

## ANNEX 5: NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT

### Six-Month and Annual Reporting

version 50622

General information	
Name of the Organisation: Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER)	Contract Ref. No.:
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#### 1. What changes did you see in pro-poor government policies (in design, implementation or review)? How did such change come about and what is your interpretation of the changes?

The Government of Ghana has a three-pronged approach to managing the economy, namely:

- Macroeconomic stability
- Accelerated economic growth
- Significant poverty reduction

In pursuit of this approach, the strategy is to work through the second Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II), the institution of which marked the most significant manifestation of pro-poor policies in Ghana. To achieve this, the GPRS II has been assigned the following objectives:

- Sustain macroeconomic stability
- Accelerate private sector-led growth
- Deepen human capital development
- Good governance

This focus has been further reflected in the Medium Term Expenditure Framework of Government and the 2006 Budget. This new interest in pro-poor policies is also reflected by the reference to the Millennium Development Goals in all policy documents. All of these initiatives seek to quicken the pace of poverty reduction.

We note that in the 2006 budget, major allocations were been made to social sectors with a view to providing social safety nets. What is interesting about the current approach to fighting poverty is the recognition of the fact that without significant economic growth the reduction of poverty cannot be done on a sustained basis. This point is acknowledged in the GPRS II document and also in the 2006 budget. ISSER is glad to be associated with this development as is indeed acknowledged in the budget statement. The budget statement acknowledges the representations made to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning by civil society organizations, including ISSER. These have led to a far richer budget document than was previously the case.

Despite the improvements, there is a need for greater engagement on policy matters. There are macroeconomic policies that have significant implications for poor households, and which must be debated. An example of these will be the issue of inflation and how it affects different poor households and at the same time the implications of conservative monetary policies for longer term growth and development. ISSER has made several suggestions to Bank of Ghana on the possible options. It will continue to draw attention to the number of possibilities for achieving optimal outcomes, as indeed happened when ISSER worked with Merchant Bank and the Institute of Directors – Ghana to organize a Mid-Year Budget Review Seminar on 14 July 2006. The seminar provided an opportunity for a dispassionate assessment of economic performance in Ghana in the first half of the year. It suggested that economic performance in January to June 2006 has been somewhat positive but driven largely on the back of increased donor inflows.

## **2. Collaboration and networking**

### **2.1 Indicate changes or progress in your working relations with the Parliament, Government Services, MDDBS Partners, Donors, NDPC, District level Authorities or Services etc.**

ISSER is currently carrying out 18 research/consultancy assignments throughout Ghana. These are largely funded by donors through overseas universities, as well as Ghana Government agencies. The large increase in the number of projects from less than 10 five years ago to an average of 20 in the last three years is indication of the improvements in the relationship with funding agencies and users of our research.

One research project which reflects this changing relationship is the Land Policy Reform project. USAID is assisting ISSER with a grant of more than \$600,000 over three years to carry out research to support land tenure and land policy reform in Ghana. The overall objective of the research is to provide greater clarity and knowledge about the nature and problems of land tenure and administration in Ghana in order to assist policy makers and civil society groups in their deliberations about the direction and character that land tenure reforms in Ghana may take to create an enabling environment for national development.

The specific objectives of the project are to:

- Critically assess the problems of customary and statutory land tenure in Ghana.
- Identify and assess institutional and legal issues that affect land tenure in Ghana
- Assess how land tenure and administration affect land security and productivity in Ghana
- Assess the relationships between environmental issues and land tenure in Ghana
- Examine the politics of land tenure reform with special reference to land conflicts
- Assess the critical role of urban and rural land markets and non-market transactions in land tenure in Ghana.
- Identify which principles, approaches and mechanisms of land tenure reforms are best suited to Ghanaian conditions and can deliver tenure security and efficient and equitable land markets.
- Engage with and make recommendations to policy makers and civil society organisations based on the findings of research.

As part of this research project, ISSER has conducted a number of dissemination/advocacy workshops in all ten regions with active collaboration from the Regional Lands Commission offices and other public and private stakeholders. The survey work was carried out in over 40 districts throughout all the regions.

Our relations with other stakeholders are also improving in similar fashion. In the first half of this year ISSER executed contracts with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, The World Bank, Cornell University, UNU-World Institute for Development Economics Research, Millennium Challenge Corporation, UNDP, John Snow Inc., African Capacity Building Foundation and African Economic Research Consortium.

### **2.2 How has collaboration been strengthened (i.e. joint campaigns, collaboration, networking) with other RAOs / CSOs / CBOs?**

ISSER continues to work with other RAOs and CSOs. The main instrument used by ISSER to achieve the very positive outcome has been the creation of the Economy of Ghana Network. The Economy of Ghana Network (EGN) is a civil society organization embracing all persons with adequate training and interest in discussing issues relevant to the proper management of the economy of Ghana and to the country's socio-economic development. The network provides a platform for disseminating research findings and discussing their policy relevance.

It seeks to make easily accessible to a wider audience the findings of all the research being carried out on the socio-economic development of Ghana from the different parts of the globe. The network also seeks to engage all interested persons in policy debates and will provide additional material to public agencies to assist in enriching national policy making. It seeks to protect its independence from known political interest groups and therefore does not align itself with such groups even as it discusses issues of political interest. The Economy of Ghana Network is generally E-based. It uses this interactive website as the main platform for discussion among members. Members receive regular email updates on relevant research and socio-economic development policy matters. There are also electronically organized monthly seminars that discuss topical and relevant issues. The Network will organize an annual conference on the Economy of Ghana and disseminate the proceedings widely. It is proposed to establish an academic journal to serve as the main outlet for research on socio-economic development in the country, while producing easily readable research policy briefs. Most RAOs and relevant CSOs have EGN members. The website address is [www.egnghana.org](http://www.egnghana.org).

ISSER has also developed a close relationship with IDEG as the ISSER Director sits on the Advisory Panel of IDEG and the Executive Director of IDEG is a subject matter specialist for EGN.

### **2.3 How has the credibility and legitimacy of RAOs changed in the eyes of GoG and the Ghana public? How did such change come about and what is your interpretation of the changes?**

The credibility and legitimacy of several RAOs has improved in the eyes of government and the public as the analytic content of their output has improved. In the case of ISSER, the clearest indication of this is the acknowledgement in the last budget statement of the ISSER contribution. This was done for a number of RAOs as well. The growth of our credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of the Ghanaian public can be seen in several forms, including the growing number of invitations to research fellows to sit on boards of both public and private entities, the growing number of references to research from ISSER in policy debates, the number of requests from journalists for interviews. All senior fellows sit on at least one public board/committee, and this was not the case three years ago. Parliamentarians make constant reference to the ISSER Annual State of the Economy Report in debates on the floor of Parliament. The Director was interviewed on six occasions in the first half of the year for TV and Radio programmes on socio-economic development in Ghana. Other researchers at ISSER were also interviewed on five occasions for TV and Radio.

The change has come about as a result of the expansion in the scope of ISSER work which places a lot more emphasis on dissemination and advocacy. Since 2005, ISSER has pursued its advocacy programme with renewed zeal and vigour through extensive publications, media programmes, seminars, workshops, symposia and conferences. The aim has been to get closer to society with research results and expertise. This effort has been enhanced by a healthy collaboration between ISSER and Merchant Bank Ghana Ltd.

ISSER and Merchant Bank Ghana Ltd have had over six years of extremely useful collaboration, which until last year, had been focused on the organization of the annual "ISSER-Merchant Bank Economic Lectures". These lectures have attracted very capable and highly respected speakers. For each of the lectures the two institutions have agreed on an appropriate relevant theme and a speaker. While Merchant Bank has provided the funding, ISSER has had the responsibility of developing the terms of reference for the speaker, organizing the lecture and ensuring its publication. There have been seven excellent lectures and publications since the collaboration began.

In 2004 the two institutions agreed to expand the focus of the collaboration even further. For the first time, ISSER assembled a panel of economists to discuss the year's budget soon after it was presented to parliament. This new feature of the collaboration was repeated in 2005 and 2006. The collaboration was taken yet a step further with the institution of a new bi-weekly seminar series organized in Accra dubbed the ISSER-Merchant Bank Development Seminar Series. For 2006 the theme has been "Does Globalization Hurt or Enhance National Development? Ghana's Experience in the last Two Decades"

<b>3. 1 Output ranking on research and advocacy products and/or services delivered</b>				
<b>#</b>	<b>Outputs presented in submitted Workplan</b>	<b>Target groups that received or used the output delivered</b>	<b>Documents</b>	<b>Copy</b>
2	Staff salaries (including sessional workers)	All Staff receive a salary top-up. Aside from boosting staff morale the top-up has helped to attract 5 new research fellows in the last year; all of them with Ph.D. Applications for positions from qualified persons have increased by 120% since 2004.	Annual Report 2005 Audited Project Accounts 2005	Yes
1	Ph.D Training: There are currently 5 Principal Research Assistants and 1 Junior Research Fellow doing Ph.D outside. Two others will start Ph.D work in September 2006.	Principal Research Assistants (PRAs) and Junior Research Fellows are the main targets. Staff development is one of the most significant areas of engagement for a research institute. Plan is to have 15 new Ph.Ds over the next five years.	Annual Report 2005 Audited Project Accounts 2005	Yes
5	Advertising, publicity and recruitment and training materials  ISSER will organize a publications bazaar in September to showcase its publications to policy makers and civil society members, as well as the general public	Seminar and conference participants: ISSER is now able to advertise its training/seminar/workshop programmes regularly. More than €50 million has been spent on adverts and publicity since the beginning of the year. These have had the response of generating growing interest in ISSER activities. Public participation in the Development Seminar series averages 100 persons per seminar. Over 200 persons were registered for the Mid Year Budget Review seminar after considerable publicity.	Annual Report 2005 Audited Accounts 2005	Yes
3	Printing, design and photocopying	General public. ISSER has recently issued an annual report and 5 new publications.	Annual report 2005 Audited project accounts 2005	Yes
4	Equipment	ISSER has recently purchased a number of new computers and a new server to enhance internet access.	Audited project accounts	Yes
6	Development costs (Library)	ISSER is now able to regularly add to the stock of library materials, including subscription to new journals.	Audited project accounts 2005	Yes
7	Catering, venue hire accommodation etc	The general public benefits from the organization of workshops/seminars at hired venues.	Audited project accounts 2005	Yes
<b>3.2 Please explain the basis of the ranking; what criteria were you using for the ranking?</b>				
The ranking is based on the significance of the activity to ISSER's future productivity.				

<b>4. Organisation: evidence of <u>significant</u> progress / change / results in the following areas</b>
<b>4.1 Strategy, planning, decision making, knowledge management</b>
ISSER focuses on issues of equity and poverty reduction. Effort is made to generate a critical mass of knowledge that will back policy making. Staff development and expansion of research facilities, as well as improvements in the way we communicate our research reports to our various publics have been the major planks of current planning. Decisions continue to be made in a demonstrably transparent and democratic manner through the committee system. In May 2005 all staff went on a two-day retreat to strategize for achieving the objectives of the ISSER strategic plan. Knowledge developed or acquired by the institute is progressively processed, stored and systematised to ensure fast and reliable access by researchers, interested parties and the general public. Our website <a href="http://www.isser.org">www.isser.org</a> and the EGN website <a href="http://www.egnghana.org">www.egnghana.org</a> provide insight into activities at ISSER.
<b>4.2 Funding base development and financial management</b>
Our ability to attract funding from additional sources has improved. In the first half of 2006, total grants received totalled almost \$400,000 from some 9 projects. For the same period in 2005 only 80% of this amount was received. In view of the growing skill demands in the management of funds, account personnel have been assisted to participate in international training programmes.
<b>4.3 Recruitment, development and retention of staff; HR planning; incentives</b>
4 Research Fellows and a Publications Officer have been recruited since July 2005. The institute's staff development programme is progressing steadily. Three of the Principal Research Assistants gained admission into Ph.D programmes in 2005 and another two will start Ph.D in 2006. Two will receive considerable financial support from the G-RAP grant while the remainder use grants and fellowships arranged independently. ISSER pays all travel costs of Ph.D students. ISSER will hire three new PRAs in September to replace those either leaving for further studies or at the end of their contracts.
<b>4.4 Organisational structure, board, management team</b>
The organizational structure has not changed. The ISSER Management Committee has seen two new members appointed by the Faculty of Social Studies and the University of Ghana. The Internal Management Committee continues to meet monthly while the other statutory bodies, namely Advisory Board, Management Committee and Finance Board continue to meet once per semester. All scheduled meetings took place in the first half of the year and attendance was good.
<b>4.5 Marketing, public relations, communication</b>
ISSER has continued to attract considerable attention for its research and advocacy work. In the first half of 2006, the main activities marketed have been the Development Seminar Series and the Mid-Year Budget Review. Both activities attracted significant advertisement and patronage. The development seminars are reported in both the electronic and print media. In appointing a publications officer, ISSER now has a point-person for bridging the gap between researchers and the general public. He is required to establish a good relationship with the information industry and ensure that ISSER work and messages receive wide dissemination as well as feedback.
<b>5. Grant and report related issues</b>
<b>5.1 Details of any notable challenges or unexpected developments encountered during the reporting period. Indicate the reason for such change and what impact this could have on the execution of your original Annual Workplan as attached to the Grant contract.</b>
We did not experience any notable challenges or unexpected development during the period.
<b>5.2 Please indicate any issues you wish to raise relating to the Grant or to G-RAP management, monitoring or financial procedures.</b>
None at the moment
<b>5.3 Please indicate any aspects of this report which are confidential and should not be communicated beyond G-RAP without prior consent.</b>
None