



MNSSP Review Brief – Public Works Programme Stakeholder Review



What is the most important or interesting fact about the programme?

- Financial management of the programme
- Change from 2 cycles to 4 cycles per year
- Programme's ability to provide food security
- Communities build community assets and earn money in the process

What are the successes of the programme over the last years?

- After 4 years, assets can be seen and the communities retain and maintain them
- Country wide programme in all councils with a strong focus on economic empowerment
- Significant coverage of Malawi's poor and ultra-poor
- Active participation by communities from development to implementation and strong community ownership
- Launch of the Mthandizi MIS



What are the issues that did not go well?

- Persistence of 'ghost workers', timeliness of disbursement of funds, and significant political interference
- Benefits are eluded because they are small, timeliness of payments
- Inadequate data sharing between implementing partners and Government
- Lack of monitoring systems at district level and late disbursement of funds, lack of capacity to provide monthly reports

How do you feel about the programme? Pessimistic or optimistic? Why?

- Optimistic: Communities take active role in design of PWP and programme is doing better than others
- Optimistic: Catchment area approach and repeat targeting are right approaches
- Optimistic: Lot of support from local, district, and national leadership
- Cautiously optimistic: PWP needs stronger impacts and communities need to graduate to make PWP sustainable



What has been learned?

- PWP have the potential for strong impacts based on the repeat targeting and the catchment approach
- Linking VSL to PWP can help improve impact
- Participatory participation of project identification is key and the selection of catchment areas is better than covering whole districts
- With community participation projects are more successful
- Top-down approach to PWP has not been successful and communities need to solve their own problems from the bottom-up

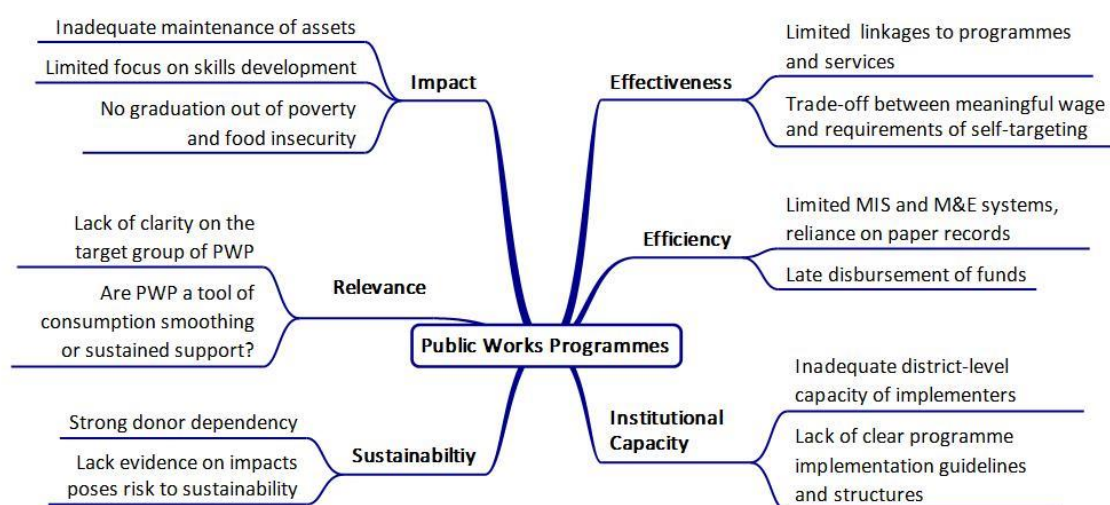


MNSSP Review Brief – Public Works Programme Stakeholder Review

This brief summarizes key discussion points and recommendations made at the MNSSP Review workshop on Public Works Programmes, held at Crossroads hotel on the 5th of May 2016 in Lilongwe.

The purpose of the workshop was to evaluate the progress made by Public Works Programmes against the MNSSP results matrix and facilitate a critical discussion amongst programme implementers on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, institutional capacity, and sustainability of micro-finance programmes under the MNSSP.

Summary of key challenges observed



Traffic Light Evaluation of Public Works Programmes: Strategic outcomes

Strategic outcomes						
Outcome	Baseline	Source	Target	2016	Source	Comments
% of households that are food secure all year round	89%	Committee on Agriculture & NRM	95%			<p>The MVAC report could be useful to suffice this indicator</p> <p>Stakeholder comments: Anecdotal evidence and impact evaluations show that so far PWP have not contributed much towards improved food security. A 2014 impact evaluation of the LDF PWP found limited impact on food security. It was suggested that the lack of repeat targeting and the short work cycles with low wages were the main reason for the lack of impact. It was suggested that these factors have been addressed in MASAGF IV and stakeholders expressed confidence that the new approach will be more effective. Generally speaking the food security of most Malawians has worsened over the last year, mainly due to weather related factors, such as floods and droughts. However, it was also recognized that social protection programmes, and especially PWP, have not been very effective in improving resilience.</p>
Proportion of households who are extremely poor	24%	IHS, 2010	10%			<p>New IHS data not yet out to ascertain this indicator.</p> <p>Stakeholder comments: During the discussion of this indicator there was an interesting disagreement between stakeholders on the exact target group of PWP. Some maintained that PWP beneficiaries should be poor with labour capacity and not ultra-poor as they often do not have the capacity and energy for heavy manual labour. Other</p>



						programmes, such as the SCT, should take care of the poorest, as they are not fit for PWP. Others, however, argued that PWP also target the ultra-poor with labour capacity. It was recognized that this needs to be clarified and a clear target group for PWP needs to be defined, within an analysis of overall social support provided in Malawi.
Proportion of households who are moderately poor	26%	IHS, 2010	17			Difficult to ascertain the figure because data is not available
Proportion of HH with access to economic and social amenities	TBC	None	TBC			Stakeholder comments: It was recognized that PWP have insufficiently focused on facilitating increased socioeconomic wellbeing of beneficiaries, beyond the transfer of wages.

1) How relevant are Public Works Programmes?

PWP are social protection instruments with the triple objectives of providing temporary employment, generating and/or maintaining labour-intensive infrastructural projects and transferring skills. PWP have been implemented in Malawi at least since the mid-1990s. Large-scale programmes were either short-term employment PWP or labour-intensive infrastructure provision. Currently, there are three main PWP in the country. They differ in terms of objectives, design, and scope:

- EU's Rural Road Improvement Programme: Labour-intensive infrastructure provision
- MASAF IV's PWP: Repeatedly targeted beneficiaries over a three-year period
- WFP's Food for Asset: Combines PWP activities with promotion of income generating activities

Evidence discussed by stakeholders

Employment	Malawi's labour market has large incidences of unemployment and underemployment that are either chronic, shock-induced or seasonal. All types of unemployment and underemployment exist and it is difficult to distinguish them. Traditionally, PWP respond mainly to seasonal and shock induced unemployment and underemployment. Recently, programmes have targeted households living in chronic poverty caused by chronic unemployment.
Design and objectives	There seems to me a mismatch between PWP design and objectives: short-term PWP at a low wage rate are an ineffective poverty reduction instrument in context of chronic poverty (insufficient value, value not accounting for household structure and needs, insufficient duration to trigger sustainable welfare enhancement).
Work conditionally	It can be extremely taxing for poor households (particularly if with relatively little labour capacity) to meet the work conditionality in order to access the cash transfer. It may lead to inefficient allocation of time away from more productive – welfare enhancing – activities. More on this in the impact section.
Infrastructure and assets	Malawi has significant unmet needs with respect to infrastructure that could facilitate local economic growth and market access. There is a need to increase resilience and productivity through improved farming techniques. It is therefore not surprising that PWP are very popular in Malawi and, at least theoretically, PWP can play an important role in improving market access, productivity and resilience. However, it is important to ensure that the infrastructure and assets created are of high quality and even if they are, there is little evidence of significant impacts such assets on households or community level indicators.
Skills	Limited emphasis in project design on the development/acquisition of skills that can increase employability/productivity in the long term. Stronger focus on skills enhancement will require higher per beneficiary investment (admin costs).



Key questions on the relevance of PWP

- How to increase the “social protection” function of PWs for the chronic poor?
- Some insights from PSNSP: Payment level accounts for household size; Long term permanence; Individuals move across PW and CTs as their labour capacity changes (illness, pregnancy)
- Are PWs the most relevant SP instrument (compared to CTs) in reducing chronic poverty if they do not deliver skills and quality assets? Cost-benefit analysis needed
- How to tailor PW design to better respond to seasonality and in emergency context?

Stakeholder discussion

Stakeholders discussed the design and objectives of Malawi's PWP, in particular the Local Development Fund's (LDF) PWP, and in how far their design and implementation reflects the triple objectives of PWP and the particular needs of Malawi's rural poor.

Stakeholders agreed that there is a need to develop a clear definition of key objectives, expected outcomes, and the target group. Interestingly, there was some disagreement amongst stakeholders whether the ultra-poor with labour or the poor with labour capacity are the target group of Malawi's PWP. Based on clarified objectives and outcomes, programmes should be re-designed to ensure that their design and implementation are geared towards these parameters.

This raised the following question: If the poorest 10 percent of ultra-poor and labour constrained benefit from the SCT and PWP (according to the MoLGRD) target the poor with labour capacity, is there any support for those not falling into these categories (such as the ultra-poor with labour or the labour-constrained poor)?

Stakeholders observed that various PWP implementers have different approaches to the implementation of PWP, including different objectives and implementation modalities. Programme implementation varies considerably with respect to the target group, wage rate, number of working days, and the length and timing of a work cycle. Stakeholders recognized the need to harmonize the objectives and implementation of PWP programmes across implementers.

Despite recent policy changes at the national level, the question whether Malawi's PWP are primarily a tool of consumption smoothing through one-off short term PWP or are designed to build resilience and provide sustained support through long-term programmes is still not sufficiently resolved.

Stakeholders recognized that, despite significant investments into PWP in Malawi, graduation of beneficiaries out of poverty and food insecurity has not been achieved and a rethinking of the contribution of PWP to Malawi's social protection system was suggested.

It was further suggested, that there is a need to demonstrate the importance of long term PWP and repeat-targeting of beneficiaries as opposed to short-term programmes and closely follow the implementation of the MASAF IV PWP, which focuses on catchment management and repeated targeting of beneficial. If this approach is found to be successful and accepted by national and local-level stakeholders, other PWP should be aligned towards that approach.

It was further discussed that efforts should be increased to ensure that existing PWP and those PWP implemented in the future are designed to be able to respond to (food security) shocks. It was suggested that this could entail flexibility with respect to the caseload of beneficiaries (bringing more beneficiaries into the programme), the length and timing of work cycles, as well as the wage level, which could be adjusted during a crisis.



Stakeholder recommendations

- 1) **Develop a clear definition of objectives and design parameters:** Based on clarified objectives and outcomes, programmes should be re-designed to ensure that their design and implementation are geared towards these parameters.
- 2) **Eligibility criteria:** Need to define the eligibility criteria and target group for PWP, within a comprehensive analysis of social support provided to Malawi's poor and ultra-poor.
- 3) **Harmonize the objectives and design parameters of PWP across implementers and ensure consistency:** Harmonize target group, duration of employment, wage rate.
- 4) **PWP to provide sustained support:** Ensure that PWP provide sustained support to beneficiaries through long-term programmes and repeat-targeting of beneficiaries.
- 5) **Build the evidence based for sustained PWP:** Evaluate the implementation of the new implementation approach of the LDF PWP, which implements PWP with repeat targeting of beneficiaries and focuses on 'catchment' areas.
- 6) **Strengthen the capacity of PWP to respond to shocks:** Develop a concept of how PWP could be designed to be more shock-responsive. Consider the feasibility of both vertical and horizontal expansion.
 - a. **Vertical expansion:** A solution suggested by the group was to ensure that there is flexibility with respect to working time (increase the number of working days – as it currently is done under LDF) and payment of wages (possibility to increase wages) in response to shocks.
 - b. **Horizontal expansion:** Another possibility would be to increase the caseload of PWP in a crisis by adding new beneficiaries, if only for a short period.

2) What is the impact of Public Works Programmes?

Generally speaking, there is a lack of rigorous evidence globally and in Malawi (as compared to CTs). PWP are often analysed along three impact vectors: wages, assets and skills

Evidence discussed by stakeholders

Wages earned	Global evidence suggests that short-term PWP implemented in contexts of chronic poverty allow at best short-term consumption smoothing. At best the provide poverty alleviation but not poverty reduction. Promotive SP impacts are unlikely as asset accumulation rarely occurs due to the low wage levels, short employment durations, and lack of predictability. Small evidence base on programmes offering ongoing employment suggest that they may have more substantial and sustained impacts than short-term PWP.
	In line with global experiences, there are few signs of productive impacts in the context of short-term PWP in Malawi. No indications that short-term PWP strengthen the resilience of beneficiaries to withstand future shocks by building up savings during the PWP participation. Malawi is no exception in that respect. In Malawi, the only robust study found no evidence of improved food security for participants of MASAF III. In fact, negative spillovers were detected
Assets created	The main difference of PW and CT programmes is that PWP aim to benefit communities not only through the transfer paid but additionally through the assets created or service provided. Depending on the type of asset or service, the expectation is that they: generate direct or indirect income opportunities for communities, shield against the impact of shocks, such as floods and droughts, or improve the quality or access to social services. Little is known to what extent and under which conditions these assumed benefits actually materialise. The limited evidence is largely based on anecdotal evidence and community perceptions gathered shortly after programme completion.
Skills developed	Positive impacts through the skills vector manifest themselves in the form of improved market-based employment prospects or in the form of a sustained increase in income from entrepreneurial activities or on their own farms where new skills are applied. Three main channels of skills acquisition: Learning-by-doing through regular PW activities, on-the-job training linked to regular PW activities and complementary training.



Caveat: Opportunity costs of participating in PWP: Each MK transferred to a beneficiary does not necessarily increase total household income by the same amount as the real transfer value depends on the opportunity costs of participating in a PWP.

- Foregone income if participants reduce other income-generating activities. Global evidence is mixed. The only rigorous evaluation of a PWP in Malawi detected no evidence of labour displacement even though the programme was implemented during the farming season
- Reduction in subsistence activities if the immediate income through the PW wage reduces the attractiveness of deferred income through farming. In Malawi, such conflicts were observed under MASAF III after an extra employment cycle was offered during the farming season
- Participation has direct costs, e.g., for transport or for the use of one's own tools. Under MASAF III, workers complained about having to use their own hoes, etc.

Key questions on the impact of PWP

- **PWP participation has significant opportunity costs:** How can PWP be designed to avoid or minimize opportunity costs?
- **MASAF III evaluation found no impact on food security:** How is this possible and how can PWP be designed to increase food security?
- **Assets created are often of inadequate quality:** How can the quality of assets be improved without significant sacrifices in coverage or the ratio of wages to other costs?
- **Participation in MASAF III increased the likelihood of receiving FISP coupons but not the use of fertiliser:** How can this be explained and how could PWP beneficiaries improve their agricultural productivity?
- **Skills development:** Can and should skills development be put at the centre of PWP?
- **Cost-benefit:** Once opportunity costs, the cost of skills creation and quality asset creation are factor in what is the cost-benefit assessment of PWs compared to other social protection instruments?

Stakeholder discussion

Stakeholders recognized that in the past inadequate attention has been paid towards the maintenance of community-owned infrastructure, which could limit the cost-effectiveness of PWP. Stakeholders agreed that PWP or will only be cost-effective if skills are transferred and/or high-quality assets are build. The group further discussed that lack of maintenance could indicate that communities do not adequately value the assets build by PWP. An alternative explanation suggested that communities do not receive enough support to maintain assets.

Concluding the discussion on asset maintenance, the group suggested that going forward a greater emphasis should be placed on the upkeep of community-owned assets. To address the potential under-valuation of assets by communities, stakeholders stressed the need to involve communities in the selection and design of asset to be build.

The plenary recognized that currently there is a limited focus on skills development and training in Malawi's PWP. It was recommended to strengthen this component of PWP and develop a set of skills training that could support an increase of resilience, (agricultural) productivity, as well as employability.

The group acknowledged that participation in PWP has, to our knowledge, no impact on food security (LDF evaluation). Stakeholders suggested that the impact on food security by PWP could be improved by focusing on generating and maintaining assets that have direct impacts on individual or community resilience and food security (irrigation, fish ponds, etc.) rather than building assets that are, in the long-run, expected to have positive impacts on local economies (roads, bridges, etc.).

It was recognized that, to our knowledge, there has not been much graduation under PWP and while they enjoy considerable Government support, donors may not continue to fund a programme that framed as a graduation programme but fails to graduate people in line with its objectives. Stakeholders suggested that a) efforts need to



be made to increase the evidence base on PWP impact in Malawi and b) develop a strategy that could support graduation of PWP.

Stakeholder recommendations

- 1) **Develop a strategy to ensure maintenance of community-owned assets:** Focus on community valuation of assets and strengthen community involvement in the selection and design of asset to be build.
- 2) **Increase focus on skills development:** Strengthen skills development components of PWP and develop a set of skills training curriculum that could support an increase of resilience, (agricultural) productivity, as well as employability.
- 3) **Increase focus on food security:** Focus on generating and maintaining assets that have direct impacts on individual or community resilience and food security (irrigation, fish ponds, etc.) rather than building assets that are, in the long-run, expected to have positive impacts on local economies (roads, bridges, etc.).
- 4) **Increase the evidence base on the impact and cost-effectiveness of PWP in Malawi**

3) How effective are Public Works Programmes?

Evidence discussed by stakeholders

Low transfer value	The self-selection targeting approach requires a wage rate below the market wage for unskilled labour, which result in very low transfer to participants, especially when taking into account opportunity costs
Limited number of working days	PWP only provide employment for a limited number of days per year and repeat targeting is rare, resulting in low and unpredictable transfers
Inadequate asset maintenance	Impact and cost-effectiveness of PWP rests on the quality of assets. Yet, limited attention and resources is currently directed at asset maintenance
Low cost effectiveness	Notwithstanding methodological limitations and variations in programme cost, it is clear that the cost per dollar transferred to beneficiaries is substantially higher in PWP than in CT
Community ownership	Reported tension between need for community ownership and 'elite capture' of implementation decisions

Key questions on the effectiveness of PWP

- **Self-targeting leads to low transfer values:** Are there reforms that could ensure effective targeting and meaningful transfers? Could targeting be more closely linked with the one adopted by SCT?
- Could mobility across PW and SCT be incentivized in accordance to changing household / individual circumstance?
- **Short-term PWP have shown limited impacts in contexts of chronic poverty:** How can PWP be designed to be a long-term, predictable source of income?
- Could transfer value be calculated in relation to household needs (size) in such a way better performing a social protection function?
- **Repeat targeting has shown some promise with respect to households impacts:** How can community resistance to repeat targeting be addressed?
- **Inadequate asset maintenance and community ownership:** How can assessment maintenance and sustainability be ensured?
- **PWP everywhere have high non-transfer costs:** Is there way that would ensure quality assets, significant coverage, and high transfer to total cost ratios?



Stakeholder discussion

Stakeholders discussed that currently PWP do not have strong linkages to complementary programmes, such as Village Savings and Loans (VSL) programmes, or services in the areas of health, education, and agricultural advice. It was proposed that PWP should increasingly focus on facilitating linkages of beneficiaries to relevant programmes and services. It was suggested that work meetings could be used to link beneficiaries to complementary services, as well as attempt to convey behavioral change messages.

Stakeholders suggested that there is a need to rethink the current targeting mechanism, which is based on self-targeting at the low wage rate. Self-selection methods, especially in context of high underemployment and unemployment, require by design a low wage rate to attract only those workers/beneficiaries with little other income generating opportunities. Stakeholders suggested that given Malawi's well-observed slack in the labour market, even low wage rates can be expected attract non-poor workers.

The challenge with self-targeting for PWP in Malawi lies in the trade-off between the need, from a social protection perspective, to have a meaningful wage to support the building of household assets and the requirement to keep the wage low enough not to attract "non-poor workers" (inclusion error).

The plenary suggested to study alternative beneficiary selection mechanisms that can effectively target the poor and ultra-poor with labour capacity while at the same time providing a meaningful transfer/wage. In theory, the LDF PWP should not exclusively employ self-targeting but rather select potential beneficiaries via community targeting. However, this does not seem to be followed in reality. The group suggested that strengthening community targeting mechanisms – potentially moving towards a variation of the SCT's targeting methodology – could allow the wage rate to be raised with less concern about a high wage rate driving high inclusion errors.

One observed challenge was the alleged opposition of the MoLYMD towards higher wage rates for PWP beneficiaries. PWP implementers suggested that the MoLYMD is concerned that higher wages of PWP would make it difficult for coffee and tea plantations to attract labour. Nonetheless, stakeholders propose to find ways to make the transfer more meaningful.

Stakeholder recommendations

- 1) **Strengthen linkages of PWP beneficiaries to complementary services:** Develop a set of services and programmes beneficiaries could be linked too and develop a referral system.
- 2) **Provide meaningful transfers:** Study alternative beneficiary selection mechanisms that can effectively target the poor and ultra-poor with labour capacity while at the same time providing a meaningful transfer.
- 3) **Strengthen community targeting:** Develop a strategy to strengthening community targeting mechanisms – potentially moving towards a variation of the SCT's targeting methodology – that could allow the wage rate to be raised with less concern about it driving high inclusion errors.

4) How efficient are Public Works Programmes?

Evidence discussed by stakeholders

Targeting challenges	Malawi's labour market is characterised by a significant surplus in unskilled labour, which makes self-selection, even at or below the minimum wage, prone to 'inclusion errors'
Cost-benefit analysis	No clear documentation of cost-to-transfer ratios and lack of evidence on cost-benefit analysis of alternative Social Protection instruments.
Implementation trade-off	There is seems to be a trade-off between coverage, the ratio of wages to non-wage costs, and the quality of assets created. The requirement to budget high non-labour costs to ensure quality assets results in a limited percentage of funding going towards wages and constricts coverage. This trade-off reduces the 'value' of PWP as a social protection instruments and limits the impact and coverage of systems that rely heavily on PWP.
Coordination	Limited coordination and harmonization of PWP in Malawi (differences in approaches, objectives, transfer levels), despite significant district overlap



Key questions on the efficiency of PWP

- **Self-targeting challenges:** Targeting the ultra-poor and poor purely based on a self-targeting mechanism can lead to inefficient outcomes in environments with significant slack in the labour market.
- Are there ways to ensure efficient targeting mechanism as well as the provision of a meaningful wage?
- **Requirement of quality assets and high wage-to-other-costs ratios may present a trade-off and limit programme coverage:** How can PWP programmes provide quality assets, improve skills, transfer a meaningful wage, and have a large coverage?
- Is PW the most cost-effective instrument to reach the vast majority of poor household that are not labour constrained (hence not covered under SCT)? Can it efficiently run at large scale?

Stakeholder discussion

It was acknowledged that the limited and fragmented MIS and M&E systems, as well as the reliance on paper records, present a challenge for efficient and effective implementation of PWP. One frequently mentioned example of resulting programme management failures were persistence of 'ghost workers'.

The group recommended all PWP to make use of the Mthandizi PWP MIS, which is currently being developed by the LDF.

Cost- effectiveness was briefly discussed. It was suggested that the main challenge with respect to PWP's cost-effectiveness is the trade-off between the significant planning and managerial efforts required to achieve high-quality assets, which are key in achieving value for money, and the need to expand coverage. No solutions were suggested to overcome this challenge but it was recognized that this trade-off places constraints on PWP's ability to expand coverage in line with need for social support in Malawi.

Recommendations

- 1) **Information management systems:** Ensure more efficient programme management and reporting through the adoption of the Mthandizi PWP MIS for all PWP.



5) What is the institutional capacity of Public Works Programme Implementers?

Evidence discussed by stakeholders

Leadership and management	Inadequate leadership and management competences (strategic, project and change management) at national level, as well as management instability and continuity. Inappropriate political behaviour (influence, compromised commitment and ownership) at district and community level, as well as management instability and continuity and inadequate leadership and project management competences.
Policy, strategy and legislation	Limited awareness, access and knowledge of relevant developmental instruments at national, district and community level. Absence of sub-program strategic plans; fragmented operational guidelines. Persistent misconceptions, absence of orientation and a simplified messages of the MNSSP mainly the district and community level.
Institutional framework and coordination mechanisms	Ineffective institutional and coordinating mechanisms due too inadequate understanding of roles and responsibilities, ineffective communication processes, high membership turnover, absence of policy planning and review dialogue forum at all levels. Competing and conflicting functional roles and responsibilities and misconceptions at the district and community levels.
Human resources	Inadequate staffing levels and work overloads due to vacancies for various reasons; inadequate knowledge in project management; absence of HRD strategy at all levels.
Information systems and technology	Fragmented data management systems among implementers; inadequate computer literacy, lack of orientation and refresher programmes for technical staff at all level. Also, slow progress in development of Mthandizi MIS, unreliable internet connectivity, reliance on manual records and untimely reporting.
Physical resources	Inadequate physical resources for coordinating structures and delays in procurement and maintenance processes at national level. Lack of regular equipment maintenance, multiple users of same resources, inadequate implements (picks, shovels, hoes, etc.) at district and community level.
Programme management	Absence of joint planning and review forum, absence of integrated work plans by partners at national level. Political influence in allocation and diversion of resources to road works at the expense of other public works, ineffective stakeholder management, fragmented M&E at district and community level.

Key questions on the institutional capacity of PWP

- **Management capacity:** How can institutional communication, coordination and collaboration mechanisms be strengthened?
- **Inadequate staffing levels:** How can staffing levels be improved? How can the turnover of senior leadership and managers be reduced?
- **Operational support infrastructure:** What is the necessary investment cost of putting in place adequate operational support infrastructure is in place
- **Fragmented implementation systems:** There is a need to increase Government ownership over PWP and streamline implementation systems with a clear Government-led management structure

Stakeholder discussion

Stakeholders suggested that there is inadequate district-level capacity for the implementation of PWP. LDF employs staff the at district level and provides resources. However, the MoLGRD currently lacks adequate staff and resources at the district level to provide operational support.

Lack of staff was not only observed at the district level but throughout the Government. Currently the MoLGRD is unable to adequately provide vital support functions, such as monitoring and evaluation.



Stakeholders observed a need to elaborate programme implementation structures at national and district level. While there seems to be strong policy support for PWP from the Government, this has not been translated into clear and harmonized implementation structures.

Stakeholders observed that varying programme implementation are currently not causing too much confusion as the LDF PWP is by far the largest programme and is effectively considered to represent the Government's approach to PWP.

In the future, however, with the expected growth of non-LDF PWP, such as WFP's FFA and the EU's RRIMP, it will become increasingly important to harmonize PWP implementation and develop guidelines valid for all programmes, which should be implemented under clear Government leadership.

Stakeholder recommendations

- 1) **Human resource development:** Develop a human resource strategy for PWP implementers, in particular for the MoLGRD to ensure higher staffing levels and appropriate human resource development mechanisms.
- 2) **Harmonization of implementation modalities:** Develop implementation guidelines applied to all PWP, including provisions for targeting, wages, and institutional arrangements.

6) How sustainable are Public Works Programmes?

Evidence discussed by stakeholders

Donor funding	Current levels of donor funding raise financial sustainability concerns. Overall Government contribution to PWP is relatively low, leaving the programmes vulnerable to changes in donor priorities. Low Government funding levels affect implementation of activities and raises the question of programme ownership
Government ownership	Limited Government ownership leads to a fragmented system. Multiple similar and competing programmes can result in shifting priorities of DP resources, with inconsistent approaches, widespread misunderstandings and inadequate support infrastructure
Skills development	Higher investment in productivity and employability enhancement, as well as asset quality is needed. This may imply a reduction in coverage (given budget constraints), as well as a re-focus on some categories of workers, with more potential for increases in employability.

Otherwise, if the focus is on rolling out a large scale safety net, the same social protection objective may be reached with more cost-effective (hence financially sustainable) social protection instruments.

Key questions on the sustainability of PWP

- **Limited Government ownership:** Will the Government take on greater ownership of the programme?
- **Limited financial sustainability:** Are there any reforms that could make the programme more financially sustainable / attractive to Government?
- Are PWs the more cost-effective model to achieve social protection coverage at scale?
- How do political economy considerations play into this?
- **Donor contributions:** How to devise an effective strategy for donors to gradually reduce their contribution to the programme in relative terms

Stakeholder discussion

Stakeholders argued that PWP programmes, compared to other MNSSP programmes, enjoy considerable levels of support from Government and high levels of Government ownership. The Government financial contribution of about 20 percent (to the LDF PWP) was seen as a strong signifier of Government ownership and is considerably



higher than contributions to other MNSSP programmes. The fact that the LDF, seen as a quasi-governmental institution, is implementing about 90 percent of PWP was further taken as an indicator of Government ownership.

While PWP benefit from considerable Government support, it was argued that donors may not continue to fund a programme that framed as a graduation programme but does not focus adequately on graduation and has limited evidence of graduation to show.

Stakeholders suggested that efforts need to be made to increase the evidence base on PWP impact in Malawi and also develop a detailed strategy that could support graduation of PWP beneficiaries.

Stakeholder recommendations

- 1) **Graduation:** Stakeholders suggested to increase the evidence base of PWP impacts in Malawi, as well as develop a strategy that would support graduation of beneficiaries.

Traffic Light Evaluation of Public Works Programmes: Strategic interventions, outputs and activities

Strategic interventions, indicators, baseline values and targets for public works						
Output	Baseline	Source	Target	Actual 2016	Source 2016	Comments
Proportion of land under forestry cover, agro-forestry & fruit tree production	8,440ha	IGPWP	17,000ha	2,936 ha	LA reports	There has been progress towards this area of intervention Stakeholder comments: -The figures for LDF indicate that it's for one cycle of 2016
Proportion of total irrigable land under irrigation	39,000 ha	MolWD	59,000 ha	421 ha	LA reports	Stakeholder comments: -The land used for irrigation is normally at a small scale, which is the reason the indicator was not met. Irrigation activities under PWP tend to be rather small scale, reaching the target of 59,000 ha would require large-scale interventions, which currently do not happen;
Number of km Constructed/ Rehabilitated / maintained per year	2,107km	IGPWP	5,000 km	4,032 km	LA reports	
% of poor HH members participating in public works	38.2%	IGPWP and MASAF	37.4%	391,585 hhs	LA reports	A total of 391,585hhs have been reached with PWP cash transfers. Total number of beneficiaries expected to reach 450,000 final reports are received.

Strategic Outputs and Activities	
Strategic Output Target 1: Increase area under forestry cover, agro-forestry and fruit tree production	
Strategic Activity	Comments
Conduct 28 district sensitisation meetings involving 1,120 DEC members and 168 community sensitisation meetings involving 3360 ADC members.	These meetings were conducted mostly at the inception stage of the programme
Conduct training sessions in Group Dynamics for 168 communities (involving 1,680 members and 2 trainers per group) in year 1.	Watershed and catchment management training conducted in all the councils across the country
Conduct training sessions covering forestation, agro-forestry and fruit tree production technologies targeting 168 PMCs involving a total of 1,680 members in the first 2 years.	
Procure 350 kg seeds, 16.8 million poly tubes, 350 kg chemicals, 3360 shovels, 1680 wheelbarrows, 6,720 watering cans 2,000 m chalk line, for 168 community nurseries in each of the 4 years	



Distribute seeds, poly tubes, chemicals and tools to 168 community nurseries in each of the 4 years.	Yellow	
Conduct supervision visits involving to 168 communities to monitor transplanting of seedlings and management of woodlots and orchards annually.	Yellow	
Provide seed capital for the Village Investment Fund for each of the 168 communities annually	Red	
Strategic Output Target 2: Increase area under irrigation		
Conduct, 28 district sensitisation meetings involving 1,120 DEC members on irrigation and 140 Community sensitisation meetings involving 2,800 members on irrigation for year 1 and 140 community meetings for years 2 to 4.	Green	
Conduct training sessions for 140 communities involving 2,800 farmers in Group Dynamics in each year for 4 years.	Yellow	
Conduct training session for 140 PMCs involving 1,400 people in irrigation in each year for 4 years.	Yellow	
Procure and distribute construction tools (2,800 hoes, 1,400 shovels, 280 wheelbarrows, 280 pick, and 520 knives) for 140 sites each year for 4 years.	Green	
Conduct design studies and prepare 140 scheme designs and construct 140 irrigation schemes in each of the 4 years	Green	
Conduct training sessions for 140 market committees involving 1,400 members each year for 4 years.	Green	
Link 140 irrigation groups involving 3,500 members to VS&L each year for 4 years.	Green	
Conduct 2 central level and 112 district level supervision visits involving central officials	Red	Such visits rarely happen due to limitedness of resources
Pay wages (person days).	Yellow	Wage payments have in some cases delayed
Strategic Output Target 3: Rural Roads Constructed/ Rehabilitated/ Maintained		
Conduct 28 District sensitisation meetings and 112 community sensitisation meetings on roads involving 1,120 DEC members for year 1 and 112 community meetings for years 2 to 4.	Green	
Conduct trainings for 112 communities involving 1,120 participants in Group Dynamics in each year for 4 years.	Red	
Conduct training for 112 PMC'S in road construction / rehabilitation / maintenance in each year for 4 years.	Green	
Conduct field appraisal, prepare cost estimates and supervise construction involving 3 officers one day per road for 112 roads in each of the 4 years.	Green	
Provide seed capital for the Road Maintenance Fund for 10,000 km (MK4,200 / person/km/month - cumulative over 4 years)	Red	
Conduct 2 central levels, 112 district supervision visits involving 4 central officials lasting 4 days per visit and 6 district officials lasting 2 days per visit.	Red	
Pay wages (person days).	Green	
Pay wage administration costs.	Yellow	
Strategic Output Target 4: Increase in Land Area under Soil and Water Conservation		
Conduct 28 District sensitisation meetings involving 40 people per District (1,120) on soil and water conservation and 140 community sensitisation meetings on soil and water conservation for year 1 and 140 community meetings for years 2 to 4.	Yellow	
Conduct training involving 5 communities per District, 10 people per community with 2 facilitators for 140 communities in Group Dynamics in each year for 4 years.	Green	
Conduct training for 140 PMCs in on soil and water conservation.	Yellow	
Procure and distribute 1,000 tonnes vertiver seedling packs, 560 shovels, 280 wheelbarrows, 140 line levels, for 140 community nurseries in each of the 4 years.	Green	



Conduct 10 supervision visits to 5 sites involving 1 officer and 140 communities to monitor soil and water conservation practices (agro-forestry, vertiver planting, contour ridges, box ridges, contour bunds).		
Conduct 2 central level, 112 district supervision visits involving 4 central officials.		
Conduct 10 supervision visits to 5 sites involving 1 officer and 140 communities to monitor soil and water conservation practices (agro-forestry, vertiver planting, contour ridges, box ridges, contour bunds).		
Pay wages (person days).		
Strategic Output Target 5: Improve Harnessing of Water Resources		
Conduct 28 district sensitisation meetings involving 40 people per DEC (1,120 officers) on irrigation and 140 Community sensitisation meetings on water harvesting facilities for year 1 and 140 community meetings for years 2 to 4.		
Conduct training session for 140 communities involving 5 communities per district and 10 people per community with 2 facilitators in Group Dynamics in each year for 4 years.		
Conduct training sessions for 140 PMCs in water harvesting facilities in each year for 4 years.		
Procure and distribute construction tools.		
Conduct 140 design studies prepare 140 designs of water harvesting facilities and construction of 140 water harvesting facilities in each of the 4 years.		
Conduct 2 central level, 112 district supervision visits involving 4 central officials.		
Wages (person days).		