



Innovation Brief

on International Development Services

Post-conflict assistance: the case of BSF in South Sudan

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The Problem

Internal and regional armed conflicts, civil strife and natural disasters have affected and displaced millions of people causing to lose their habitat, livelihoods, and are depriving them of basic services such as health services, clean water, basic education and proper shelter. Emergency relief efforts that provide immediate basic needs to victims of war, internal conflicts and natural disasters are generally provided fast and effective. But when it comes to post-conflict recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction of the communities, complex issues need to be dealt with. Local infrastructures, socio-economy structures and government services, including basic services in the affected areas need to be rebuilt.

Many donors and funding agencies are eager to provide assistance and contribute, but the delivery of efficient and effective reconstruction of a damaged society and economy is often a dilemma, as issues such as law and order, priorities of assistance and diplomatic/political factors in such a fragile environment need to be carefully considered. After 21-years of armed conflict, South Sudan has immense needs, while expectations of the people are high. Apart from basic needs and infrastructure, many government facilities and capacities need to be built from scratch. The Sudan has some of the lowest human development indicators in Africa and progress of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is slow. South Sudan in particular faces enormous challenges with a gross enrolment rate of 22% in primary education, household access to safe water being only 39%, and measles immunization coverage being only 34%.

The Challenge

In an effort to contribute to lasting peace and in preparation for meeting the enormous reconstruction needs after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in January 2005 between the Government of National Unity (GONU) and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the UN and World Bank led the Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) that produced plans for the immediate post-conflict reconstruction phase. To finance the post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction phase Multi Donor Trust Funds (i.e. for the North and the South) were established wherein multilateral and bilateral donors pledged \$ 508 million.

Box 1: Specific challenges and risks the MDTFs faces include:

- Fragility of the peace and the need to consolidate peace throughout Sudan;
- The overall security situation, which poses risks for operations;
- Weak implementation capacity and perception of slower than expected progress;
- Fiduciary aspects of project implementation;
- Difficult working and living conditions in Southern Sudan; and
- Management of donor, NGO, and government expectations to counter the ultimate risk of disillusionment with the MDTFs as effective mechanisms for delivering the peace dividend.

The major challenge was to take immediate action to mitigate the chronic lack of basic services, alleviate extreme poverty and to accelerate the restoration process of peace and stability in the region, notwithstanding a weak state capacity to manage, plan, coordinate and deliver these services.

To address this deficiency the Department for International Development (DfID) of the UK Government took the initiative and established the Basic Services Fund (BSF) initially for a period of two years and with a commitment of about GBP17.2 million (equivalent to approx. USD20 million). The BSF adopted a strategy for immediate delivery of services in education, health and water and sanitation for the affected communities in South Sudan (see Box 2), with the intention that the activities and decision-making processes of the BSF ultimately be rolled into the MDTF.

Related to the major challenge is the question How to fast-track this process? Given that transition from emergency relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and sustainable development under such fragile circumstances requires efficient coordination, professional management and monitoring of the BSF, while the government capacities are still weak and MDTF-S needs its time to be put in place.

Box 2: Basic Services Fund (BSF)

The Goal of the BSF is to work towards peace, stability, and recovery in the poor and conflict-affected areas of South Sudan. The Purpose is to expand the coverage, quality and use of basic services in South Sudan. The Goal and Purpose are achieved by BSF through emergency transitional support to non-state service delivery providers in South Sudan. The fund also supports the emergence of a framework for the delivery of services in education, health and water and sanitation, as well as technical expertise, and modest training to build state capacity.

The BSF is directed by a steering committee (SC) wherein the Government of South Sudan, United Nations, and local and international Donors are represented. The steering committee is supported by a management agent that arranges meetings, monitors progress, provides technical advice and training and manages grants to NGOs.

The Outputs are:

- Increased coverage and access to basic services – water and sanitation, health and education.
- Strengthened systems and structures for service

delivery, including community-based, state, and non-state provision.

- Improved policy, procedures, and standards for sector-based services through government agencies.
- Improved coordination and coherence in service delivery between providers, funding partners, the government and other key actors.

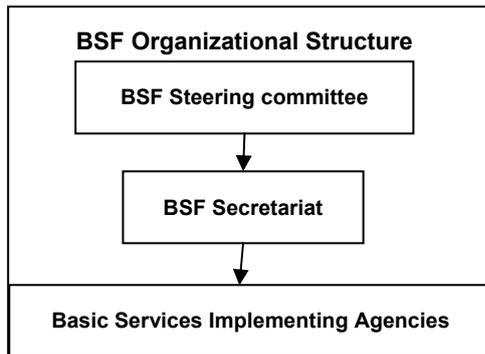
The Innovation

To bridge the gap between executing the JAM plans under the MDFT and the immediate need for action, DfID together with the Government of South Sudan and other major stakeholders, established the BSF Steering Committee (SC).

The SC is central to the governance of the BSF and is responsible for endorsing an implementation strategy, relevant rules, regulations and guidelines for reviewing and selecting project proposals for funding recommendations, and for monitoring implementation of the basic services delivery. More broadly the SC acts as cross-sectoral committee through which GoSS and its partners can assess different modes of service provision and develop longer-term social service policies, programmes and projects. The committee and its members are supported by the BSF Secretariat, which tasks was contracted out to a private firm, while the specific basic services activities were implemented by non-state service providers, (i.e. NGOs, civil society and community based organizations).

The innovation of this approach lies in the establishment of a tripartite collaborative mechanism between:

- public sector – public funding through DfID with oversight resting with GOSS;
- private sector – the Secretariat of the SC, being a highly professional private firm, responsible for efficiently and effectively managing and monitoring the BSF, and
- non-state service providers (i.e. civil society) – local and international NGOs that have experience working in the country under crises conditions and who provided strong rapport at the grassroots among the communities and are skilled in a post-conflict rehabilitation processes.



Selection of Implementing Agencies to deliver essential social services to underserved areas in Southern Sudan was done through a competitive “Call for Proposals” process. Implementing Agencies had to submit robust proposals for service delivery, while adhering to the BSF core principles.

The BSF Secretariat, staffed and managed by BMB Mott MacDonald, provided the following services:

A. Organise call for proposals

- Support the SC to establish policies and procedures for calls for proposals and produce application guidelines.
- Publicise the fund and organise information meetings for NGOs
- Pre-screen all full applications to ensure that proposed projects are compatible with the Fund’s objectives and funding criteria.
- Assist the SC in proposal evaluation and awarding grants to NGOs.
- Inform applicants whether their proposal has been successful or not.

B. Financial management of NGO grants

- Disburse funds to the NGO projects, ensure auditing of accounts, fiduciary arrangements and up to date financial reporting of grant receiving organisations.
- Report to DFID on NGO disbursements and provide periodic forecasts.

C. Monitor and evaluate the impact of the NGO projects

- Set up a monitoring and evaluation system and a management information system to keep track of progress made with NGO projects.
- Carry out field visits and on-the-spot checks.
- Gather, synthesise and disseminate service provision lessons learned from projects in a creative and effective manner.

D. Provide advice to the SC and DFID

- Support the SC so that the GoSS and its partners can assess different modes of service

provision and develop longer-term social service policies, programmes and projects.

- Assist the SC and DFID to merge lessons learned with the implementation of the BSF into programmes and projects financed under the MDTF.

Box 5: BSF Core Principles

- Basic Services are understood to be Health, Education, and Water and sanitation services. It refers to the lowest level of minimum services and thus does not include, tertiary education, complex hospital treatment and other more complex secondary service levels.
- Work with the GoSS and local government authorities to design, implement, and monitor and evaluate projects and programmes. Work in accordance with GoSS policies and plans as they develop.
- Employ a conflict-sensitive approach to service delivery projects and programmes. At a minimum, ‘do no harm’ by not exacerbating existing tensions.
- Link service provision to community-level demand for services through processes of community participation, inclusion and client control.
- Seek to build accountability at all levels: between non-state service providers, clients, donors, local authorities and the GoSS.
- Address issues of social inclusion by designing projects and programmes that address inequalities and are inclusive of women, children, different ethnicities, and returnees.
- Promote partnership with and build capacity of local (Sudanese) non-state service providers (NGOs and private sector). Look for opportunities for collaboration and lesson learning.
- Work to integrate service delivery. Look for opportunities to link sectors and services. Water and sanitation, education and health are intrinsically linked to improving child mortality, morbidity, gender equality and security.
- Work to enhance sustainability, including environmental sustainability, of project impact and service delivery either through local government or local organisations.

At the time of writing this paper the BSF is in its third year of implementation and has recently been extended until end 2010. At the start of the BSF in October 2005, the CS invited non-state service providers to express their interests for implementing basic services in South Sudan. The first round of selecting service providers resulted in the allocation of GBP8.7 million to six lead NGOs (see box 6), including their partners. A second call for proposals was organized in the last quarter of 2006 that led to the selection of eight additional NGOs, for a total amount of GBP8.8 million. In the last quarter of 2008, a third call for proposals was organised which resulted in the selection of 24 NGO projects, for a total amount of GBP21.3 million.

Box 6: The first six non-state service providers supported through the first round are:

- Oxfam: Water and Sanitation in Upper Nile, Bahr el Ghazal and Western Equatoria;
- CCM: Strengthening and developing primary and secondary health care systems in East, North, and South Tonj Counties;
- Caritas: Primary Schools development, one health centre and boreholes in Eastern Equatoria;
- Medair: Safe Water, Hygiene and Sanitation aimed at IDP host communities and returnees in Aweil Centre, Renk, Khorfulous and Ayod;
- AMREF: Primary Health Care to Conflict Affected communities of Terekeka County;
- SCF-US: Basic Health, Water and sanitation services in Upper Nile State;

The total contract sum for the BSF, covering a period of four years (2006-2010) comes to GBP 41.833 million. More than 91% of the budget is spent on programme funds for the NGOs, while 9% is retained by BMB Mott MacDonald to manage and administer the programme.

At the end of the programme, the Fund will have built and rehabilitated 150 schools, providing access to over 60,000 primary school students. It will have trained 2,100 teachers and headmasters. In the area of drinking water, the Fund will have constructed 410 boreholes, providing access to safe water to over 200,000 persons. It will have built 2,400 latrines, providing 12,000 persons with access to improved

sanitation. In the area of health, the Fund will have constructed and rehabilitated 127 health facilities, serving a capacity of more than 1.5 million people.

Conclusion

During the course of BSF implementation, the BSF Secretariat strongly advised DFID and the SC to look beyond basic services delivery only and develop strategic thinking for longer-term sustainable development in the sectors. Particularly the issue of sustainability of the delivered services, such as for example, salaries for medical staff, continued supply of basic medicines and materials to the health clinics that guarantees a continuation of basic health services, securing books and salaries for teachers at primary schools, and proper operation and maintenance of boreholes and pumps to guarantee continued water supply, became obvious. This required an increase in capacity building of the local service providers as well as for the concerned local, regional and national government line agencies. An increase of training for skills development and capacity building is evident in the second and third round projects.

In this regard it is clear that after BMB-Mott MacDonald was contracted to take up the role of Secretariat, it became evident for the funding agency and the SC that hiring a professional fund manager, and outsourcing service delivery to non-state actors with experience in the area, showed to be highly efficient model as decisions focused on delivery, were made fast and procedures less bureaucratic and time-consuming as compared to the World Bank administered MDTF. Further, through this fund management model the BSF has demonstrated that it is possible to integrate rapid service delivery with basic capacity building.

You are welcome to contact us:

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