
Annex D

Preliminary Report of the Midterm District Institutional Study

NORTHERN GHANA MILLENNIUM VILLAGES IMPACT EVALUATION

Date: **November 2016**

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External Impact Evaluation of the Millennium Villages Project, Northern Ghana

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

Camfed	Campaign for Female Education
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHC	Community Health Committee
CHPS	Community Health Planning System
CHV	Community Health Volunteer
CHW	Community Health Worker
CLTS	Community-Led Total Sanitation
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DA	District Assembly
DACF	District Assemblies Common Fund
DCD	District Coordinating Director
DDF	District Development Facility
DFID	(UK) Department for International Development
DPO	District Planning Officer
DWST	District Water and Sanitation Team
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GES	Ghana Education Service
GH¢	Ghanaian Cedi
GHS	Ghana Health Service
JHS	Junior High School
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MTDP	Medium-Term Development Plan
MoFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Millennium Promise
MV	Millennium Village
MVP	Millennium Villages Project
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHIS	National Health Insurance Scheme
NORST	Northern Region Small Towns Water and Sanitation Project
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PSE	Planning for School Excellence
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
RING	Resilience in Northern Ghana
SADA	Savannah Accelerated Development Authority
SMC	School Management Committee
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WATSAN	Water and Sanitation

Executive summary

INTRODUCTION

This study is one of three making up the qualitative part of an independent evaluation of the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) Millennium Villages Project (MVP) (2012–17). Together the three qualitative studies seek to provide an understanding of the qualitative changes happening in the Millennium Village (MV) cluster and control areas as well as serve as an interpretational lens on the quantitative data. Three reports have been written following the fieldwork prior to the synthesis process in September 2015. Each provides one piece of a puzzle that has yet to be assembled. Deeper cross-referencing of the data with the quantitative data has also yet to take place. A synthesised report will be produced once this is done.

MAIN FINDINGS

The district officials are beginning to see **signs of impact of the SADA-MVP on the functioning of district and community organisations and actors**. The *district administrative staff* see an improvement in infrastructure and facilities and increased staff capacity (experience, knowledge and skills) as a result of training they have received, which can be replicated in other communities in the district. Various sector-linked committees (health, education, agriculture, water and sanitation, CLTS) in the communities have similarly benefited from capacity-building activities. With this they have noticed an increase in the confidence and trust in the district assemblies among citizens. SADA-MVP staff also spoke of some community committee members beginning to use their new-found skills and confidence to stand for district assembly (local government) elections.

The *district heads of sector departments* also told of several positive effects observed within their sectors. Like their colleagues in district administration, they referred to increased confidence among citizens who have noticed such changes as improved performance as shown by the results of periodic testing by SADA-MVP, increased teacher recruitment and attendance, increased health and education infrastructure, construction of household toilet facilities by community members and improved coordination

among district-level offices. Building contractors have spoken of applying SADA-MVP standards in construction and bidding processes now also being applied to non-SADA-MVP projects they undertake. SADA-MVP staff have seen improved professionalism among district officials in terms of time management and meeting deadlines.

The district officials all said that the SADA-MVP had had no **effect on the resource allocations from central government**, either up or down, although there was one example cited by the Department of Agriculture in West Mamprusi and Mamprugu Moaduri Districts of being excluded from the Resilience in Northern Ghana (RING) project because they were beneficiaries of the SADA-MVP. When they complained an agreement was reached to include them in the next phase. There were also two examples of the districts reallocating resources meant for projects within MV cluster communities to others outside the cluster because SADA-MVP has undertaken those projects.

As far as the district administrations are aware no **new major organisations or institutions** have been created or emerged as a result of the SADA-MVP. The heads of sector departments noted that community-level committees pertaining to their sectors had been identified and strengthened or created by SADA-MVP. In addition, most sectors have seen the rekindling, adaptation or recruitment of focal people at community level. These include health, education and veterinary volunteers/workers. District officials were mostly ambivalent about these as, while they can help immensely with workload and increasing community access to government services, they cannot currently see how their SADA-MVP-level remuneration will be sustained post-project. In some cases people who have previously been content to volunteer are now being paid, which they think may affect their future expectations, reduce the level of community spiritedness and damage positive traditions of communal labour and volunteering.

District officials reported a number of ways in which they see the **SADA-MVP impacting on poverty and the standard of living** of people in the SADA-MVP cluster and districts. They highlighted the infrastructure and facilities in all

the associated sectors. **Among the results they perceive** at this midterm point are¹:

- Increased food security from the provision of farm inputs, cultivation of maize in commercial quantities and training in new farming methods and management practices.
- Improved access to more proximate health facilities and more health personnel, lives saved in emergencies by ambulances, improved nutrition status and immunisation due to regular monitoring and health promotion, reduced child and maternal mortality.
- Improved school performance due to increased pupil and teacher attendance as a result of new classrooms and teacher housing, better pupil:book/computer ratios, uniforms and scholarships for 'needy' pupils. Children being able to attend school much closer to home in both SADA-MVP and non-SADA-MVP communities.
- Increased economic activity due to enhanced mobility and market access as a result of road rehabilitation as well as access to electricity and access to savings and loans schemes to expand businesses – for some.

The SADA-MVP governance structure has changed from what was initially planned with the merging of the proposed Project Steering Committee (PSC) and stakeholders coordinating body into one PSC, which now includes the heads of key sector ministries and meets annually. According to the SADA-MVP team it controls between 80–90% of project funds as these are used for infrastructure projects that are handled directly by them. The remainder is used for capacity-building activities and top-up allowances for the various staff and volunteers/workers. **Memoranda of understanding (MOU)** with the four district administrations and with sector departments are now in place, with some due for renewal. These are perceived to set out the relationship with the SADA-MVP clearly, and their

associated annual plans are said to be followed to a large extent.

There were differing views among the district officials about the **type and extent of participation of district institutions and actors** in the SADA-MVP. This seemed to vary according to: the presence of an MOU, the size, status and existing relationship of a particular department within the national and local government system (where some are larger, more central and influential than others), the role of the department in SADA-MVP activities (making some more important than others) and the capacity of district leaders to facilitate participation. There are also varying expectations among individual district officials about the type and level of participation that is needed or desired. In most cases the amount and depth of participation by district officials had increased since the baseline with many saying that they have been involved increasingly in design and decision making, as opposed to the initial stages when they were merely informed or consulted. The exception was the Department of Community Development and Social Welfare and the Gender Desk Officers who complained that they had scarcely been involved in the SADA-MVP at all despite their capacity to mobilise communities and relate to marginalised and vulnerable groups.

All the **contributions by the district assemblies and communities to the SADA-MVP** cited by district staff during the institutional study were non-financial. Those mentioned broadly fell into three categories: i) time and ideas as part of project management processes and capacity building events, ii) use of government facilities and equipment and iii) involvement of government staff in project implementation. Most were of the view that this was a significant and substantial contribution given the financial constraints that the district assemblies face with inadequate and unreliable flows of revenue.

The overall SADA-MVP approach of working through the existing district structures and departments seems generally to be appreciated

¹ These are the perspectives of government officials only. They need to be verified by the findings of the other two qualitative studies and in particular the statistical data analysed by the evaluation team.

and considered to be relatively **cost-effective** by comparison with other district-level external interventions. Some district staff were of the opinion that it was not only cost effective but would lead to greater likelihood of the work being sustained. However, the study participants raised three ways in which existing cost-effective practices of government institutions are being undermined by the MVP. The first was where SADA-MVP provides monthly payments to the various 'community volunteers/workers' who fill personnel gaps. The second concern was that the approach to construction undermines the traditional spirit and practice of communal labour on which communities have relied for a long time. The third area relates to the organising of residential training events in hotels, thereby introducing unnecessary subsistence and lodging costs that the district assemblies and departments cannot possibly meet in future.

In the view of district officials, citizens from **neighbouring communities have benefited** from SADA-MVP interventions by: commuting to MVP communities to access services, thus reducing the distances involved in accessing government services, benefitting from the new skills taught to community members in MVP communities and to government personnel who serve non-MVP communities in the districts as well. They also benefit from infrastructure such as roads and culverts that have been constructed to link the various communities. Notwithstanding these benefits, most district staff keenly feel the imbalances created by the MVP with its multiple advantages awarded to a minority of communities.

The Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) is the main pillar of the local government planning and budgeting process. Given the history of resource and funding constraints that have plagued the district assemblies over the years however and as illustrated by the case of Builsa South District which has two-thirds of the beneficiary communities (Section 3.2), it is difficult to imagine how the MTDP alone can be the mechanism for sustaining the SADA-MVP – particularly as government revenue patterns remain unchanged.

The SADA-MVP acknowledges the importance of community participation and ownership as key to

sustainability and has made efforts in that respect. SADA-MVP staff expressed scepticism about whether five years was sufficient time to embed new practices and mind sets and proposed a two or three-year extension to consolidate the gains in agriculture, since it serves as the main income source that will sustain what has been achieved in health and education.

Other key issues emerged during the institutional study:

- The need for government institutions to build co-operative relationships with citizen groups and other non-governmental organisations. Apart from transforming farmer groups into co-operatives and working with various volunteer/worker schemes and sector committees there were few signs of the district authorities and SADA-MVP developing co-operative relationships with citizen groups.
- The MVP faces challenges with building local ownership. Despite the institutional arrangement where the SADA-MVP is aligned with government structures and the assertion from staff in the departments of education, health and agriculture that SADA-MVP projects are in line with their own plans, there was little evidence indicating that the district officials felt ownership over the projects.
- The current status of Ghana's decentralisation framework, which is meant to drive local development. Numerous accounts from the district officials and the project team in this study show how, to a large extent, Ghana's local government system is only partially functional (uneven devolution of powers, high staff turnover, limited fiscal decentralisation, inadequate and inconsistent revenue, etc.).
- As long as a lack of accountability to citizens and rampant corruption, whether real or perceived, persists it will be difficult for donors or international NGOs to entrust project funds into the hands of district authorities, which further undermines their authority (Section 3.3).
- Lack of control over the whole. The purpose of the Millennium Village (MV) is to bring about synergistic change that will, at the end of its interventions, continue to propel the well-

being of the people and local development. However, at district level the local government system does not yet operate as one unit, managing the whole in a coordinated way as was intended in the legislation (Act 462).

CONCLUSION

Overall, most of the district officials who took part in the focus group discussions said they are happy with the SADA-MVP in terms of what has been achieved since it started its operations in January 2012.

At midterm it is clear that the work in the five key sectors that the SADA-MVP is principally involved in (agriculture, health, education, water and sanitation, infrastructure) is much improved. There is however no sense at this stage that a critical mass of the human, financial and material resources have been mobilised within the district and so the likelihood is that the work will continue to depend on a continual injection of funds. The marginal participation or neglect of the traditional authorities, citizen groups and sub-district institutions that could galvanise broader participation could undermine the gains made. Furthermore, the likelihood of the project affecting the district institutions positively and in a lasting manner are severely hampered by the current status of the decentralised local government system. Most notably, the erratic disbursement of funds from central government renders their efforts at medium- and long-term planning and implementation almost pointless.

1 Introduction

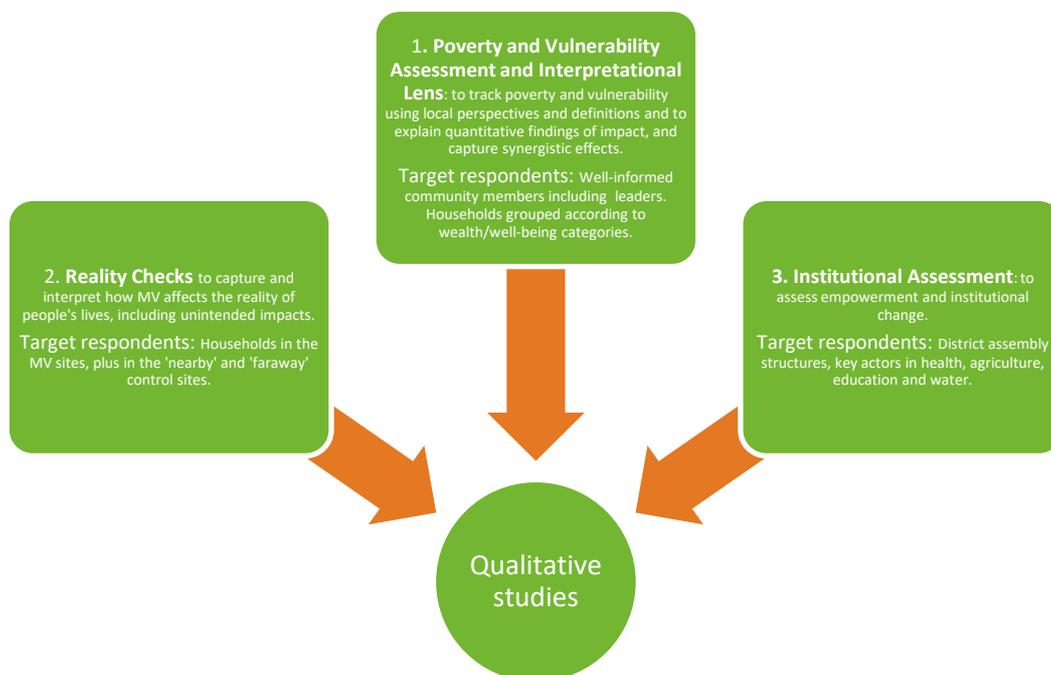
The Savannah Accelerated Development Authority Millennium Villages Project

The Millennium Villages Project (MVP) was designed to show how an integrated approach to community-led development can translate the international Millennium Development Goal (MDG) agreements into results in rural Sub-Saharan Africa. The Millennium Village (MV) model provides an integrated package of interventions that aims to lift rural communities out of poverty. The central hypothesis is that addressing the most immediate capital deficiencies in communities and households through a form of local 'big push' provides the necessary conditions for reaching the threshold required to move towards local resilience and self-sustaining economic growth. A key part of the approach is to improve agricultural productivity and market development, enabling people living in rural areas to save and accumulate wealth, stimulating investment and diversification into non-farm work. The MVP was piloted in Kenya (Sauri) and Ethiopia (Koraro) in 2005 and launched at scale in 2006 across 10 countries.

As part of the second phase of implementation across Africa, the Millennium Promise Alliance approached the UK Department for International Development (DFID) to finance a Millennium Village in rural Northern Ghana. The proposal was for the design, implementation and monitoring of a five-year set of integrated interventions to accelerate development in a cluster of communities of up to 30,000 people based on the MV model with potential to be substantially scaled up. DFID agreed to support the new MV along with an independent and rigorous evaluation. The Savannah Accelerated Development Authority Millennium Villages Project (SADA-MVP) thus started operations in three project districts in January 2012, making it the second MV set of clusters in Ghana. The site is spread across the West Mamprusi, Mamprugu Moaduri and Builsa South districts. By supporting the new MVs together with an independent evaluation, DFID and the semi-autonomous SADA aims to provide evidence that can guide further development interventions in Northern Ghana, influence development policy in Ghana and inform the international debate on the effectiveness of the MV model (Masset, E., Jupp, D., Korboe, D., Dogbe, T., Acharya, A., & Barnett, C., 2013).

The parts of the independent longitudinal impact evaluation

The independent evaluation of the SADA MP is based on quantitative and qualitative data with the qualitative aspect made up of three separate but interconnected studies, of which this district institutional study is one.



It should be noted therefore that this report is but one part of the whole assessment with a particular focus on the experiences and perspectives of the MVP of the district actors involved. The perspective of community members and the statistical data relating to the MVP can be found in the reports from the other studies.

Following on from the above, this report sets out the preliminary analysis after the completion of field activities but prior to the stage where team members have met to compare, connect and discuss data from the different studies. As such, it is important to note that there are sections where, for example, one district has provided statistical data and the others have not or where a district perspective needs to be verified or compared against community perspectives or quantitative data to ascertain a more complete picture. The Institutional Assessment will be looked at holistically with the two other qualitative studies (the Reality Check Approach and the Participatory Rural Assessment) in which the real value lies in joining findings from all streams together and synthesised alongside the statistical analysis. This will help to determine the impact at the midterm based on the difference-in-difference evaluation design. Eventually this report will form an annex to a midterm evaluation report that draws together the findings from all of the studies.

Purpose of the district institutional study

As part of the independent longitudinal impact evaluation activities, a baseline district institutional study was conducted in 2012–13² before the project interventions took off fully.³ The main purpose of this study was to understand the institutional and governance arrangements that had been put in place for the management and implementation of the SADA-MVP to keep track of the changes occurring over the implementation period. This midterm institutional study, therefore, is designed to understand, from the perspective of key district actors and the project management, how the relationships between institutions/organisations at various levels have evolved as a result of the project and why. Their perspective is important because one of the expected project outputs noted in DFID's Business Case for the support to the Millennium Village in Northern Ghana is: *Strengthened local institutions and community capacity – to increase the involvement and commitment by the local community and officials, and help to secure sustainability of the impacts.*⁴ This means that the sustainability of SADA-MVP interventions and their impact during and after project implementation will, to a large extent, be dependent on the level of ownership and control by community and district actors, which in turn is dependent on Ghana's decentralised development framework. Evaluations of integrated rural development projects implemented in the 1970s and 1980s point to the importance of institutional capacity and ownership for project implementation and sustainability of the impacts.⁵

The purpose of this midterm district institutional study and the baseline one preceding it is to understand the institutional and governance arrangements in place for the management and implementation of SADA-MVP activities and to track the changes occurring during implementation. The primary data for the study was taken from six focus groups of district officials that took place in the district capitals of the three project districts between 11–15 May 2015. In addition to the focus groups, information was verified by interviews with SADA-MVP staff and SADA-MVP documents.

Critical contextual changes

Changes to district demarcation took place across Ghana during the early stages of the SADA-MVP in 2012–13. At this time Builsa District was divided into two (Builsa North and Builsa South) with all the project communities ending up in Builsa South. Builsa North was included in the initial baseline assessment because some of its staff had been in the original Builsa District and were responsible for the preliminary partnership agreements with the SADA-MVP. With no SADA-MVP interventions taking place in Builsa North District the SADA-MVP only dealt with the new Builsa South directly and the staff of Builsa North did not see the need to be included in the study.

² While the reports for the institutional study were produced in 2013, the data gathering in the two Builsa Districts took place in 2012. The study could not be undertaken in the other two districts at this time however due to a strike by local government personnel. The study in the remaining districts therefore took place in early 2013.

³ ITAD Appendix F: Baseline Report – Institutional Analysis of the Builsa District, 2013.

ITAD Appendix G: Baseline Report - Institutional Analysis West Mamprusi District, 2013.

⁴ DFID, Business Case: Millennium Village in Northern Ghana, 2011, p. 2.

⁵ (i) DFID, EvSum438 Synthesis of Integrated Rural Development Projects. 2004

(https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67873/ev438s.pdf); (ii) The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Country Case Study – “Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) North Western Province, Zambia”, 2005.

(iii) Cynthia Clapp-Wincek, Integrated Rural Development Projects: A Summary of the Impact Evaluations, Center for Development Information and Evaluation, 1985.

1.1 Objectives of the midterm district institutional study

The objectives of the midterm district institutional study were to see what progress had been made so far regarding the following:

- The effective participation of district institutions and the actors in decision making in the SADA-MVP project implementation and monitoring.
- The effect of the SADA-MVP on the district and community institutions and actors.
- The effect of the SADA-MVP on poverty and the standard of living of the people in the beneficiary and neighbouring communities, and the three participating districts as a whole.
- The contributions of districts and community institutions to the projects initiated under SADA-MVP.
- a) The cost-effectiveness and b) the sustainability of the projects initiated under SADA-MVP from the perspective of the district actors.

Six key issues

The same six key issues explored during the baseline were revisited in the midterm study as follows:

1. Institutional arrangements between MVP and the district and community institutions in terms of:
 - Changes in institutional, financial and governance arrangements and how they have impacted on effective participation of district and community institutions and actors in decision making and project implementation, monitoring and reviews compared to other past or existing projects.
 - What structures and mechanisms are in place for sustaining the projects, services, facilities, etc. that have been implemented in the MVP communities when the project ends?
 - What is MVP's exit strategy? What plans have the districts in place to take over from MVP?
2. Effect of MVP on district and community institutions and actors in terms of:
 - Which existing district and community institutions MVP is working with and what are their roles and responsibilities?
 - Which new organisations or institutions have been created or emerged in response to MVP?
 - What has been the effect/impact of the MVP (positively or negatively) on:
 - The functioning of district and community institutions?
 - The confidence and trust of the people in these institutions?
 - Allocation of district revenues?
 - What contribution have communities made in kind towards the building of infrastructure and the attitudes of community leaders and chiefs toward MVP?
3. **The effect of MVP on poverty and standard of living of the people in the MV communities, neighbouring communities and the MV districts as a whole** in terms of: poverty, health, education, agriculture and infrastructure.
4. **The contribution of districts and community institutions to projects initiated under MVP and if the MVP has affected Central Government's resource** (human, financial, material, projects, services, etc.) to the district?
5. The **cost-effectiveness of projects** initiated under MVP.
6. The **sustainability of projects initiated under MVP** in terms of community ownership, training of facility users, measures for maintenance, sensitisation of people, etc.).

1.2 Methodology and organisation of the study

Location

As outlined above, there were just two project districts (Buisa and West Mamprusi) at the start of the SADA-MVP in 2012 but a few months into the project each of these was split into two in line with a wider government decentralisation policy. Buisa District was split into Buisa North and Buisa South districts and the Mamprusi District was split into West Mamprusi and Mamprugu-Moaduri districts. In both cases a new district capital was created and the old one retained, though with fewer resources and a smaller area of jurisdiction. Across Ghana new districts began from scratch with few facilities or resources.

As a consequence of these institutional changes, the baseline study was faced with two challenges. The first was that most of the engagement between the SADA-MVP and the district officials was done with the staff of the 'old' districts. The second was that most staff for the two new districts (Buisa South and Mamprugu-Moaduri) had just been recruited and did not have functioning offices in their new district capitals. As a result, some officials still worked from their original district offices. Acknowledging the situation, the baseline assessment team involved personnel from both the old and new districts so that the staff of the old districts could share their experiences and knowledge of the institutional arrangements with the new ones. This was done within focus group discussions. The Buisa South was paired with the Buisa North and the Mamprugu-Moaduri with West Mamprusi. However, for the midterm assessment the team went to each district (except Buisa North) separately.

Main sources of information

Six focus groups (two in each of the three districts) were organised with the key district actors to discuss the issues outlined in 1.1 above, using a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix 4). As was done with the baseline study, the midterm assessment team met the district administrative team separately as one focus group and the heads or representatives of the district technical departments and agencies as another. The focus groups were made up of the following participants, subject to availability:

District administration team	The District Chief Executive, the District Coordinating Director, the District Planning Officer, the District Finance Officer and/or the District Budget Officer)
Heads of district departments	Ghana Health Service, Ghana Education Service, Department of Community Development and Social Welfare, District Works Department, Department of Agriculture, Environmental Health Department, Gender Desk Officer

The participants varied slightly by district. In Buisa South District the administration focus group had five participants and four heads of technical departments. In West Mamprusi District there were three administration staff and eleven departmental staff. In Mamprugu-Moaduri District there were three administration staff and six departmental staff.

To protect the identity of those who participated in the discussions (so as not to create any animosity between them and the SADA-MVP staff they have to continue to work with) only the number of district officials and whether they work with the district administration or the technical departments have been noted in Appendix 1.

To allow for effective focus group discussions (FGDs) and note-taking the study team consisted of one person as the facilitator and one as a note taker. On completion of the FGDs in each district, the team discussed the main issues arising to identify possible gaps and follow-up questions. The notes from these district focus groups provided the majority of the primary data for this report. Information from notes from an earlier meeting with the SADA-MVP team after the Participatory Rural Appraisal study in March 2015 was used to substantiate some of the information provided by the district actors. At the time of the institutional study the team wanted to meet the SADA-MVP team after the district FGDs but they were preoccupied by the visit of an MV delegation which included Jeffrey Sachs. However, a top management member of the SADA-MVP team was interviewed subsequently by Skype, largely to verify or comment on issues arising from the FGDs.

On a few occasions the study team used simple scoring to provide an idea of participant emphasis or weighting. Using a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), the FGD participants were asked to discuss and give a score to an issue or

projects. However, the emphasis in using the scoring methodology was on the reasons and explanations people gave for their scores rather than the scores themselves.

Analysis of the discussions of the administrative focus groups in each district revealed very similar issues emerging. The same was true for the technical focus groups. For this reason, instead of producing separate reports for each district, as was done at the baseline, there is only one report for the midterm institutional study, incorporating the perspectives of the district administrators and those of the technical personnel. Where deemed necessary the views of the SADA-MVP team have also been incorporated. The report has focused on what the district officials and the SADA-MVP team had to say. It is only at the end of the report that the study team has raised some emerging issues.

Study team and timeframe

The study was undertaken by a team of four researchers from Participatory Development Associates Ltd, a member of the Itad-led consortium (including the Institute of Development Studies and the London School of Tropical Hygiene and Medicine), which is independently conducting the impact evaluation. The focus groups for the study took place in the three districts (West Mamprusi, Mamprugu-Moaduri and Builsa South) from 11–15 May 2015.

1.3 Limitations of the midterm district institutional study

Changes in district boundaries and staff

As mentioned above and further described in Section 2.1, the changes in district boundaries as a result of national wide policy affected both the institutions as a whole and the people working within them. The main limitation faced by the midterm district institutional study was that many of the people who had participated in the baseline study were no longer present – partly as a result of these changes and partly due to the general practice of transferring personnel to other posts on a regular basis. Most of the administrative and technical staff in the West Mamprusi District who took part in the baseline had been transferred to other districts, metropolitan or municipal assemblies. The new District Coordinating Director, for instance, had been in the district for just seven months. The key administrative and technical personnel in the two other districts, Mamprugu-Moaduri and Builsa South, which had recently been carved out of the two old districts at the time of the baseline study were not in place at that time and therefore had not participated in it. Those who had participated in the baseline were staff from the old districts who had been seconded temporarily to assist with the setting up of the departments in the new districts, and almost all had been transferred out of the new districts. The staff of Builsa North who were part of the activities and meetings leading to the start of the SADA-MVP and who participated in the baseline study signalled that since they were no longer a project district they were not in the position to be part of the midterm evaluation.

All these changes inevitably had an effect on the consistency in the data that the team was able to gather. For example, several of the new personnel taking part in the FGDs had not followed the project activities since the baseline and thus could only share their sense of what had changed since the time they had joined. The study team thus drew on the baseline report to determine some of the changes since the start of the project. The absence of district key actors such as the former district planning officers of West Mamprusi and Builsa North Districts, who were deeply involved in the pre-implementation activities of SADA-MVP, meant that it was difficult to determine whether the project is delivering as initially planned or to what extent it has deviated from the agreed plan. Despite these limitations however it was evident from the discussions that because both the administrative and technical staff of the three district assemblies work closely with the SADA-MVP staff they were between them able to provide sufficiently detailed data, from their perspective, on the institutional and governance arrangements and relationships in the project.

Links with the quantitative evaluation data

It was not possible to sequence the collection and sharing of the quantitative and qualitative data as was envisaged in the design document. The original idea was to start the qualitative midterm studies in November 2014 having analysed the quantitative data and identified areas for the study team to look at in more detail with the community and district actors in order to hear their explanations and reasoning for some of the outcomes.

As at the middle of January 2015, because the Itad evaluation team had not received the main SADA-MVP data set/data from the Millennium Promise and the Earth Institute, it was decided that the qualitative studies could not delay any further and so all three went ahead between February and May using the quantitative data from the baseline and the mini-surveys of 2013.⁶

1.4 Structure of this report

The following sections largely mirror the manner in which data was gathered, i.e. from the two separate groups: district administration and heads of district technical departments as outlined in Section 1.2 above. Thus each sub-section in **Section 2** presents the perspectives from these two groups separately for purposes of disaggregation and comparison. The sub-sections are based on the main issues explored in the study, which include:

- Section 2.1: Overall perceived impact of the MVP
- Section 2.2: The institutional arrangements of MVP and the district
- Section 2.3: The participation of district officials in decision making, implementation and review
- Section 2.4: The contribution of district assemblies and communities to MVP
- Section 2.5: The perceived cost-effectiveness of MVP
- Section 2.6: The perceived impact of MVP on neighbouring communities
- Section 2.7: Challenges for sustaining the gains made under MVP

Section 3 explores emerging issues that were raised by the participants but did not always directly connect with the questions. These issues were considered as having implications for the impact and sustainability of SADA-MVP. Finally, the conclusions from the study are presented in **Section 4**.

2 Findings of the Midterm Evaluation

2.1 Overall perceived impact of the MVP

The impact of the SADA-MVP in the districts and communities it is working in has been looked at in this study in terms of the district actors' experience. This section documents how these actors see the impact a) in overview terms and b) at this midterm stage:

- The effect of the project on district and community institutions and actors.
- The effect on central government's resource allocation to the districts.
- The new organisations or institutions that have been created or have emerged.
- The effect of SADA-MVP on poverty and the standard of living of the people in the SADA-MVP communities and districts.
- The impact of SADA-MVP interventions on neighbouring communities.

⁶ An internal document of preliminary findings and issues based on the quantitative data was produced instead, based on the baseline findings and the analysis of the 2013 dataset. This provided an interim measure to enable the qualitative studies to draw on some of the emerging and likely issues emanating from the quantitative analysis. Plans for the final year still anticipate a return to the original design, with some sharing of preliminary statistical analysis before the qualitative studies.

Other perspectives on these areas, such as those of community members, can be found in the other reports from the independent evaluation.

Impact of MVP on district and community institutions and actors

In all three districts the SADA-MVP is regarded by the district officials interviewed in this study as having had a positive effect on the functioning of district and community institutions and actors. From the perspective of the district administration staff, because the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) from central government is often in arrears for two or three quarters (i.e. six to nine months), the provision of services and the running of activities and programmes, especially at the departmental level, have been very difficult (see Section 3.2). They are fully aware that it is the assembly's responsibility to ensure that people are provided with basic social amenities but they are not able to fulfil this mandate because they lack funds. Builsa South District for instance was only able to generate internal revenue of GH¢ 51,454 in 2014. With the SADA-MVP operating in their districts in the areas of education, health, agriculture, water and sanitation, and infrastructure, they have provided funds which have enabled them to be functional to some extent. This is in line with their expectation of the SADA-MVP at the time of the baseline study. It was their hope that SADA-MVP would bring about improvement in infrastructure in their districts and reduce the pressure on the district assemblies to provide these to the communities.

Moreover, SADA-MVP has provided resources to some of the departments to work with. The Environmental Health Department of the three district assemblies were each given two Hoajin Motorbikes as well as fuel to implement the Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) programme which has gone to enhance their work in general. Under the CLTS artisans have been trained by the department to build toilet facilities in the communities. Due to the frequent breakdown of the district ambulances, SADA-MVP has provided new ones (with monthly fuel support) for emergency referrals. These have also reduced the burden on the assemblies. As was anticipated at the baseline study, the personnel of various district institutions have had their capacities built through the numerous workshops and trainings they have attended. This also fulfils another baseline expectation that the participating district assemblies would gain experience, new skills and knowledge to replicate the project in other communities in the district.

In the view of the administrative staff of the West Mamprusi and Mamprugu-Moadori districts, the confidence and trust of the citizens from the beneficiary communities in the district assemblies and in the SADA-MVP has improved over the past two years. This is because they have seen the results of the interventions that the SADA-MVP is implementing together with the assemblies and departments in their communities. Some of the staff interviewed have the impression that the people perceive that the district assemblies lobbied for these projects to come to them. One of the district-level interview participants gave the example of when they held community *durbars*⁷ in Nabari and Kpasenkpe they received the MVP and the district assembly well and were thanked for their interventions. One expectation at the baseline study is that SADA-MVP will build the capacity of the assembly persons to facilitate the ownership of projects among the community and their understanding of community development. This has not come up so far as a regular activity that was undertaken. Instead, according to a member of the SADA-MVP project team, some members of the various community-level institutions they are working with and whose capacity the project has built, like the emerging farmer co-operative groups, Parent-Teacher Associations/School Management Committees (PTAs/SMCs) and Water and Sanitation (WATSAN) Committees, are taking advantage of their new skills and knowledge and association with the project to stand for various positions in district and sub-district institutions in the upcoming district elections.

In Builsa South District, however, the administration staff were more cautious about concluding that the people's confidence and trust in them had increased because no formal survey has been conducted to enable such a conclusion. However, based on their observations they thought that the people are content with the SADA-MVP and the district assembly since the two work closely together.

One of the expectations of the district representatives at the baseline was that the district assemblies can channel some of their resources to the non-beneficiary communities. In that regard, some communities that are not beneficiaries of the SADA-MVP are thought to have also been affected positively. This is because money that would have otherwise been used by the district assemblies to implement some projects in the beneficiary

⁷ Durbar is a meeting of the community leaders and the entire community to receive government officials or visitors.

communities has been used for other projects in other communities. For example, in West Mamprusi District there were plans by the district assembly to renovate Kpasenkpe Community Health Planning System (CHPS) facility but once it was done by MVP the money for that was reallocated to the renovation of Wulugu CHPS compound. Similarly, in Builsa South they had planned to build Pitengsa CHPS but after SADA-MVP built one there the funds were channelled to build one at Kasiesa, which is now at lintel level. This is an important point which needs to be systematically mapped out and analysed during the evaluation in 2017.

The representatives of the district departments were also of the view that the SADA-MVP has had a positive effect on district and community institutions and actors. An example given by Ghana Education Service (GES) district officials was that they believe the confidence and trust levels of community members have increased because of the results of the SADA-MVP evaluation of the performance of the school children, which has shown some improvement. They regard this as an indicator of the success of the project. The GES staff also maintained that community members themselves are testifying that academic standards in the communities are rising and that the recruitment and training of additional teachers in the beneficiary communities has made the officers at the education directorates confident that the staffing problem is on the decline. The Environmental Health Department representatives were of the view that capacities of beneficiary communities have been built because they can now construct their own toilet facilities. WATSAN committees in the communities have also been strengthened. From the District Works Department perspective, the MVP has contributed to building capacities and improved coordination between departments in the districts. For instance, the Works Department and the Planning Unit are now working more closely together and therefore learning from each other. Initially contractors were not in agreement with the MVP's quality standards but later they realised that it helped them to market themselves better and to win bids because of the improved standards of their construction. The SADA-MVP staff interviewed explained further that at the start of the project some contractors who had political connections thought they could rely on their connections to win contracts and so did not put effort into putting together winning and comprehensive bids. However, because the SADA-MVP bidding process was open, transparent and based on merit, with time such contractors conformed to the standards and criteria required and which reflected in the quality of the construction works. This was also one of the expectations the district actors had of SADA-MVP's impact at the baseline study; that the project would come with new ideas that will benefit the staff of the assembly.

According to the SADA-MVP staff, apart from the district staff appreciating the changes the project is effecting, it has also influenced their attitude to work. The district staff now appreciate and respect the timeframe within which activities are to be carried out. For instance when they are to send in a proposal to be assisted with an activity those who send in good quality ones on time are those who are supported. Also, the practice where some people attending capacity workshops absent themselves to attend to other matters and expect to have their transportation cost and other expenses reimbursed has changed.

Effects of the SADA-MVP on central government's resource allocation to the districts

There was consensus among the district actors that the operations of the SADA-MVP in the three districts had not affected central government's allocation of resources to them. This is because they received the same amount of resources as before and when they compare theirs to other districts that are not being supported by SADA-MVP there were no marked differences. They also did not anticipate a change.

In the West Mamprusi and Mamprugu-Moaduri districts the representatives of the Department of Agriculture mentioned that because they are beneficiaries of the SADA-MVP (though only 11 communities are beneficiaries in the two districts) they were excluded from the Resilience in Northern Ghana (RING) project which is aimed at livelihood, nutrition and governance. When the Department complained about this an agreement was reached to include them in the next phase of the RING project.

New organisations or institutions created or emerging in response to the MVP

At the district administration level, no new organisations or institutions were said to have been created or to have emerged in any of the three districts as a direct result of the operations of SADA-MVP.

The district technical staff could not think of any new NGOs or projects that had arisen as a result of the MVP. It was however reported that Catholic Relief Services (CRS) has recently started operating in five communities within

the West Mamprusi and Mamprugu-Moaduri Districts.⁸ They provide services similar to that of SADA-MVP with the exception of infrastructure. They have provided the communities which are farthest from health facilities with motor tricycles to make it easy for community members, especially pregnant women, to access them.

In the **agriculture sector**, however, it was reported that MVP operations have contributed to an increase in the number of agricultural input dealers. They also mentioned that Village Loans and Savings Associations have been established by the MVP to mobilise interested community members to cultivate the habit of saving and to loan what they have mobilised to themselves. District actors think that this will put farmers in a good position to access loans from external sources. Existing and newly created farmer-based groups are being supported to form co-operative unions. SADA-MVP has also introduced the concept of Community-based Veterinary Extension Volunteers to address the shortage of veterinary officers in the districts.

In the **health sector** new community health committees have been formed where they did not exist and existing ones strengthened. Before the operations of SADA-MVP, traditional birth attendants (TBAs) assisted pregnant women in the delivery of their babies at their own home or that of the TBA. This was partly due to the unavailability of midwives at health facilities and/or the traditional preference of some women or families. With SADA-MVP's assistance – the rehabilitation of health facilities in some beneficiary communities, the provision of midwives and community nurses and the availability of a means of transport for easy access to these facilities – the Ghana Health Service is now more able to enforce the national policy that deliveries should be done at health facilities. As part of this TBAs are asked to stop assisting deliveries and rather encourage and/or accompany pregnant women who are due to deliver to go to health facilities.

Another group that has been impacted by SADA-MVP is the Community Health Volunteers. Though Community Health Volunteers⁹ existed before SADA-MVP operations the latter has modified it by paying them monthly allowances (and changed the name to Community Health Workers (CHWs), which used not to be the case and, in the view of the health staff in the three districts interviewed, may not be sustained post-MVP. In the meeting with the SADA-MVP team in March 2015, they affirmed that prior to the MVP Ghana Health Service (GHS) collaborated with unpaid Community Health Volunteers (CHVs), whose main functions included birth and death registration and mobilising communities for health interventions such as immunisations. Within the SADA-MVP cluster some CHVs have benefited from a skill upgrading package under the MVP and are now known as CHWs. CHWs, who number 53, perform a wider and more intensive range of diagnostic and curative tasks at community level guided by a mobile phone-based application (Commcare) and supervised by GHS's community health nurses. In acknowledgement of the considerably higher demands on their time, MVP pays each CHW a monthly allowance. The SADA-MVP staff interviewed said they are aware that the payment to CHW is a contentious issue between the project and the GHS. However, the SADA-MVP believes the CHW is the pivot around which health services should evolve.¹⁰ Though CHWs are in every community in the MV cluster, there are only 10 Community Health Committees (CHCs). This is because, according to SADA-MVP staff, they do not want to introduce new community institutions which will stop functioning when the project ends. For this reason the CHCs have been formed around the 10 health facilities within the cluster and their role is to plan how they can support a facility, for instance, how they will provide water to the facility if the borehole breaks down.

In the **education sector** the Community Education Workers concept was introduced with support from the SADA-MVP. They play the role of sensitising parents to send their children to school. They also step in when teachers are absent. Like CHWs they are paid a monthly allowance and the issue of sustainability has also been raised. To address this the project stated in its 2014 mid-year report (page 57) that it is, *'strongly lobbying the District Directors of Education to post some of the newly trained teachers to schools in the Cluster in September 2014. An MOU is in place which states that when the government lifts the ban on recruitment of teachers, they will post some teachers to the MVP schools'*. Also in education, MDG clubs are being piloted in selected schools to promote

⁸ This affirms information gathered in a mapping exercise of NGOs working in Northern Ghana undertaken by Itad in 2013 that CRS has an education programme in West Mamprusi and Mamprugu-Moaduri Districts called I-SHINE and REST. This is a programme which was implemented in these two districts from 2012–14 and has been extended to 2017.

⁹ These are community members who are given basic training by the GHS and who help periodically with such things as community mobilisation for immunisation programmes and generally monitoring health and sharing health information in the community.

¹⁰ The question of sustaining the payment of CHWs may soon not be an issue because in his recent visit to Ghana Jeffrey Sachs met with the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations who informed him that 3,000 CHWs are to be recruited as part of Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Agency programme. Of this number, 800 will be posted to the savannah zone. After two years the programme will be reviewed.

the MDGs. In the water and sanitation sector the existing WATSAN committees were given refresher training on their roles and responsibilities. New ones were formed where they did not exist in a community where a borehole had been rehabilitated or newly installed.

The Environmental Health Department reported that the Northern Region Small Towns Water and Sanitation (NORST) Project has started operations in some communities in the districts. No national or international NGO has been observed by the district actors to have rolled back because of the presence of SADA-MVP. For instance, World Vision International continues to operate in parts of West Mamprusi and Mamprugu-Moaduri Districts. No institution or organisation has folded up or left the beneficiary districts because of the presence of SADA-MVP.

The Impact of MVP on poverty and the standard of living of the people in the MVP communities and districts

On a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), in terms of impact, the representatives of the district administration of the three districts were asked to discuss and give a score as to the extent to which, from their perspective, the SADA-MVP has led to improvement in certain key aspects of living of the people in the project communities. The scores are as shown below. However, as mentioned earlier the point of emphasis with the scoring methodology in qualitative studies is the reasons people give for their scores, not in the scores themselves.

District	West Mamprusi	Mamprugu-Moaduri	Builsa South
Poverty	8	9	6
Health	10	10	10
Education	7	6	6
Infrastructure	9	8	6
Agriculture	6	4	6

1. Poverty

In all three districts the representatives of the district administrations had a similar view. Although they are a step removed from happenings in the field, they were emphatic that the performance of the SADA-MVP is improving the poverty situation in the beneficiary communities and was generally very good. They attributed this to the improvement it has brought in the areas of education, health, agriculture, water and sanitation and physical infrastructure.

They claimed that the food security of households has improved through the provision of farm inputs and training of farmers in new and improved farming methods, free National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) registration, improvement in nutritional status through growth monitoring and the award of scholarships to brilliant but needy girls.

The staff of the Department of Agriculture also perceived a reduction in poverty. They attributed this change to increased food production with the introduction of maize cultivation in commercial quantities in the three districts. In addition, some selected farmers and poor households have also been supported with livestock. However, performance in both crop and livestock production has varied from year to year depending on the rainfall pattern, the form of support granted the farmers and the utilisation of the support by the farmers.

2. Health

The administrative staff of the three districts were of the view that the numerous interventions by SADA-MVP have contributed to improvement of people's lives in the beneficiary and surrounding communities. The interventions they mentioned, most of which have already been noted in this report, included:

- Building of health facilities such as CHPS compounds resulting in increased access.
- Recruitment, training and remuneration of CHWs.
- Provision of ambulances for use in emergencies.

- Provision of fridges to store drugs and vaccines.
- Registration of community members on NHIS for free resulting in increased attendance.
- Recruitment of midwives for some health facilities.
- Motivating CHNs.
- Providing health staff with motorbikes and fuel for health awareness promotion activities and trainings organised to build the capacities of health staff to better serve the people in the beneficiary communities in all three districts.

There is the view among GHS actors in the districts that, with the renovation or expansion of health facilities and the provision of qualified staff and drugs, people now spend less on transporting themselves to the major health centres like Walewale Hospital to seek medical care because similar services including ante-natal clinic services, normal delivery and suturing are being provided by a facility close to them. These facilities serve the communities within the MV cluster as well as those outside it. Moreover, in Builsa South District child and maternal mortalities were said to have reduced as a result of the MVP interventions. At the time of the study in May 2015 Builsa South District was said to have recorded no maternal mortality for the year.

According to the representative of the health directorate in Mamprugu Moaduri, “health is wealth”. In his view, since the people now have a lot of health services at their disposal they are healthier and thus able to work and make money for themselves, which will move them out of poverty. He also said nutritional indicators and immunisations have improved tremendously. Similarly, skilled deliveries have increased and child diseases have reduced. All these, they said, were achieved through the joint efforts of the GHS and SADA-MVP.

The representative of the health directorate in West Mamprusi explained that the quality of service has improved. For instance, at Kpasenkpe Health Centre there had been no medical assistant or midwife on site until the SADA-MVP intervened. Though there were nurses at the time they were performing roles that they had not been trained for. Moreover, motorbikes and an ambulance provided have helped to save lives.

The representative of the health directorate in the Builsa South District (who is relatively new) made the point that although almost all the SADA-MVP zones have midwives skilled deliveries have not increased appreciably in the district. Supervised deliveries dropped from 184 in 2013 to 166 in 2014, though they anticipate this will increase in 2015 which has recorded 135 deliveries as at May. Also, post-natal coverage dropped from 68.6% in 2013 to 53.5% in 2014. They realised this during the first quarter performance review held on 29 April 2015. They attribute the poor supervised delivery and post-natal coverage to lack of resources from central government. Since the district was created in 2012, the health directorate has not received funding from central government to run the administration. For this reason, they lack resources such as motorbikes for proper monitoring and follow-ups on defaulting patients and staff are demoralised.

3. Education

The district administrators and the representatives of the education departments interviewed all agreed that the SADA-MVP has impacted positively on education in the beneficiary communities. An official of the district administration in the Mamprugu-Moaduri District said before the start of SADA-MVP the student-to-textbook ratio was about 1:15 *‘with some students not even having the opportunity to look into what is in a book’*. Now new school classrooms as well as teachers’ quarters (though they said some staff members in some communities have still refused to use the facilities) have been built or renovated, computers, textbooks and uniforms have been provided and ‘brilliant but needy’ girls in schools have been awarded scholarships. These interventions have resulted in increased pupil enrolment and encouraged school attendance among girls in these communities. One of the officials of the education department in the Builsa South District said that parents of junior high school (JHS) students from Jaadema, Kunkwak, Kategri, Yagba and some inaccessible (often referred to as ‘overseas’) communities used to rent rooms in Fumbisi for their wards to live in so that they could get access to quality JHS education. With the SADA-MVP interventions most of such children are now attending school in their own communities. Despite the positive signs described above, some of the officials also acknowledged that it is too early to evaluate the returns on the investment made by SADA-MVP in the sector because education is a long-

term investment. The results may only begin to come in three to four years' time. Also the purpose of supporting education in the beneficiary communities is to ensure improvement in academic performance and thereby ensure that more children are progressing from junior high school to senior high school and then on to tertiary institutions. Though this has started to show through the SADA-MVP testing process, the real impact will be known in some years to come, and even then cannot be wholly attributed to the SADA-MVP.

The district officials repeatedly stressed that the number of MVP beneficiary communities are few compared to the total number of communities in the three beneficiary districts. In this regard, they would like to see more textbooks provided, the awarding of scholarships scaled up and to include boys as well; and the construction of teachers' quarters in communities to complement schools that have been built in order to enable teachers to stay on site.

4. Agriculture

Both the district administrators and the staff of the Department of Agriculture said they felt there had been remarkable improvements in the agriculture sector. The administrators attributed this to inputs that had been given to farmers. These include: the tractor services provided at subsidised prices, the training that farmers had received in new improved farming methods, the formation of farmers groups (both males and females) who had been trained in how to keep records, the increased access to services through community members who have been trained as veterinary and agricultural extension volunteers with links to better trained and accessible veterinary and extension officers, and for some communities, access to the storage/warehouse facilities that have been built. The above interventions, in the view of the technical staff of the department, have made farmers more self-reliant together with their new skills in preparing a farm budget, keeping farm records and assessing when to approach financial institutions for credit services. All these, they said, have led farmers to apply their knowledge to their farming practices. Coupled with the improved seeds that SADA-MVP supplied, these changes have resulted in higher yields and improved food security.

Despite all of the above, the district administrators recognise that there is still a lot to be done if the impact of the SADA-MVP interventions is to translate into long-term household food security. To achieve this they called for the rehabilitation and construction of irrigation dams so that the farmers do not depend solely on poor, erratic and unpredictable rainfall. They also want agricultural inputs and services to be provided on time so that they can optimise their yields. They were also of the view that food security in households needs to cut across the entire three districts and not just benefit a few communities in the districts. The staff of the Agriculture Department regard their biggest problem as the age-old challenge of recovering credit inputs from farmers. They attribute this to some service providers not spelling out the terms to the farmers properly before providing them with the inputs as well as some farmers misapplying the inputs, resulting in low yields and then being unable to repay. In their view, until these attitudes change farmers will always face issues with low yields and thus reduce the chances of recovering input credits.

5. Infrastructure

In addition to all the infrastructure that has been provided by SADA-MVP in health, education, agriculture, water and sanitation, the district officials also included the rehabilitation of some roads and culverts in their districts as important interventions by the project that have enhanced mobility and market access. They also acknowledged that it was through lobbying by SADA-MVP that some communities have been connected to the national electricity grid and soon others will be added. They also expressed concern that some of the roads and culverts that have been constructed or recently rehabilitated are already beginning to deteriorate, which would not have been the case if they had been tarred.¹¹

6. Knowledge and capacity

Some district officials, especially those from the Department of Community Development and Social Welfare and Environmental Health Department, looked at the impact of the SADA-MVP on the beneficiary communities from the angle of new knowledge and capacity. In the words of one, "*Knowledge is wealth and ignorance is poverty*". In this regard, they argued that the knowledge that community members have gained, for instance, in modern

¹¹ This statement may not necessarily mean poor quality work on the roads but an appeal for the laterite roads to be tarred.

agricultural techniques will bring about agricultural gains which will see them lifted out of poverty. A similar example is the training of artisans to make household toilets. The introduction of the Village Loans and Savings Associations was said to have helped some community members, especially women, to expand their businesses thereby alleviating poverty.

2.2 The institutional arrangements of MVP and the district

The institutional arrangements underpinning the intervention of the MVP are of particular interest to the evaluation team because they provide the foundations for sustaining the desired changes into the future. At this midterm point the team was especially interested in how the district leadership had experienced the MVP as well as whether, and how, they thought the impact or changes above could be sustained post-project.

At the time of the baseline study in November and December 2012, the district institutions as well as the SADA-MVP were in a state of flux. The project had just commenced and was in the process of recruiting its full set of staff and establishing its office. The SADA-MVP team leader, for instance, was recruited in June 2012. As was said above the two original project districts (West Mamprusi and Builsa) had both been split into two as part of a national policy and the newly created districts were yet to have their full complement of personnel and other resources in place. In addition to this, the national presidential and parliamentary elections took place in December 2012 followed by a lengthy and preoccupying legal dispute over the election result in early 2013. This caused a nationwide sense of turmoil in governance. This was therefore an exceptionally fluid moment in institutional arrangements and presented major challenges to the district assemblies (DAs) and the MVP in terms of being able to work with a consistent group of actors to get the project underway. It has also made it difficult for the evaluation team to assess change as the very institutional frameworks within which to assess change have themselves changed. The MVP began by focusing its attention on project activities such as the distribution of mosquito bed nets, agriculture input credit that could be organised relatively quickly, leaving the institutional relationship and capacity building work for later.

SADA-MVP governance structure

According to the SADA-MVP staff, at the start of the project there were to be two governing bodies – the PSC and a stakeholders coordinating body. The PSC was meant to be a small body made up of DFID, the Regional Ministers of the Northern and the Upper-East Regions, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of SADA and a representative of Millennium Promise in Dakar, with the SADA-MVP team leader as the secretary to the committee. The SADA CEO chairs the meetings of the PSC. The stakeholders coordinating body was to include the regional heads of the various departments and ministries that SADA-MVP collaborates with. However, the two bodies were fused together to create an expanded PSC, which is made up of the original members mentioned above and key ministries or departments like the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), GHS and the GES. Their primary role is to approve the project's workplan and budget. The PSC has met once a year in 2013, 2014 and 2015. There are plans to have a second meeting in 2015, to be preceded by field visits by the members to project sites.

The heads of the district institutions do not attend the PSC meetings but instead periodic review meetings are organised with them. First, planning of activities and budgeting happens at the departmental level. At this level they review activities, identify gaps and plan the activities to be carried out with associated budget. These are presented at a bigger forum for the information of other stakeholders.

In terms of finance, the SADA-MVP staff explained that the project team controls between 80–90% of the project funds. This is because much of the project funding goes into infrastructure projects which are handled directly by them. The remaining 10–20% are related to capacity-building activities of the district staff, monitoring and review activities, top-up allowances for GHS and GES staff/workers, fuel for ambulances and motorbikes, etc. Such monies are paid directly to the district institutions to disburse.

Memoranda of Understanding

Memoranda of Understanding have provided the formal framework for the MVP to work with government institutions at district level. At the time of the baseline only the Department of Agriculture and the Ghana Health Service said they had a draft memorandum of understanding (MOU) they were discussing with SADA-MVP. By the

time of the midterm study (May 2015), all the three project districts – West Mamprusi, Mamprugu-Moaduri and Builsa South – had MOUs with the SADA-MVP in place. These spell out the institutional, financial and governance arrangements between them in broad terms and are mostly complemented by annual action plans. Similarly, in all the project districts MOUs have been signed or are being reviewed prior to signing, with the technical departments of the district assemblies in line with their specified areas of collaboration. The FGD participants in all the districts seemed generally happy with the MOUs as a vehicle for expressing the nature of the relationship with the MVP and they appear to have provided a useful vehicle for administrative continuity amid the considerable changes in personnel. They also said that the MOUs signed between SADA-MVP and the districts had, to a large extent, been adhered to as planned and had helped them know what was agreed and expected.

The evaluation team observed that the MOUs largely reflect the current and varying status of institutional arrangements within Ghana's decentralisation system as a whole, with some departments being more devolved than others. Technical departments such as the Environmental Health Department, Department of Social Welfare and Community Development and the Works Department fall directly under the authority of the district assembly, while others (such as the Ghana Health Service, Ghana Education Service and the Department of Agriculture) are semi-autonomous at district level and yet are still more subject to directives from their regional and national offices.

The FGD participants described **three categories** of MOU as follows:

1. *The main MOU between SADA-MVP and the three district assemblies* (see extract of an example in Appendix 2). This defines the relationship between the administrative, finance and planning units of the district assemblies (administrative arm for short) as well as departments directly under them, including the Environmental Health Department, Department of Social Welfare and Community Development and Works Department. These departments receive their funds and resources from the district assemblies.
2. Some examples of this are how, based on this main MOU with the DA, the Environmental Health Department in the three districts which is responsible for leading the implementation and monitoring of the CLTS programme was provided with motorbikes (Haojin) and fuel for the monitoring work. Also, the District Planning and Coordination Unit works closely with the District Works Department in the design, supervision, monitoring and evaluation of SADA-MVP infrastructure projects. The FGD participants reported that, unlike at the baseline study where the Works Department complained that they were not being allowed to make site visits, they are now responsible for monitoring the projects undertaken by the contractors.
3. *Separate MOUs between SADA-MVP and the technical departments* and agencies in the three districts: the Ghana Health Service (at the regional level), Ghana Education Service (at district level) and the Department of Agriculture (at district level). While this reflects their strategic importance to the achievement of key components of the SADA-MVP's intervention (health, agriculture and education), it is also a reflection of how these departments are perceived within Ghana's decentralisation system. This is explained further in Section 3 below. The SADA-MVP staff also explained that having separate MOUs with these three departments enabled them to avoid the bureaucracy and consequent delays in project implementation that would have been inevitable if they have to reach them through the district assemblies. An extract of the MOU between SADA and the Agricultural Department is in Appendix 2.
4. *One-off MOUs for specific tasks* such as the one developed between SADA-MVP and the District Water and Sanitation Team in West Mamprusi to undertake the task of identifying and rehabilitating 33 boreholes¹² and training community members in the communities to take responsibility for borehole management. It also entailed SADA-MVP training some members of the District Water and Sanitation Team (DWST) in how to maintain and repair boreholes to provide back up support to the trained community members when needed. Another one was drawn up to enable the timely distribution of fertiliser in line with the farming season. These MOUs featured more at the beginning of the MVP as they enabled specific tasks to get underway amid the

¹² In its 2014 mid-year report (p. 39), the project reported that 29 boreholes were deemed necessary and construction has begun in June 2014. Additionally, 49 existing water points are being rehabilitated; 33 by the West Mamprusi District and 16 by the Builsa South District.

institutional turmoil described above. They tended to be drawn up to support tasks that were already clearly defined or relatively easy to execute and did not require long-term collaborations to be discussed or defined.

The SADA-MVP staff explained that in reality there were only two categories of MOUs. The third one referred to by the district officials were not MOUs but rather workplans for specific pieces of work. The rehabilitation and drilling of new boreholes carried out by the DWST were part of the MOUs with the district assemblies and funds were channelled through them to the DWST. This was the case for all works undertaken by departments and agencies working directly under the district assemblies. This was to ensure direct supervision by the district assemblies and to avoid double funding by the project and the assemblies to these departments.

2.3 The participation of district officials in decision making, implementation and review

The FGDs with district actors revealed that the type and level of participation in the MVP has steadily increased since the baseline as the project activities got underway but that different districts and different departments and personnel have had varied experiences. This was corroborated by the SADA-MVP personnel interviewed. These experiences seem to vary according to a number of factors, the key ones being:

1. The presence of an MOU to set out what was expected on both sides. When these came on stream things were clearer and, according to the FGD participants, enabled participation of the district institutions in SADA-MVP projects.¹³
2. The status and existing relationship of the department within the decentralised local government system. As alluded to above, the DA has more or less authority over some departments than others and some command bigger operations and budgets than others. These result in closer working relationships and more influence on the MVP.
3. Some departments are especially key to MVP activities and it therefore tends to work with them directly – notably the GHS, GES and the Department of Agriculture.
4. The capacity or interest of individual district leaders to manage in a way that facilitates participation.

The study team also observed that there are varying expectations among district personnel about the level and type of participation that is needed or desired. Some are content with being kept informed by the MVP team about what their activities are while others expect and are ready to be fully consulted and involved in design and decision making at all stages. Some regard the MVP as a temporary foreign guest with useful resources while others feel a high degree of ownership and see it as part of DA activities and an opportunity to bring about the kind of changes they want. This has affected the way in which actors at all levels have engaged and feel a sense of ownership for both what happens during and after the project. MVP personnel affirmed that the level of commitment and participation of district actors is dependent on the individual. Some of the heads of departments are proactive and take initiatives to pay monitoring visits to schools, health facilities and communities to see what is going on and to carry out activities agreed upon. For instance, in one district the health directorate is sponsoring two nurses to be trained as midwives to replace the retired midwives who were brought in as an interim measure. In another district they claim there is nothing they can do but kick against any alternative proposals that the project team make but are not also forthcoming with their own suggestions. The attitude, interest and commitment of the leadership of the departments or the district assemblies also affect the outcomes, and generally the more they are involved the more is gained. In the view of the SADA-MVP staff, the way to get around this and the frequent staff turnovers at the district assemblies is for full decentralisation to take place. This should include the appointment of such key staff as the District Coordinating Director (DCD) by the district assembly and sub-committees of the district assembly being strengthened and provided the resources to work. This will enable projects like SADA-MVP to go beyond the district administrators.

The following provide summaries and examples of how the different district actors have experienced their participation in the MVP.

¹³ To get a sense of how SADA-MVP compares with other projects in terms of participation in decision making, implementation, monitoring and review, the study team facilitated a scoring exercise in the West Mamprusi District by the representatives of each department present at the meeting (see Appendix 3).

1. District Administration

As at the baseline study, the district administrations in all three districts said that they participate in: a) stakeholder meetings, b) quarterly and annual review meetings and c) trainings and workshops, often represented by the DCD and the District Planning Officers (DPOs). One DCD participating in an FGD was new but showed the team the numerous invitation letters on-file, suggesting that his predecessor had participated in a good number of trainings and meetings. In the same district, the DPO who was the focal person of the District for the SADA-MVP and who took an active part in the initial activities that led to the setting up of the project has been transferred and replaced by a new person. The new DPO has been in the district for two years and has taken over his successor's role as a focal person and has participated in capacity-building workshops, review meetings and community engagements of the SADA-MVP.

As per the MOU, one institutional arrangement meant to enhance participation of the district stakeholders is the allocation of time to the SADA-MVP to brief the assembly members on progress made in the districts during the district assembly meetings. SADA-MVP staff affirmed that this happens in all three districts. The district assemblies and the SADA-MVP have also agreed to make time to participate in each other's annual review meetings so as to synchronise their activities and avoid duplication.

Given the limited time available, the evaluation team was not able to assess in any detail to what extent: a) the various MVP activities had been useful institutionally to the district administration team in other areas of their work or b) how those who had attended but then left the district had been able to share what they had learned with colleagues prior to leaving or put in place systems or practices that would continue after their departure. It may be possible to revisit and analyse this during the external evaluation in 2017.

2. Departments and agencies

Department of Agriculture

At the baseline study, the representatives of the Department of Agriculture in all three districts were of the view that although their extension staff had been involved during the initial implementation activities of SADA-MVP in 2012, the project did not consult them during the design and planning processes. This was attributed to the project wanting to rapidly organise some early activities, such as the distribution of some agricultural inputs to the farmers before the start of the farming season.¹⁴ The level of consultation is said to have increased as SADA-MVP got underway and they are now more involved in the design of the projects. Room is now given for the staff of the departments to make their inputs during the meetings at the design stages of individual project activities and final vetting is conducted together with the departmental staff. One example given of this was in the West Mamprusi District where there was a two-day meeting with SADA-MVP to thoroughly discuss (agree and disagree) some of the activities and policies SADA-MVP is planning to implement. One of the representatives said that SADA-MVP staff call the Directorate on the phone to consult, provide or request information, which he feels is important in such a collaboration.

FGD participants reported that as per the MOU and right from the time of the baseline study, the Departments of Agriculture in all three districts have always been directly involved in the day-to-day implementation of all the SADA-MVP agricultural projects. This is also because the projects are already in line with the activities of the Department. However, participants also said that there have been few occasions when the SADA-MVP has gone behind their back to act contrary to what they had agreed. An example given was when input credits were given to farmers. It had been agreed that the police would not be brought in should some farmers fail to pay on time. According to the representatives of the department, this was flouted by SADA-MVP and the police involvement has scared many farmers away from patronising the input credit activities, including what comes from the department and other partners. The SADA-MVP staff interviewed affirmed that the police were brought in and

¹⁴ SADA-MVP personnel explained that these early activities to support farmers as soon as possible were seen as particularly urgent partly because of the project's food security objective and partly because of the pivotal role of agriculture in the MVP economic model. If they had not taken place it would have set back other activities for another year.

that the purpose was to threaten those who can repay the credit but refuse to pay. The agricultural extension staff they work with in the communities know who can and cannot pay. The aim of the project in taking this action was also to put an end to the attitude of people seeing input credit as gifts, which stops other organisations coming into the area. The negative impact it has on the project was because in the first year it was compelled to directly implement the input credit scheme because of its food security objective and also because the financial institutions did not have the capacity and were reluctant to take it on. If this had been the case, it would have been the financial institutions bringing in the police to retrieve their input credits and it would not have been linked to SADA-MVP. Currently it is the financial institutions that are implementing the input credit and dealing with the farmer co-operatives that have been formed.

Representatives of the department from all the three districts felt that there had been an improvement in their involvement in the monitoring and evaluation of SADA-MVP agricultural projects since the baseline. They attributed this to the frequent meetings to review progress. Joint mid-year and end-of-year meetings have become regular events; the same as all the other sectors (health, education, etc.) that the SADA-MVP works with. The motorbikes and fuel provided by SADA-MVP to extension officers and directors were said to have ensured that the monitoring of other non-MVP projects is also executed properly and on time.

In comparison with other projects in the West Mamprusi District, the representative of the Department of Agriculture was of the view that the only project they would rank slightly above the SADA-MVP is the Rice Sector Support Project. This is because the latter operates on the concept of “comparative advantage” where more resources are channelled to communities where there is more capacity and commitment by the leaders or the farmers. The representative felt this is not the case with SADA-MVP where a lot of resources are directed towards communities where the capacity and commitment is lacking, making it difficult to achieve meaningful results. For instance, SADA-MVP may demand that 300 farmers be mobilised for input credit support from an area where it is only feasible to gather 100 farmers that qualify. This is said to lead to involvement of people who may not even be farmers.

Ghana Health Service

There was general agreement across the three districts that, since the institutional baseline study in 2012–13, there has been improvement in the participation of the health department in the design and implementation of SADA-MVP projects. For example, in the West Mamprusi District when the Kpasenkpe Health Centre was to be renovated, the health directorate made a complaint that it was being side-lined. Since that complaint, activities at all stages of SADA-MVP projects in the health sector are perceived to have the full involvement of the directorate. The subsequent construction of the CHPS compounds at Nabari and Duu took place with regular consultation with the department. The Toyota Land Cruiser ambulance vehicles provided by SADA-MVP were procured on the recommendation of the beneficiary directorates because they were of the view that they can withstand the bad roads in the north better than other cars. The high level of participation of the health directorates in the SADA-MVP projects was said to be because the SADA-MVP fits into the Ghana Health Service’s own plans and because it uses the GHS staff.

Apart from the health directorates’ involvement in SADA-MVP initiated projects, the FGD participants explained that SADA-MVP also asks the directorates about impending programmes of their own and supports them with their implementation. For example, at the time of the midterm study in May 2015 the districts were celebrating National Child Health Week with support from the SADA-MVP.

To facilitate the monitoring of projects SADA-MVP provided GHS-recommended Yamaha AG 100 motorbikes¹⁵ as well as a monthly allowance for fuel to all the project districts. This is separate from the SADA-MVP’s own monitoring and evaluation of projects by its team. According to one of the district directors of health, one shortfall of the SADA-MVP when it comes to monitoring is that it only gives a verbal report (not a written one) to the directorate. However, the SADA-MVP staff said they share their annual and semi-annual reports with the district assemblies.

¹⁵ The model of the motorbikes has been mentioned because for the health staff it was an indication that SADA-MVP conforms to the GHS regulations.

When asked to compare SADA-MVP with other projects being implemented in the West Mamprusi District including the Community Case Management, Nutrition and Malaria Control for Child Survival and Tuberculosis Control Programmes, etc. and give them scores out of 10. The GHS representative said he would give SADA-MVP a score of 10 out of 10 in 2015 compared to 7 out of 10 at the baseline study in 2013 for GHS's involvement in design and planning for the reasons stated above. He would give the other projects a score of 1 out of 10 in 2013 and 2015 (baseline and midterm). This is because most of the other projects are designed at national level and brought to the districts for implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Ghana Education Service (GES)

There were conflicting views about the level of involvement of the GES directorate in the design stage of projects. While one representative of the Education Department in one district said: *"We are not involved at all in the design process"*, another in a different district stated that at the design stages SADA-MVP meets with all the directorates from the three districts to discuss their programs before they are implemented. The latter view is more in line with what was said at the baseline study. The representative of the third district was unsure because he felt the director (who could not attend the FGD) was the right person to assess their level of participation in all the stages of SADA-MVP projects.

The GES directorates in all the districts participate in the numerous training sessions organised by SADA-MVP for teachers, PTA, SMCs and staff of the directorates. SADA-MVP was also said to support the circuit supervisors with fuel to aid them in their supervision. The directorate is also involved in activities such as handing over and award giving ceremonies, supervision, distribution of support materials to beneficiary schools/students, etc. There was general acknowledgement among the FGD participants that involvement in project implementation had improved since the baseline study.

An example was given of the organisation of the recent teacher/student awards, which was left entirely to the various education directorates of the three districts. They did the selection of the beneficiaries as well as organise the packages for each award winner. This they felt is the level of involvement they would like.

The GES in the three project districts feel involved in monitoring because MVP provides them with fuel to carry out supervision. What they see as a short-fall is that circuit supervisors are not given motor bikes to aid them in their monitoring. They use their own bikes and SADA-MVP pays for the fuel in cash. A maintenance allowance is not also included in the package.

At the planning stage of evaluating the school children, the directorates are always informed by SADA-MVP of what their intended plans are. However, when it comes to the actual evaluation of the school children SADA-MVP does this without involving the GES directorate. The evaluation is normally conducted in the form of examination of class three of beneficiary schools. The results are then shared with the directorate.

In comparison with other projects the GES representatives in West Mamprusi chose Camfed as the project which is almost at par with SADA-MVP. For both projects they scored them zero on their participation in the design. This is contrary to what was said at the baseline study where the representatives at the time were the only ones, along with the District Works Department, who seemed happy with the level of involvement in the design stage of SADA-MVP projects. They scored Camfed 10 out of 10 for participation of the directorate in implementation and SADA-MVP 6 out of 10 because the district directorate helps Camfed in the selection and the supply of materials to the needy girls that they sponsor. The materials are usually received by the stores of the directorate and the distribution is done solely by the directorate in the presence of Camfed officers. However, with regard to participation in monitoring, SADA-MVP is regarded slightly above Camfed because the directorate (notably the circuit supervisors) is provided with support for monitoring and supervision and is not very involved in Camfed's monitoring sessions. However, the circuit supervisors are involved in the Planning for School Excellence (PSE) project of Camfed during the facilitation process to review the activities of the PSE project and draw new action plans after which they review again at mid-year.

The Other Departments

Since the time of the baseline study the Department of Community Development and Social Welfare feel they have been marginalised and have played no role in SADA-MVP activities despite the importance of community

mobilisation towards active participation and ownership by communities of the projects, which is one of the expected outputs of SADA-MVP. The Gender Desk Officers complained similarly.

The District Water and Sanitation Team of the West Mamprusi District (the DWST in the other districts were not represented at the meetings) were given a specific task of identifying and rehabilitating non-functioning boreholes which they have completed and since then have not had a further active role to play.

The Environmental Health Departments are responsible for monitoring the CLTS programme and have been provided with the resources to do so by SADA-MVP through their respective district assemblies.

Since the baseline study the Works Department's role was said to have increased. They are now involved in the design of infrastructure projects as well as in the monitoring and evaluation of the projects, often undertaken by external contractors.

In comparison with other projects the representative of the Department of Community Development and Social Welfare was of the opinion that the UNICEF Child Protection Project involves stakeholders at the design stage more than the SADA-MVP does. The same applies at the implementation stage because with UNICEF there is no involvement from the regional level so they are free to operate. UNICEF conducts its monitoring separately from that done by the department and then the findings are compared. However, the representative gave SADA-MVP a higher score than World Vision which only introduces the project to the department while the rest of the work is executed entirely by themselves and eventually they evaluate it themselves.

From the perspective of the District Works Department representative, SADA-MVP is doing better than NORST and the Sustainable Rural Water Project when it comes to the level of the department's involvement in the project because the latter projects use outside consultants. However, the District Development Facility (DDF) and the Local Service Delivery Governance Program are better than SADA-MVP in terms of the participation of district personnel in the programmes because they used the staff of the Works Department of the district as their internal consultants and involve them directly in all activities.

2.4 The contribution of district assemblies and communities to MVP

All the contributions to SADA-MVP cited by the FGD participants during the institutional study were non-financial. The contributions mentioned by district level actors broadly fell into three categories:

1. Their time and ideas as part of all the project management processes (design, planning, monitoring and evaluation) and capacity building events.
2. The use of government facilities and equipment such as meeting rooms and vehicles.
3. The involvement of government staff in project implementation.

The following details were shared by the FGD participants:

District administrations

As noted above, the level of involvement of district staff in all three districts (both administration and technical staff) in SADA-MVP's projects has increased greatly since the baseline. They give considerable amounts of their time and share ideas and expertise whenever they attend the frequent review and stakeholder meetings as well as workshops. They also participate in monitoring and evaluation of SADA-MVP projects.

According to the district administrators of the West Mamprusi and Mamprugu-Moaduri District Assemblies, the SADA-MVP has continued to use their halls for training and meetings free of charge, as was the case at baseline. Newly created Builsa South District does not have its own hall yet. At the time of the institutional baseline study in 2012–13, the two 'old' district assemblies supported the SADA-MVP by making their vehicles available to carry out its preliminary work. This arrangement was temporary and ended as soon as the SADA-MVP had its own vehicles.

The representatives of the district administrations at the FGDs were of the view that the SADA-MVP has the means to fully fund projects without needing any form of financial support from the assemblies. Moreover, the district assemblies have not received their basic District Assembly Common Fund allocation from central government for a number of quarters and their internally generated funds are also not substantial. These factors mean that the district assemblies are not in a position to make financial contributions in addition to those they make in-kind.

Departments and agencies

At the time of the baseline the representatives of the departments regarded the Department of Agriculture as the main district agency that the SADA-MVP was working with. As already noted above, the other departments and agencies have since become much more involved. Like their colleagues in district administration, the technical departments see their main contribution to SADA-MVP to be in the form of the staff, structures and logistics they have put at its disposal. In their view this is a significant contribution and has saved the project having to acquire these things.

Education

From the perspective of the Department of Education, SADA-MVP did not involve the community members in the school projects in the early stages even though the communities were willing to provide communal labour.¹⁶ This has now changed, to some extent, with the involvement of PTAs/SMCs. The communities also provide land for infrastructure projects like schools and teachers' quarters (the consultations at the land acquisition stage do not involve the directorate). The communities are also tasked to take responsibility for maintaining the facilities provided by SADA-MVP.

The education directorates were said to contribute to SADA-MVP in the following ways:

- Supporting the schools with newly trained teachers.
- Accompanying SADA-MVP staff during monitoring and supervision of projects.
- Provision of logistics.
- Providing training officers/facilitators to help train the teachers.

Health

The GHS was said to contribute to SADA-MVP in the following ways:

- Personnel time.
- Fuel: when SADA-MVP fuel is exhausted the district runs on its own fuel for SADA-MVP related activities.
- Staff motivation: GHS motivates its staff including those under SADA MVP.
- Trainings are sometimes organised by the department for its officers including those whose allowances are paid for by the SADA-MVP.

Communities

As explained in the footnote above, communities have not been asked to contribute free labour and materials during the construction of schools, CHPS compounds and other infrastructure projects such as roads, culverts and boreholes. Some community members, however, have been selected and trained under the CLTS project as artisans to help build toilet facilities so as to help eradicate the practice of open defecation. In addition, community members also contribute about 40% of the cost of constructing the household toilet facilities. Another important contribution mentioned by the district FGD participants was their monitoring and scrutiny of the physical projects being constructed during implementation. They check to ensure that the right thing is done and bring any shortfalls they see to the notice of SADA-MVP so that action can be taken. The SADA-MVP staff said that

¹⁶ The SADA-MVP staff explained that asking communities to contribute unskilled labour and materials like sand and gravels to infrastructural projects was going to complicate the award of contracts so decided to award contracts directly to contractors so they acquire these themselves.

increasingly communities are beginning to take their own initiatives. When additional accommodation was needed to house teachers and nurses in Kinkadina and Jadema communities the SADA-MVP said it did not have the funds to extend what it had provided, but could support these two communities with materials if they took the initiative to do so. These two communities did so using local materials with the project providing cement for plastering the walls and with roofing sheets. Zamza community also took the initiative to construct a co-operative office and a warehouse. The staff estimated that if SADA-MVP had put up the accommodation for teachers it will have cost around GH¢ 100,000 but the cost of supporting the Kinkadina community to do so was GH¢ 20,000.

2.5 The perceived cost-effectiveness of MVP¹⁷

Participants in the FGDs viewed the issue of cost-effectiveness from a number of different angles. Overall the SADA-MVP is considered to be relatively cost-effective in comparison with other external interventions. The overall MVP approach to achieving cost-effectiveness by working through the existing district structures and departments seems generally appreciated and has clearly saved a considerable amount in terms of personnel and logistical costs. A GHS staff member was of the opinion that this was not only cost-effectiveness but would lead to greater likelihood of the work being sustained.

The positive examples shared by participants mostly related to infrastructure projects, while most of their concerns related to sustainability and whether or not MVP practices could be continued post-project. The selection and training of community members as artisans for the CLTS project was said to be more cost-effective than if people from outside the communities had been contracted. A member of staff of the district administration in the West Mamprusi District said the SADA-MVP compared favourably in terms of the quality of its programmes and infrastructural projects when he considered similar projects executed in other districts he had served in. A staff member of Mamprugu-Moaduri District administration said that when he compares the contract sums of SADA-MVP projects and those of government projects such as a the construction of a one-unit-three classroom block, SADA-MVP has generally provided better results for lower cost.

The FGD participants raised three ways in which existing cost effective practices are being undermined by the MVP:

- The first was where SADA-MVP provides monthly payments to the various 'community volunteers/workers' who fill personnel gaps. An example given was the Ghana Health Service volunteers who are 'motivated' periodically and when they are called upon to help in programmes such as on National Immunisation Days. As they see it, the fact that some of the volunteers have served the GHS for more than 15 years on this basis is evidence that their approach is sustainable. The FGD participants fear that when SADA-MVP comes to an end and the community volunteers/workers are not paid the allowances they have now become used to they will stop working and this could ruin the activities that depend on these volunteers.
- Another example given was SADA-MVP's practice of paying community members to work on infrastructure projects rather than using communal labour. The concern is that this will undermine the traditional spirit and practice of communal labour on which communities have relied for a long time.
- The third area relates to the organising of training events, where participants are taken from their communities and lodged in hotels (mostly in Bolgatanga), thereby incurring and introducing unnecessary feeding and lodging costs. It also sets a precedent and creates expectations among community members that the district assemblies and departments cannot possibly meet in the future.

2.6 The perceived impact of MVP on neighbouring communities

In the view of district officials, neighbouring communities have benefited from SADA-MVP interventions in the following ways:

¹⁷ This section is a summary of perceptions of cost-effectiveness in the view of district officials. A full assessment of cost-effectiveness is being undertaken in a separate cost-effectiveness analysis workstream by the evaluation team.

1. They commute to access health care, education and foodstuffs from beneficiary communities. They therefore save the money they would previously have used on transportation to far off places for other important things.
2. In terms of education children who used to leave home and go to other districts for basic education now attend school in communities closer to home. As noted above, the money used by parents to rent rooms and buy other necessities for their upkeep can now be used for something else.
3. In terms of agriculture neighbouring communities also now enjoy the services of community agriculture extension and veterinary volunteers. Through this they have access to information regarding new and improved methods of farming which farmers in project communities have been trained in.
4. They also benefit from infrastructure shared with project communities such as the roads and culverts that have been constructed to link various communities. In project communities where there is electricity the non-project communities come there to grind their staple foodstuffs at the grinding mills that individuals have installed for commercial purposes. This saves women, in particular, a lot of time.

Notwithstanding these benefits, most district staff keenly feel the imbalances created by the MVP with its multiple advantages awarded to a minority of communities.

2.7 Challenges for sustaining gains made under MVP

Projectised interventions are nearly always time-bound and usually come to an end. As noted earlier, the institutional arrangements put in place before, during and after the project go a long way to determine how long the structures, systems and the impact made will be sustained. Even though the district assemblies and the various departments recognise that the SADA-MVP will come to an end in December 2016, they do not seem to be consciously preparing for its end. In the words of one official, *“We are even praying for their mandate to be renewed”*. They do not have an exit plan and they are rather waiting to hear from SADA-MVP about its exit strategies.

According to the district administration officials of Builsa South, in one of the meetings they attended in Bolgatanga in 2014 representatives of beneficiary districts raised concerns about sustainability plans but since then nothing has been done. This meeting and the issue of an exit strategy were also affirmed by a representative of the GHS.¹⁸ One of the Builsa South administrative staff pointed out that a review of the documents and the MOU signed by the district administration and SADA-MVP suggested that there was nothing relating to who and what needs to be done to sustain the projects after the end of the project implementation. A top district official was, however, of the view that even though nothing has been collectively agreed upon in that direction, the district assemblies always have plans to take over projects implemented by NGOs and other partners. This will be captured in their Medium-Term Development Plans.¹⁹ He also stated that a road map on sustainability of projects through routine monitoring and evaluation of projects by district personnel has started.

In West Mamprusi another top district administration official felt that the SADA-MVP is not implementing its activities in parallel to what the district assemblies are already doing. They ride on existing structures of the district assemblies to implement their projects, hence nothing different is being done from what they would have done themselves. For this reason he believes that the districts will automatically take over the running of the projects and ensure that the appropriate departments will include them in their plans. This apart, the West Mamprusi District participants were of the view that sensitisation of communities on ownership and the need for them to manage projects implemented in their communities has been carried out quite well by SADA-MVP. As

¹⁸ This is contrary to what the SADA-MVP staff interviewed said. He said the process of developing an exit strategy began in 2014 with the various district assemblies and departments. As a result they have comprehensive exit strategies on infrastructure, top-up allowances, ambulance services, NHIS registration, etc. They have started implementing the exit strategies. Some like the drug funds are well advanced so after one year of their establishment, MVP has weaned the facilities off and for them to take charge. So is the NHIS registration. Others like the top-up allowance are lagging behind.

¹⁹ Considering the low percentage of the activities in the MTDP that is implemented (see Section 3) this statement that these projects will be sustained is not convincing.

discussed in Section 2.4, GHS may not be in a position to maintain the payment of allowances to the community health workers and the salary top-ups for other health staff.²⁰

In the Mamprugu-Moaduri District, it was said that there is a 'District Monitoring Team' which is responsible for monitoring projects that are ongoing in the district and reports to the district administration when projects are to end and makes appropriate recommendations for sustaining them.

Other officials also pointed out that there are structures in the communities such as WATSAN Committees, SMCs and PTAs, which are responsible for maintaining or sustaining projects.

The SADA-MVP staff was of the view that sustainability is a matter of time and the mindset of people. With regard to time, he was of the view that the five-year timeframe of the project was not enough and the project team had to push certain activities through quickly. Agriculture is the income base of majority of the people in the MV cluster and it is this income that will support and sustain the gains in health and education. Unfortunately, because the project started effectively in June 2012 and the end of project evaluation will be in May 2016, in effect they would have had only three agriculture seasons instead of the five years intended.

If an adult son does not expect his father to continue to feed him he will go to work to feed himself. At the district level, it is about commitment on the part of the District Chief Executives (DCEs), who are the political heads, towards the wellbeing of the people in the district. There are some DCEs who seem more interested in initiating new projects where they can get kick-backs or see infrastructure projects run down to justify the high amount spent on them (and therefore make some personal gains on them) than to continuously maintain the existing structures. At community level, it is about educating or challenging people to own the projects that have been implemented. He gave an instance where during a monitoring visit they stopped at a health facility. The midwife came asking him to help get rid of termites in the building. He said to her that if it was her house then she will go to someone for help considering the insignificant cost of getting rid of the termites.

Taking these two factors into consideration, he was of the view that, at the minimum, there was the need to extend the project for two or three years to consolidate the achievements in agriculture and also work on the attitudinal changes needed to sustain the gains of the project.

The representatives of the various departments that work closely with SADA-MVP saw the institutional arrangements for sustaining the outcomes and impacts of the SADA-MVP in terms of the following departments and sectors discussed below.

Department of Agriculture

"Sustainability of agricultural projects lie solely in the hands of farmers" – a top official of the Department of Agriculture in Mamprugu-Moaduri District

One of the sustainability measures has been SADA-MVP involving the Department of Co-operatives to train farmers to transform themselves from farmer groups into co-operatives on their own terms and based on member farmers who feel they can be in the same co-operative with. The Department of Co-operatives²¹ also certifies the members of the co-operatives at their own cost. This is making them gradually independent of the Department of Agriculture in accessing loans and other credit inputs from banks and other institutions. The staff then only need to lead the farmers to the providers of input credits and loans while the negotiations are done by farmers themselves. In their view, this is a sustainable approach.

SADA-MVP also recruited agricultural extension officers to add to the existing ones. They have managed to get them onto the government payroll so they will continue with their work when the project ends. The knowledge gained by the farmers from the work of these officers will forever remain with them and how they go about their farming activities. In addition, some lead farmers have also been given some training similar to that of extension

²⁰ The SADA-MVP staff was of the view that in the medium term the top-up of salaries will not be necessary as staff of public institutions like nurses and teachers will accept postings to communities in the MV cluster because of access to improved facilities like accommodation, water, health, electricity, roads due to all the interventions in the area. The project has planned a stakeholder meeting in the health sector to discuss top-up allowances and how this can be brought down, especially considering that with the additional staff that have been posted to the health facilities, the workload on the staff have decreased.

²¹ Nobody from the Department of Co-operatives attended any of the meetings though they were invited.

officers to help their fellow farmers in the proper application of farming techniques and for greater yields. Finally, community livestock extension workers have also been trained by SADA-MVP to assist community members to take care of their livestock. For the representatives of the Department of Agriculture these are some of the sustainability measures put in place by SADA-MVP.

What may be difficult to sustain is the recovery of credit inputs. This is because SADA-MVP involved the police in the early stages of the project which scared farmers away from participating in the credit inputs scheme. According to one of the representatives of the Agricultural Department in Builsa South, they are trying to improve this by ensuring that farmers don't even experience financial losses by ensuring good agronomic practices.

Ghana Health Service

"Only projects outside the plans of Ghana Health Service are not sustainable"

All the representatives of the GHS in the three districts hold the view that most of the projects funded by SADA-MVP are sustainable because they only came to support the Ghana Health Service's own planned projects and, by and large, worked within their policies. In West Mamprusi, they for instance mentioned that SADA-MVP had instituted a drug fund at the health facilities in the beneficiary communities like Kpasenkpe Health Centre. This has provided a buffer that enables them to purchase some drugs while they await the refund of the NHIS claims to replenish the fund. It also enables them to sell drugs to patients who are not registered with NHIS and have to pay cash. This provides additional liquidity to enable the fund to work while it awaits reimbursement from the NHIS. This they believe is sustainable. Another account devoted to non-drug services (service account)²² has also been created with funds from SADA-MVP in order to sustain them when the project ends. However, GHS personnel interviewed were doubtful that this account would be sustained post-MVP because the non-drug services are numerous and thus likely to drain this limited resource.

It is those projects initiated by SADA-MVP which contravene the GHS's policies and the MOU signed with them that are viewed as least likely to be sustained. These include the free registration of community members in beneficiary communities on to the NHIS. This is not sustainable because they believe the people will now always wait for a sponsor to renew their registration for them. At the meeting with the SADA-MVP team in March 2015, the health sector representative affirmed that they did register and renew the NHIS of community members in the cluster. This was to let them see the benefit of the NHIS and hopefully they can continue to renew it. As a way of reducing dependency on SADA-MVP, in 2014 they registered only those who had been identified as poor and vulnerable. For 2015 they are only going to renew that for under-fives, pregnant women, lactating mothers and the poor.

As already noted, GHS staff do not think the move from Community Health Volunteers who are motivated in kind and periodically to Community Health Workers who are paid monthly allowance is sustainable post MVP.

It has been agreed by the GHS in the districts to sponsor the training of some young nurses as midwives to replace the retired midwives who were recruited by SADA-MVP as an interim measure to manage the same health facilities that did not have them. Builsa South District is already sponsoring two nurses for this purpose with much difficulty, according to the district health representative, while the West Mamprusi District is yet to start.²³

Another area of concern to the health representatives is the sustainability of the ambulance services and the tricycles (known locally as 'Motor King') that have been provided with monthly provision of fuel by the SADA-MVP. In the view of the representatives of Mamprugu-Moaduri and Builsa South the ambulance services should be covered by the NHIS. The heads of the health directorates can then take it upon themselves to think of ways of sustaining their operations of the tricycles since the communities are failing to be responsible for them.

²² These were explained by a health worker as services that do not require the use of drugs, laboratory supplies, fuel for ambulances and any other service rendered to the patient with just the application of knowledge and skill by health personnel. SADA-MVP staff also added that the service fund is used to pay workers like cleaners, security persons and minor maintenance of the building.

²³ In its 2014 mid-year report (page 5), SADA-MVP reported that 8 students from the Upper East Region have been supported to undergo training in midwifery to bolster local capacity in health care provision.

Ghana Education Service (GES)

In terms of infrastructure provision such as primary school classrooms, teachers quarters, etc. that have been renovated or put up with the support of SADA-MVP, it is expected that the respective district assemblies will step in when major maintenance is needed. However, minor maintenance can be catered for by the community members through their SMCs and PTAs. A staff member from the education directorate in Mamprugu-Moaduri is sceptical of the communities' preparedness to sustain education projects because many community members are of the view that basic education is free in Ghana. For this reason, they have asked the head of basic schools to use funds from the Capitation Grant from Government to undertake minor maintenance immediately the need arises.

The Community Education Workers (senior high school graduates) who were recruited by SADA-MVP to improve the staff strength in schools are being assisted to become trained teachers so they hope that they will be employed by the Ghana Education Service to continue teaching when the project finally comes to an end.

Other Departments

The focus of the representatives of the Department of Community Development and Social Welfare and the Environmental Health Department was on the sustainability of the CLTS programme. For the latter, the implementation of the CLTS is part of the normal duties of the department which the SADA-MVP only came in to support. At the end of SADA-MVP they believe these will continue although they expect that the monitoring will not be as effective as before because of limited resources.

There was also the view that the education of communities on the health risks of open defecation will reflect in a change in behaviour. This will be buttressed by the fact that communities have been educated in how to construct their own household toilet facilities. Also, community leaders such as the chiefs and opinion leaders are to penalise the perpetrators of open defecation. However, despite all the sensitisation that had gone on in communities, the number of people embracing the concept was still very low. The excuse the people gave was that local building materials were not strong and did not last long. At the same time they cannot afford quality building materials. This led SADA-MVP to step in to support them with 60% of the cost per toilet facility. While understandable there is also the concern that this is not sustainable at the end of the project.

3 Other Emerging Issues

Section 2 of this report seeks to capture the views and perspectives expressed by both the staff of the district administration and the technical departments who work with the various SADA-MVP projects in response to the main questions of the study. This section records some of the points made that did not necessarily fit within the main questions but which are nevertheless pertinent to the objective of understanding more about how the institutions through which MVP works are changing or not. Also outlined here are some overarching issues of relevance or concern that were alluded to by the FGD participants or noticed by the evaluation team during the sessions which relate to the SADA-MVP objective of '*Strengthened local institutions and community capacity – to increase the involvement and commitment by the local community and officials, and help to secure sustainability of the impacts*'.²⁴

3.1 Institutional arrangements and ownership

Building co-operative relationships with citizens groups and non-governmental and faith-based organisations.

During the discussions in the three districts there was no mention of any of the project activities being conducted by NGOs or contracted to private consultants. Even if there was, it was not known to them or significant enough to be worthy of mention. Apart from physical infrastructure projects like buildings and roads which require the expertise of road and building contractors, and procuring items like school uniforms, desks, playground equipment, which are often needed in bulk and therefore contracted out to private suppliers, the majority of the projects are being undertaken by staff of the district assemblies as was agreed in the respective MOUs.

²⁴ DFID, Business Case: Millennium Village in Northern Ghana, 2011, p. 2.

Consequently, most of the district officials in the study gave the SADA-MVP a high score for the participation of the district institutions in the entire project cycle (see Section 2.3).

However, there are a number of NGOs and faith-based organisations operating in the MV cluster. In the qualitative baseline study on well-being it was reported that, '*The Presbyterian Agricultural Station at Sandema (PAS-S) and the Friends of Widows Foundation are well regarded in several of the Buili sites visited. PAS-S provides extension services to large-scale farmers as well as small ruminants and fowls to disabled persons and poor households. World Vision Ghana also provides support in the areas of health, agriculture, education, infrastructure and also education finance/supplies to poor children*'.²⁵ Likewise, there are self-help groups in the communities pursuing the welfare of their members. Yet because of the limited resources available to it, local government tends to appropriate external resources for itself to the neglect of building a variety of co-operative relationships with organisations outside government – such as with civil society (citizen self-help groups), private and faith-based organisations. For this reason, much of the potential human resources which drive development within a district remain underutilised or untapped.

Community participation, capacity building and ownership

As noted in the introduction to this report, one of the expected project outputs of the SADA MVP noted in DFID's Business Case for the support to the Millennium Village in Northern Ghana is: *Strengthened local institutions and community capacity – to increase the involvement and commitment by the local community and officials, and help to secure sustainability of the impacts*.²⁶ So far the project is working with the Department of Agriculture to transform the farmers' groups into co-operatives with the support of the Department of Co-operatives. This is to bring the farmers to a position where they can negotiate terms with financial institutions, input dealers, traders, service providers, etc. and make them less dependent on the staff of the Department of Agriculture. SADA-MVP is using the 'lead farmer' and 'community livestock workers' concepts to extend extension services to the communities. In education, the capacity of SMCs/PTAs is being built so that they can play their roles and responsibilities in the management of the schools more effectively. There are also community education workers who go round the community to urge parents to send children to school as well as doing some teaching. Similarly, in the health sector, there are community health workers extending the reach of the GHS. Regarding water and sanitation, the WATSAN committees have been revitalised and strengthened and local artisans trained to build household latrines instead of contracting them to outsiders. Engagement at community level therefore has focused largely on extending the work and services of the district departments.

The various volunteers/workers appear to be regarded as extra person power to deal with the volume of government work and as an extension of the district's reach rather than from a community strengthening and empowerment perspective, i.e. to enable communities, especially their leadership, to have a sense of ownership or to take over, manage and sustain the projects that have been initiated. As described above, the approach being used seems to be a fairly 'top-down' one aiming to roll out government services. None of the district officials spoke of building community capacity or supporting them to identify their own priorities and goals and pursue them despite this approach being officially described in the local government planning process as documented in L.I.1589. Community participation thus appears to be conceived by the district officials in the study as involving communities in MVP and government schemes rather than also supporting them to be in charge of their own development.

From the impression given in its mid-year reports of 2013 and 2014, the SADA-MVP approach to community participation and capacity building has been largely in the form of staff attending community *durbars* to sensitise or educate the community on SADA-MVP objectives, activities, progress and challenges, and the roles expected of community members in implementation. The numbers at these meetings (*durbars*) have ranged from 70 people in Naadema/Louisa to 600 in Kunkwa. It has also organised community review meetings '*to take stock of the project implementation in each community to date, so that the community may collectively agree on how to*

²⁵ Masset, et al., Millennium Village Impact Evaluation, Baseline Summary Report: Appendix D. Baseline Report – Wellbeing and Field Group Discussions Assessment, 2013, p. 126.

²⁶ DFID, Business Case: Millennium Village in Northern Ghana, 2011, p. 2.

improve upon its role in the project implementation and engagement'.²⁷ It has also periodically organised workshops for community leaders as well as for representatives of PTAs, SMCs, WATSAN teams and Village Savings and Loans Associations, separately or collectively. One of the main objectives of one such workshop was *'to educate the communities on the concept and importance of advocacy and how it can help bring change to their communities'*. Following these workshops, six-month advocacy plans were developed for selected sectors including health, education and water and sanitation.²⁸ These forms of engagement have also been complemented by those of community-level extension workers like the Community Health Workers, Community Education Workers, etc. mentioned above.

This form of participation and capacity building is what Pretty et al. (1994) referred to in participatory development discourse as belonging to the category of 'information giving' and 'consultation' which does not engender community ownership and responsibility and is therefore not transformative. For participation to be transformative it has to be in the realm of 'deciding together', 'acting together' or ideally 'supporting'/'self-mobilisation'. The closer participation is to supporting/self-mobilisation, the stronger the level of control and stance of, in this case, the communities (it is applicable to the district assemblies and technical departments). When this is the case they have argued that there is the greater likelihood that people would participate by taking their own initiatives and not relying on any prompting from outside. They only rely on external sources for funding or technical advice but keep control over how resources are used. Such local initiatives sometimes change existing allocation of power and sometimes do not.²⁹ The SADA-MVP staff gave an example of this kind of transformative participation when additional accommodation was needed to house teachers and nurses in Kinkadina and Jadema communities. The SADA-MVP said it did not have the funds to extend what it had provided but could support these two communities with materials if they took the initiative to do so. These two communities did so using local materials with the project providing cement for plastering the walls and with roofing sheets. Similarly, Zamza community also took the initiative to construct a co-operative office and a warehouse. In these three communities there is likely to be greater sense of ownership and responsibility towards these projects than those that were given out to contractors and seen as SADA-MVP or district assembly projects. Considering the importance of community participation and ownership it is surprising that the staff of the Department of Community Development and Social Welfare feel marginalised in SADA-MVP's community-level activities.

Most worrying to the district officials, in terms of community ownership, is that by choosing to pay monthly allowances to the various community health/teachers/livestock workers the SADA-MVP may have even weakened the existing sense of community responsibility. Admittedly, getting the right institutional arrangements in place to promote community ownership of projects is a considerable challenge for most development actors and projects. But others have evolved a more enabling and sustainable pathway by facilitating analysis by the various community stakeholders themselves of what they see as the problems or challenges and the best ways of improving their wellbeing.

The challenge of building local ownership

Despite the institutional arrangement where the SADA-MVP is aligned with government structures and the assertion from the staff of the departments of education, health and agriculture that SADA-MVP projects are in line with their own plans, there was little evidence from the FGDs to indicate that the district officials felt ownership of the projects that have been implemented. Rather, it appeared that they saw their role as helping SADA-MVP to carry out 'its projects' and not the other way round. This may be a presumption based on previous projects that, as they said, often have been imposed on them from their headquarters or outside bodies. It may also be as a result of the fact that the MOU is with the Millennium Promise rather than SADA or, what would be ideal, from the district assemblies to SADA-MVP on their negotiated terms. It is also possible that this lack of a sense of ownership is due in part to the pressure felt by the project staff to show results and to roll out activities as quickly as possible, which is understandable, particularly since the seasonal timing of the agricultural cycle is

²⁷ Millennium Villages and Millennium Promise – 2014 Midyear Report on the Millennium Village Project in Northern Ghana: Reporting Period 1 January 2014–30 June 2014, p. 43.

²⁸ Ibid. p. 42.

²⁹ Pretty et al. (1994), IIED Participation Learning and Action. A trainer's guide adapted from Adnan et al. (1992); <http://www.partnerships.org.uk/pres/fitlog/sld007.htm>; (retrieved on 02/08/15) <http://www.participatorymethods.org/method/levels-participation> (retrieved on 02/08/15).

so critical (see Section 2.3 pp. 30–31). There is clearly a need to balance the urgency of addressing food insecurity in the short term with the need for the longer participatory processes that nurture a sense of ownership in the longer term. At midterm however the impression given by the district participants in the study is that this balance has so far been skewed towards delivering short-term results at the expense of nurturing well rooted community based institutions, practices and self-reliance.

3.2 Decentralisation and the challenges it poses to local development

Closely linked to the issue of institutional arrangements and ownership is the current status of Ghana's decentralisation framework, which is meant to drive local development. Numerous accounts of the district officials in the FGDs in this study show how, to a large extent, Ghana's local government system is only partially functional. This point is also reiterated by the SADA-MVP staff interviewed who thought the way to get around the frequent staff turnovers at the district assemblies is for full decentralisation. This should include the appointment of such key staff as the DCD by the district assembly and sub-committees of the district assembly being strengthened and provided the resources to work (see Section 2.3 p. 29). This will enable projects like SADA-MVP to go beyond the district administrators. These first-hand accounts are supported by a substantial body of literature written by Ghanaian development practitioners and researchers (e.g. Gariba 2009; Yemedi 2014) as well as almost daily references in the Ghanaian media.³⁰ There is broad acknowledgement that until certain aspects of decentralisation policy are realised interventions such as the MVP can only achieve modest, localised and even temporary gains. This has implications for the extent to which the districts can take over projects initiated under SADA-MVP and sustain them. The following outlines some of the main areas that are regarded as problematic.

Uneven devolution of powers

Though key departments and agencies of government like education and health are said to be under the authority of the district assemblies, in practice and by law they are deconcentrated offices of their parent bodies – Ghana Education Service (Act 525 of 1996) and Ghana Health Service (Act 506 of 1995). Just as participants in the focus groups in West Mamprusi attested, projects in these sectors are largely determined by their headquarters based in Accra. These departments also experience delays in the transfer of funds for their recurrent costs and for project execution. The Builsa District Health Management Team reported at the time of this study in May 2015 that since the creation of the district in 2012 it has not received any funding from central government to cover its administrative expenses. (See section below on Inconsistent Revenue below).

High staff turnover

As outlined at the beginning of this report (Section 1.3) it is clear at midterm that many of the district staff who were there at the outset of the SADA-MVP have changed just in the two years since the baseline. This fact lends credence to the SADA-MVP staff's assertion that as part of full decentralisation key positions like the District Coordinating Director would be better appointed by the district assembly. Also for the sub-committees of the district assembly to be strengthened and adequately resourced. By extension, it would seem to make it all the more important for projects like SADA-MVP to work more closely with the assemblypersons, the Presiding Member of the district assembly, the sub-district structures like the area council and unit committees (where they are functional) and the leadership of communities (chiefs, *'magazia'*, i.e. the women's leader, SMCs/PTAs, etc.) to discuss and agree ownership terms with them at the start of the project. Doing this not only increases the number of people that can help to continue the work but these people tend to be less mobile and often have proven local support.

Party political interference

³⁰ <http://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2014/August-25th/okyehene-calls-for-decentralisation-of-ghanas-governance-system.php>;
<http://www.modernghana.com/news/307896/1/ghana039s-decentralisation-system-makes-limited-pr.html>;
<http://www.modernghana.com/news/578249/1/ghanas-education-system-needs-a-devolution-the-sta.html>

Over the years more and more responsibilities have been devolved to the local level without a corresponding devolution of power and fiscal decentralisation. The current local government system was introduced in 1988, i.e. 27 years ago. By law, 'a District Assembly shall perform deliberative, legislative and executive functions' (Local Government Act 462, Article 10 Section 2). The political heads (District Chief Executives) of the districts are appointed centrally rather than being elected by the people of their district. Through this arrangement they effectively become political appointees of the government in power and are under pressure to be more accountable to their political masters than to the people they are supposed to serve. This means that whenever there is a change in ruling political party they are also changed, often resulting in delays in projects and lack of continuity. This negatively affects the chances of consistent execution of the long-term plans of the district.

Limited fiscal decentralisation

The FGD participants repeatedly referred to the inadequacy of funds in relation to what they are expected to do. With regard to fiscal decentralisation, only 10% (increased in 2014 by Parliament, up from 7.5%) of total revenues of Ghana are allocated to the DACF to be shared among the 216 district assemblies for local development. The remaining 90% is controlled by central government. Even then, only 50–60% of the DACF is available for the assemblies to use. Between 40–50% is reserved for Members of Parliament (MP Common Fund), the Regional Coordinating Councils, the DACF Administrator for monitoring, training of district assemblies' staff and for priority intervention projects or programmes like school feeding, waste management and the sanitation module of the Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency, persons with disabilities, training and funds for cured lepers.³¹

Inconsistent and inadequate revenue

The release of the DACF to the district assemblies is regularly six to nine months in arrears³² (see the case of Builsa South District Assembly in the textbox below), sometimes it is less than expected and sometimes it never comes at all. This results in serious fiscal and budgetary constraints and renders the annual district plans out-dated and of little use by the time funds arrive. This in turn discourages district officials from planning, particularly in the long term. A recent study by SEND Foundation reviewed the Medium-Term Development Plans (MTDPs) of 11 district assemblies and found that only 7.3% of the planned activities contained in MTDPs were actually implemented (SEND Foundation, 2014).³³ It has been argued that the district assemblies must do more to generate revenue internally and that their dependence on DACF transfers has served as a disincentive to local revenue collection (Yemedi 2014). Builsa South District (newly created in 2012) was only able to mobilise GH¢ 51,454 for 2014.

³¹ SEND-GHANA, Making Decentralisation Work for the Poor, 2010, p. 15

http://www.commonfund.gov.gh/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=337&Itemid=437 (retrieved on 03/08/15).

³² It was not possible to verify the information on DACF provided by Builsa South on the DACF website because information on it is not up to date. DACF Administrator is supposed to report to Parliament on how DACF funds have been distributed during the preceding financial year. On its website it has posted the executive summary of the reports for 2010 and 2011 but nothing after that. Similarly, it used to post quarterly press releases of the distribution of the common fund to the districts. There have not been any new quarterly press releases after that of the 4th quarter of 2012.

³³ SEND Foundation, Bringing Development to the Doorstep of Citizens: The Contribution of the District Assemblies Common Fund, 2014, p. 7.

The district administrations and the technical departments spoke about having to rely on SADA-MVP for

District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) – the case of Builsa South District

According to a source at the Builsa South DA, their most recent receipt of DACF was in April 2015. This was for the first quarter DACF for 2015. However, the third and fourth quarters of the previous year (2014) were not received. The first and second quarters of 2014 were received in November 2014 and January 2015 respectively. The details of the amounts for the various funds are presented in the table below.

QUARTER	DATE RECEIVED	No. months overdue	AMOUNT (GH¢)
1st quarter (Jan-Mar 2014)	November 2014	7	210,080.78
2nd quarter (Apr-Jun 2014)	January 2015	7	333,107.53
3rd quarter (Jul-Sep 2014)	Nil	-	Nil
4th quarter (Oct-Dec 2014)	Nil	-	Nil
1st quarter (Jan-Mar 2015)	April 2015	1	456,642.55

Source: Builsa South District Assembly

motorbikes and monthly fuel allowances in order to perform the roles and responsibilities agreed on in the MOUs, such as monitoring and evaluation. Thus instead of projects like SADA-MVP lending a hand to assist the district assemblies and the departments with what they are doing, they have become lifelines that enable them to perform their most basic functions. Inevitably there was a sense of district officials hoping that the SADA-MVP will be extended (as one district official said) or that another donor project will come to their district when SADA-MVP ends. One of the representatives of the district education facility was hopeful that the school facilities that the SADA-MVP has provided will be maintained using the Capitation Grant³⁴ which government sends to schools. However this, like the DACF, is also often delayed and unreliable.

Control over the whole

The purpose of the MV is to bring about synergistic change that will, at the end of its interventions, continue to propel the well-being of the people and local development. However, as shown above, at district level the local government system is not yet one unit managing the whole in a coordinated way as was intended in the legislation (Act 462). The key leaders responsible for district administration thus cannot exercise control in a way that would enable them to achieve greater synergy between the various development outcomes in their district. Medium-Term Development Plans are another tool/entity that could help the synergy to happen. Yet as noted earlier, most DAs are only able to implement an average of 7% of their medium-term plans – due to delays in DACF disbursement from central government and inability to raise their own locally generated income. Thus while projects such as the MVP ameliorate the immediate situation they do not address these structural issues underlying the local government system. Until decentralised government is realised to the extent that district assemblies are in control of the whole development picture, they are arguably unable to bring transformative and synergistic change that the MVP seeks to achieve.

3.3 Lack of transparency, accountability and its attendant corruption

In Section 2.3, an example was given of how the education directorate in West Mamprusi took full responsibility for the organisation of the 2014 teachers/students awards (the selection of the beneficiaries as well as the packages for each award winner). The DDF was seen as one of the projects that enables full participation of the district (Section 2.3) because once a district is deemed to have qualified through the use of the Functional and

³⁴ The Capitation Grant was introduced in Ghana in 2005. It is a subsidy paid by the government per student per term. It covers general stationery and management, office machinery, first aid, building maintenance, sports fee, culture fee, sanitation fee, postage, textbook user fee, practical fees, furniture maintenance and tools maintenance as well as machinery for technical schools and institutions. It is meant to make basic education truly free by eliminating the cost of these items that public schools charge pupils and students.

Organisation Assessment Tool it is allocated a flexible and open-ended revenue to finance its investment and maintenance projects in economic, social and environmental sectors.³⁵ Both examples illustrate the desire of district authorities for greater ownership and control of project activities and budget. And ideally that is what it should have been had Ghana's decentralised system been fully functional. In which case most donors and projects like SADA-MVP could simply agree on project activities, budget, workplan and monitoring and evaluation plans with the three districts and then apportion the funds to them accordingly. Unfortunately, as alluded to by the SADA-MVP staff, corruption on the part of some district political heads (DCEs) makes this a difficult option at the moment (see Section 2.7 p. 38). It is therefore not surprising that SADA-MVP controls 80–90% of the project budget and only 10–20% is given to the districts to manage directly.

The corruption at levels of government is attributed to lack of transparency, accountability and responsiveness to citizens' demands. Most of the citizens at the district and sub-district level are not informed about how much money has been given to the district authorities to manage on their behalf. Be it the DACF or externally funded projects. When they or civil society organisations ask for such information they are most often refused.

SEND Ghana has reported that in the 50 districts in which it monitored the DACF information on the availability of funds was not uniform. *'In districts with difficult leaders information is not often provided when the DACF is received. In fact, in Ada the DCE has literally imposed a fiat on providing information about the Fund without his permission... Many DAs (such as Wa Municipal and Jirapa) have found that when information on the fund – such as how much has been received and the conditions attached to it – is provided, public demand for it has been moderate. The Builsa North DA provides information on radio and on notice boards on how much has been received and how it was spent'* (SEND Foundation, 2015³⁶). Accountability is mostly conceived of by those in power as upwards, not downwards. This breeds corruption as is regularly reported by the Auditor-General.

The Auditor-General, in his report on the management and utilisation of the DACF and other Statutory Funds for the year ended 31 December 2013 noted that, *'The deficiencies noted in the operations of the Assemblies created avenues for some officials to mismanage the funds and resources of the Assemblies to a financial value of approximately GH¢ 28,536,877.56 during the year under review. The lapses and deficiencies were identified in transactions such as cash management which repeatedly recorded payment cycle irregularities, unsubstantiated payments and misapplication of funds. I also noted procurement, store and contract irregularities in the transactions of some Assemblies as well as tax irregularities all of which have been summarised and consolidated in this report'* (Ghana Audit Service, 2014³⁷).

As long as lack of accountability to citizens and rampant corruption, whether real or perceived, persists it is going to be difficult for donors or international NGOs to entrust project funds into the hands of district authorities. Consequently, the latter are compelled to permit project secretariats such as the SADA-MVP to oversee the efficient project implementation which perversely undermines the district assembly's sense of ownership and commitment to the projects they implement. Repeatedly therefore, instead of being in the driver's seat, they end up being in the passenger's seat, grateful for the ride.

4 Conclusion

On the whole most of the district officials who took part in the focus group discussions said they are satisfied with the SADA-MVP in terms of what has been achieved since it started its operations in January 2012. In the beneficiary communities there are some new physical infrastructure in health, education, agriculture, water, sanitation, electricity, roads or coverts which can be attributed, directly or indirectly, wholly or partially to SADA-MVP. Health facilities that were not being patronised by community members because there were no staff or

³⁵ <http://www.afd.fr/lang/en/home/pays/afrique/geo-af/ghana/projets-ghana/projet-de-dotation-des-collectivites-locales> (retrieved 07/08/15).

³⁶ SEND Foundation, Report on Evaluation of Making Decentralisation Work for the Poor II, 2015, pp. 16-17.

³⁷ Ghana Audit Service, Report of the Auditor-General on the Management and Utilisation of District Assemblies' Common Fund and Other Statutory Funds for the Year Ended 31 December 2013, Government of Ghana, 2014, p. 2 of Transmitter Letter.

medicines are now being patronised once again. Similarly with the schools. Despite some challenges with the input credit and the unreliable rainfall in 2014, which is also likely this year (2015), the district officials are confident that farmers have increased their crop production because of the introduction of maize farming on a commercial basis.

The district actors generally appreciate the way in which the MVP has helped them to execute their roles more effectively. The injection of funds has helped them and their staff to become more mobile and thus able to supervise and monitor the changes taking place, get their planning and implementation systems running once more as they should and generally breathe life into a faltering set of government services. They acknowledged the capacity-building activities that their staff are benefiting from. They also appreciate the level of involvement of district officials in the SADA-MVP project, which compares favourably to other external interventions that contract out the work to private consultants. Their involvement in the project has also increased appreciably since the baseline, although some of the departments (education, health, water, works) feel much more involved than others (e.g. the Department of Community Development and Social Welfare).

These outcomes are, to some degree, to be expected once resources of this scale have been injected into these communities. As some district officials acknowledged, however, despite the positive signs described above, it is too early to draw conclusions about the ultimate impact (positive or negative) that the SADA-MVP will have on the lives of the people in the beneficiary communities and in the cluster as a whole.

While significant gains have been made in terms of extending government services to community level by increasing the person power at community level in particular, this approach may not be sustainable if a) it only involves individuals or groups of individuals and not the active participation of the whole community and b) does not place the responsibility for the development of communities in the hands of traditional community institutions and the sub-district institutions of the district assemblies (unit committees, assembly members and area councils) which make up the local government system as an integrated whole.

At midterm it is clear that the work in five key sectors that the SADA-MVP is principally involved with (agriculture, health, education, water and sanitation, infrastructure) is much improved and thus the potential for synergy between these areas of activity is starting to look possible. However, there is no sense at this stage of this synergy mobilising a critical mass of the human, financial and material resources possible within the district and so the likelihood is that the work will continue to depend on continual injection of funds. The marginal participation or neglect of the traditional community, citizen and sub-district institutions that could galvanise broader participation could undermine the gains made.

The 'big push' seems at this midterm point to be focussed on increased delivery of and access to government services. This is very important and yet it is a fraction of the potential big push that could be achieved if more citizens were involved.

At this stage it is difficult to see how the project achievements can be sustained without a continued injection of funds and an extended period of consistent support to the processes that engender community participation and ownership of their own development.

Most of the district officials understood that the district assembly or the technical departments will take over the various projects implemented with SADA-MVP upon the latter's exit. Given the history of resource and funding constraints that have plagued the district assemblies over the years and as illustrated by the case of Builsa South District, which has two-thirds of the beneficiary communities, this is difficult to imagine with only a year and a half of implementation remaining and government revenue patterns unchanged. Despite this, the shortcomings of Ghana's decentralisation system are beyond the project. As things appear at midterm, additional measures will need to be taken by SADA-MVP and the three beneficiary districts between now and the end of the project to ensure that the gains made are continued and sustained. District officials have identified and raised the particular issues that need addressing. The primary ones mentioned in the FGDs were: the payment of monthly allowances to community volunteers in health, education and agriculture; the fuelling and maintenance of ambulances; the means of transport and fuel for district officials and extension agents for monitoring and supervision visits to

projects and communities. In the process of addressing these issues, there is the need to differentiate between project activities that address long-term livelihood deficits such as provision of farm inputs and training farmers in improved farming methods in order to make them food secure and increase their income, and those which are short-term or gap-filling measures like paying for free NHIS registration, the award of scholarships to 'brilliant but needy' girls, free school uniforms, etc.

The project acknowledges the importance of community participation and ownership as key to sustainability and made efforts in that respect. However, it is not evident as at this midterm that there is the kind of participation of entire communities, citizen groups, traditional community leadership and sub-district institutions that will make them feel ownership and responsibility towards the projects to the extent that will make the people sustain them after SADA-MVP has ended.

The likelihood of the project affecting the district institutions positively and in a lasting way are severely hampered by the current status of the decentralised local government system as district administrations are not fully in control of all the factors needed to achieve the synergy intended by the MVP. Most notably the erratic disbursement of funds from central government renders their efforts at medium- and long-term planning and implementation almost pointless.

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Appendix D1: Number of District Assembly Staff Met

District	District Administration Staff	District Department Staff
Builsa South	5	4
West Mamprusi	3	8
Mamprugu-Moaduri	3	6
Total	11	18

Appendix D2: Extract from MOU between SADA-MVP and District Assemblies and Departments

(I) EXTRACT FROM MOU BETWEEN SADA-MVP AND DISTRICT ASSEMBLY RELATING TO RESPONSIBILITIES (Dated October 2013)

3. Understandings and Agreements

The parties to this MOU understand and agree to the following:

3.1 MOU Term

This MOU shall be effective from 1 October 2013 to 30 September 2014. It **may be renewed** with the mutual written consent of the parties, subject to the terms and conditions **to be** agreed by the parties hereto.

3.2 Assembly Responsibilities

The Assembly shall undertake the following activities during the duration **of the MOU term**:

- i. **Involve Millennium Promise (MP)** in agreed programmes and activities, including:
 - Meetings of the General Assembly.
 - Planning and budgeting sessions, particularly the preparation of Medium-Term Development Plans (MTDPs).
 - Meetings to review the MTDPs.
 - Monitoring and evaluation visits to communities within the SADA-MVP cluster.
- ii. Collaborate with MP to involve communities within the SADA-MVP cluster in the development, monitoring and evaluation of MTDPs.
- iii. Collaborate with MP to facilitate the involvement of communities within the SADA-MVP cluster in other important activities of the Assembly (e.g. Fee Fixing resolution).
- iv. Attend meetings, workshops and other programs upon the invitation of MP.
- v. Carry out monitoring and evaluation of SADA-MVP sites in collaboration with MP officials and communities.

3.3 MP Responsibilities

MP shall undertake the following activities during the duration of the MOU term:

- i. Subject to applicable confidentiality obligations, provide all necessary and reasonably available information on SADA-MVP programs and activities to assist the Assembly to carry out its planning and budgeting roles;
- ii. Involve the Assembly in all relevant SADA-MVP programs and activities such as:
 - Stakeholder meetings.
 - Review sessions.
 - Annual community *durbars*.
 - Programs to hand over infrastructure in cluster.
- iii. Support the Assembly in the provision of infrastructure, logistics, materials and any other necessary support required for the development Projects set forth in the SADA-MVP workplans, provided such support is aligned with the mandate and within the limitations of the budget of SADA-MVP.

- iv. Within the limitations of the SADA-MVP budget, provide resources (e.g. fuel, DSA at rates in the public service) for joint monitoring of **SADA-MVP programs** and activities within the cluster. The exact quantum of **resources shall be** determined after detailed negotiations between MP and the Assembly.

3.4 MP and the Assembly agree to the following general provisions:

- i. MP will provide financial support to the Assembly to carry **out agreed activities** as spooled in the present MOU in accordance with as financial **policies and** procedures.
- ii. MP and the Assembly shall jointly assume the responsibility **for the** implementation of activities to be agreed between the two parties.
- iii. Subject to the terms and conditions to be agreed by the parties hereto, the Assembly and its decentralised departments will take over completely and maintain whatever structures and amenities that are constructed for or provided to SADA-MVP to consolidate the achievements of the project (e.g. buildings, roads, water and sanitation facilities, storage facilities, etc.).
- iv. Any report or any other materials prepared under this MOU by MP shall remain the property of MP. MP hereby grants to the Assembly a non-transferable, royalty-free license to use, reproduce, distribute and display such materials in the course of performance of this MOU, provided that the Assembly's external use of such materials shall be subject to sub-clause (a) below.
- v. The Assembly acknowledges that MP's confidential information may be made available to it in connection with this MOU, and, subject to applicable laws, the Assembly agrees to treat such information as confidential and not to disclose such confidential information without the prior written consent of MP. As used herein, the term 'confidential information' includes all information and materials belonging to, used by or in the possession of MP relating to its products, operations, processes, technology, technical information and know-how, inventions, patents, developments, business strategies, financial data, pricing, current and prospective customers, current or prospective donors, marketing plans, management policies, computer software, and trade secrets of every kind and character, affiliates, directors and employees, but shall not include (i) information which was already within the public domain at the time the information is acquired by the Assembly or (ii) information that subsequently becomes public through no act or omission of the Assembly.
- vi. Neither party will issue a press release or other information concerning this **MOU** or the relationship between the parties or using the name or symbol of **the other party**, without obtaining the other party's prior written consent.
- vii. The relationship of the parties is that of independent **contractors, and nothing** contained in this MOU shall be construed to: (i) **give any party the power to direct** and control the day-to-day activities of the other, (ii) **constitute the parties as partners, agents and principals, or joint venturers, or** (iii) **allow any party to create or assume any obligation on behalf of the other party for any purpose** whatsoever.

(I) EXTRACT FROM MOU BETWEEN SADA-MVP AND DISTRICT DIRECTORATE OF AGRICULTURE RELATING TO RESPONSIBILITIES (dated September 2012)

2. Main Purpose/General objective

The main purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Ministry of Food and Agriculture's District Directorate of Agriculture (MoFA **DDA**) and **MP is to set** solid grounds for efficient collaboration and the day-to-day **implementation and** monitoring of the MVP agriculture related activities carried out in **the Northern Ghana Builsa** and West Mamprusi Districts.

3. Common areas of interest/commitments

MP has requested the two District Directors of Agriculture to perform the following activities, which are agreed to by the MoFA RDA:

- Ensure a continuous and excellent extension services delivery, i.e. the good agricultural practices, in the Builsa and West Mamprusi Districts.
- Connect and strengthen linkages between the SADA-MVP anti all major national agricultural policies and programs as well as the ones undertaken by other partner projects and NGOs so as to build necessary synergies for the benefit of the populations.
- Set up and monitor on-farm demonstration p100 10 all the communities, which includes (1) site selection and delimitation, (2) input distribution, (3) application of the good agricultural practices as specified by the demonstration technological packages, (4) yield estimation, (5) continuous monitoring and (6) periodic and timely reporting.
- Collect all information needed to document all major MVP agricultural performance indicators, a list of which will be made available by the MVP.
- Share with the MVP all the agriculture related statistics collected in a routine basis by the MoFA.
- Ensure good extension coverage through, if necessary, posting of new Agricultural Extension Agents (AEAs) in the MVP intervention area; initially one AEA will be posted in each community of the MVP intervention area, but the parties may agree on later modifications depending on the needs and availability.

The two District Directors of Agriculture recognise that the activities requested above by MP *fall* in their general portfolio and declare being well fit to carry them out. However, they *declare* having some logistical and financial difficulties to deliver and therefore request MP to provide them the below support, which is agreed to by MP:

- Organise refresher trainings for the AEAs active in the MVP intervention area on all proposed technological package to be implemented, including the demonstrations.
- Provide monthly fuel and allowances for the field extension staff (AEAs) operating in the MVP intervention area in the amount of 12 (twelve) gallons of fuel and 150 (one hundred and fifty) GHC per month and per AEA involved.
- Provide means of transportation or, in alternative at MP's discretion, a monthly fuel provision of 8 (eight) gallons per supervisor (District Development Officers and District Director of Agriculture) and the District Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, and a Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) in conformity with the national standards (25 GHC per day) to allow them to have a close supervision of all the activities to be carried out by the AEAs, including demonstration, data collection and general routine extension services delivery. A common time table will be established for the frequency of these supervision missions.
- Put at the disposal of MoFA DDA staff for their use all the necessary field equipments/materials such as: field bags, rain coats, boots, field notebooks, garden lines, (the rope used for planting in line), measuring tapes, weighing scales, GPS and Personal Data Assistant.
- Strengthen the DDA by providing the use of desktop computers and accessories to facilitate data management and production of reports; the actual amount and type of equipment that MP will make available to the DDA for its use will depend on the *agreed* upon needs and the possibility by MP to meet them.

Appendix D3: The Perceptions of Staff of the Level of Involvement of Departments in Donor Assisted Projects in the District

DEPARTMENT: GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE (GES)

PROJECT	DESIGN		IMPLEMENTATION		MONITORING		EVALUATION	
	2013	2015	2013	2015	2013	2015	2013	2015
TENI PROJECT	0		10		5		5	
Camfed PROJECT	0	0	10	10	5	5	5	0
WORLD VISION	0	0	4	4	5	0	5	0
RAINS (SUPPLIES BICYCLES TO SCHOOL CHILDREN)	0		5		5		5	
SADA MVP	Uncertain	0	5	6	5	6	5	4
SCHOOL FOR LIFE	0		5		5		5	

DEPARTMENT: GHANA HEALTH SERVICE (GHS)

PROJECT	DESIGN		IMPLEMENTATION		MONITORING		EVALUATION	
	2013	2015	2013	2015	2013	2015	2013	2015
Community Case Management	1	1	10	10	10	10	10	10
Nutrition and Malaria Control for Child Survival	1	1	10	10	10	10	10	10
Tuberculosis Control Programme	1	1	10	10	10	10	10	10
Millennium Villages Project (MVP)	7	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

PROJECT	DESIGN		IMPLEMENTATION		MONITORING		EVALUATION	
	2013	2015	2013	2015	2013	2015	2013	2015
Northern Rural Growth Project (NRGP)	2	7	8	8	7	9	5	5
Sustainable Land and Water Project (SLWP)	2	9	8	8	8	9	6	8
Japanese International Co-operation Agency (JICA)	2	8	9	7	8	8	7	7
Millennium Villages Project (MVP)	2	7	7	7	7	8	6	7
Rice Sector Support Project	2	8	7	8	7	9	6	8

DEPARTMENT: DISTRICT WORKS DEPARTMENT

PROJECT	DESIGN		IMPLEMENTATION		MONITORING		EVALUATION	
	2013	2015	2013	2015	2013	2015	2013	2015
Northern Region Small Towns Water and Sanitation Project (NORST)	4	4	6	7	6	6	8	9
District Development Facility (DDF)	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Sustainable Rural Water Project (SRWP)	4	4	6	7	6	6	8	9
Millennium Villages Project (MVP)	6	7	4	5	4	5	6	6
Local Service Delivery Governance Program (LSDGP)	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL WELFARE

PROJECT	DESIGN		IMPLEMENTATION		MONITORING		EVALUATION	
	2013	2015	2013	2015	2013	2015	2013	2015

World Food Program (WFP) Iodine salt re-bagging	6		9		9		8	
UNICEF (Child Rights Promotion and Protection)	7	7	9	10	10	9	8	9
World Vision (Child Protection Team)	5	4	7	2	8	2	8	2
NORPREP: Water and Sanitation Development	2		5		7		7	
Millennium Villages Project (MVP)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

Appendix D4: Questions for Institutional Assessment

Objective of the midterm institutional assessment of MVP will be to see what progress has been made so far regarding the following:

- The effective participation of district institutions and actors in decision making in MVP and in project implementation and monitoring.
- The effect of MVP on district and community institutions and actors.
- The effect of MVP on poverty and standard of living of the people in the MV communities, neighbouring communities and the MV districts as a whole.
- The contribution of districts and community institutions to projects initiated under MVP.
- From the perspective of district and community actors, the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of projects initiated under MVP.

As much possible, the team will request evidence from the district administrations and the departments to back their claims.

Similar questions will be asked of communities during the PRA/Interpretational Lens Study and the Reality Check.

Objective/Issues	Questions	Who to ask
Institutional arrangements and effective participation	<p>What has changed in the institutional, financial, and governance arrangements that have been put in place for the management and implementation of MVP since the baseline study?</p> <p>How have these institutional arrangements enabled effective participation of district and community institutions and actors in decision making and project implementation, monitoring and reviews compared to other past or existing projects?</p> <p>Compared to other donor-funded projects mentioned at the baseline, how does the MVP compare in terms of the involvement of the district administration/departments in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects?</p> <p>What structures, mechanisms are in place for sustaining the projects, services, facilities, etc. that have been implemented in the MVP communities when the project ends?</p> <p>What is MVP's exit strategy? What plans have the districts in place to take over from MVP?</p>	<p>(i) MVP Bolga office; (ii) key district administration staff (DCE, DCD, DPO, DBO, etc.)</p> <p>(iii) Staff of key decentralised departments and agencies (education, agriculture, health, works, community development)</p>
Effect of MVP on district and community institutions and actors	<p>To what extent is the MVP working with existing district and community institutions? Which are these and what are their roles and responsibilities in MVP?</p> <p>Which new organisations or institutions have been created or emerged in response to MVP? (Ask for evidence)</p> <p>What has been the effect/impact of the MVP (positively or negatively) on:</p>	

Objective/Issues	Questions	Who to ask
	<p>(i) The functioning of district and community institutions?</p> <p>(ii) The confidence and trust of the people in these institutions?</p> <p>(iii) Allocation of district revenues?</p> <p>Community involvement:</p> <p>(i) What contribution have communities made in kind towards the building of infrastructure?</p> <p>(ii) What have been the attitudes of community leaders and chiefs toward MVPs?</p> <p>The District Administration and the key departments that MVP works with to provide information relating to staffing, annual budget, income, and expenditure from 2012-2014.</p> <p>Number of NGOs in each district from 2012-2014.</p> <p>Which NGOs that have started, ceased or scaled-up operations in the area? And, why?</p>	
<p>The effect of MVP on poverty and standard of living of the people in the MV communities, neighbouring communities and the MV districts as a whole</p>	<p>On a scale of 1-10, to what extent has the MVP led to improvement in:</p> <p>(i) poverty?</p> <p>(ii) health?</p> <p>(iii) education?</p> <p>(iii) agriculture?</p> <p>(iv) infrastructure in beneficiary communities and districts?</p> <p>On a scale of 1-10, what has been the effect on the above in neighbouring communities and districts?</p>	
<p>The contribution of districts and community institutions to projects initiated under MVP</p>	<p>At baseline, districts admin's contribution was MVP's use of Assembly Hall, and Departments contributed personnel time and motorbike (fuel by MVP). What has changed?</p> <p>On a scale of 1-10, what is the extent of the contribution of (i) the district administration, (ii) departments, and (iii) communities to projects under MVP?</p> <p>How has the MVP affected Central Government's resource (human, financial, material, projects, services, etc.) to the district?</p>	
<p>The cost-effectiveness and sustainability of projects initiated under MVP</p>	<p>Against the factors that was identified during baseline study for sustainability of projects (e.g. community ownership, training of facility users, measures for maintenance, sensitisation of people, etc.), how would you rate the MVP on sustainability, and why?</p>	

Objective/Issues	Questions	Who to ask
	Against the factors which were identified during the baseline study for cost effectiveness of projects (similar to the above), how will you rate the MVP on cost effectiveness, and why?	