

SECTION ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Eastern Regional Co-ordinating Council (ERCC), is mandated under Section 188 Sub-section 1 (a)(b)(c) of the Local Governance Act 2016 (Act 936), and Section 9 of the National Development Planning (Systems) Act 1994 (Act 480), to monitor, co-ordinate and evaluate the performance of District Assemblies; monitor the use of funds mobilized by the District Assemblies or allocated and released to the District Assemblies by the Central Government and Donor Agencies; review and co-ordinate public services within its jurisdiction including embarking on periodic monitoring and backstopping visits to all Municipal and District Assemblies in the Region.

In furtherance to the above, the ERCC undertook its year 2023 third quarter monitoring exercise of Municipal/District Assemblies in the jurisdiction through the Regional Planning Coordinating Unit (RPCU) to track activities of MMDAs in the year 2022 and to provide on-the-spot technical backstopping. An upshot of the monitoring activity was a one-day Dissemination Forum organized under the auspices Regional Coordinating Council to review the Monitoring Report. The building of consensus on recommendations that are aimed to ultimately improve service delivery through enhanced performance of the statutory functions of Municipal/District Assemblies in the Region was yet another important objective of the report dissemination.

This Report, product of the Dissemination Forum/Exercise brings to the fore highlights of the Regional Ministers Address as well as key issues, questions, answers and recommendations reached at the Forum.

1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE FORUM

The main objective of the Forum was to discuss the third quarter 2023 District Monitoring Report and build consensus on the recommendations to chart an effective regional way to improve performance through enhanced service delivery to the citizenry.

It was also aimed at providing the needed platform to share knowledge and experience on learnable practices and technical support to give boost to Municipal and District Assemblies service delivery. Again, it was in line with one of the key principles of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation, which requires that findings must be communicated to key stakeholders.

1.2 DATE AND VENUE

The Dissemination Workshop was held on Monday, 18th September 2023 at the ERCC Conference Room - Koforidua

1.3 MATERIALS USED

The major reference material for the Forum was the 2023 End-of-Year District Monitoring Report (both District Specific Reports & Global District Report).

1.4 PARTICIPATION

A total of Two Hundred and Seven participants from both regional and district levels of governance participated in the Forum.

Five key officers of Municipal and District Assemblies (M/DAs) comprising Municipal/District Co-ordinating Directors, Municipal/District Finance Officers, Municipal/District Planning Officers, Municipal/District Budget Officers and Municipal/District Heads of Works, were drawn from all the thirty-three Municipal/District Assemblies in the Region to participate in the Dissemination Forum. Also in attendance were members of the RCC Monitoring Team and the Regional Planning Coordinating Unit (RPCU). *(Attached as annexes 1 and 2 are the Letter of Invitation to the forum and the Attendance List of Participants respectively)*

1.5 FACILITATION OF THE FORUM

Facilitation of the Forum was led by Mr. John Donkor, Chief Director at the ERCC, Mr. Michael Agyemang, the Regional Development Planning Officer and Dr. Alexander Owusu Otopah, Head of Finance at ERCC. Table below gives the names, designation and topics led by facilitators for the Workshop.

TABLE 1: NAME, DESIGNATION & SECTIONS HANDLED BY FACILITATORS

S/NO.	NAME	DESIGNATION	SECTIONS FACILITATED
1	Mr. John Ahunu Donkor	Regional Co-ordinating Director	General assembly meetings and approvals Functionality of statutory and mandatory organs of the assembly
2	Dr. Alexandar Otopah	Head of Finance	Public financial management and auditing Transparency, accountability and participation
3	Mr. Michael Agyemang	Regional Development Planning Officer	Basic/social services Physical and spatial planning services Social protection, gender & nutrition Environmental health,

			sanitation & climate action Environmental health, sanitation & climate action
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SECTION TWO

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This Section gives highlights of the Regional Ministers Welcome Address as well as key questions, issues, comments and recommendations made by both participants and facilitators.

2.1 WELCOME ADDRESS BY REGIONAL MINISTER

In his welcome address, the Eastern Regional Minister, Honourable Seth Kwame Acheampong stated that Government commits significant resources every year to support a wide range of development interventions that are designed to improve the social and economic conditions in the country. He further stated that in the context of good public sector governance, the application of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) tools to generate results-based information to help Government and managers make sound policies and decisions can never be over emphasised. He stressed that all Government Agencies at the regional and district levels implement programmes and other intervention and must demonstrate, through evidence-based information, that these interventions are having the desired effects of positively transforming the lives of beneficiaries.

Honourable Acheampong remarked that the Forum is a crucial activity on the calendar of the RCC with an objective to deepen the Regional Co-ordinating Council's mandate to co-ordinate, supervise and monitor the performance of the District and Municipal Assemblies in the Region. He told the gathering that the one-day Forum is purposed to review the 2023 third quarter Monitoring Report and to build consensus on recommendations that will ultimately improve service delivery through enhanced performance of statutory functions of Municipal and District Assemblies.

The Minister told participants that he had reviewed the Report and had not been enthused with some of the observations. He said in the light of the level of investment and staff capacities in District Assemblies, he least expected M/DAs to be plagued by such avoidable infringement of the age-old local governance procedures and processes. Honourable Acheampong lamented that the Report is replete with administrative inefficiencies such as poor supervision of staff, poor record keeping and management, failure to prepare reports and failure to write Minutes of General Assembly and other statutory Meetings long after the event had taken place.

Another critical observation according to the Minister was the worrying penchant in some MMDAs to sidestep standard procurement procedures and contract management practices that flies in the face of value for money. He urged MMDAs to remove the little 'foxes' that deny the people optimal gains from the resources we manage on their behalf.

The Report also observed that some Assemblies had abandoned the Street Naming and Property Addressing Project. He entreated the MMDAs to explore innovative ways that will help them maximise their annual Internally Generated Funds collection in the face of ever-increasing demand for municipal services and dwindling inter-governmental fund transfers.

Honourable Seth Acheampong stressed that Municipal and District Assemblies cannot continue on the current trajectory, but they have the choice to improve or bow out before long.

He welcomed participants and expressed hope that they will participate fully, acknowledge their shortfalls, and learn from best practices to improve service delivery.

2.2 HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PRESENTATIONS MADE

The highlights of the presentations made by the three facilitators are listed below:

1. It was observed that in about 70 percent of the Districts, some minutes, reports and invitations letters had not been signed;
2. 2 Assemblies could not provide evidence on the discussion and approval of the Annual Action Plan;
3. 3 Assemblies did not adhere to the stipulated procedures and timelines for the approval of the Annual Action Plan and Composite Budget;
4. It was noted in about 80 percent of the Districts that General Assembly Resolutions as well as statutory committees' decisions or recommendations had not been signed;
5. Inconsistencies with meetings and invitations dates and agendas was noted in most Assemblies;
6. Poor quality/linkages with minutes and reports was observed in most Assemblies;
7. Inconsistencies with signatures in attendance books and minutes was noted in some Assemblies
8. More than 40 percent of the Districts did not have attendance books for meetings;
9. Duplication of minutes and/or reports contents was observed in some Districts;
10. Lack of evidence on the transfer of the ceded revenue to the sub-structures was observed in more than 45 percent of the Assemblies;

11. It was observed that Management meetings were not duly attended by the required Heads of Departments in 2 Assemblies;
12. Lack of evidence on the actions taken on decisions and recommendations was noted in most Assemblies
13. Composition of some statutory committees were not duly constituted in 3 Districts;
14. A lack of dedicated and/ inactive telephone number for the Client Service Unit was observed in about 11 Assemblies;
15. Poor records documentation was seen in most Districts;
16. Lack of transmittal letters submitting documents/reports was observed in about 9 Districts;
17. Lack of activity or implementation reports was noted in majority of the Assemblies;
18. It was observed that the Public Relations and Complaints Committee (PRCC) was not functional in some M/DAs;
19. About 5 Assemblies were noted for no evidence or actions taken on PRCC recommendations;
20. Some Assemblies could not provide invitation letters to meetings organised;
21. In 5 M/DAs, there is non-compliance to the organisation of town hall meetings as well as the use of PFM Template and MMDCEs engagement with communities;
22. Non-compliance on the use of the PFM template for town hall meetings was observed in 3 Assemblies;
23. 2 Assemblies was noted for poor linkage between Procurement Plan, Annual Action Plan and Budget;
24. More than 50 percent of the M/DAs could not provide evidence of Assemblies' support to the sub-structures;
25. It was observed that most Assemblies could not provide evidence that at least 80 percent of electricity and water applicants had been processed and provided with the service;

26. About 60 percent of the M/DAs were unable to spend at least 20 percent of their IGF on sanitation improvement services;
27. About 80 percent of the M/DAs did budget and utilise 10 percent of their Operation and Maintenance (O&M) budget in relation to their capital expenditure;
28. Lack of evidence on monitoring and screening of food vendors as well as follow-up actions on hygiene was observed in some of the Assemblies;
29. Some Assemblies could not provide data and evidence on the functionality of institutional toilet facilities and water in public schools;
30. Lack of evidence on engagement with the business community as well as follow-up actions was observed in more than 40 percent of the Assemblies;
31. Issue of non-compliance to required/submission timelines was noted in most Assemblies;
32. In some Assemblies, it was observed that the Planning and Building Inspectorate Unit was not functional;
33. Eight (8) Assemblies could not provide report on the recommendations taken as well as activities of the Planning and Building Inspectorate Unit;
34. It was observed that less than 90 percent of the permit applications received were not processed, approved and issued in about 6 M/DAs;
35. More than 40.3 percent of the Assemblies could not trace their approved permits to the local plans;
36. Lack of functional Street Naming Database and Property Addressing System was observed in some Assemblies;
37. It was observed that nine (9) Assemblies had issues in relation with services to People Living with Disabilities;
38. More than 10 Assemblies could not provide evidence on screening forms and EPA permits on all physical works;
39. 9 out of the 33 Assemblies visited had no report on the adherence to occupational health and safety standards;

40. It was observed that seven (7) Assemblies had failed to update its public transport register;
41. Lack of functional final disposal site for liquid waste was noted in three (3) M/DAs;
42. It was observed that in 1 Assembly, the General Assemblies took less than 50 percent decisions on improving service delivery;
43. About 6 Assemblies could not provide evidence on actions taken on all General Assembly decisions in relation to improving service delivery;
44. Lack of post-training impact assessment reports was noted in some M/DAs;
45. Only 1 Assembly had less than 90 percent of its implemented activities from the approved Annual Action Plan;
46. Issue of cash irregularities of more than 1 percent was observed in 8 M/DAs.
47. Issues of other financial irregularities of more than 3 percent was noted in 7 Assemblies;
48. Lack of computerised billing system was observed in eight (8) Assemblies;
49. Lack of evidence on the generation and distribution of bills was noted in 9 Assemblies;
50. 8 Assemblies could not provide evidence on follow-up actions on defaulters/non-payers of bills;
51. On the issue for justification and approval for the use of contingency, 2 Assemblies failed to provide adequate justification and approval;
52. Issuance of completion reports on all completed projects was lacking in about 33.3 percent of the Assemblies;
53. About 45 percent of the Assemblies had a clear budgetary provision and had failed to release about 80 percent of its budgetary allocation;
54. Lack of multi-stakeholders' participation in monitoring was observed in 3 Assemblies;
55. In some Assemblies, it was observed that development permit communication exceeded the 30-working day period;

- 56.3 out of the 33 M/DAs Audit Committees had not received and reviewed responses to all audit observations;
57. On support to education services, it was observed that 17 out of the 33 Assemblies had supported public schools;
58. It was noted that 11 out of the 33 Assemblies had supported public health centres;
59. It was observed that 11 Assemblies had not promoted new businesses and of new jobs;
60. 20 out of the 33 Assemblies had not facilitated and supported small-scale agro-processing and manufacturing industries to acquire equipment/storage facilities;
61. No documents presented was noted in most Assemblies; and
62. Only 2 out of the 33 Districts had uploaded all the required data on the DDDP platform.

2.3 CLOSING REMARKS BY THE REGIONAL CO-ORDINATING DIRECTOR

In his closing remarks, the Chief Director of the Regional Co-ordinating Council, Mr. John Ahunu Donkor informed participants that monitoring and evaluation had become a permanent feature on the calendar of the RCC. He informed participants that they should use the Report to work at areas they fall short and improve their performance going forward.

He informed the Forum that another monitoring activity will be embarked upon by the RCC before the end of the year and urged district managers to prepare for that exercise.





