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Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the conceptual and methodological approaches of this study. It states why the research is being undertaken and describes how it was done.[1]

During the past two decades more than two-thirds of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) have implemented one or more decentralisation policy reform or programme, the focus of which has changed over the years (Olowu, 2003 and 2006; World Bank, 2004; UNDP 2007a). These nations' diverse rationales for taking on and implementing these reforms are political, economic, ethnic and territorial. According to Shah and Thompson (2004:3) ethnic-based political conflicts set off one type of decentralisation in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and South Africa, while territorial political conflicts lent weight to decentralisation initiatives in Madagascar, Mali, Senegal and Uganda. In a sense, improving service delivery was the impetus for decentralisation in Côte d'Ivoire, although that country has also been engulfed in ethnic/territorial conflicts for some time now. The designs of decentralisation policies also differ between countries and as a result of these variations in rationale, making comparison of progress and achievements among countries is problematic. Even though decentralisation starts in most countries to address one or two issues, as it progresses other interests are added that spark off new forms of rationale and design of the policy. However, two key objectives of most decentralisation intentions and programmes are: (1) to improve the provision of public services; and (2) to empower local citizens and institutions for self-governance. These two objectives have been coterminous with global efforts to reduce poverty and open the democratic space.

The Commonwealth Secretariat through a number of its divisions provides opportunities for member countries to share experiences on policy implementation and outcomes. The Governance and Institutional Development Division (GIDD) of the Commonwealth Secretariat provides technical assistance, advisory services and training to member countries to improve public sector governance and strengthen the capacity of the public sector to effectively deliver services to citizens and facilitate socio-economic development. During the 4th Commonwealth Heads of African Public Services meeting held in Magaliesburg, South Africa in July 2007, it was agreed that the Commonwealth Secretariat should document and publish the progress that African public services are making in improving services in three areas, one of which was decentralisation policy and practices – seen as crucial in getting services delivered

to the people. It is as a result of this agreement that rapid research was undertaken in five countries: Botswana, Cameroon, Ghana, Mozambique and Tanzania. These countries were chosen precisely because they were the first countries to have submitted their country reports to the Commonwealth Secretariat for validation. The findings on decentralisation policies and practices in these countries are presented in this publication, which is divided into three main sections.

This chapter, the first section, provides an overview of the study in three parts. The first part provides a conceptual/literature review of decentralisation, while the second lays out different approaches to the study of decentralisation and the analytical approaches adopted for this study. The final part discusses and explains the methods of data collection, including the guiding research questions.

The second section (chapters 2 to 6) presents the socio-cultural, political, economic and historical background of the analysis of decentralisation elements in each of the five countries (using sectoral, political, fiscal, human resource, and planning and budgetary parameters). It then reviews the progress of decentralisation in each of the five countries and analyses the opinions of the key stakeholders interviewed in each country. The final section (chapter seven) undertakes a comparative review and highlights the challenges presented, lessons learned, and suggestions on ways to improve some of the weaknesses in implementation.

1.2 Conceptual/Literature Review of Decentralisation

The state has a number of responsibilities to its citizens. Johnston (1982) identifies six roles: (1) a 'protector', protecting citizens against outside action; maintaining law and order and providing welfare for vulnerable citizens; (2) an 'arbitrator', mediating and resolving conflicts between citizens and groups; (3) a 'cohesive force', striving for national unity; (4) a 'facilitator', regulating the economic, social, political and administrative environment so as to facilitate or obstruct the interaction between economic units; (5) an 'investor', investing in social, economic, and physical infrastructure services to stimulate technological, capital and human development; and (6) a 'bureaucracy', providing organisational structures, procedures, protocols, regulations and management issues. The roles of the state may be delivered or shared by different levels of government and non-state actors. The extent to which the central government shares the role of the state with other organisations/institutions is the subject of decentralisation.

Decentralisation is a multifaceted concept that involves a transition from a governance structure where power, resources, and capacity are centrally concentrated to one in which they are dispersed to sub-national actors. Decentralisation involves many stakeholders, including central and local governments (LGs), citizens, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs), and the private sector.

Decentralisation is essentially the transfer of some authority, responsibilities, resources and accountability arrangements from the central government to a lower level of government, quasi-organisations or the private sector with the aim of achieving specific objectives. Decentralisation may be used to improve service delivery and bring government closer to citizens. It may also be used to improve participation, democratisation and accountability of the governors to the governed, to improve planning and decision-making, and to empower local institutions.

In some literature decentralisation is divided into *political, administrative* and *fiscal reforms* between central and sub-national governments. Others divide the concept into *deconcentration, delegation, devolution,* and *divestment.* Below we describe briefly various forms of decentralisation and their characteristics (for extensive reviews of definitions and typologies of decentralisation see UNDP, 1999; 2007b; Adamolekun, 1999; Brillantes and Cuachon, 2002; Litvack and Seddon, 1999; Olowu, 2006). While distinguishing these different forms of decentralisation is useful for analytical purposes, it is also important to note that there is considerable overlap.

1.2.1 Forms of decentralisation

The institutional structure that defines the relationship between central government and sub-national governments or organisations in terms of *authority, responsibility, accountability,* and *finances* has diverse forms. The degree of control or autonomy that sub-national governments have on these issues determines the form of decentralisation that is practised, from low density (lesser degree of control) to a high density (greater degree of control). Based on this characteristic, there are four forms of decentralisation: deconcentration, delegation, devolution and divestment.

Deconcentration

This form of decentralisation occurs when the central government redistributes some of its decision-making authority and financial and management responsibilities to its subordinate or field agencies. In this form of decentralisation, subordinate lower level units of the central government such as regional, district or local offices have very limited authority and independence in policy formulation, decision-making, financing and resource management. As the offices and employees at the local level fall under the jurisdictional authority of the central government, employees respond to the central government's direction and control even though they work at the local level. Thus, staff accountability is upwards to the central government that employs, hires, motivates and dismisses them. Deconcentration is often considered to be the most basic form of decentralisation. It is normally undertaken as the first step in improving service delivery.

Deconcentration can take three forms. First, there is the *functional* system whereby 'field officers belong to distinct functional hierarchies'. This is a system of diverse

functional territories that has no general or regional co-ordinator, instead co-ordination of the several policy areas is done at the centre (exemplified in Britain) (Rhodes, 1992). Second, there is the *integrated prefectoral system* in which the central government is represented at regional level by a government commissioner or prefect who supervises both LG and central field officers. For example, prior to the 1982 Act of Decentralisation in France, there was a prefectoral system whereby high-ranking officials appointed by presidential decree were charged with district-level co-ordination of a range of national programmes, including responsibility for the modernisation of public services at local level (Nelson, 2008). This was the most widely used form of decentralisation in colonial Africa in both French-speaking and English-speaking countries (Mawhood, 1983). The third form is the *un-integrated prefectoral system* where the prefect supervises only the LG officers and is only one of a number of channels of communication with the centre; the prefect is not superior to and does not co-ordinate other field officers. Examples include the Italian prefect and the district officer in Nigeria (Rhodes, 1992; Adamolekun, 1999; Harris, 1980). The un-integrated prefectoral system is 'difficult to manage and generates major administrative inefficiencies' (Prum, 2005), yet it is the model used by many post-colonial African countries.

Delegation

This form of decentralisation involves the transfer of responsibility for public functions from the central government to semi-autonomous organisations that are not wholly controlled by the central government, but are ultimately accountable to it. Usually these organisations have a great deal of discretion in decision-making, financing, administration of employees and management of public functions. For instance, employees of a semi-autonomous organisation may be exempt from constraints that apply to regular civil service personnel in deconcentrated government units. The organisation may be able to charge users directly for services that they deliver. Delegation is a more extensive form of decentralisation than deconcentration, and became increasingly popular in the 1980s and 1990s with the adoption of executive agencies under new public management (NPM) reforms.

Devolution

This is the most extensive and popular form of decentralisation whereby the central government transfers not only *responsibility* but also *authority* for *decision-making, resources,* and *accountability* to an autonomous and legally constituted LG. Devolution is considered a democratic form of decentralisation because it empowers LGs to carry out public functions effectively and efficiently by reforming state–local political and fiscal relations. The transfer of major decision-making powers or authority from central government to LG's own-constituted council is called political decentralisation, while the ability of LGs to raise and spend their own budget is fiscal

decentralisation. Devolution in its purest form has certain fundamental characteristics. First, local units of government are autonomous, independent and clearly perceived as separate levels of government over which central authorities exercise little or no direct control. Second, LGs have clear and legally recognised geographical boundaries within which they exercise authority and perform public functions. Third, LGs have corporate status and the power to secure resources to perform their functions. Fourth, devolution creates the need to 'develop LGs as institutions' that will be perceived by local citizens as organisations that provide services that satisfy their needs and as governmental units over which they have some influence. Finally, devolution is an arrangement in which there are reciprocal, mutually beneficial, and co-ordinated relationships between central government and LGs and between LGs and other organisations operating within that community (UNDP, 1999: 6).

While deconcentration and delegation do not provide the full range of benefits theoretically attached to devolution, in practical terms, a well-planned and properly implemented deconcentration could bring worthwhile developmental returns. The totality of all the various local organisations that can interact with one another – competing, co-operating or contracting – are referred to as local governance institutions (Olowu and Wunsch, 2004; UNDP, 2008). There is some controversy in the literature on whether LGs can promote pro-poor outcomes. Of the three economic functions of government, i.e. allocation, stabilisation and distribution, LGs can have the least impact on redistribution, which is the essence of poverty reduction (Jutting et al., 2005, Smoke, 2006). In the *World Development Report 2004*, however, the World Bank (2004: 74–75, 186–189) argued that decentralised organs do promote pro-poor development through direct action by sub-national governments (when there is devolution), by acting on service providers (through deconcentration) and through direct links between service providers and clients when there is delegation to special-purpose agencies. But poor-impact is a function of *the nature of the services* (whether easy or difficult to monitor), *the nature of politics* (whether pro-poor or clientelist) and *the type of community* (whether homogenous or heterogeneous). Of course, much depends on whether the national government adopts policies to empower LGs and/or the people and also whether LGs in turn empower other institutional actors and citizens.

Unlike deconcentration and delegation, where the central government appoints the organisational leadership, in a devolved system of government citizens living in LG jurisdictions would have the opportunity to elect their own leaders (executive and councils) and may be able to recall councillors for underperformance or vote them out during elections. The LG would also have greater authority to raise and spend its own revenues. Full LG autonomy is rarely practised anywhere in the world, otherwise an LG ceases to be local and assumes statehood (or nationhood). There are several reasons to justify central government control of LGs: (a) many of the services for which authorities are responsible (education, water, housing, public health) are national in

character and therefore there is a need to have a sustained level of standards across LG boundaries; (b) the central government has ultimate responsibility for public services and it is only the central government that is held responsible for management of the economy as a whole; (c) LGs may not be able to extract a substantial part of a nation's resources, so a substantial amount of LG income comes from the central government by way of grants, and any responsible government would ensure that such money is spent in the right way; (d) it is necessary to protect national and local taxpayers against possible financial mismanagement by LGs and ensure that LG spending priorities are consistent with central government and are aligned to national vision. This is why the relationship between central and local governments becomes particularly critical in any devolution programme.

Divestment and co-production

This form of decentralisation allows central government functions to be carried out by commercial private organisations via contracting out and other forms of public–private partnerships (PPPs) and privatisation. Deregulation reduces the legal constraints on private sector participation in the provision of public services. Some authors argue against inclusion of divestment in decentralisation discussions, but in Africa, where privatisation and PPPs have substantially reduced the role of the state, its inclusion is imperative (Plummer, 2002; Edigheji, 2007; Rwelamila et al., 2003; African Labour Research Network, 2002). Co-production, on the other hand, involves state collaboration with non-governmental organisations such as co-operatives and community-based organisations working together to provide public services (Ostrom, 1996). In some cases, indigenous local communities in Chad have financed schools and built water points and health clinics that the decentralised organs of LG could not – and did so at a time when the central state apparatus had collapsed. They did this either working alone or in collaboration with other local organisations (Fass and Desloovere, 2004).

Delivery of any public service entails two types of activities:

Provision activities: These relate to decisions governing what services to provide and to whom; quality assurance for service provided; financing the service; and ensuring the production of service.

Production activities: These entail the conversion of inputs into outputs.

This distinction, made by Ostrom and Bish (1988) and Ostrom et al. (1993) is necessary because the responsibility for providing a service can be assigned to LGs, even though LGs can also contract out to produce it.

It is significant to note that service requirements also differ between urban and rural areas. In addition, the differential assignment of service responsibilities may be the result of differences in the technical and administrative capacities of LGs.

Moreover, decentralisation of particular sectors may be phased due to the absence of the necessary capacity at the local level (Awortwi, 2002).

Although we have outlined here all four possible forms of decentralisation, the focus of the analysis in this report is deconcentration and devolution.

Sectoral decentralisation

Instead of a comprehensive decentralisation of all services, some countries settle for the decentralisation of a specific service or sector. Sectoral decentralisation aims at decongesting government ministries by delegating the delivery of services to sub-national field offices and other autonomous or semi-autonomous agencies to enable ministries to concentrate on policy formulation, supervision and regulation (Andrews and Schroeder, 2003). Examples of sectoral decentralisation in Africa exist in health services, education services, water and sanitation agencies, forestry department, agriculture extension services, land boards, etc. The main rationale for sectoral decentralisation is efficiency gain in the provision of public services. The argument is that such arrangements lead to a closer match between services provision and the preferences of beneficiaries, thereby increasing accountability. There is no single pattern or blueprint for sectoral decentralisation owing to differences in historical, political, cultural and economic conditions.

In Africa, popular targets for sectorally decentralised provision include: education, primary health care, rural roads, and drinking water. It must be noted that what governments purport to decentralise (stated in decentralised laws) and what is decentralised in practice does not always agree. Reasons for this variance include: intergovernmental and bureaucratic politics, local-level capacity constraints and service-specific production issues (Andrews and Schroeder, 2003). Some governments may decide to organise some services as special-purpose operations distinct from other general services. This is how school districts are organised in many American communities. Some African countries have also sought to organise specialised forms of decentralisation for some of the services normally devolved to local authorities. Donor initiatives, such as the sector-wide approach (SWAP), have tended to support and encourage sectoral decentralisation, especially in many donor-dependent African countries.

A gradual approach is sometimes advocated on the grounds that LGs have inadequate capacities to handle newly assigned responsibilities (Shah and Thompson, 2004: 18–20). The risk of this approach is that it might give too much time for those opposed to decentralisation to organise and neutralise such efforts.

Another approach, the *bottom-up process*, involves residents or voters getting organised in Tiebout-type communities, declaring home rule for local public services, and asking higher level governments to support these efforts. A *top-down process* of decentralisation,

on the other hand, is when a central government unilaterally draws up a blueprint to transfer some of its responsibilities downwards (Shah and Thompson, 2004: 18–20). Decentralisation initiatives are likely to be sustained if they were implemented after reaching a broad societal consensus. Since decentralisation in most countries is a top-down affair rather than the result of grassroots pressure, central government actors that benefit from the top-down process are very strong and organised enough to defend their interests against future reversals.

1.2.2 Components of decentralisation

Whether it is territorial or sectoral, decentralisation as a policy involves the transfer of some components of central government's (a) responsibilities, (b) authority, (c) resources, and (d) accountability to local institutions that are either part of the central government, semi-autonomous, or autonomous. In much of the literature, these key components are also described as constituting different forms of decentralisation. For instance, the transfer of responsibility may be defined as administrative decentralisation, the transfer of finances as fiscal decentralisation, and the transfer of authority as political decentralisation.

Transfer of responsibility

The transfer of central government responsibilities in service provision can be in the form of policy formulation, planning and budgeting, direct service delivery (major and basic services), and management of staff. Some of these responsibilities may be shared between the central government and either the field agencies or autonomous LGs. The type of services that are transferred from the central government to lower levels may be based on economies of scale, spill-over effect, specificity of the service, concern for distributional effect and capacity of LGs and field agents to deliver. Those components of a service that are decentralised or centralised vary from country to country.

Transfer of authority

As described earlier, the authority to make decisions regarding policy, planning and budgeting, human resource management, investment, leadership, etc., is low in deconcentration, moderate in delegation and high in devolution. Under devolution, citizens elect their own LG leaders and hold those leaders accountable for their performance. LG leaders can make byelaws that are binding in their jurisdiction, and normally have authority to hire, motivate, train, fire, and generally set conditions of service for personnel who work at the LG level without interference from the central government or higher authority.

Transfer of resources

Transfer of resources includes financial, human and natural resources. In a deconcentrated system of administration, sub-national organisations may depend wholly or substantially on transfers from the central government, while in delegated systems, semi-autonomous organisations may be self-financing using service charges, own taxes, indirect charges, and co-production. In a devolved system, fiscal decentralisation policy may be designed to increase fiscal autonomy of LGs. This involves the rationalisation of four policy issues: (i) expenditure assignment; (ii) revenue assignment; (iii) intergovernmental fiscal transfer; and (iv) regulation of LG finances. Expenditure assignment clearly delineates the central and local governments' responsibility for providing and paying for specific services to citizens. Revenue assignment policy demarcates both taxable revenue sources and tax-raising powers between the central government and LGs. It may also create a new sub-national tax to strengthen the fiscal base of LGs and give them authority to decide how to spend their revenue. Intergovernmental fiscal policy enables a central government to transfer financial resources in the form of grants to LGs, while regulatory policy tries to monitor and set limits on LG finances (including borrowing powers). An important objective of any intergovernmental fiscal system should be to achieve an acceptable level of equality or horizontal fiscal balance in a country. Horizontal imbalances exist when there are significant economic and fiscal disparities across regions or localities. Although horizontal imbalances are a natural occurrence in any country, it is the government's role to address imbalances while at the same time ensuring efficient allocation of resources. LGs may also be given some degree of control over the use and revenue generation of some *natural resources* such as land, water bodies, and forestry.

Transfer of accountability

Accountability involves the development of objective standards of evaluation of how work is carried out in an organisation. It is the means by which organisations and their leadership are held responsible for their actions (and inaction) in the use of public resources and authority. Any accountability system thus has three critical components–clear definition of responsibility, reporting modality and reward system (Olowu, 1999:140). Accountability can be vertical – *upwards* to central and regional governments and other higher tiers of decision-making bodies or *downwards* to citizens. *Horizontal* accountability may be transferred to organised civil society, community groups, and residents' associations or to the private sector (formal and informal enterprises). Accountability has political, financial and administrative dimensions. It is about whether decisions are made to address local preferences and needs and whether the mechanisms, such as the electoral process, are effective in signalling citizens' views. Accountability is also about the successful collection of revenues and subsequent use of public funds, which in turn requires financial information. Bird (1994) suggests regular financial reporting both to the local users and to independent

audit agencies. The quality of accountability depends on the ability of supporting institutions to both enforce fulfilment of commitments to local beneficiaries (for financial accounting) and provide technological assistance and expertise (Mody, 2004: 5).

Transfers of responsibility, resources, authority and accountability can be designed to take the shape of deconcentration, devolution, delegation, divestment or co-production depending on many factors. These may include historical context and initial conditions, geographical features (particularly the size of the country) and objectives. Given that all government systems are likely to include different elements of decentralisation there are sometimes considerable overlaps and therefore a clear taxonomy is always problematic.

1.3 Analytical Framework and Methodology

1.3.1 Analytical framework

This study uses a combination of three analytical frameworks. The first framework analyses the process of decentralisation, focusing on the transfer of the four key components of any decentralisation programme to local-level actors. These components are: responsibility, authority, resources (human, fiscal and natural) and accountability arrangements. The second approaches decentralisation as a policy process that must be initiated and sustained by a coalition of political forces in any polity. The strength or weakness of any of the three key policy elites active in decentralisation– namely, senior politicians, senior administrators and local level (political and administrative) leaders – determine the content of decentralisation policy and its success at the levels of initiation, implementation and sustenance respectively (Ndegwa and Levy, 2003). Finally, we use an institutional analytical framework that focuses on the existing institutional incentives and constraints on decentralised structures (Ostrom, 1990; Ostrom et al., 1993). The search focuses on four institutional incentives for collective action, collective choice, principal-agency and constitutional choice. The framework is built on the assumption of human rationality. Humans are likely to co-operate when they find themselves in institutional constructs in which they can take collective action, make collective choices, ensure that agents are accountable to the principal and have the freedom to design or redesign their organisations in light of experience.

These frameworks, as well as a close reading of the literature, helped us to develop a number of guiding propositions for the research. These are described below.

1.3.2 Guiding propositions and questions

Based on the literature review, the following propositions are made to contextualise decentralisation policy and practices:

1. The design of decentralisation is crucial to determining whether its impact will be good or bad. If designed well, decentralisation can improve service delivery,

expand the democratisation process, enhance accountability mechanisms, improve local governance, and reduce poverty. However, design is extremely complicated since it involves a number of components which individually and interactively affect outcomes. If decentralisation is not designed well and supported by (a) political commitments to transfer authority, (b) adequate resource capacity, (c) clear allocation and balance of responsibility and resources, and (d) an effective accountability mechanism, it might lead to unintended consequences.

2. Not all government functions should be entirely decentralised. Following the principle of subsidiarity, a function should not be decentralised to a lower level if (a) it is critical for the achievement of central-level goals and its sustainability at the local level cannot be guaranteed and (b) if the capacity to perform the function does not exist or the function at this level is not cost-effective. In fact, most services have differing ranges of complexity and integration between their primary, secondary and tertiary aspects. In light of this fact, we give particular emphasis to basic education, health care, land, water and sanitation, and how they have been decentralised to ensure a cost-effective outcome.

3. Decentralisation policy in Africa (as elsewhere) is driven by politics and interests. The gains of local politicians and bureaucrats are perceived as loss of power, prestige, and budgetary (and sometimes human) resources for their counterparts at the centre. Since it is perceived as a zero-sum game, central government politicians and bureaucrats who believe that they stand to lose from decentralisation are likely to hold back the policy initiative. In spite of pretences to the contrary in formal policy-making, as central government actors sabotage the decentralisation process, they continue to make local units weak, subservient and redundant. Without effective pressure groups at the local level to push for decentralisation, the timing, pace and control of the decentralisation process would be driven by (or become the preserve of) central government politicians and bureaucrats. The ability of those promoting decentralisation to transform what is widely perceived as a zero-sum (win–lose) game to a positive-sum (win–win) game is important to the overall success of this policy. Central government leadership is critical to ensuring that administrative, political, and fiscal decentralisation operate in tandem. In this regard, one would like to ask: Who are the protagonists of decentralisation reforms in a country? What are their interests? How have they promoted their interests? How have various actors and institutions (formal and informal, public, private, and civil society) reacted? To what extent have central politicians perceived decentralisation not as a zero-sum game (in which they gain or lose) but as a positive-sum game for both central and local actors?

4. There is often a big difference between formal arrangements for decentralisation and what is actually practiced in the country. Thus, an analysis of

decentralisation that only examines the formal arrangements (i.e., constitution, laws, regulations and policy discussions) will be inadequate. In the countries selected for this study, therefore, we seek to identify the gaps between policy intentions (as stated in statutory books) and actual practice.

5. There is no 'one size fits all' design of decentralisation policy. Instead decentralisation has to be sensitive to the existing cultural, political, and institutional arrangements within a given country. This means that historical context and initial conditions, geographical and climatic features, natural resource base, existing patterns of service provision, or traditional methods of addressing user's need and economic conditions all significantly influence the pattern of decentralisation in a country. In the five countries selected for the study, how have these factors influenced the types and methods of decentralisation policies, programmes and their implementation? What are the consequences of these for equity, inequality and quality of local governance and service delivery?

6. The state has a key role to play in facilitating decentralisation processes through initiating forums for discourse, establishing financial guidelines, building capacity, setting a timetable, legislating, and setting up advisory bodies and resource institutions that are interested in understanding local problems and finding solutions that work locally. Therefore, the success of any decentralised form of government and policy would critically depend on strongly responsive and accountable government at the national level. In this regard, how have central governments in the five countries facilitated accountable political, economic, and financial decentralisation policies in favour of lower levels of government, semi-autonomous organisations and field agencies?

7. Donors play a critical role in promoting decentralisation in Africa. Donor programmes assist central government to design and implement plans, reform legal, political and fiscal systems, and carry out sectoral programmes. Donors also help to build local capacity and exert important leverage in LG negotiations with central government, thereby combating central domination and promoting genuine devolution (Nielsen, 2002). However, donors also have problems co-ordinating their inputs among themselves. It is essential, therefore, to know what roles international development agencies play in the provision of quasi-public goods and services. In what ways have donors influenced decentralisation policy design, programme support and implementation in the four countries?

1.3.3 Sources of data and data-collection methods

Three types of data collection methods were adopted. The first was based on the report that the countries (represented by their respective ministries) submitted to

the Commonwealth Secretariat for validation. The country reports were assessed to determine their level of adequacy in terms of providing information on various aspects of decentralisation. On the whole, the Tanzania report provided most of the information but it still had only 15 out of 28 elements; Ghana and Botswana follow with only 8 and 6 respectively out of 28. Cameroon had only 3 out of 28 elements adequate while the Mozambique report had none of these elements.

Based on the review of the country reports, a two-week rapid field survey was conducted in each of the five countries with the support of the host ministry. While the original idea was to validate the countries' reports, the focus of the field work changed to comprehensive field data collection to fill the gaps identified in the initial reports. During the field survey an interview guide was used to solicit information from key respondents. Among them were senior government officials in the sectoral ministries, central and LG officials, politicians (within and outside government), leaders of civil society organisations, donor agencies, traditional authorities, academics, etc. (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1. Institutions/stakeholders interviewed per country

Institutions/stakeholders Interviewed	Number of people interviewed				
	Ghana	Botswana	Cameroon	Mozambique	Tanzania
Ministry of LG/state administration	6	3	1	1	2
Ministry of Public Service	8	1	2	3	3
Sectoral agencies: education, health, water, agriculture, etc.	8*	10	1	4	10
Technical unit/commission responsible for decentralisation	9	0	2	4	6
Association of LG authorities	1	1	1	1	1
Urban local councils	–	1	1	1	2
Rural local councils	–	3	1	1	1
District administration	2	2	1	1	1
Civil society organisations	2	1	1	1	–
Traditional authority	–	1	1	0	–
Academics	1	1	1	2	–
International development agencies that support decentralisation programme	2	1	1	1	2
Others (politicians)	–	2	2	1	1
Total	35	27	16	21	29

* This figure represents the number of interviewees from the Public Service Commission, the Head of the Civil Service Commission, the Institute of LG Studies and the Common Fund Administration combined. Ghana does not have a Ministry of Public Service.

Apart from the semi-structured interview that was administered to key people, the study also incorporated a range of data-collection techniques including a literature scan of official government and published documents, team discussions, and direct observations. The third and final data-collection method was a regional workshop that was held in Gaborone, Botswana in April 2010.

Notes

1. For more detailed information on the research methodology, two documents were presented to Commonwealth Secretariat by the research team. These are the Research Plan and the Inception Report.