

Public Accountability in Tanzania Initiative

Brief 1: Approach, Results & Operational Lessons

Introduction

The Public Accountability in Tanzania (PATA) initiative used an innovative approach designed to address issues of public accountability that constrain the implementation of local level development initiatives. PATA was a partnership between the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN), SNV Tanzania and the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG-I). The roles of each partner were as follows:

- **EKN:** address accountability in policy dialogues on sector programmes and general budget support; provide an Innovation Fund to finance innovative interventions on public accountability
- **SNV:** embed accountability in SNV practice/sectors; prepare methodologies, products and Local Capacity Builders (LCB) and other relevant actors, such as media, to address accountability issues.
- **VNG:** Support learning dynamics, using its international expertise and networks

PATA began with an inception phase in late 2009 and finished in December 2013. This brief looks first at the approach used by the initiative before looking at some of the results achieved and the operational lessons learned.

1. Context

Devolution of centralised power has been government policy in Tanzania for more than a decade. In practice, however, the process of transferring responsibility from central to local government authorities has been slow and, in many cases, poorly implemented. As a result, the projected benefits of decentralisation; improved services, local ownership of planning and development and clear lines of public accountability have failed to materialise in most local government areas.

In 2009, an analysis of accountability dynamics and power relations at local government level described a largely dysfunctional system. District level institutions and the people working within them operate in a culture of informal incentives and personal relationships which is often complex and entrenched. Well intentioned individuals or groups find it hard to instigate positive change in the face of an environment where change is discouraged in many subtle and not so subtle ways.

Adding to this problem, civil society organisations attempting to address the accountability agenda at district level find that it is often impossible to do so without allowing themselves to be co-opted by local government to a certain extent. Many CSOs walk a line between their commitments to their funders and the realities of politics and personal relations at local level, in order to ensure their ability to operate. In such circumstances their ability to serve their constituencies is often severely compromised.



2. Strategic approach

The PATA initiative developed from an understanding that poor accountability relations will undermine all technical approaches to development issues. The strategic approach of the initiative was to increase understanding of local dynamics, strengthen both the supply and demand for accountability (leadership and civic agency) and focus on the formal and informal power relations. An issue based sector focus – on water, agriculture and renewable energy – provided entry points to address accountability issues and also to address generic issues more effectively.

With this in mind the PATA partnership developed a strategy that would support:

- Improved understanding of accountability issues in particular sectors through service mapping and power and change analyses
- Improved supply and demand for accountability through the identification and support of energetic civic actors and ethical, committed leaders with the courage to seek change. Councillor oversight training would form a key element of this support
- The development and delivery of tailored support, informed by iterative experiential learning, to people and organisations willing to address issues affecting the delivery of community services
- Using the lessons learned by the initiative to stimulate a debate on the problems of devolved local government in Tanzania and to feed into national processes

Theory of Change

Change towards sustainable service delivery requires strengthened accountability relationships between citizens and government to overcome underlying non-technical constraints that are institutional, political and incentive related.

The initiative used processes of inquiry and discussion based on evidence to broker constructive, non-confrontational and collaborative relationships between communities, their local representatives and local and national government executives i.e. facilitating change from dysfunctional to functional (accountability) relationships. Service delivery mapping provided a necessary foundation for these discussions. Active engagement in support of local political processes¹ was used where it was assessed that such an engagement would be useful. Ultimately, the lessons learned from the localised, issue driven sector specific approach adopted by PATA were fed into discussions on national level development planning and implementation.

3. Localisation

Essentially, SNV acted as a broker, building local capacity to arrive at locally acceptable solutions to specific problems in a particular sector. The rationale for this policy of localisation included:

- Sustainability of Capacity Development Services (CDS)
- Up-scaling SNV's efforts
- Effectiveness - utilising knowledge of local context/relations; of strategic importance for addressing accountability issues (knowledge of local political and power dynamics)
- Efficiency - attracting lower costs

Localisation was effected by contracting Local Capacity Builders (LCB) i.e. civil society, public or private sector organisations identified as change agents capable of providing capacity development services which are owned and governed within the country context. The PATA Innovation Fund (PATA-IF) was used to contract LCBs to address accountability issues i.e. the fund manager (KPMG) contracted the LCBs. PATA IF funds were not channelled through SNV.

4. Key changes and elements

Positive change has been seen in a number of areas since the inception of PATA. The headline achievements have been:

- An up-scaled accountability approach has successfully promoted changes in the approach of central government, specifically the Ministry of Water, to addressing service delivery issues i.e. a shift to focus on addressing key accountability issues
- Accountability relations and developmental leadership have improved in intervention areas, particularly demonstrated by changes in the approach of councillors to their oversight roles with regard to service delivery
- There have been many examples of increases in the levels of civic agency seen in interventions; communities and citizen - state relations have been enhanced.

Services mapping, councillor oversight training and strengthening working relations were among the key elements of the PATA initiative contributing to bringing about these changes.

¹ The process of the formulation and administration of public policy usually by interaction between social groups and political institutions or between political leadership and public opinion

Service mapping - In all projects it was found that service mapping provided an effective entry point to the process of strengthening accountability relations. Mapping key service delivery factors demonstrated the extent of the functionality or dys-functionality of accountability relations in each sector. Through processes of validation (of the mapping data) and inquiry (into underlying causes of the situation) these analyses provided knowledge on the status of service delivery. This knowledge provided the entry point for discussing the status of service delivery which broadened local knowledge of the local context through multi-stakeholder dialogue. Their most important function was to allow dialogues to move beyond disagreements about the facts on the ground and political posturing to plain speaking and the development of common understanding of their causes and, ultimately, to agreement about the roles and responsibilities of communities, private sector village governments, local governments and central government ministries and agencies. Once all actors agreed the facts of a situation and understood each other's perspective, progress could be made towards agreeing entry points and solutions that represented the best fit for the issue in focus. When presented to communities, mapping exercises and initial context analyses formed an effective catalyst for citizen agency.

Projects in the areas of rural water supply, WASH in schools and cattle dip functionality were founded on surveyed mapping exercises. Multi-stakeholder dialogues regarding the Morogoro red meat supply chain and rural energy supply were instigated by researched service delivery analyses (focused on a few key parameters) and validation inquiry processes commissioned by SNV.

Councillor oversight training - One of the most striking outcomes relating to citizen-state relations has been strongly influenced by councillor oversight trainings. SNV provided guidance and coaching, linked to service mapping, to councillors to improve their capacity to fulfil their oversight responsibilities. This guidance and coaching catalysed changes in councillor power dynamics and political processes in almost all projects.



Many councillors recognised that dialogues facilitated by the mapping exercises provided them with an opportunity to: i) investigate district budgets, ask questions of the relevant district administrative officials and hold to account the executive on poor performance and misuse of resources and ii) build their political profile by connecting with their constituents in a meaningful way. In all intervention areas, councillors are fulfilling their oversight role more effectively by requesting information and demanding more accountable service delivery. In most districts, action taken by councillors has resulted in the suspension of technical staff engaged in corrupt practices. However, due to a lack of legally robust data describing corruption no executive has been prosecuted, though some have been transferred. Active councillors have also been able to make a difference in their own electoral areas by motivating communities to make better use of their own resources, and to better take on their own responsibilities.

However, institutional change remains elusive as motivated individual councillors struggle to stimulate change in the face of a business as usual, formalistic attitude which remains prevalent in district council chambers (full council), LGA committee meetings and among LGA staff and executives.

Strengthening working relations - Multi-stakeholder dialogue on mapping results, training and coaching e.g. of the Councillors - is necessary for stakeholders to understand and reach agreement on their roles and responsibilities, but in itself is not sufficient to establish stronger accountability relations. Key stakeholder groups need to enter into dialogue and be facilitated to negotiate and to translate the agreement on roles and responsibilities into concrete, workable activities and subsequent collaborative action. For example, coaching of councillors also requires relation building between councillors and LGA staff e.g. the District Water and Sanitation Team through discussion and accompaniment towards meaningful communication and collaborative action.

5. Key outcomes in sector interventions

As the implementation of activities under the PATA framework evolved, activities became focussed on accountability issues in the WASH, agriculture and rural energy sectors, eventually covering forty one districts of Tanzania. The vast majority of partnership resources were directed towards five projects in three sectors. Of these the rural water supply projects accounted for over half of all resources due to the levels of outreach involved.

Although there have been some significant achievements, it is too early to make definitive statements about the sustainability of the impact achieved as the implementation has taken place over only 3½ years. However, it is certainly possible to say that significant outcomes and outputs have been achieved that are likely to lead to long term beneficial impacts in the intervention areas. Sustainability will rest on the durability of changes in accountability relations encouraged by the PATA initiative.

Impacts were sought under three headings: Improved access to basic services, a strengthened business environment and improved functionality of democratic and decentralised governance in the intervention area. The following project summaries look at the main outcome/outputs that are likely to create long term impact, and briefly describe how they were achieved.

• Rural Water Supply

Context - The rural water supply service is characterised by a high percentage of non-functioning water points and inequitable services in rural areas due to deficiencies in local level accountability relations between communities and LGAs. Local government investment in water services focuses on the construction of new facilities at the expense of operational maintenance and management. There is also no clear policy, nor understanding in place, on the role of communities in the operation and maintenance of rural water points. As a result, existing water points become non-functional at the same time as new ones are built.

Intervention – In 2008, SNV along with Water Aid and Concern Worldwide conducted a Water Point Mapping (WPM) exercise in 55 rural districts. The mapping data showed that 46% of water points were non-functional. Based on the findings of the WPM and a subsequent validation and inquiry process in 10 districts, SNV developed a Water Point Functionality Intervention Framework. With WPM data as an entry point, interventions focused on clarifying roles and responsibilities of water users, Community Owned Water Supply Organisations (COWSOs) and councillors, in order to strengthen relationships and enhance accountability. SNV brokered (accountability) relations, facilitating negotiation on who can do what. In 22 districts, communities were encouraged to take part in the management of their water facilities and facilitated to set up and register COWSOs. The capacity of councillors to undertake their oversight responsibilities was built through training on district council planning and budgeting and use of WPM data. SNV also focused on up-scaling the accountability approach in rural water supply by promoting its key aspects at national level.

Results – In most districts the citizen-state relationship has been improved by increased interactions between communities and councillors, Also, councillors are more effectively demanding information from district executives, connecting communities with district water supply teams and supporting communities to set funds aside for water point maintenance. Civic agency has also increased in most communities. More than 400 COWSOs have been registered or are in the process of registering. Most COWSOs have surveyed the non-functioning water points in their areas and have prepared budgets for repairs. Many have also submitted requests to the district in instances where they have discovered that the costs of repair are too high for the community. Over 200 water non-functioning water points have now been revived.

As a result of up-scaling the accountability approach, the Ministry of Water has shifted the balance of its operational emphasis from infrastructure development to a focus on the sustainability of rural water supply services. The starting point of this change of emphasis was the mainstreaming of water point mapping in all local government authority areas completed in 2012. In addition, the Ministry is in the process of developing a national sustainability strategy using lessons from the PATA initiative. The Ministry also participated, along with a wide range of other stakeholders in a High Level learning Event on Sustainable Rural Water Supply Services in Dar in 2013. A summary of the proceedings of this event is available at <http://www.snvworld.org/en/countries/tanzania/publications/sustainable-rural-water-supply-services>

Rural water supply – Key outcomes

Impact sought	Outcomes
Improved access to basic services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200 water points revived in 22 districts to serve 50,000 users • 434 COWSOs either registered or in the process of registering
Improved functionality of democratic and decentralised governance in intervention areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local councillors in intervention areas have become more active and assertive in their relations with district executives • Strengthened citizen-state relations and civic agency – COWSO registration and local revenue collection for maintenance • Central government mainstreaming WPM and developing a national sustainability strategy using lessons from PATA

• School WASH

Context – Over the past decade, a government focus on increasing school enrolment has increased the burden on existing school infrastructure in general, and on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities in particular. The lack of WASH facilities has led to overcrowding and deterioration in most cases. As the roles and responsibilities for WASH construction and maintenance are unclear both at government and local level, little is done to improve the situation.

Intervention – In 2009, SNV along with WaterAid and UNICEF undertook a mapping exercise of school WASH facilities in 2,677 schools in 16 districts. Only 11% of schools met required minimum standards. An inquiry process found that this situation was due to the low prioritisation given to WASH in the face of competing demands, weak governance structures and poor resources management.

The information from mapping and inquiry processes provided a foundation for school WASH assessment, participatory accountability analysis, councillor oversight training and district multi-stakeholder dialogues in 15 districts.

Results - The initiative has succeeded in increasing the level of accountability communities require of school committees and village governments regarding school sanitation. In all districts communities have started to internalise their roles and responsibilities and to mobilise resources; labour, materials and funds, for the improvement of WASH facilities. In intervention districts the proportion of schools using improved sanitation facilities has risen from 18% to 75%. Councillors are starting to link community school WASH action plans, prepared with support from Council Water and Sanitation Teams, with LGA planning and budget processes. However, the link between CWSTs and communities remains frail.

The results of mapping and inquiry exercises were also discussed with the Ministries of Water, Health and Education and have influenced a national sanitation campaign under which the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training is now coordinating efforts to improve WASH in schools. Responsibility for water and sanitation in schools was previously uncoordinated and divided among the four Ministries and local government. Now, an MoU and the newly established school WASH guidelines form the basis for coordination among the four ministries.

School WASH – Key outcomes

Impact sought	Outcome
Improved access to basic services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rise from 18% to 75% in the number of schools in 15 districts using improved toilet and sanitation facilities
Improved functionality of democratic and decentralised governance in intervention areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local councillors in intervention areas are linking community action plans with the district budgeting process • Central government has developed an inter-ministerial MoU and new national school WASH guidelines to coordinate the work of Ministries

- **Cattle dip functionality**

Context – Cattle dips are crucial to the control of the tick borne diseases which cause over 70% of cattle mortality in Tanzania. However, few of the cattle dips built by government are operational, as incentives for personal gain in local government; political popularity and embezzlement, lie in dip construction rather than maintenance and management. In addition, responsibility for dip management was hurriedly devolved from districts to communities, who have unclear mandates and have received insufficient training in their roles and responsibilities and are therefore unable to maintain the dipping operations effectively.

Intervention – Mapping of the functionality of cattle dips revealed very low functionality rates; in 13 districts 55% of dips (234 dips) were found to be in good condition but not working. Multi-stakeholder dialogue on the status of these dips enabled councillors, executive and livestock keepers to move away from blaming each other to trying to see what could be done to improve dip management, jointly agreeing roles and responsibilities. Tracking the government’s subsidized acaricide system indicated the programme was being mismanaged, resulting in waste and theft. This discovery prompted groups of livestock keepers to demand information from district authorities on the actual acaricide supply situation and also to demand access to these supplies.

Results - As a result of interventions, 71 of these dips (30%) became functional. Based on average construction costs for one dip at €1,640, this means that an investment of €116,440 was brought back into operation within 1.5 years. As a result an additional 311,500 cattle were dipped, from a total of 61,367 households. Each household received an estimated additional income of TSh.150,000 per year based on one additional calf survived. Councillors in intervention areas are now proactively spearheading action, responding to citizen demands for quality dip services. Councillors have also pressurised district livestock officers to account for themselves at public meetings regarding the status of the cattle dip revival project in their areas for which they are responsible.

Cattle dip functionality – Key outcomes

Impact sought	Outcome
Strengthened business environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% (71) of dips in good condition but not functional, in 13 districts revived, improving the incomes of 115,606 households
Improved functionality of democratic and decentralised governance in intervention areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local councillors in intervention areas have become more assertive in their district level demands for a revival of cattle dips • The Tanzania Meat Board has become active in cattle dip revival which has resulted in a realisation at the Ministry of Livestock that increased dip numbers do not necessarily mean that more cattle are being dipped

- **Improved management of the red meat value chain in Morogoro Town**

Context – Abattoirs in Tanzania are managed by Government. Hygiene and safety regulations are rarely enforced as the LGAs are responsible for both managing and regulating these facilities. The Morogoro abattoir was built in 1953 with a designed capacity of 20 animals daily. It currently processes 215 animals a day. Despite numerous complaints about public health risks, the Municipal Council failed to improve conditions at the abattoir.

Intervention - SNV initially provided information on public health risks existing at the abattoir, revenue flows in the Morogoro meat trade and the existing regulatory oversight situation. A facilitated dialogue was brokered which has produced an agreed understanding between Morogoro butchers and municipal executives regarding the reasons behind poor standards in the town’s abattoir. Civic agency also energised the multi-stakeholder dialogue which produced the agreement aimed at improving the red meat supply chain in Morogoro. A local radio station ran a series of on air debates, often heated, involving meat traders, municipal officials and the general public regarding the condition of the abattoir.

Results - In return for a reduction in unhygienic backyard slaughtering by traders, the municipality has agreed to secure a public private partnership that would improve the quality of service offered at the town's public abattoir.

Improved management of the red meat value chain in Morogoro town – Key outcomes

Impact sought	Outcome
Strengthened business environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation period (7 months) was too short to observe improvements in the business environment • Morogoro municipality has formed a partnership with meat traders to curb informal slaughtering • The municipality is also taking steps to enter a PPP to enhance abattoir management
Improved functionality of democratic and decentralised governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillors are following up on promises made by the municipal executive

• **Integrated renewable energy services**

Context – More than 80% of Tanzanians live off the electricity grid. Although national government policy supports the development of local level renewable energy initiatives to try to bridge this divide, local government authorities have yet to implement Local Energy Planning in any serious way. The main constraint to spread of renewable energy technology is the lack of a reliable supply chain backed up financially by the Government.

Intervention – SNV facilitated Local Capacity Builders to deliver mapping of the public and private energy sectors in the Lake Zone in order to clarify key issues in the local context. A Market Intelligence (MI) survey, composed of three interdependent assessments targeting: (i) consumer energy demand and usage; (ii) RE enterprise capacity; and (iii) the enabling environment, aimed to clarify issues of consumer energy demands, relative to viable RET availability in the Lake Zone. Public and private sector stakeholders participated in a joint Local Energy Planning session, intended to produce a public-private endorsed vision for improved citizen access to energy. District level energy planning was kick-started in Bukoba District, by strengthening the capacity of more than 60 local enterprises and CSOs to formulate business plans to explore and produce renewable energy options and to assist and cooperate with local government energy planning and implementation.

Results - Improved cook stove actors, via technical facilitation and greater linkages with local actors, successfully secured tenders for higher quality wood stove production. Private sector agreement to the adoption of formal standards and improved practices in price clarity to consumers publically distinguished their operations. Also, local individuals in intervention areas demonstrated greater willingness to form groups or community based organisations to manage community services and to demand accountability regarding the use and expenditure of community resources and to seek support from LGA technical staff to engage in rural energy enterprises.

Integrated renewable energy services – Key outcomes

Impact sought	Outcome/Output
Strengthened business environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved technical ability among cook stove and solar providers • The adoption of formal standards and price clarity have strengthened the market in renewable energy products
Improved functionality of democratic and decentralised governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved orientation of energy priorities in local government operations In Bukoba, TSh, 75 million in public funds have been identified as applicable to renewable energy initiatives

5. Operational lessons learned

The importance of informal practices - focus on strengthening relationships

The importance of the nature of the informal network of relationships and practices among all actors, institutional and individual, in local level accountability issues was recognised early on. Particular situations are usually a function of informal relationships among individual actors working within formal settings. The acceptance that informal relationships are predominant and key to governance and accountability creates a necessity to adapt or alter approaches which may be based on assumptions that are less relevant in the Tanzanian context.

As a result, the PATA partnership moved away from 'supply or demand' approach to accountability and towards the development of accountability relations. This approach focussed on developing understanding about how relationships between specific actors e.g. District Water and Sanitation Teams and communities, councillors and the district executive are affecting the delivery of quality services in an area. The approach involved multiple actors including agencies, individuals, institutions and CSOs. It was also multi-phased, beginning with a period of gathering and using information to facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue. Finally, it was multi-level, meaning that it worked both at local and national level, simultaneously and inter-dependently.

The approach evolved to include dialogue leading to a negotiated agreement on roles and responsibilities and which aimed to reduce the negative factors in relationships such as lack of trust, competition, unresponsiveness and poor communication and to increase clarity on these roles and responsibilities. Inevitably, some actors, usually in the district executive, would react badly to the demands of councillors and communities e.g. by blocking or derailing these demands. However, it was often possible to reduce the effects of this negative reaction through objective engagement and by seeking the support of actors in a position to pressurise the executive. From an operational perspective the relationship based approach required SNV to build the capacity of advisors to analyse individual accountability issues, often at the micro level. In addition, the process facilitation skills of advisors were built to maximise the effectiveness of their interventions in complex situations, often involving powerful vested interests.

Changing relationship with Local Capacity Builders (LCBs) – from task to process orientation

SNV's relationship with LCBs was contractual and related to the delivery of a particular service or the implementation of a process towards accountability solutions. The capacity of the LCB was built through learning by doing. While this approach has worked well in the past, the complexities that are encountered while implementing a multi-layered approach tailored to each accountability issue necessitated a more comprehensive type of LCB capacity development. Therefore, the way in which SNV works with and relates to LCBs is now becoming longer term and process rather than short term, task orientated. The transition from contractual arrangement to partnership is gradual and is often characterised by greater LCB participation in programme design. A total of 67 LCBs were engaged by SNV since 2010; the annual number of LCB contacts increased from 12 to 45. The quality of service provided has also improved as a result of LCB involvement at all phases of planning and implementation. In some cases councillors and communities are seeking the services of LCBs directly and LCBs are undertaking accountability work for other development organisations.

Building LCB financial management capacity early

The administrative aspects of the PATA Innovation Fund required more time than was initially envisaged due to low levels of financial management capacity among LCBs. An intensive effort was made by KPMG and SNV to build this capacity on the job and, as a result, a large number of local organisations are now in a better position to produce key financial reports. The key lesson to be drawn from this experience is that financial management training should take place early in the relationship with a new LCB. As part of its strategy of localisation, SNV is now encouraging trained LCBs to undertake peer learning and mentoring of other organisations.

Note: The PATA initiative also led to a number of strategic policy implications and conclusions. These are covered in Brief 2.