

## **FINANCING COMMUNITY ROADS – TASAF EXPERIENCE**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*A good reliable road infrastructure is a catalyst for development more so in rural areas. Well-maintained rural roads can alleviate poverty by providing access to the basic social needs and economic empowerment through income generating activities.*

*Most of the district and feeder roads are in un-maintainable condition. Rehabilitation of these roads through conventional methods has been very difficult due to meagre resources available at our local government. Although, the government has created a road fund to be used for maintenance of roads, it will still take a long time before the backlog of un-maintained roads is cleared. It is therefore very important that other methods are looked at, to find a temporary solution to open up access to the poor communities in rural areas. In a country where unemployment is high and labour wages low, labour intensive methods should be used for road maintenance. This method has many benefits which include but not limited to: (i) ownership creation - communities will be involved in maintenance thus creating ownership; (ii) there will be job creation in the community; (iii) skills upgraded (thus chances for future employment enhanced and community empowerment); and (iv) assets of economic value created. Through proper planning and facilitation by local governments, communities can be involved in construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of roads within their localities.*

*This paper presents TASAF's initiatives in co-financing community roads and supporting communities that have been involved in road maintenance in rural areas, storm water drainage canals in urban areas and at the same time provided them with temporary employment through local authorities. During implementation of TASAF phase I, through a participatory process communities have been able to open up access roads with a total of 2,255 kms of earthroads,, construction and or rehabilitation of 2,900 meters of storm water drainage canal all valued at more than 9.3billion shillings . Most of these are in the districts/islands road network. More than 75,000 villagers benefited from temporary employment.*

*Second phase of TASAF is in its second year of implementation, already communities have requested assistance to rehabilitate/construct community roads more than 1500kms worth 8.4 billion shillings. Communities are expected to contribute not less than 20% of the total cost involved. Assets created through TASAF interventions call for*

*continuous maintenance to sustain their usefulness. The social capital created within the communities during implementation of these subprojects is expected to lead to sustainable economic and social development within the same areas, the main thrust of course being poverty reduction.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) was established in June 1999 as a key poverty alleviation instrument designed to address community social needs. TASAF is a Social Fund designed to finance self-help community projects and transfer cash through Safety net activities.

In November 2000, the Government of Tanzania obtained a credit worth USD 60 million, this credit will be used to implement a four-year project to cover 40 districts in the Mainland and two islands of Pemba and Unguja. This phase was completed in 2004. The Government of Tanzania obtained a second credit worth USD 150 million to be used to implement a five years project to cover all districts in the mainland and the two islands of Pemba and Unguja. This project is expected to be completed in December 2009. Among the interventions which are eligible for funding are community roads (formation and gravelling), storm water drainage canals, footbridges, simple bridges, construction of culverts.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVE**

The main objective of TASAF is to increase and enhance the capacity of communities and stakeholders to prioritize, implement and manage sustainable development initiatives and in the process improve social- economic services and opportunities.

The expected outputs of the funds include identified and implemented community and safety net sub projects; better informed communities and stakeholders; and improved capacity to manage funds and facilities. Furthermore, this programme supports governments' poverty reduction efforts that target women, youth and other vulnerable groups during seasons or period of food insecurity.

The PWP Safety Net with direct contribution to economic growth and improvement of social capital mostly at the grass root level. Its key outcome is community empowerment as follows:

- Wage employment created,
- Earning of beneficiaries increased,
- Assets of economic value created, and
- Chances for future employment enhanced through creation of community based organizations (CBOs).

### **3.0 SUB-PROJECT IDENTIFICATION**

#### **3.1 Subproject selection**

The selected Districts and Island of Pemba and Unguja identify the most affected communities in their areas after an open-ended Participatory Rural Appraisal (O-PRA) exercise. Targeting of the community is done geographically to identify the appropriate areas of intervention on the basis of the following criteria:

- Inaccessibility by the existing infrastructure,
- Located in remote areas,
- Persistent shortage of food, and
- Lack of access to cash income.

As the objective of PWP of TASAF is to provide cash income for groups employed to create infrastructures which will have sustainable social economic values, the involvement of the community at all stages of project cycle is essential. Thus subproject promotion, identification and targeting is done with active involvement of the community.

The Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) team of the districts/islands visits the targeted community:

- To let the community select one Sub-Project out of the several identified during Open ended PRA.
- To facilitate selection of the targeted beneficiaries through a wealth ranking exercise.
- To facilitate selection of the Community Management Committee (CMC).

The PRA activity takes 3-4 days depending on the cooperation of the village government in mobilizing the communities to attend the meetings. In order to confirm that the Sub-project selected is the priority of the community and to confirm the list of beneficiaries, the meeting must be attended by 70% of the total eligible voters in the community out of which 40% must be women. The beneficiaries' list must also make sure that 40% of it is women. Women are given special priority because most of the time they are disadvantaged and women headed households make up a disproportionate share of the poorest families. It is by incorporating gender perspective into planning interventions at all levels, that project outputs will be more effective and efficient, as well as increase the prospects for more quality and sustainable development.

The next activity during the community meeting after selection of the Sub-Project and beneficiaries is selection of the Community

Management Committee democratically from among the beneficiaries. The elected CMC shall be actively involved in monitoring and maintaining a system of labour attendance register. They shall also mobilize beneficiaries to come out in numbers as will be required.

### **3.2 Sub-Project design and appraisal**

The Sub-Projects selected must be small in size, must promote labour based technologies while adhering to respective sector Ministries Standards. Furthermore, at least 40% of TASAF funding must be for payment of wages to beneficiaries.

Detailed Sub-Projects preparations including design, bills of quantities, price estimates, budget and implementation schedule are prepared at the district/island level by respective Sector experts i.e. Engineers and or civil engineers technicians.

Desk and Field Appraisal of the proposed Sub-Projects are carried out by Sector experts assisted by districts/islands management team. During desk appraisal the eligibility of the Sub-Project is checked through the following: if it is in line with TASAF objectives from the approved menu; beneficiaries are the target group; technology chosen is appropriate; gender and environmental concerns etc. During field appraisal issues that are considered include: Technical, social, institutional, economical and environmental.

Once this process is complete, the Sub-Project is submitted to two committees at the district/island for approval and application for funding is made to TASAF Management Unit (TMU) in Dar es Salaam. These are verified at TMU for National Village Fund rules and thereafter submitted to the Ministry of Infrastructure for verification of sector standards and norms. Subsequently funds are released after endorsement by national Steering Committee.

### **3.3 Programme of Work**

The implementation programme is drawn on the basis of activities shown on the Bill of Quantities. It is drawn up with timing schedule shown on weekly hours and reduced to bar charts to produce an over all picture. The relevant sector expert is responsible for the overall implementation of its Sub-Project. Once the funds are released, the District/Island Project Team (DPT) will assist the sector expert in the recruitment of supervising technician and procurement of tools and materials. At the community level training of the CMC is carried out and launching of the Sub-Project is done.

### **3.4 Supervision and Monitoring**

The sub-Project supervision team includes: the relevant sector experts at local government level, employed Site supervisor (Technician) and CMC.

The District team will draw monthly works implementation programs on the basis of the overall Sub-Project implementation schedule and issue the same to the site supervisor. The site supervisor draws weekly and daily activities schedules from the monthly plans. The Site supervisor will also maintain daily works progress records, resources utilization and labour attendance records. The CMC will assist the site supervisor in day to day supervision and mobilization of beneficiaries.

Monitoring is done monthly at district level to verify monthly progress reports submitted by the relevant sector experts. Monitoring at TMU level is done quarterly to determine the success or otherwise of the subproject in monitoring the TASAF objectives. There are indicators that will be used by TMU to determine the success of the subproject. The completed subproject is evaluated by the sector experts from the regional secretariat office or neighbouring districts, their task is to certify the quality of completed work or propose corrective measures if any.

## **4.0 TASAF EXPERIENCE AND LESSONS LEARNT**

### **4.1 Community roads funded**

Through a participatory process, communities have been able to identify 305 out of which 204 subprojects are related to community roads with a total of more than 2,200 kilometers which were implemented in phase I of the TASAF. The value injected for implementation of these projects is more than 9.3 billion shillings. More than 75,000 villagers benefited from temporary employment earning 3.94 billion shillings. Other structures included: drifts, footbridges, box culverts and normal culverts.

This high demand shown by communities in phase I and again as it is happening now in second phase, is evidence that there is a gap out there in the communities which cannot be filled by government alone. Communities are ready and eager to contribute provided they are guided properly.

### **4.2 Quality of the Product**

Labour-based technologies are being used as defined by the Appropriate Technology Unit (ATU) of the Ministry of Works. In the

districts/islands where the sector experts are committed and have been able to recruit good site supervisors who are labour based trained, the quality of the end product is excellent.

In other areas, due to shortage technical staff in some districts and unavailability of dedicated technical supervision the finished product is not encouraging even though the communities are happy with the temporary employment and opened access to other social services.

In other districts, the District engineers have taken over maintenance of the rehabilitated earthroads included them in the District annual maintenance plans.

#### **4.3 Availability of Equipment**

Employment Intensive labour does not mean 100% labour. There are other activities that must use minimum and simple equipment. Equipment that is relevant for labour-based projects is scarce. For example, pedestrian rollers, small water bowsers. The lack of durable and heavy tools has also been a big problem; wheelbarrows and hoes in the market are not strong enough to be used for heavy duty works.

#### **4.4 Capacity Building**

Beneficiaries' skills are upgraded during implementation of the subprojects. In the districts where subprojects have been implemented successfully, beneficiaries are very motivated and eager to get new subprojects because they are confident of the gained skills.

Some districts have advised respective communities to form village road maintenance groups which will be used for maintenance of respective roads.

In other districts supervising technicians performed so well that they got employment in the Councils they had worked for.

#### **4.5 Poverty Reduction**

Beneficiaries' assessment has been carried out and the report shows that some beneficiaries had utilized their income effectively. For example, some had improved their houses by roofing with galvanized sheets, others had been able to start kiosks, paid school fees for their children and others had bought bicycles. These are tangible benefits.

Rehabilitated rural roads have improved the livelihood of many people in rural areas. Most of them said apart from the earnings, they could now sell their farm produce because vehicles could go to the villages.

#### **4.6 Gender Empowerment**

TASAF in its design made a deliberate action whereby women involvement was given high priority. It was therefore designed that for any beneficiaries identified, at least 40% of them must be women. Furthermore, at least 40% of the members of the selected Community Management Committee must also be women. This requirement has been observed in every subproject and gave voice to the women.

#### **4.7 Accepting Changes**

There has been a lot of resistance from the relevant sector experts to accept these changes and that communities are not able to perform. But given the chance they can and they have proved that they can participate in infrastructure improvement to alleviate their poverty.

### **5.0 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 It is clear that communities could be involved effectively and ready to contribute cash for road maintenance in their areas. Provided they are mobilized properly and made to participate from project identification to implementation.
- 5.2 There is a need to encourage existing manufacturing industries to research and produce equipment that is affordable and simple to use.
- 5.3 To reduce the shortage of technicians trained in labour based technologies, the local government should look into arrangement to use skills created within the communities for regular maintenance of the created assets. This will even motivate communities to take care of the assets and stop vandalism.
- 5.4 It is no doubt that community's involvement in road maintenance could reduce poverty.