

GOZ 007 - INTEGRATED RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION PROGRAMME.**REPORT FROM THE MID-TERM REVIEW OCTOBER 1989****1. INTRODUCTION.**

As stated in the Agreement between Norway and Zimbabwe regarding the support to the National IRWSS Programme, the purpose of the semiannual meeting is to review and assess the development of the Programme activities. In view of the concern previously expressed by NORAD regarding the compatibility between the integrated district projects and the actual capacities of the district administration, it was agreed between NORAD and the NCU that the 1989 review primarily should focus on aspects related to this issue.

The NORAD review team consisted of Reidar Dale (Consultant) and Ruth Kove (Senior Programme Officer, Harare). The Resident Representative headed the Norwegian delegation in the review meeting with the NAC.

The basis for the review was the annual progress reports from the districts and provinces, together with field visits and discussions with Government officials and Programme staff at national, provincial and district level.

The Consultant's Review Report (including TOR for the Review Team), Programme for the review session, Agenda for the NORAD/NAC meeting, and Minutes of the meeting NORAD/NAC are attached to this report as Annexes I - IV respectively.

The purpose of the present report is to compile a record of the proceedings and to supplement the Consultant's report with a few additional comments from NORAD's side.

2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

During the Review, which took place between the 13th and 20th October 1989, the NORAD mission met representatives from the Zimbabwe Government authorities involved in the Programme, at national as well as provincial and district levels.

The review programme included field visits to Mt. Darwin District in Mashonaland Central, Chipinge District in Manicaland, and Zaka District in Masvingo.

The NORAD mission extends its gratitude towards all those, both GOZ officials and special Programme staff, who contributed to a successful completion of the mission. Special thanks go to the above mentioned provinces and Districts' authorities, who facilitated an open, frank and friendly atmosphere for the discussions.

15/11/89
824 ZW89

824-ZW89-11345

3. PROJECT REVIEW.

In all essentials the views and assessments given in the Consultant's Report reflect the consensus of the NORAD team with regard to the status and development of the IRWSS district projects. Naturally the Report also reflects the impartial view of an independent observer, and it is hoped that this will add a new dimension to our future discussions with the Zimbabwe officials and Programme staff.

As it is not considered necessary to elaborate further on the issues already thoroughly dealt with in the Consultant's report, the comments given below are therefore limited to a few issues which either has not been discussed, or which we would like to high-light in this record.

- a) As stated by the Norwegian delegation in the NORAD/NAC meeting, the review team had a generally positive impression of the districts' capacities and the local staff's capabilities and dedication to the Programme. However, it is common for all districts that the first year of implementation is very difficult, and we feel sure that some additional support in the pre-implementation stages would be of great benefit to the Programme.
- b) Interministerial cooperation seems to work quite smoothly at district level, which makes the regular absence of MEWRD representatives in the DWSSC meetings the more regrettable. This not only because many coordination problems could be more easily solved; if the IRWSS Programme shall develop a truly integrated and decentralized (i.e. bottom-up) planning and implementation model, it is vitally important that all agencies involved take part in the work carried out at the bottom level.
NORAD is fully aware that this may be a difficult issue to resolve, but it is also strongly felt that its importance warrants renewed efforts in this respect.
- c) The differences between the districts have been mentioned in the Consultant's Report. We wish to point out that they also have quite a few things in common, namely the practical and administrative constraints. The main constraints are lack of transport, shortage of cement, cumbersome (central) payment procedures, and inadequate financial reporting procedures to and from the districts.
These are all problems which have been observed over a long time, and discussions at district level revealed that there are obvious inter-connections. We were, for example, told that even if cement sometimes is available locally, procurement has not been possible, either due to lack of transport or because the suppliers don't accept Government's purchase orders.

In our view, this information indicates a need for seeing the present constraints as a whole rather than as isolated problems. Import of cement is, for example, seen by NORAD as a short term (and rather costly) remedy for an isolated problem only; it is not considered as a solution which can be sustained over the whole Programme period.

For the performance in the districts to reach the ultimate level in relation to the local administrative capacity, the districts shall need assistance in improving their general conditions for project implementation.

As for the financial reporting routines it is hoped that the present focus on this problem at central level, will lead to a review of the general communication routines between the national and local levels.

- d) The issue of involving women in the Programme as active partners in planning and implementation as well as beneficiaries has been raised by NORAD on several occasions. In this review we did not particularly look into the matter, and we shall therefore limit our comments to commending the DDF for having made their training opportunities open to women, even in fields that traditionally have been dominated by men.

4.0 REVIEW MEETING NORAD/NAC.

The NCU's minutes of the meeting is agreed to give a true record of the proceedings.

The NORAD delegation, headed by the Resident Representative, was somewhat disappointed by not getting any response to the observations of the NORAD review team - particularly as regard the above mentioned problems. Admittedly, none of the problem areas identified are new to any of the parties involved in the Programme, but in our view this makes it the more desirable to try to shed some new light on them through discussions in a plenary meeting between NAC and NORAD. It is sincerely believed that if the progress of physical implementation is to be improved, it will be necessary to give the issues related to common constraints very high priority.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS.

NORAD consider that this years Project Review was quite successful in so far as both the Norwegian delegation and representatives from the NAC were given a very useful insight in the process of decentralising project planning and implementation. It is hoped that the report of the NORAD Consultant will lead to further discussion on some of the most pertinent issues raised.

**ZIB 007 - INTEGRATED RURAL WATER SUPPLY
AND SANITATION PROGRAMME.**

P R O J E C T R E V I E W 1 9 8 9

Harare 23rd October 1989

Reidar Dale

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

1. Introduction.
2. The Task and basic Requirements for its fulfillment.
3. Overall Assessments.
4. Coordination.
5. Planning Mode.
6. Programme Duration, Speed of Implementation, and Coordination into the local Administration.
7. Brief Reflections on other Issues

Annex I : Terms of Reference for the Review Team.

1. INTRODUCTION

In compliance with the Terms of Reference for this mission, the present report will deal with the integrated district water and sanitation projects, being part of the national water supply and sanitation strategy in Zimbabwe. The reflections made are based on written documentation, discussions with national level administrative staff, and, probably most importantly, field visits and discussions with involved personnel at the local, district and provincial levels.

Three districts were visited, namely Mount Darwin, Chipinge and Zaka. Although explicitly asked to assess projects supported by NORAD, the observations and views expressed below relate to the integrated district approach as a whole. In fact, the review team is much concerned that one coherent approach must be operationalised and adhered to - which will, of course, have bearings on the way the donors perceive and administer their support.

For reasons of topical coherence and the flow of argumentation, the structure of this report deviates from the sequence of issues as given in the Terms of Reference. It is nevertheless hoped that the readers will find the topics under points A, B, and C, (i) in the latter, appropriately covered. Unfortunately and regrettably, however, the topics under point C (ii) and (iii) are not dealt with in the report because it was found impossible to form any substantiated opinion on them in the course of this very brief assessment. (The TOR is enclosed as Annex I to the report.)

This leads to a note on the scope of this exercise. For the readers who may not be well informed about the background for and the intentions with it, the following needs to be stressed: The assessment on which the present report is based, has been nothing like a thorough review. It has rather been a brief brainstorming exercise by an outside person and a person involved on the NORAD side, with the main purpose of tracing issues of general, overall character critical to good performance, and suggesting very tentatively possible ways and means of dealing with general problems identified, hopefully of some benefit to the agencies and persons involved in the operation of the programme. Thus, the present report contains neither a thorough and balanced judgement of the performance of the programme to date nor examinations of and recommendations pertaining to very specific administrative and technical issues and problems.

To the extent we have been able to trace and judge important issues, spur discussions on these, and promote further efforts towards concretising good management practices, the review team would see its mission fulfilled.

Having thus stressed the limitations of the present review, the review team feels nothing but deep appreciation of the openness

with which we have been met and the efforts made by the large number of competent personnel involved in this programme to inform us. We want to convey our most sincere thanks to all of them.

It has been thought that the usefulness of the report might increase when applying a problem oriented rather than a strict case oriented approach. Therefore, in Chapter 2, main issues of strategy and organisation pertaining to programmes of this nature are briefly introduced, and our views on them stated. This introduction then represents the basis for discussions on such issues in the context of the programme examined in Chapters 4 through 6. Together these four Chapters constitute the main body of the Report. Interspersed, but still inter-connected, is a brief presentation of the Team's overall impression of the Programme, and in Chapter 7 a cluster of more specific issues are briefly dealt with.

2. INTEGRATED PROGRAMMES: THE TASK AND BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ITS FULFILLMENT.

The overall direct aims of the integrated district projects are to improve the access to good-quality household water and to improve sanitary conditions for people living in disadvantaged rural areas.

The primary activities can be considered to be:

- provision of water
- construction of toilets
- sanitary education
- improving the institutional basis for maintenance of the water supply facilities.

Main supportive / additional activities at the field level are:

- land use planning, and
- villagization programmes (in some instances even resettlement programmes).

In an operational perspective, main facets and implications of this cluster of activities are:

- a strong community orientation
- integration of components being the responsibility of different administrative bodies, necessitating effective administrative coordination
- active participation by the prospective beneficiaries and their representatives.

While the latter is to be seen as a requirement for realising the intentions of activities stated above - particularly the acceptance of improved sanitary practices and the maintenance of the physical facilities created - it is most certainly also viewed in this programme as an ideologically based aim in itself.

Main operational principles which can be deduced from the above, and which should guide the design of the integrated district approach, are:

1. Intensive and fairly current interaction between administrative staff and prospective beneficiaries;
2. Effective coordination at lower levels.

As for the latter, in the view of the team, effective structuring of the cobweb of constantly changing interactions which is implied in the integrated district approach, can only be achieved through a strong coordinating structure at and close to the field level. This is basically so

- 1) because it is here that the large majority of the actors (including the beneficiaries and their representatives) are located, and
- 2) due to the high degree of fluidity and dynamism which will characterise planning and decision making in any programme with substantial people's participation - a dynamism which is induced from below, and will consequently have to be managed mainly at that end of the organisational hierarchy.

This implies a planning strategy which can be termed a process approach from below, as compared with a more conventional blueprint approach.

A strategy which is sensitive to local involvement will also entail a recognition of a need for operational variations from area to area. This is so because perceptions and commitments of people living in different environments (both nature-wise, socially and institutionally) would be expected to vary considerably. Such variations should be accepted as having implications for aspects of the approach adopted, such as organisational arrangements for various tasks, the speed of implementation, the timing of activities, and even the balance between the different project components.

In addition, variations between the different districts and provinces in terms of administrative capacity and competence are also important factors in favour of considerable flexibility regarding such operational factors.

The requirement for a process mode of planning is also stressed by the need to respond positively to improvements in organisational capacity and competence, including the participation and commitment by the beneficiaries. Inasmuch as the level of investments and activities should be low in situations of low management abilities, there should exist opportunities for larger investments as and when these abilities increase due to factors such as training and, not least, learning from work which has already been done.

Implied in the above is also a need for flexibility with regard to the duration of the project in any one district. This need is also stressed by variations among the districts in terms of more objectively verifiable factors, such as size, population, the pre-project status regarding water supply and sanitation, the efforts required to exploit available water resources, and the need for village restructuring.

Furthermore, the specific case of resettlement observed in Chipinge demonstrates the need for flexibility not only regarding duration, but also with respect to the magnitude of investments at any particular point in time.

In broad summary, if the intentions of local community involvement and local institution building are to be realised, the major portion of the decisions which have to be made during the planning and implementation of the district projects, would need to be made on a fairly current basis at or close to the field level.

The role of the centrally placed bodies should basically be limited to establishing the general framework in terms of overall aims and scope within which the lower level bodies will have to act;

- preparation of common criteria for planning, implementation and monitoring;
- assistance to lower level bodies whenever required, e.g. in the field of training;
- execution of overall monitoring regarding the use of funds, quality of work, etc.;
- organisation of impact evaluations, and
- disbursement of funds, the arrangements for which may vary considerably.

It needs to be stressed that

- 1) the scope within which bodies at lower levels may operate freely needs to be clearly defined, and
- 2) the involvement of and decision-making within higher level bodies have to be conducted in an orderly manner, in most cases in accordance with routines spelt out in advance.

Thus, for instance, there is a need for unambiguous procedures for reporting, report assessments and feedback on reports from the centre, for budgeting, and for allocation of funds.

Highly important facets of this are the number of bodies involved at higher levels (especially the national level) and the relationships between them: There is a strong case for involving few administrative bodies at this level in decision making capacities, and certainly so for establishing an unambiguous division of responsibilities, as well as simple and unambiguous routines for interactions between them. In the view of the review team, we are here touching upon a highly important principle regarding the design of multifaceted programmes with substantial beneficiary participation, such as the present one.

In order to increase manageability of the programme as a whole, the operational flexibility which by necessity will be introduced at the lower levels should be sought counteracted by reducing flexibility at higher levels. It should in this connection be recognised that decentralisation of authority from higher levels, and operational simplicity and clarity at these levels, will also have positive feedback on complexity at the lower levels. More decisions may be taken locally with less formal communication upwards, the time taken to process issues at higher levels may be shortened (whereby implementation planning locally may be facilitated), lines of communication may be clearer, etc.

In the pages to follow, some reflections will be made about aspects of the actual operation of the integrated district projects, as observed today, in the light of the general points made above. As a general, introductory note, we would here just like to state that the initiation and operationalisation of the district integrated approach represent, to a considerable extent, a new challenge for the bodies involved in the promotion of water supply and sanitation in Zimbabwe.

3. OVERALL ASSESSMENTS.

Operationwise the district projects were started in a rather unfortunate manner. The first districts selected were asked to prepare proposals without any concrete frameworks having been formulated for the planning exercise, and without the necessary mechanisms for appropriate support from the national level having been established. This led to the districts being exposed to backlashes as their proposals were censured and considerably cut down by the national authorities and the Donor.

In view of these initial problems, the team is rather impressed by the achievements in the projects which served as case studies. In particular, the ability of the district and local staff to cope with the challenge more or less thrown upon them is highly commendable. Within short periods of time, available personnel resources have been mobilised and a considerable ability to coordinate the many agencies involved in the programme have been developed. As for physical development we found that a substantial amount of work has been done in all the areas visited.

As the requirements for good performance of the integrated district projects has become clearer, commendable ability has also been shown by the national level staff to reorient their own attention towards the districts' need for support. Procedures for such support are being established, and the communication between the staff at different levels has improved.

The review team considers the integrated approach to be appropriate in terms of both the package of inputs and activities and the general decentralization of planning and implementation.

The observations made also led to the belief that the programme, as regards the integrated district developments, may, on the whole, be implemented quite successfully.

This assessment is made in spite of the inherent problems of organisational design and the need to refine the approach and intensify certain activities (e.g. health education), primarily because of the capabilities and the degree of motivation which are apparent among the personnel involved.

Indicative of the potential for successful implementation is also the fact that discussions of performance only a limited degree centre around very concrete, day-to-day issues (lack of transport and shortage of cement being the exceptions), but rather more on substantial issues such as community involvement, organisational arrangements and sustainability.

However, it should be kept in mind that the organisational problems referred to - which may be kept within manageable limits through specific programme measures, such as specially recruited programme staff, conditionalities of financing and donor involvement - may pose serious threats against the sustenance of this cluster of activities after the programme period.

4. COORDINATION.

The problems of sustainability can largely be considered as being of a coordinative nature.

Coordination is generally considered as a crucial aspect of the operation of organisationally complex programmes and projects. Any thorough examination of the coordination issue would, however, require a detailed, operational definition of the term. For the present purpose we will simply consider coordination as the harmonisation of activities, the direct responsibility for which has for various technical and other reasons to be split up between different administrative bodies.

In practice, this implies the responsibility for

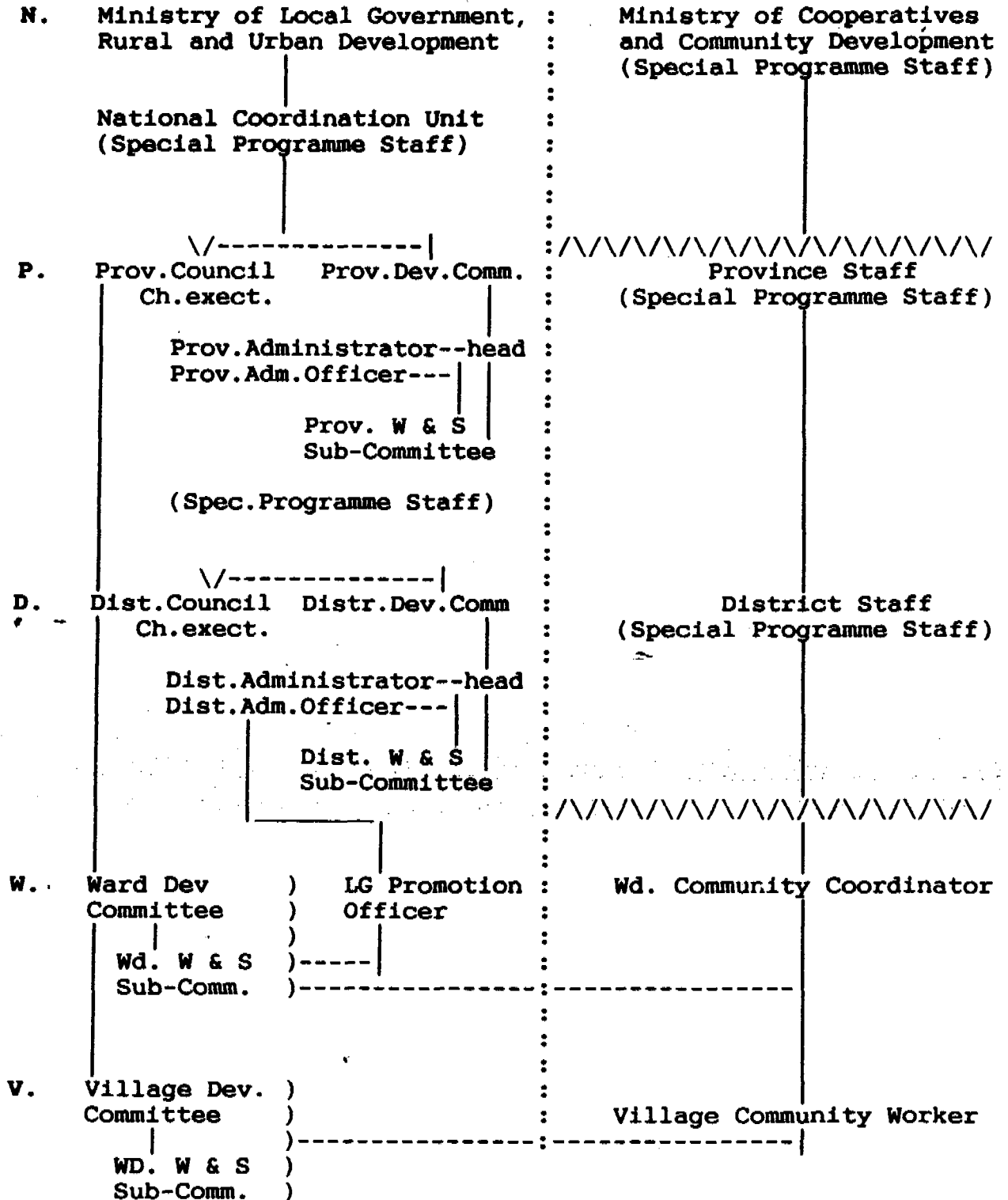
- preparation of guidelines for planning procedures, plan preparation, financial management, monitoring, evaluation, training, motivational work, etc.;
- overall (coordinative) planning;
- guidance in and synchronisation of component planning;
- synchronisation of implementation of the various components;
- overall monitoring;
- organisation of studies, especially those relating to overall goals - including evaluation studies; and
- managing the feedback of experiences from ongoing and completed work into subsequent planning.

Thus defined, the crucial importance of coordination in programmes such as the present one can hardly be disputed.

The figure overleaf displays what is considered as the main coordinating structure in this programme.

THE MAIN CO-ORDINATING STRUCTURE :

LEVEL



Below follow some observations relating to the figure. This discussion may be substantially broadened and concretised at follow-up stages by the involved bodies.

Whereas the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development through its National Coordination Unit is formally allocated the role of overall coordination, the figure suggests that important coordinating functions are also performed by the Ministry of Cooperatives and Community Development. In particular, this appears to be the case for the national and local level bodies of this Ministry - which is illustrated by a dotted line between the two Ministries at those respective levels. Thus, at the national level, the latter Ministry is expected to and is actually in the process of preparing guidelines for important aspects of planning, and is also assigned the responsibility for working out guidelines for monitoring of the participatory aspects of the programme.

These guidelines are presumably expected to be complementary to the similar documentation having been or being worked out by the National Co-ordination Unit.

The different guidelines seem to be targeted to different actors in the programme, in general those belonging to the respective ministries themselves. To the team, however, it is not at all clear how these different aspects of planning and monitoring can be divided up in this way, without causing substantial communication problems and disruptions to the operation of the programme.

In the opinion of the review team, people's participation is such a central strategic aspect of the present programme that any guidelines relating to this issue must necessarily be known and adhered to by all the actors involved in the planning, implementation and monitoring processes. This applies not least to the MLGRUD officers who are centrally placed in the coordinating (including planning) and decision-making structures at the different levels, without apparently being a primary target group for these guidelines.

A study of the preliminary guidelines which have so far been worked out, underlines this view. (ref. more on this later).

The situation is also aggravated by an apparent lack of recognition among some bodies of the coordinating role assigned to the National Coordination Unit (NCU) in the programme, and of the often inadequate communication between the NCU and other bodies involved. A highly revealing indication of this was the observation that while the guidelines which had by the time of the review been worked out by the Ministry of Cooperatives and Community Development (MCCD), had been forwarded to NORAD/Harare, persons in the NCU were not aware that they existed and were even being tested out in the field.

The review team believes that programme requirements, together with a desire among programme staff to rectify the above

mentioned incongruences, will probably lead to improved cooperation in this respect. However, the team has paid special attention to this issue also because it is considered a precondition for the sustainability of the decentralized and integrated programme model that such division of coordinating responsibilities are not allowed to prevail.

It may also be mentioned that the MCCD is expected to perform important training task as well as to organise or undertake studies relating to important programme goals. It may well be that they are the appropriate body to do this. Problems are, however, likely to arise if other agencies are not consulted and efforts are not undertaken to make these activities compatible with other programme activities. In addition, substantial operational economy would be expected to accrue if such activities could be coordinated and possibly integrated with similar activities of other agencies. Again, the need is stressed for the general acceptance of one coherent - although vertically divided - coordinating administrative structure.

At the provincial and district levels, coordinating functions appear to be placed more firmly in the hands of bodies belonging to the MLGRUD, although the team was made aware of exceptions. At these levels, there is, however, another potentially complicating factor, namely the existence of parallel political (Council and Party) and central Government administrative structures. In practice, however, this does not seem to have represented much of a problem. On the contrary, cooperation between the two structures appears to have been good. This is, presumably, largely due to the key positions of the Provincial and District Administrators and the Administrative Officers (belonging to the MLGRUD and thereby centrally placed at their respective levels in the present programme) both within the administrative sphere and vis-a-vis the political leadership (ref. the figure). In other words, the lead and link roles of the Administrators (which may partly be performed by their subordinate Administrators) in development affairs generally is fully compatible with their assigned coordinating role in the present programme.

At the ward and village levels, shared responsibility for coordinating tasks between the MLGRUD and the MCCD again becomes a major issue. On the administrative side, the tendency has been for the staff belonging to the MCCD (the Ward Community Coordinators and the Village Community Worker) to become the principal actors, while the MLGRUD's Promotion Officers have, at least in some instances, tended to be pushed out on the sideline. This may largely be due to the simple fact that the former greatly outnumber the latter, and that the capacity which they represent is absolutely necessary for promoting people's participation. The point to be made in the present context is that the promotion of people's participation largely means liaisoning - between the people and the administrators, also at higher levels,

between groups of people, and between people and their elected representatives.

In other words, their functions are largely coordinative, and as such have vital bearings on overall programme design. Nevertheless, it would appear reasonable under any circumstances, recognising the focus of the programme and given the present administrative set-up, to have the MCCD playing a crucial role in the programme at the local levels. Also, coordination generally becomes much easier at the lower levels, due to factors such as the links between the actors being shorter and more direct, the tasks being more concrete, and the pressure for demarcation and assertion of own administrative boundaries and positions being generally much less. The dispersion of responsibility for liaisoning at these lower levels is, thus, considered as being much less of a problem than the dispersion of coordinating responsibility at the national level.

A major challenge which one is up to in trying to institute unambiguous coordinating structures and mechanisms, is to convince the involved bodies that renunciation of overall coordinating functions to another body may not necessarily mean reduced influence on their part in decision-making relating to their own special field of competence. This would primarily depend on the modes and atmosphere of cooperation - for which the attitude of the coordinating bodies vis-a-vis the other cooperating agencies and respect of their special competence would be crucial.

The team would like to stress that the functions assigned to the Ministry of Cooperatives and Community Development are crucial indeed to successful operation of the present programme. But as the present activities of the MCCD to a large extent are of a coordinating nature, a major design problem would seem to be that these tasks are not the direct responsibility of the bodies which have been assigned the overall coordinating role.

Logically, and in the perspective of this particular Programme, the optimal solution would appear to be the integration of the community development functions of the present MCCD into the MLGRUD. However, this is an issue on which we assume that the IRWSS Programme have little or no influence, and we therefore refrain for further elaboration of this point.

Another restructuring which has been suggested to the team, and which from the point of view of the programme design is even more profound, is the placement of the direct responsibility for the district projects with the Rural District Councils, as is the practice in several other countries. This would imply a direct responsibility on their part for managing the project funds. In principle we find this suggestion extremely interesting, and we see a number of problem areas on which its implementation might have a decidedly positive effect. There are, however, equally many implications requiring clarification at high political and

administrative levels, and further discussions on the theme are therefore not considered appropriate in the context of this review. We may only add that if the above devolution of responsibilities for the integrated district projects at is being considered in the future, we recommend that it is first tried out on an pilot, experimental basis in one province only.

We have dealt with coordination issues at some length because they are seen as the most crucial ones in relation to the sustainability of the present development endeavours. Besides, they are very important in relation to operational effectiveness and efficiency of the programme. Relations between the different Government organisations involved, and between the Government and other agencies could also have been discussed here. We have, however, restricted ourselves to what we consider as the most pressing coordination problems, both in order to place focus where we feel it should mainly be at present, and because we have not sufficient information about and insight into interministerial relationships.

Finally, we will just mention that we have not dealt with overall policy formulation in this chapter. Such formulation, which may also be considered as a coordination function, is placed at higher levels, most directly the National Action Committee. Any reorganisations of the programme would have to be decided by them.

5. - PLANNING MODE

The preliminary planning guidelines which have been worked out by the National Coordination Unit, spell out a strategy of planning with an unmistakable blueprint notion. The approach advocated is for a comprehensive inventory to be made of water resources, latrines, and relevant natural and societal aspects, then for a long-term development plan to be worked out, and, on the basis of this, for the preparation and presentation of a three-year project document to constitute a part of the present programme. So far, one has not been able to adhere to this sequence of work in any district.

Relating to the discussion in chapter 2 above, the team thinks that there exists a need for installing more of a process notion and greater flexibility into planning. The appropriateness of preparing a long-term district development plan for water and sanitation at the initial stage, before working out a project document, is seriously questioned. For one thing, one would hardly be in a position to secure much people's participation in this initial comprehensive planning exercise, which would then become functionally largely separated from the preparation of the project proposal. And more generally, although the plan would certainly be of more overall nature than the project document,

it is far from clear how such a substantive plan should guide the preparation of the project document, because the former would, it is thought, have to be based on precisely the kind of assessment and decision-making exercise which is intended in the preparation of the project document, for it to become really meaningful.

The review team therefore suggests that one should consider changing the sequence of intended events. Rather than basing (or pretending to base) the project document on a comprehensive district plan, one should seek to derive the latter from a sequence of project documents, with a view to have towards the end of the project period, in any one particular district, a fairly well worked out plan for remaining works to be done in the fields of water supply and sanitation during some years ahead. In line with this reasoning, one should also not think in terms of a blueprint project document for what is considered to be the whole project period, but rather in terms of annual documents, each containing well documented immediate priorities as well as, hopefully, gradually better founded perspectives of priorities and desired developments in the longer term. In this way, a comprehensive plan would be gradually concretised and grow out, so to speak, from a continuous planning endeavour in the course of the project period. This planning endeavour would thus also represent a constructive learning exercise on the part of all involved bodies. And as any specific, immediate investments at any stage should be based on well founded priorities, the team feels convinced that the likelihood of wrong or faulty investments would not be greater (in fact, probably smaller) than in the case of planning and implementation in accordance with the present concept.

Certainly, an important requirement would be a thorough mapping exercise initially of, particularly, directly observable, quantifiable and objectively verifiable phenomena - such as important aspects of the natural environment, the institutional framework, the supply of public services, the incidence of diseases, and certain other social factors. The team thus agrees with the emphasis in the existing guidelines on the initial establishment of a solid inventory, and recommends that more time be set aside for this than seems to have been done in the projects which have so far been started up.

Complementary to the above is the view, as also presented in chapter 2, that flexibility as regards the duration of the programme in any one district should also be built in as an operational principle, in order both to secure compatibility between, on the one hand the local institutional capacity and competence and, on the other hand, the actual work to be done at any one point in time; to be able to adjust the total inputs in accordance with actual needs, which will vary; and to be able take cognisance of differences of other kinds.

Another more specific planning issue which we would like to raise under this heading, is the requirement stated in the Programme Agreement (point 4.1) for detailed descriptions to be presented to NORAD by the end of January of activities to be implemented in the course of the next financial year. The team feels strongly that adherence to this requirement may have a negative effect on planning in the districts. This would be so firstly because detailed planning under such circumstances will be undertaken without knowledge of the exact amount of money to be made available for the planning period, secondly because it would lead to an unfortunate concentration of plan preparation for the next year at such an early stage that only limited experience from the work undertaken in the present year may be drawn upon. The latter point is, then, connected to our preference for a learning, process mode of planning.

Instead, we recommend that the parties consider to institute the same two-stage approval procedure as is now practiced in most NORAD-supported integrated district development programmes. The basic approach is as follows: Only general perspectives as well as sketches of new proposed activities are presented for discussion at the annual meeting, in which an agreement in principle may be reached to support activities proposed and even others and a total budget is committed (subject to formal approval at the following country programme negotiations). On the basis of this agreement and allocations, the district authorities may subsequently more confidently embark upon detailed planning of the activities agreed upon in principle, after which a final annual plan document (which may also contain activities to be continued in further years) is forwarded to the NAC and NORAD for final approval. Further flexibility may be instituted through the allocation at the annual meeting of a, preferably small, district specific contingency funds, which may cover any activities which may come up and be deemed as support worthy towards the end of the financial year.

A specific point which we would like to stress in this connection is that it should be the district authorities which should initiate and take direct responsibility for the planning process leading up to the annual meeting, i.e. that these authorities should not only be left with concretising activities according to priorities decided on at the national level. The main coordinating mechanisms to be applied at this level should, as stressed under point 4 above, be general aims, planning guidelines, and monitoring of actual adherence to the policies of the Programme.

6. PROGRAMME DURATION, SPEED OF IMPLEMENTATION, AND INCORPORATION INTO THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

One will have to recognise that the overall aims of the Programme, i.e. improved health conditions through the integrated provision of protected water supplies, sanitation facilities, and hygiene/health education to people in the rural areas, are ambitious ones, the fulfillment of which will be a long-term endeavour indeed.

Although all needs can certainly not be met through this programme, even with financing also by other donors than NORAD, the team is of the firm opinion that the programme should go on for a long enough period to have substantial impacts on rural water supply and sanitation over at least most of the country. This would mean an involvement over many years, probably more than ten.

A specific argument in favour of a long-time involvement is that the marginal benefits of investments would be expected to increase over time, due to increased efficiency and effectiveness of the work undertaken - as more experiences are being gained, as people become more alert and involved, and as staff professionalism increases. A further argument is an increased likelihood that the tasks and procedures instituted may be more readily sustained after a long programme period, as they would be expected to have become more firmly ingrained into the administrative system. And a final, very important argument is that programmes which so directly arouse people's expectations, must carry and fulfill a promise that they will be helped - implying that substantial improvements on a broad scale would have to be achieved.

The review team feels a need to reiterate what was already stated in chapter 2 that the launching of the integrated district approach represents considerable new challenges. We would therefore not consider any arguments on the part of any donor to the effect that long previous involvement in the water supply sector may now call for a reduction in the transfer to the sector (including sanitation) as particularly relevant. The donors which have now taken upon themselves to support this new, demanding endeavour - in this case not least NORAD - should under uninterrupted conditions feel morally obliged to continue their support for a substantial number of years to come.

Programme duration is also related to the speed of implementation, which is again connected to the degree of deployment in the programme of special administrative and management resources. The latter has, in its turn, direct bearings on sustainability after the programme period.

The importance which should be attached to the question of sustainability calls, in the view of the team, for a restrictive attitude towards the recruitment of specific programme staff-expatriates as well as Zimbabweans.

We tend to think that one has in the past gone somewhat too far in the opposite direction, which is probably related to a greater emphasis on speed than we now consider appropriate.

In the future, we think that the number of support staff at national level should be reduced - provided that decentralised planning and decision-making routines are initiated. In fact, the review team consider that after guidelines have been finalised and procedures more agreed, there would be a scope for a general reduction of staff involved in the programme at the national level, which would mean that ordinary Government posts may not have to be created for the replacement of the whole complement of present support staff.

A critical eye must also be kept on the need for and roles of special staff at provincial and district levels, in order that they do not take upon themselves functions which should be firmly placed with the permanent staff, or exert undue pressure for speed in implementation.

7. BRIEF REFLECTIONS ON OTHER ISSUES.

7.1 Guidelines for Planning and Monitoring.

It has already been stated (Chapter 4) that both the National Coordination Unit and the Ministry of Cooperatives and Community Development are to work out planning and monitoring guidelines. In addition to the reflections made in Chapter 3, the review team would like to make the following brief observations regarding this issue:

Firstly, there exists, in the view of the team, a need for working out one composite set of guidelines in an easily accessible form and format, containing the basic set of principles and requirements in brief, which would target all involved staff and peoples representatives, even at the local level. This would be important for everybody involved to share the same knowledge and perception about the approach.

Furthermore, principles and procedures for planning and monitoring should be incorporated into the same document, as these functions are intimately connected to each other in a process approach with people's participation. In addition, more elaborate, detailed guidelines would be needed for each of the two functions, although the team would call for a careful examination of what would actually be considered necessary and appropriate, especially on the planning side.

In particular, great care must be taken not to enforce provisions on the local level bodies which would counteract the desirable principle of continuous bottom-up planning.

Secondly, the review team consider the planning guidelines worked out by the National Coordination Unit as lacking in vision and perspective about the task to be performed.

While details regarding plan contents and formats are useful and even necessary within limits, these need to be placed in a broader setting. Moreover, the guidelines do not reflect basic requirements in the planning process for securing people's participation (which is, as we have argued above, central to the whole planning exercise), and they say almost nothing about how to promote the vital integrative component of hygiene/health education. And additionally - they lay the foundation for the, in the team's opinion, unfortunate principles of comprehensive district planning as preceding the preparation of any project document, and of a basically blue-print approach in the latter. On the other hand, much of what is lacking in these guidelines is found in the guidelines prepared by the MCCD; the case for integration therefore appears as rather obvious.

Thirdly, the review team was disappointed to find that virtually no guidelines, except some reporting forms, seem to have been worked out on monitoring. In the light of observations made above, it is recommended that work on monitoring guidelines be revived and closely integrated with refinements of the planning guidelines.

7.2 Sanitation Education.

It is not only in the planning guidelines that the issue of sanitation education is largely absent; it does also not loom large in other documents, such as progress reports. Still, we were during our field visits convinced that quite a lot of commendable work is being done in this field, but that this appears to be conducted in a somewhat ad-hocish way.

The review team is of the opinion that there is a case for more formalization of the execution of this task. Moreover, the character of this work suggests, in our view, that transfer of information to and the actual interaction with the people on this issue should be made the prime responsibility of the Village Community Workers - which would to some extent seem to actually represent a formalisation of present practice. The reasons for this suggestion are

1 - that the Ministry of Health do not have enough staff at local levels who could do this on a sufficiently intensive scale, and

2 - that it would seem advantageous to integrate this component as part of the general community mobilisation efforts which will primarily have to be the direct responsibility of the Village Community Workers.

However, the responsibility for working out and disseminating education material as well as for training of the community based staff must continue to be with the MOH.

7.3 Water Supply: Responsibility for Siting, Drilling and construction of Headworks.

From the initiation of the integrated district projects, there has existed a lack of clarity about the responsibility for these tasks when relating to borehole based schemes.

At present, work is partly done by the DDF and partly by the Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Development (MEWRD). Whereas some clarifications seem to have been made as regards drilling, the uncertainties regarding the other tasks remain.

This is an example of an issue that should be resolved at the national level, as the division of responsibilities in the districts should reflect national policy on the matter. It exemplifies, in other words, the facilitating role which the national level programme authorities should perform vis-a-vis the lower level bodies.

This problem also more indirectly pinpoints another important design requirements in such programmes; the need for all agencies involved to have representatives at the main coordination level, in this case the district level. In the present situation, when the issue of responsibilities has not so far been appropriately solved at the national level, the lack of a representative of the MEWRD in the districts has also thwarted efforts to settle the issue at this level.

Immediate steps should be taken to have this problem resolved.

7.4 The Choice of Water Supply Technology.

The review team's impression is that the choice of technology is, at least in most cases, governed by the principle that the simplest possible facility be constructed to supply adequate amounts of good water. It is, however, also clear that in some areas there are just no alternatives to boreholes. In exceptional cases even boreholes may not do. Thus, in certain parts of Mt. Darwin district where water is difficult to find and often saline, gravity pipe water schemes appear to be the only realistic option. If so, we are of the definite opinion that this should in principle be accepted within the present programme; it would be unfortunate if certain areas were left unserved because alternatives to the main promoted technology types would be required, provided such alternative facilities may be constructed within reasonable cost limits.

The team is nevertheless left in some doubt about how systematic the approach is to finding the most appropriate (i.e. basically the simplest) technology alternative; certain pieces of information indicated that there may be some shortcomings in this respect. Apart from the technical dimension this is also organisationally not a quite straight forward question, because

three different agencies are involved in the construction of the three main types of facilities - shallow wells, deep wells and boreholes.

Some specific attention to this issue in the future is therefore recommended.

7.5 Operation and Maintenance of Water Supply Facilities.

Appropriate operation and maintenance of the water points mainly depend on two factors:

1. The motivation and involvement of the local communities, and
2. the efficiency and effectiveness with which the DDF is able to operate its 3-tier maintenance system.

The former is important both in relation to the day-to-day maintenance and minor repair works which the communities and pumpminders are expected to attend to themselves, and to the channeling of requests for attention by the district maintenance teams. The extent to which this may happen is believed to be closely related to the effectiveness with which national and training activities are performed in the communities. Thus, like hygiene/health education, the issue of operation and maintenance of the water points should be an integral part of the general community mobilisation effort.

The District Development Fund seems, on the whole, to have made good progress with the introduction of its maintenance system. This positive judgement tallies well with the positive impression which the review team got regarding the work generally performed by this agency at district level.