

GHANA RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY PROGRAMME (G-RAP)

Mid-term Review 2004-6

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report covers the first phase Mid-term Review of the Ghana Research and Advocacy Programme (G-RAP), which was launched in 2004, and provides an opinion on the prospects of achieving its objectives in the first phase, ending in September 2007.
2. The overall assessment is positive. Though not without its problems, G-RAP is evolving in progressive directions. The principle of core funding enjoys wide support in Ghana, and is appreciated by the RAO community. The PMT suffered, in the early months, from having to grapple with an ambiguous programme concept, but it has responded to RAO interests and concerns. G-RAP is recognised to address an important constraint on RAO performance and has the potential to make a significant contribution to pro-poor policy development.
3. That said, G-RAP would benefit from a degree of repositioning. The present report aims to facilitate this. It seeks to focus attention on the central vocation of the G-RAP concept: using core grants to help research and advocacy organisations inform and influence pro-poor policy. A core funding arrangement of this type exists to support and develop policy engagement, not internal organisational development in its narrower sense. It allows recipients considerable freedom and flexibility as to the means by which their policy objectives will be achieved. This implies a move away from the strong organisational development bias in the current approach. Concentrating on the policy engagement aspect of the original mandate should help the programme to address, in a more balanced way, the three levels of relations with its partners: the administrative; the programme and the strategic.
4. This refocusing would encourage G-RAP to test the core concept more courageously. In a core funding arrangement, the role of the funding authority is essentially that of ensuring that the grantee conforms to the minimum performance standards, particularly as regards financial controls and output quality, and then delivers on the objectives specified. Once the grantee is 'certified' (in the sense of proving its conformity to the standards), the influence of the funding authority is limited. The onus is on the grantee to identify its objectives and the processes by which they will be achieved, and then to monitor progress towards their achievement. The grantee's objectives and a small number of key indicators form the basis of the dialogue between it and the funding authority. The processes are largely at the grantee's discretion.
5. It is recommended that:
 - a) Efforts of the PMT are more narrowly focused on such core funding support, avoiding the tendency to use G-RAP for other purposes;
 - b) Competitive funding is used more rigorously to channel demand and support the policy priorities;
 - c) The funding instruments are simplified;
 - d) The governance structure is streamlined;

- e) The dialogue on problem definition and strategic development is widened, bringing together RAOs, government, donors and others, and offering the RAO community opportunities to work together on strategic issues.
6. *Funding arrangements and priorities:* The focus on core funding as a form of budgetary support implies:
- a) Providing funds to organisations on the basis of their positive achievements and capacities, the opportunities which they identify in the applied policy field, and the constraints [mainly external ones] that inhibit the achievements of their goals.
 - b) Limiting the roles of the PMT to the functions of a Secretariat (this mainly implies, administering grants and allied activities such as assessing fiduciary risk and servicing the governance structure);
 - c) Implementing more structured core funding arrangements, perhaps applying a limited number of funding bands.
 - d) Allowing for support of effective but smaller RAOs within the framework of core funding grants, without recourse to technical assistance and institutional/capacity building (ICB).
 - e) Creation of a new category of 'Small Projects Facility' to channel innovation in a strategic fashion; specifically, this would support joint actions by RAOs on a demand-led basis, with a view to enhancing critical mass.
 - f) Further simplification of the assessment requirements for core funding, allowing partner RAOs greater autonomy, and encouraging them to concentrate on the policy outcomes they have defined for themselves.
7. Regarding *RAO selection*, the MTR recommends:
- a) Greater clarity in the eligibility requirements.
 - b) Greater precision in the size of grant awards/less flexibility in funding decisions
 - c) Greater transparency in the information provided on grant decisions.
8. *Programme Governance:*
- The existing governance arrangement (separate Funders' Committee and Advisory Board) has worked reasonably well, and has helped develop the programme in ways that are responsive to the needs of the RAOs and the central vocation of G-RAP. However, it is arguably less well adapted to the programme's future needs, particularly as regards its establishment as a self-managing body, divorced from day-to-day donor influence.
- With this in mind, the MTR proposes:
- a. A move to a single governance authority ('Steering Committee') with grant-awarding being handed by a Grants Sub-Committee. The Steering Committee would function to:
 - i. Give authority to funding decisions;
 - ii. Act as the guardian of the programme's integrity – ensuring a balanced approach in its overall pattern of support;
 - iii. Manage and encourage strategic innovation;
 - iv. Provide a link to democratic governance;

- b. Participation in the Steering Committee should be broadened, so that funding decisions are less closely associated with the donors, and the PMT is able to act as a conventional secretariat.
 - c. It is recommended that an annual *G-RAP Strategic Issues Meeting* be held, to promote strategic thinking and ideas and to inform to the Small Projects Facility.
 - d. Research quality and the potential for positive policy outcomes need to be given greater prominence, while issues of process should be left more to the discretion of the RAO grantees. A peer review mechanism would help to facilitate this shift.
 - e. It is evident from a recent legal opinion that a legal Trust could be established as the future G-RAP governance authority. While this would appear relatively straightforward, the MTR would advise against this move, until all the present management and procedural matters are sorted out. The issue of the legal status is separate from that of breadth of participation in G-RAP governance (per 8.b, above).
9. *M & E*: Interesting work has been done in this area, with the help of an external consultant. However, the MTR would recommend a move away from delivery of externally-generated M & E packages and methodologies, towards an approach that is more attuned to the core funding concept, which gives much greater responsibility to the RAOs to monitor their own progress towards their policy aims. The Logframe should also be reviewed, with a view to bringing G-RAP and the PMT into the delivery of all levels of objectives.
10. *Pooled funding arrangements*:
- a) The adoption of pooled funding has provided an interesting demonstration of the willingness of donors to implement the principles of the Paris Declaration. To that extent, it has been an important step forward, one that needs to be consolidated. Much progress has been made, although there is evidently further room for improvement. This applies particularly to:
 - i. More reliable and timely delivery of finance
 - ii. Less demanding and more harmonised reporting requirements, more in line with the core funding philosophy.
 - b) An important managerial principle is *equivalence of donor systems*. Application of this principle would help to lighten the load on participants, in terms of reporting requirements, and would also aid G-RAP to focus on its central vocation – information for and influencing development policy.
 - c) Challenges still remain both in terms of implementing the G-RAP core funding philosophy and putting in place appropriate governance arrangements to ensure sustainability. Until these basic problems are resolved, it would not seem advised to invest heavily in developing a more autonomous funding arrangement, through an incorporated trust or similar fund.
11. Recommendations are summarised as follows:

Summary of recommendations by category

Action	Lead Responsibility	Suggested completion dates	Section of Report
1. Focus dialogue with RAOs on policy engagement (information/influence)	PMT	immediate	5.9, 5.10
2. Wind down supply led ICB programme	PMT	immediate	5.12
3. Clarify feedback arrangements to grant applicants (successful/failed)	PMT	One month in advance of next funding round	5.37
4. Finalise arrangements for simplified reporting (financial and technical) in line with core funding philosophy	FC & PMT	Within 3 months	5.10, 5.11, 5.24
5: Draw on consultancy input to advise on how best gender can be mainstreamed into G-RAP as a core grant making facility	FC&PMT	Within 3 months	5.30
6. Review funding proposals with a view to introducing new funding bands, and implement as appropriate.	FC/AB	By end of Phase 1	5.9, 5.11
7. Review proposal for SPF, and implement as appropriate.	FC/AB	By end of Phase 1	5.9, 5.13
8. Clarify governance requirements for Incorporated Trust with GZH	FC	Within 3 months	5.32-5.36
9. Agree new single governance authority (SC) – structure	FC with AB	Within 6 months	5.16-5.22
10. Agree ToRs for membership of new single governance authority (SC)	FC with AB	Within 6 months	5.16-5.22
11. Propose candidates for SC	AB & RAOs	By end of Phase 1	5.16-5.22
12. Simplify grant payment schedules and agree with AB	PMT	Within 1 month	5.39-5.42
13. Revise and clarify JPM	FC	Within 6 months	5.43
14. M & E Review	PMT then FC/AB	Within 3 months	5.23-5.25
15. Logframe review	PMT then FC/AB	Within 3 months	5.26-5.27

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The Mid-term review team would like to thank all those persons in Ghana who gave up their time to meet with it during the fieldwork stages of the mission, including RAOs (beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries), public servants and donors.¹

¹ A list of all those interviewed is included as Annex B to this report.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBO	Community-based organisation
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CS	Civil society
DFID	Department for International Development, UK Government
EYG	Ernst and Young (Ghana)
FC	Funders' Committee (G-RAP)
G-RAP	Ghana Research and Advocacy Programme
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GZH	Gaisie Zwennes Hughes & Co, legal practitioners
JPM	Joint Programme Memorandum
IBIS	Danish NGO
ICB	Institutional capacity building
LTSI	Edinburgh-based consultancy firm (G-RAP management agency)
MDBS	Multi-donor budgetary support
M & E	Monitoring and evaluation
MTR	Mid-term Review
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OD	Organisational development
OVI	Objectively verifiable indicators
PMT	Programme Management Team
NETRIGHT	Network for Women's Rights in Ghana
RAO	Research and Advocacy Organisation
RAVI	Rights and Voice Fund (Ghana)
RNE	Royal Netherlands Embassy
SNV	Dutch Development Agency
TA	Technical assistance
ToRs	Terms of Reference

GHANA RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY PROGRAMME

MID-TERM REVIEW

1. DESCRIPTION OF MANDATE

- 1.1. The purpose of this first phase Mid-term Review (MTR) is to review progress of the Ghana Research and Advocacy Programme (G-RAP) over the two-year period since its launch in September 2004, and to provide an opinion on the prospects of achieving its objectives within the timeframe allowed.
- 1.2. A team comprising Dr. David Brown of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London, and Dr. Nicholas Atampugre of CaRoRa Consult, Accra, was contracted by competitive tender, and undertook fieldwork from 29 September – 18 October, 2006.
- 1.3. The work undertaken was in keeping with the reporting requirements of the G-RAP Joint Programme Document, and in line with the ToRs proposed by the Funders Committee (Annex B, attached).
- 1.4. The original objectives of the programme are as set out in the 'Joint Programme Memorandum (Draft for Discussion)' of January 2004 (henceforth, 'JPM' refers to this document). These define the goal and purpose as:
 - a) *Goal:* 'effective pro-poor policy adopted and implemented'²
 - b) *Purpose:* 'To enhance the capacity of research and advocacy organisations (RAOs) to carry out evidence-based research and advocacy activities in support of pro-poor policy'
- 1.5. Revised objectives have since been proposed by the G-RAP Programme Management Team (PMT), in association with a contracted M & E consultant (see: 'G-RAP Annual Report 2005', Annex 2). Unusually, the standard single purpose statement has been replaced in this formulation by nine constituent statements, all of them pertaining to different facets of RAO work, not all of them necessarily appropriate to all RAOs. The goal and purpose are re-defined as:
 - a) *Goal:* '(change in GoG) Pro-poor policy adopted and implemented effectively by GoG'
 - b) *Purposes:* '(changes in G-RAP RAOs)
 1. RAOs that have been given access to G-RAP capacity building grants are able to gain better access to funding
 2. RAOs are more able to attract, retain, motivate and develop capable staff

² Alternatively (Para 2.6 of the JPM) 'to secure stronger pro-poor policy in Ghana'.

3. RAOs generate high quality evidence-based research based on robust primary sources
 4. RAOs package evidence based research and use it in targeted advocacy activities
 5. Improved cooperation between RAOs
 6. RAOs build up a strategic set of relationships with CBOs
 7. RAOs build up a strategic set of relationships with government, parliament and MDDBS donors
 8. The credibility and legitimacy of RAOs is improved, in the eyes of the GoG and Ghana public
 9. RAO autonomy is not undermined through participation in G-RAP
- 1.6. Comments on the Logframe revisions are offered in Paras 5.24 – 5.30 of this report, and also in Annex A, Paras 3.5 and 3.6.
- 1.7. Findings of the MTR were to be provided in an *Aide Memoire* (this was presented to the donors at a meeting on 18 October, in the offices of DFID in Accra – see Annex D); as well as the present more detailed report.

2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1. GRAP has already benefited from a very detailed and frank Annual Report (MAP Associates, April 2006). This used quantified stakeholder survey methods as part of its methodology.
- 2.2. Valuable as this study was, the consultants have felt it wiser to avoid using quantitative methods for the MTR. While these have the advantage of giving precision and weight to findings, they do not solve the problem of the representativeness of informants or the difficulty of interpreting complex observations taken in isolation from their context.
- 2.3. This review has preferred to use in-depth interviews, to attempt to discern experiences and appreciations of the programme, backed up by a half-day seminar with beneficiaries to test and ‘validate’ findings. Typically, interviews lasted an hour or more, and involved single informants, or small teams (2-4 persons). While this methodology does not solve all problems regarding the representativeness of findings and the likely buy-in for them, it would seem the most appropriate approach in the circumstances, given the nature of the tasks required of the MTR, and the time available for their achievement.
- 2.4. A list of interviewees is provided in Annex C to this report. Coverage was strong in relation to existing beneficiaries of the fund, adequate (though incomplete) in relation to donors, and limited in relation to non-beneficiaries and agencies of the state. Nevertheless, the MTR team is confident as to

the feedback that it received, and feels that this adequately covered the main issues under review.

- 2.5. *Breakdown of interviews:* Staffs of 18 RAOs were interviewed. Three were non-beneficiaries of G-RAP and 15 beneficiaries. Two were specialist women's rights organisations. Overall, 46 persons were interviewed in individual and small group meetings; 25 of these were male, and 21 female. (see Appendix C).
- 2.6. Ultimate responsibility for the views expressed in the MTR lies with the consultants hired to undertake it. These views are, in the last analysis, their own judgements based upon their assessment of the evidence before them and their own experience, and do not necessarily represent the majority opinions of G-RAP stakeholders.

Terms of Reference

- 2.7. The MTR ToRs refer (see: Annex B). These give a prominent place to a number of terms which are current in programme documents but the meaning of which is not self-evident (for example: ownership, autonomy, institutional capacity, political space, evidence). This report is not an academic treatise, and will not attempt to interpret all such terminology. However, an interpretation of some key terms is provided, where this is necessary to better comprehend the nature of G-RAP (see, for example, Annex A).

Questions for Review

- 2.8. Given the ambiguities in the Programme Document, assessing the extent to which G-RAP has met its objectives is not necessarily a straightforward task. Which interpretation of the JPM is the right one?
- 2.9. This review adopts the approach that would be taken were the issue to be one of ambiguity in law – that is, it asks what the central and underlying aims of the JPM were, and the implications of these aims for the programme design.
- 2.10. The existence of two very different versions of the Logframe is also problematic. The MTR review team has used the original Purpose statement as the standard against which prospect of achieving G-RAP objectives is assessed, with the nine revised purposes treated as quasi 'Objectively Verifiable Indicators' (OVI).

3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT FOR THE REVIEW

3.1. G-RAP is an innovative programme which seeks to support civil society engagement with the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy, as a complement to the central feature of the new architecture of international development assistance - multi-donor budgetary support (MDBS).

3.2. The rationale is presented in the JPM as follows:

- a) Civil society participation in the policy process is necessary to:
 - give voice to the poor and vulnerable
 - mainstream policy issues
 - engage the public in the formulation of development policy
 - ensure the transparency of the government and hold it to account for its policies and use of public resources.
- b) Ghana is relatively well-endowed with RAOs, and these have a solid track record.
- c) However, RAO impact is reduced by the inadequacies of their funding base, the heavy projectisation of which pushes them to undertake fragmented and short-term work
- d) This hinders them from developing their own agendas and capacity, from attracting and retaining high calibre staff, and from effective coordination with their RAO peers.
- e) G-RAP aims to overcome these limitations by providing RAOs with a more predictable funding base
- f) Its objective is to 'cement their autonomy, strengthen their institutional capacity and create more political space for them to engage in the policy process'.
- g) In its operation – as a pooled donor fund - it is also consistent with the wider moves to donor harmonization and the MDBS approach.

3.3. G-RAP is being complemented by two other civil society instruments:

- a) Complementary funding with a more grass-roots orientation, particularly the RAVI sister fund. There is also the BUSAC Fund which aims to support CS intervention in policy formulation and implementation through advocacy actions that improve private sector performance³.
- b) Other capacity building measures have been targeted on the executive and legislature at national, regional and district levels; these will simultaneously, and in complementary fashion, help to strengthen GPRS monitoring and reinforce policy research and analytical capacity in the government of Ghana.

3.4. It is made clear in the JPM (Paras 2.8, 2.9) that G-RAP should:

- Recognise the diverse areas of specialisation of RAOs

³ See pg 16, Daily Graphic of Wednesday, October 25 on the advocacy initiative of the Health Service Workers Union (HSWU) on the rights of employees in Private Health Institutions (PHIs).

- Allow them the autonomy to develop their own agendas and strategies
- Encourage them to develop mutually reinforcing research and advocacy strategies

3.5. The tools available to G-RAP to enhance RAO capacity are specified in the JPM as:

- Multi-annual (3-year) core funding 'awarded on a competitive basis to RAOs with an established record of achievement and influence, and which are able to demonstrate a funding gap in achieving their institutional development goals'.
- One-off institutional support to promising RAOs (*inter alia*, to prevent G-RAP from functioning as an elitist club), so to 'encourage and support new entrants into G-RAP'.
- Needs-based institutional grants and technical assistance to be offered to RAOs which are identified as promising but which, due to institutional short-comings, are not in a position to benefit from core-funding; having received such support they would be in a position to apply for core funding subsequently.

3.6. Four donors initially indicated their interest in supporting G-RAP: CIDA, Denmark, Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE), and UK (DFID). Much of the early impetus for the programme came from RNE and DFID, and it was agreed that DFID would act as lead member for the consortium, and as a conduit for the pooled funding of the three other donors, who are now all active in the programme.

Programme Governance

3.7. In line with the prescriptions of the JPM, G-RAP implementation was outsourced to a non-governmental body, by a process of international tendering. The contract was won by LTSI, a UK-based firm, supported by Ernst and Young Ghana. The latter is a member of the Ernst & Young Africa Group (EYAG), and responsible for developing and managing the financial systems of G-RAP.

3.8. The present Programme Management Team (PMT) comprises a team leader (expatriate, full-time); programme administrator, programme coordinator and programme secretary (all nationals and full-time); and a consultant institutional development specialist (expatriate, part-time). Ernst and Young provide financial management specialists as required, from their national complement of staff.

3.9. The Governance Structure of G-RAP involves a *Funders Committee* and *Advisory Board*. The Funders Committee comprises participating donor representatives and an eminent Ghanaian. The Funders Committee makes all decisions relating to disbursement of funds based on recommendations by the Programme Management Team. The Advisory Board comprises representatives of parliament and the donors, the eminent Ghanaian who also serves on the Funders Committee, and two RAO representatives.

(Some other RAOs had served on an Interim Advisory Board, before the establishment of the substantive Board). In the absence of a formal 'RAO community', these are chosen democratically from among the existing RAO grantees. The Board advise on policies and priorities for the programme, and leads on the external relations of G-RAP.

Programme Design

3.10. The design stage preceded the appointment of the PMT. The G-RAP programme formulation was participatory, and the prospective donors and a number of leading RAOs were involved in its design. Preparation of the main Project Document was, it appears, outsourced to private sector consultants.

3.11. The JPM appears as a rather ambiguous document. Among the ambiguities are the following:

- i. Overall, a tension between a core funding programme, with only very loose controls over the participating RAOs, and a fairly complex programme development component (ICB&TA) 'package', with a strong emphasis on external management and direction.
- ii. Lack of clarity as to what range of organisations is covered by the acronym 'RAO' and a failure to explicitly acknowledge the diverse and evolutionary nature of the RAO constituency and its implications for G-RAP design and implementation strategy.. On one interpretation, organisations would need to have both research and advocacy as their vocation. On another, these could be on an either/or basis.
- iii. A fairly superficial interpretation of RAO size and capacity. For example, Para 3.2 of the JPM appears to suggest that organisations which fail to qualify for core funding must have failed because of lack of institutional capacity; hence, they are to be offered 'needs-based institutional grants and technical assistance to help address' this deficiency. This implies a view that small RAOs need to be helped to graduate to the level where they have potential for G-RAP core funding, but that (even where lacking initial capacity) they can reach this level well within the programme cycle.
- iv. Lack of clarity as to how much freedom is allowed to core-funded RAOs to set their own objectives. One notes, for example, that such freedom is recognised as desirable in the JPM and a key element of G-RAP design (Para 2.8) and as a Purpose in the Logframe (Objectives 3-1 and 3-2 at Output level). However, the same freedom also appears as an area of high risk in the Risk Assessment (*Para 4: External Impact Risk No.2: 'medium probability', but potentially 'high impact'*).
- v. Lack of recognition that different RAOs may be at different stages in the organisational cycle. Some may be working optimally, though they would benefit from additional core funds to give them more 'thinking time'. Others may be in a more difficult period in the funding cycle, so that, in all probability, core funding would be deployed to fill a funding gap, even to keep them afloat.

- vi. A rather simplified view of the potential of networking, with an implication that every RAO would benefit from increased networking with all the others. And there is also a tendency to view networking mainly within the context of formal networks rather than as a process in which nearly all organisations are involved, at varying levels of formalisation.
- vii. Lack of clarity as to the meaning of 'not-for-profit'. The JPM states, for example:
- viii. "[a *participating*] organisation's primary aim is to engage in research and advocacy activities on a not-for-profit basis (an applicant may undertake some activities for profit where required for financial sustainability, provided that its primary aim is not profit)."
- ix. This suggests some confusion in the design as to the meaning of 'not-for-profit', and a failure to distinguish 'generating a surplus' from 'distributing a profit to share holders'. The former is arguably desirable in any organisation, whether NGO or private sector; the latter is a formal status associated with certain types of business organisation and legal structures, and would seem to conform much more closely to the normal sense of 'for profit' – that is, 'private sector'.
- x. A particular area of confusion and contention is the balance between budgetary support/core funding and capacity building. This is particularly evident in Annex D of the JPM. This presents two lists of criteria for G-RAP eligibility at pre-qualification stage (27 criteria) and full qualification ('organisational competencies', 24 criteria). The pre-qualification criteria include five essential criteria, and 22 criteria which are to be scored from '5' ('fully demonstrated') to '0' ('not demonstrated'), giving a total maximum score of 80 points (the assessment includes three main financial criteria that are scored between 0-20, not 0-5). The full qualification criteria are scored on a similar basis, giving a maximum possible score of 100.

It is noted that: 'assessment is meant to be a developmental process. While pre-qualification criteria (are obligatory), it is not expected that all grantees demonstrate excellence for all organisational competencies'.

The implication is that the use of the scoring system is obligatory, to be applied by the PMT when appointed, though 'in dialogue with *prospective funders* and ... transparent' (emphasis added). No explanation is given of how this scoring system is to be translated into an all-or-nothing decision as to whether or not to provide core funding. More broadly, Annex D might be seen as encouraging a rather strongly interventionist approach, somewhat distant from the core funding philosophy.

G-RAP Implementation in its early stages

- 3.12. This section reviews the first two years of the programme, focusing on the interpretation of their mandate by the incoming PMT.
- 3.13. As is evident from the above, the context in which the PMT began its work was not particularly propitious in that the aims and objectives of G-RAP were ambiguous and not necessarily coherent. It also was entering an arena in which a number of established RAOs had already been active, and had developed the view that G-RAP would be a fund where they would enjoy a high level of ownership. Thus, the PMT has had to cope with both a JPM that provided a rather uncertain guide to G-RAP implementation and the heightened expectations of some (but not all) of its prospective partners. This was not an easy inheritance, and the PMT has needed to employ all its skills to cope with the consequences.
- 3.14. To date, there have been two funding rounds, in 2004/5 and 2006. The PMT was established in September 2004, and was immediately put under pressure to disburse. Key factors here would appear to have been the expectations raised by the highly 'participatory' process of programme design (at least as regards a select number of established RAOs), together with the need to get moving rapidly following the delays which are typical in international tendering processes of this type. In addition, the fact that the contract had been awarded to a private sector consortium, led by an external organisation with no established legitimacy in the local context, may have increased the pressure on the PMT to deliver, and to quickly 'prove its mettle' to the RAO community. The PMT resisted pressure from the donors to organise an early RAO convention, but succumbed to the demand to move swiftly to the first Call for Proposals, and to select the first round of grantees. The call was announced on 17 September, 2004, in the national press, and the list of grantees was released on 14 January, 2005. Nine organisations were selected for core funding out of 24 short-listed RAOs. Thirteen ICB and four TA/Project grants were also awarded. There was considerable overlap between the core grantees and the ICB grantees. In the event, the donor bureaucracies moved rather slowly (not necessarily being attuned to the requirements of core funding to NGOs), and the first round of grants was not paid over until July 2005. The total grants disbursement in the period 2005-6 was US\$1,958,750 (*2006 Mid-Year Progress Report*, Annex 3).
- 3.15. The PMT recognised early on that, while in some ways parallel to the MDDBS programme of the official development partners, G-RAP differed from it in one significant way. While the choice of national partner is uncontroversial in relation to MDDBS (in that the host government self-selects), this is not the case with an RAO support fund, where the demand is likely to far outstrip the supply, and where selection for funding confers a potentially significant competitive advantage on the chosen few. The choice of partners was thus crucial in the G-RAP case, and needed to be made with care.
- 3.16. LTSI/EYG and the PMT began by taking a rather cautious line. This involved:

- a) An interpretation of 'RAO' to imply that joint research and advocacy must be undertaken by the same organisation.
- b) Three grant instruments: *core grants* (of 3 years' duration); *institutional and capacity building* grants or 'ICB' (mainly capacity building grants to individual RAOs, though with a small number of institution building grants, mainly to strengthen inter-RAO networking); and *technical assistance* (TA) grants (a rather vague and flexible funding category which has been used, in the event, to offer a range of grants, linked to varying combinations of IT equipment, capacity building and human resource inputs).
- c) Undertaking demanding organisational assessments of applicants for core funding. 109 questions are said to have been used in the first (2005) selection round. In the second selection round (2006), the number reduced to 51, which still implied a fairly detailed managerial assessment format.
- d) Grant awards linked largely to the turnover of the organisation (so as not to unbalance the organisations' funding), as well as to the size of the fund requested (thus, organisations which presented larger requests were likely, other things being equal, to receive larger grants).
- e) The capacity building aspect of the JPM was given particular prominence, and almost all participating RAOs were offered capacity building grants, at least in the first round (usually at a flat rate of \$10,000 per organisation);
- f) Initially, a turnover threshold of US\$400,000 was set for eligibility for a core grant award. This was felt necessary both to prevent the PMT being swamped with inappropriate applicants to its 'calls for proposals' in the national press, and also to distance G-RAP from the sister funds, particular RAVI, the aims of which included capacity building of intermediary NGOs, particularly those working closely with community groups. RAVI's average grant size was much smaller than that envisaged for G-RAP (\$100k for the first round of grantees and now down to \$50k for the second round and is likely to go even lower)⁴

3.17. The RAO assessment methods tended to encourage a fairly projectised approach to the use of core funds by beneficiary RAOs. These centred on the work plans presented by the RAOs to the PMT, in which RAOs were asked to present their operation plans for the use of core funds in some considerable detail, and in itemised fashion, very much on an activity-led basis.

Areas of RAO concern

- 3.18. Particularly (though not exclusively) in the first (2005) round, RAOs were somewhat critical of the selection processes used. Their complaints covered such areas as the following:
- a) Lack of clarity as to the criteria of eligibility
 - b) Lack of clarity as to the reasons for grant awards and/or rejections
 - c) Lack of understanding of the reasons for particular grant awards

⁴ There is limited capacity to absorb higher level of grants (*pers.comm*, Taaka Awori, Country Director of ActionAid).

- d) Award of grants (particularly TA and/or ICB) for which no applications were made
- e) Pressures on them to increase their networking activities, whether or not the proposed partners were appropriate ones (the RAOs are often natural competitors), and seemingly in disregard of the networking activities on which many of the RAOs were already engaged.
- f) A too strongly interventionist approach by the PMT which has sought to intervene in areas (parliamentary relations, for example), where the RAOs are already active (though not necessarily in high-profile ways).

3.19. A particular area of contention at the time of the first round of awards was the issue of *gender*. There exist a number of strong and prominent gender-oriented RAOs and RA networks in Ghana, though none of these proved eligible to apply for core funding in the first round. Among the reasons were:

- a) Gender policy tends, in the Ghana context, to be addressed by two separate types of organisations: gender research organisations and gender advocacy organisations; research and advocacy are not normally combined – with good reason, in the opinion of some knowledgeable respondents.
- b) None of the gender organisations had a high enough turnover, and all failed to reach the \$400,000 threshold;
- c) gender advocacy organisations tend to be particularly small;
- d) Gender networks (such as ‘Netright’) tend also to play an important role in gender advocacy in Ghana; however, these lacked the essential legal requirements to pre-qualify for core funds.

Thus, none of the gender RAOs proved eligible for core funding. In some cases, grants were still offered to them for ICB or TA. Such offers were accepted in a number of cases, largely for want of alternatives, although rejected in at least one prominent case (see Annex A, Para 3.16).

3.20. The problems experienced by gender RAOs were shared, to a greater or lesser extent, by many of the RAOs.

- a) Some well-established research organisations were unwilling to take up advocacy positions, fearing that this would compromise their objectivity, while other organisations, which lacked the means to undertake detailed primary research, focused more on advocacy. The interpretation given by the consortium to ‘RAO’ - as implying R *and* A - was thus felt to be too restrictive.
- b) There was considerable resistance, initially, to the preference shown by the PMT for two alternative capacity building agencies (SNV and IBIS); this was partly because ICB grants tended to be offered even to those who had not formally requested them, partly because there are a number of well-known OD agencies in Ghana other than the two promoted by the PMT. This requirement was subsequently relaxed, and a greater choice of ICB agencies was allowed.
- c) Many RAOs complained that the G-RAP procedures were very time consuming, particularly in the early months. This put a particular strain on the RAO representatives (that is, RAOs on the interim G-RAP Board,

and the two RAOs that were subsequently elected by the RAO G-RAP beneficiaries as their representatives on the substantive Advisory Board).

- 3.21. On top of these problems, the late release of funds by the donors severely dented the PMT's early credibility, and limited its capacity for firm management.
- 3.22. All in all, therefore, the original round of grant applications got G-RAP off to rather a bad start. The PMT found itself experiencing unexpected resistance to its offers, and subject to attack for its application of what it felt to be the rules it had inherited from the JPM. Relations were said to be fraught in the early months, not helped by a lack of clarity in the governance arrangements for the programme (the division of responsibilities between FC and AB), and continuing difficulties with the four donor agencies (particularly, though not exclusively, with regard to the provision of finance).
- 3.23. The subsequent (second) call for proposals was marked by a general relaxation in procedures by the PMT. The \$400,000 threshold was dropped (on the agreement of the FC and AB), and the OA process made less cumbersome and time consuming. The number of questions posed during the initial organisational assessment was reduced from 109 to 51. ICB and TA grants continued to be used, partly for capacity building. The Second Call was published in the press on 13 March, 2006. 54 organisations responded, and 15 were short-listed (including 7 existing grantees, whose one-year grants were to expire in July 2006). In this round, six of the seven existing core grantees were awarded further one year grants, and three additional core grants were added. The total available for disbursement in this round was US\$2,245,000 (*2006 Mid-year Progress Report*, Annex 3). Once again, however, the round has been dogged by bureaucratic delays originating in the pooled funding arrangements (and thus outside of the control of the PMT). The awards that were announced in early July, 2006 were not disbursed until mid-October. This has again made it difficult for the PMT to establish a funding rhythm or to impose the necessary reporting disciplines.⁵

⁵ For example, the PMT finds it difficult to sanction late reporting RAOs by withholding release of funds. Given that even the better performing RAOs have had to wait to receive their grant awards from the PMT, it has not been in a strong position to sanction others.

4. FINDINGS

- 4.1. The above provides the background to the findings of the MTR, which are presented in the following paragraphs.
- 4.2. While not without its strengths, the way in which G-RAP has been put into effect in the first two years would appear to differ quite markedly from the initial programme concept. This statement carries the caveat that the JPM was itself not necessarily fully congruent with the original programme concept.
- 4.3. On the positive side, the PMT has delivered services in a professional manner, in line with its interpretation of the JPM, and these services have been valued by many of its partner RAOs. Within the limits imposed by the continuing difficulties in delivery of finance, the PMT has operated an efficient service. It has been particularly strong on financial and narrative reporting, and presents useful compilations of the constituent RAO reports.
- 4.4. G-RAP has also been valued as a financing mechanism. Participating RAOs identified a number of areas in which G-RAP had helped improve their performance. These included:
 - As an important platform for RAO dialogue and networking
 - As a means of improving financial and administrative systems and equipment
 - As an aid to staff development
 - In facilitating strategic planning
 - In facilitating organisational reflection and change
 - As a financial support to help develop new programmes and ideas
 - Helping reach fundraising targets

Annex E records some of the positive assessments provided to the MTR during the course of the review, relating both to the financial mechanism and programme management⁶.

- 4.5. These are important achievements, which attest to the positive outcomes to date, in quite diverse areas. However, valuable as these benefits have been, they do not necessarily imply the future fulfilment of the G-RAP aims. This relates to the particular area that is central to the use of the core funding window, *viz.* information and influence for public policy development.
- 4.6. To date, this interest in policy information and influence seems to have been somewhat peripheral to G-RAP's aims. In the event, the intervention model would appear to have been less concerned with policy influence than NGO structuring and dynamics:

⁶ See also "Implementation of an M&E framework for GRAP, a Summary Update by the M&E Specialist, Dr. Rick Davies-July 2006

- a) An initial approach which appeared to locate the primary challenges as internal to the RAOs, and not located in their funding environment. This led to a process of detailed organisational assessment, backed up by capacity building through OD.
 - b) Over-emphasis on activities in line with a conventional projectized approach, seemingly to the detriment of policy outcomes and impact; a tendency to try and influence the internal RAO environment, rather than to focus on the external challenges;
 - c) An interventionist approach by the PMT, which presented itself as seeking to coordinate and lead the RAO community, rather than as a conventional funding secretariat.
 - d) A flexible approach to grant making, in which the PMT/FC tended not only to offer rather smaller grants than had been applied for (this is as might be expected, given the programme's limited means), but also to offer grants that had not been applied for at all; these included ICB grants (in the first round, usually \$10,000 capacity building grants, which were offered almost routinely) and variable TA awards (often of quite substantial sums). The TA grants seem to have figured at least on occasions as a 'compensation mechanism' to reward worthy organisations that were ineligible for core funds under the existing rules.
- 4.7. The most distinctive feature of the approach adopted by the PMT is the singular emphasis on capacity building through some specific organisational development methodologies, to be delivered for preference by the two 'process coaches' selected by the PMT, IBIS and SNV. Commitment to CB/OD methods has figured as little short of a fundamental PMT 'conditionality' imposed upon participants in G-RAP.
- 4.8. It should be stressed that, despite considerable initial hesitation, many RAOs have benefited from some of the ICB methods used or recommended. While the heavy capacity-building emphasis was not what they expected, they often said they found it useful. Equally, the organisational assessment methods and questionnaires used, while time-consuming, were also felt to have been illuminating and instructive to many of the responding RAOs. If the sole criterion for the MTR were to have been ultimate usefulness, then the strong CB/OD profile would not be particularly controversial.
- 4.9. Given the radical nature of the G-RAP concept, however, the approach adopted is more contentious. For example:
- a) The fundamental premise of G-RAP design was not the need to develop systematic RAO organisational capacity, but rather (and much more positively) to free up high-performing RAOs from the external constraints that were inhibiting them from fully impacting on pro-poor policy;
 - b) Core funding and organisational development have different, and in many ways conflicting, managerial requirements; great care is required to avoid distorting demand (so that capacity building is valued by partners not for its own sake but as a means to access much-needed funds); if the two objectives are to be combined under a single programme umbrella, then ideally they should be kept quite far apart.

- c) OD methodologies of the types favoured by the PMT are quite intrusive in their methods and long-term in their implications; if they are to be applied successfully, it is essential that there is strong buy-in to them from the RAO involved; this underlines the importance of separating funding decisions from CB/OD.
- d) The ways in which specific CB/OD requirements were imposed on RAOs sent an unfortunate signal to them at a critical early stage, to suggest that – despite the highly participatory ways in which G-RAP had been designed – the PMT was sceptical of their capacities, and felt itself better placed than they were to discern their own needs.
- e) The CB/OD emphasis has reinforced a tendency in the PMT to over-concern itself with the one element over which, in a budgetary support approach, the recipient RAOs should have greatest autonomy: their internal systems and processes. Beyond the immediate ‘certification’ requirements, the core funding concept favours a very hands-off approach to management. In the event, the PMT has been over-preoccupied with administrative details and internal grantee processes, to the detriment of the G-RAP aims and objectives. This would appear to have spilled over into the attitudes of RAOs, which are tending to present very detailed workplans, sometimes of a highly-projectized character.

4.10. The PMT’s problems have been compounded by some severe delays with financing, as well as some uncertainties in the management model. G-RAP governance has developed on a ‘learning by doing’ basis, and this may have been one factor encouraging the PMT to adopt a rather interventionist approach. Participation of the second-generation parliamentary representatives (the *ex-officio* chairs of the ‘Finance’ and ‘Public Accounts’ Committees) has been low, which has affected the performance of the Advisory Board, and the Funders Committee has had its own internal difficulties, mainly of an administrative nature. Pooled funding has proven very time-consuming to arrange, and G-RAP’s lack of a legal identity has posed particular difficulties for some of the development partners. It has put a particular strain on DFID. Each has had its own administrative requirements, with the result that the ‘highest common denominator’ has tended to be required, not the lowest one (that is, the bureaucratic requirements have tended to include and subsume all the different donor rules). Reporting requirements have been heavy, and out of keeping with the spirit of the core funding approach. Grant recipients have been required to submit quarterly financial reports (these being regarded as essential by one of the four donors), though narrative reporting is only twice-yearly.⁷ RAOs complain that the financial requirements are too demanding, and preventing them from getting on with the job. They argue that the financial reports should anyway be linked with, and subordinate to, the narrative reports.

4.11. The overall picture is thus of a programme that has not yet fully found its development niche. As presently managed, it functions as a mix of a grant making body and a project implementation unit. It is perceived by many of its

⁷ The MTR was told by a representative of the donor agency in question that financial reporting is now required by them only on a 6-monthly basis, though it would appear that this applies only to the financial summaries collated by the PMT, not the RAO financial reports which are still required quarterly.

intended beneficiaries as a useful mechanism, but one that has adopted a rather normative approach, having a flavour of social engineering and seeking to promote particular approaches to organisational change which may not always be appropriate to RAO priorities.

- 4.12. It should be emphasised that G-RAP has made progress over its first two years. Following some quite severe initial difficulties, G-RAP has gradually grown in strength, and the PMT likewise. G-RAP has offered some interesting services to its RAO partners, and its administrative problems are slowly being ironed out. Some of the original problem areas – for example, the requirement that research be linked directly to advocacy and the US\$400,000 funding threshold – were abandoned in year two, and these changes have had significant benefits. The G-RAP Mid-Year Progress Report (January – June 2006) presents a more optimistic picture of progress than the preceding 2005 Annual Report. The PMT is being careful to avoid pre-empting the interests and initiatives of the RAOs, and is working rather to give these actors added support. However, there is still a very strong emphasis on ICB to the detriment of the budgetary support/ core funding concept, though some frustration at the continuing lack of RAO interest in the services on offer. Thus, the Mid-Year Report states:

‘IBIS and SNV need to be brought closer into the programme. G-RAP is an opportunity for both organisations to realise their own development goals, and affords access to key RAOs and donors’. [Para 2.5]

‘A good base has been established - the need now is to convince RAOs of the benefits of continuing [with OD activities]’. [Para 3.6]

The main challenges are often still perceived as internal to the civic community, including ‘long (-term) movements of behaviour and mentality change’ (Para 2.4).

- 4.13. The MTR team is unconvinced that this approach represents the most effective way forward for G-RAP, particularly given its need to fully establish its credentials by the end of 2007, and hopefully to attract additional donor interest. The Review Team therefore recommends a degree of repositioning of the programme to enable it to fully test the underlying philosophy over the remaining months of its first phase development. This repositioning would, to a significant extent, accentuate trends already in evidence in the programme, and which are already under consideration (though not yet fully embraced) by the PMT. The MTR’s recommendations are set out in the following section.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1. In making recommendations for the future development of the programme, the MTR team is aware that there is little room for manoeuvre in the short term. For example:
- Given the three-year cycle of support to the leading RAOs, heavy contractual commitments have already made, and the available discretionary funds are fairly limited.
 - The organisational development programme is now close to completion; most of the potential candidate RAOs have already received OD funds.⁸

The existing management system is working well enough to see the programme through to the end of Phase One.

- 5.2. The present recommendations are thus more oriented to the future development of the programme, in its second phase (nominally 2007-2010), than influencing the first phase, in the few months to its completion.
- 5.3. This perspective is also justified by the nature of the challenges that will need to be faced in Phase Two. These particularly concern the governance reforms that are advised before any new funding arrangements are put in place. Again, the MTR proposals are made with longer term developments in view.

The Character of the Programme

- 5.4. The recommendations that follow are based on the view that the vocation of the G-RAP, and the means by which its performance will ultimately be judged, is as a programme of policy engagement, and not organisational capacity building.
- 5.5. Thus, the central focus should be on the effectiveness of G-RAP's programme of core grants to RAOs active at the national policy level. These grants are intended to enable the beneficiary RAOs to inform and influence policy development in the broad area of pro-poor policy.
- 5.6. Philosophically, G-RAP should be oriented to supporting already performant RAOs to confront and manage constraints of a largely external nature – not a means of graduating them from a low level up to a point where they are capable of exerting policy influence. To be used successfully, core grant making demands a minimum level of organisation and a proven track record. Organisations which are not in a position to merit core funding at any level should not be funded by G-RAP. They may be more suited to conventional project funding, in which case, they may be candidates for the sister fund, RAVI.
- 5.7. The guiding 'intervention model' available to G-RAP management is that of MDBS in its relationship to the new aid architecture, using programme planning

⁸ Not all have yet completed the OD programmes, however; in several cases only the organisational assessments have been completed.

instruments such as the GPRS. G-RAP needs to take its lead from the MDDBS approach as to the kinds of dialogue and discussion that are appropriate to it, and the level of influence available to the PMT and governing board over the participating RAOs.

- 5.8. Annex A reviews these issues in greater detail, focusing on the nature of a core funding programme, and the meaning of 'ownership' within it. Consideration is also given to some critical areas for programme development, such as gender and women's rights.

General Recommendations

- 5.9. To assist G-RAP to focus on this aim, and with a view to the future elaboration of an innovative financing arrangement, it is recommended that the programme be repositioned by:

- ⇒ Simplifying the funding instruments;
- ⇒ Refining the governance structure;
- ⇒ Widening the dialogue on problem definition and strategic development, bringing together RAOs, government, donors and others, and using competitive funding to RAO consortia to channel demand and support the identified priorities.

- 5.10. *Funding arrangements and priorities*

G-RAP should seek to:

- a) Provide funds to organisations on the basis of their positive achievements and capacities, the opportunities which they see for themselves in the applied policy field, and the constraints [mainly external ones] that are inhibiting realisation of their objectives.
- b) Place greater emphasis on the quality of outputs and outcomes than the processes by which they are achieved. Process is clearly important but quality equally so, and it is the latter which are most pertinent to the policy impacts that G-RAP seeks to support. In dealing with government at the policy interface, second chances are rarely given, and thus RAOs have to be able to deliver high quality work whenever this is demanded. G-RAP should focus its attention on ensuring that quality work is supported, and that the overall quality is maximised. Process issues should, within broad limits, be left to the discretion of the grantees in line with the core-funding philosophy.
- c) Limit the roles of the PMT primarily to administering grants and allied activities (such as assessing fiduciary risk), avoiding other activities of a more interventionist type that might undermine the central aim.

- 5.11. Regarding the detail of the approach, it is recommended that:

- a) More structured and less flexible core funding arrangements should be applied than hitherto, perhaps using a limited number of funding bands. Organisations would then receive core funding appropriate to the overall scale and nature of their operations. This would also allow for support of effective but smaller RAOs outside the confines of TA and ICB, and help avoid creation of an 'elite club' of beneficiary RAOs.
- b) All core-grantees should be offered multi-annual support to allow them to respond in a way that is realistic for the types of changes envisaged. This will give grantees incentives to manage their funds accordingly, in the

knowledge that, if they fail to do so, they will be losing an asset they already value and have planned for.

- c) An external review mechanism is needed to assess issues of research quality at the grantee selection stage; this needs to be sustainable in the longer term.
- d) Creation of a new category of 'Small Projects Facility' to channel innovation in a strategic fashion, through funding RAOs working in collaboration.

5.12. This would imply:

- a) Abandonment of the TA and ICB grant categories, which have tended to figure at least in part as a compensation mechanism to reward organisations not selected for mainstream core funding.
- b) Significantly down-sizing the more supply side elements of the programme and ensuring that all its services are employed in response to demand.
- c) Further drastic pruning of the assessment requirements for core funding (accelerating the existing trend), allowing partner RAOs greater autonomy.

5.13. *The Small Projects Facility* is recommended as a vehicle to respond more effectively to demands expressed by important stakeholder constituency groups, including donors and the RAO community (both existing RAOs and applicant RAOs).

- a) This fund would privilege joint actions to deliver on objectives that cannot be supported with the core funds provided to individual RAOs.
- b) Selection should be transparent and competitive;
- c) The fund would not be available to individual RAOs, but only for consortia and groups of RAOs wishing to collaborate on policy issues, with a greater critical mass than they could have individually.
- d) The aim would be to finance activities which deal with cross-cutting issues, and require partnerships and networking, and which would not fit in with individual RAOs plans⁹.

Though obviously to be managed prudently, this fund would not be subject to the stringent financial controls required of core grant recipients (e.g. at least two annual audits by commercial auditors). Care would need to be taken to avoid using this as a projectized funding mechanism for single RAOs (as has occurred hitherto with ICB and TA grants).

5.14. It is recommended that an annual *G-RAP Strategic Issues Meeting* be funded, to function specifically as a forum for strategic thinking beyond the confines of individual RAO interest. This would allow RAOs, government, donors and others to debate the future funding priorities, and to identify themes to which RAOs and consortia might wish to bid for funding¹⁰. Ideas would then be fed to, and filtered by, the governing body, and put out to competitive tender, according

⁹ Not all the actors in a group would have to be recipients of core grants, however; indeed none need be, provided the strategic value is evident.

¹⁰ It should be stressed that this meeting is to advance strategic thinking and issues – not to define 'G-RAP strategy'.

to the means available.¹¹ It is envisaged that this meeting would be under the organisational control of the recipient RAOs, as is presently the case with the G-RAP Convention, though in close liaison with the PMT and Steering Committee. Like the present convention, the Strategic Issues Meetings would be open to contributions from other parties, provided the balance between the participants and the focus on G-RAP strategic thinking are maintained. The essential requirement, however, would be that the Meetings support the programme cycle of G-RAP.

- 5.15. Additional G-RAP RAO conferences might also be held, with support from G-RAP within the limits of the funds available. These might retain the 'RAO convention' format, should the RAO community so choose. These would have a much broader and less focused role, examining the wider context and challenges to the RAO community in Ghana, and not being as closely linked as the Strategic Issues Meetings to the G-RAP funding cycle.¹²

Programme Governance

- 5.16. Though based on the MDBS principles, the fact that G-RAP does not confront a single national partner makes it imperative that its funding decisions enjoy wide public legitimacy. This is challenging, as the benefits and disbenefits of receiving/failing to receive core funding are likely to be significant. In addition, the lack of a coherent and bounded RAO community also has implications for governance and ownership (see Annex A).
- 5.17. The governance structure would merit review:
- a) The structure is confusing for the partners.
 - b) It is too much associated with the donors and lacks grant-making authority; this adds to the difficulties of the PMT.
 - c) It is ill-suited to the likely future requirements of G-RAP, in the event that it moves to a more stand-alone arrangement, less influenced by the donors.
- 5.18. It is proposed that G-RAP moves fairly rapidly to a single governance authority (a 'Steering Committee'), with grant-awarding being handed by a Grants Sub-Committee. The Steering Committee (SC) would function to:
- i. Give authority to funding decisions;
 - ii. Act as the guardian of the programme's integrity – ensuring a balanced approach in its overall pattern of support;

¹¹ Purely by way of illustration, the following hypothetical examples were given by the Review Team at the RAO feedback meeting on 17 October:

Example 1: proposal from GE/WR RAOs for joint work on preparing guidelines to parliament on gender-sensitive budgeting.

Example 2: proposal from PMT (based on analysis of core grants) for research to be undertaken on disability policy and advocacy and its links to the GPRS, as an under-represented theme.

Example 3: proposal from a group of RAOs on how they might combine to target/profit from a major international event to be held during 2007 in Accra.

¹² Like development studies conferences they would also offer networking opportunities. They should not be geared directly to G-RAP funding decisions.

- iii. Broaden participation in funding decisions, so that they are less closely associated in the public eye with the judgements of the PMT and/or the donor group.
- iv. Develop systems which allow greater consideration to be given to issues of quality of outputs and outcomes, through some sort of peer review process;
- v. Manage and encourage strategic innovation;
- vi. Provide a link to democratic governance through the continued involvement of parliamentarians;
- vii. Provide the unambiguous governance structure that will be required if G-RAP is to become more autonomous.

5.19. The function of the SC (not the PMT) is to ensure that G-RAP adopts a balanced approach, and is not associated (even inadvertently) with any particular political tendency or interest group, or finds itself involved in any conflicts of interest. To a large extent, G-RAP should seek to fund a broad profile of organisations, some establishment (though not party political), some less so. Should the associations between any specific organisation and a political tendency be judged by the governance body to be excessive, to the point where its research and/or advocacy activities are compromised, then the response should be not to fund it at all.

5.20. SC should aim to ensure an effective link-up with democratic authorities. The participation of the legislature is proving a challenge and may have no easy solution. However, two steps might perhaps be taken to improve parliamentary involvement, and these are put forward for consideration:

- i. Widening the number of parliamentarians from two to four, by inviting the parliamentary leadership of the majority and minority parties to each nominate an additional member to the Board (this is in addition to the two *ex officio* committee chairs); this could compensate for the frequent changes in the leadership of parliamentary committees.
- ii. Seeking to integrate G-RAP Board membership into the annual Parliamentary calendar of work, so that Parliament takes over responsibility for any incentives to parliamentary Board members, relieving pressure on G-RAP.

5.21. The PMT should act as a Secretariat, collating information for decision making and reporting, and scrupulously avoiding any tendency to promote particular interests of its own.

5.22. *RAO representation:* One outcome of the changes proposed is that there would no longer be a place for RAO representatives on the management authority. This is not a criticism of the participation of the RAO representatives on the Advisory Board to date (which by all accounts has been exemplary). However, since the restructuring process emphasises the fund-management role of the SC, RAO involvement in direct grants management would not be appropriate.

This change is clearly of concern to RAOs (as evidenced, for example, by the views of participants at the RAO feedback on 17 October, 2006, who felt it would

'surrender' the direction of the programme to an external board). However, the consultants hold to this proposal nevertheless, and would seek for strong RAO participation in other areas. For example, the RAO representatives would be asked to contribute to the selection of the Steering Committee members, and to coordinate the annual G-RAP Strategic Issues Meeting. Should there be continuing calls for RAO involvement in programme direction, then consideration might be given to a formal consultation process between the Steering Committee and the RAO community or representatives, rather than direct participation of RAO representatives on the Steering Committee itself.¹³

Monitoring and Evaluation

5.23. M & E and reporting arrangements and schedules are critical to assessing the contribution of G-RAP¹⁴. It is recommended that the G-RAP avoids building an M & E framework and process which specifically aim to extract information from RAOs beyond what is normal and internal to the organisation. The key to addressing M & E capacity gaps is to induce a demand-led process which enhances the RAOs' own internal learning processes. In G-RAP's grant-making assessment, greater priority should be given to RAOs' own M&E processes and reporting schedules.

Experience with other comparable programmes and with mainstream MDBS suggests that the monitoring framework agreed between G-RAP and its grantees needs to be kept to a minimum. A small number of broad objectives should suffice to focus discussion between the grant giver and recipient. The objectives and the OVI should be set at a level that allows some flexibility in their achievement.

5.24. An interesting area for debate is whether G-RAP should follow the MDBS model in linking payments to dialogue over objectives and their attainment. In a typical MDBS approach, for example, all parties make two yearly payments: the first is a *basement tranche* and is calculated on the annual budget, while the second is a *performance tranche* and is linked to what has been delivered by the individual grantees. The measurement of their performance is on an output and impact basis (as derived from M&E system) and measured against input/output ratio. This is certainly a possibility in the present case, though the MTR team would, on balance, advise a simpler model, with a single annual payment subject to satisfactory performance in the year just ended. G-RAP must deal with a large number of grant-holders, none of which has such a large disbursement as to justify a very sophisticated approach.

5.25. M & E issues are considered further in Annex A, Para 3.5.

The Logical Framework

5.26. The MTR has some concerns about the revisions that have been made to the G-RAP logframe (see: Sections 1.5 & 2.10 of this report; also Annex A, Para 3.6). While these do help to link objectives to actors – the output level with the

¹³ Were the RAO community to have had a formal identity (not just comprising G-RAP beneficiaries), then a more interventionist model might be feasible.

¹⁴ The major challenges to M & E lie not so much in the technical aspects of data gathering and reporting but in the attitudes and internal organisational culture.

PMT, and the purpose level with the RAOs - they also have the effect of producing a logframe in which G-RAP managerial responsibilities are evident only at the lowest level. This might encourage an over-emphasis on administrative issues by the PMT, at the expense of programme and strategy.

5.27. The MTR team acknowledges that considerable thought and effort have already gone into the logframe revision exercise, and has no wish to add to the workload unnecessarily. However, it would, on balance, prefer to see a logframe which identified objectives for G-RAP and the PMT at all three levels of activity - the administrative; the programme and the strategy. An internal review of logframe is therefore advised. The aim would be to extend the PMT relevant objectives to levels above the output level. The governance changes advised in this section of the report would hopefully facilitate this revision – with the administrative level being concerned mainly with delivery and reporting targets, the programme level with the steps the PMT and G-RAP management might take to help RAOs achieve their policy information and influencing objectives, and the Strategy level with the longer term changes proposed in the governance structure, with a view to creating a sustainable management model.

Gender Mainstreaming

5.28. The abolition of the funding threshold has gone a long way to reducing the gender blindness of G-RAP. The selection process now explicitly aims to ensure gender inclusion and there is increasing prominence of gender issues. The imbalance of benefiting organisations has been changed to favour small gender sensitive organisations.

5.29. Nevertheless, gender mainstreaming goes beyond resource provision. There are a range of options that could be considered to promote gender mainstreaming. Although the RAO convention took the view that gender should not be made a condition for receiving a core grant, a case could be made for a strong emphasis on gender mainstreaming in the assessment process¹⁵ and in the organisational life of RAOs.

5.30. It is recommended that a local consultancy input be used to advise on how best gender could be mainstreamed into the predominantly core-grant making role of G-RAP without making this a conditionality.

Future development of G-RAP

Bringing in new donors?

5.31. The MTR was also asked to address the issue of broadening the funding base to include new donors. It takes the view that resolving the underlying problems of applying pooled funding to a budgetary support mechanism of this type will, in the fullness of time, create a framework which is more amenable to multi-donor involvement, provided that the systems aspects of donor

¹⁵ Questions of how gender is being mainstreamed, whether the RAOs have a gender policy and strategy, and the support the RAOs require to mainstream gender in their organisation may be worth considering.

harmonisation are met. In a context where widening participation of development partners is under consideration, firming up of an *exit strategy* may appear premature but it must be kept constantly under constant review. Two considerations are paramount:

- Avoiding dependence on the present donors;
- Creating management systems which would be easily transferable to an independent national body.

The first condition would be best assured by requiring that grantees build future self-sufficiency into their core funding proposals. The proposed Steering Committee would go some way to satisfying the governance requirement. The second is addressed below.

A Trust Fund Financing Arrangement?

5.32. A useful consultancy was commissioned from a legal firm on the legal issues around autonomous governance (the report of *Gaisie Zwennes Hughes & Co, Legal Practitioners and Notaries Public*, of 21 January 2005). It would appear that a trust fund arrangement (in the form of an 'incorporated trust') would be feasible in the local context for the future legal management of G-RAP funds. Continuance of the current governance structure would also be possible, provided that the Advisory Board exerted an advisory function on behalf of the beneficiaries, in a non-binding consultative arrangement with the Trustees (Zwennes' Report, p.11). Under such an arrangement, the Project Management Team would act on the basis of a purely administrative management contract to be awarded by DFID (or presumably another donor) on behalf of the Trustees (Zwennes' Report, p.10).

5.33. Whilst an incorporated trust arrangement might have considerable appeal to the four development partners, the latter would need to resolve any outstanding issues on the pooled funding arrangement before they move to a joint trust fund stage.

5.34. Differing financing arrangements are possible for trust funds in the development field. Some are highly capitalised and live off the interest raised. Such arrangements may require concessions of a political nature by the sponsoring government (for example, regarding off-shore investments by the trust), and they would normally demand considerable confidence as to the long-term viability of the programme that the trust is expected to support. Alternatively (as in the World Bank model), the trust fund may live off its capital, with the implication that, when the capital runs out, the 'project' closes down. The latter arrangement may be the more appropriate to the G-RAP situation.

5.35. In the present circumstances, it would seem advised to continue with the present basket fund arrangement, in the shorter term, ensuring that this is working effectively with the four existing donors before investing in a trust fund arrangement to manage the future development of a programme the value of which is still uncertain. The fundamental requirement for 'proof of effectiveness' of a basket funding arrangement would seem to be that the PMT confronts only one set of interests and procedures at the donor level. Once this is achieved, then the move to a trust fund would seem relatively straightforward. It would, however, imply a sole formal governance authority, *per* Para 5.32 above.

- 5.36. The question of legal status is separate from the issue of composition of the Trustees. The Zwennes Report would not appear to preclude nomination of non-donors or diplomats as trustees by the Settlers of the Trust. The MTR would favour a broadening of participation in governance, beyond the present 4+1 arrangement, per Paras 5.18 and 5.19 above.

Administrative matters, technical and financial

- 5.37. Regarding *RAO selection*, the MTR recommends:
- a) Greater clarity and precision in the requirements for participating RAOs and the grants on offer. Eligibility criteria for beneficiaries need to be defined precisely, so that RAOs know when they are or are not eligible. Eligibility should be on an all or nothing basis.
 - b) Equally, the size of awards should be clarified and the rules streamlined.
 - c) Greater transparency in the written information provided on grant awards, including reasons for refusal or for making awards other than those requested.
- 5.38. Regarding steps already taken:
- a) The MTR team strongly supports the decision taken to de-link research from advocacy. Attention should rather be focused on building synergies between the two (again, this supports an existing trend).
 - b) The decision to abandon the \$400,000 funding threshold is also endorsed. While the PMT does need to have some notion of a funding threshold (both to control its external relations and workload, and to maintain a distance from RAVI and the sister agencies), the complexity of the funding milieu does not encourage this level of precision.
- 5.39. There are a number of aspects of the present administrative arrangements that appear to pose particular problems for the PMT. Three issues of particular concern to it are:
- ⇒ The variability in the size of the tranching disbursements made to recipients of Core funding by the RAOs. At present, it would appear that RAOs are free to request variable disbursements where this would suit their needs (provided the total allocation is in line with the grant award).
 - ⇒ The delays in the transfer of funds from the participating donors;
 - ⇒ The grant making rhythm is presently out of sync with the calendar year, which most RAOs use for their planning and budgeting cycles.
- 5.40. While the administrative arrangements do need to retain a degree of flexibility, the MTR can well believe that the system of variable disbursements is over-demanding of limited PMT resources, and recommends that disbursements be standardized henceforth.
- 5.41. Likewise, there would be evident merit in harmonizing the G-RAP grant cycle with the planning cycle of the recipient RAOs.

5.42. The MTR team is rather puzzled as to why such issues are not proving easier to resolve. Should the above issues be symptomatic of a wider problem with the PMT mandate, then the MTR would recommend a re-examination of this as a matter of priority.

5.43. *Joint Programme Memorandum*: this needs to be revised, to remove the ambiguities in the present document, and provide more effective guidance to the PMT on the objectives of G-RAP, and their operational implications.

5.44. Summary of these recommendations indicating the category of stakeholder with lead responsibility is provided in *Table One*.

Table One: Summary of recommendations by category:

Action	Lead Responsibility	Suggested completion dates	Section of Report
1. Focus dialogue with RAOs on policy engagement (information/influence)	PMT	immediate	5.9, 5.10
2. Wind down supply led ICB programme	PMT	immediate	5.12
3. Clarify feedback arrangements to grant applicants (successful/failed)	PMT	One month in advance of next funding round	5.37
4. Finalise arrangements for simplified reporting (financial and technical) in line with core funding philosophy	FC & PMT	Within 3 months	5.10, 5.11, 5.24
5: Draw on consultancy input to advise on how best gender can be mainstreamed into G-RAP as a core grant making facility	FC&PMT	Within 3 months	5.30
6. Review funding proposals with a view to introducing new funding bands, and implement as appropriate.	FC/AB	By end of Phase 1	5.9, 5.11
7. Review proposal for SPF, and implement as appropriate.	FC/AB	By end of Phase 1	5.9, 5.13
8. Clarify governance requirements for Incorporated Trust with GZH	FC	Within 3 months	5.32-5.36
9. Agree new single governance authority (SC) – structure	FC with AB	Within 6 months	5.16-5.22
10. Agree ToRs for membership of new single governance authority (SC)	FC with AB	Within 6 months	5.16-5.22
11. Propose candidates for SC	AB & RAOs	By end of Phase 1	5.16-5.22
12. Simplify grant payment schedules and agree with AB	PMT	Within 1 month	5.39-5.42
13. Revise and clarify JPM	FC	Within 6 months	5.43
14. M & E Review	PMT then FC/AB	Within 3 months	5.23-5.25
15. Logframe review	PMT then FC/AB	Within 3 months	5.26-5.27

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 In summary, G-RAP is evolving in positive directions but would benefit from further refinement and rationalisation of its aims.
- 6.2 The MTR Review would advise that G-RAP continues to move, with growing speed, towards a more demand-led approach. As the G-RAP concept makes clear, the RAO community in Ghana is already developing well under its own steam, and G-RAP provides an opportunity to support and strengthen this autonomous development.
- 6.3 In governance terms, the MTR advises a simplification of structures and procedures, signalling a greater willingness to free up the management arrangements from donor and PMT control. A more independent management model needs to be constructed and tested, with a view to establishing a more self-sufficient governance model.
- 6.4 The strengths of G-RAP lie in its innovative approach to core funding, which complements and should reinforce other elements of the new aid architecture, including multi-donor budgetary support. It needs to be remembered that, at the end of the day, it is in these terms that the success of the programme is likely to be judged.

7 ANNEXES

- 7.1 Annex A: TAKING STOCK OF THE CORE FUNDING APPROACH
- 7.2 Annex B: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE MID-TERM REVIEW
- 7.3 Annex C: LIST OF PERSONS MET
- 7.4 Annex D: AIDE MEMOIRE (19 OCTOBER 2006)
- 7.5 Annex E: APPRECIATIVE STATEMENTS MADE BY
INTERVIEWEES CONCERNING THE G-RAP
PROGRAMME
- 7.6 Annex F: OUTLINE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE
PROPOSED STEERING COMMITTEE

ANNEX A:

TAKING STOCK OF THE CORE FUNDING APPROACH

This Annex reviews the underlying concept of core funding, and its implications in a number of areas that are critical to the future profile of G-RAP. The accent is both on the general features of a core funding window, and the specific needs of G-RAP.

The annex is in four sections:

- A.1 *The nature of 'core funding'*
 - A.2 *The nature of the core grant relationship and the issue of fiduciary risk*
 - A.3 *Some cross-cutting issues*
 - 3.1 The meaning of 'ownership' of G-RAP
 - 3.2 Gender and related issues
 - 3.3 When is CB required?
 - 3.4 Institutional capacity building:
 - 3.5 Monitoring and evaluation
 - 3.6 The G-RAP Logical Framework
 - A.4 *The pooled funding approach*
-

A.1 *The nature of 'core funding'*¹⁶

5.31. The essence of a core funding arrangement is to allow flexibility to RAOs in which the Programme has confidence to pursue their own agendas with commitment. Having agreed their objectives with G-RAP, they then have considerable freedom as to how to deliver them. Core funding puts the recipient RAO in the driving seat, and it must take authority for defining its objectives and indicators, and monitoring progress towards their achievement.

5.32. That said, there is value in having some degree of focus to the work that each partner undertakes. There are several reasons for this:

- a. The contributing donors have not offered a blank cheque to the grantees, and within reasonable limits, are justified in asking them to focus on areas of strategic priority to their development assistance interests. Objectives relating to the new aid architecture, and its commitment to the interests and welfare of the poor, are of this type. This focus – signalling areas of major strategic concern - is one of the factors that might reasonably be taken into account when assessing the various proposals for funding.
- b. Such a focus may also be of help to grantees, in that it encourages them to focus (at least in part) on areas of international interest and priority. As, under a core funding approach, it is basically up to the RAOs to define their objectives and monitor progress towards their achievement, the agenda has to be agreed prior to the funding decision being taken.

¹⁶ At the RAO feedback meeting held at the ILGS on 17 October, several RAO participants indicated their lack of understanding of the meaning of 'core funding' and requested that the MTR team reflect on this issue. This section addresses this need.

- c. Such a focus also helps to form a common dialogue between the parties, and encourages trust between them.
 - d. Clearly, such a framework has to be applied flexibly, if it is not to become a narrow straightjacket or set of 'conditionalities'. Among other things, it needs to be applied in a way that puts an emphasis on outputs and outcomes rather than activities, and which respects the autonomous trajectory of the beneficiary RAO.
 - e. RAOs would be wise to avoid seeking to use G-RAP funds merely to supplement existing projects, or to fund simple projects for which they have been unable to find funding elsewhere. The essence of G-RAP is to support the strategic development of its partners, not to provide one-off funding for no-hope projects which have not found funding because of their lack of merit. Such ideas should be weeded out at the selection stage.
- 5.33. Thus, prospective RAO partners need to ask what incremental benefits they might gain from G-RAP funding, over and above their normal activities. These might include:
- i. Investments of time and money in work which seeks to reposition the organisation in the market place, and better handle emergent themes in the policy arena;¹⁷
 - ii. Investments which give extra value to a range of existing and successful projects – for example, publications series which cross-cut funded projects, address a broad-based readership and which would increase the reputation of the organisation in its market area.
 - iii. Activities which are essential to achieving solid outcomes, but which are difficult to fund in the existing RAO business models (for example, time-consuming field research in remote rural areas, to ensure that advocacy positions actually reflect local interests).
 - iv. Assessments of research and advocacy activities which cross-cut the major projects, where there is often a tendency to cut corners, to the detriment of quality; for example internal and external peer reviews of proposed advocacy campaigns to ensure that these are not only attractive to the public but economically and socially sound (the NGO campaign to promote consumption of local rice may provide a useful case study here).
 - v. Systems development (administrative, management, research management) of types that are already familiar in the G-RAP programme; the essential requirement here is that the activities in question respond to real demand, and are not treated merely as hurdles to be surmounted on the obstacle course to secure core funding.
 - vi. Ability to undertake unanticipated advocacy activities, responding to external events to promote the RAO's own findings and interests.

¹⁷ Knowledge-intensive topics such as climate change and its implications of the poor commend themselves in this regard; likewise research on the new aid architecture.

A.2 *The nature of the core grant relationship and the issue of fiduciary risk*

2.1 In a core funding arrangement, the nature of the relationship between funding authority (and its secretariat) and the grantee is essentially one of ensuring that the latter proves their worth in relation to the minimum management standards demanded by the authority, as regards both financial controls and basic competence. Once the grantee is 'certified' (in the sense of proving its conformity to the requisite standards), the influence of the funding authority is severely limited. The onus is very much on the grantee to identify its objectives, and then to monitor progress towards their achievement. The funding authority should not interfere excessively, and the process element should be firmly in the hands of the grantee. Effectively, it is left to the grantee to decide how their objectives will be reached. Thus, the basic sequence is:

- i. The authority assures itself (in line with its 'due diligence' requirements) that the grantee has the systems in place to manage its operations, and does not pose a fiduciary risk; the systems in place are very much the grantee's own systems, though they do need to show their compatibility with the standards set by the authority;
- ii. The grantee assures the authority that its objectives are broadly in line with the criteria set by the fund; in the present case, this would imply dialogue around the GPRS, and the aims of MDBS.
- iii. The grantee assures the authority that it can deliver on the objectives it has set for itself, at the requisite level of quality;
- iv. At appropriate stages in the process, the grantee and the authority come together to discuss progress towards the attainment of the objectives, where obstacles lie, and what other actions the funding authority or others might take to facilitate attainment of the objectives; however, the grantee decides on the process of delivery.
- v. A few key indicators may be set – again, the onus would be on the grantee to specify these - but they need to be kept to a minimum to avoid the risk of micro-management by the funding authority or its representative; part of the dialogue between the two parties would be on the level of attainment of the indicators, and any changes that would need to be made.

The basic approach is thus very 'hands-off'. A great deal depends on the confidence of the funding authority both in the managerial competence of the grantee, and in its ability to work towards the objectives it has set itself.

2.2 A problem area arises where the prospective grantee does not satisfy the minimal standards. In such a situation, a judgement has to be made as to whether it can rectify the deficiencies to the satisfaction of the authority. Clearly, beyond a certain tolerance, it is unlikely that an organisation that cannot satisfy the fiduciary requirements will be able to fully satisfy the technical ones. There is a place in such an arrangement for the provision of external advice and support, but the core funding approach offers limited possibilities. Organisations in need of capacity building may justify some projectized support from a programme such as RAVI, but they are unlikely to merit long-term core funding from G-RAP, which has rather different aims.

2.3 What distinguishes G-RAP experience to date from this model is the extent of intervention of the PMT in a wide range of management issues, going far beyond the fundamental fiduciary rules and the agreement of policy-relevant objectives. Workplans are often very detailed indeed, and highly projectized. The organisational assessment questionnaire, even in its reduced (second year) format covers a wide range of issues, many of which are only peripherally concerned (if at all) with the grantee's financial probity and ability to achieve its policy objectives.¹⁸ Organisational assessments have often been followed up by demanding organisational capacity building programmes, as a precursor of or adjunct to core funding support.

The MTR advocates a more proportionate approach to management assessment, with a clearer focus on G-RAP's actual policy objectives. It is recognised that this is likely to involve assessments of professional competence and delivery which go beyond the capacities of the PMT. The solution lies in establishing workable peer review arrangements, rather than recourse to complex and in-depth OD assessments, of doubtful relevance to the tasks in hand.

2.4 *Mitigation of fiduciary risk* is likely to imply not only strict requirements as to minimum financial standards and a strong emphasis on self-reporting by beneficiary RAOs, but also effective coordination between funders. This should be based on a willingness of participating RAOs to reveal their other funding sources, and to accept the need for close harmonisation between their donors. A move towards a donor round table system may be indicated.¹⁹

¹⁸ For example, The Organisational Assessment covers 51 performance measures in 12 areas of assessment. The re-assessment template for ICB grants (second round) includes 37 questions in 8 areas, including the following:

- Managers have analytic skills & are oriented toward finding solutions to problems rather than toward exercising authority by applying rules and regulations.
- A probationary period for newly hired personnel--usually three months--emphasises that effective performance is expected. A full review at the end of this period, followed by dismissal when individuals fail, emphasis at induction that probationary period needs to be taken seriously.
- Leadership: Viewed as outstanding "people person"; uses diversity of communication styles including charisma to inspire others & achieve impact; continually self-aware; continual self improvement; contagiously energetic; lives the organisation's vision; articulates path to achieving vision so that others see where they are going; establishes win-win relationships; guides organisation to succeed simultaneously in dual mission of social impact and optimal financial efficiency; builds systems for smooth transition to any new leader.

¹⁹ At least one of the RAO representatives interviewed questioned the validity of this, suggesting that it smacked of neo-colonialism; it would seem to the review team to be a necessary requirement in a situation where grantees are being offered largely un-earmarked funds in areas where they are already heavily supported by other donors; the suggestion makes no presumptions as to the probity or otherwise of any particular organisation, and the requirement would be imposed across the board. It would be applied equally to all grantees regardless of their legal status, international or national.

A.3 Some cross-cutting issues

A.3.1 The meaning of 'ownership' of G-RAP

- 3.1.1 The MTR is asked to comment on the 'level of ownership' of the programme by its stakeholders. The circumstances in which the G-RAP programme was designed led to a strong emphasis on RAO ownership, and this notion is very current in the thinking of the PMT. Involvement of two elected RAO representatives on the Advisory Board, for example, is seen as indicative of an element of RAO ownership. The emphasis on ICB has also been presented to the MTR Review as necessitating RAO 'ownership' - not just of their OD processes, but also, it would appear, of the G-RAP programme at large. Discussions around the issue of donor exit strategy, and the possibility of a new institutional arrangement to take forward the programme under a trust fund arrangement, are also giving currency to the concept of ownership.
- 3.1.2 The notion of 'ownership' is evidently open to interpretation.²⁰ It would seem inappropriate to interpret it too literally, particularly with regard to beneficiaries, as this would smack of an elite club of participating RAOs who not only benefit from its effects but also govern its direction. It is difficult to see how a joint programme of fund management by the RAO community could be taken forward, given the lack of a clear boundary around this community, and the need also to avoid conflicts of interest in the financing and management of a programme. 'Ownership' of the programme by the RAO community, in the full sense of the term, would only be feasible if this community was self-defined and regulated, and if an appropriate mechanism existed to expand the membership, vetting new RAOs for their professional competence, and their qualifications to join the community. The RAO community, thus clearly defined, would also need to exert a high degree of discretion over G-RAP finances. Good governance considerations would argue against allowing for a high level of self-management by an existing group of RAOs, speaking on behalf of an amorphous category of RAOs, still in flux and formation. It must also be wondered whether the degree of control that donors would be willing to surrender in a context such as this would ever really constitute a transfer of 'ownership'.
- 3.1.3 More realistically, the essential requirement of G-RAP, *qua* financing mechanism, would appear to be that it is useful to beneficiary RAOs, not that they should 'own' it.
- 3.1.4 A common-sense interpretation would argue that what the participating RAOs *do* need to 'own' is not the financing mechanism but rather the work that they undertake with its finances. The essential requirement is that G-RAP fits in well with and supports their trajectory and dynamics, and contributes to their growth

²⁰ The 'Investors in People' Standard defines it thus: 'This means people playing a greater role in the success of the organisation, and be willing to own a decision and be accountable for its outcome'. Clearly, the type of organisation that the IIP Standard has in mind is not a funding programme. (See: <http://www.iipuk.co.uk/NR/rdonlyres/enfug6nnctfct3dtfjvzxjf4abh4tub3erbitm5ovewlsmbrtu53f2e4l pce6vjijsxsxzc7hv4ucmn/Overview1.pdf>)

as research and/or advocacy organisations – in short, that it supports RAO *autonomy*.

3.1.5 Viewed from this perspective it must be wondered whether the effect of the approach taken to date has not been somewhat antithetical to these aims, particularly in the early days. This is reflected, *inter alia*, in the heavy reliance on ICB grants as an almost obligatory means to promote organizational development (something close to a 'conditionality')²¹, and the initially rather supply-side approach to networking.

3.1.6 The letter of rejection of the offer of ICB funds by the gender network, NETRIGHT, is illuminating in this context:

'We are also very concerned by the PMT's attempts to use the promise of capacity building support to force a number of women's organisations into so-called strategic partnerships. We do not believe that the PMT has the mandate to re-engineer the women's NGO landscape.' (Letter of 18/1/05 from *Netright* to the PMT).

It is noted that the PMT is now much more careful not to appear to pre-empt RAO interests, nor to force them into unwanted alliances, and this development is strongly endorsed by the MTR.

3.1.7 The proposed governance reforms are intended to clarify this issue of ownership and also to broaden the mechanisms of RAO participation in the definition of G-RAP goals and strategic development.

3.1.8

A.3.2 *Gender and related issues*

3.2.1 Gender issues – particularly women's rights – have been a major source of controversy and contention in programme development. For gender RAOs and networks, the initial funding restrictions were unfortunate (though unintentional) and mobilised strong opposition from this group.

3.2.2 At the same time, while all donors are committed to mainstreaming gender into G-RAP, there is no consensus as yet as to how best this can be done. Some have come close to requiring gender mainstreaming as a fundamental criterion for receipt of its financing, seeing it as near to a 'conditionality' both to the programme and its management.²²

3.2.3 It is noted that RAO respondents were generally in favour of an approach which would reward gender awareness and sensitivity in appropriate situations, and put gendered proposals at a competitive advantage, but not impose these as conditionalities. This position is endorsed by the MTR review. The MTR

²¹ G-RAP documents speak of an 'approach of coaching partnership', using 'G-RAP's process coaches', SNV and IBIS, to develop appropriate processes in the partner RAOs. See, for example, the G-RAP website:

(<http://www.g-ap.org/index.php?choice=types%20of%20grants>)

²² See, for example, 'G-RAP – A Gender Blind Initiative', paper tabled at the FC Meeting of 15 December 2005.

therefore supports the current position that gender appraisal should be integral to the assessment of proposal, and one of the aspects which would lead to a favourable assessment, but not an absolute criterion. A consultancy is proposed to develop this thinking further.

- 3.2.4 A gender consultancy was undertaken in 2005-6, and this provides a number of other practical recommendations, relating variously to programme design, capacity strengthening, programme monitoring, and programme governance ('*Gender Analysis of G-RAP*' by Dr. Agnes Atia Apusegah, March 2006). This report has a strong focus on the engendered nature of poverty in Ghana ('the feminisation of poverty') and on working towards positive gender outcomes, with which the approach advocated by the MTR should be compatible.
- 3.2.5 Taking a broader view (beyond gender alone), there may be value in treating the gender issue as an example of a wider principle. There are other interests that are presently marginalised – for example, disability – which would also merit serious concern, but for which there is no apparent momentum.
- 3.2.6 All this speaks of a need not just to address gender and women's interests, but to put in place structures which increase the legitimacy and authority of the G-RAP funding mechanism more broadly. The MTR would see the failure to address gender issues in the early stages as, at least to some extent, a problem of the excessively 'supply-side' orientation of the programme, particularly in 2004/5. A more demand-led orientation would thus also be valuable in this regard.

A.3.3 *When is CB required?*

- 3.3.1 There is an assumption that where there are observable weaknesses in an organisation, these will be addressed when the organisation undertakes an organisational assessment leading to a coherent development plan. The consequences of the context within which these weaknesses are identified are often underplayed. An all important condition - the need and willingness to change within the organisation - is often not given serious consideration. It is difficult to determine the willingness to change when it is induced by the promise of resources. And when there is insufficient internal pressure for organisational reform, organisational change programmes are likely to be sustained only as far as they deliver the promised resources. A more demand-driven and internally managed OD change programme which is not linked to promised resource flows is more likely to be sustained.
- 3.3.2 The current preoccupation with OD also appears to confuse three separate constituencies (which were not well differentiated in the original JPM):
 - a. Organisations which merit immediate award of core funding.
 - b. Organisations that would do so where they to meet the key requirements (financial systems to mitigate fiduciary risk and/or funding threshold).
 - c. Organisations which are not operating in a way that would merit core funding or TA, and whose problems go beyond specific and easily resolvable deficiencies.

- 3.3.2 OD training may be relevant to the needs of category [c], but it is unlikely to be required for categories [a] and [b].
- 3.3.3 As noted above (Para 5.4), the MTR would advise against use of OD on a supply-led basis. Among other things, this change of emphasis would encourage an opening up of dialogue on both the underlying challenges and the methodologies for RAO development. It is not necessarily the case that organisational dynamics are the major issue confronting the RAOs, nor that OD provides the best route to address the actual challenges.
- 3.3.4 There could well be circumstances in which an RAO would value an OD approach, however. The important criterion is that this should be fully demand led, and completely de-linked from any wider funding decisions.

A.3.4 Institutional capacity building

- 3.4.1 In G-RAP parlance, this relates to networking, and to the stated intention of the programme to reinforce inter-RAO interaction and solidarity. The MTR concurs with the view of the PMT that coalitions between RAOs are likely to be an important route to strong advocacy. Coalitions and networks operate best when urgent concerns galvanise different organisations to channel their individual initiatives through joint action. By their nature they wax and wane according to the pressures around the issue in hand. They are often easy to form but difficult to sustain. They are the organisational form most prone to high 'infant mortality' or stunted growth.
- 3.4.2 However, the ability of an externally funded programme such as G-RAP to predict and direct coalition building is likely to be very slight. On the one hand, not all RAOs are likely to want to network together (they often have quite different interests). On the other, where they do then they are likely to be best placed to decide how they want to network and for what purposes.
- 3.4.3 Some RAOs are natural competitors – in which case two dangers arise:
- The danger of forcing RAOs into unhealthy and unrewarding collaboration, where a more productive strategy would be to fund one organisation on a 'winner takes all' basis;
 - The danger of disrupting markets for services where alternative providers are already competing effectively.
- 3.4.4 The important question to be asked about collaboration, partnerships and networking concerns the value added by the relationship. Effective partnership, for example, seems more likely to come from RAOs with complementary skills choosing to come together than from trying to force alliances between RAOs with similar skills.
- 3.4.5 While the RAO/government interface is clearly an important one, other interfaces may take priority. One of these is the research/advocacy interface. G-RAP's experience underlines the importance of allowing RAOs to develop the skills and attitudes that are most important to them, without forcing them into activities

(advocacy by research organisations, or research by advocacy groups) which are inappropriate to their interests and future development.

- 3.4.6 Other important interfaces include the NGO/broader civil society interface and the class interface between middle class NGO interpreters of local interests and the underlying working class and rural interests themselves. Important questions still need to be posed regarding the ways in which rural interests figure in national discourse. These questions do not only concern RAOs, though they are highly pertinent to them.
- 3.4.7 Thus, as regards networking, there is little merit in promoting RAO networking for its own sake. What might be promoted by this funding mechanism is dialogue across the interfaces indicated above. Again, the role of G-RAP is to offer funding to support such dialogue, in response to perceived need of the wider stakeholder community (particularly the RAOs), and on the basis of a process of prioritisation. Primary responsibility for the institutional development of the sector should lie within the RAO community, responding to their own demands and perceived opportunities, and the PMT's role is to provide support. The Small Projects Facility should aid with this process, along with the associated 'Strategic issues meetings'.

A.3.5 *Monitoring and evaluation*

- 3.5.1 M & E of a core funding programme poses some problems, particularly as regards methodology. Policy influence is the major outcome anticipated by the development partners, but policy development is a complex process, heavily influenced by democratic governance, and policy influence cannot be delivered off the shelf. Equally, it is not always self-evident, even where it has occurred. In some instances, external influences are easily identified (as with major national media campaigns); in others, the process is more subtle, and influences are only evident in retrospect. In addition, governments are often resistant to the notion that their policies have been excessively influenced by others, and RAOs committed to their survival might be well-advised not to overstate their own importance even where they believe they have contributed significantly.
- 3.5.2 'Fungibility' is also an issue. For example, in the event that receipt of G-RAP core funding releases money to allow an RAO to undertake an activity that it would not otherwise have been in a position to undertake, which outputs should be used to judge the effectiveness of G-RAP – those that are claimed to be direct outputs of this funding, or the ancillary activities funded from the independent source? It could be argued that the latter is the more accurate standard by which to assess G-RAP's influence, as it would not have been possible without the G-RAP funds.
- 3.5.3 More practically, the limited influence of the PMT over the partner RAOs warns against linking the higher-level G-RAP indicators too strongly to PMT performance, as this might encourage an excessively interventionist approach.
- 3.5.4 G-RAP Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) has suffered from the ambiguities associated with the JPM. The JPM, in its M & E section, refers to two mechanisms – *Annual Reviews* and an external *Mid-term Review*. The former are to be commissioned by the Advisory Board and the latter by the Funders

Committee. The Annual Reviews are to review G-RAP structures, procedures and eligibility criteria as well as determine whether the balance of organisations funded is appropriate. They are also expected to assess the impact of G-RAP on the external policy environment and determine progress towards achieving G-RAP goals and objectives. The MTR, commissioned by the Funders Committee, is expected to assess progress against project goals and objectives, and to make proposals on an exit strategy, as well as to consider and advise on the introduction of project funding for non-core funded RAOs and the criteria upon which such decisions should be based. The relationship between the two mechanisms is not explained neither is the existence of two separate mechanisms justified. There is also no explanation as to why two quite demanding reviews, exploring similar issues, should be conducted 6 months apart from each other.

- 3.5.5 Nowhere in the JPM is there mention of the M & E systems of core-funded RAOs and the nature of the linkage, if at all, with G-RAP's own M & E.
- 3.5.6 Important efforts have been made by the PMT to address the weaknesses of M & E in the JPM. It has involved a revision of the log-frame and designing data gathering and reporting systems to respond to the needs of G-RAP's log-frame. At the beginning of 2005, important steps were initiated to develop a shared understanding of M & E in general and those for Research and Advocacy organisations in particular. Sustained input by an M & E consultant has involved, amongst others, providing advice on G-RAP's M & E and offering training on network analysis and the "Most Significant Change" (MSC) monitoring as a compliment to the more conventional log-frame indicator based M & E data collection processes. The MSC monitoring hopes to generate data relevant to G-RAP's goal statement whilst network analysis could respond to the log-frame's purpose level statements. The primary purpose of the M & E consultant's input has been to enable G-RAP obtain the information it requires to monitor progress against its log-frame
- 3.5.7 The M & E consultant has provided interesting insights into M & E and RAOs found the training interesting. The team did not however come across evidence to show that newly acquired skills have been mainstreamed into the respective RAOs routine and internal M & E and reporting systems.
- 3.5.8 The consultant has promoted the use of the 'most significant changes' approach. This appears as a useful monitoring device, though not necessarily the best way of demonstrating accountability, or of focusing discussions on the broad objectives set out in the 'pact' between G-RAP and an RAO.
- 3.5.9 Likewise, network mapping techniques have also been promoted by the consultant. These are visually interesting though they do not necessarily address the main challenges confronting the RAOs, which have more to do with quality of perceptions, understanding and influence than the density of networks. It is far from clear what benefits such mapping techniques offer the RAOs. In general, it might be wiser for most of them to adopt more literal and descriptive monitoring methods, setting out in plain terms how they intend to inform and influence policy, and then describing their successes and any obstacles they have encountered.

- 3.5.10 Given the apparently low uptake of these ideas, there is a need to rethink the role of M & E, and to move away from delivery of externally-generated M & E packages and methodologies. The effort should be on promoting a culture of regular M & E and learning within organisations. At the assessment stage, M & E should be an important area of interest to G-RAP. Organisations with well-developed M & E systems should have an advantage over others with poorly developed ones.
- 3.5.11 The 'social engineering' bias probably explains why RAOs' own internal M & E systems and processes do not feature significantly in G-RAP's assessment criteria for core funding. They do however feature in the more intensive organisational assessment process where RAOs' Performance Measurement and Performance Analysis & Programme Adjustments capabilities are explored. For example, eligibility for core funding focuses on RAOs' capacities in the following areas: Research & Advocacy; Impact; Finance; Collaboration; Non partisan; Strategy; and Capacity to change. The proposal Assessment Sheet (PAS), 'blue paper' and the Organisational Assessment overview sheets however include programme design, monitoring and evaluation in their assessment criteria. It is however not clear whether the latter refer to the M & E of specific initiatives funded by G-RAP or deals with how the organisations conduct their own M & E or promote regular internal organisational learning and change.

A.3.6 *The G-RAP Logical Framework*

- 3.6.1 G-RAP's M & E has suffered from the weaknesses inherent in the JPM and the 'social engineering' interpretation that has been subsequently been given to the programme. The latter has significantly shaped the construction of the log-frame, the basis for G-RAP's M & E. The log-frame currently has 9 purpose level statements, 4 of which relate to the performance of individual funded RAOs and the remainder dealing with changes in relationships between RAOs, and with others. The interventionist ethos of G-RAP is reflected in Purpose Level statement 1 which anticipates that RAOs who gain access to G-RAP grants will subsequently be able to gain better access to funding. This ethos is similarly reflected in Purpose level statements 5, 6, 7 which seek to shape the sort of relationships that funded RAOs enter into. Constructed as it is, the log-frame conveys a certain normative view on the direction of growth and change that funded RAOs are expected to take. The consequences of competition for resources among RAOs have been downplayed in favour of the benefits of co-operation, collaboration and networking. Furthermore, the possibility of research institutions producing research outcomes with contradictory policy implications has not been fully appreciated. Neither has the right of advocacy organisations to advocate for and defend opposing policy positions.
- 3.6.2 The above purpose level statements are reinforced by Output level statements 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 which put the onus on the PMT to ensure that purpose level objectives are achieved. Output 3, for instance, states that "*G-RAP provides Once-Off grants to RAOs to enable them to become eligible for core funding.*" A linear relationship between one-off grants and eligibility for core funding is assumed. Whilst the above purpose and output level statement allude to

normative changes which may indeed be desirable there is a danger that G-RAP may inadvertently undermine the ability of the RAOs community to shape its agenda and the nature of its relationships in the way it deems fit. In short a non-interventionist model which allows RAOs to grow and change in ways that they choose for themselves might well have been more appropriate. Whilst co-operation, collaboration and networking are useful, how they are undertaken can only be nurtured by making resources available on demand.

- 3.6.3 G-RAP's own M & E would be strengthened were it to collect and process data generated routinely by funded organisations themselves. Its log-frame purpose level statements should aim to reflect what organisations collectively seek to achieve for themselves. And its outputs should prioritise a smooth delivery of core funding as well as a strategic use of projectised funds.

A.4 *The Pooled funding approach*

- 4.1 There are good grounds to adopt a pooled funding approach in a situation such as this. Not only does it avoid the problems of multiple donor systems and requirements weighing heavily on national partners (*per* the Paris Accords), but it also offers a way of limiting the risk to donors in supporting policy development in potentially sensitive areas. A core funding arrangement allows relatively little control to donors over outcomes, though it is potentially damaging to them if they become inadvertently associated with any contentious views and proposals put forward by the RAOs they support. There are evident benefits in sharing the risks and responsibilities involved in supporting civil society, much in the same way that risks and responsibilities are shared over MDBS. At the same time, this allows for the donors to act in a more coherent way in their relations with their RAO partners.
- 4.2 The problems associated with the unrolling of a pooled funding approach in the G-RAP case are now well understood by all parties, and do not need to be dissected much further. They primarily concern the prescriptive requirements of the various separate donor systems, and their inflexibility in the face of what is a new orientation to project funding. While important progress has been made, it is clearly essential that the participating donors resolve any outstanding problems once and for all, if further strain and unacceptable costs are not to be placed on G-RAP, the PMT and the beneficiary RAOs.²³
- 4.3 Early experiences with this innovative programme are allowing some ground rules to emerge for pooled funding, which may be of value in other instances

²³ As an issue of relevance to any future programme design work in which the parties to this programme might be involved, consideration might be given to the circumstances in which a pooled funding mechanism is or is not indicated as the preferred financing instrument. For example, it might be questioned whether pooled funding is the most appropriate instrument where programme design is especially innovative and has to confront a significant number of unknowns; in such instances it may be more cost-effective to launch the programme with a single donor, and to bring in additional funders when the approach has proved its technical effectiveness, and is better placed to cope with uncertainties in financing rules and systems, and delays in the delivery of funding.

where donor harmonisation is being considered. The most important managerial principle is *equivalence of donor systems*. This appears as something close to an essential condition for the operation of a pooled fund. It implies that a grantee that satisfies the requirements of any one donor automatically satisfies the others.

- 4.4 Where donors have policies which impose specific conditionalities, then the suitability of a core funding approach needs to be carefully evaluated; core funding is unsuited to inflexible conditionalities. This would apply to any conditionalities or quasi-conditionalities. The only room for manoeuvre available to the donors in a core-funding approach would be at the negotiation stage, and in relation to the broad outlines of the programme. The proposed gender consultancy (which will look mechanisms for the prioritisation of gender in a way that falls short of full 'conditionality') may have wider value in this regard.

ANNEX B

FRAMEWORK FOR G-RAP MID-TERM REVIEW

Background

The Ghana Research and Advocacy Programme (G-RAP) is a pooled funding mechanism for supporting the institutional development of Research and Advocacy Organisations (RAOs) in Ghana. Ghana has a network of RAOs built up over the past decade, with a track record of carrying out evidence-based research in support of development policy and holding government to account for its policy choices and its use of public resources. However, the development of RAOs to date has been hampered by the short-term, projectised nature of their funding base. The intention of G-RAP is to offer multi-annual core funding to a group of the most established RAOs, selected on a competitive and needs-assessment basis, together with one-off grants and technical assistance to emerging RAOs.

DFID, DANIDA, the Royal Netherlands Embassy and CIDA have committed an total amount of US\$ 7 million to support G-RAP over five years. Additional donors (i.e. EU and WB) have expressed interest to join the facility in the future. The participating donors have developed G-RAP as a follow-up to their move towards a Multi-Donor Budgetary Support (MDBS) approach. MDBS entails greater reliance on government systems for policy making and resource allocation. To ensure that these systems deliver pro-poor policy, the participating donors recognise the need to strengthen and broaden the range of inputs into the policy process, in particular from civil society, based upon robust data and analysis.

G-RAP is led and managed by a Project Management Team (PMT) comprising of a full-time Team Leader, Programme Manager, Programme Administrator, and a part-time Institutional Development Specialist and Financial Management Systems Specialist. The PMT is contracted by the LTS led consortium in partnership with Ernst & Young Ghana. The PMT is the Secretariat to the Advisory Board and the Funders Committee (the two organs of oversight and decision making for G-RAP). G-RAP commenced on 31st August 2004 and the current phase ends on 31st August 2007 but could be renewed for two more years.

Rationale: As the initial three-year phase of the programme draws to a close, the Mid-Term Review will be an important exercise in giving various stakeholders a view of progress and a steer on what needs to be done differently. It will also inform future funding decisions of G-RAP Funding Partners. The evidence generated from this exercise will be a useful tool for negotiation between G-RAP Lead Advisers from funding agencies and their management. The output could also be a useful tool for marketing G-RAP to other prospective donors.

Timing: Timing is crucial here as some funders need to make decisions by the end of the year when they will be planning for 2007 and beyond.

Purpose of the Mid-Term Review

The overall purpose of this exercise is to review G-RAP progress over the two year period and the prospects of achieving its objectives within the timeframe. A caveat to this

is the fact that it took about six months or more to clear administrative issues and for grants to start flowing to RAOs. The review will mirror the outputs against the purpose and overall goal, specifically with respect to its purpose to increase autonomy of RAOs, build institutional capacity and political space for RAOs to secure pro-poor change. It will look at the original conception of G-RAP and against current practice (i.e. what was G-RAP meant to be and what it is now) drawing out the points of departure, implementation challenges and establishing what needs to be modified.

The review should identify successes, challenges as well as lessons and should come up with clear recommendations to inform programme development with emphasis on the systems and modalities employed, the innovative character and its inherent challenges vis-à-vis ownership, funding and management. The recommendations will include suggestions on what should be done differently up to the end of the three-year phase in August 2007 and beyond.

Suggested Framework

The Mid-Term Review will examine:

- a) **G-RAP design and structural issues:** This should include but not limited to a review of the practicality of the design, funding mechanism and governance structures. The latter should address issues relating to the current performance, original intentions and expected contribution of each structure to the G-RAP agenda and ascertain whether their current configuration and incentives are appropriate for the execution of their roles.
- b) **Purpose achievement:** Determine the extent to progress by reviewing outputs and outcomes against the G-RAP logical framework and establishing the likelihood of purpose achievement. This should also include a review of existing mechanisms for tracking progress.
- c) **The future G-RAP architecture:** Assess the level of ownership of the programme amongst stakeholders including their vision of the form and role of the programme in future. Review current efforts at securing legal status for the programme and draw out the implications for its future autonomy.
- d) **Lessons Learnt:** Draw out lessons from G-RAP with respect to implementation, funding, management and overall governance of the programme.
- e) **Recommendations:** Based on the lessons, emerging opportunities, trends and changes in the context –including risks (if any), provide concrete suggestions on what needs to be done to ensure that G-RAP meets its expectations for the first phase and beyond.

PLAN OF WORK

The MRT will be conducted by two consultants – one International (Lead Consultant) and one National Consultant. The international consultant will be responsible for identifying and sub-contracting the national consultant. Both consultants will work as a team and as such are responsible and accountable to the Client for providing a joint report. It will be the joint responsibility of the team, under the overall leadership of the

Lead Consultant, to agree on a common methodology, which will be made explicit in the MTR workplan.

The consultants will be expected to follow a participatory approach undertaking this MTR in order to include stakeholders and intended beneficiaries in the exercise to the fullest extent possible.

Methodology

The consultants will gather information from both primary and secondary sources using interviews and/or questionnaires or others targeting the following stakeholders:

- G-RAP grantees
- Interviews with Funding Partner representatives, Advisory Board members and PMT staff and consultants
- Prospective organizations (e.g. short-listed but not selected)
- Prospective donors (WB, EU ...)
- Upstream target beneficiaries (policymakers, legislators/parliamentarians)
- Downstream organization whose linkages with the RAOs could be enhanced through G-RAP
- Documentation research (quarterly reports, RAO reports, event reports, M&E reports)
- Funding mechanisms active in related domains (Sister Funds).

Deliverables

The Consultants has three primary deliverables. These include a workplan, Aide Memoire and a Review Report all of which should be written in English.

1. The workplan should be ready at the beginning of the fieldwork
2. The Aide Memoire should be ready at the de-briefing session at the end of the fieldwork
3. The draft Mid Term Review report should be ready one week after the fieldwork and
4. The final Mid Term Review Report should be ready 4 weeks after submission of the draft review report

The Review report should include but not limited to the following:

- Executive Summary (not more than 2 pages)
- Description of mandate
- Background and context
- Methodology used
- Analysis and findings
- Recommendations
- Conclusion
- Annexes containing supporting data.

Reporting and Results Sharing

- The consultants will debrief and present Aide Memoire to the Advisory Board, Funders Committee and RAOs immediately at the end of the Field Work.
- Circulate draft report to the same stakeholder groups for comments
- Submit final three hard copies and an electronic version of the final report to the Client.

Existing records

The expectations and key agreements on the programme have been documented in various sources which will provide useful background to the consultant. Some of the key documents are listed below and will be provided by the G-RAP Management Team but the consultant can also have access the G-RAP files kept by Donors.

- Joint Programme Memorandum, April 2004
- Revised Logical Framework, June 2005
- G-RAP Annual Report 2005 and 2006
- G-RAP Progress Reports and Quarterly Reports (narrative & financial)
- G-RAP M&E Reports (26/05/05 and 12/10/05)
- TOR for the G-RAP Management Agency (LTS)
- RAOs Narrative Progress Reports
- RAOs quarterly financial reports
- RAOs expression of interest and funding applications
- TORs for the G-RAP Management Agency (LTS)
- G-RAP website (<http://www.g-rap.org>)

The consultants might request access to other documents not listed here as they deem necessary and that will be provided (if available).

Level of effort for deliverables

The team will consist of one international lead consultant and one national consultant, each of them with their own time line, whereby the national consultant will provide more inputs upfront and where the international lead consultant will finalise the report at the end.

The Client will provide contact details of key people who should be interviewed but scheduling of activities including meetings is the responsibility of the consultant.

The Consultants will be responsible for submitting their work plan and work schedule. The total number of days required will be finalized during the contract negotiation period though, it is envisioned that the assignment would not take more than 25 working days.

Profile of National Consultant

- University Degree, minimum Masters degree in Social Sciences, Development Studies, Political Science or related field
- Knowledge and understanding of the Ghanaian civil society environment, as well as the donor community and the context for Citizen-Government Engagement in the country.
- Knowledge of governance, policy management, public sector reforms and the Government's priorities for poverty reduction and multi donor budget support mechanisms
- Experience in writing and preparing reports for donors
- Ability to work within tight timeframes and to deliver the final product within the said time