

**OECD/DAC Dialogues with Developing Countries on National Strategies for
Sustainable Development**

GHANA COUNTRY PROGRESS REPORT

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1 Objectives of the study

(a) to help identify successful and unsuccessful elements of the process of developing and implementing NSSD in Ghana through gaining an understanding of previous and current national development strategy work in Ghana, (b) to contribute to the identification of international best practices in NSSD design and implementation, (c) to provide a useful input into the on-going process of developing the Second Step Policy Framework (2001-2005) for Ghana's Vision 2020.

2 Overview of approach and activities

The study is being conducted in five phases. The Team:

- (a) reviewed key issues in implementing NSSD in Ghana.
- (b) held a stakeholder workshop to review preliminary findings, with participation from the national planning commission, ministries and departments, academics, national council on women and development, the parliament, donors, development projects and IIED.
- (c) prepared the Country Progress Report for this Mid-Term Review Workshop, including integrating suggestions from the stakeholder workshop.
- (d) would discuss the draft Report, and comments from the Mid-Term Review workshop at a second focus-group seminar to involve mainly beneficiaries.
- (e) would finalize and publish the Country Report, including integrating comments from all sources and activities.

3 Contribution to development strategy processes in Ghana

- The study would help enhance the effectiveness of the participatory approach in the design of district plans under the Second Step (2001-2005) of the Ghana-Vision 2020.
- Lessons learned from the study would inform the process of future strategy work, especially the design of the next steps under the Ghana-Vision 2020

4 Development strategy work in Ghana

Ghana had the first development plan in the world, the 1919-1926 Guggisberg Plan, which was a medium-term public investment programme designed by the colonial administration without any participation by the people and implemented largely by the administrative service. From the 1950s to the early 1980s, the economic and social development of Ghana was guided by seven development plans of various time durations. The 7-Year Development Plan (1964-1970) was the first integrated and comprehensive plan that also utilized the participatory approach in plan development by involving various stakeholders, including the civil service, academia and business sectors.

The next major development framework was the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) initiated in 1983. Strictly, this programme of stabilization, rehabilitation and liberalization was not a long-term strategic planning process in the real sense as it did not

provide a long-term development vision for the essentially short-term interventions to achieve. Nonetheless, (a) the ERP involved some degree of economic planning, including the development of some sectoral plans as part of the process, (b) it was aimed at placing the economy on the path of sustainable long-term growth, (c) it provided the impetus and context for the re-emergence of long-term planning that eventually led to the development of the Ghana-Vision 2020 framework. The ERP stimulated the design of the NDPF, via the need to (a) integrate spatial concerns, (b) consider human development concerns, and, (c) provide a long-term perspective for growth.

In 1991 the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) initiated the process of preparing a National Development Policy Framework (NDPF) to provide a consistent framework for comprehensive development planning over the long-term with the main goal of transforming Ghana from a poor, underdeveloped low-income country into a vibrant, prosperous middle-income country within a generation, by the year 2020. It was envisaged that the long-term objectives would be implemented through successive five-year rolling plans. Although the NDPC did not set out to prepare a vision document, the long-term orientation of the NDPF enabled the Government to refer to it as Vision 2020. Consequently, the Government directed the NDPC to initiate the process of preparing the medium-term plan that would constitute the first step in the implementation of Vision 2020. The process of preparing the NDPF and the First Medium-term plan is shown in Table 1. The NDPC is currently engaged in the preparation of the Second Medium-Term Plan.

Table 1
Formulating Ghana – Vision 2020 & Medium-Term Development Plan (1996-2000)

Step	Stakeholders/Participants
1. Goal Setting	NDPC
2. Stakeholder comments on goals	NDPC, MDAs, DAs, Etc.
3. Synthesis of stakeholder responses	NDPC
4. Hierarchy of goals and strategies	NDPC, MDAs, DAs, Etc.
5. Draft NDPF	NDPC
6. Review of Draft NDPF	NDPC, MDAs, DAs, Etc.
7. Finalization of NDPF	NDPC
8. Preparation of First Step (1996-2000)	NDPC
9. Approval by Parliament	Parliament
10. Preparation of First Medium-Term Plan	NDPC, MDAs, DAs, Etc.
11. Preparation of Programme of Action	NDPC

The application of the participatory approach to the development of national strategies for sustainable development at the sectoral level is exemplified by the process of developing a renewable natural resource sector management strategy with the assistance of the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) of UK. This is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Formulating the Renewable Natural Resources Strategy (1996 – 2000)

Step	Objectives	Stakeholders/Participants	Output
1. Initiation of Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold initial consultations to agree on need to undertake the strategy process 	NDPC, MDAs, DFID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified key constraints on coordination and sustainability for development of RNR
2. Sogakope Workshop September 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliberate on issues which affect the sustainable development of RNR sector Consensus building 	Chief Directors, Directors of PPMEDs of MOFA, MEST, MLF, MLGRD, Forestry Dept., NDPC (Chair); UK/ODA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultative Group formed
3. Consultative Meeting 4. Planning Workshop November 1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Goal Oriented Project Planning (GOPP) approach to prepare a strategic plan for the development of the RNR sector 	MDAs, local government officials	Draft strategic framework for the development of the RNR sector
5. Strategy Formulation Workshop, Accra, March 28, 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulate a draft RNR Sector Strategy 	MDAs, District Assemblies, Research Institutes, NGOs, Donors	Draft Renewable National Resources sector strategy (1996 – 2000)
6. Strategy Finalization (Stakeholder Forum) Accra 12 – 13 Sept. 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform stakeholders of the process Reach consensus on Draft Strategy Define institutional responsibilities and arrangements for coordinating implementation of Strategy Identify mechanisms to integrate strategy into the national planning system Define mechanisms for local level client consultations on Strategy Define mechanisms to implement the Strategy 	75 participants including Ministers of State, Chief Directors and Chief Executives of relevant MDAs, Research Institutes RCCs/District Assemblies, Parliament, Donors, Embassies, NGOs, Private Sector, Coordinators of relevant RNR projects, Political Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalized RNR Strategy Defined process to secure endorsement by Government and implementation

The participatory approach to national development administration was deepened and institutionalized with the inception of decentralization in 1988. This involved decentralizing the administrative and financial management machinery of government to the regions and districts and affording all possible opportunities to people to participate in decision-making at all levels of national life and government. This approach was enshrined in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. Thus, all national, sectoral and cross-cutting development strategies have to be designed and implemented within the framework of decentralization and people participation.

Interrelationships among strategy work: The Ghana-Vision 2020 is regarded as the overarching framework for strategy work in Ghana. It provides the framework for several of the current strategic processes while at the same time incorporating many of the other strategic processes within its framework. For example, work on decentralization and an agriculture sector strategy started before the initiation of the preparation of the NDPF in 1991. In contrast, the formulation of strategies for renewable natural resource sector management, poverty reduction, and, gender development preceded, and were engendered, by the Vision 2020. However, the Vision 2020 took on board existing strategy work at the time of its formulation. For example work on the Programme of Actions to Mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment (PAMSCAD) under the ERP was the genesis of the poverty strategy.

5. Criteria for success of strategies for sustainable national development

A strategic process for sustainable development should meet the following success criteria:

- ❑ A high quality of the design of the process that, among others,
 - (a) assures the technical soundness as a strategic planning process (e.g. goal setting, identification of key development issues, consideration of a leading growth scenario and alternatives, etc)
 - (b) integrates social and spatial concerns,
 - (c) takes the long-term view
 - (d) is responsive to external factors and regional imperatives
- ❑ Taking due cognisance of implementation capacities
- ❑ Engendering and sustaining a high degree of participatory approach (broad-based involving stakeholders, political commitment) and ownership
- ❑ Integration of natural resource and environmental management concerns
- ❑ Consideration of governance, gender issues and other rights and entitlement concerns

The Ghana-Vision 2020 meets several of the above criteria: (a) it is the most comprehensive and integrated national development framework; (b) it is a strategic vision; (c) it defines the programmatic strategies; (d) it takes the long-term view; (e) it provides for strategic steps to achieve the vision (First Step, Second Step, etc); (f) it has provisions for periodic review; (g) it covers all the sectors needed to make a vision sustainable (economic, social, NRM, governance, gender, etc); (h) the design process was participatory to a large extent.

However, the Ghana-Vision 2020 process is deficient in some regards. These and general lessons from development programming in Ghana are discussed below.

6. Lessons learned from Ghana's experience with strategies for sustainable national development

1. The pace of Ghana's development has not matched the depth of its experience with development programming due to several reasons:
 - (a) the concept of implementing development programmes within the framework of a long-term vision is relatively new as the previous development planning efforts were basically medium term planning,
 - (b) very few of the previous development plans were fully implemented over their planned timeframes,
 - (c) there was relatively little commitment by most previous governments to the development plans they themselves formulated;
 - (d) stakeholder participation in the design of the development plans was either non-existent or very low and ineffective.
2. There is the need to state up-front the expected output in the design of a national strategy. The developers of Ghana-Vision 2020 set out to prepare a medium-term plan but realized they needed a long-term framework, hence they prepared the NDPF. They did not set out to produce a long-term vision.
3. For a nation to develop an effective and sustainable strategy for development, it needs to apply the appropriate methodology for its visioning process. For example, the use of GOPP methodology does not directly address the issue of scenarios (forecasting) of the future.
4. A NSSD needs to contain fall-backs as part of the strategy content to address vulnerabilities to assure resilient and sustainable national livelihood. It is not enough to provide for reviews or implementation steps, as in the Ghana-Vision 2020 as the major corrective or re-aligning feature. The Ghana-Vision 2020 does not provide alternatives or fall-backs based on scenario analysis.
5. To achieve effective participation and quality of work, terms such as 'strategy' need to be clearly defined.
6. For enhanced shared vision, the ownership factor has to be raised through appropriate participatory processes. Regarding the nation at large, it appears that the majority of the citizenry are aware that there is something called Vision 2020 that provides a long-term goal of achieving a middle-income status by the year 2020. However, they do not know the contents of the Vision nor what it takes to achieve it. Furthermore, since the NDPF is not very much in the public domain, most people refer to the First Step as Vision 2020.

7. A key finding was that the process of participation in the design of strategy work has been dominated by the ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs). In the main, these institutions decided on the need to undertake the strategy formulation exercises, proposed the development objectives to be achieved, decided on which stakeholders to invite, and selected the methodology and processes to be used. However, since national development objectives should be determined through a political process of consulting as many stakeholders as possible, more direct participation by other stakeholders would have enhanced the ownership and commitment to the Vision.
8. For effective commitment and participation, stakeholders need time to prepare for their participation in forums and workshops held to elicit their support.
9. For participation to be effective, outcomes need to be actualized to enhance commitment. For example, the private sector feels that results from consultative sessions on the economy have not been completely or effectively implemented resulting a less-than optimal environment for private sector development.
10. The use of ‘brainstorming’ as the key approach to participation has limitations in ensuring total participation. The nominal group technique is more effective in eliciting response from all participants in a group session.
11. Full participation by all social or pressure groups is enhanced by advance information, education and communication campaigns on the process, objectives, methodology and expected outcomes to all potential participants. In the absence of this, ministries and departments and those they select to attend, dominate participation in stakeholder functions related to strategy work. This is an issue of equitable and timely access to advance information by all potential participants.
12. Although political parties were not in existence in Ghana at the time the NDPF was being formulated, efforts should have been made at the earliest opportunity to seek their views on the methodology, processes and participation of stakeholders involved to facilitate broad-based political commitment to the Vision. Nonetheless, political parties participated in various stakeholder forums on the economic policy framework for the First Step of the Ghana-Vision 2020, culminating in their involvement in the National Economic Forum during which consensus was reached on several areas of national economic policy.
13. In terms of donor versus government-led processes, donor-led processes are not necessarily less participatory than home-grown processes. In addition, there is variation in the participatory nature of different donor-led processes. For example, the Sustainable Natural Resource Management Strategy (supported by DFID) was more participatory than the Comprehensive Development Framework (World Bank promoted) whose participation was limited only to ministries and departments.