



LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE

SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

FOR METROPOLITAN, MUNICIPAL AND DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES (MMDAs)

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FOREWORD

The Local Government Service (LGS) was established by the Local Government Service Act, 2003, Act 656 with the objective “to secure effective administration and management of local government in the country”. The LGS is made up of the Local Government Service Secretariat (LGSS), Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs), Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) and Sub- Metropolitan District Councils, Urban, Zonal, Town and Area Councils (UZTA).

The mission statement of the Local Government Service is “to support Local Government to deliver value for money services through the mobilisation, and utilisation of qualified human capacity and material resources to promote local and national development”.

In accordance with its mandate the Service is to ensure effective Administrative Decentralisation which is a major pillar in the decentralisation policy as enshrined in Chapter 20 of the 1992 Republican Constitution. As a policy objective, Administrative Decentralization seeks to improve the administrative and human resource capacity of members of the Service to ensure quality service delivery.

To improve service delivery to the citizenry, it is required to first identify and set the Service Delivery Standards (SDS) and then manage, measure and monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of these standards. This will also inform the Service’s clientele on what to expect.

This booklet contains acceptable principles and measurements that will serve as a general guide and reference to staff of the Local Government Service, particularly those at the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) whose services emphasise more on the management of physical infrastructure and other public services such as: roads, building, housing, water & sanitation, waste management, agriculture, health, education, social and environmental activities, etc.

The Local Government Service acknowledges with gratitude the collaboration and support of key stakeholders from RCCs, MMDAs, NGOs, CSOs and the Public Services Commission. The Service also appreciates the immense support extended to it by the EU and DANIDA in the development of the Service Delivery Standards.


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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

Under the Government's decentralization and Local Government reform initiative, the Local Government Service (LGS): Local Government Service Secretariat (LGSS), Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs), Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) have been established and assigned a wide range of responsibilities, including ensuring effective administration and management of local government, provision of basic social services and infrastructure, and the promotion and co-ordination of local economic development. The MMDAs in particular have a critical role in addressing national poverty reduction objectives and contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Fundamental Human Rights / Freedom and the Directive Principles of State Policy under the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana prescribes the manner and principles in which public administration should be carried out. These are as follows:

- Services are provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias;
- High professional and ethical standards should be promoted;
- Utilization of resources are done in an efficient and effective manner;
- Peoples' needs should be responded to;
- Popular participation should be promoted in decision making;
- Accountability and transparency should be ensured.

The section on Administrative Justice of the 1992 Constitution also gives citizens the right to hold the state responsible whenever their constitutional rights are violated. These provisions that are set out in the Constitution are the principles that govern the country as a whole and inform the LGS in its service delivery.

Local Governments, the LGS being no exception, are better informed about, and are more responsive to, the needs and preferences (i.e. services such as transport, water, education, health, sanitation, etc.) of local Communities due to their proximity to the citizenry than the Central Government. This brings to the fore and reinforces the need to identify and set acceptable and pragmatic service delivery standards in a participatory manner.

1.2. NEED FOR SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

Service Delivery Standards are mechanisms by which transparency, accountability and mutual trust are ensured between duty bearers and right holding citizenry in service delivery. They establish the minimum levels of service delivery and serve as a means of improving client satisfaction. In order to improve service delivery and minimize potential conflict between the citizenry and public officials mandated to deliver services, it is first required to identify, set, comprehensively document and communicate acceptable and realistic service delivery standards for all stakeholders. This will facilitate the management, measurement and monitoring of implementation of the standards.

Since 2012, the LGS has been engaged in a process of defining acceptable Service Delivery Standards (SDS) and establishing a universal framework for operationalising these standards. It has been the desire of the Service to deliver quality service to the citizenry and also in accordance with the provisions of the LGS Act, 2003 (Act 656), which enjoins it to:

- set performance standards within which the District Assemblies (DAs) and Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs) shall carry out their functions and discharge their duties;
- monitor and evaluate performance standards of the District Assemblies and Regional Coordinating Councils.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS (SDS)

As part of promoting decentralisation and good governance, the LGS aims at improving the quality of service delivered to the citizenry.

The specific objectives for developing service delivery standards are:

- a) define minimum levels of services that the Local Government Service should provide and what service recipients should expect in terms of quantity, quality, time and cost
- b) determine minimum cost implications for providing services;
- c) empower service recipients and communities to demand the services that are due to them at the appropriate standards;
- d) provide a basis upon which feedback on the level of satisfaction against the standard criteria can be evaluated;
- e) provide a basis for the review of management systems and processes;
- f) provide uniformity and consistency in the provision of services at the local levels;
- g) provide mechanism for both service providers and clients to measure, monitor, evaluate and report on the actual performance against the planned targets for further improvement; and,
- h) enforce quality assurance and put compliance mechanisms in place to measure and benchmark service delivery against best practices.

3. ESSENCE OF THE SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

In this era of resource constraint, amid numerous development needs and expectations, it is crucial to develop transparent and acceptable minimum values or principles to guide both the delivery of services to the citizenry and the expectations that the citizenry have of public services.

To measure their level of trust in local governments and subsequently the satisfaction they will derive from public services delivered, community members generally expect to be certain about the quantity, quality, processes, time, frequency and cost of such services offered to them. They also expect to know clearly what redress mechanisms they can resort to, whenever service delivered to them are either not satisfactory or not acceptable.

The LGS in particular, needs to demonstrate realistically, its commitment and resource capacity as a duty bearer to meet the needs and expectations of the citizenry who are right holders. It is therefore the firm commitment of the LGS to fulfil its mandate and help reduce poverty especially at the local level that strongly informed its efforts to develop the service delivery standards in a participatory manner.

The Service is further committed to promoting the SDS and mobilising the support of all stakeholders in their application as the following key benefits will accrue:

a) Services will be improved and delivered at a reduced cost by:

- refocusing services on clients;
- providing management the flexibility to respond to the needs of clients;
- developing proper incentives to promote innovation and continuous improvement;
- monitoring and analyzing performance against realistic targets and standards.

b) Governance generally and management in particular will improve by:

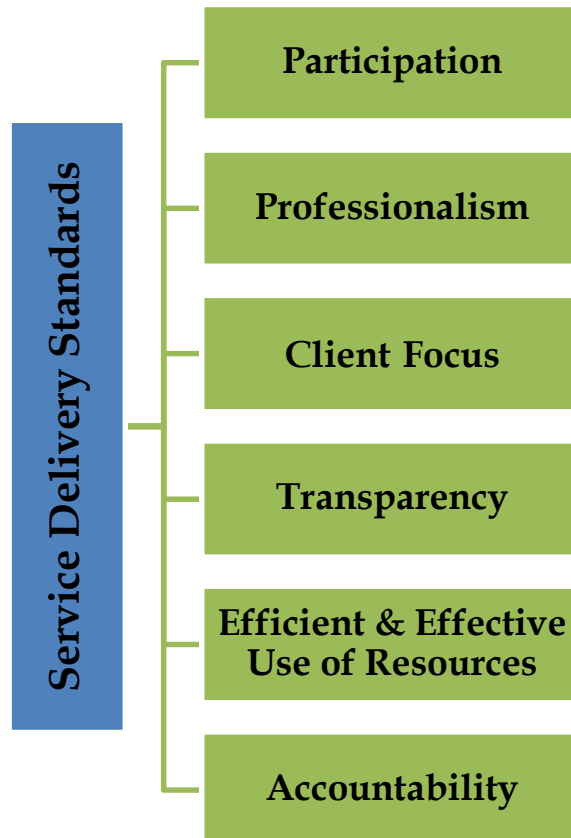
- promoting partnerships for delivering quality client service;
- providing the means to measure service performance and costs in a reliable manner;
- providing meaningful information on the content, value and method of service delivery;
- using performance and client satisfaction information to guide operational decisions to improve service standards and actual performance on a continuous basis.

4. DEVELOPING THE SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS (SDS)

The SDS together with their measurements and monitoring indicators and mechanisms were developed and documented with inputs from key stakeholders from the RCCs, MMDAs, NGOs, CSOs and the Public Services Commission (PSC) at a series of zonal workshops. Outputs emanating from all the zonal workshops and which culminated in the formulation of the service delivery standards were validated by the stakeholders in a participatory manner.

4.1. SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS FOR LGS

Six (6) Service Delivery Standards developed and approved by the Local Government Service Council for adoption by the MMDAs are listed below:



5. DEFINING AND MEASURING THE LGS SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

Defining the Service Delivery Standards (SDS) is pivotal because the citizenry are entitled to know: what they should expect from government; how services will be delivered; what services cost and what clients can do; when services they receive are not acceptable. These standards include:

- A description of the service provided and, where applicable, the benefits clients are entitled to receive;
- Service pledges or principles describing the quality of service delivery clients should expect to receive;
- Specific delivery targets for key aspects of the service;
- Complaint and redress mechanisms clients can use when they feel standards have not been met.

For the Service Delivery Standards to be adhered to and operationalised to yield the expected benefits to the citizenry, all stakeholders therefore need to have a common understanding of their definition and measurement indicators. Also crucial are the strategies and institutional framework as well as the time frame for effecting the standards. The definitions and measurements of the SDS are elaborated as follows:

5.1. PARTICIPATION

Participation is the involvement of relevant stakeholders including Civil Society Groups, Media, NGOs, Private Sector and Community Members in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of service delivery at the LGS.

MMDAs are required to regularly and systematically seek the opinion of the citizenry within their areas of jurisdiction on the provision of both current and future services. Stakeholders' participation in decision making affords them the opportunity to provide adequate inputs into the prioritisation and provision of services. The process of participation should be carried out such that it ensures comprehensiveness and representativeness. When this is adequately done, the outcome would be a balance between what citizens want and what the local governments have the resources and the capacity to deliver.



Measurement of Participation

Some measurement indicators for assessing “Participation” include ensuring that MMDAs:

- involve all stakeholders in the annual fee-fixing resolutions;
- organize community hearings to include the views of all stakeholders during the planning and budgeting process;
- conduct annual surveys to ascertain the level of community knowledge on agreements reached during service delivery consultations;
- involve relevant stakeholders, beneficiary departments and communities in quarterly and annual monitoring of projects.

5.2. PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism is the demonstration of requisite skills and competencies, and the ability to adapt best practices in the delivery of services to the satisfaction of the client whilst adhering to ethical standards

It is required that staff working in MMDAs maintain high levels of specialist knowledge, keep up-to-date with current research, methodologies and processes. Staff must participate in induction processes, professional development, effective performance management processes and professional peer supervision and support.

Additionally, staff must demonstrate effective interpersonal skills for working in partnership with others, follow through on negotiated actions and commitments as well as maintain confidentiality.



Measurement of Professionalism

Some measurement indicators for assessing “Professionalism” include ensuring that MMDAs:

- conduct Performance Appraisals with staff within intervals of six months or yearly;
- prepare and implement staff development plan for staff on an annual basis;
- ensure that the output of staff is measured in reference to standards stipulated in the Code of Conduct for the Service bi-annually;
- conduct annual in-service training for the professional development of staff;
- establishes annual award schemes for staff who demonstrate professionalism in the performance of their duties.

5.3. CLIENT FOCUS

Client focus is using client requirements to prioritize and consistently develop affordable and accessible Services in a timely manner.

It is crucial for officials of MMDAs to treat members of the public as “clients” who are entitled to receive the highest standard of service. These services range from greetings and addressing “clients” to the style and tone of officials when interacting with members of the public and in dealing with people with special needs such as the elderly or physically challenged.



It is also important for senior officials and management to set an example through their unspoken day-to-day interaction with junior officers on the values and culture of the local government institution. Local governments must make serious efforts to train staff who come into regular contact with the public as well as monitor the performance of these officers and discourage behaviours that fall below acceptable standards.

Measurement of Client Focus

Some measurement indicators for assessing “Client Focus” include:

- establish functional Client Service Centres in all MMDAs by the end of 2014;
- publish and disseminate a Client Service Charter by the end 2015;
- establish a mechanism (suggestion, box, etc.) for the receipt of complaints from clients on a weekly basis and to provide feedback to clients effectively within five (5) working days of the receipt of a complaint;
- acknowledge and respond to correspondences effectively within Seven (7) working days upon receipt;
- organise annual beneficiary surveys.



5.4. TRANSPARENCY

Transparency is providing all stakeholders with the understanding of how LGS operates, and furnishing them with easy access to adequate and timely information regarding decisions and actions taken by the Service.

Transparency and openness are the hallmarks of a democratic government and therefore key to the functioning of public service institutions. In terms of public service delivery, transparency is required to build trust and confidence between the MMDAs and the people they serve. It also borders on the utilization of resources by the MMDAs on behalf of the citizenry.

The principle of transparency requires that MMDA officials must be circumspect in matching available resources against planned budgets and actual expenditure as their actions and in-actions are information for public consumption.

Measurement of Transparency

Some measurement indicators for assessing “Transparency” include:



- establish a Procurement Committee and ensure that all procurement activities are carried out in conformity with the Public Procurement Act, Act 663;
- update and display monthly revenue and expenditure charts on MMDAs’ notice boards and at other vantage places;
- publish and display MMDAs’ audit report on Assembly’s and Area Councils’ notice boards within one week of receipt of the report;
- disseminate draft budget estimates to Assembly members two weeks before the General Assembly meeting and publish the approved budget on the Assembly’s notice boards;
- adopt the Social and Public Expenditure Financial Accountability (SPEFA) format for reporting on MMDA to key stakeholders yearly;
- publish General Assembly meeting minutes on community notice boards and other public designated areas (such as the reception) in the MMDA quarterly.



5.5. EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCES

Efficient and Effective use of Resources is the optimal use of resources (including time, human resources, natural resources, financial resources, etc.) to provide services and products that satisfy the requirements of users in a timely manner.

The scarcity of resources to public institutions requires that the limited resources are used to achieve the best possible value for money. Local government officials must ensure that they cut down public expenditure and create a more cost-effective local government.



The practices where goods, works and services are procured way above the prevailing economic market prices are inconsistent with the practice of the principle of value for money.

Measurement of Efficient and Effective use of Resources

Some measurement indicators as presented for assessing “Efficient and Effective use of Resources” include:

- procure goods, works and services in conformity with the Public Procurement Act and on time;
- ensure that financial transactions are in line with the Financial Administration Act, Financial Regulations and the Financial Memoranda and that transactions are done in a timely manner;
- organise monthly Financial & Audit review meetings to discuss the financial transactions of the Assembly;
- ensure that at least 90% of activities, projects and programmes implemented are within the Annual Action Plan and Budget;
- provide all clients with timely services.



5.6. ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is taking responsibility for one's actions and/or in-actions in rendering services and informing citizens on the use of public resources.

Measurement of Accountability

Some measurement indicators for assessing "Accountability" include:



- organize stakeholders' public budget hearing in the local dialect most widely spoken within an Assembly (Twi, Gonja, Dagbane, Ga, etc.) on an annual basis;
- publish and implement comments contained in the annual Audit Reports within two weeks of

receipt;

- publish monthly financial statements by the 20th of the ensuing month on MMDAs' notice boards, Community Information Centres, etc.;
- provide information on programmes, projects, revenue and expenditure to the public using local radio/FM stations on a monthly basis;
- organise four (4) quarterly Audit Report Implementation Committee (ARIC) meetings to discuss and act on Audit Reports.



6. CONCLUSION

As a decentralisation policy objective, administrative decentralization seeks to improve the Administrative and Human Resource capacity of members of the Service to ensure quality service delivery. To improve service delivery to the citizenry, it is vital to establish, manage, measure and monitor the effectiveness of the Service Delivery Standards.

It is therefore an initiative that provides a means to improve the effectiveness of the Local Government Service by linking and aligning individual and team responsibilities to service delivery and also providing the mechanism for enlisting trust from the public.

Service Delivery Standards (SDS) are also goals the LGS has set to achieve in the fulfilment of its mandate and a yardstick for measuring and evaluating its performance in the context of a Performance Management System (PMS).

