

Local Government Capacity | 2013 Award



“County staff will have sufficient knowledge to design a pilot project to test locally relevant cost recovery mechanisms, which will guide future policymaking and regulations at county level within the national WASH policy framework”

Katia Leber, Resident Programme Manager, South Sudan

Kapoeta North County (KNC) was created out of Greater Kapoeta in 2006. It is bordering the counties of Kapeota south, and Kapoeta East to the North, Budi County to the North East, and Lopa/Lafon to the South Eastern and Jonglei in the North. The population is estimated to be 100,000. The goal of KNC is to improve the living conditions of the people by providing them with basic infrastructures such as feeder roads and bridges for transportation of goods and people. In specific activities there is a focus on WASH programmes to develop capacities of KNC staff in preventive maintenance of needs.

In May, training was conducted to understand what the water policy defines as service delivery and the costing components of WASH service delivery. The KNC WASH steering committee (consisting of heads of various departments in the institution) conducted an assessment of water systems on their level of service, infrastructure, management and financial revenues and it became clear that the KNC WASH steering staff was unable to assess operations and preventive maintenance need. Nor were they able to plan and budget for community involvement in water management. The capacity building of the KNC organization is thus concerned with prevention of insufficient operational county funds and inability to provide service by realistic county planning and budgeting of activities. The approach is based on the national policies with regards to decentralized water service delivery and governmental roles and responsibilities. Thus, the overall aim is to identify, test and implement locally relevant cost recovery mechanisms that ensure reliable functioning of the water systems over its lifespan.

The Local Government Capacity Programme (LGCP 2012-2016) accompanies state and county authorities to increase their capabilities in agreeing on, committing to and further delivering of WASH policies and services for local communities. Since February 2013, LGCP capacity developer, Katia Leber, assisted the county mainly through coaching, advisory services and the organization of trainings. She also organized the training on WASH service delivery. With regards to understanding the water policy, the national ministry was involved and conducted a session to create awareness on the content of the water policy. It is expected that the County WASH steering committee will be able to understand the costs involved in WASH service delivery beyond construction. Another training was organized on community management of water systems (as according to the water policy) and the role of the county in this. The participants were training with the aim to increase their ability to calculate the costs of maintenance of existing water systems over their lifespan in order to realistically develop yearly plans and budgets for maintenance and repair, as well as to have the ability to determine tariff setting for households. In addition, the training focussed on providing skills for facilitating community dialogue as well as realistically plan and budget for these activities.

At the conference we will try to make explicit the logic of the changes which are explained in the following sentence “ Hereafter county staffs will have sufficient knowledge to design a pilot project to test locally relevant cost recovery mechanisms, which will guide future policy making and regulations at county level, within the national WASH policy framework.” [extract from the call for case under paragraph ‘Increased capability to act and to commit’]. Assumptions will be made more explicit about the results expected from the training. Working on this sentence will also show how the various capabilities of an institution are interlinked and why it is important to be aware of it although only a few capabilities are targeted by the programme



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“From the training, there are plans to prioritize sanitation in urban towns e.g. Elmina”

Paul Opon Tutu, Public Health Engineer of Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem (KEEA) Municipal District describing impact of LGCP

Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem Municipal District in Ghana, where capacity development supported by LGCP led to an increase of funding for sanitation projects and an improved service delivery.

The Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem (KEEA) Municipal District is one of the Twenty (20) Metropolitan, Municipalities, and Districts in the Central Region of Ghana. One of its responsibilities is to provide sanitation, waste (solid and liquid) management and environmental health services to its inhabitants. Studies have shown that not all waste is appropriately treated and that about 80% of solid waste and only 60% of liquid waste is properly collected and managed.

In order to achieve a successful and sustainable implementation of the District Environmental Sanitation Strategies and Action Plans (DESSAP) and to ensure that all waste (solid and liquid) is correctly processed, KEEA Municipal district is getting support from the Local Government Capacity Programme.

This support is at an early stage: the Environmental Health and Sanitation department (EHSD) has appointed a Public Health engineer and its key personnel has received training and on-the-job coaching in community led sanitation, sanitation and waste management especially linked to the biomethanation plant. Moreover VNG International has organised a benchmark meeting with a focus on sanitation to kick-off the programme.

Preliminary results of LGCP can be noted: the EHSD has shown improved ability in collecting relevant data on waste production and management, community planning, fund raising, and awareness, thereby positively influencing the overall implementation of the DESSAP and improved service delivery.

To begin with, the conference would want to look back at the current capacity of the KEEA Municipal District in managing waste and sanitation, pointing out the limitations to achieve its responsibilities in the field. Following this current situation analysis of capacity, the conference will shed light on the activities implemented through LGCP specifically on the precise results achieved in terms of capacity. We would want to hear how the new skills taught to Environmental Health staff in the field of sanitation and waste management relate to an improved capability to act and commit necessary for KEEA Municipal District to achieve a successful and sustainable implementation of the District Environmental Sanitation Strategies and Action Plans (DESSAP). How does the focus on competencies of staff fit into the larger capacity development trajectory KEEA Municipal District has set for itself? Does LGCP target other aspect of capacity development, besides staff skills and competencies? What other factors of success will be triggered through LGCP to achieve the goal of KEEA Municipal District?



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“The capacity development initiative, ie use of puppetry through the children is one of the best ways to inculcate attitudinal and behavioural change.”

Mark Amedzrator, Kadjebi Statistical Officer

Kadjebi District was created as an Assembly by Legislative Instrument 1465 in 1989. The district is located in the south of the northern belt of the Volta Region of Ghana and is bordered to the east by the Republic of Togo. The district has a total population of 59,303. The mission of the Assembly is to improve the living standards in the district, with a special focus on health and sanitation. More specifically, the Kadjebi District Assembly (KADA) aims to further develop the community’s capacities to utilize and maintain public health facilities such as latrines. In specific activities there is a focus on basic sanitation services to develop capacities of KADA in citizen participation and cost management.

KADA initiatives follow the national policy framework on sanitation, which is the Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach to propel Ghana back on track to reach its MDG target on sanitation. This approach came on the heels of a sanitation promotion approach implemented by the Afram Plains Development Organisation (APDO) and funded by WaterAid in Ghana (WAG) called ‘Total Sanitation’ under which total sanitation of communities was encouraged

Kadjebi District Assembly’s capacity building activities have been supported by VNG International through several programmes since 2004 especially focussing on municipal registration and administration. Only from 2012 onwards the Local Government Capacity Programme - LGCP (2012-2016) supports capacity development activities that focus on water and sanitation. Since then, also municipal Ghanaian experts from Maple Consult are involved along water and sanitation experts from The Netherlands.

Recently, LGCP started with on-the-job coaching activities and in September KADA participated with other municipalities in a kick-off meeting of Learning Benchmark that took place in September 2013. Through the Learning Benchmark on sanitation, KADA will collect data and share similar information with other municipalities on planning, coordination and budgeting of sanitation programs; awareness raising/behavioural change; financing/funding; law enforcement (by-laws), including prosecution; solid waste collection; knowledge management; monitoring and evaluation; and PPPs (engagement of the private sector). At the same time KADA explores the possibilities for an unprecedented initiative concerning education of a community through puppetry workshops with children. This particular initiative is part of KADA’s endeavour to revise their District Environmental Sanitation Strategies and Action Plan (DESSAP).

During the conference we will want to hear about how LGCP contributed or will contribute to the capacity development of the District Assembly. We will want to link up activities planned to specific objectives in terms of capacity development of the municipality. How are/will the capacity development activities supported by LGCP leading to changes in terms of the capacity of the District Assembly? A focus will be given to benchmarking and assessment by the District. How has/will the District Assembly been integrating the various developments made through the benchmarking workshops (and through other capacity development interventions supported by LGCP) into the functioning KADA? How can the status quo be utilized as a benchmark? To what extent can the District do a self-assessment, and on which basis? And, to which norms of monitoring and evaluation should this self-assessment adhere to?

Also and since the District Assembly intends to further develop the community’s capacities to utilize and maintain public health facilities such as latrines, what specific skills KADA staff needs to have in order to achieve this? What about a specific atmosphere between the Assembly and the Community? Will LGCP work on these or is it part of KADA’s larger capacity development plan?



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“We want to be able to collect waste, sort and process it into Compost so it can be used by our farmers”

Sulait Lutakoome, Mayor – Kalangala Town Council ”

Kalangala, made up of 84 small islands in Lake Victoria, predominantly has fishing as the main livelihood of its population. Forty three of these islands are inhabited and have potential for agricultural production, which is currently not being harnessed. Decreasing the dependency on fishery, by making agriculture more attractive, is key as the fish levels in Lake Victoria are dropping. Production of high quality compost enhances the fertility levels of the soil, leading to higher production levels.

The main problem concerning Kalangala in relation to the production of high quality compost is the non-separation by households of solid waste material into clear bio-degradable and non bio-degradable for purposes of easy management at the handling site. In the past Kalangala Town Council established a waste management system aimed at changing the attitude of the community towards taking their wastes to the available collection centres. Community members were sensitised through meetings on how to handle their waste. This was done with assistance from VNG International and support of experts from de Ronde Venen and Gemert Bakel.

Now, Kalangala wants to accelerate attitude change in the community towards adapting sorting, so as to ease management of the collected garbage, and utilise the compost for increased food production and productivity. To achieve this, a sound and feasible project plan needed to be designed that sets the pace for results to be achieved, activities to be carried out and by who. Through coaching by an expert from Gemert Bakel, Kalangala TC designed a project plan, which is more realistic in its kind, based on in depth analysis. One of the key elements is its financial sustainability. The available annual budget for the project coming from the local government is only a fraction of what is needed. Kalangala plans to increase its locally generated revenue base, by stricter enforcement of levies - which is not popular, lobbying through development partners and by re-prioritising within limited budget.

Simultaneously, Kalangala, together with seven other local governments, will be supported to integrate food and nutrition security (based on the three pillars food availability, access and use) in its overall Development Plan. With the aid of a reference guide developed with support of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), technical officers of Kalangala have been sensitised on the integration process.

The call for cases mentions the vision Kalangala Town Council set out for itself, a “Bouyant, Serene, Commercial, Tourist Town” with the slogan “Clean for Health”. The first aspect the conference will want to clarify relates to the capacity limitations Kalangala Town Council is facing to achieve its vision. Further, the conference will look at what results were already achieved and how do they contribute to achieving the vision. Supportive questions could be: what did you learn from developing project plans and how does such a process and output support Kalangala TC? How is the implementation of the project plan guided? What was the role of the political leadership in this process? Discussions will take place to allow for the foreseen pathway of changes towards the vision to become explicit, linking for example how preparing a sound project plan will make more sense when combined with mobilisation of resources.



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“We hope that our working and learning environment and the way we handle projects will make sure that we sustain a high level of capacity in the field of integrated urban and economic planning.”

Tinus Minnie, Manager Technical Services and Infrastructure of Camdeboo Municipality, South Africa.

Camdeboo Municipality is a relative small municipality in the Karoo, in the north of the East Cape Province. Being small compared to larger cities in the province, like Port Elizabeth, maintaining skilled motivated staff is being seen as one of the biggest challenges. This issue was addressed in a new development: the planning process of an integrated community Umnyama Park. VNG International has supported Camdeboo Municipality since 2008 in this matter. Actively involved with advices and expertise were also Winterswijk Municipality and the Dutch organisation We Love The City (WLTC). Under VNG International's current LGCP in South Africa, the focus of the project is to increase the capacity of Camdeboo Municipality in local economic development, amongst others by contributing to favourable business climates and using urban planning as catalysts.

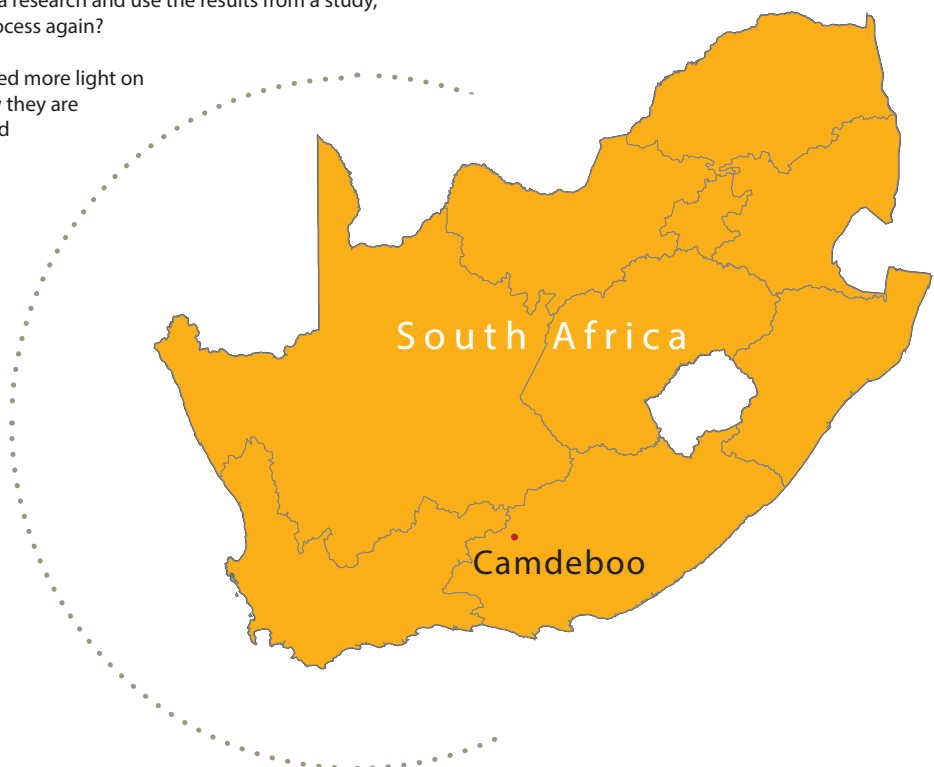
An innovative approach was applied in the Umnyama Park project, with the support of Winterswijk and WLRC. Future tenants, local entrepreneurs and social organizations have been involved in planning the new community from scratch. A project team and steering committee were set up to do market research, which outcome led to a change in the focus of the plan. Team and committee developed and implemented a vision on a new community that integrates the existing neighbourhoods and provides economic and social opportunities to its residents.

The project team consists of municipal officials in the field of town planning, housing, economic development and infrastructure. The increased capability with this new way of handling projects concerns speed and adequacy of the activities, team spirit, and support from the council for the project.

Thanks to VNG International and the Dutch expertise, the project built the capacity of staff on participative workshops as well as supported the development of clear structures at project and management levels. This has resulted in “staff and politicians being aware of the power of public participation in designing and the implementing a project” as well as bringing “clarity about everyone's role and responsibility throughout the project”. It also improved relationship with stakeholders like residents and entrepreneurs.

At the conference issues will be raised to get a more explicit picture of this case. i.e. How has the project created a certain open atmosphere favouring team spirit and commitment? What was the role of the (political) leadership in the project? How did the politicians and officials collaborate together? How to come up with creative solutions to ensure the core value of the project is maintained while it might not aligned at first with existing laws, or when the budget of the plan needs to be reduced? What pushed the project team and steering committee to use the results of the market research to switch the focus of the project? Would Camdeboo Municipality be able to perform or manage such a research and use the results from a study, or to do a participatory planning process again?

In brief, the conference will try to shed more light on the conditions for success - and how they are linked - contributing to the improved capacity of the Municipality of Camdeboo.



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“The fact that both REMCO and “de Vecht Initiative” operate cross boundary, contributes to the reciprocal character of the programme”

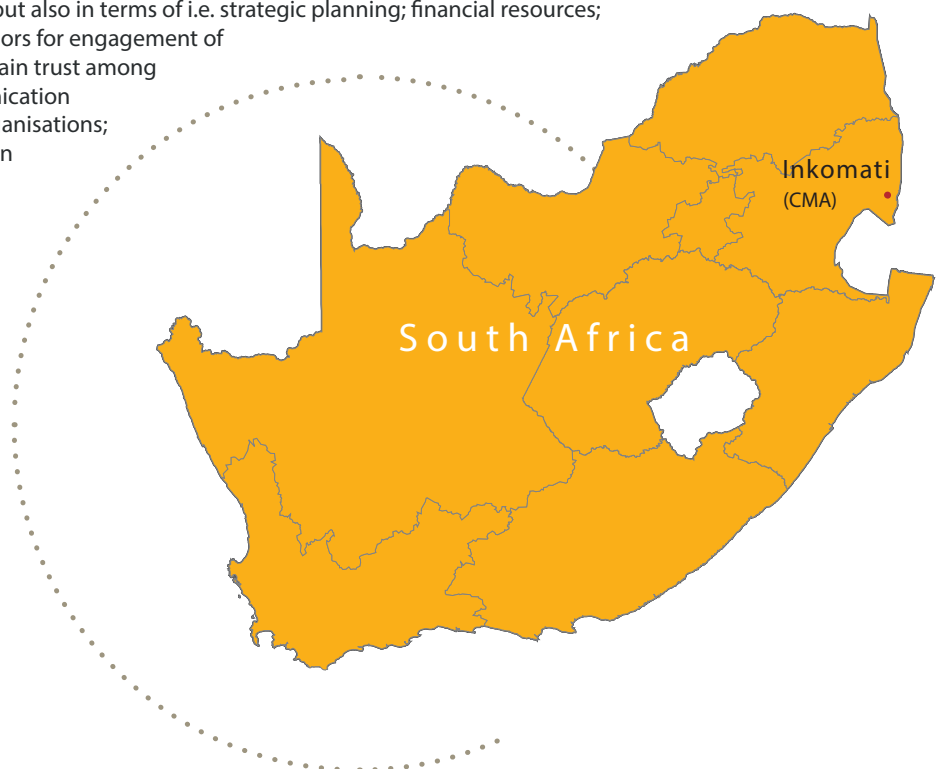
Anne-Marie Tosserams, Country Programme Director for South Africa, VNG International

The southern border of the famous Kruger Park is formed by the Komati River. This river falls within the authority of the Inkomati Catchment Management Agency (CMA), which covers a vast area in the east of South Africa and borders Mozambique and Swaziland. The Inkomati CMA was established as one of the first in South Africa, following a new national legislation issued, by which CMAs were introduced as a new layer of water management institutions, taking over the responsibility for managing water resources at catchment management level. From the start the capacity building of these newly established organisations has been supported by VNG International; the Inkomati CMA in particular is supported by Waterschap Groot Salland in the Netherlands.

CMAs have to give shape to their Catchment Management Strategies, in which cooperation with various relevant stakeholders to consult and seek agreement on water-related matters is key. Rivers do not stop flowing at the border. Being a CMA, which borders 2 countries, intensive collaboration is needed. One of the outcomes of several capacity building initiatives is the establishment of REMCO, which stands for River & Environmental Management Cooperation. REMCO is an example of working with cross-border stakeholders of water management institutions in the three countries: South Africa, Mozambique and Swaziland. It includes institutions which operate at local level acknowledging the national interest and sovereignty of all the three countries. It is a promising initiative to manage complex issues in an innovative way. Currently it is a well-established co-operation in the use and management of the river system, though constant innovation is needed.

Waterschap Groot Salland also shares their river “de Vecht” with another country, being Germany. The cooperation between the Netherlands and Germany is constantly in search of innovative approaches to strengthen their cooperation. REMCO does not only learn from “de Vecht Initiative”, but also adds to discussion by means of sharing best practices and innovative approaches applied in the Southern continent. This makes the exchange between the Dutch and South African water institutions reciprocal in character.

River systems don't know borders. Nevertheless cross-border co-operation is far from easy to develop. During the conference, we will want to look at the specific capacity needed for the sustainable cooperation of water institutions in the three countries. Which capacity elements are already in the organisations and which ones are missing? We would look broadly, not only in terms of capacitated staff but also in terms of i.e. strategic planning; financial resources; M&E skills, competencies and use; factors for engagement of stakeholders; factors to build and sustain trust among partners; factors for effective communication within organisations and between organisations; etc. Some experience has already been gathered so we will make explicit the capacity factors of success and the capacity bottlenecks which should be tackled. What capacity development activities have taken place or will take place soon, especially as part of LGCP? What were the results of the capacity development activities that already took place and how do they fit in the overall capacity strategy to reach successful cooperation? Answering these questions will also support the possible use of ICMA's experience by other CMA's.



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“This initiative has given improved the confidence in the municipality, even of people who had their grievances.”

N'BOUKE Santos T. Borgia, Head of Unit for Decentralised Cooperation at the municipality of Dogbo

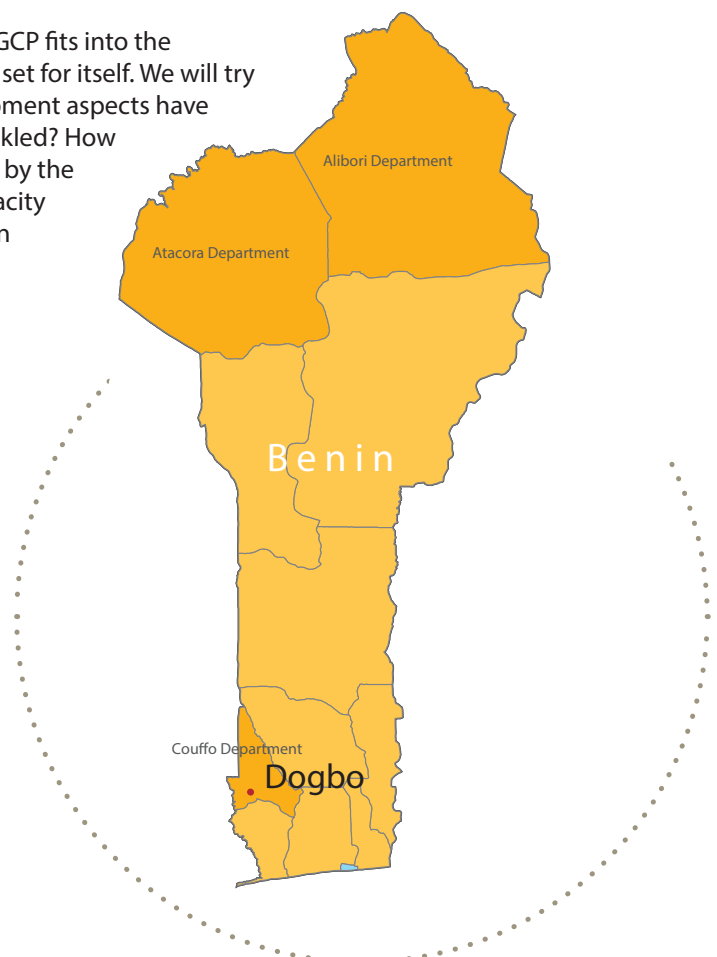
The municipality of Dogbo, in the district of Couffo, lies about 120 km south west of the capital of Cotonou and consists of 52 villages and 7 urban neighbourhoods. The economy of Dogbo is mainly agricultural and the main challenges in the area are related to the agricultural sector. In order to increase food security, job creation and revenues, the municipality of Dogbo seeks to improve its capacity in supporting this sector. A ambitious vision was laid down for Dogbo: in 2025, Dogbo will be a soundly administered municipality, with a prosperous agricultural economy which is clean and durable.

To achieve this vision, a plan was initiated in which the local government of Dogbo and the farmers cooperated in strengthening the local agricultural sector. The main innovation implemented was the co-financing of seeds, fertilizer and oil plan trees by the municipality: it offered to finance 50% of all costs related to these products. Expertise of partners and studies provided the necessary knowledge in selecting the best and most durable products. The effects of this policy are already noticeable. On one hand the agricultural sector is growing due to the support, and on the other hand the citizens of Dogbo, sometimes mistrusting their municipalities are becoming more confident in their government, leading to an increase of local revenues for the municipality.

Furthermore, the municipality of Dogbo participates in VNG International's benchmarking programme in Benin, which allows for a sharing of their experiences and for learning from their fellow municipalities in the region.

During the conference we will take a closer look at how LGCP fits into the capacity development trajectory Dogbo Municipality has set for itself. We will try to answer questions like: Which specific capacity development aspects have already been tackled through LGCP or are about to be tackled? How are these in line or coherent with the ambitious vision set by the Municipality? What are the precise results in terms of capacity development of the benchmarking workshops, not only in terms of skills learned but also in terms of for example ability to share with other Municipalities and actors of the sector, ability to create the right atmosphere to implement activities (leading to increasing trust from the farmers and inhabitants of the municipality), ability to achieve its vision by 2025.

We would also want to hear about how Dogbo Municipality has been integrating the various developments made through the benchmarking workshops (and through other capacity development interventions supported by LGCP) into the functioning the Municipality.



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“The originality of the initiative is the pride of our organisation as it serves as a reference in Benin in the promotion of local economic development through the strengthening of agricultural growth sectors.”

Christophe MEGBEDJI H., Mayor of Klouékanmè

The municipality of Klouékanmè is situated in the department of Couffo in the Republic of Benin. It consists of eight districts and sixty-one villages and urban neighbourhoods. With the introduction of a Municipal Administration performance system in 2005 and the subsequent implementation of ‘Operation Marble’ the capacity of the staff and its ability to collect revenues increased significantly. Within LGCP the focus is on a new challenge, the promotion of the local tomato sector.

Klouékanmè has set its goals high and strives to become a flagship for the intensive production of tomatoes and the regional centre for its industrial transformation by 2015.

The innovation in this project lies in the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders in the development and implementation of all policies aimed at the strengthening of the tomato sector. This includes the involvement of elected officials, civil servants, supervisory staff, farmer’s unions, traders etc. The programme seeks to introduce significant improvements in the production technique of tomatoes that will lead to higher returns and in the long term to the promotion of the local agricultural sector and an increase in revenues.

To this end benchmarking workshops have been organised for all stakeholders as part of LGCP with VNG International support. It has led to an increase in the capacity of the staff of the municipality of Klouékanmè in relating to external stakeholders, needs assessment and the systematic measuring of progress. This approach to develop local economic policy is gaining interest in Benin on both regional and national interest.

During the conference we will take a deeper look at how the benchmarking activities improved the capacity of the Municipality. We will try to answer questions like:

- how was the atmosphere during the workshops, what were the elements that created this atmosphere and how to maintain or improve this climate to sustain the link/cooperation between the municipality and the other stakeholders? Can we consider that the benchmarking workshops strengthen the role of the Municipality in the tomato value chain? Why and how? [questions related to the capability to relate]

- what new skills benefiting the Municipality’s staff were taught through the workshops and how can these be sustained? Have the workshops influenced the capacity of the Municipality with regards to leadership or strategic planning? If so, which elements were key to the changes? [questions related to the capability to act and commit]

- has the Municipality set a plan to replicate similar events as benchmarking workshops in the future, within LGCP or as part of the institution as a whole? [question related to the capability to adapt and self-renew]

- during the benchmarking workshops, how was the Municipality able to deal with external influence without compromising its vision and the mission it set to itself as leader in the tomato value chain? [question related to capability achieve]

In short, we will be digging into the conditions and elements making the benchmarking activities a successful step towards the improvement of the capacity of the Municipality.

