

VARIATION IN INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT QUALITY AMONG GHANA'S LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



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IN BRIEF

- » The timely completion of public infrastructure projects is crucial in ensuring the efficiency and growth of government investments
- » In Ghana, information on infrastructure projects at the local government level is scattered in annual reports making it difficult to compile and comprehensively analyse
- » This study has successfully compiled and digitised project details for all 216 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) for the period 2010-13

Infrastructure is crucial for economic development and public service provision but building infrastructure is challenging. Ghana's decentralisation process has transferred a great deal of responsibility and resources for infrastructure development to MMDAs. However, it has not previously been possible to compile a comprehensive picture of how this money is being spent and whether projects are being successfully completed. While a number of institutions monitor MMDAs' use of their funds, due to the fragmentation of these monitoring channels it is difficult to reconcile them into picture of the state of infrastructure development in Ghana.

The main contribution of this research project has been to collect, digitise, and analyse all available Annual Progress Reports (APRs) and District Medium-Term Development Plans (DMTDPs) for all of Ghana's MMDAs for the period 2010-13. The database of executed projects from the APRs makes it possible for the first time to comprehensively analyse the capital investment activities of Ghana's MMDAs in terms of: 1) the type and number of infrastructure projects that are being undertaken, and 2) the efficiency of these investments, in particular whether or not the projects are actually being completed, but also delays and cost overruns. In addition, the database of 8,500 planned projects from the DMTDPs will make it possible to compare what districts planned to do with what they actually did.

The findings show that approximately one-third of MMDA projects that are started are not completed; average projects had a 5 month planned duration, however 1 year after projects begun, only 45.8% of projects were completed; and over a third of projects (35.5%) remained unfinished, 3 years after the start date of the project. A simple practical requirement ensuring that agencies budget to finish ongoing projects, before starting new ones, seems to be effective at deterring this inefficient practice. The database of MMDA projects created as part of this study has been handed over to the National Development Planning Commission of Ghana.