

IGC-Ghana Stakeholder Workshop on Country Strategy

Monday 24th June 2013

Alisa Hotel, Accra, Ghana

Introduction

As the IGC moves into Phase II it has been necessary for all established country programmes to re-visit and consider revisions to the strategic direction of the programme. In light of this IGC-Ghana organised a workshop to bring together key policy stakeholders to discuss topic areas and themes to form the basis of the new Country Strategy Note: the key document outlining the work of the IGC-Ghana country programme.

The workshop was opened by **Dr Nii Sowa** (IGC-Ghana, Country Director) who gave an overview of the IGC, and the history of the IGC-Ghana programme. He explained the purpose and the structure of the workshop and stressed that the demand-driven nature of the IGC's work meant that events such as this were crucial in determining the strategic direction of the work of the organisation.

Dr Henry Telli (IGC-Ghana, In-Country Economist) explained that the IGC had already been having many meetings and discussions with key policymakers, academics, policy think-tanks and civil society in Ghana. From these discussions some ideas – grouped into six broad themes – for research topics had been formulated.

Proposed thematic areas for IGC-Ghana country strategy

Dr. Telli presented three of the proposed thematic areas, as follows:

1. Human Capital

- Explaining regional differences in BECE performance.
- Financing Higher Education in Ghana: the relevance and challenges of student loans.
- Understanding mismatches between graduate skills and industry requirements.
- Explaining fluctuations in EMIS data.
- Measures of public sector labour productivity and identifying the resources/logistics need to monitor performance in the public sector.
- Understanding labour markets inefficiencies and the measurement of unemployment.
- Challenges to managing immigration and immigrants.
- Alternative ways of funding the National Health Insurance Scheme.
- Impact of malaria on school performance.

2. Natural Resource Management

- Impact of small-scale mining on the economy and rural livelihoods.
- Studies on urban waste management.
- Links between tenure security and food security.

3. Agriculture Sector Restructuring

- The risks and constraints to private sector investment in agri-business.
- Understanding the supply response to food prices.
- Welfare analysis of changing food prices.
- Understanding the determinants of real prices of agricultural commodities.

Dr Sam Mensah (IGC-Ghana, Resident Country Director) then presented on the remaining three thematic areas:

4. Macroeconomic Stability

- Fiscal management
- The macroeconomic impact of the public sector wage bill.
- Inflation.
- Exchange rate management.
- The size and sustainability of public debt.

5. Private Sector Development

- The importance of supporting small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- The critical role of local business organisations.
- The need for an enabling legal and institutional environment.
- The role of the financial sector (banking, capital markets, etc.).
- The importance of access to international markets and international institutions that work in the interests of all.

6. Governance, Accountability and Political Economy

- The efficiency of public service delivery.
- Understanding the roots of corrupt practices and the incentives needed to eliminate them,.
- The role of audit and related institutions in tackling corruption.
- Strengthening the role of representative institutions, such as organs and committees of parliament, in providing oversight of government programs.
- Budgetary processes and institutions.
- Local governance.

Following presentation of each of the thematic areas a lively open discussion took place where participants suggested additional areas that would be interest. A list of the topics raised is shown in the **Annex**.

Summary and Next Steps

Following a brief summary of the possible research areas raised in discussion by Dr Telli and **James Bonner** (IGC Hub Economist) Dr Sowa closed the workshop by explaining that the topics that had been raised would be considered and worked into the new Country Strategy Note for IGC-Ghana. This revised country strategy would be further discussed with key policy interlocutors as the work was on-going.

Dr Sowa also explained that the IGC's flexibility allowed it to conduct 'Rapid Response' projects in areas of interest that required the attention of high-quality researchers to answer very specific policy questions, and encouraged the participants to contact IGC-Ghana if any policy issues fitting these criteria arose in their areas of expertise.

Annex – Issues for consideration in the IGC-Ghana Country Strategy

1. Human Capital

- The role of financial institutions in financing Tertiary Education in Ghana.
- A welfare analysis of the beneficiaries of student loans. The impact of student loans on their learning outcomes and achievements.
- Evaluating the outcomes of policy interventions on the uptake of student loans at SLTF: Monitoring and Evaluation after the baseline survey.
- Issues of traffic in urban areas and the impact on productivity, and whether this could be addressed through expansion of public transportation.
- Research into arriving at a working definition of unemployment in Ghana.
- Ways to quicken the attainment of MDG 5 (maternal mortality).
- Ways to increase community engagement in health care.
- Understanding the education market: why are training institutions neglecting mid-level technical skills in favour of business training in Ghana? How should the state be involved, and how could they incentivise private universities?
- The impacts of lack of decent shelter and housing on productivity.

2. Natural Resource Management

- There is chaos in the land system. All players are losing out because of the confusion: land-owners, developers, land users and municipal authorities. This applies to the customary custodians of land. Research on land tenure could be a useful input to the upcoming Land Bill.
- Examining the immigration and migration policy for nomadic settlers. Defining relationships between players to avoid conflicts.
- Issues around urban environmental management, including assessing the impact of recycling in Ghana.
- How Ghana can best benefit from its extractive industries, natural resources and agricultural production. This includes: building the capacity of small-scale miners so that less of the gains from resources flows out of the country; how Ghana can gain benefit from the oil sector; whether incentives paid to encourage FDI are getting good value for Ghana.
- Attitudes of local people to mining policies and interventions.
- The impact of sand winning on the environment.
- The effects of climate change on the coastal zone, and the management of this zone. The benefits/costs of a body to oversee the management of the coastal zone.
- Impact for communities of water borehole projects.
- What are the likely impacts of increasing Ghanaian population on natural resources?

3. Agriculture sector restructuring

- Examine how to make fish farming attractive to tackle the depletion of fish stocks.
- Assessing the successes and failures of irrigation projects. Examining viable alternative solutions.
- Understanding food value chains in Ghanaian agriculture.
- Studies to ascertain if the Dutch disease has happened – or is happening – in Ghana.
- Examining the constraints which are causing the low levels of technology uptake by farmers.

4. Macroeconomic Stability

- Examining ways to widen the tax net to take account of the 90% of the workforce that are employed in the informal sector, as well as tackling tax evasion and avoidance loop-holes.
- Understanding changes in the Cedi exchange rate.
- To what extent is the Ghanaian economy 'dollarizing' and what are the consequences of this.
- What is the correct fiscal rule for Ghana to implement, and will a fiscal rule that ensures fiscal sustainability also lead to debt sustainability?
- How can the state enhance the efficiency of public spending and reduce wastage?
- Studies on streamlining the budget process in Ghana.
- Explaining the causes of the election year budget deficit explosion.
- What potential is there in Ghana for revenue generation from non-traditional exports (i.e. not oil, gold or cocoa)?
- Monetary policy and the links to macroeconomic stability is an important area for research. How strong is the monetary transmission mechanism?
- A detailed examination of the public wage bill, and its structure.
- Examination of the breakdown of inflation between food and fuel components. Is fuel (or non-food) is relatively stable, and are food prices driving inflation?
- Since Ghana became a middle-income country it has spent money like a middle-income country, but raised revenue like a low-income country. There is a need to guide reform of the efficiency of revenue-raising methods and to 'take the human element away'.
- How can Ghana ensure that it becomes less susceptible to macroeconomic shocks?

5. Private Sector Development

- Studies on the constraints to and drivers of SME development, in order to develop a SME policy document, which fits within PSDS I & II.
- Review and evaluate the impact of the trade sector support policy (2003 – 2008).
- Examine the likely impacts of the Economic Partnership Agreement on the private sector.
- An assessment of the impact on private sector development of the increasing numbers of microfinance institutions.
- Studies in the area of competitiveness of SMEs in Ghana.
- Assessing the effects of infrastructural constraints (power, transport, internet, etc.) on SME performance and growth.

6. Governance, Accountability and Political Economy

- Why did Unit Committees fail?
- Understanding the nature of funding political parties Ghana: challenges and implications.
- Research into the impact of appointments of heads of public agencies/institutions.
- Cultural dimensions of corruption, and investigations into the supply-side (as opposed to the demand-side) of corruption.
- Policy on corporate social responsibility (CSR).
- Examining the role of community members in monitoring projects.

IGC Stakeholder Workshop on Country Strategy

Date: Monday, 24th June 2013

Venue: Alisa Hotel, North Ridge

Agenda

9.00 - 9.30	Registration
9.30 – 10:00	Opening Remarks by Dr Sowa
10.00 - 11:00	Thematic Areas by Henry Telli (Agriculture, Human Capital and NRM)
11:00 – 11:20	Tea break
11:20 – 12:20	Thematic Areas by Dr Mensah (Macroeconomy, PSD and Governance)
12:20 – 12:40	Summaries of Research Issues by Henry Telli and James Bonner
12:40 – 1:00	Closing remarks
1:00	Lunch

REGISTRATION SHEET

EVENT: COUNTRY STRATEGY WORKSHOP, Alisa Hotel, North Ridge, Accra

Date: Monday, 24th June, 2013

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*Area of Interest: Macro, Agriculture, Public Sector Development (PSD), Human Capital etc.

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