Initial Thoughts on CBMS for Improvement of Resources Allocation and Internal Revenue Collection

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INTRODUCTION

Location
Dodoma Municipality covers an area of 2,669 square kilometers, of which 625 square kilometers are urbanized. Based on the 2002 National Population and Housing Census, Dodoma has 324,347 residents, broken down into 157,469 (48.5%) males and 166,878 (51.5%) females.

The municipality is situated in an economically depressed area. Although it has rich agricultural land, it is affected by harsh climatic conditions. In general, traditional agricultural methods still predominate. Residents in the rural areas engage in commerce and civil service employment and have crop farming and livestock as their prime means of livelihood.

Vision 2010
By year 2010, the Dodoma Municipality aims to provide improved services and better protection of its environment.

Mission
Dodoma Municipality will establish and promote a vibrant decentralized governance system that ensures a smooth flow of information, proper mobilization and use of resources, partnership in socio-economic programs, and support for environment-friendly activities.

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AN OVERVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS AND PRESENT MONITORING SYSTEM

The municipality has been using the *Fomu ya Takwimu (statistics form)*, which is based on the Opportunities and Obstacles for Development (O&OD) methodology (Appendix I). This is a standardized village data form to be used in all wards. However, during the implementation, poor communication between data producers and users led to a long delay in the analysis of existing data especially in the various tiers—from *vitongoji/mtaa*, wards up to district levels.

The form proved to be too complex for a villager to understand, lacked individual household data, and was not filled out frequently enough to produce reliable information. This means that the essential datasets were insufficiently captured or shared by policy- and decisionmakers to other levels of the local government. The previous system had no consistent and timely data on poverty at the district level and lower: i.e., at the mtaa and village committee levels.

In response to the aforementioned shortfalls, the Municipal Council of Dodoma has pilot-tested the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) from 2006 to 2007 under the auspices of the CBMS cluster of the Poverty and Economic Policy (PEP) Network. The developed system has captured spatial, time-related and socio-economic data at the village and ward levels of the municipality. The pilot areas were the K/Ndege ward (urban area), which has approximately 2,396 households; and Nala Village (rural area) with 2,444 households.

The present system (CBMS) boasts of the following features:

- Has a more positive outlook on the community. That is, it encourages the community to identify available resources so as to overcome obstacles, thereby fostering self-reliance.
- Uses participatory tools, which assist with the bottom-up planning process: e.g., village registers, files, village spot maps, focus group for discussions and problem identification, and prioritization of resources and issues.
- Enables the community to identify in a logical framework the specific objectives, opportunities, obstacles, and steps for implementation.
- Policymakers are able to monitor the impact of programs and determine whether poverty conditions are improving, getting
worse, or remaining the same.

Learning from the experience with both past and present systems, the CBMS has involved the participation of communities in data collection, which is a low-cost and easy-to-sustain system. Furthermore, because CBMS uses basic poverty indicators and avails of the services of enumerators from the community, it evidently captures the relevant data and information that reveal the real situation of the poor in a specific locality.

INITIAL THOUGHTS FOR THE USE OF CBMS
The initial purpose for using CBMS has focused on improving the ways of allocating development resources and organizing of the way revenue collection is done in local geopolitical units, including the municipalities.

Improving Resources Allocation
The outcome from the CBMS became the basis for the preparation of village/ward poverty profiles, poverty maps, and LGUs’ development plans. Likewise, the CBMS report compiled during this research project can be used by LGUs to better monitor and evaluate the performance of ongoing development programs in their areas.

Improving Revenue Collection
In K/Ndege’s urban areas, its database has been used to develop a property tax management tool. A computerized data management tool identifies property types with the estimated tax rates and owners. Such uses the CBMS data to identify the taxpayers more transparently and rationally. Occupants who are not property owners do pay property tax under the name of their landlords although such are considered as part of the rental charges.

The tool has further substantially simplified tax collection procedures and thereby increased the municipal’s revenue.

THE WAY FORWARD
The council envisages to establish an institutional framework that supports the implementation of the new system as follows:
System Management
Capabilities of enumerators and database supervisors in each geopolitical unit should be honed, bearing in mind that these groups are also the ones responsible for updating the databases regularly. The council should refrain from redeploying these enumerators and supervisors until a capable replacement has been identified and trained. Establishing extension workers for all priority sectors at village and ward levels should be aimed if one were to sustain the CBMS’ implementation.

Database Building
Database building should principally start at the community level, as this is where data are captured. This can be achieved when the capability of extension officers are frequently upgraded and supported with new tools and knowledge. The municipality has a role in ensuring that the personnel and necessary tools involved in this activity are always available. Therefore, a computerized system is highly encouraged as it saves time and gives a more comprehensive simulation of results. The attempt of the incumbent council to install computers at all departments is a positive step toward supporting the CBMS efforts.

Budget
Institutional arrangements have always been one of the pillars for project implementation. Specifically, institutional arrangements specified the role of the Dodoma Municipality and paved the way for a technical team committed to oversee the project’s activities, to be established. Presently, a unit of the Urban Development and Environmental Management (UDEM) has been incorporated in the CBMS so that a package of demonstration projects and information management supports some of the earmarked development plans for 2008-2009. Also, by applying the CBMS data related to urban planning, the Capital Development Authority can start supporting projects aimed at developing unplanned settlements.

Replication of the System in Other Wards and Villages
The council of Dodoma confirms its commitment to support the already established CBMS process and to replicate the exercise in other wards.
and villages in the municipality. At present, two villages—namely, Mtumba and Matumbulu—have indicated their wish to replicate the system in their own localities and are presently discussing the modalities of implementation.

Moreover, the council intends to share its experience from the pilot project with other cities and municipalities in Tanzania. It is hoped that through the council’s testimony, the project may be expanded to other interested localities.

**Replication of the System in Other Municipalities**

In the attempt to replicate the system nationwide, the Association of Local Government Authorities was identified as the organ that can spread the CBMS process at the national level. It was agreed that the Dodoma Municipal Council’s CBMS experience and findings should continue to be disseminated during various municipal and national gatherings so as to build awareness over the benefits brought by CBMS. The council will be sharing its CBMS details with other councils currently working under common programs such as those implementing the reform program and working with the same donors under the auspices of Association of Local Authorities of Tanzania (ALAT). Specifically, the council, through ALAT and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), has invited representatives from three councils (Mbeya, Morogoro and Lushoto) to discuss the CBMS implementation process in their areas.

All in all, the municipal council will maintain its link with the CBMS cluster under the PEP Network and help share their experiences on the implementation of the system. It is anticipated that other wards and municipalities in Tanzania will prepare other project proposals involving the CBMS process as a way to solicit support from PEP in tapping this system for its other potential uses.