EVALUATION OF THE CAPACITY OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTING AGENTS (PIAS) TO IMPLEMENT THE CBPWP

RESEARCHED FOR THE

NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

BY THE

COMMUNITY AGENCY FOR SOCIAL ENQUIRY

MAY 2000

Florencia Belvedere
Ronke Olusanya
Ezekiel Mogodi

Table of Contents

GLOSSARY

CBO	Community Based Organisation
CBPWP	Community Based Public Works Programme
CDO	Community Development Officer
CM	Cluster Manager
CMIP	Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme
CSC	Cluster Steering Committee
CSF	Cluster Social Facilitator
CWSS	Community Water Supply and Sanitation
DBSA	Development Bank of South Africa
DC	District Council
DoL	Department of Labour
DPW	Department of Public Works
DWAF	Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
EXCO	Executive Committee
FC	Financial Controller
IDT	Independent Development Trust
IDP	Integrated Development Planning
ITI	Institutional Training for Implementation
ITOMM	Institutional Training for Operation, Management and Maintenance
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
LA	Local Authority
LDO	Land Development Objectives
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEC	Member of Executive Committee
MITT	Municipal Infrastructure Task Team
MMIS	Management Monitoring Information System
NDPW	National Department of Public Works
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NPM	National Programme Manager
OMM	Operation, Management and Maintenance
PAC	Projects Approval Committee
PCC	Provincial Co-ordinating Committee
PDI	Previously Disadvantaged Individuals
PDW	Provincial Department of Works
PIA	Programme Implementing Agent
PIA CEO	PIA Chief Executive Officer
PIA FC	PIA Financial Controller
PIA PM	PIA Programme Manager

PMS	Programme Management System
PMT	Provincial Management Team
PPM	Provincial Programme Manager
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PSF	Provincial Social Facilitator
PTO	Permission to Occupy
PWP	Publics Works Programme
RC	Regional Council
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RCBPWP	Re-aligned Community Based Public Works Programme
SANCO	South African National Civics Organisation
SDI	Special Development Initiatives
SF	Social Facilitator
TLC	Transitional Local Council
TRC	Transitional Regional Council
WFW	Working for Water

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Part I: Background to the study

In January 2000, the National Department of Public Works (NDPW) commissioned the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (C A S E) to conduct an evaluation of the capacity of Programme Implementing Agents (PIAs) to implement the Community-Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP). The present study evaluates the capacity of PIAs, in most cases district or regional councils but also IDT and consultants, in three provinces – the Northern Province, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. In addition to evaluating PIA programme managers themselves, the report also focuses on the different stages of the project cycle in order to highlight problems that affect the capacity of PIA managers to implement the CBPWP.

Methodology

- In-depth interviews constituted the main method for data collection. Approximately 35 in-depth interviews were conducted with PIA managers (council officials, consultants and IDT), Provincial Programme Managers, Cluster Managers, and the National Programme Manager for the CBPWP.

- This study focuses on the 1998-99 financial year, as it allowed us to speak to different stakeholders about their experiences after having completed one project cycle as outlined in the Programme Management System (PMS).

Literature review

- A literature review was undertaken to ascertain what institutions are used as PIAs in similar programmes in other developing countries, and their capacity to implement the programmes. The literature tend not to focus on these issues, but rather on the effectiveness of PWPs in achieving the overall objectives of alleviating poverty, generating employment and creating sustainable assets.

- International practice offers little guide as to the best institution for implementation, as government organisations, international agencies, and local NGOs all act as implementing agents for PWPs in developing countries. Nonetheless, certain trends were ascertained:

- PWPs should form an integral part of national policy and take a long-term approach to development issues. This should be reflected in their implementation, and sufficient time should be allocated to planning and training.

- Community participation is vital to ensure that community members identify with the asset created, as they are also ultimately responsible for sustaining it. The decentralisation of implementation is the best way to ensure community participation. Care should be taken to prevent the real aspirations of the community from being blocked by local elites.

- Local organisations should be responsible for implementation. Where local government bodies do not have the capacity, as is the case in many developing countries, NGOs or private agencies with proven expertise should be utilised.

CBPWP in context of similar government programmes

- Programmes like the Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme (CMIP) run by the Department of Constitutional Development, Working for Water, and the Community Water Supply and Sanitation programmes, run by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry are structured along similar lines to the CBPWP.

- Except for the Working for Water programme, CMIP, CWSS and CBPWP all rely on existing development plans as well as communities to identify projects. All have project steering committees to encourage community involvement; and all rely on regional or provincial structures to approve projects and business plans.

- One notable difference is the disbursement of funds. While CBPWP disburses its funds from national level directly to regional or district councils, all other programmes disburse their funds to regional or provincial government structures.

- There is a substantial lack of co-ordination between these different programmes across departments. Joint planning and project identification would allow the combination of management structures to implement projects across departments, as well as more efficient budget allocation and linking of infrastructure with services.

Part II: Research findings

Capacity of District and Regional Councils

- Many of the issues raised by the PIA managers are linked not to considerations of capacity but to the fast-track nature of the programme, which limits their ability to exercise that capacity.

- In the Eastern Cape and Northern Province, PIA programme managers were consultants contracted by or seconded to the council. In KwaZulu-Natal PIAs were regional councils.

- There is no clear correlation between the number of council employees or population served and the ability of councils to act as implementing agents. Instead, the issue of capacity seems to be linked to the expertise that can be found within council structures.

- While the district councils in the Eastern Cape have fully out-sourced the programme management function, regional councils in KwaZulu-Natal have resorted to hiring additional staff on a contract basis to supplement the work carried out by permanent council staff.

- Most of the council officials interviewed for this study indicated that more capacity could be built if funding were guaranteed for a longer period of time, particularly three years or more.

- Council officials in the Eastern Cape and the Northern Province mentioned time constraints, as well as lack of human resource capacity as the main reasons for outsourcing the programme management function of the CBPWP.

- At present there is no clear strategy for the transfer of skills outlined in the PMS; however, many initiatives are underway to allow district councils in the Eastern Cape to play a more active role in the implementation of the CBPWP.

Training on PMS and MMIS

- Most PIA programme managers participated in at least one PMS and MMIS training session.

- Most respondents argued that the training was useful given the multi-layered nature of the programme, although some also complained that it lacked the required depth.
- In addition to formal training, most PIA programme managers interviewed mentioned that PCC meetings also allowed them to clarify some of the issues in the PMS.

Awareness of objectives and assessment of their attainment

- All interviewees were aware of the main objectives of the programme, as well as the targets that each project is expected to meet.
- Most respondents agreed that the objectives are being met to a certain extent. For them, the most successful part of the programme is the creation of assets.
- Respondents were uncertain about the CBPWP's ability to meet two of its objectives fully – the creation of more permanent jobs for community members and the long-term sustainability of assets created.
- Due to the fast-track nature of the programme, training for community members in most cases did not precede the implementation phase of projects.
- Even if communities are able to sustain the assets, it is unrealistic to think that many of these projects will provide permanent employment for many people in a community.

Awareness of targets and assessment of their attainment

- Respondents were well-aware of the employment targets as specified in the PMS.
- There were difficulties with enforcing these targets during the 1998-99 financial year because they were introduced half way through the project cycle, after tenders had closed and contracts with contractors signed.
- Most respondents raised concerns with the target stipulating that at least 30% of project budgets must go to local labour. Projects such as road construction are machine-driven (plant) projects, where the 30% target is difficult to meet. Suggestions on adapting the 30% local labour target include: allowing more time and money for project implementation so that labour-intensive methods could be used on projects; qualifying the 30% local labour target to apply to specific projects; measuring the 30% local labour target per cluster (not project) and hence allowing some projects to surpass the 30% target, while others do not.
- Almost all the respondents admitted to having difficulties meeting the target for the employment of women. The reasons given were cultural attitudes and the patriarchal nature of the societies in which the programme is running.

Identification of clusters

- Cluster identification was usually driven by the council, based on existing Integrated Development Planning or Regional Development plans.
- Development focused in a particular area or cluster often posed political problems for some District or Regional Councils, as they would prefer to distribute the funds across a variety of areas in order to benefit a larger spread of people.
- Party politics and the power of individual councillors were also cited as factors influencing the siting of clusters.

- Once clusters were identified, these plans were sent to the PCC for approval. In general, this process was quick, taking one to three weeks.

Appointment of Cluster Managers and monitoring of their activities

- Because the PMS was introduced after many of the cluster managers had been hired for the 1998-99 financial year, some of the requirements of the CMs as stated in the PMS had to be negotiated with cluster managers after their appointment.
- In general, PIA managers, whether council members or consultants, participated actively in the hiring of cluster managers.
- In the Eastern Cape and Northern Province, CMs were more likely to be appointed if they had the technical and managerial skills or had worked in the area identified. In contrast, in KwaZulu-Natal more emphasis was placed on ensuring that CMs were from local communities or where this was not possible from the particular region.
- Monitoring of CMs by programme managers is done mainly through monthly reports, monthly meetings attended by PIA managers, CMs and council representatives to discuss problems and progress with projects. Some PIA managers occasionally conduct site visits, sometimes unannounced.
- Most CMs, except those in the Northern Province, seemed to be satisfied with the amount of feedback and support that they receive from PIA programme managers.

Relationship of PIA managers with national structures, Provincial Programme Managers, CMs and communities

Relationship with national structures and Provincial Programme Managers

- Interaction between PIA managers and representatives from the NDPW occurs mainly through PCC meetings, as national NDPW representatives sit on these meetings.
- A minority of PIA managers complained about the lack of guidance and the difficulty in getting hold of NDPW officials.
- In general, PIA managers have contact with the PPM through the monthly PCC meetings, although some have contact on a daily basis. They communicate with the PPM, or with the technical and financial members of the PMT, when they face problems requiring intervention.
- Most PIA managers indicated that they received considerable support and guidance from the PPM through workshops and other meetings. Some also complained about the inability of PPMs to respond quickly due to other commitments.

Relationship with CMs

- In the Northern Province, the PIA manager and CMs do not have a smooth working relationship, probably due to the late introduction of the PMS, as well as the change of PIA manager halfway through the financial year.

- In the Eastern Cape, PIA managers have good working relationships with their CMs. Many of them recognised that CMs "have gone an extra mile" to meet the requirements outlined in the PMS, even though they were not legally bound to do so.
- In KwaZulu-Natal, the relationship between PIA managers and CMs, as described by CMs, ranged from tempestuous to excellent. Where the relationship with the PIA managers was described as excellent, the reasons cited were that the PIA had a knowledge and understanding of local dynamics, was always available, provided feedback, technical, financial and political support, and was aided by a competent team of people.
- The difficulties that arose between CMs and PIA managers were linked mostly to poor information flow and the lack of written correspondence by the PIAs.

Relationship with communities
- There is no regular interaction between the PIA managers and the communities unless serious problems require direct intervention beyond what the social facilitator can provide.
- PIA managers attend site meetings at times but irregularly (too time-consuming).
- PIAs are often represented indirectly at site and Cluster Steering Committee meetings through TRCs or TLCs.
- In some cases, CSC members approach the PIA with problems or concerns.

Appointment of Social Facilitators, Technical Designers and Trainers
- There were problems with the appointment of social facilitators because KPIs for SFs were not concrete enough to monitor their work. SFs were appointed by the PIA manager and not the CM, as specified in the PMS, and there was confusion regarding the reporting structure.
- During the first round of funding, technical designers in the Eastern Cape were more likely to be outside consultants, while in KwaZulu-Natal and Northern Province they were more likely to be the same person as the CM.
- In most cases trainers were not appointed until late last year or early this year.
- There was very little general training of communities before project implementation in the three provinces studied. For the most part, there was no training in technical skills; the only training currently taking place, in a rush to spend the training budget, is in management, fund-raising and marketing.
- Overall, there was general agreement that training needs to start early on, months before implementation in order to make sure that the community is on board.

Project identification
- While communities were almost always involved and consulted in project identification, there were variations across provinces regarding the involvement of the CMs in this process.
- Most respondents felt that tight timeframes for submitting business plans did not allow insufficient consideration of community and social issues.
- All respondents wanted to see longer lead-in times of between three and six months to allow for proper planning.

- In the Eastern Cape and Northern Province, CMs, together with community representatives, were responsible for project identification. In KwaZulu-Natal projects were identified by the regional council through its councillors or standing committees. Politics played a significant role in identifying projects.

Tendering and working with emerging contractors

- Since the CBPWP follows the tender procedures used by local councils, there was no notable variation among respondents regarding how this procedure works.
- CMs pointed out that emerging contractors are often at a disadvantage in the tender process and within the programme as a whole. They require more time to complete work, but given the tight timeframe of the CBPWP are often under pressure to perform.
- It was generally agreed that the tender documents were too complicated and that emerging contractors required considerable guidance and training just to complete them correctly.
- Emerging contractors generally had problems with financial management due to not having access to overdrafts or financing and not knowing how to manage their cashflow.
- To allow participation of emerging contractors, respondents suggested that in joint ventures, joint bank accounts must be set up and memoranda of agreement drafted. An on-site full-time person should be hired to be in charge of monitoring and support for emerging contractors; and training on project and financial management skills should be provided to emerging contractors.

Monitoring of overall quality

- PIA programme managers visit projects at least twice during a project cycle. These visits happen at the beginning of a project and at hand-over time, once the project is finalised.
- PIA managers indicated that they rely heavily on CMs and their technical personnel to undertake the day-to-day monitoring of quality at project level.
- PIA managers check the work carried out by CMs through monthly reports submitted by them.
- In many cases, the technical person from the PMT also conducts announced and announced site visits to monitor the technical quality of the projects.

OMM organisations and plans

- In the Northern Province, neither OMM organisations nor plans have been put in place.
- In the Eastern Cape, most projects seemed to have management committees. Detailed OMM plans had been drafted for most projects but had not yet been approved.
- In KwaZulu-Natal, OMM organisations had not yet been set up for the majority of projects.
- All respondents stated that the PIA was not directly involved in this task and that it was the job of the social facilitator, and to a lesser extent the CM, to set up these organisations.
- Respondents felt that given the rushed planning stage, proper sustainability plans could not be drawn up at the start of the project.

Long-term sustainability of assets created
- Most respondents felt that the NDPW had not given sufficient thought to the maintenance and sustainability of the assets created.
- There was general agreement that communities need some form of start-up funding or capital to equip assets such as community halls or sports fields.
- Some respondents felt that the NDPW should provide funding for ten years to ensure the long-term success of the projects. Others indicated that the NDPW should match the funds raised by the community.

Financial management
- In all three provinces, all PIA programme managers appointed financial controllers (FCs) to carry out MMIS-related tasks as well as to process payments and claims.
- Except for PIA manager and FCs in the Northern Province, all others had received training on MMIS.
- While most FCs felt that the MMIS was not difficult to use, they felt that it was a cumbersome monitoring system.
- Suggestions for altering the reporting system included reducing the number of forms, particularly for contractors, delaying the forms by one cycle, and allowing MMIS to be cluster-based.

Conclusions and recommendations
- The timing of the introduction of the CBPWP hampered the ability of many of the councils studied to play an active role in day-to-day programme implementation.
- The stress on committing funds quickly and delivering quality products under tight deadlines often pushed councils to outsource programme implementation. In addition, many of the councils lacked the human resource capacity to implement the CBPWP.
- Councils will only be able to become successful PIAs if they are given some kind of assurance that this programme will be ongoing for a few years, as they would be more likely to hire personnel who would work full-time on the CBPWP. This assurance of funding should be conditional on the transfer of management skills to other council members.
- Even if new personnel are hired, time needs to be allocated for their training and gaining understanding of the PMS.
- Since the CBPWP is a politically sensitive programme, which relies on public funds, it is advisable that its implementation remain in the hands of local government structures. While consultants might have the skills that council staff often lack, council officials are more likely to be accountable to their constituencies.
- Individuals hired to work on the CBPWP should be seconded to the council on a full-time basis or hired to work within the council based on a mentorship arrangement. By hiring someone to be located within the council, and to be exposed to day-to-day management issues and problems, there is greater chance that programme management skills will be transferred to other council members working on the CBPWP.

- Another possibility to build capacity within the councils is to work more closely with departments such as Water Affairs and Forestry, in order to combine management structures across departmental programmes.
- More time needs to be allocated for planning and training of council officials on the PMS itself. If more time is given, council officials might be able to receive the necessary training, become acquainted with the workings of the programme and possibly reduce the reliance on consultants.
- More planning time would also help to ensure that the beginning phases of the programme, namely cluster and project identification, as well as community consultation and training, are not compromised.
- It is imperative that a monitoring and evaluation component be added into the CBPWP, not only to monitor the activities of the PIA, but also those of cluster managers and social facilitators.
- Provincial Public Works departments could play a vital role in monitoring the extent to which management skills are being transferred to council officials, based on an agreed-upon set of indicators.

PART I: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

In January 2000, the national Department of Public Works commissioned the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (C A S E) to conduct an evaluation of the capacity of programme implementing agents (PIAs) to implement the Community-Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP). This study evaluates the capacity of PIAs, in most cases district or regional councils but also the IDT and independent consultants, to implement the CBPWP in three provinces – Northern Province, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. In addition to this evaluation, the report focuses on different stages of the project cycle in order to highlight problems that affect the capacity of PIAs to implement the CBPWP.

This study focuses on the 1998-99 financial year, because this allowed us to examine the work of PIAs after having completed one project cycle as stated in the Programme Management System (PMS).

METHODOLOGY

In-depth interviews constituted the main method of data collection. It was envisioned that this method would be conducive for PIAs to speak freely about the tasks, as well as problems, that they face in the implementation of the CBPWP. Interviews were conducted with eight PIA programme managers in the course of March 2000: one in the Northern Province, three in KwaZulu-Natal and four in the Eastern Cape. In addition, in order to supplement the questions posed directly to PIA programme managers, the national programme manager, provincial programme managers (PPMs - one per province), as well as cluster managers and financial controllers were interviewed. In cases where the PIA programme managers were consultants rather than council members, council members were also interviewed to gain another perspective on issues of capacity. This brought the total number of interviews to around 35.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

There are many varieties of Public Works Programmes (PWPs), including social funds and social action programmes. What they all have in common is the aims of alleviating poverty, generating (short-term and long-term) employment and creating sustainable assets. International practice offers little guide as to the best institution for implementation. Government organisations, international agencies and local NGOs all act as implementing agents for PWPs in other developing countries.
Except in passing, literature on PWPs does not tend to focus on the structure of such programmes, or on what institutions should act as the implementing agents. Rather the literature

tends to evaluate the effectiveness of the programmes in terms of their ability to achieve their overall objectives, as well as additional issues such as targeting and community empowerment. In doing so, however, they do raise the issue of the most appropriate form of implementing agent, and the consensus is clearly that the implementing agent should be one that allows the local community to be involved as much as possible. From this perspective, maximum community involvement is vital for the success of PWPs, and decentralisation is the best way to ensure active community participation. This will help to ensure that the targeted people are indeed reached, and that community members are able to identify with and therefore sustain the assets created.

Background to PWPs

PWPs have played an important role in both developed and developing countries over the past seventy years. In the developed countries, they were important during the great depression of the 1930s in combating cyclical unemployment. From the 1960s onwards, the focus has shifted to the developing countries, where such programmes aimed on the one hand to cope with short-term emergencies related to droughts and floods, and on the other hand to combat structural poverty by creating long-term employment opportunities and sustainable assets. As a result, in developing countries PWPs have tended to become a more permanent feature of government policy.

PWPs in developing countries were widely undertaken in Asia (India, China, Bangladesh) before African countries, notably Kenya, Morocco and Tunisia, introduced them. In the last two decades greater emphasis has been placed on labour-intensive public works as a major instrument in tackling unemployment, under-employment and poverty in general. While Kenya acquired experience in general public works programmes, in countries such as Botswana, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe the focus has been on programmes designed to achieve food security in emergency situations. The implementing agents also differ: programmes that focus on food security have been implemented by NGOs and international donors (Ethiopia, Niger), but also by governments themselves (Botswana, Zimbabwe).[1]

In South Africa, public works programmes were first implemented in the 1930s to address the 'poor white' problem, through job reservation and other initiatives which assisted whites at the expense of the African majority. The 1980s saw the introduction of the Special Employment Creation Scheme (SECP), an ad-hoc response to rising African unemployment, especially in rural areas. In May 1994, the new democratic government introduced its National Public Works Programme as one of the mechanisms for implementing the Reconstruction and Development Programme. Its aims were to reduce unemployment, create and maintain physical assets which improve the quality of life of the poor and promote economic activity, provide training to the

---

[1] von Braun, J. et al, *Labour-intensive public works for food security in Africa: past experience and future potential* in *International Labour Review* (Vol. 131, No. 1, 1992)

unemployed, empower and build the capacities of local communities, and help build and strengthen local government and local institutions. In McCutcheon's opinion[2], the programme has been far from successful: its fast-track approach – with insufficient lead-in times, lack of planning, poor training and short-term political objectives – contradicts its claim to be a programme with long-term development objectives. It has tried to produce high-quality assets with short-term delivery. Instead, greater focus should have been placed on the long-term objectives of institution building, planning and training.

Centralisation versus decentralisation

The role of central government is considered crucial to ensure the integration of PWPs into overall policy for infrastructure provision. Much of the success of projects such as the Kenyan Rural Access Roads Programme and the Botswana District Roads Improvement and Maintenance Programme is based on the fact that they were long-term national programmes, and not ad-hoc responses to emergency situations[3]. Consistent political and financial commitment to the programme by the government (whatever party is in power) is also essential to provide continuity and stability. Many programmes have failed due to the lack of political will to implement them.

However, with regard to implementation, much of the literature supports the idea that local organisations should play a major role in project management. Whether these should be government institutions or NGOs appears to be less important. Implementing PWPs requires good management and administration and therefore, where NGOs or private sector organisations have proven abilities these should be utilised. Examples of this include the Valley Trust's labour-based public works programme in the KwaDedangendlale valley in KwaZulu-Natal in 1985 and the IDT relief development programme in 1992[4]. In many countries, public sector institutions, international agencies, bilateral aid agencies, and NGOs are active in PWPs.

Although institutional capacity at local level is lacking in many developing countries, as von Braun points out, most countries have a basis on which to build stronger institutions: Burkina Faso and Cameroon have well-developed village groups and active grassroots NGOs[5]. Moreover, as local authorities are responsible for the delivery of infrastructure and the majority of public utilities at the local level, they would be the most appropriate organisation to implement infrastructure projects under public works programmes. The UNCDF implements local public works programmes as part of its local development funds programme through local government,

---

[2] McCutcheon, R.T. and Marshall, J., *Institution, organisation and management for large-scale, employment-intensive road construction and maintenance programmes* in *Construction and development series No. 1* (DBSA February 1998)

[3] ibid

[4] *Public works programmes in South Africa: key elements in employment policy* (Urban Foundation Research Report 8, May/June 1994)

[5] von Braun, J. et al, *op cit.*

while at the same time trying to build local government capacity. The idea is that there is a direct positive relationship between good governance and development[6].

By contrast, in a review of social action programmes and social funds in sub-Saharan Africa, Marc *et al* found that some social funds were set up as independent units that bypassed normal bureaucratic procedures, reporting directly to the President or Prime Minister. This brought advantages such as speed, efficiency and lack of political interference. On the other hand, the dangers of placing the implementing agent outside normal government structures included corruption, as well as the risk of poor co-ordination with broad government strategies and of knowledge not being transferred to relevant government agencies[7]. On the whole, commentators recommended that the institutional capabilities of government institutions be strengthened rather than that parallel institutions be created.

Community participation

Giving local governments a greater role in the implementation of PWPs, and building their institutional, financial and technical capacity is, however, not sufficient for success. Community participation is essential. In particular, the community should be involved in the identification of projects, since it is the community that will be ultimately responsible for maintaining and sustaining the assets created. Community participation at this stage would also enable more effective targeting.

Although, in theory at least, devolving power to local institutions offers the possibility of increasing community autonomy and of promoting popular participation, as some commentators point out, just because a local authority is in charge of implementation does not mean that the voice of community members will be heard. This is because there may be inequalities at local level, for example in the case of gender roles, and activities may be dominated by local elites. In Rwanda, for example, although communes participated in the identification and planning of public works programmes, there were doubts as to whether the local authorities (mayors) were really able to voice the aspirations of the populations concerned[8].

Decentralisation should therefore ensure that ordinary community members, rather than their representatives have a greater say in the various stages of implementation of public works programmes. Franke mentions bringing in an "external authority[9], while Garnier and Majeres[10] emphasise the role of grassroots community organisations.

---

[6] I.T. Transport, *International perspectives on public works programmes* (April 1997)

[7] Marc, A., Graham, C., Schacter, M., *Social action programs and social funds: a review of design and implementation in sub-Saharan Africa* (World Bank June 1993)

[8] Derrier, J.-F., *Public works programmes in Rwanda: conditions for popular participation* in *International Labour Review* (Vol. 124, No. 5, September-October 1985)

[9] Leffler-Franke, U., *Social funds as poverty targeted programs – concepts and experiences*. Paper presented at the seminar on poverty-oriented expenditure planning (Johannesburg, 4-8 November 1996)

Summary

Successful PWPs comprise certain key elements. They should be an integral part of a national programme, taking a long-term approach to development issues. The political backing of central government, which also acts as co-ordinator, is essential. Implementation should reflect the fact that it is a long-term programme, and sufficient time should be given over to planning and training. Local organisations – government bodies or, where capacity is lacking, NGOs and private agencies – should be responsible for implementation. Efforts should be made to build the institutional, managerial, financial, technical and human capacity of government bodies at all levels to ensure improved implementation over time. Real community participation in project identification, but also in planning and in implementation, is vital to ensure effective targeting as well as the sustainability and maintenance of the assets created.

CBPWP IN CONTEXT OF OTHER PROGRAMMES

Since the departments of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) and of Constitutional Development are involved in running programmes along similar lines to those of the CBPWP, this section provides a brief look at three programmes to explore possible areas of co-operation and move towards an integrated development strategy. We examine the Department of Constitutional Development's Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme (CMIP), as well as the Working for Water and the Community Water Supply and Sanitation programmes, both run by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry.

Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme (CMIP)

Objectives

CMIP, run by the Department of Constitutional Development, has been in operation since 1997. In the 1998-99 financial year, CMIP allocated and spent R695 million on infrastructure projects. Its main objectives are redressing infrastructure backlogs, providing services to government housing projects, expanding the developmental potential of SMMEs and creating local employment, and capacity-building and training of local people.

Management structure

The CMIP programme is managed by a national structure supported by provincial teams. The programme is primarily urban-focused. At the national level, the programme is managed through two sections: Policy Development and Programme Management. This arrangement seems to

---

[10] Garnier, P. and Majeres, J., *Fighting poverty by promoting employment and socio-economic rights at the grassroots level* in *International Labour Review* (Vol. 131, No. 1, 1992)

work for the area of programme management, but not for policy development. The main problem is that staff members tend to be experts who specialise in particular areas, while policy development should have a broader and overarching character. In most cases, the department ends up issuing calls for tenders for policy development, regardless of the existence of a policy section.

At provincial level, nine provincial programme managers are supported by a group of consultants. The management of the programme is conducted through municipalities and district councils, which in turn can outsource this function. Similarly to the CBPWP, once assets are produced, they are handed over to the council for upkeep. CMIP conducts training and capacity building for a period of three years. However, after the first year, it reassesses this commitment based on whether or not the community is participating. If it is not, the funding is cut off. In addition, every two years, a national review of projects is conducted to assess the extent to which the capacity of councils has been built.

Project cycle

Municipalities identify specific projects and submit plans to the provincial programme manager. The identification of areas for projects involves a consultative process with NGOs, consultants and municipalities. The idea is for projects to be community-driven. In many cases, consultants identify projects and present their proposals to the council for approval. However, in our interviews we became aware that in some cases projects have been identified by consultants but have not been approved by council structures, thereby bypassing the councils.

At provincial level, the MEC for local government is responsible for CMIP. This department must convene a provincial inter-departmental municipal infrastructure task team to ensure co-ordination. In consultation with this task team, the provincial programme manager either approves the project application in principle or rejects it. In evaluating applications, the provincial programme manager must be satisfied that the applicant municipality has obtained community approval for the project, is able to fund the operational and maintenance costs of the service from tariff collection, and that what is funded is an asset of the municipality.

If the project is approved, municipalities must submit detailed business plans and technical reports (if required) to accompany the application. Business plans and technical reports are then evaluated by the provincial Cabinet, which grants final project approval. In special cases, final approval is granted at national level. Upon their approval, the provincial programme manager must submit the business plans to the national programme manager for funding approval.

Funds are disbursed to the provinces on a monthly basis and the municipalities apply for these funds. District Councils or municipalities review the tenders for the projects identified and inform the provincial structures. Government tender procedures are followed.

Working for Water (WFW) Programme

Objectives

The Working for Water Programme (WFW) has been running for the last five years with over 300 projects spread across all provinces except the Free State. WFW projects are selected on the basis of factors such as the impact of clearing invasive vegetation on water resources, the importance of bio-diversity, contribution to agricultural production, secondary industry potential, levels of poverty and unemployment, availability of a competent implementing agent and the potential for partnerships with local stakeholders. In a similar vein to the CBPWP, the WFW programme seeks to alleviate poverty by creating employment, based on a labour-intensive approach to work, which targets the most marginalised sectors of society. In addition it seeks to ensure that the training of workers will optimise long-term opportunities for alternative employment. For instance, the WFW is developing ways to use the wood that is cleared to develop skills in the production of furniture, building materials, crafts, educational toys, charcoal and firewood, among others.

Management structure

The WFW programme is run by a national board, composed of ministers from 11 ministries and chaired by the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, as the lead agency. At provincial level, the WFW programme operates through regional offices, each with 20 to 40 employees who work on contract basis, headed by a Regional Programme Leader who provides a link between the national and provincial structures. Contracts are given out on a task basis. In the Eastern Cape and Northern Cape, the WFW programme felt that it was strategic to build the capacity of the councils and hence worked with them. However, WFW does not work with councils in all other provinces.

Selection of contractors

To select contractors, WFW uses closed tender procedures. One of the objectives is to assist emerging contractors, who may be a community collective, a co-operative, etc. The WFW programme assists them in making their submissions and filling in the documents. For this purpose, the WFW has devised a quotation package including documents for potential contractors, as well as regulations, rules, criteria for the selection of workers and a code of conduct, all of which written in simple English with clear instructions for contractors. For instance, the package informs contractors of their legal requirements, such as being registered as a taxpayer, etc.

In addition, the WFW management makes site visits jointly with contractors before tendering. Using GPS, they produce a map of the area, explain where the clearing of trees needs to happen, and based on the work, produce a call for tender quotation. Staff from the WFW office assist contractors with their administrative and financial tasks, such as how to fill in pay slips, how to

set up bank accounts, and so forth. In turn, contractors might be charged a minimal fee of R200 for this assistance. Since these are closed tenders, the WFW has pegged maximum limits for wages.

Contractors are given an initial two-week contract, and if it is completed successfully, they are moved to one-month contracts. If the contractor does not manage to meet the targets, then the contractor is not given further contracts. Only after they have successfully completed a one-month contract several times, are they given three-month contracts.

Workers and contractors are taken through a training process. Contractors are given both functional training and training on the WFW programme itself. Workers are given training on how to use machinery such as saws and first aid. Unlike the CBPWP, which is a programme that requires greater engineering skills, skills within the WFW are not as difficult to transfer.

Funds are disbursed from the national Department of Water Affairs and Forestry to its regional offices. The WFW at provincial level pays contractors, who in their turn pay workers.

Project cycle

In terms of planning, the WFW programme consults with other government departments, particularly Agriculture, Environmental Affairs, and Welfare. Guidelines for project selection emphasise the selection of areas where there is pressure on water, as a result of alien vegetation. The WFW attempts, where possible, to prioritise work on public rather than private land. At a stakeholder meeting, WFW informs other government departments of the areas in which it will be working and prioritises for projects.

Once a list of projects has been prioritised and compiled, it is sent to the national Department with attached budgets. In the meantime, projects are given provisional approval accompanied by suggestions on how to tighten budgets where necessary. If the area chosen is a new one, a meeting is held with the community to agree on the wages that will be paid. A steering committee is set up, made up of the local community, farmers, the local authority, and other stakeholders. The committee makes recommendations on the selection of contractors. There is no social facilitator hired on a full-time basis to liaise with the community. If needed, someone is sent from the regional office or contracted for a short period to address problems at community level. To address any problems that might arise, receive feedback and assess progress, the WFW meets with the steering committees twice a year.

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry's regional offices take political responsibility for projects. In many cases, local authorities do not have the capacity to manage the programme, in which case consultants are employed for this purpose. Where the WFW works with councils, councils receive a 5% management fee.

Similarly to the CBPWP, the WFW programme has established employment targets and criteria. In particular, the WFW seeks to employ 60% women, 20% youth and 2% disabled in its projects. The main criteria for the selection of workers are as follows:

- People who earn a government pension are not allowed to work
- Only one person per household can be employed in a project in order to ensure the spread of employment opportunities
- People employed must have been previously unemployed.

In addition, WFW is considering the introduction of another criterion, specifying that someone who has worked on the CBPWP for the past two years cannot work on the WFW.

Unlike the CBPWP, the WFW programme operates on a five-year cycle: there is an initial clearing of the land and follow-ups thereafter. Agreements are signed between WFW and landowners, in the case of private land, to establish that landowners are responsible for carrying out any follow-up clearings. If the land is public, either the local authority or the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry is responsible for the upkeep. In the majority of cases, the WFW works on land that is owned nationally by government departments such as Public Works and Land Affairs. In such cases, the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry takes responsibility for the land.

Community Water Supply and Sanitation (CWSS) Programme

Objectives

The primary aim of the programme is to provide basic water supply to meet RDP standards, namely 20 to 30 litres of water of acceptable quality per capita per day within 200 metres of the household, by means of an integrated and sustainable people-driven programme. A further aim is to initiate a process to ensure community access to adequate domestic sanitation.

Similarly to the CBPWP, the CWSS programme aims to provide job opportunities and develop skills within communities and assist in developing the capacity of communities to manage the operation of the project. In addition to building capacity within communities, the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry has recognised the need to build the capacity of local government given its responsibility for service delivery. In particular, the Department aims to develop and support local authorities in operating and maintaining water and sanitation services.

Management structure

Regional offices of the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry are responsible for programme implementation and co-ordination with local government, as well as with other role players at area and project level. To assess progress with implementation, the Department has monitoring and evaluation units at national and provincial level. In addition, provincial offices are

responsible for the disbursement of funds received from national level. In order to implement the CWSS, the Department has relied on NGOs such as Mvula Trust, district and regional councils, Water Boards, as well as consultants (where no local government capacity existed). At present, due to the capacity constraints that have slowed down the delivery of water and sanitation schemes, the Department has appointed private sector PIAs for the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Northern Province. These consultants are appointed on a fixed term basis in order to ensure continuity in support and capacity building of council structures. Each of the PIAs works jointly with a dedicated team of consultants who handle all the projects in the province.

The main responsibilities of PIAs include:
- Community mobilisation and establishment of Project Steering Committees
- Initial investigations on projects and consultation with the community
- Preparation and submission of business plans, including area business plans for all business plans within a planning area
- Organisational development
- Capacity building
- Design and construction of the projects
- Sanitation
- Operation and maintenance of the projects
- Transfer of projects to the Operating Authority; and
- Mentoring of the Operating Authority.

At project level, decision-making lies with Project Steering Committees (PSC), which oversee project implementation. PSCs normally have a majority community representation. Since service delivery is a local government responsibility, it is preferable for PSCs at project and programme levels to be established with the agreement and participation of local government structures. Instructions issued by the PSC or one of its sub-committees are carried out by the PIA.

Typically, the following organisations will be represented on the PSC:
- Community representatives
- Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (Representatives from Community Water Supply and Sanitation, Project Planning, Regional Office, Environment Studies, Design, Geo-hydrology, and Construction Directorates as considered relevant)
- Provincial RDP co-ordinators office and provincial government
- Implementing agents
- Local government representative (municipal/district/local councillors or other functionaries as appropriate)
- Consultants and contractors
- Organisational Development officers
- Civic organisations, e.g. SANCO

- Political organisations – normally only if no other representatives are available
- Trade unions
- Others (such as NGOs, DBSA)

Community members are reimbursed for attending PSC meetings based on a tariff determined by the RDP national office in consultation with the Department and certain PSCs.

Project cycle

Community Water Supply and Sanitation planning forums at provincial and area levels are in charge of the identification and prioritisation of projects. These forums identify villages and their needs, and evaluate them according to a sustainable planning process involving the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, provincial and local authorities. The provincial forum also attempts to co-ordinate funding from other channels such as the Public Works Programme and the Municipal Infrastructure Fund.

Area planning forums represent an attempt to develop a programmatic approach, whereby local government is central to planning and decision-making. These forums are made up of interested parties in a given area including representation from local government, the national Department, other departments, community and civic structures, NGOs and consultants. One of the main functions of these forums is to ensure that integrated development takes place at local level. Their task is to plan and develop strategies for the provision, management, operation and maintenance of water and sanitation services. Provincial planning forums are similar structures, in which NGOs, Water Boards, consultants, local government and community representatives can participate.

Once projects have been prioritised, business plans are drawn by the PIA. These plans are shared and discussed with the Project Steering Committees and council members before they are sent to the Business Plan Appraisal Committee. Appraisal committees are located within the national Department, although the Northern Province and the Eastern Cape have chief directors who do the appraisal at provincial level.

After three years of operation, the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry has made a series of changes to expedite the implementation process. As part of its monitoring system the Department developed extensive Key performance indicators, in conjunction with the European Union, to ensure the sustainability of programmes. Second, and already referred to above, the Department has shifted to appoint private sector PIAs (and team members) through a BOTT (Build, Operate, Train and Transfer) approach on a fixed term basis. Not only has this done away with the delays brought about by the consultant identification and appointment process, but it also allows for a dedicated team to become available before projects begin. The long-term involvement of the PIA is also an advantage in that contractors will not be coming into the area, try to make money quickly, and withdraw again.

Third, the Department has agreed to allocate funds to begin planning for follow-up projects within the following financial year. It realised that very large projects require a long lead-time for planning and feasibility stages. In turn, this means that once the project is prioritised and funds allocated, a long time is required before a business plan can be produced. For this reason, the Department has proposed that up to 5 % of the budget may be allocated to future appropriate projects. Thus, this money will enable a feasibility study of sufficient detail to be done in time, so that once approved, a business plan can be quickly prepared and implementation started.

Lastly, the Department identified that the programme lacked any specific training guidelines or accredited courses. To begin to address this issue, a recently drafted document on training guidelines will serve for planning purposes, though accredited courses are still lacking.

Possible areas of co-operation between CBPWP and similar programmes

At national level, co-ordination between departments such as Housing, Water Affairs and Forestry, Land Affairs, Finance, Public Works, Mineral and Energy Affairs, as well as the Development Bank of South Africa takes place through the Municipal Infrastructure Task Team (MITT). However, MITT meetings tend to be convened only when crises arise, and not regularly.

Looking at the CMIP, CWSS, WFW and CBPWP, it becomes apparent that these programmes are structured along similar lines in terms of their procedures for project identification and the encouragement of community involvement. Further, all programmes rely on regional or provincial structures to approve projects and business plans. One notable difference is the disbursement of funds. While the CBPWP disburses its funds from national level directly to regional or district councils, all other programmes disburse their funds to regional or provincial government structures.

The overlap in programme management structures is not accompanied by co-ordination in programme implementation, however. Indeed, different departments frequently work in the same geographical areas with little communication or co-ordination between them to integrate projects. Furthermore, each department has its own management structures, thus leading to what often appears to be unnecessary duplication of functions.

The combination of management structures to implement projects across different departments would be enhanced if planning and project identification were done jointly. In particular, this would allow for more efficient budget allocation as well as the linking of infrastructure produced by CBPWP and CMIP with services provided by the CWSS programme. Both CWSS and CBPWP currently stress the importance of area and cluster development. If different departments were to adhere to the goal of integrated development planning, and communicate about what each of them is likely to be doing in an area, it would be possible to combine management structures. For instance, Water Affairs business plan approval committees already do the

technical appraisal of all CMIP business plans. If an integrated approach were adopted, a single management structure per area could be in charge of implementing projects across different departments. This would reduce management costs and facilitate inter-departmental co-ordination. In fact, the Department of Water Affairs is open to sharing its PIA consortium (made up of a dedicated team of consultants) to engage in the management of programmes run by Public Works or Constitutional Development, as it has spare capacity.

In addition to co-operating more closely with other departments involved in similar projects, CBPWP should also consider putting in place a system to monitor community involvement in projects, similar to that used by CMIP. CMIP commits itself to longer-term involvement in specific areas, subject to assessment of the level of community participation. If CMIP realises that the community is not participating as it should, then funding is withdrawn. Making communities aware of this consequence might actually give them an incentive, although a negative one, to participate actively in the maintenance and upkeep of facilities. Also linked to maintenance, CBPWP should foster partnerships with private sector organisations, as WFW has successfully done, in order to assist communities in the acquisition of moveable assets and provision of training and materials.

Considering the difficulties that emerging contractors have faced in becoming part of the CBPWP, the Department of Public Works may wish to consult the quotation package produced for emerging contractors by the WFW programme. This document could provide useful information and help contractors in establishing themselves and becoming acquainted with tender documentation and procedures.

PART II: RESEARCH FINDINGS

CAPACITY OF DISTRICT AND REGIONAL COUNCILS (DCS AND RCS)

Many of the issues raised by the PIA programme managers who were interviewed are not necessarily linked to their capacity but rather to the fast-track nature of the programme. As respondents often pointed out, the issue is not whether PIAs have the capacity but rather whether the programme allows them sufficient time to exercise that capacity, in areas such as planning, selecting consultants, consultation with the community, training, and so on.

Furthermore, and keeping in mind that one of the aims of the programme is the building of capacity at council level, it was surprising to find major differences between provinces regarding the structures that act as PIAs. While in all councils studied there was a PIA political head (called the PIAO, or PIA CEO) working from within council structures, in the Eastern Cape and Northern Province all PIA programme managers were consultants, either contracted or seconded to the council. In contrast, in KwaZulu-Natal, PIA managers were regional council members. In the case of the Northern Province, the programme started off in January 1999 with a PIA manager from within the council, who was subsequently suspended and a consultant hired in September 1999 to replace him. Consultants always work together with the council, but they do most of the day-to-day management and implementation.

		Admin & Management Dept	Finance Dept	Tech. & Engineering Dept.	Emergency Services	Other	Total Number employees
Northern Province	Northern DC	-	-	-	-	-	70
KwaZulu -Natal	Ilembe RC	8	6	20	0	3	37
	Uthungulu RC	15	20	13	0	2	50
	Ugu RC	200	100	400	-	-	700
Eastern Cape	Wildcoast DC	24	10	20	0	0	54
	Amatola DC	-	-	-	-	-	1900
	Stormberg DC	34 (jointly)		220 (Roads)	49	52	355
	Kei DC	13	12	1	0	4	33

Table 1: Composition of district and regional councils, by province.

		Population served (in millions)	Total Number employees
Northern Province	Northern DC	2.7	70
KwaZulu-Natal	Ilembe RC	1.2	37
	Uthungulu RC	1.4	50
	Ugu RC	1.5	700
Eastern Cape	Wildcoast DC	1.8	54
	Amatola DC	-	1900
	Stormberg DC	0.7	355
	Kei DC	1.2	33

Table 2: Employees and population served by district and regional councils, by province.

There seems to be no correlation between the number of council employees and the ability of councils to act as implementing agents. Rather, capacity seems to be linked to the expertise that can be found within council structures. For instance, even though Stormberg has 220 staff in the Engineering department, most of them work on roads projects and have little experience with other types of infrastructure.

While the district councils in the Eastern Cape have fully outsourced the programme management function, regional councils in KwaZulu-Natal have resorted to hiring additional staff on a contract basis to supplement the work carried out by permanent council staff. For instance, in the Ilembe RC three permanent staff members work part-time on the CBPWP (on technical and financial issues). In addition, three people have been hired as technical, financial and social co-ordinators on a contract basis to work full-time on the CBPWP.

Similarly in the Uthungulu RC, even though nine permanent RC staff work part-time on the CBPWP (four on technical issues and five on financial issues), the council has pooled in social facilitation from the province and contracted staff on a part-time basis to help with financial management. Lastly, even though the Ugu RC has approximately 700 permanent staff, only three council staff work on the CBPWP. The PIA programme manager spends about 75% of his time on the CBPWP, while the other two persons are temporary staff hired on contract to work on the programme. According to the CEO of the Ugu RC, the council does not have social co-ordinators or technical managers working on the CBPWP due to insufficient project management funds.

In the Eastern Cape, regardless of the size of the councils, between four and six permanent staff have been assigned from within the council to work on the CBPWP on a part-time basis. The only exception was Stormberg DC, where council staff worked on a full-time basis. This might be linked to the fact that this DC has a higher number of staff and serves a smaller population compared to other district councils studied in the Eastern Cape (see Table 2). These staff usually comprised a finance person, a technical manager, an administrative secretary, and engineers or social facilitators.

Similarly, in the Northern Province, three permanent staff (two technical and one finance person) work part-time on the CBPWP. The Northern District Council only has one facilitator and five technical personnel who work on other projects in addition to the CBPWP.

One possible explanation for the differences in capacity between Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal councils to implement the CBPWP is that regional councils in the latter province rely more heavily on provincial structures for support with social facilitation. Nonetheless, most of the council officials interviewed for this study indicated that more capacity could be built if funding were guaranteed for a longer period of time, three years or more. Council officials in all three provinces discussed the hiring of full-time staff members to work on project management, but the uncertainty of long-term funding, and hence of job security, was raised as a reason for not following through with this idea. In particular, Ilembe RC officials mentioned that with certainty of funding they would hire some of the contract workers as permanent staff and establish a separate unit within the council devoted to the CBPWP. Similarly, the CEO of the Ugu RC stated that they would hire the current technical manager on a permanent basis for public works programmes if they receive sufficient project management funds from the Department of Public Works to do so.

When council officials in the Eastern Cape and the Northern Province were asked to explain why the programme management function of the CBPWP had been outsourced, most officials mentioned time constraints, as well as lack of human resource capacity. In the case of the Kei DC, no one was assigned to work on the CBPWP during the 1998-99 financial year. Kei DC only got involved with the 1998-99 fast-track funding. The CEO is aware of the lack of human resource capacity within the council, but as he stated, "the council appoints staff according to its levy base. The levy base is too low right now and consequently it cannot appoint as many people as it would desire". Instead, the council relies on grants to hire additional staff.

In Stormberg DC, the council did not become the PIA because, according to its CEO, *"the programme came very quickly. In addition, we were busy with the elections at the time and many employees were on leave. The NDPW also included changes in the programme so it was difficult to determine what had to be implemented"*. For these reasons, the decision was made to outsource this function and hence speed up the implementation process.

Similarly, the CEO of the Wild Coast DC stated that *"because the funding [for the CBPWP] took place very quickly (fast-track), we needed to hire someone from outside to get the work done"*. In addition to lack of sufficient time to implement the programme, the Wild Coast DC also seems to lack sufficient technical and social facilitation staff to implement the CBPWP. According to the CEO, the district council only has one social facilitator for all projects. This was also the case with the Northern DC in the Northern Province. In addition to having only one social facilitator for the CBPWP, it has only five technical personnel (three technical assistants, one technician and one engineer).

Lastly, the case of Amatola DC is similar in that a large number of council staff devoted a huge portion of their time towards planning for the 1999 elections at the time that the CBPWP was introduced. In addition, even though this council has eight technical personnel and 19 social facilitators that could assist with the CBPWP, the need for quick implementation did not allow for them to get involved at the time.

The reliance on consultants, particularly in the Eastern Cape and Northern Province, raises the issue of transfer of skills from consultants to district councils. Consultant PIA programme managers raised the concern that there is no clear strategy for the transfer of skills outlined in the PMS. In all cases studied except one, no formal process for the transfer of skills exists. Council representatives participate most actively in the selection of clusters and in tender adjudication procedures. Apart from these activities, however, the transfer happens haphazardly, by inviting council representatives to accompany the PIA programme manager on site visits, attend meetings, and so on.

One programme manager indicated that the use of consultants is not advantageous to the district councils because consultants are not taken as seriously as council officials. While this is a concern, most district councils studied in the Eastern Cape and in the Northern Province lack personnel with adequate skills to implement the CBPWP fully. This is particularly worrying in light of the concern with longer-term maintenance and sustainability of the assets created. As long as CBPWP funding is allocated on an annual basis without any indication that it will continue beyond one year, councils are not likely to run the risk of employing staff on a permanent basis. It remains to be seen whether the allocation of funding over a three-year period according to the Mid-term Expenditure Framework can help in resolving this dilemma.

Initiatives to build district council capacity in the Eastern Cape

Even though there is no clear strategy on how to transfer skills from consultants to district councils, initiatives are underway to allow district councils in the Eastern Cape to play a more active role in the implementation of the CBPWP. The most promising of these initiatives is taking place within the Amatola DC. There is an agreement between the council and the consulting engineering firm currently in charge of programme implementation to train someone from within the council to take overall charge. It is envisaged that the consulting firm will gradually phase out its involvement as PIA by June 2000. In addition, the council has plans to train some of its 19 social facilitators and thus avoid having to outsource the project social facilitation function.

In the Kei DC, four Community Development Officers (CDOs) have been seconded from the Department of Housing and Local Government to be trained in social facilitation this year. In addition, at the time the interview was conducted, the Kei DC was about to sign a memorandum of understanding with the IDT to agree on the training and resources needed by the district council. Up until now, however, the CDOs have been given neither an allowance to go to site

visits nor vehicles to use for this purpose. Consequently, they have not received any training on site so far.

Lastly, the technical manager in the Stormberg district council is currently training three people in the engineering section to work on the CBPWP. It is expected that consultants will also participate in this training in order to transfer skills. According to the CEO of the council, it is envisaged that the council will take over programme implementation from the consultants in the 2000-01 financial year. As in the case of the Amatola DC, consultants will be retained for advice during the transition period. In addition to building capacity on the technical side, the Stormberg DC has submitted an application to the Department of Public Works to allow it to use the money accrued from interest to train DC staff in social facilitation. The council was still awaiting a response at the time the interview was conducted.

These initiatives got underway as the 1998-99 financial year was coming to a close, and they represent attempts at greater council involvement. However, to ensure capacity building of councils over the long term, a formal process for a transfer of skills should be outlined by the CBPWP.

In the meantime, the information presented below sets out to assess, as far as possible, whether the PIA programme managers have been implementing the CBPWP according to PMS guidelines. The milestones that PIA programme managers need to achieve according to the PMS are used as entry points to evaluate the administrative, financial, communication, facilitation and technical skills that they possess for CBPWP implementation.

TRAINING ON PMS AND MMIS

Most PIA programme managers indicated that they had participated in at least one Programme Management System (PMS) and Management Monitoring Information System (MMIS) training session, which was held in Pretoria and organised by the NDPW. The session lasted two days and combined training on both systems. While most respondents argued that the training was useful, some also complained that it was not in-depth. This is understandable, as participants would have had to absorb a lot of information in a two-day period.

Besides relying on training sessions to familiarise themselves with the PMS, most programme managers mentioned that monthly Provincial Co-ordinating Committee (PCC) meetings allowed them to clarify some of the issues in the PMS, by addressing important policy issues.

Northern Province

Since a consultant PIA programme manager was brought into the CBPWP in September 1999, this person received training on the PMS, organised by the NDPW in the same month that he started working. The training allowed for a thorough understanding of the PMS and of what was

expected of the different consultants. He mentioned that he has not received training in the MMIS.

Eastern Cape

In addition to the training conducted in Pretoria, PIA managers also mentioned a training session on the MMIS organised in Bisho by Dean Barnes. Some respondents indicated that a frustrating aspect of learning about the PMS and MMIS was that the documents kept changing from one training session to another. As one of them put it, *"The problem that we had was that they kept on shifting the goalposts. They would come with a policy one week, and down the line it was something new. They also had problems with the MMIS and it took some time for them to refine the document".*

One PIA manager felt that the PMS did not address adequately problems of rural development or what the term 'local community' means. In this person's opinion, 'local' could be taken to mean the immediate community, the district council, or even the province.

Another manager expressed concern that they had just received a training session, which did not add much value to what they already knew because it was essentially a repetition of previous training on the PMS guidelines. As this PIA manager stated it: *"I would have expected the kind of training which is going to be informed by the problems that we experienced in the 1998-99 financial year, rather than conducting training on the same PMS which had some flaws".*

While it was difficult at first for most programme and cluster managers to absorb the quantity of information that was handed to them, most of them feel comfortable with the PMS and MMIS forms at this point. Some respondents, however, felt that more attention needs to be given to training communities on the main aspects of the PMS so that they can understand the objectives of the programme, its targets, as well as the criteria for project selection.

KwaZulu-Natal

All PIA programme managers received training on the PMS, with most attending two workshops. All said it was helpful in understanding the objectives of the programme and project management issues. One of them would have liked to have received the programme training earlier to help with the PMS document. Instead, he had to figure things out as he went along. By contrast, another PIA manager felt that he had had training too early, before he had even worked on the programme, which meant he was unable to participate and contribute fully to the workshops.

All PIA programme managers felt that the public works programme was very well run compared with other projects that they were involved with, and that they had learnt a lot by participating in the programme. The PMS itself provided guidance, and aspects of the manual could be adapted to other projects.

The MMIS training was regarded by financial controllers as essential for their work. All of them were using the MMIS for several months before they received training (in January 2000), and as a result suffered from severe problems and made a number of major errors. Once they received training, however, the system became relatively user friendly. They all agreed that they should have been trained on the MMIS before they had begun working on it.

The MMIS training itself was said to be very useful and practically oriented. The opportunity to meet other participants in the programme and to understand their roles was welcomed.

AWARENESS OF OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT OF THEIR ATTAINMENT

All interviewees, including programme, cluster and provincial managers, were aware of the main objectives of the programme, as well as the targets that each project is expected to meet. Most respondents indicated that the main objectives of the programme are poverty alleviation, local economic development, and empowerment of disadvantaged communities, through the creation of jobs and assets.

Most respondents agreed that the objectives are being met to a certain extent. In particular, respondents indicated that the most successful part of the programme is the creation of assets, especially if one takes into account the relatively high poverty levels in the three provinces studied. Respondents indicated that the implementation phase is relatively quick and communities generally welcome the approach as they can physically see that assets are being created and delivered.

Even though the NDPW distinguishes between projects that have a normal project cycle and those that are fast-track, this distinction is not meaningful below the national level. At provincial and local levels the projects that fell within the 1998-99 financial year were all considered to be fast-track. The main reason for this is that the majority of PIA managers began to work on the CBPWP in January 1999 and were directed to commit the funds by the end of the financial year, namely end of March 1999. This, in turn, allowed only three months to identify clusters, appoint cluster managers, identify projects, go out to tender and award the tenders. Hence, the beginning and largely defining phase of the programme was compressed into a very short period. As the report shows, this rush without adequate planning sometimes forced PIAs and cluster managers to cut corners and to a certain extent undermine the long-term objectives of the programme.

In general, respondents were hesitant about the CBPWP's ability to meet its job creation objectives over the longer term. Most respondents raised concerns that most of the jobs that are created at present are of a temporary nature. Due to the fast-track nature of the programme, training for community members in most cases did not take place before the implementation phase of projects. While community empowerment is being achieved by eliciting the active participation of communities in the projects, it is also being compromised by not transferring

skills that might be of use to community members. As one PIA manager stated it, *"because it is a fast-track programme and you are constantly chasing deadlines, you are more likely to use ready-made materials and skip training [on production of materials]"*.

In addition to the creation of temporary jobs, it is envisaged that a group of people, comprising members of the project committees, will obtain longer-term employment as they form management committees for the maintenance and sustainability of the assets created. The money generated from the renting out of community halls or sports facilities is meant to cover maintenance costs, as well as the salaries of the committee members. However, as a number of respondents pointed out, precisely because these are very poor rural areas, it is unlikely that the communities will be able to ensure the sustainability of many of the assets without additional funding.

Other respondents pointed out that even if communities are able to sustain the assets, it is unrealistic to think that these projects will provide permanent employment for many people in a community. Even if projects have management committees responsible for maintenance that work well, they will only provide jobs for a handful of people. As one cluster manager pointed out: "*They're expecting to give too many people long-term employment. A lot of these projects, if you want to give somebody a job where they're going to earn income, I don't think there's a lot of opportunity here to do it.*"

Moreover, many cluster managers questioned whether the right kinds of projects are being undertaken. In particular, some cluster managers and PIA programme managers expressed the need for greater emphasis on building job- and income-generating assets rather than structures such as community or sports halls. According to one cluster manager, the focus should be on "*projects which do more for the community, which provide more work and entrepreneurial opportunities. I realise the importance of providing social facilities, but at the end of the day they need jobs and income. I feel strongly about that. There should be a concentration on these projects rather than on access roads, for example, which make life more convenient. I would like to see mini-chicken farms and more community gardens, possibly setting up mini-factories, teaching people how to weld or make bricks or some form of gainful employment.*"

Given the above concerns, respondents were generally uncertain of the CBPWP's ability to meet two of its objectives fully, namely the creation of more permanent jobs for community members and the long-term sustainability of assets created.

AWARENESS OF TARGETS AND ASSESSMENT OF THEIR ATTAINMENT

Respondents were aware of the employment targets as specified in the PMS. In general, they mentioned the difficulty with meeting these targets during the 1998-99 financial year because these targets were introduced half way through the project cycle, after tenders had closed and contracts with contractors signed. For this reason, contractors were not legally bound to comply with these targets and a number of respondents felt strongly that it was unreasonable to try and

force contractors to meet these requirements retrospectively. Nonetheless, efforts were made by PIAs and cluster managers to convince contractors of the importance of meeting these targets. Some PIAs indicated that with the second round of projects, this situation has changed as contractors became legally bound to meet those targets. In addition, a penalty clause is included in contractors' contracts if the targets are not met. While this might facilitate their enforcement, respondents raised specific issues around the local labour target and whether its application should be qualified.

Budget allocated to local labour

Almost all respondents raised concerns with the stipulation that at least 30% of the project budget must be spent on hiring local labour. While supportive of the principle of local labour, they pointed to two contradictory processes that make it difficult for the target to be met. On one hand, they are expected to deliver quality products under tight deadlines. On the other hand, they are expected to rely on local labourers and emerging contractors, who often lack the necessary skills and experience to deliver quality products on time, especially under a fast-track programme.

In particular, projects such as road construction, which constituted the bulk of projects for many of the cluster managers, are machine-driven (plant) projects, where the 30% target is difficult to meet. If local labourers were to be relied upon, more time would be needed for the delivery of the asset to allow labourers to be trained and supervised during the construction phase, and for a quality product to be delivered. In addition to time constraints, cost was raised as an additional concern. As one cluster manager put it: "*From experience, 30% can always be achieved if you are willing to pay for it, but there has to be a balance between the percentage of labour and cost of development of the infrastructure. I don't think 30% is a realistic target. It shouldn't just be a decision of 30%. On roads, a target of 20-22% local labour is achievable, as long as you don't have time frames that constrain you*".

Some managers mentioned that often the inability to meet the local labour target was linked to the inadequate briefing received by contractors on the aims of the programme. In particular, they indicated that contractors were either not told about incorporating a larger proportion of local labour to do the work, or they acted as business people, concerned with making a profit with the use of machinery rather than focusing on hiring local people.

Suggestions on adapting the 30% local labour target included:
- Allowing more time for project implementation so that labour-intensive methods can be used on projects
- Allocating more money to projects to allow for local labour to be employed, keeping in mind that it will take time for training and that the actual work may take longer
- Qualifying the 30% target to apply to specific projects such as community gardens, soil reclamation, etc., but not road construction. Instead of measuring the 30% local labour target

per project, it should be measured per cluster, thus allowing variation between projects (combining those above and below target to reach an overall balance).

The employment target for women

Almost all the respondents admitted to having difficulties meeting the target for the employment of women. The reasons given were cultural attitudes and the patriarchal nature of the communities in which the programme is running. Although problems were cited, attitudes were said to be changing. One region in KwaZulu-Natal stated that it was having no problem meeting this target owing to the fact that most of the men worked away from home and also because of the high number of single parents. Similarly, one cluster manager in the Eastern Cape indicated that it had not been a problem to meet the target for women as many of her projects involved the establishment of community gardens. Referring to the participation of women in the gardens, she stated: *"The women are more and more taking it over. The women part of it for me is the most important one since rural women are usually the most oppressed. But now, you see them coming out and it is really going to happen for the women in this programme".*

Target for the use of local materials

While the issue of local materials was not widely discussed by respondents, one PIA programme manager was concerned that technical designers fail to take into account the use of local materials because they are not aware of the context in which they work. As stated by him, *"some technical designers used tiles for market stalls, which is not a local material. They could have used thatch which can be produced locally and thus can be easier to maintain".*

In contrast, one cluster manager described his frustration with trying to convince the community to use local materials, in this case blocks, to push money back into the community: *"The question came up in one of my meetings with the community: 'Do these materials conform to standards?' I said that they don't conform 100% to standards but if you look at your buildings around you, they have been standing for quite a few years. The structure will not fall down. They think [block work] is an inferior project. They don't want the blocks, they want the face-brick buildings, but people don't make face-bricks".* While this illustrates the apprehension of the community in using local materials, it might be necessary to explore whether the quality standards set out by national Department of Public Works are beyond what can be produced locally.

Another cluster manager raised the contradiction between the use of local materials and the need to meet quality standards as defined by NDPW. In this case, *"the CSC envisioned that seven day-care centres were going to be built using traditional building methods using local mud and bricks. But due to the fact that Public Works requires bricks of a certain quality that meet other specifications, we had to go back to conventional construction and reduce the number of day-care centres to three due to the costs involved. The traditional way could have been more than*

adequate, if properly designed, especially if there is input from a technical person. There is nothing wrong with that construction. You could put something on the ground that would meet the needs of the community, would be aesthetically pleasing and that would be there for 25-50 years or more if properly maintained".

IDENTIFICATION OF CLUSTERS

Cluster identification was usually driven by the council, based on existing IDP (Integrated Development Planning) plans or Regional Development plans prepared by council authorities. There were some variations regarding the actors involved in this process. In two of the four district councils in the Eastern Cape, the provincial programme manager (PPM) also participated in the selection of clusters. In the Kei District Council, both the PPM and a representative from NDPW were involved due to the problematic nature of the partnership between the council and the IDT.

In one of the councils studied in KwaZulu-Natal, a regional development council, jointly with a development planner appointed by the NDPW identified the clusters. In the second council studied, the regional council was divided into four sub-regions, each with its own standing committee based in the community, which identified clusters based on regional development plans. In both cases, these clusters were subsequently approved by the Regional Council's EXCO.

One issue that sometimes caused delays in the identification of clusters was the lack of acceptance by District or Regional Council representatives that one of the goals of the CBPWP is to develop a particular area or cluster, rather than engage in isolated projects in a number of areas. This posed political problems for some DCs or RCs as they would prefer to distribute the funds across a variety of areas in order to benefit a larger spread of people.

Party politics and the power of individual councillors were also cited as factors influencing the siting of clusters. *"You do get a problem where you find that projects are rotated in one area because they are being decided by politicians. Because councillors belong to one political party, projects go to that region. This is not addressing the purpose. Identification of poverty pockets is a political decision. You find that the people who are well-represented and have a councillor who knows what to do and what not to do are the people who are in urban areas. But those people in rural areas, maybe they don't even have a councillor to represent them. There are areas around here which haven't seen anything of Round 1 or 2 and they are the poorest areas."* To address this problem, when identifying clusters, some respondents suggested that feasibility studies be carried out by independent NGOs or consultants in co-operation with the District or Regional Councils.

Once clusters were identified, these plans were sent to the PCC for approval. In general, this process was quick, taking between 1-3 weeks.

APPOINTMENT OF CLUSTER MANAGERS AND MONITORING ACTIVITIES

Interviews with programme managers suggest that neither the NDPW nor some of the managers were clear on the initial role of the cluster manager. For instance, one PIA programme manager was convinced that the cluster manager should be a "social side person", only to find out as the programme moved on that a person with technical skills was needed. Referring to the ambiguity from the NDPW's side, one PIA programme manager stated that as the programme went along the NDPW "*realised that this person [CM] needed to adopt a far more responsible role within the working of the programme. They tried to force it onto them without amending their budget. The level of responsibility was not proportional to the budget that was approved for them*".

Because the PMS was introduced after many of the cluster managers had been hired for the 1998-99 financial year, many of the requirements of the cluster managers as stated in the PMS had to be negotiated with them after their appointment. In general, PIA programme managers, whether council members or consultants, participated actively in the hiring of cluster managers. In cases where the PIA manager was a consultant, consultation took place between the council representative and the consultant. In most cases, technical and management skills and acquaintance with the cluster area were the requirements for the job, though the acquaintance with the area played less of a role in the Eastern Cape and Northern Province than in KwaZulu-Natal. In KwaZulu-Natal more attention was paid to selecting previously disadvantaged individuals as cluster managers.

While these differences are real, they are linked at least in part to time constraints. As stated by one PIA programme manager in the Eastern Cape, "*because of the fast-track nature of the programme – the deadlines we had to meet—the process of appointing the CMs was not in line with our procurement policy. We had to identify project managers or consultants who were already working in these areas who would be able to be in a position to develop business plans within narrow time frames.*" In KwaZulu-Natal, in contrast, RCs had set up databases of qualified consultants, which was referred to when making appointments for cluster managers. The task of selecting them while using relevant technical and affirmative action criteria was made easier as a result.

Monitoring of activities performed by cluster managers

All respondents were asked to describe the type of monitoring that is done of the activities of cluster managers. Besides submitting monthly (and sometimes more frequent) progress reports to the PIA programme managers, "cluster manager meetings" were held regularly, to discuss problems at the site as well as the progress with projects. Cluster managers in the Northern Province, however, complained that the monthly meetings either had not been happening or were called by PIA managers on a very short notice, which made it difficult for them to attend.

Most cluster managers were satisfied with the amount of feedback and support given by PIA programme managers, though cluster managers in the Northern Province voiced some complaints in this regard. In particular, they complained that the distribution of information is not quick enough, that no minutes are taken at meetings, and that directives are given by phone and not in written form. In addition, they complained that the PIA informed them that their project business plans had not been approved once projects were halfway through being completed. As a result they had to redesign their plans without getting paid for the extra work.

In addition to meetings and reporting, some PIA project managers engaged in site visits, sometimes unannounced, to check the work that is being performed on sites but also the information that is submitted through the cluster managers' monthly reports. Unfortunately, this method is not practised systematically by PIA managers. All cluster managers stated that PIA programme managers are always invited to attend project site meetings, but attend only irregularly.

The majority of PIA programme managers interviewed indicated that they try to visit all projects at least twice during a project cycle. In cases where an assistant to the manager has been appointed or there is a technical officer, these visits are more regular (monthly). Moreover, in situations where a 'problematic' cluster exists, PIA managers will conduct site visits more regularly. One PIA manager indicated that due to budgetary constraints and long distances between clusters, there is a limit on the time that can be spent out in the field. Cluster managers in the Northern Province indicated that the PIA programme manager conducted site visits at the beginning of the programme, for site selection and project identification, but now those visits have stopped.

RELATIONSHIP OF PIA PROJECT MANAGERS WITH OTHER ACTORS

Relationship with national structures

Northern Province

According to the current PIA programme manager – a consultant appointed after the council representative in charge of the programme was suspended – contact with the NDPW takes place through the monthly PCC meetings, as well as telephonically with the deputy director in the department who is in charge of the province. The PIA manager highlighted that co-ordination with the NDPW has been a problem. In his words: *"The NDPW has a lot of decisions to take in order to monitor progress, they need things to move fast, but the response to queries and questions is not moving as fast. As most projects are on a fast-track, if there are queries and questions the department needs to move fast to provide answers".*

Eastern Cape

Interaction between PIA programme managers and representatives from NDPW occurs mainly through PCC meetings, in which NDPW take part. However, one PIA manager complained that *"even the calibre of people that they send to these meetings, they are not able to respond to issues. They are not decision-makers, they always say that they will take it back and they never come back."*

In addition to having contact with NDPW representatives, PIAs communicate with the National Programme Manager (NPM) on a need basis, to get clarification on PMS guidelines. They also contact Peter Brooke with concerns around the MMIS. In most cases, PIAs indicated that they have more contact with the national consultants appointed to the programme than with the NDPW itself.

This lack of contact with NDPW officials was a concern for some of the PIA managers interviewed. One programme manager indicated that it would be useful to have more regular meetings with the NDPW to discuss problems. Another PIA programme manager highlighted the problems that they face in trying to get guidance from the NDPW on issues such as fee structures for cluster managers. As the PIA manager put it, *"they wouldn't give us an answer as to whether this was acceptable or not for a long period of time. In fact, we offered them solutions but [NDPW] would never recommend those solutions…We only got a response from the PCC after three months. Sometimes we had to make decisions, but without any authoritative backup or recommendation from them. As a result, we had to take risks in some cases".*

Coupled with problems in obtaining guidance, one PIA programme manager complained about the difficulty in getting a hold of NDPW officials. In his own words, *"National [DPW] needs to think about their approachability… There is never someone we can get a hold of who will put their neck out and say: 'Yes, do this, do that'. You can never get anything in writing from them with regards to authorisation. It is a problem because in managing a programme, you need to make decisions and you need guidance on the way forward with regards to departmental policy. If you don't have that, you end up taking risks".*

KwaZulu-Natal

Contact with the NDPW is confined to the monthly PCC meetings, which representatives attended regularly. One PIA programme manager said that NDPW representatives also made a couple of ad hoc site visits when projects were being identified.

One PIA manager mentioned that funding for the programme promised in December still had not been received, with the result that the council had to dip into its own funds. A similar situation also arose at another council, where the financial controller said that NDPW had transferred funds into a Round 1 instead of a Round 2 account, with the result that the council had to use its own funds to pay contractors while the problem was being resolved.

Relationship with provincial programme manager (PPM)

Northern Province

The PIA manager communicates telephonically with the provincial manager on a daily basis, and occasionally face-to-face at PCC meetings. The PIA often discusses issues related to quality control and budgets with the PPM. There were problems in getting quick responses to queries from the PPM. This might be due to the fact that the PPM in turn is unable to get responses from the NDPW in a timely fashion.

The PIA programme manager is responsible for producing monthly reports to the PPM, though according to the PPM the PIA manager lacks the skills to produce these reports, and it is the PMT which produces them based on the information submitted by cluster managers.

Eastern Cape

In general, PIA programme managers have contact with the PPM through the monthly PCC meetings, although some have contact on a daily basis. Otherwise, they communicate with the PPM, or with the technical and financial members of the PMT, when they face problems that call for their intervention. For the most part, this relationship seems to work well, although at times PIA managers feel frustrated that the PMT does not respond as quickly as they would like them to. This is because their schedules are full or they also lack guidance from NDPW on how to respond to specific issues.

One PIA manager was concerned that NDPW and the PMT do not provide enough guidance and feedback because they have left out the monitoring and evaluation side. In the PIA manager's words, *"this has been a learning process, and it needs to be monitored closely to inform policy"*.

KwaZulu-Natal

All PIA programme managers were happy with the relationship with the PPM and the PMT. They said they received considerable support and guidance through workshops and other meetings. There was a lot of confidence in the dedication and skills of the PMT.

PIA managers and the PPM met regularly at the monthly PCC meetings, where progress, policies and other issues that needed sorting out are discussed. Ad hoc meetings also take place when needed, and one PIA manager said he talked almost daily with the technical member of the PMT.

Relationship with Cluster Managers (CMs)

Northern Province

Compared to other provinces, the PIA programme manager and the CMs do not have a smooth working relationship. As already indicated, this is probably due to the late introduction of the PMS as well as the change of PIA PM halfway through the financial year. The PIA manager raised concerns about the qualifications and experience of some of the CMs, as well as their ability to do the job given their workload. In addition, one of the problems is that firms and not individuals are appointed as CMs. Although the firms may offer good profiles or CVs, the people who are seconded to the projects often do not have much experience in running projects on the ground.

On the other hand, CMs raised concerns about having too many bosses in the programme. Since the consultant was appointed as PIA programme manager, one cluster manager mentioned that they have encountered different standards from the council and from the consultant PIA. In his own words, *"the PIA might be happy with the work done by CMs, but that does not mean that the Northern District Council (NDC) is happy with the work done. Suddenly, the NDC does not want to pay the CMs and the contractors."* This may point to a lack of co-ordination and co-operation between the council and the consultant PIA, or a lack of adequate quality control by the consultant PIA. In fact, one CM indicated that at the time that the council was the main implementing agent there were clashes between the CM and the PIA programme manager because the social facilitators and not the cluster managers were given the responsibility for co-ordinating projects. As could be expected, this strategy failed and the process was reviewed before the new consultant was appointed to act as the PIA programme manager.

Cluster managers indicated that they communicate with the PIA manager on a weekly basis or often as need arises. In addition, there are monthly meetings before the monthly reports are due, although these meetings have not been taking place regularly.

Eastern Cape

PIA programme managers seemed to have very good working relationships with their cluster managers. Many of them recognised that CMs "have gone an extra mile" to meet the requirements outlined in the PMS, even though they were not legally bound to do so. In addition, the concerns raised by CMs about their fees were acknowledged by programme managers, who felt that adequate remuneration was important to ensure that the work is carried out according to plan. Similarly, when CMs were asked to describe their working relationship with the PIA managers, they indicated that the PIA managers provided feedback promptly and were supportive when problems arose.

A few complaints were voiced by CMs regarding the role of PIA programme managers. One CM complained that the lack of a representative from the council during the hand-over of projects has become a problem, *"because otherwise I must take the responsibility to accept the product*

when the PIA must be there". Another CM indicated that the district council does not keep good records and it becomes difficult to find information. In particular, this CM was concerned that due to this problem, the district council, the PPM and himself all had different sets of budgets for his projects, which represented a problem in the reporting.

All PIA programme managers communicate regularly with CMs, either daily or every other day. In addition to this contact, which often happens by phone, email or fax, PIA managers and CMs hold monthly meetings to discuss problems. These meetings usually take place before the PCC meetings and after the site meetings attended by the CMs, to allow CMs to report on progress and problems at project sites, as well as to check the information that is conveyed by the technical staff. In one case, these meetings took place after the PCC meetings so that the PIA manager would be able to give CMs feedback on the decisions taken.

KwaZulu-Natal

The relationship between PIA programme managers and CMs, ranged from tempestuous through good to excellent. Where the relationship with the PIA manager was described as excellent by both CMs in a region, the reasons cited were that the PIA had knowledge and understanding of local dynamics, was always available, provided feedback, technical, financial and political support, and was aided by a competent team of people. Difficulties in other regions were linked to a number of issues, primarily poor information flow. Some CMs complained that information was often passed on by the PIA at the last minute, and that they were often given very short notice of meetings or reporting requirements. *"They often don't give enough advance warning of wanting information. In today's world when people ask you for something they expect it immediately. I'm sorry let me drop everything so I can deal with your problem. The PIA needs to understand that there is a lead-in time to getting information back."* The same point was also raised by some of the financial controllers. Clearly, requests for information were coming from the province and were passed on down the line.

Another major issue in relations between cluster managers and PIA programme managers was the lack of written correspondence on the part of the latter. For reasons of legal liability, CMs were very concerned about receiving written confirmation of appointments and instructions from PIAs. *"At the end of the day, someone says to you why did you do this, you have a piece of paper that you had an instruction to do this. If he tells you over the phone, you haven't got a leg to stand on. It's like they're too scared to make a decision so they don't want to write it. Nobody wants to make a mistake."* In at least two instances CMs had to start work on the basis of verbal instructions because they could not wait for the written confirmation. *"We can tell the contractor that he has been appointed but I will only do that if the PIA has actually said to me in writing please appoint so and so. If he starts work and the PIA turns round and says: 'No, I didn't give you an instruction', then that person can come back to me. We haven't yet received written instructions… So essentially I'm working at risk on these projects."*

In one case, complaints about the lack of written information were directed at the provincial management team as well as the PIA. *"Every so often we get summoned down to a group meeting. At these meetings, run jointly by the PIA and PPM, they will address all the CMs whether it's for all the province or that particular region. Statements are made that often affect us quite drastically and they are refuted at a later stage. For all those meetings I've never seen any correspondence which says that is what was stated, those were the proposals, decision, suggestions. It is vitally important that the people who run those forums make formal notes and distribute them."*

Generally, CMs communicated with PIA managers or other members of the PIA team on a daily basis over the phone to discuss progress, deal with problems or provide reporting information. Face-to-face meetings occurred at least monthly (sometimes more frequently) when progress reports were submitted. Respondents were generally satisfied with the amount of communication, which was sufficient for the running of the projects. One CM, however, preferred regular report-back meetings rather than the ad hoc crisis management meetings he was currently having with the PIA manager.

Relationship of PIA programme managers with communities

Northern Province

Before the consultant PIA PM was appointed, the council interacted frequently with the community, particularly with the TLCs, by holding meetings with them. The consultant PIA programme manager who was appointed in September 1999 does not interact directly with the community, but rather through the provincial social facilitator and the TLCs. Even though the PIA manager has conducted some cluster visits, these do not seem to be done on a regular basis. Lastly, the PIA manager has not been involved with the CSCs as the latter were set up before the consultant was appointed. He does not participate in CSC meetings though he does receive reports from them.

In most cases, the CM and the social facilitator (where there is one) have been the main links with the community. Two of three CMs interviewed visit sites either once or twice a month, while the third CM has a resident engineer who visits sites twice each week.

Eastern Cape

According to the respondents, the PIA manager does not interact directly with the community on a regular basis, unless there are serious problems that require intervention beyond what the social facilitator can provide. PIA managers sometimes attend site meetings but it is quite difficult for one manager to attend between 20 and 30 site meetings monthly, though in one case an assistant visits the sites monthly. As will be explained below, PIAs are often represented at site and Cluster Steering Committee meetings through the TRCs. In many cases, PIAs interact with the

communities because CSC members approach the PIAs with problems or concerns that they might be facing.

Most of the interaction of the PIAs with the communities happens indirectly through the CMs and social facilitators. CMs attend sites either once or twice a month in order to attend site meetings or CSC meetings. In most cases, CMs are physically present at these meetings although in some instances they are represented by their technical or social consultants, who report back to the CMs.

Some CMs indicated that the frequency of project visits is often linked to the stage of the project. Usually, CMs conducted weekly visits at the beginning of the project in order to talk to people around the identification of projects, set up CSCs and work out business plans. Once the projects are underway, CMs conduct monthly visits to attend site meetings. As part of their visits, they talk to CSCs to ensure that they understand the project, to find out if there are any problems with progress at the site, with contractors, with labourers, etc.

In general, CMs feel that the communities have participated actively in the projects, as they are also in charge of selecting the labourers themselves. As one of them put it: *"If they got the feeling they were not on board, they would make noise".* However, there are also signs that as the projects have moved along, the excitement has began to wear off. Several CMs indicated that community representatives used to participate actively in CSC meetings at the beginning of the projects, but they have not been attending meetings regularly. According to one CM, *"There are no fights between them, but they don't seem to be interested or committed to the projects".* One PIA manager also pointed out that part of the problem might be linked to the fact that CSC members *"are not getting paid to attend these meetings, they travel long distances, and they need money for food".* In one case, CSC members seem to be obtaining remuneration for their expenses from the social facilitator's budget, though this was not a general practice across district councils.

KwaZulu-Natal

Overall, the PIA programme managers' contact with the community is through the Cluster Steering Committees and project site meetings. None of the three PIA managers in the province attended CSC meetings on a regular basis, but would send a representative if they were not available. Time constraints were the reason given. Two PIA managers said that they were sometimes contacted directly by members of the community regarding project issues.

The communities concerned seemed to be aware and involved in most of the projects. Traditional authorities were also fully on board. Indeed as one PIA programme manager put it: *"Projects are very conspicuous and every leader wants to be associated with it and having done an effort to bringing about that particular project. So there's a great deal of support."*

At the same time, doubts were raised as to the extent of communication between community members and their representatives, i.e. councillors.

APPOINTMENT OF SOCIAL FACILITATORS, TECHNICAL DESIGNERS AND TRAINERS

Social Facilitators (SFs)

From the interviews conducted it became apparent that there were problems with the appointment of social facilitators and technical designers the first time around. A common complaint by cluster managers and some of the PIA managers was that the key performance indicators for facilitators were not concrete enough to enable managers to monitor their work. As one PIA programme manager put it, *"criteria for selecting the SF should be established, as there is no barrier to entry in this field. A lot of teachers took retrenchment packages just to get into the social development field but they have not gone through training. By being a teacher, it does not mean that a person can be a social facilitator without the necessary social facilitation knowledge"*.

Managers felt that it was very difficult to get the facilitators to adhere to the rules in the PMS. Many respondents would like the NDPW to introduce a more formal approach to the duties of the social facilitator and a way to enforce them more effectively. Tensions arose particularly when the social facilitator clearly was not performing well. In a number of cases, it was stated that the SF was either not setting up committees, not producing monthly reports, or not identifying and resolving community disputes or issues, thus forcing the cluster manager, and in some instances the PIA programme manager, to step in and conduct the social facilitation. As captured by one CM: *"We're supposed to manage the project and now we spend too much time managing the SFs themselves and the harm they do."* A number of respondents recognised that sometimes CMs had little control over the SFs' work.

The fact that CMs received 2% of the budget and SFs 4% was often raised in this context. One CM suggested giving SFs a flexible fee depending on the project, as some projects such as access roads required little if any social facilitation.

Northern Province

It seems that while the council representative was the PIA programme manager, social facilitation was left behind. CMs sent letters to the PIA to get a social facilitator appointed. One cluster manager complained that the council appointed SFs who were sometimes not capable of carrying out their tasks according to the terms of reference. In particular, one CM recalled that a student was seconded for social facilitation, but this person had little knowledge of the programme and had to be trained. In some cases, once the consultant was appointed to take over as PIA manager a person from the Social Division of the district council was seconded to perform cluster social facilitation. As might be expected, this procedure brought about problems

in reporting and accountability, as cluster managers did not want to be responsible for disciplining a SF appointed by the PIA.

Eastern Cape

In all but one of the district councils studied, cluster managers had leeway to choose their social facilitators, subject to joint approval by the PIA manager and the district council. As one PIA manager put it: "*Although we don't make the ultimate appointment we do influence the decision. In one case we ensured that the SF, whoever was appointed, would come from the PDIs*". Cluster managers generally corroborated this oversight role by PIA managers. As one CM put it, *"there has been no pressure to appoint particular people. You are working with people who you would like to work with or work well with."*

Nonetheless, there were variations across district councils regarding concrete arrangements. While they let CMs appoint their own facilitators, two of the four PIA managers interviewed indicated that they do not allow the CMs to do the social facilitation within the same cluster, although they are allowed to cross-facilitate in clusters other than their own. On the other hand, about half of the CMs interviewed chose individuals from within their own firms to do the social facilitation work, to allow faster lines of communication. Many CMs and PIA managers regard this as a way of getting around the limiting 2% in fees that CMs receive for their work. By hiring facilitators from the same firm, CMs receive the 2% in addition to the 4% for social facilitators. This raises the question of whether the work available is being spread across different people, particularly previously disadvantaged persons, and it raises concerns over monitoring. In one district council, the PIA manager prohibited CMs from doing their own social facilitation because it did not allow for independent monitoring of the social facilitator's work. In cases where the SF is from the same firm as the CM, it might be necessary for the SF to be paid directly by the PIA so that the work can be monitored.

It is encouraging to point out that two of the district councils studied are currently involved in the development of social facilitators. In an attempt to build capacity at council level, one of them foresees that individuals within the council who have been trained in social facilitation and project management, will in future be in charge of the social facilitation presently undertaken by consultants. In the other case, the PIA manager is developing a pool of local people knowledgeable of the areas where projects are taking place, who can be trained in social facilitation by the current facilitators (who are consultants).

KwaZulu-Natal

In most cases the SF was identified by the PIA manager or the PPM and officially appointed by the cluster manager. In one case, the CM had expressed a preference and been overruled in his choice of SF by the PIA manager. In all cases but one, the SF came from the local community. Even if cluster managers had a good working relationship with their social facilitators, they were unhappy with this procedure. Given that they are ultimately responsible for the SF (and all PIAs

agreed that it is the CMs that are responsible for monitoring the work of SFs), cluster managers felt that they should have greater input in the choice of SF. This could be achieved by meeting the person beforehand or by making their own suggestions. In one case, a CM said that even though the PIA manager was in a better position to identify SFs, particularly when it comes to spreading the work, he would rather indicate three preferences from a list provided by the PIA who would then pick one. This would allow both parties to make input. The general policy is not to combine the role of cluster management with that of social facilitation.

The manner of the identification and appointment of social facilitators seemed to be the cause of considerable problems between cluster managers and social facilitators. First, there is confusion over the reporting procedures. As one CM put it: *"The PIA appoints the SF and CMs are told you are responsible for that person. SFs generally sort out problems well, but they don't report to us sufficiently, but go directly to the PIA. The SF has two masters in a way. He is appointed by the PIA but ultimately the CM is held responsible."* Some cluster managers and PIA mangers were under the impression that the SFs did not like being subordinate to the CM. This because they felt their work was undervalued, especially as it is not an officially recognised profession, and because the CM is seen as a technical person with little sensitivity for social issues. Many respondents said they thought the SFs would prefer to report directly to the PIA, which in many cases they did, thus bypassing the cluster manager. *"The SF reports all over the show. They don't just report to us, they disregard us, bypass us and then we sit with the problem and we have to go and facilitate to solve the problem."* The question also arose as to whose interests the SF was representing, that of the cluster/programme or that of the community.

Technical designers

As the following sections will illustrate, there were differences between Eastern Cape on one hand and KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern Province on the other regarding the position of technical designer. During the first round of funding, technical designers in the Eastern Cape were more likely to be outside consultants, while in KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern Province their tasks tended to be performed by the cluster manager.

Northern Province

In most cases CMs were also the technical designers for projects. They were not from the local community but were expected to be from the same area or province. As the PIA programme manager put it, *"it is very difficult to get an engineering consultant from the community. When you identify a cluster, you are identifying the poorest of the poor and villages that are very rural, and there are no engineering consultants based in those particular areas".*

Eastern Cape

In most cases, cluster managers, or the firms they belong to, were not allowed to act simultaneously as technical designers. Due to the lack of guidance on this issue in the PMS, PIA managers took it upon themselves to make decisions on appointments. For this reason, we found cases where CMs who were engineers were not allowed to act as technical designers in one district council, but had no problem in doing so within another council. This seems to have changed for the second round of funding, as most of the PIA managers and cluster managers indicated that CMs were now generally allowed to act also as technical designers. This seemed to have emanated from a decision to facilitate the gathering of information, meeting times and consultation on the work that needs to be done, and to allow CMs to supplement their generally inadequate fees.

Cluster managers were allowed to appoint their own technical designers, subject to approval by the PIA manager and the district council. In some cases, since it was considered too expensive to hire a technical person full-time for the clusters, technical designers were appointed on a project basis.

PIA programme managers raised two complaints about technical designers. One PIA manager pointed to the lack of monitoring carried out by technical designers because they are paid in advance for their designs: *"They don't go to site because there is a marginal amount left on the budget. If they don't go to site, then CMs pick up the task and they are already over-worked"*. There is no easy way to solve this problem, such as withholding payment, since the law stipulates that they must be paid in advance. Another PIA manager indicated that he was not satisfied with the designs produced by the technical designers because the latter did not understand the objectives of the programme and failed to take into account the local context and the need to use local materials.

KwaZulu-Natal

In most cases the cluster manager also acted as the technical designer. The main reason given for this was practicality. It made more sense to combine these two functions and have fewer consultants involved, and in most cases consultants had in-house design capabilities. If the CM did not have design capabilities, then the PIA manager either appointed that person or left it to the CM to identify and appoint a designer.

Trainers

In general communities received very little training before project implementation in the three provinces studied. For the most part, there was no training in developing technical skills such as bricklaying, which should happen a few months before the projects start. The only training that is currently taking place, in a rush to spend the training budget, is in management, fund-raising and marketing. In most cases trainers were not appointed until late last year or early this year.

There was overall agreement that training needs to start early on, months before implementation in order to allow community members to feel that they are involved from the beginning and are aware of the details of the projects, including the kinds of materials that are going to be used. As one CM put it: "*If the asset is going to be productive, you need the management committee as well as the selected individuals who will have permanent jobs to live with the process and grow with it. [Training] must start when construction starts, so that they know what bolts, what windows, etc. are being used.*" The more the community is involved at the beginning of the project, the greater the chance of instilling a sense of ownership of the assets. This, in turn, could be crucial in ensuring the long-term sustainability of the assets created.

Northern Province

The late appointment of trainers did not help the relationship between CMs and PIA programme managers. As one CM expressed this, *"training for communities was suggested by CMs in many meetings, but the PIA and the Department were never concerned about the matter. Now, many projects might fail because the PIA and the Department overlooked the main component which is training for the communities"*. Eventually, CMs were asked to identify trainers who could prepare training budgets. However, in the meantime, the PIA appointed trainers through the Department of Labour. As one CM put it, *"the trainer appointed by the PIA (through the Department of Labour) had no idea of the projects I was working on"*.

Eastern Cape

Training was postponed for about a year, during which time no training in technical skills took place at project level. With the realisation that the financial year was coming to an end, there was a sudden rush to spend the training budget quickly. The PPM approached a firm, from which some of the CMs come, to run the training component for all district councils. For this reason trainers in the Eastern Cape were appointed through the provincial management team rather than through the CMs. Under direction from the PMT, the training firm contacted the Department of Labour to obtain training funds and developed training courses and modules. Only one council benefited from Department of Labour funding and training in technical skills such as joinery, tyre repairs, sewing, child-care management, etc. This technical training started in January 2000.

Even though all respondents were worried about the delay in training for community members, some CMs did not feel comfortable with the selection of trainers because "*we were basically forced or instructed to appoint them from above.*" The training firm gave CMs form letters (with space to insert the name of the trainer) in order to appoint the trainers. Several of the CMs interviewed felt that they were not given enough time to evaluate the trainers and to assess whether the training to be received by the community would be appropriate.

One of the concerns with training raised by CMs was that the community members selected for training were not necessarily the most suitable ones. One CM indicated that at the beginning of

the project, the SF identified six people to receive training. However, as the trainers came in a year later, these same names were put forward. The trainers did not check that *"they took people from the CSC. Some of the people who were identified for the day-care centre to do the training were living 60km from the centre. Only one or two people came from that area. The whole purpose was that people who were going to run that facility would be trained, so the objective of the training was missed."*

KwaZulu-Natal

The needs of the community for training to maintain the structure appeared to be neglected. The training of members of the Operation, Maintenance and Management (OMM) organisations has not yet taken place, in most cases because these organisations had not yet been set up. In only one case had trainers been appointed, although the people to be trained had not yet been identified. However, tenders for trainers have been put out. Responsibility for this as well as for appointments lay with the councils in all regions, something which all respondents were happy about. A couple of CMs felt strongly that training should begin much earlier and be ongoing: "*Funding is approximately for 3 months. We've extended it for 12 months, as the CM together with the PIA. We went back and said we want this to continue for at least a 12-month period. Although we think it's an ongoing thing. You cannot stop it after 12 months; it's supposed to continue indefinitely. There is no structure for this. It's a major shortcoming.*"

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

As the sections below will show, while communities were almost always involved and consulted on project identification, there were variations across provinces regarding the involvement of the CMs in this process.

One concern that most respondents raised was the timeframe for this whole process – cluster and project identification and drawing up project business plans. The tight timeframe from learning about funding and having to submit business plans was such that insufficient consideration was given to community and social issues. As a result a number of projects had to be cancelled or re-sited once work was underway. In one case contractors were physically threatened by members of the community when they wanted to start work. The main problems cited were the lack of or disputes over PTOs (permission to occupy) and regional conflicts. Respondents felt that if more time were available to undertake feasibility studies and social facilitation, such problems would not have occurred.

In other cases, while not having to be relocated or cancelled, the scope of the work had to be changed in the course of the projects. As one PIA programme manager stated it, *"Out of the consultation process, it later came out that the community was not actually happy with it, with the site and with the nature of the work. Because of the fast-track nature of the programme, we were not able to consult fully with the community. Once we did that [after the project had*

started] we realised that that was not exactly what they wanted. They wanted something else, so we revised the business plan and resubmitted it".

In addition, as one CM pointed out, while at the moment any project, whether it be a taxi rank, community garden or community hall is welcome, with time, project identification will have to be more discerning to find out the real needs of the community, and this requires time. All respondents therefore wanted to see longer lead-in times (three to six months) to allow for proper planning.

Northern Province

CMs are in charge of identifying projects through contact with the community, local development forums and TLCs. Through this consultation process, the community prioritises a list of projects. In turn, CMs prepare project business plans to accompany the projects. In theory, these plans should be signed by the Project Steering Committees, but this usually does not happen due to time constraints. The community agrees in principle to the projects, although there might be disagreements regarding the siting of the projects. Some CMs felt that it was not necessary for the PIA manager to participate directly in the identification of projects, as the TLCs on the ground have a sound idea of what projects are needed within the communities.

One CM felt that the current PIA manager did not have the necessary skills to approve project business plans. He indicated that the PIA (NDC) had the necessary skills but the current consultant did not. In his own words, *"The consultant tries his level best but he often gets lost and eventually relies on the PPM or technical managers".*

Eastern Cape

While PIA programme managers, whether consultants or council representatives, play an active role in the identification of clusters, their role in the identification of projects within clusters is limited to the approval of projects and project business plans. In other words, PIA managers do not participate in the identification of projects directly, although they do so indirectly through the input provided by council structures.

In all cases studied in the Eastern Cape, CMs together with community representatives were responsible for project identification. In many cases the social facilitator worked jointly with the CM as the link to the community in order to canvass the latter's views on projects to undertake. Community structures that were consulted included Cluster Steering Committees, local development forums and traditional authorities. In most cases, consultation with communities on the projects led to the re-prioritisation or alteration of proposed projects. For instance, in one cluster one of the projects was supposed to be a sports-field with a small ablution facility. However, as the CM explained it, *"the community decided that they wanted an indoor facility to use as a multi-purpose facility, so this was approved".*

In cases where more than one local community was involved, CMs and SFs faced difficulties in reaching agreement with communities on the location of projects, as each community wanted the project to be built on its grounds. In addition, one cluster manager indicated that sometimes it was difficult to determine who should be consulted at community level. In his own words, *"You go into the community and who do you deal with? In many communities, there is playing for power. To decide who you deal with is very important because that can actually make or break a project. That's where the TRC should have a big input"*. While TRCs should be actively involved, as they are indirect representatives of the council, at times it was difficult to negotiate with them: *"TRCs feel that some communities have already received projects, so it is necessary to move onto other communities. They participate a lot, but sometimes it takes a lot of work to get them on board."*

CMs in the Eastern Cape did not face difficulties with traditional authorities over the projects. In most cases they have been supportive because they could see they would benefit from the asset created in the process: *"The Chief helped us, he told the community members off. He told them that it would be a pity to lose the funds for the project, because of selfish people. He worked closely with us. Even though the Chief is not part of the CSC, he was very good at intervening"*.
Once agreement is reached with the community, cluster managers are responsible for the production of project business plans. Most CMs produce these plans themselves, as they tend to have a technical background and hence the necessary skills. In cases where they do not have some of these skills such as costing or design in-house (within their own firms), they outsource them.

Before submitting plans to the PCC for approval, CMs send them for PIA programme manager approval. In most cases, PIA managers check the business plans to make sure that they conform to PMS requirements, will be able to meet the established deadlines, and are viable. As one PIA manager stated it: *"I will not take a project to the PCC that I am not sure of, or if I know that it will not meet the requirements, or if it is not viable. Sometimes you have to trim them a little bit"*. This was generally confirmed by CMs who indicated that the PIA manager will ask them to revise plans if any aspect might not comply with the requirements.

Most PIA managers seem to have the necessary skills to evaluate the project business plans. However, a couple of them complained that sometimes they do not have enough time to do a comprehensive evaluation of the plans. As stated by one PIA manager: *"To be frank, I have not had the opportunity to evaluate plans properly because we get the plans which have to go to the PCC next week. So, I do spot checks and rely on the PMT team to pick up contradictions. I will look at the budget, the KPIs, time frames to see whether it can be finished, and the EIA. The PMT goes through the plans very thoroughly before going to the PCC"*.

Another consequence linked to the fast-track nature of the programme is the lack of sufficient time to allow the community to grasp business plans. As one CM put it: "*The only gap is that the*

project business plans go straight to PIAs, and communities are not workshopped on the nuts and bolts of the business plans. This is important to create the sense of ownership within the community from the beginning. They should know about the costs, about the time it will take, etc. But due to the fast-track nature we are old that business plans must be in in 5 days, so there is no time between the preparation and submission, to take it back to the community to consult."

Most respondents agreed that there were no delays in PCC approval of project business plans, particularly because the PCC often met more regularly if there were plans that needed to be approved.

KwaZulu-Natal

In a few cases the CM went out to the community and identified projects in consultation with them and councillors. Generally, as with clusters, projects were identified by the regional council through its councillors or standing committees. Some respondents felt that this ensured that the projects were driven by the community. Others felt that this constituted political interference: *"Councillors are complicating the matter. They say they have gone to the community for projects, but in fact they haven't. They are the representatives of the community and you have to believe them – verifying it is difficult."* Everyone admitted that politics played a role in identifying projects, though whether this was detrimental to project implementation and the objectives of the programme remained disputed.

Two proposals were put forward to try and combat political interference:
- Social facilitators and regional councils should go out to the community together and through workshops find out their needs
- NDPW funding should be split between the regional councils and NGOs or consultants who would both run projects. The success of the two PIAs could then be compared.

Once projects are identified, cluster managers examine their technical viability, either in the field or on paper. The PIA manager evaluates the projects before passing them onto the council's executive committee for approval and then to the PCC. There were no complaints about the speed at which the PCC cleared projects for implementation.

TENDERING AND WORKING WITH EMERGING CONTRACTORS

Tender process

Northern Province

Usually, the CM or the PIA is in charge of putting out tenders. Cluster managers make recommendations both to the TLCs and the district council for appointments, even though it is the council that makes the final decision. According to respondents, it seems that the current PIA

manager does not have the same capacity as the council to evaluate tenders. This is largely linked to the fact that the PIA manager for tenders even before the project designs had been approved.

Eastern Cape

Since the CBPWP follows the tender procedures used by district councils, there was no notable variation among respondents regarding this procedure. The only exception was one CM who indicated that they only had 24 hours to commit the funds and hence were unable to go out to tender. In this case, the district council became the main contractor. Generally, however, CMs or their technical consultants draft the tender specifications on behalf of the district council. The CMs or the PIA managers, with the approval of the district council, usually do the advertising for tenders. Once the tenders are received by the closing date, tenders are opened publicly at council offices, in the presence of all contractors, CMs, and PIA managers. The names of each contractor and the amounts and projects they tendered for are written on a board for everyone to see.

Once the tenders have been opened, the tenders are distributed to CMs for their evaluation. The CM or the technical consultant produces a tender report which short-lists the contractors based on information on their track record, quality, budgets, and so on. These recommendations are then tabled in front of the tender adjudication committee that is mostly composed of council representatives, including their technical people. Usually the PIA manager is invited to participate in the tender adjudication committee meeting.

Even though the technical consultant makes recommendations on which contractors should be appointed, it is the district council, and often its EXCO body, which makes the final decision over appointments. In many cases, the technical person who produced the recommendations is not represented at the tender adjudication committee meeting. The entire process usually takes one-two weeks.

According to most CMs interviewed, the district council often follows the recommendations forwarded by the CM or the technical consultant. However, some CMs pointed to instances where the district council did not follow recommendations. In general, this results from tender recommendations not meeting district council requirements, such as whether contractors are local and whether they are PDIs. In other cases, the district council will not accept recommendations because the contractors have a bad working history or bad debts with the district council.

Cluster managers were of two minds regarding the right of district councils to make the final appointment. While they agreed that it was necessary for the district council to provide background information on contractors, which they might not have access to, they also felt frustrated because the CMs have to work with contractors that have not been appointed by them.

As one CM put it, *"In one project they asked us on what basis we were recommending the person, because the DC knew the company, they had a case against it. It is useful that the DC takes a look because they have information that we don't have".* In contrast, other CMs expressed their frustration with their lack of control over final decisions over appointments. One CM complained thus: *"They expect you to work with that consultant that they've chosen, and then if the contractor fails, who takes the responsibility?"* Similarly, another CM stated: "*It gets frustrating sometimes because since it is fast-track, we have certain deadlines. If you make a mistake and choose a contractor who does not have the necessary capacity to do the job in the required time, you as a CM take the flak. Or else, you did not make the decision with regards to the appointment. Similarly, because the committee didn't choose the person recommended, the consultant also gets frustrated because he is concerned that the contractor does not have plant capacity and personnel to meet the deadlines, lacks administrative and financial capacity necessary".*

KwaZulu-Natal

The same tender procedure was used across all regions within KwaZulu-Natal, and all respondents were satisfied with the way it functioned and with the various players' roles. Basically, the cluster managers draw up the tender documents; the advertisement is placed either by the CM or the regional council; proposals are returned to the council; the CM evaluates the proposals according to the council's and the PMS criteria and makes recommendations to the PIA. In many cases, the PIA evaluates those recommendations before passing them onto the council's tender sub-committee for approval and the appointment of contractors. Contractors in the province were always either emerging contractors or joint ventures. As will be discussed below, this has given rise to problems.

Respondents at all levels in the programme agreed that this tender procedure worked well. However, two major concerns were raised. First, it was clear from discussions that certain targets within the PMS were introduced only after tender documents and ads had been sent out. Efforts to get contractors to meet these targets retrospectively were strongly opposed by a number of CMs. The following was typical: *"When you draw up a contract, when you have a tender document, the person is giving specifications and on that basis they decide how they are going to do the work and at what price. There are certain things covered in those specifications which affect the price. Once that is in place you cannot change it without mutual consent between the employer and contractor. On too many occasions, certainly at the start, things have changed after the tenders have closed. And as far as I'm concerned that is not on. Issues like 50% of labour force has to be women. I don't care if it is 100% but it's got to be 100% when the guy tenders. You can't change fundamental issues like that after the tender date. You cannot change it unilaterally. And that happened a number of times."*

Second, most respondents expressed their concern with the timeframe surrounding the tender procedure. Both cluster managers and PIA programme managers pointed out that the whole

tender process, including the two weeks for the ad to be placed, takes four to seven weeks, which makes the whole timeframe for the PWP very tight. A number of respondents indicated that too little time was given for evaluating tenders. In a number of cases, CMs had to evaluate them in two days, when it was generally agreed that a week was usually needed. One CM said that, particularly with respect to emerging contractors, he would like to have more time to conduct more thorough investigations into their credentials.

Working with emerging contractors

CMs highlighted a number of problems in relation to the appointment, through tenders, of emerging contractors to some of the projects. As was mentioned at the beginning of this report, working with emerging contractors often clashes with the requirement to produce quality products within tight deadlines. While CMs are not necessarily against the hiring of emerging contractors, they emphasised that emerging contractors are often at a disadvantage in the tender process and within the programme as a whole. Furthermore, they indicated that when appointed, they cause delays because they lack the necessary training and support to get projects done on time. In most cases, CMs, who feel overworked as it is, find themselves having to help the emerging contractors with their problems so that the project can be done on time and CMs can also get paid.

Several cluster managers and PIA managers felt that although the programme was aimed at providing employment for emerging contractors, the latter were at a severe disadvantage in the tender process. It was generally agreed that the tender documents were too complicated and that emerging contractors required considerable guidance and training to complete them correctly. Proposals from emerging contractors, said one PIA manager, were often rejected out of hand simply because they were completed incorrectly. In one region, the CMs invited all prospective contractors to a workshop a week prior to the tender date to assist in completing the tender documents. One CM suggested that the efforts should be made, perhaps by the Public Works department itself, to simplify the documents, especially the General Conditions of Contract.

In some cases, emerging contractors have entered into joint ventures with established contractors in order to build capacity. CMs and PIA managers gave mixed reviews on the success of such ventures. One PIA manager commented how *"someone, like a retired nurse, signs as an emerging contractor but does not get the transfer of skills, they just get the money from the established contractor. Established contractors, in turn, target women since it is part of the target, but they are abusing the system"*. Other CMs complained that *"emerging contractors don't try to develop their companies, but rather buy the services. They become brokers. They walk away with the money but don't built capacity"*.

In addition to inadequate capacity building, joint ventures have not worked well where contractors did not have joint bank accounts for the project. As a result, there have been recurrent problems when established contractors get paid but refuse to pay emerging contractors.

This does not allow the emerging contractors to pay their labourers, who in turn refuse to work and hence cause delays to the project.

Joint ventures have not worked well in the absence of clarity on how to split the funds between contractors. As one CM put it, *"People get into joint ventures for a number of reasons, misunderstanding being one of them. They think that if they enter joint ventures, it is a 50-50 arrangement, only to find when the job is done that if I've got plant, I've got to split 80-75% of the work, and emerging contractors are left with 25%. Emerging contractors feel they are being cheated. With joint-ventures, the powerful partner is always white, the emerging one is black, so it becomes a black-white issue."* Where joint ventures have been appointed with joint bank accounts and with an understanding of how much each partner will receive, they have worked well.

In many cases, emerging contractors were appointed on their own, rather than through joint ventures. The PWP was seen as an opportunity for emerging contractors to work and build their reputation, yet the structure of the programme was making it difficult for them to perform well. Many CMs spent a lot of time assisting emerging contractors on site; this was accepted as part of the job and the empowerment aspect of the programme: *"Some of them didn't know that in three days' time they'll need this and next week that. So helping them to get things in place."* In one region, a PIA manager admitted that using emerging contractors sometimes meant quality was not sufficiently high and structures sometimes had to be knocked down and rebuilt. This was accepted as part of the empowerment objective. In one region, projects were deliberately broken down into smaller units to enable emerging contractors to participate more easily.

In some cases, CMs conducted workshops on how to fill in the PMS forms, or aided contractors with financial management to address their constant cash-flow problems. Even though holding workshops with emerging contractors went beyond CMs' duties, they felt that they were necessary to simplify their administrative work in the longer-term. In other words, if contractors manage to understand the forms and how they should be filled, this is likely to cut back on the time that CMs have to spend in helping contractors fill the forms correctly.

The problems with financial management arise from two factors, namely that emerging contractors do not have access to overdrafts or financing while at the same time they often do not know how to manage their cash-flow. As one PIA manager expressed this, *"Everything is on a fast-track, there is no time for planning, so contractors do not have time to appeal to development corporations for financing".* Coupled to this, as the same PIA manager explained, *"new contractors have not seen a lot of money in their lives. They get a big cheque and go through a state of "I am rich" and then when time comes to buy materials, there is no money."* In turn, the success of a project is often based on the fact that labourers are paid regularly. If this is not the case, progress is affected greatly because in many cases without pay work stops.

In order to address this problem, one PIA manager suggested that emerging contractors should be forced to open a bank account, where every month they would put a certain amount of money

to pay labour, materials, etc., so that they have some funds to fall back on. The CM and the contractor could control this fund. While the CM would not have access to it, he would need to sign every time money comes out of the account. In essence, this would constitute a forced cash-flow procedure that could help contractors to manage their money.

In addition to the suggestions already mentioned, respondents also had the following ideas on how to improve the participation of emerging contractors:

- For joint ventures, make sure that joint bank accounts are set up, where both contractors have signing powers and produce memorandum of agreement that states clearly how much each of the contractors will receive from the joint venture
- Hire on-site full-time person to be in charge of monitoring and support for emerging contractors in order to lessen the burden on CMs
- Provide training on project and financial management skills to emerging contractors, take them to site and conduct on-site training.

MONITORING OF OVERALL QUALITY

Northern Province

It seems that the PIA does not have sufficient capacity to undertake overall quality control and consequently it is the CMs who are in charge of this task. According to the PIA, quality control is done through occasional site visits and communication with the PMT. In addition, some CMs indicated that their monthly meetings with the PIA also serve to help the PIA receive reports on what is happening at the sites. This was a way to overcome the problem of the PIA manager's lack of capacity to conduct regular site visits and assess the technical quality of projects. Even though the PIA manager works jointly with civil engineers, the latter *"keep quiet because they are afraid that they will not be hired again. So they agree on problems with engineers but not in front of the PIA"*.

Eastern Cape

Although the PMS specifies that PIA programme managers are in charge of monitoring the overall quality of the programme, they rely heavily on CMs and their technical personnel to undertake the day-to-day monitoring of quality at project level. The PIA managers check the work carried out by CMs through the monthly reports submitted by them. In many cases, the technical person from the PMT also conducts, both announced and unannounced, site visits to monitor the technical quality of the projects.

At a minimum, PIA managers visit projects twice during a project cycle, at the beginning of a project and at hand-over time, once the project is finalised. As one PIA manager put it, *"We won't issue a final completion certificate on a project if I haven't seen it or have been around to the site. In any case, consultants don't want to expose themselves to delivering bad quality*

projects. There is a triple check in place with the technical consultant, the CM and the PIA. If it passes through the three, then it is not wrong". In addition to these visits, PIA managers conduct site visits irregularly, usually when there are specific problems that require their presence. With two PIA managers, visits seem to be more frequent because in one of these cases the PIA has an assistant that spends a lot of time visiting projects, and in the other the district council is actually the main contractor.

Monitoring the technical aspects of the projects is largely the responsibility of the technical person that is appointed at project level, subject to overall supervision by both PIA managers and CMs who possess a technical or engineering background. In the words of one PIA manager, *"As an engineer, I will intervene when I see problems. I have little doubts about the technical integrity of the projects because I am an engineer and I can assess that".* In one case, where the PIA manager lacked the technical skill to evaluate the quality of the projects, a technical audit was conducted before producing completion reports. In the PIA manager's own words, *"I have called a technical audit, because I don't actually have the capacity to see technically whether a wall will crack in six months' time, if the foundation is solid enough, etc. I have called an evaluation of all projects so that at least we can assure ourselves that we have put a quality product on the ground to the best of our ability. It has helped us take care of small problems before the completion report and hand-over".*

In general, everyone realises that it would be unrealistic to expect PIA managers to go to site visits frequently and also have time to complete the administrative and financial management tasks that fall within their responsibility. However, two CMs pointed out that the district council, and not the consultant PIA manager, should play a more active role in going to the sites, especially since it is the district councils which will be legally responsible for the projects once they are finished. One CM was quite concerned about the different standards that district council representatives and consultants adhere to. While in this case a person was appointed from the council to see what was happening at the sites, the appointment came very late. As he described this, *"A consultant continues with the work, thinking that the way he is doing the work is acceptable (according to the contract), but sometimes the District Council has different standards, maybe lower, maybe higher. It comes to the time of delivery of the project, and there are problems pointed out by that person. So, the person needs to be more involved in the project and point out the problems in the early stages to ensure the success of the projects".*

Even when they do not physically go to the sites, most PIA programme managers interact with the communities through TRCs. TRCs communicate information and any problems to the council. As one PIA expressed this, *"With the institutional structures that we have at project level, we are able to get direct communication even from the councillors who do sit in [the CSCs], in relation to problems that they might pick up. They will inform the District Council and we will liase directly. So these institutional structures also look at the project quality and progress. If they pick up any issues, they report directly to us. It is very good because it is a sign that people are capacitated out there and can pick up problems".*

KwaZulu-Natal

All PIA programme managers and cluster managers stated that it was essentially the CMs' role to monitor project quality. Nonetheless, all PIA managers did conduct site visits several times a month, either unannounced or alongside the CM. Where the PIA manager did not have technical skills, a technical officer from the regional council would also undertake visits.

In addition to site visits, one PIA manager stated that all projects are insured by the regional council in the event of defects, and that the council hired only CMs who had professional liability, which extended for a certain period beyond completion of the project. He also stated that timeframes for project completion were adjusted in business plans beyond those laid down by the NDPW because some were impossible to finish, owing to concrete drying times for example, within that period. Another PIA manager said that they stipulate a certain level of quality – 10% of funding is held back from CMs if this level of quality is not achieved.

OMM ORGANISATIONS AND LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF ASSETS

Establishment of OMM organisations

Northern Province

The consultant PIA manager did not know who was working on the establishment of operation, maintenance and management (OMM) organisations. Even though he recognised that there had been problems constituting them due to the lack of effective social facilitation, he stated that the *"NDC is busy working on it".* As might be expected, OMM plans have not yet been approved.

Cluster managers indicated that in meetings with council representatives they had been told of the requirements to set up OMM organisations. However, it seems that many of these organisations are not in place and that specific people to make up management committees have not been identified.

Eastern Cape

Based on the data gathered, most projects seemed to have what CMs referred to as "management committees", usually set up by the social facilitators and cluster managers. The only exceptions were road projects, where the council is directly accountable for their maintenance. Management committees are made up mostly of members of he project and cluster steering committees established at the beginning of the project. However, none of these committees constitute legal entities. Some CMs complained about the absence of clear guidelines from the NDPW regarding the form of these committees, and whether they should be trusts, co-operatives, or take some other form. One PIA manager indicated that the NDPW is not willing to fund the formation of trusts. At the same time, one CM was concerned about setting up trusts. As he explained it, *"The*

problem is ownership because the trust would probably consist of 20 people from the community, but then legally, the asset would only belong to those 20 people".

In three of the four district councils studied, detailed OMM plans had been drafted but not yet approved. In addition, in two of these district councils, workshops on OMM had been conducted with the communities, often with the participation of district council representatives.

KwaZulu-Natal

There seemed to be little uniformity within regions and across regions as to how OMM plans and organisations were to be set up and approved. Except in a couple of cases where the project steering committee was designated from the start to be the future OMM organisation, OMM organisations had not yet been set up. In certain cases, they were in the process of being set up, in others, there were still some outstanding training issues to be resolved. All respondents stated that the PIA was not directly involved in this task and that it was the job of the social facilitator, and to a lesser extent the CM, to set up these organisations. Almost all respondents indicated that they were running behind schedule with establishing OMM organisations and in particular with the training of the members. A similar situation prevailed regarding OMM plans: some had been drawn up, others not. In some cases, the PIA or the regional council approved the plans, in others it was left to the SF and project steering committee. No single region had all OMM plans and organisations in place.

Long-term sustainability of assets created

Several respondents raised concerns about the maintenance and the sustainability of assets over the longer term. One CM felt that the emphasis on training and OMM was out of proportion with the size of the projects, which would provide very little long-term employment. A couple of CMs also pointed out that given the rushed planning, proper sustainability plans could not be drawn up at the start of the project. "*You can't draw up a proper sustainability plan without a feasibility study. The programme's aim is project sustainability but this is not identified before a project is started. We have no idea at the start of a project whether it will be sustainable.*" One PIA manager pointed out that all the assets were being built on tribal land and therefore could not be legally owned by the council. Communities could therefore be responsible for the asset but not own it, an issue he said he had taken up with the NMT.

More broadly, respondents felt that the NDPW had not given sufficient thought to the maintenance and sustainability of the assets created. As one PIA manager put it, *"The department has shut the door on this aspect of the projects".* In particular, respondents felt that the programme took insufficient account of the fact that the targets of these projects are rural communities with very little money to sustain the assets. According to one CM, *"I've seen many projects in my 20 years doing this work. Projects will only be successful for around three years and then they fall flat; that's unfortunately the history of all these projects and this is*

countrywide...I'm talking about rural areas. Rural communities have no money for maintenance."

In order to be able to generate money to maintain the assets, communities need some form of start-up funding or capital to equip assets such as community halls or sports fields. It is worth quoting the following CM in detail, as he manages to sum up the frustrations expressed by all respondents in this study. Talking about the problems he is facing with his projects, he stated:

> *"With the sports-field there is a problem because the NDPW does not fund movable assets. People have nice sports field, but to use them as sports centres, you need a mower or two, we don't have those. The only mechanism to keep grass low is to put in animals. So how are you going to have activities with the cows? The drawing of lines when the grass is high is very difficult. We have been idealistic about the issue of OMM. We have community halls that have no chairs, no tables, nothing. They are lying there empty. So when people need to use them, they have to wait until the school is closed and then they can borrow the chairs to use the hall, whereas the objective of the hall was to have it as a multi-purpose centre for meetings, for funerals, church services, pre-school facility. But when there is no equipment inside we can't do that. We end up having the halls sitting there, being used partially, not to the extent they should be".*

Even if communities manage to generate revenue from projects, it would take them some time to generate enough revenue to pay for maintenance, as well as the salaries of those community members in charge of it. As one CM explained this, *"In a commercial enterprise, things don't go right from the start – it takes a little while to get profitable. During the process, you need working capital, since people can't take overdrafts. If the department does not provide the working capital, how is it going to work? If at the end of the first month the community can't find the money to pay the management committee, they might go elsewhere to find a job".*

Given these concerns, some respondents felt that the NDPW should provide funding for a period of ten years to ensure the long-term success of projects. Others felt that start-up funding should be provided, but in a monitored fashion. As one CM put it, *"If one committee is operational, then it is necessary to assess what they have been doing before giving funding. If one gives money or charity, then it is dis-empowering. We need to have a system so that people will be responsible to continue the upkeep and the fundraising".* Some respondents indicated that the NDPW should match the funds that are raised by the community. In this way, communities get financial support on condition that they raise some on their own.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

In all three provinces, all PIA managers had appointed financial controllers (FCs) to carry out MMIS-related tasks as well as to process payments and claims. In the Eastern Cape, the provincial FC from the PMT team provides extensive support to the PIA managers.

Northern Province

Neither the PIA manager nor the Financial Controller received training on the MMIS, although they did receive training on the PMS. The PIA manager has acquired some knowledge on the MMIS by working closely with the Provincial Financial Controller. Unlike in other provinces, it is the Provincial Financial Controller who is in charge of filling in the forms on the MMIS. The PIA manager indicated that the quality of information supplied by CMs makes it very difficult to fill in the forms in a timely fashion.

Payments are submitted by CMs to the Provincial Financial Controller who in turn sends them to the PIA technical manager for verification. Once verified, these requests are submitted to the PIA Financial Controller who checks them once again before having them signed by the Provincial Financial Director and submitted to the NDPW. In general, payments from NDPW take only a few days. Both the PIA Financial Controller and the PIA manager were satisfied with the feedback received from the PPM and NDPW on the monitoring of expenditure.

Eastern Cape

All FCs received training in MMIS in June 1999 in Bisho and early in 2000 in Pretoria. However, the training received in June was not very helpful because at that stage there was no sense of unity of all the MMIS forms. The training conducted in Pretoria has been more useful, but not sufficient, since not enough time was allocated to the MMIS. One FC suggested that training should happen more frequently and should allow FCs to get behind computers to practice with the forms on screen.

Most FCs felt that the MMIS was not difficult to use though it was a cumbersome monitoring system. Part of the problem emanates from the fact that the PIA managers work with three different systems – their own internal monitoring system, the MMIS and Pastel for FCs. One PIA manager was concerned that the Excel-based system was not the most appropriate for the storage of data. In his words, *"The problem is that an Excel spreadsheet is not really designed to do that, but is rather designed to play with numbers. An MS Access database is better designed to store and report on data".* Another PIA manager pointed out that *"the most cumbersome aspect is the bulk of information that goes through the system. It is time consuming, expensive to reproduce. For some people, the forms are beyond their grasp. This, in turn, affects their payments, because if the forms are not filled correctly, then their payments are delayed".*

Suggestions for altering the reporting system included:
- Reduce the number of forms, particularly for contractors
- Delay the forms by one cycle
- Allow MMIS to be cluster-based, or allow for forms to be transferable from CM to PIA managers so that they do not need to retyped.

All PIA managers drew up their business plans, informed by the business plans from the clusters. They all felt capable of doing this task, since the PMS itself provides useful guidance.

KwaZulu-Natal

Once the FCs received training, they found the system fairly user friendly, especially after it was revised during 1999. One FC did feel, however, that there were too many forms. Although he understood that the government needed to show it was achieving its objectives, some of the forms were unnecessary. It was quite worrying to hear the following: *"You spend more time worrying about the forms than the objectives of the programme."* He also felt that the large number of forms that cluster managers had to fill meant that they were overloaded and at times just entered any information for the sake of completing them on time. Overall, however, the FCs were happy with the MMIS.

All FCs said they information received from CMs was frequently late. All, however, accepted that part of their job entailed chasing up the CMs for information. Reasons given for this delay were the limited capacity of some CMs and the fact that contractors sent the information to the CMs late. The FCs appeared to have some understanding for the situation of CMs who have to compile all the information from contractors before being able to forward it to the PIA, and also for contractors for whom it was deemed to be a lot of paperwork in comparison to other projects. In one region, owing to time constraints, CMs often failed to send original payment certificates in good time, so the FC had to work with faxed copies.

In two regions, the provincial financial controller checked and signed all payment claims before they were sent to the NDPW. According to the FCs concerned, this slowed down the claims process considerably. Once the NDPW received the claims, they generally disbursed payments within ten days, which was considered reasonable, but one FC stated that on a couple of occasions payment had been delayed by up to three weeks because of errors at the department's end.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As was stated at the beginning of this report, an evaluation of the capacity of PIA programme managers must take into account the context within which PIAs are asked to put this capacity to use. As this report has shown, the timing of the introduction of the CBPWP hampered the ability of many of the councils studied to play an active role in day-to-day programme implementation. The stress on committing funds quickly and delivering quality products under tight deadlines often pushed councils to outsource programme implementation. In addition, many of the councils lacked the human resource capacity to implement the CBPWP. In many cases, councils' levy bases are not wide enough and hence they indirectly restrict the number of people that the council can support. Coupled to this, the yearly allocation of CBPWP funds and the uncertainty about future funding has in turn dissuaded councils that lack human resource capacity from hiring either permanent or contract staff to be devoted solely to the CBPWP.

Councils will only be able to become successful PIAs if they are given some kind of assurance that this programme will be ongoing for a few years. If they have that assurance, they are more likely to hire personnel who would work full-time on the CBPWP, and hence not be affected by events such as elections or having to devote time to other projects. At the same time, if new personnel are hired, time must be allocated for their training and understanding of the PMS. In other words, simply getting more personnel will not lead to successful management of the programme.

The setbacks described above, however, should not be used to motivate that councils cease to play the role of PIAs. Rather it is recommended that councils continue to act as PIAs, or become PIAs where they currently are not. Since the CBPWP is a politically sensitive programme that relies on public funds, it is advisable that its implementation remains in the hands of local government structures. While consultants might have the skills that council staff often lack, council officials are more likely to be accountable to their constituencies.

More importantly, one of the aims of the CBPWP has been to enhance the capacity of government structures at local level. Considering that local government is the tier of government that is largely responsible for the delivery of basic services, building this capacity is crucial. If councils are not given an opportunity to build their capacity, either by having assurances that the programme will be on-going, or by having enough time to train people within the council to be active in the programme, they will continue to rely on consultants to implement the CBPWP.

Informed by the concerns raised above, it is recommended that the following be considered as possible CBPWP policy changes:

Continuity of funding

In order to ensure that local councils become PIAs and that their capacity is enhanced to enable them to play this role, the NDPW must ensure continuity of funding for a specified number of years, preferably no less than three years. As has been pointed out, this assurance will allow local councils to hire additional staff dedicated solely to the implementation of the CBPWP. In turn, this assurance of funding should be conditional on the transfer of management skills to other council members.

Where possible, it is recommended that the person hired will be seconded to the council on a full-time basis or hired to work within the council jointly with other members in the framework of a mentorship arrangement. Currently, consultant PIA programme managers do not work from within the council, but rather from their private offices. Even though they communicate with council officials, consultants do not share day-to-day management experiences with them. There is often a real risk that councils may become rubber stamps for decisions arrived at largely without their involvement. By hiring personnel who would be located within the council, and thus exposed to day-to-day management issues and problems, there is a greater chance that programme management skills will be transferred to other council members working on the CBPWP.

Another possibility to build capacity within the councils is for the NDPW to work more closely with departments like Water Affairs and Forestry, in order to combine management structures across departmental programmes. At present, DWAF has PIA consortia, in the same provinces where NDPW is implementing the CBPWP, which could give management support to council structures.

Planning and training time

Before CBPWP funds can be committed, more time must be allocated for planning and training of council officials on the PMS itself. As this report has shown, in the 1998-99 financial year, several local councils decided to outsource the programme management function as a result of not having had sufficient time to become acquainted with the PMS. Since local councils had to commit CBPWP funds within three months after having received them, many were forced to outsource programme management to consultants with expertise in the area. However, if more time is given before the actual implementation of CBPWP projects begins, this could allow for council officials to receive the necessary training, become acquainted with the workings of the programme and possibly reduce the reliance on consultants.

In addition, more planning time would help to ensure that the beginning phases of the programme, namely cluster and project identification, as well as community consultation and training, are not compromised. It is of utmost importance that community training and involvement in the selection of projects be given sufficient time in order to safeguard the longer-term sustainability of the assets created.

As the end of the 1998-99 financial year was coming to a close, PIA programme managers were battling to spend their training budgets. Rather than having to rush to conduct training at the end of the programme, these funds should be used prior to the implementation phase of the programme. In this way both council officials and communities would be trained on the PMS and become aware of what to expect from the projects. Moreover, if councils were allowed more time for training before the commencement of projects, they would be able to hire and train local unemployed people in social facilitation skills. This would reduce the need to hire established consultants who are often not acquainted with the culture of the local areas where projects are taking place.

Monitoring and evaluation

As previous studies on the CBPWP have pointed out, it is crucial that the monitoring and evaluation component be added in, not only to monitor the activities of the PIA, but also those of cluster managers and social facilitators. Unlike the CBPWP, other programmes discussed in this report work closely with their provincial or regional offices. Provincial Public Works departments could play a vital role in monitoring the extent to which management skills are being transferred to council officials, based on an agreed-upon set of key performance indicators.

REFERENCES

Abedian, I. and Standish, B. (1987). "Public works programmes: Challenging unemployment and poverty", *Indicator SA*, Vol. 4, No. 3.

Barnes, J.R. and Morris, M. (1997). "KwaZulu-Natal's rural institutional environment: Its impact on local service delivery", *Development Southern Africa*, Vol.14, No.2.

C A S E and Fafo South Africa (1999), *Infrastructure delivery in South Africa* (1999).

C A S E (1997). *An experiment in empowerment: An evaluation of the community-based public works programme.*

Everatt, D. (1997). *Targeting in public works programmes*, C A S E.

COSATU (1991). "Employment creation programmes: COSATU outlines proposals", *SA Labour Bulletin*, Vol.16, No.2.

Department of Constitutional Development (1998). *The consolidated municipal infrastructure programme handbook*, 3rd edition.

Derrier, J.F. (1985). "Public works programmes in Rwanda: Conditions for popular participation", *International Labour Review*, Vol. 124, No.5.

Donaldson, A. (1987). "Public projects: A spanner in the works", *Indicator SA*, Vol. 5, No. 1.

Edmonds, G.A. and Veen, J.J. (1992). "A labour-based approach to roads and rural transport in developing countries", *International Labour Review*, Vol. 131, No.1.

Financial Mail (1994). *Public works programmes: Note of warning*, 15 April.

Garnier, P. and Majeres, J. (1992). "Fighting poverty by promoting employment and socio-economic rights at the grassroots level", *International Labour Review*, Vol. 131, No.1.

Gaude, J. and Watzlawick, H. (1992). "Employment creation and poverty alleviation through labour-intensive public works in least developed countries", *International Labour Review*, Volume131, No. 1.

IT Transport Ltd (1997). *International perspectives on public works programmes*. Policy research paper on behalf of the ILO.

Khosa, M.M. (1998). "Employment and asset creation through public works in KwaZulu-Natal", *South African Geographical Journal*, 80 (1), 33-40.

Leffler-Franke, U. (1996). *Social funds as poverty targeted programs – concepts and experiences.* Paper presented at a seminar on poverty-oriented expenditure planning, Johannesburg.

Marc, A., Graham, C. and Schacter, M. (1993). *Social action programs and social funds: A review of design and implementation in sub-Saharan Africa*, World Bank, Human Resources and Poverty Division, Africa Region.

McCutcheon, R.T. and Marshall, J. (1998). "Institution, organisation and management for large-scale, employment-intensive road construction and maintenance programmes", *Construction and Development Series*, Number 15, Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA).

Phillips, S.D., Delius, P.N. and McCutcheon, R.T. (1995). "Planning labour-intensive employment creation programmes for the short term", *Development Southern Africa*, Vol.12, No.2.

Urban Foundation (1994). *Public works programmes in South Africa: Key elements in employment policy?* Urban Foundation research report No. 8.

Van Imschoot, M. (1992). "Water as a source of employment"*, International Labour Review*, Vol.131, No. 1.

Von Braun, J., Telu, T. and Webb, P. (1992). "Labour-intensive public works for food security in Africa: Past experience and future potential", *International Labour Review*, Vol.131. No.1.