

# **Enhanced Representation and Local Engagement: A Preliminary Review and Assessment of the Platforms Project**

David E. Guinn, JD, PhD  
SUNY Center for International Development<sup>1</sup>

13<sup>th</sup> Workshop of Parliamentary Scholars and Parliamentarians  
Wroxton, Oxfordshire, UK  
29-30 July 2017

## **Introduction**

Legislators have three primary functions: law-making, oversight, and representation. Representation, in turn, includes not only seeking to advance the political interest of that member's constituency within the functions of law-making and oversight, but also frequently engaging with actors within the executive to address the concerns of individuals and small groups of constituents. Of the three, many studies have indicated that most legislators prefer their representation work.

In the USAID funded Legislative Strengthening Project for Cote d'Ivoire, the project sought to enhance the legislator's work on representation by creating constituency platforms or work groups in which legislators joined with local governmental and civil society leaders to collaborate in monitoring and advocating for improvements in public service delivery by the

---

<sup>1</sup> Note: The author is the project director for the USAID Legislative Strengthening Project for Cote d'Ivoire. All data reported is based on internal project records, conversations with staff and the mid-term evaluation conducted by Democracy International for USAID (DI 2017).

national government. LSP piloted this approach in 24 constituencies spread across the country. This presentation will review the findings of this initiative and some of the lessons learned.

### **Background: The Problem**

The delivery of agreed upon, fundamental public services is one of the primary duties of a government. Service delivery is particularly important in a post conflict state, like Cote d'Ivoire in which service delivery translates to public perceptions of governmental legitimacy and is crucial for rebuilding stability (Levi, Sacks and Tyler, 2009). Unfortunately, in the early 2000s, when USAID was developing its strategy for how to strengthen the new post conflict government, public service delivery was very poor.

Typically, in a democracy, one influences service delivery in one of two ways: through the local government or through the central government. The natural first intervention involves engaging with local government leadership and holding them accountable through the ballot box. Unfortunately, in Cote d'Ivoire, governmental authority resides in the central government and local officials report to it. Thus, USAID decided to support an intervention targeting the central government. To do so, the proposal designers focused on the representative function of parliamentarians.

Here again, USAID confronted a challenge. A large majority of parliamentarians throughout Africa favor and devote most of their efforts towards serving the representation function (Barkin et al. 2009.) As noted in a report by the International Parliamentary Union and UNDP, this is undoubtedly because *"...voters are much more likely to judge MPs on their ability to provide support at local level than on their activity in legislation or control of government action."* (IPU/UNDP 2012) Somewhat surprisingly, that was not the case in Côte d'Ivoire where, in a study sponsored by AECOM/OTI in 2012, a majority of constituents complained about *"a total absence of MPs in their constituencies of origin [which they] perceived as treason to the population"* and that there was *"a complete lack of reporting on parliamentary business."* (Research Institute 2012). Added to this, the constitutional mandate for MPs is not to represent

their constituents, but rather that: "Each MP shall be the representative of the nation as a whole." (Constitution of Cote d'Ivoire 2016: Art. 96)

In light of this, the program designers with USAID for the Legislative Strengthening Project in Cote d'Ivoire (LSP) decided to solicit proposals for an innovate new type of representation. Representation can be thought of in terms of either the MP representing the interests of his/her constituents in the review of laws or in government oversight as determined by either the MPs knowledge of that constituency or through the conduct or public hearings in the constituency. To support this representation function, donors commonly provide technical and material support for MPs to conduct public hearings in their constituencies and, so support the related oversight work, they support oversight hearings. In the alternative, many MPs seek to intervene on behalf of individual constituents by providing a means for the constituent to communicate with individuals within the government through the auspices and support of that MP. For this, donors will commonly provide training and support on how to establish a constituency office. In both of these cases, the MPs act on behalf of a relatively passive constituent.

In LSP, in light of the previous demonstration of limited engagement between MPs and their constituencies, the designers wanted a structured engagement between MPs and their constituents in which they would work together in the form of "platforms" to identify local service delivery problems that the MPs could then advance to the national government. Thus, as refined by SUNY Center for International Development (SUNY/CID), the constituents participating in the platforms not only convey local concerns to the MP, they represent a form of demand on the MP to meet with them and they participate as collaborators in the identification of local public service delivery concerns. Moreover, drawing on the MPs position within the government and his power to convene groups to work together, LSP helped establish collaborative platforms that involved not only local civil society leaders (on behalf of the constituents) but also local government officials and, when appropriate, representatives drawn from the national government.

In light of the innovate nature of this effort, USAID further specified that it should be piloted in 24 demographically representative constituencies spread across the country and rigorously

evaluated at the end of the project. The project does not end until December 13, 2017, so this is a preliminary review of some of the findings, though it lacks data to be collected in a final survey of impacts within the constituencies and a group of control constituencies.

### **Project Implementation and Initial Findings**

In order to illustrate both the nature of the collaborative platform design and some of the challenges in its implementation, the following analysis will follow the key features of implementation starting with design/buy-in through project roll out.

#### *Goals and Objectives of the Platform Initiatives*

As contemplated within the platforms initiative design, the platforms were intended to advance the following three goals and objective: better performance of the representation function; improved service deliver; and improved civility and collaboration at the community level.

*Representation:* The mechanism of the platforms establishes an institutionalized means for the MP of assessing, at a granular level, the needs and desires of his/her constituency with respect to community wide issues, as opposed to individualized concerns. It also allows the MP to monitor the performance of the government in the delivery of public services – which can be brought back to the ANCI and advanced during public question periods and other *oversight* activities and, at the same time, to communicate with his/her constituency about activities an initiatives being advanced by the MP and the ANCI (part of the related role of *outreach*.) Finally, the presence of local civil and civil society representatives potentially creates a level of public demand for the MP to comply with his/her representation responsibilities.

*Service Delivery Monitoring and Advocacy:* The platforms also create a collaborative multi-partisan forum to monitor local service delivery and, where problems are found, to collectively engage in discussions and advocacy on how to remedy those problems. Unlike a more typical CSO based project, the promotion of better service delivery is non-adversarial (in the sense of citizens demanding better service) but collaborative in that both the government and its representative act along side of their citizen/CSO colleagues.

*Civility Collaboration at the Community Level:* As a post conflict country, tensions between ethnic, social and culture groups remain an issue of significant concern. As noted in the *DI Mid-Term Evaluation (2017)*, in discussing the ANCI strategic plan, “The leadership felt that the priority in the post-conflict context was to focus on learning to live together in peace towards a better standard of living – in order to not slip back into civil war.” (26) Thus, an important goal of the platform initiative was to create an environment in which the diverse representatives drawn from across the full spectrum of citizens within the constituency could come together in safe environment to collaborative work to improve public services in their community.

#### *Design/Buy-in*

A key requirement of any legislative strengthening project is that the legislative counterparts (legislative leadership and MPs) must agree to and ultimately take ownership of the reform initiative (USAID 1980; EC 2010.) Added to that list in this case would also be the local constituents and their representatives who would participate in the platforms. Reform cannot be imposed from the outside.

To promote buy-in by the leadership of the National Assembly of Cote d’Ivoire (ANCI), at the outset of the project, LSP staff started meeting regularly with the President of the ANCI and the Secretary General (SG) and other administrative department heads (as involved) to discuss all aspects of the project, including the collaborative constituency platforms (Platforms) initiative. This included not only a description of the aims of the initiative but also working with the SG on the selection procedures for MPs and their constituencies (since this was a pilot project involving only 24 selected constituencies) and the types of administrative support that the MPs would need to support the Platforms. As is to be expected, the SG sought to adjust the initiative to meet his political interests and needs – in particular his effort to assure that the President of the Assembly’s constituency was included among the selected constituencies – whereas SUNY/CID and USAID sought an objective selection criteria to avoid the perception of favouritism as well as to assure demographic/social/cultural diversity among the Platforms. Negotiations on this point and repeated redesigns of the selection criteria resulted in an 18 month delay in implementation. Nonetheless, while this did severely impact the duration of the Platforms

operation, it did result in significant commitment by the ANCI in support of the platforms including designation of specific administrative support staff (drawn from a very small overall support staff) to support the MPs both within the ANCI and by sending them into the constituencies when the MPs were present there for Platform activities.

With respect to the MPs, while their constitutional mandate is for them to represent the nation as a whole and not simply their constituencies, there was substantial interest among the MPs to have their constituency selected. In order to assure demographic/social/cultural diversity, it was determined that the selected constituencies would be drawn from the center (Abdijan) and the four compass points (north/east/south/west) and include constituencies of different sizes (distinguished by the number of MPs from that constituency – ranging from 1 (small) to 3 (large). However, to assure MP commitment, as an additional factor, SUNY/CID required interested MPs to file an application requesting that they and their constituency be included in the initiative. A total of 106 out of 255 MPs applied to participate. The final selection of 46 MPs was made jointly by SUNY/CID, USAID, the ANCI and 2 MP representatives.

Both prior to and subsequent to their selection, MPs were informed that the purpose of the Platform was to promote enhanced representation. It was not intended to simply underwrite MP travel to the constituencies. Nonetheless, the amount of support being provided by the project for travel and per diems was a regular source of friction and out of the 46 MPs representing the 24 chosen constituencies, seven ultimately did not participate in the initiative – most of whom represented multi MP constituencies in which there were one or two other MPs participating.

In order to obtain constituent/constituent representative buy-in, the project used a combination of public civic education efforts (see more details below) and small group meetings with key local representatives including: administrative governmental authorities, heads of public services, community and religious leaders, and women's and youth leaders. The public education campaign laid the groundwork understanding among the broader population about the nature of the platform effort, while the small group meetings allowed more nuanced discussions and helped project staff make necessary adjustments to the implementation plan to take into account local social and political dynamics. At the conclusion of this education/consultation phase, local

representatives of all the key stakeholders (local government officials, public services representatives, community and religious leaders, women's leaders and youth leaders) were selected by mutual consent of all involved. For the most part, this selection process proved relatively successful, with local participation being positive – though in some cases, failure in leadership by the MP led to overall poor performance by the platform.

### *Citizen Score Card Survey*

The Platforms initiative had two objectives at the outset. First, it was necessary to educate the public about the role of the parliament and its place in the delivery of public services. Second, it sought to promote citizen engagement with the MPs in advocating for improved public service delivery. In order to establish a baseline from which to operate, SUNY/CID conducted a Citizen Score Card Survey (CSC) of the 24 constituencies plus 10 control constituencies (in which no interventions would be made) to assess public understanding of the role and functions of the ANCI along with other relevant political understandings. This would provide a baseline<sup>2</sup> upon which to evaluate the success of the planned public education campaign (discussed below.) Not surprisingly, the public was poorly informed about the role of the ANCI and how public services were managed and administered. Moreover, the participants judged the performance of the ANCI and their MPs very poorly.

Second, in order to insure that the Platforms were addressing the actual public service delivery concerns of the citizens within each constituency, as opposed to the interests of the eventual members of the Platform. Indeed, the idea of working to identify the actual desires of the constituents was an important teaching moment for the platforms. Operationally, the CSC sought to establish the three topic issues of concern in each constituency. The top three service delivery concerns for most constituencies were: Health, Roads and Infrastructure, and Education – though the priority varied somewhat from constituency to constituency and with some constituencies prioritizing security as among the top three. (See Addendum 1 for a full listing.) While the platforms were expected to honor the prioritization of interests specified by the constituents, some allowance was made to elect among the three top priorities.

---

<sup>2</sup> Note: The project has not completed the final CSC survey. Thus comparisons and measures of improvement will be taken from the DI, *MidTerm Performance Evaluation* April 2017 - Draft.

*Program Introduction/Civic Education*

In order for citizens to assert their rights and demand the delivery of public services, it is obviously necessary that they know their rights, know the obligations of the government to deliver services, how government carries out those obligations and the ways in which the public might intervene to influence government performance. As was anticipated and confirmed by the CSC survey, the citizens in the surveyed constituencies were not well informed on these issues. Accordingly, SUNY/CID designed a significant and sustained public education effort to remedy this situation. The project had three objectives for this training: to introduce and lay the groundwork for the platforms initiative; to broadly empower the public through a better understanding of its government and governance; and to counter misperceptions of the MPs role.

First, as previously noted, the project sought to introduce the concept of the platforms to the constituencies and to build support for their implementation. It was crucial that the public within the constituencies know about the platforms, understand what they would be working on, and appreciate and value the opportunity to work with the platforms either individually or through their community representatives. Building on the traditional oral culture in Cote d'Ivoire, the project enlisted singers, dancers and local theatre groups to help get the word out about the projects. The effort was wildly successful, ultimately engaging over 7,775 people in initial meetings about the platforms.

Second, the project continued its public education effort through additional public meetings, through training journalists on how to better cover the ANCI, and a collaborative program with 22 community radio stations who, in consideration of small grants to provide them with needed broadcasting equipment, agreed to cover all significant platform activities and to broadcast informational programs prepared by the ANCI (with project support). In addition, the project supported additional public events to publically discuss issues selected as priorities for each constituency. In the 24 constituencies this effort engaged with 7,121 participants for an average of 296 per constituency in 2016 and approximately 9,614 in 2017 for a total of 24,508 participating in a total of 73 forums.

Third, the public education effort was intended to counter a common misperception about the role of the MP. In most of Africa, most constituents and many MPs view the role of the MP as similar to a traditional tribal leader (see e.g. Barkin 2009) with the expectation that the MP will help them with individual problems or difficulties such as funds to assist with a burial, school tuition costs or other personal needs. For many MPs who feel compelled to meet these needs, this comes out of their own pockets. Obviously, if every visit to their constituency results in a drain on their personal assets, MPs will feel reluctant to visit their constituency. Whether or not this explains the prior absence of many MPs from their constituencies mentioned above, the project sought to counter this by educating the public not to expect this of their MP.

#### *Platform Make-up*

The platforms, involving between 15 to 25 people for each platform, are intended to be broadly representative of the key stakeholders within the constituency. As such, the platforms included:

- The MP or MPs (some constituencies had 2 or more MPs depending upon size)
- Locally elected Mayor
- The Prefecture (Appointee of the President)
- 1-2 Sub-Prefectures
- 1 Representative from each Public Services Agency
- Representatives from the Security services (where security is a service concern)
- Civil Society Leaders
- Community, Tribal and Religious leaders (with attention to women and youth)

Some, because they hold official positions (the MP(s), Mayor, and government officials) were automatically included, while the local community representatives were selected through consultation and mutual consent of the citizens and CSOs within the constituency.

#### *Leadership and Management*

The role of leadership and management of the platforms proved to be one of the most challenging and significant aspects of platform formation and success. Its development within the platform initiative evolved over time with unpredictable results.

At the outset, the platform initiative was viewed as an elaboration upon the MPs representation function. Accordingly, program developers within SUNY/CID viewed the establishment of the platforms as an exercise in the MP's power to convene constituents and local officials and draw them into a form of collaborative engagement. As such, LSP staff expected that the MPs would provide overall leadership for the platforms with administrative support provided by ANCI staff, all supported and supplemented by LSP. In some cases, this approach was adopted by the participating MP. For example, the MP in Abengourou, cited in the DI Mid-Term Evaluation (April 2017), enthusiastically adopted the platform framework as a means of representing her constituents. With her own funds, she supported a local constituency office which served as the administrative hub for the platform in her community and she provided staff to provide administrative support. While the *Mid-Term Evaluation* (April 2017) found that strong MP presence and leadership lead to the perception of improved representation and service delivery, few MPs were in a position to provide the level of underwriting provided by the MP from Abengourou.

Indeed, as LSP moved forward towards implementation and budget adjustments were made limiting the number of onsite support missions for the platforms that could be underwritten by LSP, SUNY/CID had to rethink administration and management. In place of regular visits to support the platforms, LSP sought a local focal point – an individual who could handle the day to day administration for the platforms. Ideally, the focal point should also have access to offices or other facilities in which not only platform equipment (computers, etc. provided by LSP) but also could hold regular meetings of the platforms. In most cases, one of the subprefectures met these criteria. Moreover, because the subprefecture was a representative of the national government, was not a local politician or affiliated with a political party, they were viewed as neutral, unbiased facilitators of the platform's efforts. Lastly, because they were part of the government, they also had access to actors and processes within the government that were directly involved in service delivery in which case they could help facilitate meetings and engagement with these actors and their resources. Similar arguments can be made for leadership or co-leadership of the platform by the local mayor (save that the mayor is by definition a politician.) These factors led ANCI administrative leadership to view leadership by the

administrators (Prefectures and Sub-Prefectures), as preferable, a position shared by the LSP program officers supporting the platforms initiative.

A third alternative for leadership of the platforms is that of the local representatives of the constituents. The concept of the collaborative platform was, in part, based on the model of CSO empowerment programs. The idea is to promote “demand” for reforms and improvement in services by educating and empowering CSOs and their members to lobby for those reforms and improvements. In these case, creating a forum in which representatives of the public and CSO participated as equals place a certain level of demand on both the government and the MP to listen to their concerns. At the same time empowering citizens and CSOs can be viewed badly by MPs who perceive themselves as being placed in an adversarial position with the citizens/CSOs. Hence any effort to empower the citizens/CSOs needs to be handled delicately. In this case, neither DI, in the *Mid-Term*, nor LSP staff were able to effectively determine what level of leadership may have come from the citizen/CSO members of the platforms – a point deserving further research.

#### *Platform Capacity Building*

The project next focused on building the capacity of the platforms and their members to develop and carry out an action plan for how that platform will promote improved service delivery. To promote sustainability of the initiative, SUNY/CID and the National Assembly sought and obtained the cooperation of the Direction General of Decentralization and Local Development (DGDDL) in the development of this training activity. The DGDDL is the government institution dedicated to decentralization initiatives and support to the development of local collectives. This provides a permanent partnership to help ensure the sustainability of the collaborative community platform initiative after the USAID funded project ends.

The project, the ANCI and DGDDL worked together to develop the training modules and identify trainers to conduct the trainings in each constituency. SUNY/CID and the DGDDL designed the content of the training modules and the detailed agenda covering the three-day workshop. The DGDDL nominated 14 experts to develop the training modules and will provide two experts to travel with the LSP team to each of the 24 constituencies in which the program is

implementing the platforms. (These traveling experts will intermittently swap out with other experts to ensure that they are able to continue their work at the DGDDL.)

Given the range to topics that needed to be covered and the goal of building capacity through an extended series of iterative training/application – training/applications, the training program was consolidated into two parts. The first set of training modules for platform members covered the following themes:

- Roles and Responsibilities of local authorities (MPs, Prefectures, SubPrefectures, Mayors, service delivery directors, community leaders and civil society) in local governance
- Project planning process
- Programming and budgeting
- Participatory budgeting
- Budget execution and oversight

The training seminar also included the presentation of the CSC survey results in each of the pilot constituencies and the top three public service priorities identified by the constituents. The LSP and DGDDL trainers then helped platform members develop an action plan for the year taking into consideration the public service priorities of their constituency as identified in the CSC. In addition, participants were provided with multiple tools for managing their activities, including an action plan template, which the members completed with LSP assistance, report presentation templates, and templates for meeting notes.

For the second training seminar, LSP and DGDDL trainers provided training on:

- Advocacy and advocacy techniques
- Fundraising techniques (to support their continued operations.)

Again, the platform participants were also supplied with tools and templates to support their work in these areas. (See Addendum 2 for complete listing of module titles.)

### *Platform and Support Activities*

At the time of their establishment, platform members agreed to a basic charter of operations that provided that the platform would meet on a monthly or bimonthly basis, with the meeting to be

called by either the MP(s) or the platform focal point (representative of the Prefecture). Specifically, for this initiative, the charter started with a preamble that clearly states: that the members of the platform work on a free and voluntary basis; and that the platform is apolitical and is intended to bring together diverse representatives from the constituencies in service of a common objective of promoting the improvement of the quality of public services delivered to the population. The charter is set out in four parts. Part one identifies the composition of the platform and methods of selection. Part two identifies the mission of the platform, while part three elaborates on its method of operation and finally, part four, how it will be sustained over time. While many features of these charters are common among all of the platforms, adjustments to take into consideration local concerns were obviously important in ensuring local ownership and buy-in in the platforms.

The second key management document adopted by each platform was an annual action plan developed with the assistance of the LSP. The action plan set forth the specific objectives for that year, identified the actions to be undertaken to meet those objectives and the resources required to underwrite those actions.

At an early stage in the initiative design, it was anticipated that LSP would conduct regular field visits during the years of implementation to assure continued support and mentoring. However, this was deemed too costly and LSP attempted to substitute regular engagement with the focal point through phone calls as well as regular consultations with the participating MPs individually and as a group to provide direct support on how they could advance platform objectives and to promote the sharing of information and experience among themselves. LSP also obtained agreement by the ANCI administrative leadership to provide designated staff members to support platform activities and initiative.

### **Impact and Assessments**

It is extremely difficult to assess the impact of the collaborative platforms initiative. While 23 of the 24 platforms were established in 2015 (the 24<sup>th</sup> in early 2016), the first capacity building workshops did not take place until 2016. Therefore, in practice, the platforms have only been

fully operational for approximately one year. The legislative elections in the Fall of 2016 further complicated implementation. In order to avoid the appearance of interfering with the elections or political favoritism, LSP was not allowed to work in the field with the platforms from September 2016 up through and immediately following the elections in November 2016. Finally, SUNY/CID has been completed its own final evaluation study of the platforms initiative, with the results reported here based on internal project reporting and the DI conducted *Mid-Term Evaluation*.

### *Concept Design*

Overall, the general design of the platforms appears valid. As reported by DI (2017):

Evidence supports the findings that the design/technical approach to Platforms was valid, including membership, types of training and processes....

The conceptual design of “Collaborative Platforms” was validated during a number of comments and discussions. The Secretary General of the National Assembly noted that Platforms are “a vital interface between citizens, civil society and administrative authorities, help to mobilize people for common aim, and make the National Assembly a stronger institution.” The structure of Platforms, involving representatives from administrative powers working around a table with citizen representatives, was effective at improving some local services, resolving services-related problems, or informing citizens of the issues, and thereby helping to avoid conflict. It is an effective instrument for citizen engagement with local authorities, and also increases visibility of the participating MP. The Action Planning process ensures that needs are captured and targeted. Collaboration among different stakeholders was an important factor needed for a successful Platform, as well as an active leadership.

(DI 2017, 22-23.)

### *Effects on Services*

As reported by the DI Assessment team (2017) “Preliminary findings showed...[that p]articipants were able to document success stories in public service delivery. These services are related to improvement of security, water supply, electricity, education and health.” (p.24). This

was particularly true in the cases of Bengourou, Anyama and Bingerville. (p.22.) In Anyama, for example, the community had lost access to the only potable water resource (a well 30 kilometers away) due to security concerns and had been forced to draw its drinking water from the local marsh resulting in wide spread illnesses including schistosomiasis. The Anyama platform targeted this water problem and successfully lobbied for the government to provide regular deliveries of potable water (USAID|West Africa, 2017.)

### *Impact on Public Perceptions*

The platform initiative, on the whole had a positive impact on public perceptions about public service delivery (potentially reflect actual improvements in service delivery) and the public's perception of their MP. In a content analysis of interviews from its Key Informant Interview survey, the DI Assessment Team found that the two comments most often repeated were:

Rank	KII/FGD Comment
1	MP is more effective than previously: in terms of representation, oversight, availability, communicating law related issues, and visibility in communes
2	Platforms are effective for improving MP representation, resolving community conflicts, networking, interaction between local government and citizens, and informing about gender-related legal issues

(DI 2017, 15)

In the analysis of its broader public opinion survey, the improvements in public perception are less striking, with perceptions in both pilot and control constituencies reporting relatively low levels of satisfaction with the performance of the ANCI and the performance and presence of the MP within their constituencies – though with a small (2%) but statistically significant improvement in the perception that their MPs are present and active in the constituency (15). Interestingly, the differences in negative perceptions is even greater between pilot and control constituencies where the negative perception is 9% lower than in the controls (15.)

### *Promoting Civil Collaboration and Cooperation*

As previously noted, as a post conflict country, concerns over friction between ethnic, social and cultural communities remains high and the platforms were intended to create a neutral forum in

which representatives from diverse communities could come together and safely engage in discussion of and collaboration on efforts to improve public services could take place. The DI *Mid-Term Evaluation* reported two findings in this regard. Among the 4 top open responses to the Key informant interview, was the statement: “Platforms are effective for improving MP representation, *resolving community conflicts, networking, interaction between local government and citizens*, and informing about gender-related legal issues. (20. Emphasis added.) Further, the report noted that: “Collaboration among different stakeholders was an important factor needed for a successful Platform, as well as an active leadership.” (23) Given the finding that overall the platforms were successful, this objective appears to have also been achieved.

#### *Overall Assessment of Platforms Function*

According to internal project assessments a majority of the platforms are active and functioning at a reasonable level of performance. In the DI sampling of 8 constituencies, five were deemed acceptable while 2-3 (Bouake, Ferke and Daloa) were not functioning well. (16)

#### **Lessons Learned and Areas for further Study**

While the overall platforms initiative can be tentatively described as a success. Nonetheless, there are certain issues that proved particularly challenging and/or that may require further work and study.

#### *Nature of the Platforms*

As revealed in the DI *Mid-Term Evaluation* the exact nature of the platforms remained somewhat unclear to the assessment team and to some of the key informants interviewed by the team. Indeed at a few points, the DI evaluation team suggested that the platform function could be equally served by different mechanisms.

*Constituency Offices:* Establishing a constituency office is a common method of promoting improved representation. The DI team correctly noted that a constituency office, properly resourced, could assume many of the administrative functions currently delegated to the focal point of the platforms (Prefecture/Subprefecture) (24); however, while this would allow the

MP to assert greater leadership over the platform, it would potentially weaken the concept of the platform as a form of collaborate engagement in the resolution of public service delivery problem. Constituency offices frequently focus on resolving individual issues of concern in relation to government services and, while they can keep an MP informed of general trends and concerns, they are not designed to provide structure feedback and engagement that the platforms are intended to supply. Moreover, they do not facilitate civil collaborate engagement among members of the community in the manner of the platforms.

*Advisory Body to Local Government:* At another point, the DI evaluators referred to the platforms as “an advisory body to local government.” (17.) Presumably, this is in part because local government officials are included among the platform membership and, at a minimum, administrative leadership is provided by government officials in the form of the focal points. This appears to undervalue the actual authority and persuasive force held by the citizen/CSO members and the MP(s). While it is true, in many ways the citizen members of the platforms do provide advice, at the same time they are an important representative sample of the community represent community groups within the constituency and they are being trained in techniques of advocacy that can be directed at both governmental officials within and without the platforms. Moreover, the MP(s) retain their capacities as MPs to take the concerns of the citizen/CSO members directly to the national government as well as their persuasive authority towards the local government officials.

*CSO Demand Modeling:* The idea of empowering the citizen/CSO members of the platforms was always implicit in the platform design – yet it ultimately remained somewhat vague and unrefined. The CSO empowerment model in practice has often been viewed by government officials and legislators as a system in which donors are creating adversaries for them resulting in tension and distrust between the two sides. Clearly, in creating a unified platform with the additional goal of promoting civil collaborative engagement, empowerment of the citizens/CSOs cannot come at the expense of government and MP members. Nonetheless, additional attention and study needs to take place on how to best empower and reflect the interest of the citizens and CSOs in the leadership of the platforms.

### *Leadership and Management*

The evolution of platform leadership and management was partly the result of changes in project budgeting and implementation and partly a natural evolution based in the interests and level of engagement of those involved in the platforms. To a certain extent one might describe this as a form of natural experimentation in leadership forms. Unfortunately, due to the very short period of implementation, this evolutionary process cannot be fairly evaluated. While one can say that where MPs and/or government official asserted significant leadership, the platforms flourished. That does not resolve what is the best model for leadership. Possible models of leadership include the platform being: led by the MP; led by a local government official; co-led by the MP(s) and local officials; or co-led by either the MP or local officials and by a citizen/CSO leader. In part the answer to this question in terms of the final option also depends upon the final understanding of the nature of the platforms and the role of the citizen/CSO within it.

### **Summary**

Initial assessments suggest that the collaborate platforms initiative has proven generally successful in advancing the three principle goals of the initiative: improving MP representation; improving public service delivery; and improving the civil and collaborative engagement of diverse groups within the constituency community. Given the extremely short duration of the current project, the model deserves significantly further development and support including study of lingering questions about the proper management of the platforms.

*Cited Works:*

Barkin, J. (ed.) 2009. *Legislative Power in Emerging African Democracies*. Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Constitution of Cote d'Ivoire 2016

Democracy International (DI), 2017. *Mid-Term Performance Evaluation: Legislative Strengthening Program* USAID (April 2017 - Draft)

European Commission (EC), 2010. Engaging and Supporting Parliaments Worldwide: Strategies and methodologies for EC action in support to parliaments European Commission/EuropeAid.

Available at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/governance/documents/engaging\\_and\\_supporting\\_parliaments\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/governance/documents/engaging_and_supporting_parliaments_en.pdf)

IPU/UNDP, 2012. *Global Parliamentary Report: The Changing Nature of Parliamentary Representation*. IPU-UNDP.

Levi, M., Sacks, A., and Tyler, T. (2009) Conceptualizing Legitimacy, Measuring Legitimizing Beliefs. *American Behavioral Scientist* 53(3): 354-375.

Research International, 2012. "Baseline Study on the Perception of the National Assembly by the Population Living in Côte d'Ivoire" AECOM/OTI

USAID, 2000. *Handbook on Legislative Strengthening*. Center for Democracy and Governance, Washington DC: USAID. Available at: <http://www.cid.suny.edu/Publications/pnac632.pdf>

USAID| West Africa, 2017 Snapshot: Water for Anyama – The Source of Life. USAID. Story available at: [http://www.cid.suny.edu/newsroom/news2017/newsroom\\_2017\\_ci\\_water.shtml](http://www.cid.suny.edu/newsroom/news2017/newsroom_2017_ci_water.shtml)

## Addendum 1

## Breakdown of topics by region and Constituency

Zones	Constituencies	Priorities Services
Greater Abidjan	ANYAMA ET BROFODOUME, COMMUNES ET S/P	Security Health Education
	BINGERVILLE, COMMUNES ET S/P	Electricity Security Water
	KOUMASSI	Roads and Infrastructures Waste and Sanitation Health
	YOPOUGON	Security Health Education
SOUTH	ABONGOUA, BIEBY ET YAKASSE-ATOBROU, COMMUNES ET SP	Roads and Infrastructures Water Electricity
	CHIEPO, DIDOKO, NEBO ET OGOUDOU, COMMUNES ET S/P, DIVO S/P	Health Water Electricity
	DAKPADOU ET SAGO, COMMUNES ET S/P	Roads and infrastructures Health Education
	SAN PEDRO, COMMUNE	Roads and infrastructures Water Electricity
NORTH	FERKE, COMMUNE	Health Education Roads and Infrastructures
	KORHOGO, COMMUNE	Education Health Security
	ODIENNE, COMMUNE	Health Education Roads and Infrastructures
	DIOMAN, FOUNGBESSO ET GUINTEGUELA, COMMUNES ET S/P, TOUBA, S/P	Health Roads and Infrastructures Water
OUEST	BIANKOUMA, BLAPLEU, KPATA & SANTA, COMMUNES ET S/P	Health Éducation Roads and Infrastructures
	DALOA, COMMUNE	Health Éducation Water
	BAZRA NATILS, DANANON, KETRO-BASSAM ET VAVOUA, COMMUNES ET S/P	Health Électricity Sanitation

	<b>BOUAFLE, COMMUNE</b>	<b>Health Water Roads and Infrastructures</b>
<b>EAST</b>	<b>ABENGOUROU, COMMUNE</b>	<b>Electricity Health Education</b>
	<b>BOUKO ET BOUNA, COMMUNES ET SP</b>	<b>Health Security Electricity</b>
	<b>BONDO, LAOUDI-BA, SAPLI-SEPINGO, TAOUDI ET YEZIMALA, COMMUNES ET S/P</b>	<b>Education Health Roads and Infrastructures</b>
	<b>SORABANGO ET TAGADI COMMUNES ET S/P</b>	<b>Health Roads and Infrastructures Education</b>
<b>CENTER</b>	<b>BOUAKE, COMMUNE</b>	<b>Education Health Security</b>
	<b>ANDO-KEKRENOU, BEOUMI ET KONDRBO, COMMUNES ET S/P</b>	<b>Health Water Electricity</b>
	<b>DAOUKRO ET N'GATTAKRO COMMUNE ET S/P</b>	<b>Water Health Education</b>
	<b>AYAOU-SRAN, DIBRI- ASRIKRO, SAKASSOU ET TOUMODI-SAKASSOU, COMMUNES ET S/P</b>	<b>Roads and Infrastructures Water Health</b>

## **Addendum 2**

### Training Modules

#### ***For the 1st workshop:***

*Module 1: Role and Responsibilities of the MPs in the Local Development*

*Module 2: Role and Responsibilities of the Administrative Authorities*

*Module 3: Role and Community Responsibilities of the Civil Society*

*Module 4: Role and Responsibilities of Local Counselor and Members of the Regional Social and Economic Committee*

*Module 5: Local Strategic Development Plan*

*Module 6: Planning and Budgeting Process of the Territorial Collectivities Development Actions*

*Module 7: Budget Execution and Control (1)*

*Module 8: Execution and Budgetary Control (2)*

#### ***For the 2<sup>nd</sup> Workshop:***

*Module 1: Advocacy Techniques*

*Module 2: Fundraising Techniques*