



ADVOCATES COALITION FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

Functionality of Sector Working Groups in Uganda



ACODE Policy Research Paper Series No.99, 2020

Elijah Dickens Mushemeza | Emmanuel Keith Kisaame

Functionality of Sector Working Groups in Uganda

Elijah Dickens Mushemeza

Emmanuel Keith Kisaame

Published by ACODE

P. O. Box 29836, Kampala

Email: library@acode-u.org; acode@acode-u.org

Website: <http://www.acode-u.org>

Citation:

Mushemeza. E. D., and Kisaame. E. K., **Functionality of Sector Working Groups in Uganda**, Kampala: ACODE Policy Research Paper Series No.99, 2020.

Cover Illustration: Downloaded from https://stock.adobe.com/images/id/185971597?as_campaign=Freepik&as_content

© ACODE 2020

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher. ACODE policy work is supported by generous donations and grants from bilateral donors and charitable foundations. Reproduction or use of this publication for academic or charitable purposes or for purposes of informing public policy is excluded from this restriction.

ISBN No. 978 9970 567 21 8

Acknowledgements

The research and publication of this report is a result of the generous support and effort of several people. **The publication of this report was possible due to the rigorous research meetings of researchers at ACODE who provided oversight to ensure accuracy and coherence of findings and recommendations.** We are therefore grateful for the generous funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to the Centre for Budget and Economic Governance (CBEG). We acknowledge George Bogere and Dr. Susan Kavuma for their support in the study design and review of the draft report. We are equally grateful to Prof. Wilson Winstons Muhwezi for reviewing the report and Dr. Cornelius Gulere for editing the report. While the persons mentioned above significantly contributed to this study, the views expressed are those of the authors.

Table of Contents

List of Acronyms	v
Executive Summary	vi
Glossary	ix
Introduction	1
Rationale of the Study	3
Research Methodology	4
Overview of the Sector Working Groups	6
Structure of SWGs	6
Synthesis of the Findings	8
Functionality of the Sampled Sector Working Groups	13
Health Sector	13
Water and Environment Sector	16
Accountability Sector	20
Works and Transport Sector	23
Education Sector	25
Agriculture Sector	28
Conclusion and Recommendations	30
References	32

List of Tables

Table 1: Number of Respondents per category	5
Table 2: Performance Indicator Matrix for the Sector Working Groups	10

List of Figures

Figure 1: Highlights of Uganda’s External Financing Framework	4
---	---

List of Acronyms

ASSDP	Agriculture Sector Strategic Development Plan
ASWG	Agriculture Sector Working Group
BCC	Budget Call Circular
CISCOT	Civil Society Coalition on Transport in Uganda
CSBAG	Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DPs	Development Partners
ESCC	Education Sector Consultative Committee
ESIP	Education Sector Investment Plan
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
GoU	Government of Uganda
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune Deficiency Syndrome/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HPAC	Health Policy Advisory Committee
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
LGs	Local Governments
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoWT	Ministry of Works and Transport
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NDP	National Development Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPA	National Planning Authority
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PEMCOM	Public Expenditure Management Committee
PFM	Public Financial Management
PS	Permanent Secretary
SWAps	Sector Wide Approaches
SWGs	Sector Working Groups
TSDMS	Transport Sector Data Management System
TWGs	Technical Working Groups
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UWASNET	Uganda Water and Sanitation Network
WESWG	Water and Environment Sector Working Group
WTSWG	Works and Transport Sector Working Group

Executive Summary

In this paper, the functionality of the Sector Working Groups (SWGs) in Uganda is assessed for insights into the on-going policy developments in selected Sector. The paper unravels the operational dynamics of the SWGs, their successes, and the challenges they have encountered. It then makes recommendations on how the functionality of SWGs could be improved.

The evolution of SWGs has its origin in the adoption of the Sector Wide Approaches (SWAs) in developing countries. SWAs emerged out of a growing dissatisfaction with the traditional project approaches that were often viewed as ‘fragmented, donor-driven’ interventions entailing high transaction costs for aid recipient countries. The motivation for developing SWAs was the need to improve the impact and sustainability of aid and a paradigm shift in planning and institutional development. SWAs sought to increase the overall effectiveness and efficiency of resources and ensure that the sectors were more responsive to national government policies and priorities, facilitating coherence between Sector policies and human and financial resource allocations.

The research methodology included (i) desk review of the existing literature on SWAs, National Development Plan, Sector Working Groups, Sector Development Plans, and Annual Sector Review Reports; (ii) Stakeholder/key informants face-to-face interviews. Thematic analysis was preferred where functionality, opportunities for Civil Society Organisations and private sector; and challenges were discussed. The analysis brought out emerging issues that demanded recommendations and attention. The analysis focused on six selected cases studies namely: Accountability, Agriculture, Education, Health, Water & Environment, and Works & Transport.

FINDINGS

1. There is no legal basis for establishing SWGs and yet this group is critical to streamlining and consolidating the mandate for conflict resolution. Government, over the years, has only pronounced itself on the viability of SWGs through policy documents, such as, Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), National Development Plan (NDP), Budget Call Circulars and MoFPED policy guidelines.
2. The SWGs have financial constraints in running their activities and the Secretariat. In some cases, they partially depend on the Development partners. When interviewed, development partners expressed concern over such dependence as it does not augur well on ownership.
3. The attendance of line ministries in the SWGs where they are not taking lead is irregular. Similarly, sometimes the Executive Directors of government agencies send representatives yet they are expected to be active themselves. This delays decision making because of unnecessary back and forth consultations.

4. In some Sectors, there is no tool to track and monitor attendance of meetings, actions taken, and what remains to be followed. The records of meetings and who takes responsibility to take action and the matrix in the annual review report are not sufficient.
5. Many of the Sectors have no tool to track their Development Partners' investments in the Sector. As a result, off budget support is not is easy to monitor and supervise. Attempts by the Health Sector to put in place a 'Resource Tracking Tool' and the Accountability Sector to develop an 'Aid Platform' are yet to come into effect.
6. In some sectors particularly, Education, Works and Transport, the private sector is not represented on the SWGs yet their Sector Development Plans envisage a participation of all stakeholders including non-state actors such CSO and the private sector. Moreover these non-actors participated in the formulations of the Sector Development Plans.
7. Although there are opportunities for civil society to contribute to the policy processes undertaken by SWGs, their impact in some Sectors is yet to be realised. It is not enough to attend and contribute to the meeting without bringing in position papers, research-based evidence on policy and statements of facts and direction during review meetings. Such good practices are seen in the Agriculture Sector by the Non-State Actors Working Group.
8. The SWGs as a whole do not tell their story in the key documents produced by the sector or on the website of the lead institution (Ministry). One hardly finds the analysis of the contribution of the Sub-Sector Working Groups/Technical working groups and the main working group in the annual Sector reports.

Recommendations

1. Government should consider housing a clause in the Public Finance Management Act (2015) to anchor the operationalization of SWAs and the functioning of the SWGs since there is no legal basis to establish SWGs.
2. There is need to have inter sector working groups' interaction so that good practices in one Sector are picked by other Sectors. For example, in the Health Sector, HPAC, the SWG has a monitoring tool to track attendance, actions taken on a daily basis. Similarly, writing position papers on an issue of importance by a member of the Sector working group, and taking a participatory approach to formulate a research agenda are good practices in the Education sector.
3. The Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development should consider creating a special Budget item for activities of the SWGs. There is an operational funding deficit within the Sectors that limits the SWGs' ability to undertake meaningful monitoring and evaluation roles.

4. The Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development should expedite the formulation of the Aid Platform tool envisaged to track all development partners' investments. It is also recommended that as much as possible, Development Partners should refrain from attempting to use their own funds, whether Sector budget support or project support, to fund expenditures that are not priorities identified by the Sector Working Groups and included in the Sector Investment Plans.
5. There is need to bring in more CSOs and the private sector on board that can actively and effectively participate in decision making during SWG meetings and other undertakings.
6. All SWGs should undertake to have sub-sector working groups on cross-cutting issues. Cross-cutting issues such as Climate Change, HIV/AIDS, Environment, Monitoring and Evaluation, Gender, and Good Governance remain critical for the growth of the economy and overall health of the citizens.
7. In order to increase the visibility and the work of SWGs, an overview write-up on the functions/roles, activities, achievements and challenges should be posted on the lead agencies (Ministries) website. Similarly, the key documents of the Sectors should capture the processes in which SWGs and Sub-Sector working groups engage in their outputs such as Sector Development Plans, quarterly review reports, annual sector review reports, and budget framework papers.

Glossary

Policy: The general course of action or proposed overall direction that a government or other institution pursues that guide decision making.

Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF): A three-year rolling budget framework used to guide public-sector resource allocation, including Aid. At the beginning of the budget process, sectors are provided with medium-term resource ceilings that, in aggregate are consistent with the achievement of macroeconomic objectives. Sector working groups allocate these ceilings to institutions within the Sector over the medium term consistent with the achievement of sector policy objectives. These allocations are articulated in the Budget Framework Paper (BFP), which represents the government's medium term budget strategy. The first year of the MTEF forms the basis of the annual budget allocations that are approved by parliament.

Project Support: Refers to assistance that is not channelled via the government systems. It can be on-budget (i.e. within the ceiling) or off-budget (i.e. outside the ceiling).

Budget Support: Aid that is included in the MTEF and presented in the Government of Uganda (GoU) budget estimate books. This includes aid that flows through government systems (such as, general, Sector and Poverty Alleviation Fund support), as well as, other programme aid and projects that are reported to GoU. Also, what the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development considers should be included in the MTEF and the budget presented to Parliament. A second category of on-budget aid includes Technical Assistance (TA) and basket funds that support GoU activities and institutions whose budgets are included in the MTEF and official estimate books. On budget, aid falls within the sector ceiling

Sector Working Groups: These are leadership and technical level task-oriented groups, that harmonize, coordinate, monitor, evaluate and report on the Sector vision and goals, policy frameworks, plans, and performance of Sector MDAs.

Sector Development Plan: A detailed statement of performance, issues and opportunities, development objectives, policies and strategies that support the developments in a specific sector e.g. Education, Agriculture, Water and Environment etc. It provides a framework for the identification of public policy initiatives and projects in the segment, including the role of the government agencies, faith-based organizations and the private sector in the development of the segment. Sector development Plans should have the same time frame as the National Development Plans.

Introduction

In the 1990s, several development practitioners evaluated the development impact of their assistance to aid recipient countries. Concerned about the high and rising incidence of poverty in developing countries, many development partners launched several initiatives aimed at making Official Development Assistance (ODA) more effective during the 21st century. Among the key objectives for several of the proposed initiatives were that ODA should, by 2015, attain significant and demonstrable positive impact on the economic well-being and social development of the population of aid recipient countries¹.

Subsequently, in 1996, the Development Aid Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) formulated a strategy to address some of the unmet development challenges of aid assistance. The primary objectives of the strategy were to:

Reduce poverty while achieving broad-based economic growth; strengthening human and institutional capacities; improving the capacity of developing countries to contribute to the management and solution of global problems; and, reinforcing the transformation of institutions and enabling environments to facilitate emergence of developing countries and transition economies as growing trade and investments partners in the global economy².

The attainment of these desired development impact objectives are subsumed and underpinned by some key principles that must be effectively applied in order to make aid resources work better in enhancing growth and poverty reduction. Notable among these are the existence of: better aid coordination; country developed and owned agenda; adequate resources (both foreign and domestic); and, effective implementation and monitoring of development activities. Guided by these principles, the World Bank, in 1999 articulated and proposed the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) as a holistic development approach involving developing countries and their development partners. On their part, as an important complementary part of the approach and process, aid recipient countries developed and implemented development agenda as outlined in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)³. This is the context in which Sector Wide Approaches (SWAps) were formulated.

¹ AfDB, 2004, *Revised guidelines for Bank Group Operations Using Sector-Wide Approaches (SWAps)* Operations Policy and Review Department, p.1

² Ibid, cited in OECD-DAC, 1996, *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation*, p.13

³ Ibid.

In the late 1990s, Sector Wide Approaches (SWAs) were introduced in Uganda and in other developing countries, beginning with the Education Sector. The motivation for developing SWAs was the need to improve the impact and sustainability of aid. It came about as a new paradigm for planning and institutional development. SWAs sought to increase the overall effectiveness and efficiency of resources. It ensured that the sectors were more responsive to national government policies and priorities, facilitating coherence between Sector policies, human, and financial resource allocations.⁴

SWAs also grew out of national and international dissatisfaction with project approaches, that were seen to be inefficient and in some cases inappropriate. The traditional project approach was viewed as ‘fragmented, donor-driven’ and entailing high transaction costs for aid recipient countries. SWAs emphasized greater reliance on government institutions, common implementation procedures, stronger and closer country partnership with its development partners.⁵ They also emerged alongside debates regarding development effectiveness during the 1990s⁶.

There are four main features in any SWAp⁷:

- (i) Sustainable development partnerships, long-term vision and agreed targets for the reform of the Education Sector incorporating all stakeholders, namely, the government, development partners, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and civil society organisations (CSOs).
- (ii) Well-defined Sector or Sub-Sector plan taking into account the macroeconomic environment, Sector analysis and institutional and financial structures.
- (iii) Forward-looking work programmes, such as, the cost-effective medium-term Education Sector Strategy that fits within a wider Public Financial Management (PFM) framework and incorporates common arrangements for government and development partners with a capacity development programme.
- (iv) Strategic negotiation and Annual Sector Performance Review Mechanisms that are agreed jointly between development partners and the governments. These features do not only apply to the Education Sector but to other Sectors in the economies of developing countries.

⁴ Boak, E and Ndaruhutse, S (2011), *The Impact of Sector-Wide approaches: where from, where now and where to?* CfBT Education Trust, p.12

⁵ AfDB, (2004) Revised GuideLines for Bank Group Operations using Sector-wide Approches (SWAs), p.2

⁶ UNESCO (2007), *Education Sector Wide Approaches: Background, Guide and Lessons. Education Policies and Strategies*, 12. Paris, UNESCO.

⁷ Ratcliffe, M and Macrae, M (1999), *Sector Wide Approaches to Education: A Strategic Analysis*, DFID Education Paper No. 32 London: DFID cited in Boak, E and Ndaruhutse, S (2011), *The Impact of Sector-Wide approaches: where from, where now and where to?* CfBT Education Trust, p.15

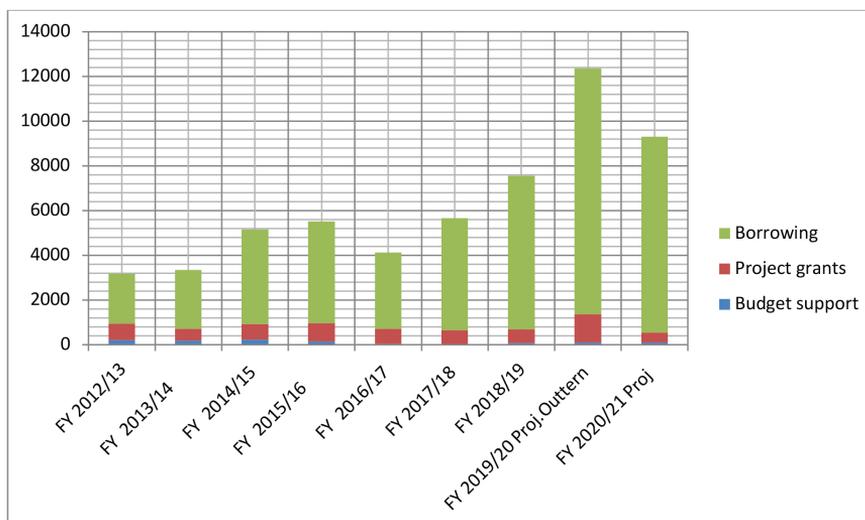
Over time, SWAps became the strong organising principle and operational framework for supporting partner governments in developing countries. The basic building block to move towards a SWAp was for a national government, in partnership with the non-state Sector (civil society, NGOs and the Development Partners), to develop a comprehensive and realistically costed Sector Strategic Plan in support of a Sector policy, around which there was common ownership and consensus.

To implement SWAps, Sector Working Group forums were adopted across Government as the basic building blocks to ensure coherent planning, consultation between related entities, engagement with external stakeholders and service providers, management of crosscutting issues, oversight by central agencies, and management of inter-sector linkages. The role of SWGs is regularly referred to by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED), National Planning Authority (NPA), and Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) in the planning, budgeting and service monitoring processes, guidelines and formats. The functionality of SWGs thus has a bearing on the performance of the public service.

Rationale of the Study

Over the years, SWAps have continued to be used as an approach to planning, prioritisation and resource mobilisation by national governments, bilateral and multilateral agencies globally. Similarly, SWGs as a structure under SWAps are meant to facilitate government coordination around the budget, so that the main departments and agencies within each Sector negotiate over priorities. Sector Working Groups have undoubtedly played a major role in shaping policy and resource allocation decisions in various Sectors albeit variedly. However, given the pre-eminence of project support (far out-stripping direct budget support) and the high levels of public debt acquired to fund development projects for over a decade, there is limited information on the functionality of the SWGs in this context. How effective the SWGs are in contributing to the management of their respective sectors in relation to what SWAps envisaged is yet unclear.

Figure 1: Highlights of Uganda’s External Financing Framework



Source: Computations from the National Budget Frameworks FY 2012/13 – FY 2020/21

In September 2019, for example, the MoFPED observed that,

Over the recent financial years, Sector Working Groups have not been as functional as expected, and where they are deemed functional, they have not performed as expected.

All Sectors were being urged by MoFPED to revamp their SWGs and to allocate joint funds for coordinated and effective planning.⁸ Against such a background, the Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) commissioned a study to assess the functionality of the SWGs in Uganda.

Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of the study was to assess the functionality of the SWGs in Uganda; with the view of gaining insight into the on-going policy processes. Specifically, the study focused on the following key areas:

1. Examining the structure of the working groups in the selected Sectors
2. Identifying and analysing the roles and functions of SWGs in relation to the planning, budgeting and accountability of the Sectors.
3. Analysing the challenges SWGs face and propose appropriate government responses in relation to the environment in which they operate.

⁸ MoFPED, The First Budget Call Circular (1st BCC) on Preparation of the Budget Framework Papers (BFPs) and Preliminary Budget Estimates for Financial Year 2020/2021, p.8.

Research Methodology

The scope of the study was limited to six Sectors that include: Accountability, Agriculture, Health, Education, Water and Environment, and Works and Transport. These Sectors were selected on the basis of their direct link to the welfare and livelihood of Ugandans.

The study was qualitative in nature, employing a case study design. We adopted qualitative methods of data collection and analysis namely: documentary evidence analysis and in-depth face-to-face interviews with key informants. Thematic analysis was preferred when following up themes derived from the specific study objectives.

Overall, the analysis takes keen interest in the functionality of the SWGs. This meant exploring whether the SWGs are undertaking their functions and roles. In particular, we sought to understand the structure of SWGs, framework of operation and mechanisms of tracking decisions and action taken. Also, we sought to understand whether the SWGs had up-to-date information on their activities on the website of the Lead Institution/ Ministry. The extent to which SWGS followed public investment guidelines, mobilised resources for the Sectors, put in place mechanisms to obtain feedback on service delivery, developed systems to obtain feedback on service delivery, track investments of development partners; and registered observable achievements were also assessed.

The key informants were purposively selected from among actors in the SWGs and other government institutions that supervise or coordinate government programmes. These included representatives from CSOs that participated in SWGs; members of the Private Sector Foundation; Development Partners as full members of the Sector Working Groups; Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and MoFPED as Central Government entities driving performance at Sector level, representatives of Senior Management Teams of Sector Lead Ministries and finally, representatives of Technical Working Groups of selected Sectors. The number of respondents per category is summarised in table 1.

Table 1: Number of Respondents per category

Category	Number of Respondents Interviewed
Office of the Prime Minister	4
Accountability Sector	6
Agriculture Sector	3
Education Sector	5
Works and Transport Sector	2
Water and Environment Sector	2
Health Sector	2
Civil society	8
Private Sector	1
Development Partners	4
Total	37

The research team also developed a set of indicators against which the functionality of the SWGs was assessed. The information filled against these assessment indicators was analysed from data obtained through the Key Informant Interviews and the document review. The assessment indicators focussed on functionality aspects, such as, existences of the SWGs, the frequency of meetings, the composition of the SWGs, as well as, the fulfilment of some of the roles ascribed to SWGs.

Overview of the Sector Working Groups

At the central level, the responsibility of planning and budgeting is delegated to Sector Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). To execute this responsibility effectively, MDAs were required to formulate their policies, strategies and programmes consolidated into Sector Development Plans that were aligned to the National Development Plan and to Uganda Vision 2040. Sectors are also required to monitor Sector outcome measures and to standardise the practice of holding Annual Performance Reviews (APR) as consultative meetings with stakeholders.

Structure of SWGs

Actors: The SWGs often comprised of Civil Society Organisations, private sector, and representatives of Local Governments, development partners, as well as, Sector Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), under the auspices of the line ministry for the given sector. The SWGs, therefore, play major roles in the formulation of policies, intra-sectoral resource allocation, as well as, monitoring and evaluation of public expenditure in the sectors. SWGs are encouraged to identify issues that fall outside their mandate, for higher level resolution and to identify key performance indicators to monitor sector progress.

Management of SWGs

The management of SWGs is undertaken by Sector Leadership Committees - the top-most organ of the Sector that should comprise the political leadership of the Constituent Sector Ministries. The Sector Implementation Coordination Steering Committee chaired by the Permanent Secretary (PS) of the Sector Line Ministry and comprised of other heads of MDAs are responsible for policy development, coordination, quality assurance in the production of Sector Development Plans (SDPs), and fund raising for the SDPs. The SWGs may have technical sub-groups for specific components. They are also required to include Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), private sector, and Development partners (DPs). They should be chaired by high-level officers from Sector Lead Agencies (SLA), with participation from Directors or Heads of Department, with a Sector Secretariat, usually provided by the Policy and Planning Units of SLA.

Functions/Roles of SWGs in a Broad perspective

Sector Working Groups are tasked with a key role in managing the work undertaken by Sectors. Specifically, they undertake the following roles:

Providing high level policy and strategic dialogue and guidance to the Sectors.

1. Guiding the preparation of Sector Strategic Investment/Development Plans and undertaking necessary review(s) of the development plans.
2. Approving all new programmes/projects (concepts and/or full proposals) before they are forwarded to the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED).
3. Initiating, coordinating and pursuing mobilising resources, especially, developing partner support for the Sector in accordance with GoU procedures.
4. Approving general criteria to guide the allocation of GoU and Development Partner resources (on-budget) for the Sector.
5. Approving the Sector Medium Term Budget Framework Paper, Ministerial Policy Statement and detailed annual work plans and budgets before submission to MoFPED.
6. Monitoring and reviewing quarterly (through the Sub-Sector Working Groups) and annual progress/performance against Sector objectives and approved targets.
7. Following up findings and recommendations of the Annual Joint Sector Review (Sector Performance Report and Agreed Minutes) and identifying policy issues to be addressed and ensuring the required timely reporting to Government and Development Partners.
8. Guiding the preparations for Annual Joint GoU/Donor Sector Reviews (JSR) and assessing the progress of implementation of agreed undertakings through annual Joint Technical Reviews (JTR).
9. Ensuring that regular performance audits, value for money and/or tracking studies and monitoring visits are carried out and recommendations are followed up.

Some of the key functions played by sectors include but are not limited to:

- Examining and reviewing policies and plans;
- Identifying priorities and emerging issues;
- Assessing resource requirements and cost implications, including proposed medium term budget allocations;
- Reviewing performance targets and outcomes;
- Participating in identifying and approving development projects.

Synthesis of the Findings

Sector Working Groups are still relevant in identifying priorities; planning and reviewing policies; assessment of resource requirements and approving budgets; reviewing performance targets and outcomes. However, there are pertinent issues of concern and operational deficits that must be addressed. This is critical for the effective functionality of the SWGs. In light of the analysis that has been made on the six case studies, the following emerging issues are drawn to the attention of policy makers, implementers, and non-state actors:

- a) There was no legal basis for establishing SWGs yet this was critical to the streamlining and consolidation of mandates and conflict resolution. Government over the years had only pronounced itself on the viability of SWGs through policy documents, such as, Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), NDP, Budget Call Circulars and MoFPED policy guidelines.
- b) The SWGs had financial constraints in running their activities and the Secretariats. In some cases, they partially depended on the Development Partners. Development partners interviewed expressed reservation as such dependence did not enhance ownership.
- c) The attendance of Line Ministries in the SWG where they were not taking the lead was irregular. Similarly, sometimes the Executive Directors of Government Agencies sent representatives yet they were expected to be active themselves. This delayed decision making because of unnecessary back and forth consultations.
- d) In some Sectors, there was no tool to track and monitor attendance of meetings, actions taken, and what remained to be followed. The record of meetings and who was responsible to take action; and the matrix in the annual review report was not sufficient.
- e) Many of the Sectors also had no tool to track all Development Partners' investments in the Sector. As a result, off budget support was not easy to monitor and supervise. Attempts by the Health Sector to put in place a 'Resource Tracking Tool' and the Accountability Sector to develop an 'Aid Platform' were yet to fully bare results.
- f) In some Sectors, particularly, Education, Works and Transport, the Private Sector was not represented on the SWGs yet their Sector Development Plans envisaged a participation of all stakeholders including non-state actors such as CSO and the Private Sector. Moreover, these non-actors participated in the formulations of the Sector Development Plans.
- g) Although there were opportunities for civil society to contribute to the policy processes undertaken by SWGs, their impact in some Sectors were yet to be

realised. It was not adequate to attend and contribute to the meeting without bringing in position papers, research-based evidence on policy and statements of facts and direction during review meetings. Such good practices were seen in the Agriculture Sector by the Non-State Actors Working Group.

- h) The SWGs as a whole did not effectively document their processes story in the key documents produced by the Sector or on the website of the Lead Institution (Ministry). Analysis of the contribution of the Sub-Sector Working Groups/Technical Working Groups and the main working group in the Annual Sector Reports was not possible due to the lack of proper documentation.

A detailed summary of the Sector by Sector Assessment is provided in table 2, where the functionality of the selected Sectors is measured against a matrix of indicators. The indicators reflect desirable standards of functionality with respect to five parameters namely: structure of the SWGs, meetings, financing, coordination and documentation. The grading of the SWG performance is by way of colour coding with **red** implying a **non-fulfilment**; **yellow** implying **partial fulfilment** and **green** implying **total fulfilment** of these desired standards.

Table 2: Performance Indicator Matrix for the Sector Working Groups

Parameter	Indicator	Grading						Comments
		Accountability	Agriculture	Education	Health	Water & Environment	Works & Transport	
Structure	Existence of functional Technical Working Groups	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	The works & Transport Sector was found to have no Technical Working Groups (TWGs)
	Existence of CSO Representatives in the SWG	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	All SWGs had CSO representation with varying degrees of participation.
	Existence of private sector Representatives in the SWG	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	It is only in the Accountability Sector where Private Sector Foundation Uganda was found to be represented in PEMCOM
	Existence of Development Partner Representatives in the SWG	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	All Sectors reported having Development Partners in their SWGs
	Evidence of CSO and private sector position papers informing the SWG's decision making	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Comment missing
	Existence of Local Government representatives on the SWG	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	The Health SWG has representatives of the District Health Officers in its structure
			Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	

Parameter	Indicator	Grading					Comments
Meetings	Evidence of regular/planned TWG and SWG meetings (meeting minutes and reports)	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	While the Accountability SWG meetings were reported to be taking place, they were irregular and unplanned
	Evidence of a regular Joint Annual Sector Review being held	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	All Sectors reported having Joint Annual Sector Reviews
	Evidence of regular SWG meeting attendance by top technical staff from the sector MDAs	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	MoWT reported limited/none attendance of the monthly SWG meetings by top technical staff from other MDAs
Financing	Existence of a dedicated operational budget for SWG activities	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	All the Sectors reported limited funding for SWG activities. The available funds were mostly for allowances and not operational activities, such as hosting SWG meetings and conducting monitoring assessments on key targets
Coordination	Existence of Sector coordination mechanism	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	All sectors were found to have coordination mechanisms
	Existence of a framework to track project support from the Development Partners	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Only the accountability and Health Sectors reported having mechanisms (albeit nascent ones) to track project support from the Development Partners.

Parameter	Indicator	Grading	Comments
Documentation	Existence of a legal and policy framework supporting the SWG	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> </div>	While no supportive legal framework was found for any of the Sectors, the Ministry of Health (MoH) had published Guidelines for Governance and Management structures that provide for the establishment and define the structure of the HPAC.
	Existence of a monitoring and evaluation framework to track progress on Sector goals and targets	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> </div>	All Sectors were found to have M&E frameworks
	Existence of an annual or multi-year work plan	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> </div>	All Sectors were found to have multi-year work plans
	Timely production and online publication of the FY 2018/19 Annual Sector Performance Report	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> </div>	While all the Sectors produced and published their Annual Sector Performance Reports, it is only the Accountability, Health and the Water and Environment sectors that have their FY 2018/19 ASPRS available online.

Functionality of the Sampled Sector Working Groups

In assessing the functionality of the sampled Sectors, the study sought to establish when the respective SWG was created, the structure of the group (including its composition and leadership), the frequency of the SWG's meetings, as well as, the existence of key documents like work-plans, meeting minutes, monitoring and evaluation tools among other indicators of functionality. This section of the report provides a sector-by-sector assessment of functionality along these aforementioned considerations.

Health Sector

This subsection delves into the establishment of the Health SWG, as well as, the structure of the SWG that includes the constituent sub committees, the number of different categories of actors represented, and elements of the SWGs functionality, such as, frequency of the SWGs' meetings.

Structure of the Health Sector Working Group

The Top Management Committee, chaired by the Minister of Health (MoH) is responsible for providing overall policy direction, making higher level policy decisions, approving policy proposals, and giving general oversight to the Health Sector as a whole. The functions of the Health SWG are mainly undertaken by the **Health Policy Advisory Committee (HPAC)**. This committee provides a **forum** for the Government, Health Development Partners (HDPs) and other stakeholders to discuss health related policies and to advise on the implementation of the Health Sector Development Plan (HSDP) and policies. The structure and functions of the HPAC are guided by the MOH's guidelines for governance and management structures.⁹ As such, the HPAC is the Sector Working Group that reviews the policies and strategic direction of the Sector. It has representation from other Health Sector Agencies, CSOs, Private Health providers, and other Ministries. It is chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the MoH and co-chaired by a Development Partners (DFID)¹⁰.

Some of the key policies and strategic issues presented and discussed by the SWG over the past one year included:

- *NDP III sector priorities*
- *The National Emergency Medical service policy*
- *Draft Market Approach for Family Planning Commodities*
- *National Malaria Control policy*
- *Draft Ministry of Health Support Supervision Strategy*
- *The Compendium of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the Health Sector*
- *Concept note for Drone Technology in the Health Sector.*

⁹Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Health, 2013. Guidelines for Governance and Management structures

¹⁰MoH, Health Policy Advisory Committee (HPAC) Attendance List October, 2019

HPAC is a forum for information and experience sharing, and resolution of disagreements and conflicts among Health Sector stakeholders. It identifies policy/non policy strategic issues that require attention within the Sector, special assignments, and approves terms of reference for such assignments. Several technical working groups in various areas of the Health Sector feed into HPAC, e.g. the Sector Budget Working Group¹¹.

Functionality of the HPAC

The HPAC is a functioning SWG that holds meetings regularly on a monthly basis, and has a documented work plan for every financial year. It has an active secretariat housed under the Commissioner Policy and Planning in MoH. The work plan clearly points out the planned activities, the corresponding outputs, targets and performance measurement indicators.¹² The SWG also has a monitoring tool to track attendance and performance against set parameters, such as, the number of policy/strategic issues discussed, number/percentage of members that attended/represented, minutes available, summary of key recommendations/follow-up actions; and percentage of actions from HPAC work plan implemented/achieved¹³. An action matrix tracks progress of decisions taken at these meetings. To this end, the Sector Working Group is indeed effective.

It was also observed that the Health Sector has well established coordination mechanisms. Coordination of the different actors has been driven by the International Health Partnership Plus (IHP+), ratified by Ugandan in February 2009. IHP+ requires all partners engaged in supporting the Sector to sign a compact, committing them to a Government-Led Coordination Framework, with emphasis on aid effectiveness and a common results framework¹⁴.

Coordination also extends to the Sector's financial resources. The Sector Budget Framework Paper (BFP) is discussed by the SWG or HPAC in accordance with the Sector Programmes that link financial resources and other inputs to Sector outputs and outcomes in a precise and coherent manner. The Programme Based Budgeting (PBB) approach that Uganda adopted in FY 2016/17 provides a useful tool for improving how the Sector makes decisions on allocating its resources¹⁵. It also helps the Sector to identify opportunities for improving the efficiency of public spending on health. Programme Based Budgeting, links outcome, output, and activity performance indicators and targets with budget allocations over the medium term. This creates opportunities for efficiency-enhancing measures and redeployment of cost savings to meet priority needs¹⁶.

¹¹MFPED, Health Sector Budget Framework Paper FY 2018/19 – FY 2022/23

¹²MoH, HPAC Work plan for July 2018 – June 2019 – FY 2018/2019.

¹³MOH, Monitoring tool for Health Policy Advisory Committee (HPAC), July 2018 – June 2019.

¹⁴ OPM, , Strengthening the Coordination function at the Office of the Prime Minister and Sector Working Groups, Final Report, April 2017.

¹⁵ MFPED, Health Sector Budget Framework Paper FY 2018/19 – FY 2022/23.

¹⁶See, The Health Sector Budget Frame Paper (BFP) FY 2018/19.

Over the years, however, there have been challenges on coordination related to the resources from the Development Partners. Similar to other Sectors, the Health Sector has been constrained in the past years by limited information on project support from its Development Partners. In order to curb the effects of this limitation in coordination, the Health Sector has designed a framework 'ATLAS' to capture budget and project support resources from the Development Partners.

There is ATLAS where all development partners have been requested to share their budgets. So, they are mapping which partners are putting in money but it is still ongoing; it is being done by the coordination unit which has just been created...

Development Partner Respondent

In line with coordination, there are a number of Opportunities for CSOs and private Sector to engage with the HPAC. CSO representation on the HPAC is very low and the need to scale it up is urgent. Consultations with the CSO representatives on the HPAC revealed that effective representation of CSOs, especially, on the Technical Working Groups, would bring in more perspectives, particularly, on deficits on service delivery and how to address them.

The best opportunity is in the technical working groups because they have representatives from the CSO. It would be good to have more CSOs on the SWG because now there are few and many opportunities are there to take up the space because most of it is taken up by the ministry and the development partners...

CSO Respondent

Similarly, inclusion of more private sector actors such as manufacturers of drugs and owners of private hospitals would add value. In addition, the opportunities also exist for increased uptake of CSO and private sector data. The Health Sector Information Systems now include data from NGO entities, though private sector has yet to be brought on board. The sector maintains detailed District level health performance reports to help identify and take action on poorly performing LGs and to learn lessons from those working effectively – an area where CSOs, in particular, can support the HPAC.

Challenges

1. In most cases, the agenda for the SWG is too big within a short time and the meeting is unable to respond to all the issues on the agenda, hence, they get pushed to the next meeting, that delays decision-making.
2. Inconsistency in attendance of meetings by the actors (real representation) affects vibrancy and decision making.
3. Attendance is often low because the Ministry, in most cases, is busy in other parliamentary meetings.
4. CSOs are not well represented and, in most cases, those recommended by the current CSO representatives to be invited for the meetings, are not invited by the SWG Leadership/Secretariat.

Water and Environment Sector

The **Structure of the Water and Sanitation SWG** has a Top Policy Management (TPM) Chaired by the Minister at the top of the organisational structure responsible for providing overall policy direction, making higher level policy decisions, approving policy proposals and giving general oversight to the Sector as a whole.

The Water and Environment Sector Working Group (WESWG) is critical in policy formulation and direction in the Sector. It is chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Water and Environment with two co-chairs: the Water and Sanitation Donor Group Chairperson, and the Environment and Natural Resources Donor Group Chairperson.

Under the WESWG, there are two Sub-Sector Working Groups: Environmental and Natural Resources Sub Sector Working Group (ENRS-WG), and Water and Sanitation Sub Sector Working Group. The Co-chairs change on an annual basis, with new ones being selected every year – a measure that enhances the effective functionality of the WESWG.

The co-chairs for the development partners rotate the leadership every year and they select among themselves. This provides an opportunity for different stakeholder's views to be brought up for discussion that result into effective and objective discussion...

CSO Respondent

The Sub Sector working groups are also supported by various Technical Working Groups namely: Climate Change Sub-Group; Finance and Liaison Sub-Group; Capacity Development Sub-Group; and, Good Governance Sub-Group. There is also a practice of creating ad hoc committees as and when required.

Functionality of the SWG

The Ministry of Water and Environment is the Lead Institution of the SWG and is responsible for overall coordination, policy formulation, setting standards, inspection, monitoring, technical back-up and initiating legislation.¹⁷ The Sector plans and budgets are aligned to the priorities in the NDPII as evidenced in the Sector Development Plan. The Sector has already prepared a priority Issues Paper to input the NDP III.

The Water and Environment Sector Working Group is functional and active. The WESWG meetings are held once every quarter (Four times a year) and the Sector also holds annual reviews every September/October and midterm review (Joint Technical Reviews) in March/April every year. The minutes are accessible and there is evidence of identifying priorities for the Sector and taking action in accordance with the functions of the SWG and the rationale of adopting SWAPs in the government systems. The Sector cannot pass a new policy, regulation or report without input from SWG.¹⁸

The key players in the Sector comprise of Ministry of Water and Environment (all Commissioners are members), National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), National Forestry Authority (NFA), National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC) and Uganda National Meteorological Authority (UNMA), Ministry of Local Governments (Inspectorate Division), Ministry of Health (Environmental Health Division), Office of the President (manifesto office), Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Development Partners, and the Civil Society Organizations (UWASNET and Environmental Alert). The private sector is yet to be represented on this important team.

The Sector Working Group embraces Programme Based Budgeting (PBB). At the beginning of every budget cycle, a WESWG meeting is held to discuss the Budget Call Circular (BCC) and through all the preparations, the sub groups are active. The SWG approves the budget before it is submitted to the MoFPED and Parliament.¹⁹

The Ministry monitors and evaluates Sector Development Programs to keep track of their performance, effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery. The CSOs complement the efforts of the government in the development and mobilization of the resources for service delivery,²⁰ while the Development Partners provide financial and technical assistance.

The SWG follows key government policy guidelines, such as, the BCC and Public Investment Management. For example, after identification of projects by technical people, they are submitted to the Finance and Liaison Thematic Group that critically looks at the projects and submits a summary to the WESWG meeting for approval and onward submission to MoFPED.

¹⁷ Interview with a senior policy officer, ministry of Water and Natural Resources, October 2019

¹⁸ Interview with a senior officer Ministry of Water and Environment

¹⁹ Interview with a member of the subsector working group, October, 2019

²⁰ Interview With the a senior officer in a CSO, October 2019

The WESWG has a mechanism for responding to issues of governance, transparency and accountability. For instance, the Sector has a Good Governance Thematic Group both for Water and Sanitation and Environment that discusses and synthesizes the above issues and reports to the WESWG. Also, in the Annual **Sector Reports**, there is a dedicated section on good governance which reports on the sectors initiatives towards transparency and accountability.

One thing that has also contributed to the effectiveness of the SWG is that it separates the leadership roles and responsibilities. There is a concept of chair and co- chair where the Chair and the Co-chair have more or less equal responsibility in terms of leading and presiding over discussion for the Working Group. Through the Co – chairs you can get alternative views and perspectives and balance the interest of the stakeholders otherwise without this approach, may be one stakeholder could seat on the views of other stakeholders...

CSO Respondent

In terms of obtaining feedback on service delivery and performance, the Sector holds annual reviews guided by the Sector Performance Measurement Framework. These are attended by representatives from DPs, LGS, Line Ministries, Academia, Private Sector, Parliament, and Media. Through quarterly and annual reports, it is possible to track sources of funding and expenditure.

The Sector participates in the annual assessment exercise implemented under the OPM where the national indicator framework is applied to assess progress on the NDP objectives and service delivery.

On-going Policy Processes/Areas of concern

There are a few identified policy processes in this sector. The WESWG is pre-occupied with gaps in the implementation of the already designed projects and sourcing for funds. The consultations with WESWG therefore yielded areas of concern instead such as the need to develop indicators to assess the mainstreaming of ENR sustainability in all Sectors in order to achieve reduced contributions to degradation.

1. Areas of concern by Development partners included:
 - a. The need for increased financing for catchment management plans
Catchment based management plans provide an opportunity for addressing degradation of wetlands and forests to achieve sustainable water supply.
 - b. The need to increase absorption capacity as a mechanism for resource mobilization to finance Sector activities

- c. The need to reflect on the purpose and criteria for developing undertakings. Some of the undertakings have spanned over 2 financial years but not achieved. Thus the need to reflect on the criteria for determining the undertakings and mechanisms for tracking and ensuring there is progress.²¹
2. Areas of concern highlighted by the CSOs included:
- a. The need to widen Sector financing through accessing of soft loans from financial institutions,
 - b. Capacity gaps at district and lower local government levels,
 - c. The need to review the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on sanitation among the three line ministries
 - d. The need to rectify the Joint Water and Environment Sector Strategic Plan as a vehicle for strengthening coordination and alignment with Sector Priorities
 - e. Cross cutting issues between and within district local governments, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), implementation of the revised gender strategy that need to be prioritised
 - f. The need to operationalize the revised sector performance monitoring indicators in terms of basic definitions, transition from paper based to web/ on-line reporting and tap into the Village Health Teams/CSO presence that need to be fast tracked to demystify monitoring²²

Opportunities for CSOs and the Private Sector

The CSOs in the Water and Environment Sector have many forums through which they could inform the Sector and they have been fully involved through their Umbrella organisations (UWASNET and Environmental Alert).

They participate in:

1. Preparation of the annual Sector Performance Report.
2. The Annual Reviews.
3. Preparation of issues papers to input the National Development Plans.

The Sector information includes data from NGOs and the private sector. However, more involvement of the private sector actors would add value in the discussion and decision making of water and environmental issues.

²¹Water and Environment Sector, the 10th Joint Government of Uganda – Development Partners Sector Review 2018, Agreed minutes – 18th – 20th September 2018 Speke Resort Munyonyo, Kampala, pp.10-16

²² Ibid, p. 10-11.

Challenges

1. Sometimes there is low participation from stakeholders who are not directly under the control of the lead institution/Ministry.
2. Inadequate financing to the Sector still remains a major challenge thus affecting the fulfilment of the set Sector and national targets and will require increased efforts by the SWG in resource mobilization.
3. Coordination with various line ministries is also crucial. Line ministries through SWGs coordination are yet to jointly set up common aims, specific indicators, and a strategy towards budget efficiency, to achieve the goals effectively.

Accountability Sector

The Structure of the Accountability SWG

The Leadership Committee is the top most organ of the Accountability Sector, providing political leadership, and policy guidance and direction to the Sector. The Committee is chaired by the Minister of Finance Planning and Economic Development and its composition includes Ministers responsible for Public Service, Local Government, Ethics and Integrity, Kampala Capital City Authority; Inspector General of Government, and Auditor General.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is responsible for formulating Sector policies and priorities. It is chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Inspectorate of Government (IG) and includes Accounting Officers and Chief Executives of Accountability Sector Institutions

The Accountability Sector Working Group

This is a technical committee that implements Sector policies in line with Accountability Sector Investment Plan (ASIP). The SWG is chaired by the Accountant General and includes Directors from the Accountability Sector Institutions, representatives of Development Partners, civil society and the private sector. At the lower level, there are Technical Working Groups for the four thematic areas i.e. Economic Management; Resource Mobilization and Allocation; Budget Execution and Accountability; Audit/Anticorruption. The TWGs are chaired by Directors and constituted by senior technical officers from Sector institutions at Principal Level or by a Director and co-chaired by Development Partners.

Functionality of the SWG

The Sector is coordinated by a Secretariat with full-time staff. The SWG meets quarterly. Access to verifiable minutes was however not possible because of a long bureaucracy. There are, however, reports that indicate the functionality of the SWG, such as, Accountability Sector Joint Annual Review Reports; and insight from key informants who are members and attend the meetings which sometimes are not properly planned.²³

The Accountability Sector contributes to the fourth objective of NDP II that is to Strengthen Mechanisms for Quality, Effective and Efficient Service Delivery. As per the NDPII, the Accountability Sector is composed of two Sub Sectors: (i) Economic and Financial Management Services and (ii) Audit. The Sector is concerned with the mobilisation, management and accounting for the utilisation of public resources to facilitate the delivery of quality and equitable services.

The PFM component of the Accountability Sector has developed effective coordination systems to promote PFM reform across GoU with support from the joint Development Partner Finance Management Programme (DP FINMAP). The Public Expenditure Management Committee (PEMCOM) is chaired by the Deputy Secretary to Treasury, with a DP from the PFM Working Group as co-chair. PEMCOM meetings commence with statements from GoU, DPs and the Civil Society, represented by Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG). The PEMCOM has developed a high-level action matrix to track progress of key reforms. This matrix sets time-frames for achievement of agreed actions, with the deadlines used to guide the agenda of the PEMCOM meetings. MDAs are held accountable through this matrix and report progress at PEMCOM. Decisions taken at the meeting are tracked through an action log.

The SWG follows Public investment guidelines while identifying, appraising and approving development projects. Feedback on service delivery is done through: Regional accountability forums; Quarterly reports from institution and on-site visits by the secretariat before regional forums. However, there is no system of tracking DPs investments particularly off budget supports. The Sector is working out an AID Platform system to manage the tracking of donor funds. The SWG participates in shaping issues that are considered in the National Performance Assessment exercise coordinated by the OPM and the preparation of the NDP III.

Policy processes

The following are studies and strategy that present opportunity for input by interested stakeholders:

- Study on 'Support to formalisation of the informal sector'
- Implementation of the Domestic Revenue mobilisation strategy to start in 2019/2020 FY.
- Study on strengthening cooperation of oversight roles in LGs on-going

²³Observation from a key informant, November 2019

Opportunities for the CSO and the private Sector

The Civil Society and the private sector are represented by CSBAG and Private Sector Foundation. There are very many opportunities for CSOs and the private sector actors to make a contribution because the sector is composed of more than 16 agencies. CSBAG has an opportunity to nominate different CSOs to the membership of different clusters that essentially constitute the broad technical working committees under the PEMCOM. Opportunities range from influencing policy on management, public procurement, corruption and audit work that can be taken on by the CSO and the private sector. There are also opportunities to learn and understand the challenges the Sector is facing so that non-state actors are able to provide appropriate solutions. Their contribution is work in progress.

As one key actor observed,

*It is still very challenging to influence because it takes time and it is complicated. There are still perceptions that CSOs are just “noise makers” and contribute no good. The system is still very rigid. However, a few champions are really pushing forward for an open system, inclusive participation and appreciating CSO input. If we keep having more of these champions we can get to influence activities and decisions in the SWGs but it also required a lot of capacity building on the CSO side because you have to be well equipped with knowledge of the issues to be discussed.*²⁴

Challenges

1. Lack of regular planned meetings. Meetings are not well coordinated and planned. As one respondent observed, “they just happen.” “It shall require a good strategy to adhere to schedules and bring in dynamism and vibrancy for the SWG to achieve its objectives with the mandate”.²⁵
2. The presence of CSO on the SWG is still based on ‘gentleman’s agreement’. There is no enforceable legal framework that defines CSO and private sector representation, such as, the number of expected representatives from the CSOs or private sector, their roles, as well as, the nature of their participation.

²⁴Interview with a key respondent on the opportunities that exist for CSOs and private sector actors to influence policy in the Accountability Sector through the SWG, November 2019.

²⁵ Interview with non-state actor and Development partner, November, 2019.

3. CSO and private sector involvement is still inadequate. Yet, several private sector entities have good practices on accountability to share within the Sector. There is need to bring in more CSOs and the private sector on board that can actively and effectively participate in decision making.

Works and Transport Sector

Under the Structure, the Ministry of Works and Transport shoulders the overall responsibility for the coordination of the Sector with the Top Management Team headed by the Minister at the helm of this process. The top management includes, Ministers, Permanent Secretary, Directors from Ministry and Agencies and Commissioner Policy and planning.

Works and Transport Sector Working Group

While the Works and Transport Sector Working Group (WTSWG) is mandated to lead and oversee the processes of planning, coordinating, monitoring and reviewing the performance of the Sector, the Policy and Planning Department coordinates policy formulation, planning, budgeting, reporting and annual joint monitoring and is the secretariat for the WTSWG.

Functionality of the SWG

On the whole, the structure of the WTSWG is not complete. There are no Technical Working Groups that would scrutinize issues before they are presented to the main SWG. In the key documents of the Sector, such as, the 6th Joint Monitoring Mission Report, August 2019; the 15th Joint Transport Sector Review Workshop presentations; and in the Annual Sector Performance Report, FY 2018/19 of September 2019, the contribution of the SWG is not captured. It was observed that monthly meetings at the level of SWG were on a high side and tended to make it a routine technical forum for the lead agency (Ministry of Works and Transport - MoWT). This is why there was a low turn up in the meetings by the Chief Executives of the Agencies and non-state actors.

The Ministry of Works and Transport is charged with the responsibility of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of Sector policies, plans and programs for efficient Works, Public Transport, Physical infrastructure and Services, as well as, performance of transport Agencies.

To perform these functions effectively, the Ministry established a comprehensive Transport Sector Data Management System (TSDMS) that is used for performance monitoring and evaluation. The TSDMS is a key component of the Sector M&E system. The TSDMS was developed using DevInfo Technology and provides online access to information using web-based technology. The Sector also has a Sector M & E Committee that reports to the Sector Working Group on a regular basis.

It was reported that the agencies under the Sector did not appear to see the benefits of the Sector coordination process. Whilst an effective monitoring system had been developed for the Sector, there was concern from DPs that long-standing policy issues, such as, adequate resources for road maintenance, progress on axle load controls, and improved inter-modal transport planning were often raised at annual review meetings, but with limited progress.²⁶ However, on the inadequacy and inefficiency of the load control system, it was reported that procurement of 5 Multi-deck weigh bridges was on-going and installation was expected to be completed in December 2019. Similarly procurement of three high Speed Weigh in Motion Systems for specific stations was on-going.

Challenges

1. Much of the investment and support from the Development Partners is in the construction area. The Railway, Water and Air transport are not well funded. In response, the SWG has proposed a Multi Model transport where all areas should be developed at the same time. The challenge, however, is for the WTSWG to mobilise resources to implement the new model.
2. There is tremendous road development but less maintenance – a function mainly for the GoU that is estimated between 26% and 30%. From the perspective of Development Partners, if maintenance is not stepped up by the GoU, DPs are going to scale down on development of more new roads. The challenge to the SWG is how to engage and secure more budget allocation by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development for road maintenance to at least 50%.
3. The attendance of the Chief Executive Officers of Agencies is low due to continuous delegation, yet, this is a decision making body that requires their physical presence. The consequence of this shortcoming is that it delays decision making in many respects. Similarly, the absence of Chief Executives of the Agencies sends a negative signal to DPs who are heavily financing these Agencies.

Opportunities for the CSO and the private Sector

As already pointed out the private sector is not represented on the WTSWG. This does not augur well in a private sector led economy. The CSO, however, are represented but with limited involvement as pointed out by the Chairperson of the Civil Society Coalition on Transport in Uganda (CISCOT) during the 15th Joint Transport Sector Review Workshop, September, 2019. These facts came out clearly:

²⁶ OPM, , Strengthening the Coordination function at the Office of the Prime Minister and Sector Working Groups, Final Report, April 2017.

By way of contributing to the sectors growth and development, CISCOT has walked the entire spectrum of processes at the MoWT and in all relevant fora for the sector except in the following areas: procurement, contract negotiation, the budgeting process, donor conferences, capacity building, technical evaluation of works, engaging the design agenda for the soft policy issues like disability gender responsive infrastructure and services, development of RAPS.²⁷

Such selective involvement of the civil society and exclusion of the private sector in critical policy issues of SWG undermines the effective functionality of the SWGs.

Education Sector

The Structure of Education SWG

The Ministry of Education and Sports is the lead institution in the Education Sector. The **Top Management Team** chaired by the Minister of Education and Sports comprises of the Ministers and the Permanent Secretary. It provides policy assurance and monitoring of the Education Sector Consultative Committee (the SWG).

The Education Sector Consultative Committee (ESCC)

Chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), the ESCC comprises of Senior Technical and Operational Personnel from the MoES, other line ministries, Agencies, Development Partners, CSOs and private sector. It is the driver of the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP)/Education Sector Investment Plan (ESIP). It handles programme designs, ESSP/ESIP Management and Monitoring, Supervision and Coordination of Working Groups, Education Development Partners' liaison; and advisory to the Top management.²⁸

Below the ESCC, there are cross-cutting Working Groups and Sub-Sector Working Groups. The cross-cutting working groups include: Sector Policy and Management; Monitoring and Evaluation, and Budget Sector Working group. The Sub-Sector Working Groups are: Primary; Secondary; Business, Technical and Vocational; Tertiary (Higher Education); Teacher Education; Special Needs Education; Gender Working Group; and Physical Education and Sports.²⁹

²⁷ MoT, civil society statement during the 15th Joint Transport sector Review workshop, 5th – 6th September 2019, REPORT p.65.

²⁸ See Annex 1b: Education SWAp Implementation and Management Arrangement' MoES, Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan 2017/18 – 2019/20ptember 2017, p.58.

²⁹; p.58.

Functionality of the SWG

The ESCC meets once a month and the Sub Sector Working Groups also meet regularly with minutes of these meetings available. For instance, the meeting minutes for the M&E cross cutting working group were available and verifiable during the course of this study. There are also quarterly review meetings to assess performance from each department on recurrent and capital expenditure. “Every end of the financial year, the Ministry holds a Sector Annual Review where all Education stakeholders are invited to participate”.³⁰ Where a member raised a critical issue but without adequate information, he or she may be required to write a position paper that clearly states what the Working Group should do/plea. It is a good practice of resolving controversial decision making. It was however noted that “regular attendance of officers from the line ministries is very low. This affects decision making in cross-cutting issues”.³¹

The ESCC is a very effective forum. It was the first working group to be established when SWAs were adopted in Uganda. It follows the national investment guidelines while approving projects. All projects must go through and M&E Sub Sector Working Group, the Sector Policy Management Working Group before the ESCC. It approves the budget that follows the Programme Based Budgeting Framework. There are timely assessments. The ESCC gets feedback on service delivery through regular and the annual assessment review processes. The Education Sector also has been participating in the national assessment exercise organised by the OPM and the on-going formulation NDPIII. The Sector has already submitted an Issues Paper to the NPA to input into the NDPIII.

Policy Processes

There are on-going policy processes in which stakeholders still have an opportunity to make input. These include but are not limited to:

1. Early Childhood Care and education Policy (to be presented to the Top Management).
2. Education Management Information System (at the level of Monitoring and Evaluation Cross-cutting Working Group).
3. Instructional Materials Policy (to be taken for national validation)
4. National Inclusive Policy (At the level of Monitoring and Evaluation Cross-cutting working Group).
5. National School Health Policy (at the level of Monitoring and Evaluation Cross-cutting working Group).
6. National Higher Education Policy (at the level of Monitoring and Evaluation Cross-cutting working Group).

³⁰With a senior technical officer in the MoES, October 2019.

³¹Interview with a senior member of the Secretariat for ESCC/SWG, October 2019.

7. National Curriculum and Assessment Policy (at the level of Monitoring and Evaluation Cross-cutting working Group).

Opportunities for Civil Society and the Private Sector

Civil Society Organisations are represented on the ESCC and attend its meetings. However, there is no evidence of presenting position papers or statements during review meetings. The ESSR report does not capture the contribution of CSOs and the private sector like it does for Development Partners. The Private Sector is not represented on ESCC. It does not appear on the membership list, review reports, yet, the ESSP formulation involved many actors including private sector players.³²

Challenges for the Sector Working Group

These challenges were generated from the response given by the key informants interviewed from the Ministry of Education who sit and attend the meetings of the ESCC and other Sub Sector Working Groups.

1. There is irregular attendance of meetings at Departmental level, M&E and Sector Policy Management Sub-Sector Working Groups. This affected the business of the ESCC. Similarly, at the ESCC level the line ministries attended when they felt the agenda had their issues of interest, yet, coordination of the Sector required regular attendance to all issues.
2. Financing of Sector Working Groups remained problematic and the budget line from the Ministry kept on declining. This could also partly explain the low attendance of the membership.
3. Not much was known of what the civil society and private sector did that effected the Sector, since there were few studies undertaken by those non-state actors that were at the disposal of the ESCC.
4. There was no system of tracking DP investments, especially, the off budget support. This makes supervision and monitoring of funds difficult in relation to meeting the priorities of the sector in accordance with the ESSP.

³² See the Executive Summary, Formulation process of ESSP, in MoES, Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan 2017/18 – 2019/20, p.x

Agriculture Sector

In terms of Structure, the Agriculture Sector Strategic Development Plan (ASSDP) provides that the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) is the lead institution of the Agricultural Sector with the Top Policy Management (TPM) providing the overall oversight role with respect to the implementation of the Sector policies and programmes. The ASSDP also indicates that the MAAIF will adopt Sector Wide Approaches (SWAP) in implementing the ASSDP by periodically bringing together development partners, private sector, academia, and civil society organisations to plan and review the implementation of interventions in the Sector in a consultative and participatory manner. In specific instances, it is to collaborate with the private sector to implement interventions through Public Private Partnerships (PPPs).

The Agriculture Sector Working Group (ASWG)

This is a platform for planning, coordinating, monitoring and reviewing the performance of MAAIF. The Agriculture Sector Working Group (ASWG) is chaired by PS Constituted by the Government Senior Staff, DPs, Academia, CSOs, and Private Sector. Under the ASWG is a sub-committee that deals with project appraisals. It is comprised of Commissioner Planning, Principal Economist, Two representatives of Development partners (USAID and IFAD) Representative of CSO (CIDI), and NPA

Functionality of the SWG

The ASWG meets quarterly although there were some meetings that were organised twice a month attended by a sub-committee of the SWG. This is an innovation of the ASWG. The minutes of the ASWG were available and verifiable. The Planning Department in MAAIF provides secretariat services for ASWG. There were Regional Joint Agricultural Sector Annual Reviews; and National Joint Annual Reviews to assess the performance of the Sector in relation to agreed priorities implemented through the Budget strategy.

The SWG was active and followed public investment management guidelines. The Sector implemented projects that were capital intensive. Projects begun with a concept that went through pre-appraisal stage, and then a proposal was appraised by TWGs, ASWG. They were minuted and sent to the Development Committee of the MOFPED through the Secretary to the Treasury. The SWG appreciates Programme Based Budgeting and Participates in the National Performance Assessment exercise.

The SWG submits periodic reports to the Office of the President, as well as, Quarterly and Annual Reports to the OPM. The Sector also prepares Quality Assurance Reports after data collection from Local Governments (LGs) and Local Governments Finance Commission (LGFC). Feedback is also through Regional Joint Agriculture Sector Annual review (AUG/SEPT after the closure of the FY); and National Joint Annual Reviews (AUG/

SEPT 29th -30th AUG 2019). Tracking of DP investments was still problematic although Projects were listed in Ministerial policy statements, Annual Work Plans, Performance Reports, and Public Investment Plan. They could also be traced in Public expenditure Review Report published by of the World Bank Group (WBG).

Policy Processes

The ASWG identified agro-industrialisation as main programme for NDPIII. The Sector was the first to submit the issues paper to the NPA to aid the preparation of the NDPIII. A Compendium (summary of the strategic plan) has already been produced under the guidance of the ASWG.

Policy issues being discussed in the agricultural sector³³ and bedrock of NDPIII include but not limited to:

1. Agro-industry as a driver of the manufacturing sub-sector.
2. Nine strategic industries extracting value and products from coffee, tea, cotton, cassava, maize, oil palm fish, dairy and beef.
3. Financing for the agro-industrialisation agenda.
4. Government role to go beyond an enabling environment to actively engage in supporting a sustainable Agro-industrialisation agenda.

Challenges

1. There are operational funding deficits that affect the SWG to undertake meaningful monitoring and evaluation roles.
2. Off budget funding is increasingly becoming problematic in terms of transparency (what actually is invested). The Challenge to the SWG, like in other Sectors, is to have detailed information on all off budget support that apparently, the DPs are not giving.

Opportunities for CSOs

The consortium of CSOs is represented on the SWG³⁴. They have been able to add value to policy formulation and legislations. CSOs participate in studies, regional and national review meetings. They make statements during the annual review meetings on critical issues. They also participate in the formulation of Sector Development Plans and are strong advocates for budget increases. They do it on the basis of the research they undertake. They present their findings to the ASWG³⁵

³³EPRC (2018), *Fostering a Sustainable Agro-industrialisation Agenda in Uganda*, Kampala: EPRC

³⁴ There is a consortium of 44 Non state actors themselves Non State Aactors Working Group in Agriculture. They are co-ordinated by Food Rights Alliance. See, a report titled JASAR 2019, Sector performance Agriculture Sector Strategic plan 2015/16- 2019/20 at a glance CSO Perspective.

³⁵ Coalition of Civil Society Organisations under the Non-state Actors Working Group in Agriculture produced a report titled JASAR 2019, Sector performance Agriculture Sector Strategic plan 2015/16- 2019/20 at a glance CSO Perspective. Among other things the report provides a snapshot to the sector priorities as laid out in the ASSP with a focus on what needs to be done to set a foundation for agro-industrialisation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The development of SWAps and operationalization of SWGs still remain key initiatives for aid effectiveness and good governance in Uganda. To implement SWAps, Sector Working Groups were introduced to among other things, review policies and plans; identify priorities; assess resource requirements and approve budgets; and review performance targets and outcomes.

This paper interrogates the functionality of SWGs, identifies the actors, the on-going policy processes, opportunities for non-state actors to make contribution and the challenges they face. On the whole, the paper identifies that the selected SWGs are all functional with different degrees of operation. While some have established secretariats, others are serviced through the Planning Departments with financial constraints to run their activities. There is little visibility in the documents of the Sectors on the role and processes SWGs guide. There are, however, good practices in some sectors to emulate in relation to tracking tools for implementation, cross-cutting issues and bringing on board non-state actors.

Furthermore, it is found that there is no legal basis for the establishment of SWGs, save for policy guidelines in various documents of government. Some of the actors in government are yet to appreciate the Programme Based Budgeting initiative that is critical in long term planning and using the budget strategy to deliver annual priorities hinged on a five-year development plan and also linked to outputs, outcomes and impacts.

In spite of these challenges, SWGs are so relevant in policy formulation and implementation. However, there is still plenty of room for improvement in their functionality, especially, in the involvement of more non-state actors, such as, CSOs and the private sector.

The following recommendations are proposed in a bid to improve the operations of the SWGs:

1. Government should consider housing a clause in the Public Finance Management Act (2015) to anchor the operationalization of SWAps and the functioning of the SWGs since there is no legal basis to establish SWGs.
2. There is need to have inter sector working groups interaction so that good practices in one sector are picked by other sectors. For example, in the Health Sector, HPAC, the SWG has a monitoring tool to track attendance, actions taken on a daily basis. Similarly, writing position papers on an issue of importance by a member of the Sector working group, and taking a participatory approach to formulate a research agenda are good practices in the Education Sector to tap into.

3. The Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development should consider creating a special Budget item for activities of the SWGs. There is an operational funding deficit within the Sectors that limits the SWGs' ability to undertake meaningful monitoring and evaluation roles.
4. The Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development should expedite the formulation of the Aid Platform Tool envisaged to track all development partners' investments. It is also recommended that as much as possible, Development Partners should refrain from attempting to use their own funds, whether Sector budget support or project support, to fund expenditures that are not priorities identified by the Sector Working Groups and included in the Sector Investment Plans.
5. There is need to bring on board more CSOs and the private sector that can actively and effectively participate in decision making during SWG meetings and other undertakings.
6. All SWGs should undertake to have sub-sector working group on cross-cutting issues. Cross-cutting issues, such as, Climate Change, HIV/AIDS, Environment, Monitoring and Evaluation, Gender, and Good Governance remain critical for the growth of the economy and overall health of the citizens.
7. In order to increase the visibility and the work of SWGs, an overview write-up on the functions/roles, activities, achievements and challenges; should be posted on the lead agencies (Ministries) website. Similarly, the key documents of the Sectors should capture the processes in which SWGs and Sub-Sector Working Groups engage in their output, such as, Sector Development Plans, quarterly review reports, annual Sector review reports and budget framework papers.

References

African Development Bank, (2004) Revised Guidelines for Bank Group Operations using Sector-wide Approaches (SWAs).

Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group, CSO's position paper on the Health Sector Budget FY2018/19. The paper is based on the analysis of the FY 2018/19 Ministerial Policy Statement for the Health Sector FY2018/19.

Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group, CSO's Position Paper on Works and Transport Sector on the Uganda National Budget Framework Paper FY 2017/18.

Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC), Fostering a Sustainable Agro-Industrialisation Agenda in Uganda, 2018.

Non State Actors Working Group in Agriculture, JASAR 2019: Sector Performance Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan 2015/16 – 2019/20 at a Glance, CSO Perspective. August 2019.

Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Health, Sector Budget Framework Paper FY 2018/19.

Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Agriculture Strategic Plan 2015/16-2019/20, June 2016.

Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Accountability Sector Annual Report for FY 2018/19, October 2019.

Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Health, Health Sector Development Plan, 2015/16 - 2019/20, September 2015.

Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Water and Environment, Water and Environment Sector Development Plan 2015/16-2019/20.

Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Education and Sports, Aide Memoire for the 25th Education and Sports Sector Review (ESSR), September 2018.

Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Education and Sports, Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan 2017/18 – 2019/20, September 2017.

Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Accountability Sector Bulletin, Issue 6, September 2019.

Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Health, HPAC Policy and Other Strategic Issues from July to June 2018/19.

Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Health, HPAC work plan for July 2018- June 2019- FY 2018/2019.

Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Water and Environment, The Contribution of Water Resources Development and Environmental management to Uganda's Economy: The Economic Study (n.d).

Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Works and Transport, Annual Sector Performance Report FY 2018/19, September 2019.

Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Works and Transport, The 6th Joint Monitoring Mission Report, September 2019.

Republic of Uganda, Office of the Prime Minister, strengthening the coordination function at the Office of the Prime Minister and Sector Working Groups, Final report, APRIL 2017.

Republic of Uganda, National Planning Authority, National Development Plan FY 2015/16 – FY 2019/20.

Republic of Uganda, National Planning Authority, Vision 2040.

Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Health, 2013. Guidelines for Governance and Management structures.

Water and Environment sector, the 10th Joint Government of Uganda – Development Partners Sector Review 2018, agreed minutes, 18th – 20th September 2018, Speke Resort Munyonyo, Kampala.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elijah Dickens Mushemeza is an academic, and author. He is a Professor of Political Science and Development Studies at Ankole Western University and a Senior Consultant at Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment. Previously he was the Dean Faculty of Business and Development Studies at Bishop Stuart University. He holds BA in Social Sciences, an MA degree in Development Studies and a PhD degree in Political Science from Makerere University. He is also a consultant on Education, Governance, Poverty, Politics, Conflict, Forced Migration, Security, Oil and Gas, and Development issues generally in Africa. He was previously a Coordinator of the MA degree programme in International Relations and Diplomatic Studies in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Makerere University. He has taught at Mbarara University of Science and Technology. Professor Mushemeza is a past alternate Executive Committee member of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa.

Emmanuel Keith Kisaame is a Research Fellow at ACODE. He is an Economist with over 8 years of experience in public expenditure reviews, Disaster Risk Reduction, gender policy review and economic empowerment. This experience has mostly been gained in developing country contexts including in post conflict settings. He has authored research in areas of public expenditure reviews, pro-poor budgeting, healthcare expenditure, Agricultural expenditure, disaster risk reduction, and poverty dynamics. He holds a M.A in Economic Policy and Planning and a B.A. in Economics from Makerere University. He has also acquired extensive training in social accountability. Keith previously worked as a Research Analyst with Development Initiatives, overseeing DI's work in Uganda.

About ACODE:

ACODE is an independent public policy research and advocacy Think Tank registered in Uganda. Our mission is to make public policies work for people by engaging in contemporary public policy research, community empowerment to demand for improved service delivery and advocacy. ACODE has for the last eight consecutive years been ranked in the Global Go To Think Tank Index as one of the top think tanks in the world.

ADVOCATES COALITION FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT (ACODE)

Plot 96, Kanjokya Street, Kamwokya.

P. O. Box 29836, Kampala. Tel: +256 312 812150.

Email: acode@acodea-u.org / library@acode-u.org Website: www.acode-u.org

