

# Tax Revenue for Economic Enhancement (TREE) in Ghana

Annual Report 2018



**Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten  
VNG International**

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June 2019

*In November 2017, the Netherlands Embassy in Ghana awarded VNG-International a grant to support Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies in Ghana on improving revenues from local rate mobilization and the quality of basic services. The Tax Revenue for Economic Enhancement project is implemented together with VNG International's Ghanaian partner MAPLE Consult. Close cooperation is being pursued with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development as well as the Office of the Head of Local Government Service in Ghana. The project is expected to be completed by December 31st, 2021.*

*The project focusses on improving property rates, business operating permits and general revenue mobilization in 33 MMDAs in the Ashanti Region, Central Region, Western North and Western Regions in Ghana.*

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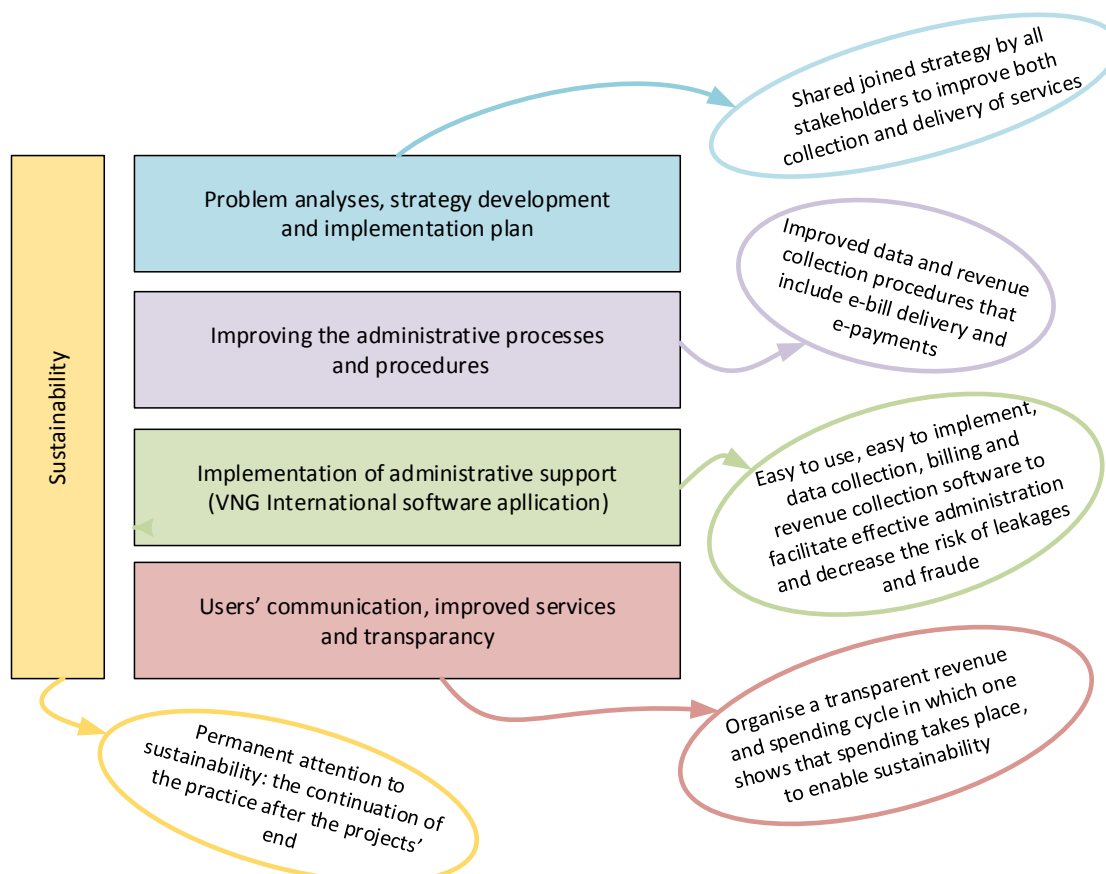
# 1. About project TREE

The main characteristics and methodology used for the project implementation as well as the project objectives and steering - and implementing parties are covered in this section.

## Characteristics and methodology

The Tax Revenue for Economic Enhancement (TREE) project consists of two main aspects: (i) to improve services and economic growth and therefore (ii) to increase domestic revenues. It was decided to use the name TREE for the project, because it covers these main aspects. Project TREE is characterised by its *revenue collection-led strategy*, which places priority on improving the revenue collection processes in 33 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in the Central, Western, Western North and Ashanti regions of Ghana.

Methodologically, the project is characterised by five components: strategy development, improving the administrative processes and procedures, developing supportive software, encouraging community sensitization and transparency and demonstrating that services are improved. Permanent attention is given to the project's sustainability: the continuation of the new practices and use of tools after the project has come to an end.



Improving services delivery through enhanced revenue collection is another characteristic of the project. MMDAs are required to prove that revenues are spent on service delivery, to be able to realise a sustainable funding cycle of revenue collection and spending year after year; in this way trust is gained with the rate payers. Therefore, accountability has to go hand in hand with decision-making on the expenditure in MMDAs for the additional revenue collection resulting from the project.

### **Specific objectives**

The specific objectives of project TREE are:

- To improve the institutional capacity and procedures of each MMDA to collect revenues and diminish the revenue gap;
- To implement IT programmes in each MMDA to support the main revenue business processes;
- To improve the capacity of each MMDA to communicate with its citizens through citizen engagement sessions;
- To implement participatory planning processes including social contracts with citizens;
- To realize political commitment and leadership support and project management expertise at the ministerial level and in each MMDA to guarantee sustainability.

### **Steering Committee**

The Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) as well as the Office of the Head of Local Government Service (OHLGS), the Controller and Accountant General's Department, the Central Regional Coordinating Council, the Ashanti Regional Coordinating Council and the Western Regional Coordinating Council are participating in the Steering Committee membership of the project.

### **Implementing parties**

The project is implemented together with VNG International's Ghanaian partner MAPLE Consult. Throughout the entire duration of the project a Ghanaian team of six experts provides direct and continuous support at Ministerial and MMDA levels. The Ghanaian team is complemented with specialist support from VNG International and its associated experts. The Ghanaian team together with the MMDAs determine the kind of content and type of support that is needed from the VNG International experts.

## 2. Main findings and challenges

**The reporting period comprises 14 months and covers the period 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2017 – 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2018. After 14 months of implementation, some findings and challenges can be marked, which are listed in this section.**

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF PROJECT TREE

- The continuous interactions between the MMDAs and the project team on strategic issues have led to the creation of an atmosphere of goodwill and trust among all actors which is good for the implementation of the project.
- In practice, the approach of the team was to listen carefully to the needs and consider what the abilities of the MMDAs are. This approach is kept in the sentence: 'adjusting after listening and understanding'. Consequently, this required the willingness to adapt the kind of services offered to the MMDAs and adjust the pace of implementation when necessary. Attune activities with planning being a permanent exercise in implementation; this worked out successfully.
- A new reference model for revenue collection was developed which implied some changes in the implementation of the project as well. Changes contained the following:
  - New elements were incorporated to make e-billing and e-payment possible.
  - New system of smart data collection was introduced by using handheld devices.
  - Software was developed, tested and adjusted.
- More time investment was needed due to the introduction of the new way of data collection, consequently, some activities had to be postponed to 2019, such as implementing activities concerning the funding and spending cycle; whilst preparation of the activity took place in 2018.
- Commitment of political leadership and high-level officials was considered to be crucial. Time was invested to address effective political leadership as starting point for the funding and spending cycle. The high-level Leadership Masterclasses were prepared; implementation will take place in the early months of 2019.
- There is high commitment on the part of MMDAs to ensure the success of the project by providing human and material support whenever required for the implementation of the various community sensitization programmes.
- The community sensitization programmes organized so far in about 14 MMDAs have been highly successful; in that, the community participation has been commendable, and the majority are now awakened to their civic responsibilities of paying their property rates and demanding accountability for public service delivery.
- Good working relations were established between the Ghanaian team and the VNG International experts, despite changes in the team of VNG International experts. Improvement of communication between teams and themes still need attention though.

### CHALLENGES

The following challenges were encountered in the course of implementing project activities:

- The project TREE Comprehensive Project Approach is based on the experience gained during the VNG supported Programs between 2014 – 2017. The project TREE concept was built on a multi-level approach which called for a regular and very intensive exchange with all partners as

well as fulfil a need based on development of the software. The demand on staff resources, the required capacity of the staff members and the need for detailed planning of activities and assignments of staff did, especially in the first two quarters of 2018 not always meet the requirements.

- A full understanding of revenue mobilization as a regular and sustainable activity by the leadership of most of the Assemblies is a core area of the project TREE Concept. The current practice especially concerning fund allocation for all regular IGF activities does not meet those requirements in all MMDAs. The issue was addressed regularly with the FDU and the Leadership of the MMDAs. In 2019 project TREE will train the MMDA Leadership and closely monitor the project TREE MMDAs to identify and address the related challenges on short notice.
- A few MMDAs have outsourced their IGF collection prior to project TREE intervention. Those MMDAs were struggling with the consequences of their external commitments. Especially, the capacity of the revenue staff and the accessibility of the property data from the external companies pose a challenge. Project TREE has engaged with the effected MMDAs to support them in overcoming those challenges.
- The national fee fixing guideline does not make any provision for categorisation of unvalued/unassessed properties During the review of MMDAs' Fee Fixing Resolutions (FFR), it was observed that the MMDAs use individual developed categories based mainly on the capacity of the Budget Analyst and the local requirements. The standardisation of the different FFR for unassessed properties in all MMDAs was not possible on short notice. The therefore required in cooperation of 16 different FFRs posed challenges especially for the support for the MMDAs in their FFR development, the data collection and the processing of the data within the project TREE software. The aim for 2019 is the standardisation of the FFR for all project TREE MMDAs.
- The collection, maintenance and the management of data is a challenge in most partner MMDAs. The access to existing property data, such as Land Valuation Data was a challenge. Additionally, the discovered data was mostly of poor quality and had to be dismissed.
- The collection of data and the bill distribution is based on a system that enables the Revenue Collectors to identify the properties in the field via GPS coordinates. The development of those application in the fourth quarter of 2018 was more complex than expected and required several field tests.
- The MMDAs were tasked to undertake the pilot Data Collection end of 2018. The selected personnel were trained by project TREE trainers on how to undertake the data collection. However, it was observed later that some MMDA did not send their Revenue Collectors for the training but rather, short term hired staff. This situation had negative implications on the quality of data (some data had to be dismissed) and impacted also on the sustainability of the trainings.
- The E-billing and E-payment component of the project TREE software which is one of the key functionalities to aid the MMDAs halt or reduce revenue leakages within the system is still awaiting approval from the MoF and MLGRD following resolutions passed by the 16 MMDAs to automate their revenue mobilization process with the assistance from project TREE.

## 3. Detailed report of the inception phase

**The aim of the Inception phase was to select and formally engage teams of experts in Ghana and in the Netherlands, agree on plan and planning and securing ownership at Ministerial level. All conditions for implementation were in place at the end of the inception phase.**

### Team of experts

A committed team of six Ghanaian experts was appointed and office space for the Ghanaian team was rented and equipped in Cape Coast from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2018 onwards. Contracts with VNG International experts were signed in the early months of 2018. The selection of MMDAs was finalised and approved by the Steering Committee in its maiden meeting in February.

### Plan and Planning in Strategy Workshop

The discussion on the strategy of the project with the main Ghanaian stakeholders was brought forward in time compared to the original planning. The project strategy and planning were thoroughly discussed and adjusted in the Strategy Workshop on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2018; originally the workshop was foreseen to take place in May 2018.

Participants highlighted the following strategies, which required priority attention:

- Improve database quality and volume;
- Ratepayer communication;
- Application of software;
- E-payments using Mobile Money or Banks;
- E-billing via mobile phones.

Based on the discussions in the Strategy Workshop, the Steering Committee agreed on a collection-based strategy and the development of a new reference model for revenue collection in all participating MMDAs. In this new reference model, all modernisations as prioritised during the workshop (indexing, flat rates, zonal approach, e-billing, e-payments and new enforced collection measures) have been integrated to one revenue collection process. The new reference model implied changes in project implementation. It was decided to work with Solution Designs for each step in the process of data collection to revenue collection, thus replacing the original approach to develop handbooks. The Solutions Designs allowed for a much more individual approach of MMDAs than foreseen previously. Based on the conclusions of the Strategy Workshop, the general plan of approach and the planning of activities was finalized and agreed on.

### Additional activity: The Kick-off event

An additional activity – not planned for in the project proposal - was a comprehensive kick-off meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2018 in Cape Coast. The kick-off meeting was chaired by the Omanhen (Chief) of the Oguaa (Cape Coast) Traditional Area. The event was attended by high-level officials; including the Central Regional Minister, the Deputy Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, the Head of the LGS, the Director of the FDU of MoF, the Royal Netherlands' Ambassador to Ghana, Mr. Ron Strikker as well as Mayors and other officials from the participating MMDAs, among others.



As a result of the suggestions of Hon. Central Regional Minister, Mr. Kwamena Duncan, Hon. Deputy Minister for MLGRD, Mr. Kwesi Boateng Adjei, the Head of LGS Ing. Dr. Nana Ato Arthur, it was decided that an additional District Assembly should be included in project TREE and that the number of participating MMDAs was therefore expanded from 32 to 33. The suggestion was made because the Asikuma Odoben Brakwa District Assembly showed great interest, enthusiasm and commitment in improving its revenue collection.

The project was widely acknowledged as being in line with the Ghanaian government's intention of pursuing a political and economic strategy of 'Ghana Beyond Aid'. Due to the kick-off event, awareness of the project became very manifest amongst partner MMDAs. There is great enthusiasm for participating in project TREE in the selected MMDAs which became clear in the high level of presence of MMDA representatives in the kick-off meeting.

A lot of publicity was generated in Ghana on project TREE due to the kick-off meeting, which enabled the 'branding' of project TREE as well. Fifteen Ghanaian journalists were present at, and have reported on the kick-off meeting. This resulted in 18+ online reports, 8 broadcast news items, one printed article and one printed editorial in the Daily Graphic (1.5 million readers a day).

Screening of two videos underlined the commitment of Ministries and MMDAs on the one hand and the views on revenue collection for better service delivery of community representatives on the other hand. The shooting of footage for the video presentation took place by the communication team of project TREE in February 2018. In total, 144 people participated in the official launch of project TREE.

#### **High-level commitment**

Securing ownership at Ministerial level to project TREE has been realised by having meetings to introduce project TREE with MLGRD, MoF, and OHLGS. Commitment is indicated by ministerial chairing and participating in the Steering Committee and the high level of attendance of Ministerial representatives during the kick-off meeting. The Ministerial commitment is not only of great importance for the implementation of project TREE in the coming years, but also for the continuity and sustainability of the intervention after the project has come to an end in 2021. The FDU of the Ministry of Finance has accepted ownership for the project and is chairing the Steering Committee.

## 4. Detailed report of activities 2018

**The beneficiary group of 33 MMDAs was divided into four clusters. Clusters I and II, consisting of 16 MMDAs, were targeted first. Implementation in clusters III and IV for the remaining 17 MMDAs will start in 2019. The main implementing activities for the first two clusters are highlighted in this section.**

### Baseline Assessment

Interviews in the first 16 MMDAs were conducted for the baseline assessment in April 2018 and questionnaires for five different themes were developed and based on pilot testing in three MMDAs in February 2018. The piloting showed that the design of the questionnaires needed some more work to be able to collect effective data. Eventually it was decided to set up five questionnaires on the following issues:

- (i) Revenue Gap,
- (ii) Revenue Administration Process & Organisation,
- (iii) Communication with Citizens,
- (iv) Revenue Administration and Human Resources, and
- (v) Information Technology management.

The five questionnaires were approved by MoF. The results of the baseline research were captured in a report that was also used as input for the 'Planting the TREE' workshop in June (see below).

### 'Planting the TREE' workshop

The starting point of the implementation for the first 16 MMDAs was the 'Planting the TREE' workshop from the 5th to 8th June 2018. The workshop was attended by high-level officials including the Head of the FDU, Mr. Joseph Antwi, the Director of Research, Statistics and Information Management at the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development Ms. Dorothy Onny, Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives and other top officials (Co-ordinating Directors, Finance Officers and Budgets Officers) of the 16 MMDAs.

An introduction was given to the project's objectives and implementation approach and to the proposed Solution Designs as well. The results of the baseline survey were presented. Discussions took place on the intended change of the current manual process of revenue mobilization to an automated one which will make it possible for bills and payments to be made electronically. Research indicated that the mobile money payment system currently being adopted by Ghana Water Company could be used to make rate payment very easy for the MMDAs. Furthermore, stress was put on the need for MMDAs to improve on compliance through building trust, service delivery and enforcement of revenue laws.

Following the workshop, there was the need for the Assemblies to take next steps to address the key issues that inhibited their revenue performance. The MMDAs were tasked to present project proposals for property data collection in at most three electoral areas where properties have not yet been assessed in their various Assemblies to serve as a pilot study. Project TREE has received and reviewed all the proposals from the MMDAs with special emphasis on the selected electoral areas, budgets and sensitization strategies for the exercise.

## Solution Designs

Development of Solution Designs started in April 2018. The following issues were captured under the Solution Design concept: Property Registration, Fee Fixing for unassessed Properties, Flat Rate, Incentives, Indexing of Rates, Enhancement of the MMDA internal administrative Processes, Citizen Accountability, Implementation of a Small-Scale Local Project, Communication, e-Billing and e-Payment. The urgent need of the MMDAs for a functional and customized Data Management System and suitable software with IT support was incorporated into the Solution Design. The Solution Design on Enforcement was postponed to 2019; it was decided to finalise and implement the process of data and revenue collection first, before addressing the enforcement issue. Due to the production time of the Solution Designs, consequently the implementation of training workshops in the first cluster of MMDAs took place from September 2018 onwards.

## Software Development

Based on the new reference model and the baseline study, fine tuning of software developed for the revenue collection process in MMDAs took place. This also resulted in the development of an easy to use mobile application by using hand held devices.

Project TREE has developed a software purposely for the collection of property data that contains all the detailed information required of the property owners and their properties such as property ownership, location, type and usage of property, phone number as well as email address among others. The collection of data especially for unassessed properties using the software will help the Assemblies eventually in property valuation after enough revenue has been mobilized internally.

Ninety pieces of hand-held devices have been procured by project TREE and installed with the software for distribution to the 16 MMDAs in order to facilitate data collection. The MMDAs were encouraged to procure supplementary gadgets in addition to what has been provided by the project and continue with the data collection exercise on electoral area basis after the pilot with all the lessons learnt. The process will also lead to the introduction of e-billing and e-payment which will resolve the problem of revenue leakages in the system eventually. As a pilot, a Ghanaian e-billing service provider E-transzact has been selected following a legal procurement and approval process. All the beneficiary MMDAs have agreed to use the e-billing and e-payment system.

Project TREE also procured desktop computers, printers and servers for all the participating MMDAs to enable them to store and manage the property data that will be collected.

## Support to MMDAs

Technical support has been offered to some MMDAs (e.g. CCMA, KEEA and AAKDA) by experts from the Ghanaian project TREE team and from VNG-International in the form of advice on IT, inter-personal communication and revenue gap issues. This was in a way to assist such MMDAs to restructure their systems for possible quick win results. There has so far been improvement in the client service units of the Assemblies. On the issue of revenue gaps for instance, CCMA is taking steps to collate the list of rate defaulters and take them to court for redress. Data collection and management is now on the high priority agenda of most of the MMDAs because of the follow up discussions with the MMDAs after the baseline survey.

The 16 MMDAs in the first two clusters were invited to submit their FFR. This however, was not up to standard especially for the property rate aspect; thus, with the support of expert on project TREE, the MMDAs were assisted to review and submit new resolutions. Property valuation by the MMDAs has not yet been done because of financial constraints.

In the first year of implementation all attention focussed on the revenue collection based on property rates. Enhancing processes and developing supportive tools related to Business Operation Permits resulting in revenue collection from businesses, will be addressed in 2019.

### **Data Collection**

All but one of the MMDAs have completed their data collection. MMDAs are cooperating very much with project TREE on the exercise and some have even found innovative ways of collecting other data sets. Although data collection has been done, bills are yet to be sent and payments yet to come in the early months of 2019.

### **Community engagement and sensitization**

As part of the property data collection exercise carried out in all the 16 MMDAs, one of the key activities that was carried out as a prelude was community engagement and sensitization. Project TREE has collaborated with 14 out of the 16 MMDAs to effectively embark on community sensitization particularly in the selected electoral areas where the exercise would be carried out. Key stakeholders that were met during the engagements included property owners and caretakers, traditional authorities, Assembly members and community opinion leaders. The discussions have been fruitful so far and property owners are prepared to collaborate with the MMDAs to gather the data since they are assured that it will lead to efficient and effective service delivery.

Next to mass communication by MMDAs, capacity development supporting inter-personal communication was stressed. It has been decided to make use of Ghanaian expertise for the inter-personal communication instead of a VNG International expert. This is because Ghanaian experts have a far more better understanding of what is needed and do not have any cultural inhibitions or differences to overcome. This resulted in hiring an additional team member to the Ghanaian team. The VNG International experts will provide general expertise regarding the issue.

### **Improving services and transparency**

Improving services through enhanced revenue collection is an annual cycle. MMDAs have to show that spending on revenues has taken place in a transparent way. Accountability is a leading force and showing leadership is an essential element to this regard. Service delivery through revenue collection will only be sustained when proof of spending is visible to those who paid their revenues. In short, this constellation is referred to as the funding and spending cycle. It was decided that MMDAs had to deliver tangible services in several electoral areas after participatory decision-making for projects. This zonal approach includes leadership commitment in general and for the elected assembly member in particular. In 2018, preparations were made to allow for the selection of electoral area projects as part of the zonal approach and for participatory decision-making. Implementation will take place only during the collection process that will take place in 2019. Leadership commitment to the zonal approach will be part of the training activities that are scheduled for March 2019.

### **Review of 2017 and planning 2019 in TREE team workshop**

By the end of the year, a meeting took place with the Ghana TREE Team and VNG International experts, which resulted in a productive meeting with input from many different team members. Presentations were done for different areas of the project answering the questions: 'What happened

the past year? What are the successes? Reflections on the performances of both the MMDAs and of the team? What problems/challenges occurred? What solutions were applied or should have been applied?' This proved to be very useful to identifying challenges and possible solutions in the different fields of the project. Also, it was further discussed and analysed as to how the project was being implemented and what needed to be improved, including the internal and external working relations, and resources, including material ones.

Considering the recommendations discussed, the planning for the year 2019 was elaborated. A clear overall planning integrating the different areas was being developed. While specific attention was given to the further implementation of activities for clusters I and II, which will mostly be done in the first half of 2019. The activities for clusters III and IV were only planned on broad lines, because they will be implemented mostly in the second half of 2019, with real collection starting in 2020. In the course of 2019, a detailed planning for the remaining of the year will be developed – taking into account ongoing developments.

### **Collaboration with GIZ**

Meetings have taken place on the issue of software application for revenue collection with GIZ which implements the “Good Financial Governance” project. It was agreed to avoid overlap concerning software and to harmonize activities in the MMDAs where both projects are being implemented. VNG International experts and project TREE team members paid a special visit to Suhum, where the GIZ software was set-up.

Notwithstanding these steps towards collaboration, the IGF technical working group summoned GIZ and VNG-International to a meeting of the working group on the 5th July 2018 in Accra to discuss the overlap in the selection of some twelve MMDAs benefiting from both development organisations.

Out of presentations made by both VNG-International and GIZ, it was evident that in the area of revenue improvement VNG-International was adopting collection-based approach where the focus is on unassessed properties and flat rate whilst GIZ was focused on street naming, house numbering and property valuation. Following intensive deliberations, two proposals were put forward for consideration by the committee. Firstly, it was proposed that VNG-International stays its interventions in the twelve MMDAs since GIZ was going to end its intervention in 2019 to allow MMDAs to gain full benefit of GIZ intervention. The second proposal was that VNG-International should keep its intervention in only six out of the twelve overlapping MMDAs (from clusters I and II) since VNG-International has already invested some amount of resources in the six MMDAs. It was further suggested that VNG-International and GIZ should work together in the remaining six MMDAs with VNG International and GIZ working in separate zones within the MMDAs.

The two proposals were forwarded to the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development for a decision. Eventually MLGRD notified VNG-International to continue with its project TREE improvement interventions in the six MMDAs where GIZ is also offering similar interventions; but the caveat was that both parties should come up with collaborative strategies that would avoid duplication of activities and report to MLGRD. VNG-International was also directed to move away from the remaining six MMDAs where GIZ was already on the ground and replaced them with new ones.

In consultation with the officials of both Ashanti and Western Regional Co-ordinating Councils, six new MMDAs were selected to participate in project TREE in clusters III and IV.

## 5. Results related to the objectives

Although 14 months of implementation that includes an inception phase, is too short to present results that are impactful, it is possible to indicate achievements related to the project objectives, which are listed in this section. The presented indicators within the logical framework will become valid in the coming year after the first 16 MMDAs would have collected their revenue by using the new expertise and other applications of supportive tools provided by project TREE.

Objectives	Indication of achievements
To improve the institutional capacity and procedures of each MMDA to collect revenues and diminish the revenue gap	16 MMDAs have collected data for revenue collection; procedures for billing are outlined. Resolutions are adjusted to the national regulations. Solution Designs are developed and used by the MMDAs to enhance the processes and procedures.
To implement IT programmes in each MMDA to support the main revenue business processes	An application has been developed to be used in hand held devices to enable data collection and bill distribution in 2019. Software is developed and installed in 16 MMDAs and ready to be used in the revenue collection process in 2019.
To improve the capacity of each MMDA to communicate with its citizens through citizen engagement sessions	Mass communication outlines are delivered to all MMDAs. Inter-personal communication training and support is given to all 16 MMDAs. Training is provided regarding data collection by using the project TREE application.
To implement participatory planning processes including social contracts with citizens	Preparatory steps are taken to be able to implement High Level Masterclasses and participatory planning processes regarding the spending of revenues collected. Actual implementation will take place in 2019.
To realize political commitment and leadership support and project management expertise at the ministerial level and in each MMDA to guarantee sustainability	Sustainability of the project intervention is addressed continually. The approach of 'adjusting after listening and understanding' has contributed to sustainability. Political commitment is high, as appears from the high-level presence in the Strategy Workshop, Kick Off event and the Steering Committee, but is showed the most by the lively discussions with Ministries and MMDAs on all aspects of revenue collection.

## 6. Lessons learned for the 2019 implementation

**Based on the implementation review and the team planning workshop some lessons learned for the 2019 implementation were composed and are presented in this section.**

- The 'Planting the TREE' Workshop for clusters III and IV in 2019 will be based on the experience that has already been accumulating in 2018 instead of relying on the baseline measurement only.
- Some baseline questions were eventually not used in the practical implementation; for 2019, the baseline questionnaires will be streamlined to avoid gathering information that will not be used.
- Throughout the implementation of the activities in the MMDAs of clusters III and IV in 2019 the lessons learned from the first two clusters will be used and will serve as learning points, both for the MMDAs themselves and for the activities of the team.
- A 'toolbox' will be set up to include both training material and other materials to be used by the MMDAs in all different areas of implementation. By setting it up as a toolbox with all the different elements included in it, the links between the different areas become clearer, and it accentuates the idea that this is something that is given within the project to the MMDAs and that they have to then do the work themselves, with the tools they now have. In this way the toolbox contributes to the sustainability of the project.
- Due to high challenges in CCMA concerning bill distribution in the early months of 2019, specific attention will be given to the implementation of project TREE for CCMA which runs parallel to the rest of the project as a 'side-project'. While posing some challenges in planning the CCMA side-project also creates a valuable test case enabling continuous improvement based on this experience.
- The communication team will work on the core message of the project in 2019 to be diffused through different means such as jingles and talk shows on the radio, to make it even more clear and attractive, which does not come easy when talking about revenue collection.
- The funding and spending cycle, including the leadership commitment and the zonal approach (to be called 'electoral area approach' going forward) will be further developed in 2019. The leadership involvement will consider two different audiences to be targeted: higher management of MMDAs and functional officers involved in the daily revenue collection work. It would also be important to work together with external facilitators with a certain status in the eyes of higher-ranking officials, to make the training more successful. In the selection of participants, special care will be taken to ensure that there is a right balance between political and administrative functionaries. Appropriate case studies relevant to the topical issues to be discussed would also be selected to make it more useful to the MMDAs.
- A few elements need to be improved in the internal management: the communication between different parts of the team, e.g. between Dutch experts and the Ghanaian counterparts, but also between the different areas, which is not structured enough. To improve the communication within the larger team, regular skype calls will be scheduled based on different themes.

# Participating MMDAs in 2018

## Clusters I and II

1. Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly (CCMA)
2. Komenda Edina Eguafo Abrem Municipal Assembly (KEEA)
3. Mfantseman Municipal Assembly (MMA)
4. Effutu Municipal Assembly (EMU)
5. Assin Fosu Municipal Assembly (AFMA)
6. Ekumfi District Assembly (EDA)
7. Gomoa West District Assembly (GWDA)
8. Gomoa Central District Assembly (GCDA)
9. Agona East District Assembly (AEDA)
10. Ajumako Enyan Essiam District Assembly (AEEDA)
11. Asikuma Odoben Brakwa District Assembly (AOBDA)
12. Assin South District Assembly (ASDA)
13. Abura Asebu Kwamankese District Assembly (AAKDA)
14. Nzema East Municipal Assembly (NEMA)
15. Ahanta West Municipal Assembly (AWMA)
16. Shama District Assembly (SDA)



## List of abbreviations

AAKDA	Abura Asebu Kwamankese District Assembly
CCMA	Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly
FDU	Fiscal Decentralisation Unit of the Ministry of Finance
FFR	Fee Fixing Resolution
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for International Development Cooperation)
KEEA	Komenda Edina Eguafo Abrem Municipal Assembly
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MMDA	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MoF	Ministry of Finance
LGS	Local Government Service
OHLGS	Office of Head of Local Government Service
TREE	Tax Revenue for Economic Enhancement
VNG	Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten (Association of Netherlands Municipalities)
VNG International	International Co-operation Agency of the VNG