

G-RAP Phase II Design Options Background Report for G-RAP Stakeholders Retreat

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G-RAP Phase II – Design Options

BACKGROUND REPORT FOR G-RAP STAKEHOLDERS RETREAT

1. BACKGROUND

The Ghana Research and Advocacy Programme (G-RAP) is a fund which supports the institutional development of Research and Advocacy Organizations (RAOs) in Ghana. It offers both core funding to qualifying RAOs, as well as one-off grants for networks and coalitions engaged in special advocacy projects. G-RAP is jointly funded by the British Department for International Development (DFID,) The Danish Embassy/DANIDA, the Royal Netherlands Embassy and the Canadian Agency for International Development (CIDA). Approximately 9 million US\$ has been committed for 2008 - 2010. Since March 2008, G-RAP has been managed by a new Programme Management Team (PMT) under CARE UK/CARE. The current phase of G-RAP is coming to an end in March 2010. Accordingly, on July 11th and 12th the key stakeholders in G-RAP, namely the PMT, donors, RAOs, and Programme Board will come together in Akosombo to discuss the process of designing the new phase of G-RAP.

In preparation for the meeting, the PMT contracted a consultant to gather the perspectives of the stakeholders on the next phase of G-RAP and based on this offer design options for discussion at the retreat. Between June 15th and July 1st, interviews were held with representatives of CARE (both in Ghana and the UK), representatives of the four donor agencies, the PMT, a member of the Programme Board and two RAO representatives.¹ The issues raised by stakeholders fall within four broad areas namely the purpose of G-RAP, the funding framework, the governance structure and programme funding for RAOs. A number of options are presented to address the issues in the next phase of G-RAP. While the Akosombo retreat will be an important space to critically discuss the issues, the design process, particularly the final evaluation of G-RAP and consultations with a broader set of stakeholders, will be essential for stakeholders to make the decisions on which options to take.

THE OBJECTIVES OF G-RAP: FOCUSING EXCLUSIVELY ON RAOS OR GOING BEYOND

¹ A full list of people interviewed is attached as Appendix 1.

The current log frame provides that the purpose of G-RAP is to strengthen RAOs in Ghana so that they are able to have better access to funding, attract capable staff, generate and effectively package high quality research and work better with other RAOs. Supporting RAOs is not an end in of itself, rather the goal is for Government to adopt and effectively implement pro-poor policies which will eventually reduce poverty, the supra goal. The purpose, therefore, represents the particular strategy or approach with which G-RAP has taken to influence Government policy making. The approach, which is focused on exclusively strengthening RAOs, is based on a number of assumptions set forth in the Programme Memorandum.²

They include:

- RAOs are available to increase the pool of information available to Government to make informed pro-poor policy choices;
- RAOs provide evaluation and feedback on existing policies and programmes;
- RAOs provide concrete information on the functioning of particular public institutions;
- RAOs contribute directly to the formulation of policy proposals;
- RAOs help to enhance the demand side of the policy process;
- RAOs will give voice to poor and marginalized groups;
- RAOs will develop links with community based organizations (CBOs);
- Additional mechanisms/funds will directly support CBOs and other NGOs which don't qualify as RAOs; and
- There is a willingness within government to take up information and ideas generated by RAOs.

The final evaluation of G-RAP will have to assess the extent to which these assumptions have held true and therefore the extent to which RAOs are contributing to Government formulation and implementation of pro-poor policies. Stakeholders interviewed raised a number of concerns about some of the assumptions noted above and therefore the impact of G-RAP RAOs on policy making in Ghana.

Supporting both Supply and Demand: One of the concerns raised about the assumptions in G-RAP is Government willingness to engage with and take up RAO policy demands. It is argued that by focusing only on the demand side, one cannot assume that Government will automatically become responsive to CSOs. Support also has to be provided to the supply side, namely Government, to engage with or take up the issues from CSOs. In the case of G-RAP II, one option would be to open up the support to Parliament, Local Government and Ministries, Departments or Agencies (MDAs). The support to these institutions would be focused on getting them to better engage with CSOs and be more responsive and accountable to the needs of the poor. Operationally, G-RAP would continue to have a civil society

² G-RAP Programme Memorandum at pgs. 2-8.

fund which is disbursed on a competitive basis to RAOs but would also have a separate window with specific initiatives targeted at these other institutions.

Another option would be to continue to limit G-RAP to RAOs but for the PMT or the funding donors, who have close and influential relationships with government, to play a brokering role between CSOs and Government. For example, increasingly a lot of policy discourse takes place within the Multi Donor Budget Support (MDBS) sector groups. If a RAO is conducting research or advocacy relevant to a particular sector, a donor who co-chairs the sector group with Government, could suggest inviting the RAO to present their findings. Currently many sectors have CSOs as regular members of the sector group thus invitation could extend to more regular participation in sector group meetings if appropriate.

Linkages with constituencies of the poor: Another concern raised by stakeholders is the predominance of RAOs in Accra without a strong constituency amongst the poor in rural areas. During the design of the first phase of G-RAP, the potential elitism of the Fund was recognized with the result that RAOs were encouraged to develop links with CBOs as part of coalitions for research and advocacy. Indeed the 6th purpose of G-RAP in the log frame is: “RAOs build up a strategic set of relationships with CBOs.” The extent to which this has happened will have to be determined by the final evaluation. The general impression, however, is that these links are weak and as a result the impact of G-RAP on the poor and the issues of concern to them is limited.

To strengthen the linkage between G-RAP and the poor in the second phase, one option is to open up the fund beyond RAOs to CBOs and district level organizations which work much more closely with communities. Opening up to these types of organizations, will have to be accompanied by significant support for capacity building in terms of institutional strengthening and policy engagement/ influencing skills.

Another option is to continue to limit support to RAOs but strengthen the linkages between G-RAP and RAVI which funds CBOs and district based organizations. For example, the fund managers of G-RAP and RAVI can work together to bring grantees working on the same issues to share experiences. These sessions would be well facilitated, focused on a particular theme or issues, and limited to the CSO grantees working directly on those issues. Attempts have been made to strengthen RAO's collaboration with others, some more successful than others. Lessons will have been learned from these experiences in the design of G-RAP II.

The preceding discussion only highlights some of the design options that may arise when one re-examines the approach taken or purpose of G-RAP. The evaluation will provide useful feedback on the extent to which the strategic approach taken in

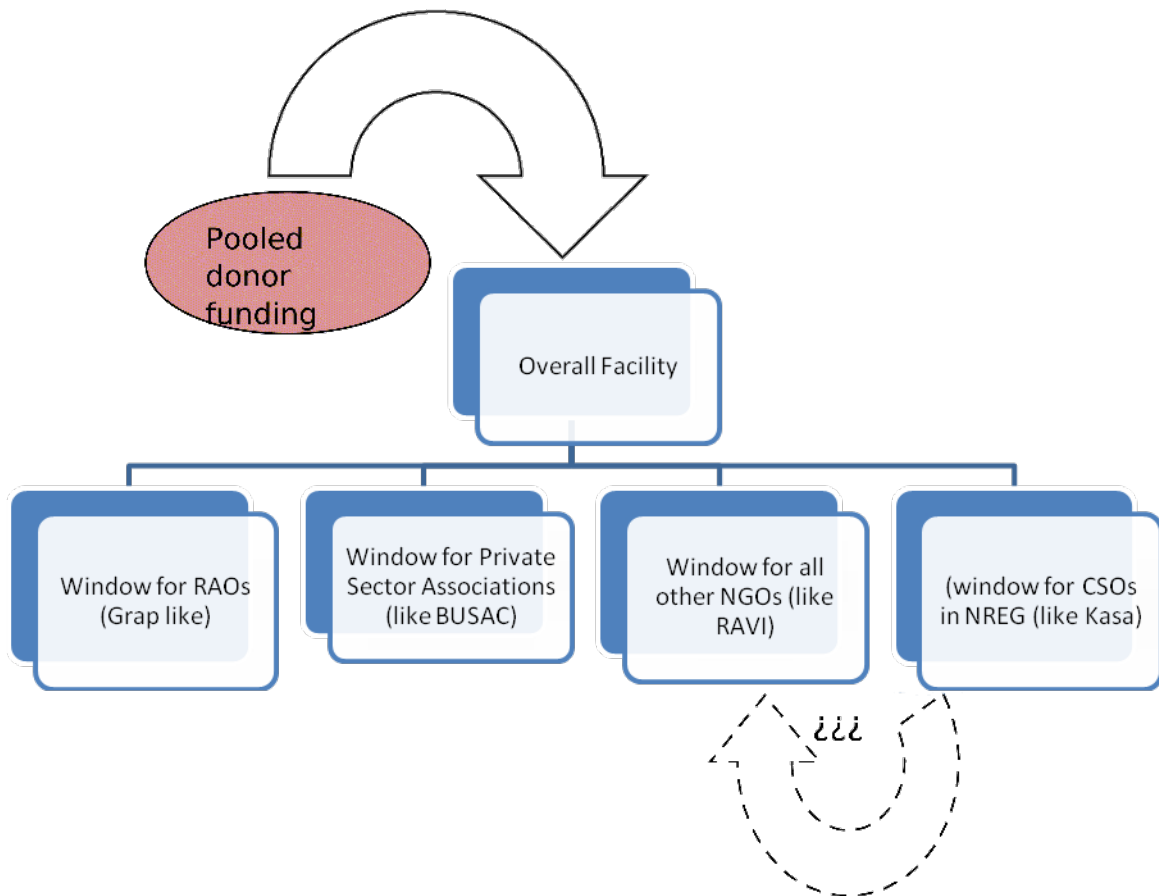
Phase I to focus exclusively on RAOs has contributed to the desired impact on pro-poor policies. As part of the design process, other options should be presented to strengthen the ability of G-RAP to achieve its ultimate goal.

THE FUNDING FRAMEWORK

Another issue raised, primarily by funding stakeholders, is the number of funds for CSO advocacy operating in Ghana. Currently there are four main funding mechanisms for CSO advocacy:

- RAVI – funds CSOs at all levels (national, district, community) engaging with government on rights issues; currently funded by DFID only, but possibilities of CIDA and the European Union (EU) joining in the next phase in 2010.
- KASA (Twi word for speak) – project supporting CSOs and media organizations to advocate for equitable access, accountability and transparency in natural resources and environmental governance; currently funded by the Dutch Embassy.
- The Business Sector Advocacy Challenge Fund (BUSAC) – supports the private sector, including business membership organizations, trades unions and media, to influence public policy formulation through research and advocacy; currently funded by DFID, DANIDA and the US Agency for International Development (USAID); and
- GRAP.

From a funding perspective, one option is to put money into the separate funds, each with its own management costs or another option is to put money into one fund within different windows for each of the existing funds as the following diagram indicates:



Stakeholders have made arguments for both options. Civil society stakeholders have argued for the first Option as they are keen to ensure that there is a diversity of funds from which they can access resources. They state that if one facility has control over all funding for CSO advocacy in the country, it is more vulnerable to political interference. There is also a concern that even though there will be windows for different types of NGOs, the tendency will increasingly be to use a one size fits all approach. On the other hand, some donors argue that in addition to minimizing transactional costs, having one facility ensures that there are better linkages between the grantees of the different funding windows, which can in turn lead to a larger impact rather than the islands of success currently seen. Ultimately, to determine whether or not the single facility model is something that G-RAP stakeholders want to work towards, during the design process, in-depth analysis should be conducted to better understand the potential risks and benefits. In addition, during G-RAP II, efforts to strengthen the linkages between the funds should continue. This should not only include attempts to bring the grantees together as was described earlier but should also include more collaboration in fund management.

GOVERNANCE

On the whole the stakeholders interviewed stated that they appreciated the current governance structure and assuming the purpose of G-RAP remained the same, would want to maintain this framework. The current structure, which was put in place after a governance review of G-RAP towards the end of 2007, consists of:

- A Programme Board which provides overall management and strategic direction;
- A funders committee which provides programme funding;
- A grants selection sub-committee which selects grantees from applicants to each call for proposals; and
- the PMT which serves as the G-RAP secretariat.

One issue of concern raised, however, is the absence of the Service Provider, in this case, CARE, from decision making on the Programme Board. Currently, the Programme Board is comprised of a representative of the donors, 2 RAO representatives, 2 Eminent Ghanaians and 2 members of Parliament. The PMT serves as Secretary to the Board and thus attends Board meetings but does not participate in decision making.

The absence of the Service Provider on the Programme Board has been explained by the fact that the latter serves as an executive board that holds the Service Provider accountable through the PMT. In this respect, the Service Provider cannot also make decisions on the same Board that is holding it accountable. The difficulty for the Service Provider, however, is that even though it is not part of decision making, it is ultimately accountable because it holds the contract with the donor (in this case DFID). The risk for the provider is that decisions may be made by the Board that may compromise its ability to meet its accountability to DFID.

During design a number of options may be explored to address this issue. The first option would be to keep the status quo but explore ways to ensure that the Service Provider's accountability to the donor cannot be undermined by a decision of the Board. The second option is to include a senior member of the Service Provider on the Programme Board but ensure that its role on the Board does not take away the local ownership that has universally valued. A third option, which is more relevant for the long term rather than the short term, is to explore registering G-RAP as an NGO or a Trust. G-RAP could then legally enter into a contract with a donor to manage civil society funds. This is a model that has emerged in other countries but would require careful consideration to determine whether it would be appropriate in this context. In 2005, a legal consultancy was commissioned to

examine the options for registration of G-RAP. Since then Government has begun a process of revising the legislation governing the registration of NGOs and Trusts. Given these changes, during the design process, it may be worth commissioning further legal expertise to enable G-RAP stakeholders to decide whether registration is the direction they would like to go in the long term and if so what needs to happen in phase II to prepare for this.

PROGRAMME FUNDING FOR RAOS

The provision of core funding is something that is much valued by the RAO community. It has provided critical support for institutional growth and it has enabled RAOs to leverage additional funding for programmes. Very little, if any, G-RAP funding is used for programmes. While the Special Facilities Projects can be used for programmes, this is limited to the activities of coalitions and networks. Thus for many RAOs, the source of programme funding has either been outside of Ghana or directly from donor agencies in country. As donors increasingly put their funding for civil society in the few basket funds, the resources left for direct funding of RAO programmes will significantly reduce. As a result, RAOs have expressed concern that in the next couple of years, they will find it increasingly difficult to access funding for programmes in Ghana. To address this, there are a number of options that may be considered in the next phase of G-RAP.

The first option is to increase the flexibility of G-RAP funding so that, if need be, a RAO could use an appropriate proportion for programmes. This would mean that the monitoring and evaluation framework within G-RAP would have to be re-designed to track and measure the impact of resources spent on programmes. The other option would be to continue to limit G-RAP to core funding and encourage RAOs to access programme funding from the other civil society basket funds such as RAVI. The danger in this is that the RAOs may crowd out the smaller non-Accra based organizations as they will be able to write better proposals. Programme funding for RAOs is, therefore, an issue that should be examined during the design of the next phase G-RAP.

CONCLUSION

By thinking through the options for the second phase of G-RAP well in advance of the completion of the first phase, stakeholders have increased the likelihood of developing a well-designed and effective second phase. It is hoped that this paper, which has captured the perspectives of stakeholders on the second phase, will be useful to deliberations in Akosombo.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

NAME OF PERSON	ORGANISATION
AKOTO AMPAW	AKUFFO ADDO & PREMP. CHAMBS
CHERYL GOPAUL	CIDA
GRAHAM GASS	DFID
DANIEL BATTIDAM	DUTCH EMBASSY
ELIJAH DANSO	DUTCH EMBASSY
MONIQUE MULLER	DUTCH EMBASSY
SUSAN YEMIDI	DANISH EMBASSY
MARCY VIGODA	CARE INTERNATIONAL
AFURIKA JUVENAL	CARE INTERNATIONAL
KOJO ANSAH	CARE INTERNATIONAL
ZAZA CURRAN	CARE UK
ROSE MENSAH KUTIN	ABANTU
KOJO ASANTE	CDD