

Evaluation of EU-TAPP

Key Findings & Recommendations

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Presentation Overview

- Overview of EU-TAPP Evaluation Process
 - Stakeholders
 - State visits
- Findings and recommendations
 - ✓ Findings on evaluation criteria (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability) in relation to :
 1. Support the LGs to meet the requirements of the LG PFM Manual
 2. Support state level to manage and separate state & county payrolls
 3. Support counties to properly manage their payrolls
 4. Support the establishment of County Transfer Monitoring Committees (CTMC)

Stakeholders and Fieldwork

- Meetings with most Juba based stakeholders (MoFEP, MoLPS, LGB, DfID, UNDP, HPF, GESS etc)
- State visits to 7 states
 - 2 states not visited due to security issues (NBG and Warrap). Organised visit of officials to Juba
 - Plane broke down for Yei visit (later rescheduled)
 - Visit to EES adventurous with no plane ticket, car breakdown and rescheduled)

Relevance

- EU-TAPP originally proposed as a supplementary capacity building intervention to a much larger sector budget support operation. GRSS and EUD to set objectives and targets as a sector budget support operation. However, this never materialised. No strategic framework guided EU operation.
- The EU-TAPP project fits well into the framework of enhancing the delivery of basic social and economic services, which was one of the key objectives in the South Sudan Development Plan (2011-2014) and the GRSS's Local Services Support Aid Instrument.
- ET couldn't find any consistent CB platform for sharing capacity building and training information at state level between projects/programmes - happened on a very selective basis

Effectiveness

- First kick-off workshops and then on-the-job training using the LGPFM Manual as the key reference document for the training, coaching and mentoring. From the beginning EU-TAPP state teams have mentored and coached Counties to implement a single treasury account (general fund) system and use financial forms – there mixed outcomes. Most focus on budgeting and reporting and limited focus on other aspects of LGPFM.
- Before the commencement of EU-TAPP counties were not producing QBPRs to the council nor to the state (CTMC). This was main focus of state teams.
- However, submission dropped drastically in most of the states probably due to the uncertainty created by the introduction of 28 states after October 2015.
- Working with other capacity building projects in some states (notably HSSP and LOGSEED/ Cowater)
- EU-TAPP's limited implementation scope, and technical resource limitations, its payroll management role has been focussed on reform readiness working principally with counties and selected states to update their payroll data for future migration to SSEPS II. (Integrity of payroll data/reform readiness/split the payroll between state and counties). No equipment.

Efficiency

- There have been some delays initially in the inception phase but the Project has been implemented with the foreseen 18 months.
- Several amendments have taken place over the 18 months' period. Relatively high incidental budget of more than 30% of total budget costs
- The EU-TAPP M&E tool (75 questions based on the Local Government PFM Manual) which consists of an Excel based reporting format allowing for numerical scores on performance in PFM and payroll. Complemented by the County Dashboards.
- EU-TAPP core team of key experts as well as the short-term experts spent approximately 14% of their working days in the field. The state-based training teams have spent 36% of their working days on duty travel to the counties.

Impact and Sustainability

- According to EU-TAPP own figures all 46 counties have been trained on LGPFMM and a total of 481 officials have received classroom training and 531 people on-the-job training and coaching.
- General resistance among some beneficiaries at state level was experienced but there was also cooperation and enthusiasm with others
- More acceptance and cooperation and enthusiasm especially from the lower cadres, who had not benefited from previous trainings. Only the Planning Officers and Controllers of Accounts were targeted by most donor interventions previously.
- CTMC guidelines included a format for the report to be submitted by the CTMCs every quarter. The EU-TAPP state teams have assisted the CTMC secretariats from all the 7 states to write up the reports for the 3rd and 4th quarters of FY 2014/15

Impact and Sustainability

- Monthly county payroll reports have not been uploaded by the County payroll administrators mainly lack of computers has hampered Payroll reporting and QBPRs as well.
- High labour turnover and/or absenteeism of key county finance and planning staff affected effective delivery of on-the-job training.
- The transfers of staff from counties to even un-related departments.
- Change of Executive Directors was also a challenge as it necessitated explaining the EU-TAPP project repeatedly.

Lessons Learned

- The introduction of Payroll management issues into the overall EU-TAPP PFM work was an ambitious endeavour from the outset when taking into consideration the time frame of EU-TAPP and the reform readiness at state and county levels. A gradual step by step approach to dealing with core PFM related activities is the key lesson from EU-TAPP and that other aspects e.g. Payroll as it relates to HR be dealt with by targeted interventions.
- The presence of state based teams adds value to interventions and the direct contact, on-the-job training, coaching and mentoring is a very needed aspect of PFM reform in the present situation in South Sudan. The need for sophisticated PFM techniques are not an option at present. The LG PFM Manual is a good solid foundation whereupon to base the work of delivering PFM reform and training. There is a need to keep the LG PFM reform grounded and simple at this stage.
- A key lesson learned is that for any functioning PFM system to be able to perform better, there is a need to have checks and balances between an elected council, civil servants performing the tasks as per LG PFM Manual and electorate. Without political accountability over the use of public resources service delivery, PFM efforts will remain largely futile.

Recommendations

- Future EU-TAPP phase should focus on PFM as it relates to LG PFM Manual in basic terms (budgeting, accounting, monitoring, reporting) and only aspects of PFM on Payroll (not HR side), revenue management as possible, assets management and procurement when relevant.
- If future EU-TAPP phase state based teams should work in clusters of 7 teams to cover 4 states each. Better mix of core team and state based is needed by focusing more TA on state level. This would entail selecting a few states/counties and concentrating on making sure that the reforms are successfully implemented in those states/counties before proceeding to implement the reforms in more states. Core team to include TA for LGB. National experts to be used.
- GRSS must change the system of frequent redeployment/transfer of county staff and move towards a more sustainable funding of key PFM institutions and processes. In future CTMCs should be made part of the institutional set-up of the states and the functioning of these should be catered for through conditional recurrent transfers from MoFEP to SMoF.
- There is need for effective change management interventions to ensure the reforms being rolled out are owned by political leaders and civil servants in the states and counties. Government should conduct sensitisation workshops for the County Commissioners and key country civil servants to educate them about their role in the accountability cycle. HR management to ensure that civil servants, incl. those who are trained by donors, are not the subject of arbitrary placement decisions and that some form of career progression, or career management, is in place.

Thank You

Good luck and hopefully peace

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