a heavy emphasis on a process approach, with local people taking decisions about the pattern of reform to be followed. It must be emphasised that the designers believed that the election of new civilian Federal and State Governments in 1999 (with local elections to come) had heralded a new approach to governance in Nigeria, with Nigerians themselves keen to adopt pro-poor reform programmes. Given this assumption the adoption of a process approach made sense.

The programme implementers took this aspect of the design seriously, and adopted the advice of reputed experts in the field of process consultancy. The approach was however, somewhat extreme, with local state partners being invited to choose from a menu of possible priorities. The position was that even if mistakes were made, learning would result, and so change would be more sustainable.

The approach may have been reasonable in some respects, and it did have the advantage of building a relatively rapid degree of client trust, but it did also have some negative consequences. Not least it was felt that doing a comprehensive baseline would be too directive and impinge upon the local ownership of the programme.

In fact it did not take long for the programme to begin to see that the initial assumption that civilian governments would be committed to pro-poor change was mistaken, and it was this that ultimately undermined the legitimacy of the rigorous approach to process that had been adopted. (See the sub-heading on choices of states below.)

3.2.2 Poor Partnership Relations

Although client relationships were good at the outset, there quickly developed (especially in Ekiti, and to some extent in Benue) a level of distrust because the aims and parameters of the programme had not been spelled out clearly enough at the outset. This was partly owing to the process approach adopted, the team being reluctant to pre-define what was on offer so as not to have undue influence over the decisions made. This was a mistake, however, because of course it soon became evident that there were some things that the programme would not support – such as the purchase of vehicles (an item high on the list in Ekiti).

It emerged that decisions about funding matters were being made somewhat “on the hoof”, because there was no partnership agreement between the state governments and DFID. Therefore there was no basis upon which the implementers could make



dependable decisions about what was and what was not permissible. The lack of clarity caused a growing level of distrust in two of the states.

This problem became more acute when, following the JIR, the decision was taken to withdraw SLGP from (quite relevantly) those two states. (See below for the real reasons for this withdrawal.) The two state governments (Ekiti and Benue) claimed, with at least some degree of validity, that the terms on which the relationship would be broken had never been clearly defined.

It must be said that the debates at this time within DFID itself, both about the need for, and then eventually the nature of, such agreements, was lengthy, and was not properly resolved until as late as 2007. It is dating back to the period especially immediately before and following the JIR, and the process of having to withdraw from some states, that really lies behind the decision to strengthen SPARC by founding it upon Partnership Agreements between DFID and the lead states.

3.2.3 The Choice of States and Lack of Political Understanding

At first the selection of states was done on the basis of previous experience. DFID had been engaged in Benue state since before the end of the Military regime (they implemented health and agriculture programmes there working with NGOs). So it seemed logical to remain there. In Jigawa there was a design already in place for a wetlands programme (this became Jewel), and although there was a debate at the time about selecting Kaduna (another DFID programme was working there with CSOs), Jigawa won the day because its Governor seemed to be an innovative moderniser.¹

DFID was also under pressure from the new Federal Government to choose states in different geopolitical zones (South South, South East, West, Central, North East and North West – Benue is in Central, Jigawa in North West). It was agreed to select the other two states from West and South East zones, and after a more structured assessment (which focussed on levels of poverty and visible signs of commitment to pro-poor changes in government), Ekiti (West) and Enugu (South East) were chosen.

SLGP conducted some preliminary political investigation prior to the first Inception Review, and this began to indicate that the politics of the states chosen (factors that had not been taken into account before) might be less suitable for change than in some others. Political economy assessments done later (around 2004 to 2005) indicated that urban centres were more conducive to reform, partly because their civil societies included greater numbers of organisations as well as more powerful sets of potentially reforming interests. This was especially true of Lagos and Kano.

In addition the view grew that success in a small state, such as Jigawa, would not have much replicable impact in larger places, whereas it is said that if Lagos sneezes then Nigeria catches cold. The DoC assessment of 2003 also indicated that by limiting itself to 4 small and predominantly rural states, DFID might have been excluding itself from taking opportunities to support significant change movements elsewhere.

The conclusion of this debate is covered below. But on reflection it is possible to conclude that the states where the programme began its work did not present the

¹ By 2007 he had been arrested on suspicion of grand corruption involving state government money.

best opportunities for change, and this must have had a negative impact on its early progress.

3.3 Formulating Changes in Approach

The period of rethinking the programme was concentrated between the two inception reviews. Rethinking focussed on building upon the results of the DoC analysis, and changing states locations. But it was also significant that the second round of national and state elections took place during the same period, and by the time the JIR came around the new Federal Government had instigated a more convincing programme of reform. NEEDS and SEEDS programmes were being started, and DFID needed to provide support for these initiatives.

3.3.1 NEEDS and SEEDS Related Changes

Partly on the basis of its experience at State level, and partly because there was a budget line available in SLGP (nearly a million pounds allocated to dissemination), the Programme was able to engage quickly in providing support to the Federal Government in developing its support for this initiative. There were three associated lines of work that meant a significant change of tack for the Programme.

SEEDS Advice

By drawing on experiences from state work, the programme was able to develop a SEEDS manual for the Government which it then used as a basis for delivering advice to all the states around the country. Not only did this greatly enhance the delivery of dissemination of lessons for the programme, but it also meant that it was able to take a more directed approach. The scatter-gun approach driven by adherence to process (at the expense of content) was weakened.

SEEDS Benchmarking and State Selection

At the same time DFID and the other donors joined forces to support the Government in establishing a set of benchmarks against which to measure State performance in a range of governance, service delivery and poverty-policy indicators. The aim was to support change by publicising information about those states performing poorly and especially about the observed improvements in subsequent benchmark series. The exercise has become remarkably well established in the state psyche, with three sequences of benchmarking now having been conducted.

But the exercise also helped DFID and other donors to choose states for support on governance that had demonstrated a commitment against a set of measurable indicators. In fact the benchmarks demonstrated especially how poor *all* the states were in these areas, but the information was used as one input in the exercise of choosing new states for engagement.

It also meant that the baseline of governance, which was omitted from early stages of the programme, was now being conducted (and repeated). Recently DFID used these benchmarks, along with other available indicators, to develop a state-level equivalent to the standard Country Governance Assessment (CGA) which DFID now conducts in all the counties where it provides assistance.

Federal Engagement

Alongside its support to SEEDS, SLGP also began engagement with the (then) Ministry of the Federal Capital Territory – MFCT (this later became the Federal Capital Territory Authority – FCTA). This entailed support that was similar to taking on another state, but the MFCT was also a pilot Ministry for reform under the Federal NEEDS programme. The initiative provided the opportunity for the Programme to pick up lessons from reform in the MFCT, carry these in to the NEEDS exercise overall, and engage in discussions over issues at Federal level that would effect states' performance (for example on conditional grants). This had been an issue that had been raised as early as the first inception review.

3.3.2 Changes Intended to Achieve Better Political Commitment

The assumption was made in the original log frame that there would be political commitment to reform. However, early phases of the programme, and the DoC study, clearly indicated that this was not very strong, and that a lack of commitment presented a particular problem in many of the states where SLGP/DFID was initially engaged.

The aim was therefore to find ways of legitimately “removing” this assumption from the assumptions column, and bringing into the output column of the programme. There were essentially two means by which DFID attempted to do this following the JIR.

The first was to change the states where the programme worked. The shift to Lagos and Kano was partly based upon the benchmark measures and upon discussion and agreements with partner donors. (Note also that the adherence to the original rule that no two states should be in the same geopolitical zone was dropped – Kano, like Jigawa, is in the North West zone.) But there was also the sense that large, urban environments provided better opportunities to engage with reform interests *and* to demonstrate changes that would be more widely visible around the country. (Later Political Economy studies underlined the differing historical evidence for this in each of these vividly different cities.)

The second was to adopt an Issues-Based Approach for some of the programme's interventions. Emerging from the DoC work, the intention was to identify issues that it was felt would be of concern to a range of different society interests, especially those who had the power to have some influence over state governments. Nevertheless it was at the same time important to pick issues that, if resolved, would not present so great a threat to government that the chances of success were slim (or the risk of conflict great). The project idea also had the positive aspect of illustrating visible reforms to services, so became a way of making reform (hitherto mainly limited to internal and systems capacity building) more obviously relevant to people outside government who may support and encourage it.

3.4 A Period of Consolidation

Having made these changes the Programme then embarked (from about late 2004) upon a period of establishing these more standard approaches, and upon working in the new states selected (including later on the addition of Kaduna).

At least for some time running up to about mid-2006 the environment for change also seemed to be relatively good, with the Federal Government not only pushing ahead



with NEEDS and SEEDS, but also publishing information about allocations to states and local governments, taking steps to tackle corruption through the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and preparing to instigate significant legislative reform, such as the Fiscal Responsibility Bill.

However, as the Federal Government achieved debt relief, and as the debate over the so called “Third Term Agenda”² intensified, so the foot was lifted from the throttle of reform. As the later reviews attest, there continued (and continue) to be concerns about the failure of state governments to control expenditure against budgets.

Despite these difficulties the last two reviews (the 2007 review was undertaken following this more difficult political period) indicated a clear positive result from the re-design of the programme.

Of course there were issues of concern and debate throughout this phase (2005 to 2007), many of which became key issues for resolution during the design of the new Programme. The sub-sections below review some of these key questions.

3.4.1 Demand-Side Working

The original programme document defined a need for SLGP to engage with civil society and strengthen its ability to influence government policy. This always proved difficult while retaining a positive working relationship with state governments that were not always that keen to improve transparency or accountability. Certain localised advances were made through the IBPs. Meanwhile the development of some SEEDS documents (though not all) did entail good public involvement. But even these have suffered from the continuing difficulties in getting governments to spend according to the budget.

The solution to this in the new programme design is to invest in a parallel programme which will be linked through the log frame to SPARC, but which will work exclusively (and under separate management) with civil society groups. This programme (called Public Accountability and Voice – PAVS) will also have a component intended to strengthen the accountability role of State Houses of Assembly.

3.4.2 Local Government

The first Inception Review endorsed the decision of the programme implementers not to engage with local government at first. But as a sounder basis was established at the state level, there has been a move in this direction. The main vehicle has been the development of LEEDS documents, followed by limited support to the implementation of some aspects of these. In Jigawa the conduct of LEEDS has been linked to a challenge fund, though, as the latest review attests, there were some teething problems with this.

Again, a slightly revised approach is recommended in the SPARC design, concentrating on getting State-level Ministries of Local Government to take on a new role in scrutinising and publicising local government performance records first, and then providing support also through LEEDS to those that do well.

² This was Obasanjo’s bid to have the constitution altered so that he could run for a third term as President in the April 2007 elections. He failed in that bid, but there were allegations that he brought pressure upon some Governors and senate members by, for example, using the EFCC against them.



3.4.3 Are Issues-Based Projects Working?

Not all the initial crop of IBPs was deemed a success. Some issues may not have been selected well (according to the recommended criteria), with possibly too much emphasis on State Government priorities as opposed to those of more influential non government groups. But the reviews also highlight the fact that some issues selection was jeopardised by the perceived shortened length of the programme. After the JIR and by the time the IBP approach was taken on board formally, it was only expected that the programme would continue for another two years. It is also the case that the programme encountered some problems with the engineering content of some projects, and in some of these cases the work got bogged down in these problems and eyes were “taken off the ball” of the institutional reform objectives.

Despite these problems there were also sufficient successes, especially the very popular water project in Kano, for the later reviews to count the IBPs as a success. They also recommended that these be included as a significant element of the new programme.

3.4.4 Co-ordination Between Programmes

Adequate co-ordination between SLGP and the other programmes was always a problem. One review accepted that this was understandable as state team leaders had enough on their plates without also having to devote extra time to working alongside the priorities of the other programmes. In fact relationships between programmes were generally also dependent upon the personal traits of the staff based in a particular location. The challenge was also bound up with the role of the DFID state co-ordinator, and there were occasional problems in some states where the perceived needs of co-ordination by the DFID advisor ran counter to the apparent objectives of the specific programme implementing agent of one or other of the programmes.

Later advances were made in some instances through sharing inputs to IBPs based in the sectors of the other programmes, as for example through use of a media programme financed by SLGP in Jigawa to publicise debates about public health issues.

In an effort to overcome this coordination problem, DFID conducted the design of its new suite of programmes simultaneously. One result of this was that elements of the log frames for the different programmes refer to work required to help achieve the outputs of the others.

3.4.5 Standardising Advice

The SEEDS work helped provided a framework within which advice could be structured, and this produced a reduction in the scatter-gun that had characterised the early years of the Programme. However, within this framework it is still true that the programme provided different lines of advice in different states. While this makes some sense, responding to state-specific conditions for change, it is not obvious that a stepped or staged approach to progress was followed. It was suggested in the 2006 OPR that more use of instruments of international good practice (such as PEFA) would have helped to ensure that states were led through mutually-supportive stages of improvement.



3.4.6 DFID Programme Management

A variety of different management issues were raised through all the reviews. But the final review makes a strong argument for the need to stream-line DFID management. While a close relationship on technical issues has been one of the enduring successes of the Programme, the review argued that DFID had taken an excessive role in approving inputs. Especially with an even larger and more complex programme following this one, it will be necessary for DFID to, “adopt a consistently strategic role, looking to influence governments’ behaviour rather than to guide and/or police the work of the contractor.”

3.5 A Concluding Comment on Impact

Despite all these debates, which are largely about approach, the key question is of course, what impact did SLGP have?

It is a little difficult to say because, as described above, there was no adequate baseline done at the outset of the Programme. However, the SEEDS benchmarks begin to give an impression. Unfortunately there is precious little evidence from these that state governance in Nigeria is improving. Although areas of advancement, especially in Kano and Lagos, can be pointed to, there were also instances of retrogression, for example in Jigawa and Enugu where there are now allegations of serious fraud over the misuse of government resources. It is not obvious from any indicators that the seven or so years of the programme saw any discernable improvement in the outcomes of governance.

Of course it might be asking a bit much for a programme like SLGP, or even SPARC as it follows on, to have a noticeable positive influence over such a massive operation as state government in the most populous country in Africa. Especially with the high current oil prices, state and local governments in Nigeria are currently receiving somewhere in the region of \$30 billion annually. Nevertheless, given the collaboration between donors on SEEDS, as well as other pressures and incentives for governments to improve their track records, it would be a matter for some considerable concern if by the end of two or three years of SPARC there was not some measurable impact improvement. If none is forthcoming then DFID may need to ask itself whether it is taking the measures necessary to help Nigeria overcome the negative political influences of its oil-rich economy.