CASE STUDY REPORT

PRIMARY EDUCATION SUPPORT PROGRAMME (PESP)
TANZANIA
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For a primary textbook procurement of this scale and magnitude, and
being a first for the Government of Tanzania, a timeframe of 12-15
months from the signing of the MOU through to delivery, with the
expectation there would be slippage to this time frame, would have been
realistic. In the circumstances, the anticipated time frame of 6 months
was unrealistic.

The provisions of the Government of Tanzania Public Procurement
Legislation required the selected textbooks to go out to restricted
tender. The bidders had to be allowed reasonable time, usually
30 days, in which to prepare (for example confirm prices with their
overseas printers, ensure adequate stocks of paper would be available,
shipping times) and submit their bids. In this instance, the submitted prices
from the publishers were then subject to negotiation between the
Government of Tanzania and each of the publishers. This was a protracted
process.

It is extremely unlikely that such a positive outcome would have been
achieved had a specialist procurement organisation, in the
form of Crown Agents, not been retained by DFID to support PMO-
RALG. Crown Agents contributed their expertise to the procurement
process and did much of the trouble shooting/problem solving. In the
latter category, the poor quality of the data collected by the
PMO-RALG’s EMIS system became a significant issue and led to further delays.

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Within Sub-Saharan Africa, the
weather can materially affect access
and delivery to remote areas, where
road infrastructure is frequently
poor. Tanzania is no exception in
that the arrival of the textbooks to
parts of the country had to be
scheduled to avoid the rainy season.
Otherwise delays of up to 4 months,
waiting for routes to become
accessible, could have adversely
affected delivery timeframes (as they
did for Jadida publishers).

Overall, this has been a successfully
managed programme with positive
outcomes. On the evidence
available, all publishers and Jambo
Plastics have performed
professionally and competently in
adhering to the time frames and
the specific details of their
contracts to which they committed.
In total, over 18.5 million books and
886,724 teacher’s guides were
procured at an average cost of
Tanzanian Shillings 2,717 (USD
1.68/£1.07) per title delivered to
the primary schools. A further
11,302 desks were also procured. A
second procurement of desks is
scheduled at a cost of Tshs
5,971,927,966.80 (£2.14 M).

Textbook programmes are
notoriously difficult to manage and
rarely run smoothly due to the
number of unexpected or
unanticipated hitches, all the more
so when textbooks and desks are
being manufactured offshore and
subject to factors beyond the
immediate control of the suppliers.

“More realistic time frame required”
The quality of production, as set by the tender specifications, has ensured that the schools received textbooks that meet or exceed the minimum standards recommended by the World Bank for their book programmes. There have been complaints about the quality of the content and lack of curriculum alignment of some of the titles. All the titles supplied under this project had previously been certified by EMAC for use in Government of Tanzania primary schools. The number of complaints led to Parliament demanding the EMAC committee be disbanded in 2013.

The plastic desks supplied by Jambo are of sturdy construction and adjustable for height. The desk top may be sloped to assist writing, reading, etc. Given the climate of Tanzania, there will be reservations about how long the wood laminate/metal desks being supplied under PESP will last.

The wood/metal desks are not adjustable. The Director of Education, PMO-RALG recognises that some Districts have failed to adhere to the instructions given to the DEOs (ie. that desks should be given to a strictly limited number of schools in each District) ideally those in most need. A better outcome would have been achieved if Jambo Plastics had been contracted to deliver to selected named schools. The latter is the Director of Education, PMO-RALG’s preferred option for the forthcoming second contract for the supply of additional desks.

The monitoring aspects of the procurement were undertaken by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) and DataVision International.

PWC, hired by the Tanzanian audit authority, have been responsible for overseeing the expenditure of the BAE/Radar funds.

DFID involved DataVision International to build a website to specifically monitor the physical distribution of the textbooks to the schools.

In its first year of operation the website had over 58,000 unique views. The existence of the website, and the publicity it has received through the media, will have contributed to deterring publishers and local officials from inappropriate behaviour.

The website can be accessed at: http://pesptz.org/index.php/home?lang=english