

GHANA TRADE AND LIVELIHOOD COALITION (GTLC)



A GTLC AND OXFAM GROW PARTNERSHIP



Building On The Foundations Of Programme Based Budgeting (PBB) To Enable Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) In Ghana

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Abstract

Increasing inequality amidst reducing budget effectiveness and efficiency has driven and increased the need to enable gender responsive budgeting in the local and national budget processes.

Ghana has since 2014 implemented Programme Based Budgeting (PBB). PBB, embedded in a three-year MTEF, is an integrated approach currently being implemented in Ghana. The new approach will change the focus of budgeting processes from input-based, annual activities to a performance-based approach that improves the efficiency and effectiveness of the budget over the medium term. The approach also lays the foundation for the modernization of PFM in Ghana. – PBB Training Manual, MOF, 2012.

Ghana has been implementing gender budgeting since 2008. Gender budgeting does not only focus on spending. The purpose of gender budgeting in Ghana is to ensure that gender matters are recognized and considered when developing tax, revenue, budget spending policies and other budget-related activities. For Ghana, gender budgeting is not a separate budget for women. Rather, it is an attempt to assess government priorities as they are reflected in the budget and to determine the impact the policies have on men and women. – Budget Operations Manual, MOF
Ghana follows the five-step gender responsive budget process that was initially developed as part of South Africa's Gender Budgeting Model. A summary of the five steps is:

Step 1 – Situational analysis which involves analysing the situation of women, men, boys and girls at the sector level.

Step 2 – Gender analysis which is performed to assess the gender responsiveness of policies.

Step 3 – Budget allocation that aligns gender sensitive policies to resources.

Step 4 – Monitoring spending and service delivery that confirms if MDAs are spending their money on approved programs and activities.

Step 5 – Assessing outcomes to determine if gender equality commitments have been met.

In 2020, Oxfam, SEND Ghana and Ghana Trade Livelihood Coalition (GTLC) collaborated to conduct a GRB In Ghana joint study (<https://policy-practice.oxfam.com/resources/gender-responsive-budgeting-in-ghana-an-analysis-of-grb-implementation-and-its-621346/>) which was an action learning project to better understand how GRB is currently being implemented in Ghana, where there are gaps and challenges, and how NGOs can strengthen their GRB policy and advocacy work to contribute to improvements in GRB implementation, particularly focused on the agriculture sector.

In the dissemination of the study report to MMDAs, GTLC gathered a sense of frustration by MMDA planning officers and observed disagreements between Budget officers, planning officers and Gender Desk officers on scope of budget processes, roles and responsibilities. These developments and the need to identify a framework that will enable the seamless implementation of GRB in Ghana is what informed GTLC to conduct a study of the composite budget within the framework of programme-based budgeting. This paper benefits from feedback from MMDA officials, civil society and private sector during the dissemination of the GRB In Ghana study report, and from consultations conducted with five MDAs to discuss findings of the GTLC assessment meant to inform GRB implementation within the framework of the PBB.

Introduction

Set against the two principles of the PBB guidelines, the GTLC assessment found gaps in the programme and sub programme description, programme and sub programme objectives of the composite budgets. It is the informed opinion that these gaps were created because the required processes that enable the two principles of PBB to manifest in the composite budgets were not followed in the development of the composite budgets. The first principle is to improve the prioritization of expenditure in the budget – that is, to help allocate limited Government resources to those programmes which are of greatest benefit to the community. The second principle is to encourage spending Ministries to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.

This paper makes two cases, that:

- a) the observed challenge in the implementation of PBB guidelines is inherent in the PBB guidelines which could be overcome through the complementary implementation of PBB and GRB,
- b) the complementary implementation of GRB in PBB will help the PBB to meet its stated objective and facilitate better targeting of beneficiaries, enhance accountability and transparency, increase effectiveness of public spending and public policies, and achieve gender equity/equality, among other benefits.

This means that GRB complements PBB by increasing:

- effectiveness of public expenditure,
- quality of programmes and services for the population,
- engagement of public in the budgeting process,
- rates of the economic development of MMDAs.

From aspiration to resulted oriented effective, efficient and equitable budgets

Three MMDA budgets were assessed for compliance to PBB guidelines. The assessment enabled gaps in the implementation of PBB through the composite budgets to manifest and this created grounds to assess the complementary role of GRB in mending the gaps identified and ensuring that PBB is more effective and efficient. Agriculture budgets of Savelugu Municipal, Tano North District and Wa Municipal Assemblies were assessed.

Contrary to PBB guidelines, there was no clear problem statement in the programme description. The programme objectives did not therefore respond to an identified problem. In Savelugu Municipal, the programme objective was stated as ‘To promote food security through modernized agriculture’ and ‘to promote wealth, employment, industry and growth of small-scale community-based enterprises’. The beneficiaries were listed as ‘all farmers and residents of the municipality and Ghana at large’. Nothing in this narration meets the requirements of PBB. Here, the programme objective may respond to the 3-year MTEF as an ultimate objective but does not respond to the immediate and intermediate objectives for 2022.

At the dissemination of findings of report of the GRB in Ghana study, MMDA planning officials opened up about challenges and frustrations that the planning process goes through. They made the case that the results of the district planning process are most times set aside by political heads in favour of partisan considerations. This probably indicates underlying weakness in the legal instrument that guides the PBB.

Goods and services, as captured in the financial information section of the budget, were assessed to determine whether they solved practical and/or strategic needs. This is a requirement in STEP 1 of the five-step gender budget process adopted by Ghana. This particular requirement states situational analysis be conducted to understand possible differences in the situation of women, men, boys and girls, **their practical and strategic needs and priorities.**

For the avoidance of doubt, practical gender needs are the needs that women and men identify based on their social roles designated to them by the society. In their turn, strategic gender needs depend on specific social, economic, and political conditions, in which women and men live. A good balance of practical and strategic needs is required.

It was found that the goods and services planned for agriculture in SMA in 2022 were overwhelmingly directed to solving practical needs and not strategic needs. If this is widespread then PBB may not be creating conditions needed to make the composite budget effective, efficient and gender responsive. This raises the question of the need to establish a legislative instrument that sets budget thresholds to ensure balance in solving practical and strategic needs that reflect the situational analysis of an MMDA. In doing this, this could be a measure that seamlessly corrects the shortfall in the PBB process in complementarity with the GRB process. The process being proposed by GTLC in this regard involves five phases:

Phase 1: Feasibility. This involves discussion with key stakeholders about PBB and its inherent gaps and to reach consensus that GRB could help strengthen its implementation, especially towards making it really gender responsive.

Phase 2: Technical consideration and requirement – Make a case for technical and institutional changes needed in the current processes to enable ease of GRB adoption,

Phase 3: The PBB manual is revised by MOF for implementation,

Phase 4: A proving ground in one or two districts to test the revised PBB manual,

Phase 5: Lessons learnt and adoption.

Engagement so far with GROW partners and five MDAs (NDPC, MoFA, MoGCSP, LGS, and MOF) responds to phase 1. A statement by a Director at the Ministry of Finance probably provides a snapshot of the level of GRB implementation in public institutions. ‘GRB is an old issue but yet a relatively new issue. ...’

The adopted strategy therefore considers increased discussion and appreciation of GRB by public officials and civil society in a more practical and result-oriented manner. It also ensures that key public institutions take the leading role in GRB adoption, influenced by the real desire to improve the budget process.

Conclusions

1. The PBB presents the best opportunity to influence gender responsiveness of local and national budgets through the adoption of GRB in PBB processes.
2. Though GRB was adopted in 2008, footprints of its progression and development in the public institutions engaged with may have been lost. The best reference to GRB in the engagements with the institution is ‘gender desk’ and the use of the term ‘gender mainstreaming’ in budget sentences. However, interest among all the institutions to improve budget outcomes is very high.
3. GTLC has gained credibility in GRB implementation among the five key institutions and therefore it is positioned to facilitate the proposed five-phase process. This paper is calling for improved and coordinated support to drive GRB adoption in Ghana.

References:

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