

SELF-SELECTION PROCESS

of local government areas & communities in FGN/DFID/UNICEF/WATERAID wash project partnership

1.0 Background

Nigeria operates a three tier Government system which are Federal, State and Local Government. Each of these has specific responsibilities in the WES delivery process. The responsibility for Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion delivery to communities has been vested by national policy to the LGAs, who are the closest tier of government to the rural communities and as such are strategically positioned to provide the necessary support and coordination to the rural communities in WATSAN activities.

Each state has 10-25 LGAs with hundreds of communities. Given limited resources, there is a need to identify the ones in which intervention can first begin. This is done through the Self Selection Process.

WaterAid was instrumental to the development of the current Self Selection Process which has been widely used in the Nigeria WASH sector especially in the FGN/UNICEF/DFID WES project. This tool has been used in selecting LGAs for intervention in Benue, Ekiti, Enugu and Jigawa States. Even though the Self selection process gained wide prominence during the FGN/UNICEF/DFID WES project, its use is not limited to the project. The tool can be used for any project in any development sector.

2.0 Self Selection Process.

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The LGA & Community self-selection could be described as a process by which desiring LGAs & Communities self-selected themselves based on performance measured against a set of commonly established criteria.

Principles of Self Selection

The guiding principles of the process are:

- Equal opportunity adequate information provided to all participating LGAs or communities with an opportunity for clarifying points for adequate understanding to inform the decision to participate in the self-selection bid or not.

- Demand responsiveness: the participating LGAs had to actively express their demand to be selected by fulfilling all the processes agreed to be undertaken as part of the bidding. Based on the principle of ask and you shall receive

3.0 Benefits of the Process:

- The most willing, committed and vulnerable LGAs & Communities that emerge have automatically been self-selected
 - The process is completely owned by the stakeholders
 - The robust process makes the result acceptable
 - It increases the chances for project success
 - It provides an incentive for other LGAs/Communities to be reform inclined

4.0 Challenges

- Ensuring that the vulnerable (poorly coordinated or disorganized) communities are part of the process without compromising integrity of the process
 - Continuity: sustaining the vision envisaged by the winning leadership team of the LGA or community (after they leave office) for sustained commitment
 - Efficient checks to nullify the use of 'professional' proposal writers
 - Adequate verification of data provided in proposals

5.0 Recommendations

- LGA Community Development units should target poorly organized & coordinated communities for sensitization and mobilization support (this could help them to realize the need for cohesion and community development action)
 - Promote networks between active and non-active LGAs & communities (this could help to highlight what they are missing and how to win in the next round)
 - Advocate for LGA level statutory status of systems & approaches for sustainable development
 - Consistent surveillance & documentation of LGA performance in general development initiatives and responses (to build a database to use in future assessment)



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- **Reform mindedness:** This had to do with being innovative and daring to introduce new ways of doing things that challenge the status quo but had the potential for improving service delivery.
- **Transparency:** Promotes the concept of fairness, transparency and accountability. Inbuilt accountability for decisions and actions to all involved in the process to increase the chances of results being accepted.
- **Stakeholder ownership:** designed to ensure that all decisions made were not only felt to be owned, but also seen to be so by all stakeholders involved in the process. This was considered necessary to earn the confidence of stakeholders and give it credibility with would-be critics.
- Believed to be the foundation upon which sustainable systems and services can be built.

Rationale

- A multitude of LGAs & communities in need against limited resources
 - Importance of equal opportunity for competitive bidding
 - Need to promote and demonstrate fairness, transparency & accountability

Process

The following are the stages involved in the self-selection of either an LGA or a community.

a) Awareness Creation and Advocacy

Sensitization and orientation meetings on programme principles at the State, LGAs and communities level. This involved providing documented information on the available programme of assistance to stakeholders at all levels. Such information dwells on the programme size in terms of budget and geographical coverage, principles and core beliefs, aims, purpose and objectives and a general idea of how an interested stakeholder could be a part of the bidding process.

Meetings are then held first with relevant Ministries such as Water Resources or Public Utilities, Rural Development, Works, Agriculture, Finance and Economic Planning. Meetings are also held with the ministries of Health, Education, the State Legislature, Civil Society Organisations, Chamber of Commerce etc at the state level. The meeting was to create awareness at state level to secure ownership of the project at that level and chart the way forward for the project in the state. After LGA selection the same exercise is conducted at the community level. All communities in selected LGAs are mobilized for the project.

b) Establishment of WES Steering/Management Committee at State/LGA Level (This should be done if not already in place)

This body was identified as a necessary institution to be responsible for policy management of the project in each state/LGA selected. It was seen as necessary to maintain transparency in decision making and carrying out necessary actions in the implementation of the project at state/LGA level. Its first duty is the assessment of bidding LGAs using commonly agreed criteria. At the LGA level the Management Committee is also responsible for grading of applications based on vulnerability assessment from communities. The outcomes so far has proved this



consideration right.

c) Development of criteria & guideline for LGA self-selection (Stakeholder Workshop)

The development of criteria and guideline for LGA/community self selection at a workshop provides an opportunity for all state level stakeholders to contribute to the self-selection process and put some level of responsibility on them to defend the process. This involves all the LGA Chairpersons, members of the Steering Committee and other interested groups. It is an opportunity for reiterating the project principles, purpose and objectives. LGA Chairpersons have the chance of asking questions for clarification. In the stakeholder workshop, the criteria for the self-selection process is developed and agreed with the LGA Chairpersons. Appendix B shows sample of Benue and Enugu States' Criteria with weights for self-selection. At the LGA level an application/bid form has been developed for community self selection. This takes into consideration the vulnerability indicators for engagement in the project.

d) Submission of bids & proposals

The LGAs and Communities need to be given a stipulated period to turn in their proposals and applications. This should not be too long, at most 3 weeks. The closing date, time and venue for proposal submission must be agreed upon at the stakeholder's workshop.

e) Assessment of LGAs & Communities by the State Steering Committee or LGA Management Committee

The State Steering Committee has the responsibility of assessing the participating LGAs' bids using the criteria and a marking scheme previously agreed with the LGA Chairpersons. The most recommended method of assessment is individual assessment of all LGAs by each member of the Committee to forestall undue influencing of each other in scoring the LGAs. The committee allocates weights to each of the vulnerability indicator agreed upon by them.

f) Endorsement and Reporting:

The result of the assessment is forwarded to the Commissioner of the line Ministry who declares the result (in