

GoSS Aid Strategy ensures that aid is aligned with government priorities

One of the main ways UNDP helps developing countries is by supporting them to design and implement important policy frameworks and strategies. In a post-conflict setting such as Southern Sudan, the development of a sound plan to manage aid flows from international donors is crucial. Without one, development assistance is often disjointed, uncoordinated, untargeted, and lacks national buy-in. This is why, when



Road construction in Juba. The establishment of a well maintained road network across Southern Sudan is among the government's top priorities

UNDP's *Support to Economic Planning Project* began almost five years ago, it placed special focus on helping the Government of Southern Sudan's (GoSS) Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MoFEP) to build aid management policies from scratch.

A major achievement was the production of the *GoSS Aid Strategy* in 2007. The document, which was endorsed and disseminated at a number of high-level meetings, clearly articulates the principles upon which aid should be based. This helps ensure that it is used effectively and aligned with government priorities. Specifically, it outlines a set of steps for approval of aid to government.

Inside this issue:

GoSS Aid Strategy ensures that aid is aligned with government priorities	1
UNDP supports policy design and implementation	2
Proper urban planning raises living standards	3
New guidelines help standardize treatment	3
Evidence-based development policy	4

First, international partners should participate in a government-led annual planning process, which is organized through Budget Sector Working Groups (BSWGs), to inform the nature of their support. There are a total of 10 such Groups, including health, education, infrastructure, security and rule of law to name a few.

Second, proposed development projects of over 1 million USD must be reviewed by an Inter-Ministerial Appraisal Committee (IMAC) in order to ensure GoSS ownership. For initiatives over 20 million USD, the Council of Ministers also assesses the proposal.

"So far, a total of 115 projects have passed through the 'IMAC' process," explains Geoff Handley, UNDP's Planning and Budget Advisor based at MoFEP. "This has resulted in greater ownership over development programmes by the government and more efficient use of aid money." Finally, the project is signed off by the Minister of Finance himself.

As well as being the starting point for formulation of activities, the BSWGs

are used to track implementation.

During the planning process, development partners provide reporting of projections for all donor financed activities within the sector. This information is presented in the three-year Budget Sector Plans, in the Annual Budget, and in an annual Donor Book.

It is now also being used to build an Aid Information Management System (AIMS) database as well. "The UNDP-supported AIMS will enhance aid coordination and management, and promote accountability and transparency as well as facilitate decision making," adds Ibrahim Koroma, UNDP's Aid Management Advisor based at MoFEP.

Regular interaction between the government and donors also happens through a GoSS-Donor Forum, which convenes on a quarterly basis and includes reporting on comprehensive development partner assistance collected through the planning process, with measurement of short- and medium-term predictability and fragmentation.

As each year passes, this process is becoming more widely understood, with demonstrable improvements in both participation and quality of aid allocations. This familiarization with, and acceptance of, the process is essential to its establishment as a robust and transparent process for resource allocation in Southern Sudan.

UNDP supports policy design and implementation

UNDP is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. In places where key government institutions have not been established for long, UNDP plays a very important role supporting policy design and implementation. Expert advisors and strategic advice is provided to deal with vital issues such as financial management, security, and rule of law.

Microfinance

Microfinance is the supply of loans, savings, and other basic financial services to the poor. Since 2009, UNDP has been providing funding for foundational work on microfinance in Southern Sudan as part of efforts to catalyze broader national economic development. Capacity building around trade issues is also ongoing.

Specifically, UNDP has been supporting the design of a *Microfinance Policy* which is being produced under the leadership of the Bank of Southern Sudan. The final policy document will be submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval in the coming months.

In a joint programme, the UN Capital Development Fund and UNDP will also provide a total of 4 million USD for the broader and longer term development of the microfinance sector. This initiative will be implemented in partnership with the Southern Sudan Microfinance Development Facility to ensure harmonization with government priorities. A range of microfinance institutions will be targeted through this programme, which aims to reach more than 300,000 active clients (savers and/or borrowers) by 2013. Funding will also be provided to support the training of staff from relevant government institutions.



Many small business owners benefit from small loans and basic financial services.

Small arms control

Due to decades of war and underdevelopment, insecurity remains a part of everyday life in many remote areas of Southern Sudan. For this reason, GoSS established the Bureau for Community Security and Small Arms Control in 2008, under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This key institution is mandated to promote community security by setting out coherent plans to enforce the peaceful disarmament of civilians and reduce the proliferation of small arms.

To support this work, UNDP's *Community Security and Arms Control Project* is providing technical assistance to the Bureau and its partners on policy formulation. It is also creating important linkages with relevant regional and international bodies. In 2009 and 2010, the *Project* facilitated GoSS-led county consultations in four particularly insecure states (Eastern Equatoria, Jonglei, Lakes and Upper Nile). These comprehensive consultations are feeding into the design of policies that are tailored to the region's diversity and complexity. They are also providing government officials with information on key priorities at county level, which is informing other initiatives.

Customary law

Customary law – which draws on cultural norms, practices, and traditional systems – is a central part of the recognized source of laws in Southern Sudan. However, many customary, and even contemporary, laws have yet to be properly recorded and enacted. This complicated situation poses significant challenges to the establishment of a robust and much needed legal system in the region.

In response, UNDP's *Support to the Ministry of Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development Project* has been helping the Ministry of Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development (MoLACD) to develop a *Customary Law Strategy* for Southern Sudan. Specifically, UNDP has facilitated study tours to Namibia, Botswana, Mozambique and Lesotho for ministry staff to dialogue and share experiences with their counterparts on how to harmonize customary and statutory laws. It has also placed a consultant within MoLACD to assist in drafting the strategy itself, which is awaiting validation by the Minister.

Not only will this work help provide clear guidelines and regulations on the use of customary law, it will also contribute to strengthening rule-of-law institutions more generally. With an integrated approach to legalizing policies and more dialogue with the traditional and local leaders, the Sudanese legal system can build the capacity it needs to function effectively.

Proper urban planning raises living standards

More than 25 years of civil war has left physical infrastructure – road systems, organized housing, water and sewage systems – virtually non-existent. For this reason, it is among the Government of Southern Sudan's top priorities.

Aware that sound infrastructure is vital to economic development and the provision of basic services, UNDP's *Support to States Project* is placing Urban Management Specialists within state-level Ministries of Physical Infrastructure in all of Southern Sudan's states. These experienced professionals – eight of which are already in place – will help ministry staff

with specific projects, such as surveying and slum upgrading, and will also facilitate the development of relevant land and housing policies. This work will directly contribute to the improvement of living conditions for communities by improving water and sanitation, and making safe housing accessible.

To encourage state-level government officials to discuss options for urban planning, UNDP is also currently facilitating three regional urban management workshops in Greater Equatoria, Greater Bahr el Ghazal and Greater Upper Nile. These workshops will provide a platform for the development

of urban management policy by defining need, identifying solutions, and creating guidelines to enforce agreed standards. The ultimate goal of this process is to ensure equal and adequate housing for all Southern Sudanese communities.

It should be noted that UNDP has been involved in urban management activities for over two years. In 2008, through a partnership with UN-HABITAT, it contributed to a consultative process to tailor urban management policies and guidelines for each state. This information will guide the work of new Urban Planning Specialists.

New guidelines help standardize treatment



Photo: Jenn Warren

In Southern Sudan -- which boasts some of the worst health indicators in the world -- developing policies on the prevention and treatment of endemic diseases is vital to public health.

In Southern Sudan – which boasts some of the worst health indicators in the world – developing policies on the prevention and treatment of endemic diseases is a vital part of improving public health. These policies provide benchmarks that standardize healthcare and access to medicine.

Recognizing this need, UNDP's *Global Fund Project* is helping the Government of Southern Sudan by providing

broad policy guidance on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The leadership and direction of the Ministry of Health is instrumental in guiding policy development and implementation.

A number of core policy documents have already been drafted (see box). These will inform programming,

treatment plans and provide a common basis for monitoring and evaluation (M&E). "The aim is to translate these policies into tangible programmes that will stem the threat of dangerous diseases such as HIV/AIDS," explains Gerard van Mourik, UNDP's Global Fund Coordinator.

The production of health statistics is also a core part of all *Global Fund* activities in Southern Sudan. Up-to-date

information is crucial, both for M&E and for the design of evidence-based policies. It is hoped that this data will be used by the Ministry of Health as well as by other organizations working in the health sector.

Key health documents

Over the last three years, UNDP and its implementing partners have supported the development of a number of core health strategies, frameworks and guidelines including:

- HIV and AIDS Strategic Framework 2008-2012
- HIV Policy
- Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
- Behavior Change Communication Strategy
- Guidelines for Collaborative HIV Care and ART for Adults, Adolescents and Children
- Blood Strategy Guidelines
- Voluntary Confidential Counseling and Testing Guidelines

Knowledge Corner

Evidence-based development policy: research by ODI

Evidence-based policy is public policy informed by rigorously established objective evidence. An important aspect of evidence-based policy is the use of scientifically rigorous studies such as randomized controlled trials to identify programmes and practices capable of improving policy relevant outcomes. However, some areas of knowledge are not well serviced by quantitative research, leading to debate about the methods and instruments that are considered critical for the collection of relevant evidence. Good data, analytical skills and political support, as such, are seen as the important elements.

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) has been looking at ways to help aid donors and partners better transform research into policy initiatives for over five years. It's research has come up with six key lessons:

1. Policy processes are complex and rarely linear or logical. Simply presenting information to policy-makers and expecting them to act upon it is very unlikely to work. Policy processes are not purely linear as they have various stages that each take varying lengths of time to complete and may in fact be conducted simultaneously.

2. Policy is often only weakly informed by research-based evidence due to information gaps, secrecy, the need for speedy responses, political expediency and the fact that policy makers are rarely scientists.

3. Research-based evidence can contribute to policies that have a dramatic impact on people's lives. Success stories quoted in the UK's Department for International Development's (DfID) research strategy for 2008-2013 include a 22% reduction in neonatal mortality in Ghana as a result of helping women begin breastfeeding within one hour of giving birth, and a 43% reduction in deaths among HIV positive children using a widely available antibiotic.

4. There is a need for a holistic understanding of the context in which the policy is to be implemented. What works in one situation may not work in another.

5. Policy entrepreneurs need additional skills to influence policy. They need to be political fixers, able to understand the politics and identify the key players. They need to be able to synthesize simple compelling stories from the results of the research. They need to be good networkers to work effectively with all the other stakeholders, and they need to be good engineers, building a programme that pulls all of this together.

6. Policy entrepreneurs need clear intent. Turning a researcher into a policy entrepreneur, or a research institute into a policy-focused think tank involves a fundamental re-orientation towards policy engagement rather than academic achievement; developing a research agenda

focusing on policy issues rather than academic interests; building multidisciplinary teams; establishing new internal systems and incentives; spending more on communications; producing a different range of outputs; and working more in partnerships and networks.

These lessons show that the relationship between research, policy and practice is multi-factoral, non-linear, and highly context specific. Developing effective strategies in complex environments is not straightforward. Simple tools such as cost-benefit analysis, logical frameworks, traditional project management tools and others may not work on their own, as they fail to take into account the existing complexity.

To help address the research-policy divide, ODI has developed a RAPID Outcome Mapping Approach. Using specific tools, this eight step process helps users identify a clear policy objective; map the policy context; identify key influential stakeholders; identify the change needed among them if they are to support the desired policy outcome; develop a strategy to achieve the milestone changes in the process; ensure the engagement team has the relevant skills to implement the strategy; and develop and monitoring and learning systems.

Source: How to develop engagement strategies for evidence-based policy-making, London: Overseas Development Institute



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