

**Ministry of Local Government & Rural Development**

**Conducting Participatory Review of  
District Development at the Regional Level  
(Regional Review)**

**Experiences from Northern, Upper East  
and Upper West Regions**

**NR RPCU  
UE RPCU  
UW RPCU  
UNICEF**

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## **List of Abbreviations**

DBO	-	District Budget officer
DCE	-	District Chief Executive
DFO	-	District Finance Officer
DPCU	-	District Planning Coordinating Unit
DPO	-	District Planning Office
GPRS	-	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy.
MTDP	-	Medium Term Development Plan.
NDPC	-	National Development Planning Commission
RCC	-	Regional Coordinating Council
RM	-	Regional Minister.
REPO	-	Regional Economic Planning Officer.
RPCU	-	Regional Planning Coordinating Unit.

## **PREFACE**

One of the most important aspects of planning is monitoring and evaluation. In contemporary planning cycle it is the monitoring and evaluation that ensures that planning is indeed a dynamic process – allowing changing circumstances to be integrated into the process. Monitoring and evaluation takes various forms and go under different nomenclatures.

The regional review which is the subject of this document is in essence a monitoring and evaluation tool. At a regional review, constituent districts gather to share information and ascertain the extent to which each is contributing to meeting region-wide development targets; identify lagging districts which may require additional national support; identify cross cutting region-wide problems and formulate such regional framework as to address the problems.

Specifically this publication attempts to establish steps for conducting regional reviews based on experiences derived from the Northern and Upper East Regions within which UNICEF operates. It is hoped that this publication will provide the HOW and WHAT to do in conducting a regional review.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Regional Coordinating Councils of the Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions of Ghana introduced Regional Review meetings in 2004 with the support of UNICEF. The purpose of the Regional Review meetings is to:

- To track the status of development within districts in the region.
- To assess regional development status as a whole.
- To track and know agencies doing what and where.
- To understand the scope and schedule of projects planned for a given year in each district in the region.

This paper provides a summary of the content and process of the Regional Review as experienced in the Northern and Upper East Regions.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

Ghana's decentralization and planning laws require the Region to play specific roles in monitoring progress of development by District Assemblies and coordinating investments at the regional level. The decentralized planning system designates the District Assemblies as *Planning Authorities* at the district level; assigns Regional Coordinating Councils with monitoring and coordination roles at the regional level; sector agencies, Ministry of Finance and the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) take on policy formulation and monitoring roles at the national level.

In this document the emphasis is on the role the regional coordinating council plays in the conduct of a regional review.

## **2.1 Functions of the Regional Coordinating Council**

Act 480 requires the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) to perform the following functions:

- ❑ Provide District Planning Authorities (District Assemblies) with such information and data as is necessary to assist them in the formulation of district development plan.
- ❑ Coordinate the plans and programmes of the District Planning Authorities and harmonize such plans with national development priorities for consideration and approval by the NDPC.
- ❑ Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the programmes and projects in the District Planning Authorities within the region.
- ❑ Act on behalf of the NDPC with respect to such national programmes and projects in the region as the commission may direct and,
- ❑ Perform such other planning functions as may be assigned to it by the commission.

The Regional Planning Coordinating Unit is required by law to facilitate the monitoring and coordination roles of the RCC.

## **2.2 The Regional Planning Coordinating Unit**

The planning function of the Regional Planning Coordinating Unit (RPCU) is by law limited to the following:

- ❑ Advise on the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of district development plans.
- ❑ Advise on matters relating to development planning in the region, including spatial and sectoral policies and,
- ❑ Provide a secretariat for the RCC.

The RPCU is not to undertake the preparation of a regional plan. Plan preparation is by law the responsibility of District Assemblies.

The RPCU can however provide direction in resolving problems that cut across districts, identify region-wide areas for new investments, and map

out lagging sub-regions for immediate national attention. Planning and implementation is as much as possible the responsibility of District Assemblies.

### **3.0 CONTENT OF A REGIONAL REVIEW**

The Regional Review as the name implies, is designed to examine the process of development in the region as a whole from the perspective of activities in the districts within its jurisdiction. For the realization of its aim, a regional review must seek to promote the following four requirements: responsiveness, accountability, participation and coordination.

#### **3.1 Responsiveness**

Responsiveness within the context of a regional review in this document is the measure of the extent to which districts have reacted to targets they set themselves.

The regional review assesses the responsiveness of District Assemblies to national and district targets.

All districts are required to present for discussion at the review meeting, progress made using prescribed key development indicators for the period of the review. Indicators are derived from (district) Medium Term and Annual Action Plans and based on the GPRS Monitoring & Evaluation Framework and sector plans such as those of education and health sectors. All Regional Departments with responsibility for basic service delivery (particularly Health, Education, Water and Sanitation, Agricultural Extension) are also required to make presentations on changes in development based on the indicators – showing regional trends and variations.

Annex 1 provides a summary of some of the indicators that districts in the Northern and Upper East Region reported on at the regional review meetings. These are largely indicators that districts can report on each year, and mainly derived from routine data systems. Examples are percentage of population served with safe water source; percentage of population served with pipe borne water; pupil-teacher ratio, percentage of JSS students qualifying for SSS; coverage of immunization; number of guinea worm cases; number of HIV/AIDS cases; gross primary school enrolment by gender, etc.

### **3.2 Accountability**

The new planning system seeks to establish planning as a dialogue process which promotes participation, Intersectoral, interdisciplinary collaboration and effective feedback. A regional review is one of such feedback tools during which districts are held accountable for their actions.

Accountability as expressed here is the willingness of major stakeholders to explain actions taken in respect of meeting goals determined in the development plan of a district.

For a regional review to effectively promote accountability the following is recommended:

- Regional Minister must play a coordinating role.
- Regional Minister must chair the proceedings of the review meeting.
- Regional Minister/RCC to direct that DCEs present District Situation/Progress Reports. (The experience of Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions showed that this requirement worked effectively well. About two-thirds of district chief executives personally presented their district's reports. Other DCEs who did not physically make presentations were out of the region on official assignments.)
- Regional Minister/RCC to direct that Districts include information on sources of funds and how funds were used in a given year – for the entire district as well as for decentralized departments. The trend of flow and utilisation of funds (by source) should also be presented for discussion. For sake of emphasis the format for presentation will cover the district's action plan, Government's transfers; other transfers e.g. donors and NGOs.

Annexes 2 and 3 are sample formats that guide district presentations on funds.

### **3.3 Participation**

Participation is the process of enabling stakeholders partake in decision making affecting them. For effectiveness it must necessarily lead to empowerment and ownership of each stakeholder involved in a programme.

Full participation of stakeholders operating in the region is an essential objective in any regional review. This objective was what the Regional Review Meetings in the Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions

sought to achieve. The Review expected the regions to have done this through the following two stages:

- a) Data gathering and information sharing at the district. This requires all contributors to district programmes are invited to present information on their contribution to development in the district.  
The RPCU will also develop framework for assessing incoming reports from the districts.  
The process of data gathering and information sharing should be as participatory as possible.

Annexes 2, 3 and 4 provide sample formats for data gathering.

- b) Participation at a Regional Review Meeting:  
Essentially all major stakeholders should participate.  
Experience from the review in the Upper East Region which greatly informed this publication showed that the following participated in a manner that made the review successful:

***From the districts:***

Upper East and Upper West regions: District Chief Executives, District Coordinating Directors, District Directors of Health, District Directors of Agriculture, District Directors of Education, District Planning Officer, District Budget Officers, District Finance Officers.

Participation in the Northern Region Review was restricted to District Chief Executives, District Coordinating Directors, District Planning Officers and District Budget Officers. The restriction was to make size of participants manageable. Northern region (prior to the creation of new districts) had 13 districts, compared to six in Upper East and five in Upper West.

***From the region:***

- Regional Minister
- Regional Coordinating Director
- RPCU Head and staff
- Regional Directors of the following sectors: Health, Education, Agriculture, Water and Sanitation, Community Development, Social Welfare

*From the donor community:*

- Bilateral agencies operating in districts, including CIDA, DANIDA, GTZ, DfID, European Union
- Multilateral agencies operating in districts, including UNICEF, World Bank, UNFPA, WFP, UNDP
- NGOs, including World Vision, Plan, GDCP, Send Foundation, etc.

### **3.4 Coordination**

Coordination in the context of this assignment is the process of linking the activities of various districts of the region. The regional review is seen as a tool for coordination in that it provides all districts in a region the opportunities to work together and achieve approved regional targets through the sharing of information.

The Regional Review Meeting in the Upper East Region, for example, provided an opportunity for districts to share information that included the quantum of funds and logistics received in a given year by source, sector/thematic area and location. Donor projects scheduled for implementation in the year of the review were given particular emphasis in review discussion.

In addition, regional review meetings as observed promote coordination in the following ways by:

- Providing opportunities for Regional Departments to discuss national policies/targets with districts.
- Enabling the identification of problems that cut across districts, and hence require larger regional support in fund raising and monitoring.
- Facilitating the identification of poorly performing and resource poor districts for close monitoring. This will help reduce intra regional disparities.

## **4.0 PROCESS OF CONDUCTING A REGIONAL REVIEW**

Given the requirements aforementioned in paragraphs 3.1-3.4 the following steps are recommended for conducting a regional review:

- a) Orientation on content and process of the Review

- b) Preparation of district reports
- c) Preparation of regional situation reports
- d) Backstopping by RPCU
- e) Organising the Regional Review meeting
- f) Submission of revised district reports
- g) Organising District Review meetings
- h) Preparation of district plans for subsequent year

#### **4.1 Orientation on content and process of the Review**

The RPCU plays a lead role in organising the Orientation on the content and process of the Regional Review for district and regional staff. The orientation should provide information on:

- a) Minimum set of indicators that districts are required to report on
- b) Flow and utilisation of funds and logistics
- c) Presentation of district reports
- d) Presentation of reports by regional departments
- e) Formats to ease report writing and presentation
- f) Role of DCEs, DPCUs and Head of Departments in report writing and presentation
- g) Role of stakeholders
- h) Dates for holding the regional review.

#### **4.2 Preparation of district situation reports**

The DCE writes to Heads of decentralised departments to submit information for preparation of District Situation Reports. Formats and templates discussed at the *Orientation* are attached to the DCE's letter as a guide. The DPCU is required to:

- Follow up preparation of sector components of the district situation report.
- Collate all components into a district situation report
- Prepare DCE's presentation at regional review meeting

Sources of data for district reports include:

- District mid year and annual status reports, where these exist
- Annual reports of decentralized departments
- DPCU records

- Monitoring reports of decentralized departments

DAs submit draft reports to the RPCU at least a week before the review.

### **4.3 Preparation of reports by Regional Departments**

Regional Departments prepare reports with a focus on trends in development indicators. Where they manage region-wide projects such as Agriculture, Water and Sanitation, Regional Departments should provide information on funding and logistics as guided by Annexes 2 and 3.

Information provided should as much as possible show trends, variations and capable of facilitating inter district comparison within a region. By way of illustration, an office such as the Regional Directorate of Community Water and Sanitation could provide/share the following information:

- Population in the region with potable water as against those without.
- Distribution of water and sanitation sources/facilities by districts.
- Regional framework for addressing water and sanitation problems.
- Presentation will show variations within the region and identify lagging districts.

Regional departments submit draft reports to the RPCU at least a week before the review.

### **4.4 Backstopping by RPCU**

RPCUs monitor preparation of district and regional reports and support districts with lean complement of staff.

### **4.5 Organising the Regional Review meeting**

The Regional Minister invites participants to the review meeting.

The Regional Minister chairs the review meeting.

The RPCU is responsible for organising and moderating the meeting.

The RPCU provides secretarial services as well as produces a report on proceedings.

The RPCU is also responsible for preparing and presenting and Overview Report of the region.

Note that a moderator for the review may not necessarily be personnel of the RPCU. A consultant for that purpose should be permissible. Timing and duration of a review should have been discussed and approved at the orientation. This should be guided by timelines stipulated in the annual planning and budgeting cycle guidelines.

#### **4.6 Organising District planning meetings**

DPCU organizes a district planning meeting, as part of the process of preparing District Annual Action Plans.

Heads of decentralised departments present findings contained in the District Situation Report at the planning meeting, to constitute the basis for the preparation of the Annual Action Plan for subsequent year.

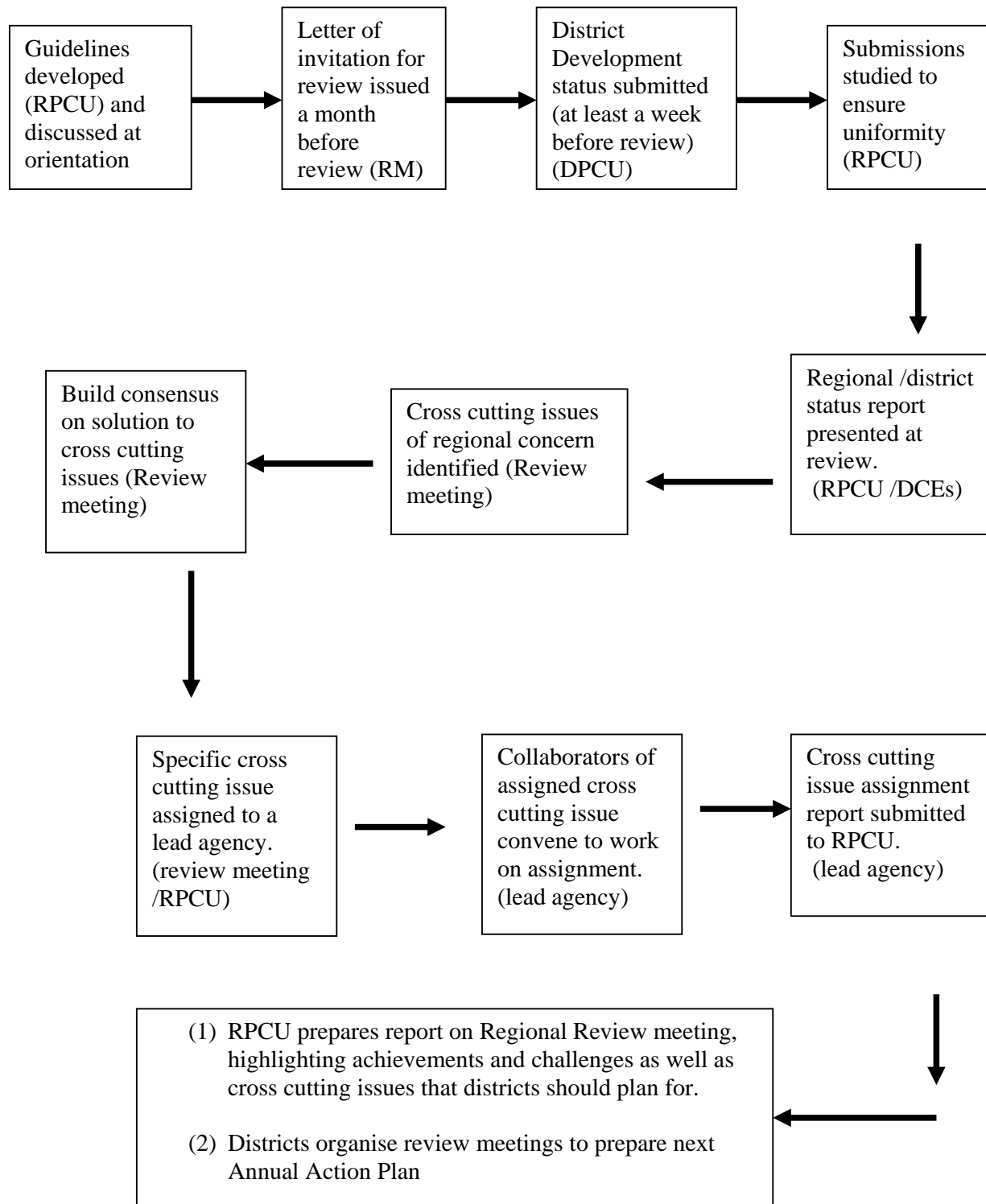
DPCU leads in the preparation of Annual Action Plans guided by timelines stipulated in the Annual Planning and Budgeting Cycle issued by NDPC.

#### **4.7 When to Hold a Regional Review Meeting**

The experience of Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions suggests that the Regional Review meeting informs the planning process of districts and partners. It should therefore conform to timelines stipulated by NDPC.

Taking note of the time schedules by NDPC, it is recommended that a regional review be held **between the third week in July and the third week in August of each year**. By this period districts would have completed their mid year evaluation meetings and be preparing proposals for their Annual Action Plans and budget.

## 5.0 Steps for conducting a Regional Review:



## 6.0 Submission of revised district reports

DPCU is responsible for submitting revised district reports, based on comments at the review meeting. The RPCU/DPCU must make demands on all departments required to make revision to their situation reports.

Example of cross-cutting issues for immediate targeting that emerged at the Upper East regional Review meeting

- Education – high drop out rate, especially for girls in spite of increase in enrolment and expenditure (Regional Director of Education)
- Health – how to reduce the rate of malaria malaise; reduce leakage of heavily subsidized insecticide treated nets (Regional direction of Health service)
- Agriculture – reduction of post harvest losses. (Regional Director of Agric)
- HIV/AIDS – scaling up district responses (HIV/AIDS focal person)
- Water – how to coordinate various water initiatives (CWSA)
- Operationalisation of the sub district structures (RPCU)
- Sub committees of DAs to be functional to strengthen local governance.(RPCU)

## 7.0 The role of the RPCU in follow-up actions:

- The RPCU to direct DAs to submit updated report.
- The RPCU will produce report on the review.
- The RPCU will write to agencies responsible for “follow-up issues” to organize thematic planning meeting and forward outcome to RPCU by an agreed date
- The RPCU will develop a support programme of action to help districts which have shown weaknesses in their development efforts.

RPCUs are further to use documentation of the review to update their database. They should advise DPCUs to also update their database.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCALING-UP:**

Regional Reviews are a tool for monitoring and when institutionalized, can promote accountability and coordination.

The following observations are the “Must Do” in organizing a successful Regional Review:

- ❑ Orientation on purpose, process and scope of the Regional Review for district and regional staff is important to ensure quality reports
- ❑ The Regional Minister should demonstrate the principle of accountability by presiding over the meeting
- ❑ DCEs should demonstrate accountability by submitting (presenting) district reports
- ❑ All key stakeholders should be invited to participate in the Review meeting
- ❑ The RPCU should appoint a Moderator for the meeting, to assist the Regional Minister
- ❑ DPCUs and RPCUs should monitor preparation of reports to ensure quality.
- ❑ RPCUs should be well resourced to by the Regional Coordinating Council (and interested stakeholders) to organize the Regional Review and to follow up recommendations
- ❑ A maximum of two days is adequate for deliberations

## Annex 1: Indicators for Monitoring District (and Regional) Development

		2001	2002	2003
	<b>Population</b>			
1	Size			
2	Age Groups			
	0-5			
	6-11			
	12-15			
	16-18			
	18+			
	<b>GOVERNANCE</b>			
	<i>Central Administration</i>			
1	Funds budgeted: actual: spent			
	-DACF			
	-IGF			
	-HIPC			
	-Other GoG (direct from central govt.)			
	-Development partners			
	-Others			
2	% Of Total Expenditure on:			
	- Administration (T&T, etc.)			
	- Social services (health, education, water sanitation, nutrition, HIV/AIDS. etc)			
	- Economic services (markets, roads agriculture, etc.)			
	<b>SOCIAL SERVICES</b>			

	<b>Health</b>			
1	Coverage of DPT3+HepB+Hib 3			
2	No of deaths:			
	- Infant deaths (community + institutional)			
	- Maternal deaths (community + institutional)			
3	% OPD attendance due to malaria			
4	% Supervised deliveries			
	- Total			
	- Health workers			
	- TBAs			
5	Nurse: population			
6	Doctor: population			
7	Quantity of bednets distributed: utilized			
8	Number of cases of guinea worm			
9	Budget			
	- Planned			
	- Actual			
	- Spent			
	<b>HIV/AIDS</b>			
1	Number of new HIV/AIDS cases			
2	Number of cumulative cases			
3	Budget			
	- Planned			
	- Actual			
	- Spent			
	<b>Water and sanitation</b>			

1	% Population served with safe water source (coverage)			
	- % Pop. Served with boreholes			
	- % Pop. Served with covered wells			
	- % Pop. Served with pipe-borne water			
	- % Pop. Served with other safe source (specify)			
	- Total population served with safe water source (%)			
2	% of population using safe excreta disposal facility			
	- % Pop. With VIP			
	- % pop. With KVIP			
	- % pop with other safe source (specify)			
	- Total population with safe excreta disposal (%)			
3	WATSAN budget			
	- Planned			
	- Actual			
	- Spent			
	<b><i>Education</i></b>			
1	Gross primary enrolment rate			
	- Total			
	- Girls			
	- Boys			
2	% schools without standard structures			
	- Total			
	- ECD			
	- Primary			
	-JSS			
3	Primary school completion rate			
	- Total			

	- Girls			
	- Boys			
4	Transition rate (from primary to JSS)			
	- Total			
	- Girls			
	- Boys			
5	Pupil teacher ratio			
	- Total teacher			
	- Trained teachers			
	- Untrained teachers			
6	% JSS students qualifying for SSS (aggregate 30 and below			
	-Total			
	- Girls			
	- Boys			
7	Education budget			
	- Planned			
	- Actual			
	- Spent			
	<b><i>Nutrition</i></b>			
1	Percentage of households using iodated salt with adequate level of iodine (25ppm and above			
2	% of health facilities designated baby-friendly			
4	Vitamin A coverage for children 6-59 months			
5	Vitamin A coverage for women within 8 week post partum			
6	Nutrition Budget			
	- Planned			
	- Actual			
	- Spent			

	<b>PRODUCTION &amp; GAINFUL EMPL.</b>			
	<i>Income, production</i>			
1	Average yield (major food crop, major cash crop, livestock)			
2	% Women receiving credit			
3	Budget (MOFA, PAF, Sen Min etc.)			
	- Planned			
	- Actual			
	- Spent			
	<b>VULNERABILITY</b>			
	<i>Vulnerability and protection</i>			
1	Proportion of births registered			
2	Child migration (proxy indicator			
	- In migration			
	- Out migration			
3	Number of street children			

## Annex 2: District Programme Overview (a)

*To be completed and presented by districts*

Source of funds	Total amount in 2003		Sector Funded in 2003																
	Amount received	Amount spent	Funding received in 2003 for Health		Funding received in 2003 for Education		Funding received in 2003 for Agriculture		Funding received in 2003 for water & sanitation		Funding received in 2003 for Roads		Central Admin capacity development		Funding received in 2003 for HIV/AIDS		Funding received vulnerable groups (street ch)		
			Cash	Supplies (equipment, logistics, etc.)	Cash	Supplies (equipment, logistics, etc.)	Cash	Supplies (equipment, logistics, etc.)	Cash	Supplies (equipment, logistics, etc.)	Cash	Supplies (equipment, logistics, etc.)	Cash	Supplies (equipment, logistics, etc.)	Cash	Supplies (equipment, logistics, etc.)	Cash	Supplies (equipment, logistics, etc.)	
DACF																			
HIPC Relief																			
IGF																			
MTEF																			
Other GoG sources																			
Total GoG/DA																			
Partners																			
EU																			
Social Investment Fund																			
CIDA																			
DANIDA																			
DFID																			
AFD																			
GTZ																			
UNICEF																			
WFP																			
UNFPA																			
UNDP																			
World Bank																			
Other development partners																			
World Vision																			
Other NGOs																			
Total Partners																			

Provide comments: e.g. why amount received was not spent; why some critical sectors are underfunded, etc.

### Annex 3: District Programme Overview (b)

*To be completed and presented by districts*

Source of funds	Sector to be funded	Planned amount for 2004															
		Total		Health		Education		Agriculture		Water and Sanitation		Road		Central Admin capacity development		HIV/AIDS	
		Cash	Supplies (equipment, logistics, etc.)	Cash	Supplies (equipment, logistics, etc.)	Cash	Supplies (equipment, logistics, etc.)	Cash	Supplies (equipment, logistics, etc.)	Cash	Supplies (equipment, logistics, etc.)	Cash	Supplies (equipment, logistics, etc.)	Cash	Supplies (equipment, logistics, etc.)	Cash	Supplies (equipment, logistics, etc.)
DACF																	
HIPC Relief																	
IGF																	
MTEF																	
Other GoG sources																	
Total GoG/DA																	
Partners																	
EU																	
Social Investment Fund																	
CIDA																	
DANIDA																	
DFID																	
AFD																	
GTZ																	
UNICEF																	
WFP																	
UNFPA																	
UNDP																	
World Bank																	
Other development partners																	
World Vision																	
Other NGOs																	
Total Partners																	

**Annex 4: Mapping support from Development Partners in a given year**

To be completed by development partners in the region and analysed as part of district and regional reports.

	Name of partner	Planned project for 2004	Location (district)	Amount involved	Equipment, logistics involved
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

