

SEEKING AND INTEGRATING CITIZEN'S VIEWS IN THE UGANDA'S PETROLEUM BILLS/LAWS 2012 PROJECT REPORT

October –
December
Project Report
2012



PROJECT NARRATIVE
REPORT SUBMITTED
TO DEMOCRATIC
GOVERNANCE
FACILITY (DGF) FOR
THE OCTOBER-
DECEMBER 2012

2012

1.0 Background

Uganda has been in the process of fast tracking the enactment of the Petroleum Bills; namely; (a) the Petroleum Exploration, Development and Production Bill¹; (b) the Petroleum Refining, Gas Processing and Conversion, Transportation and Storage Bill² and (c) the Public Finance. All the 3 bills were tabled before parliament for debate and the process saw the upstream bill being enacted into law on 7th December 2012. The Mid-stream bill and Public Finance bill are still before parliament pending enactment.

Water Governance Institute (WGI) in June 2012 with support from Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) initiated a process of seeking and integrating citizens' perspectives into the Petroleum Bills debate in parliament in a project entitled "*Seeking and Integrating Citizens' Views in Uganda's Petroleum Bills 2012.*" The engagement also intended to educate citizens on the intricacies of the Oil and Gas sector in general and on the 2012 Petroleum Bills in particular. The main objective of the project was to support the enactment of adequate and effective petroleum laws and establishment of relevant institutions that are appreciated and accepted by all citizens in Uganda.

The specific objectives were:

- i) To support the parliamentary process of enacting adequate and effective petroleum Laws and establishment of relevant institutions in Uganda;
- ii) To create community (citizen) awareness and understanding of and seek their views on the petroleum bills and their implications on society, the economy and the environment.
- iii) To enhance community (citizen) participation in the debate on and integration of their views in the petroleum bills/laws.

It is against this background that WGI is submitting the last half of the project narrative progress report for the period October to December 2012 to DGF.

2.0 Project Target areas, Stakeholders and Approach

The project was conducted in 6 oil producing district areas of Arua, Nwoya-Amuru, Kabarole-Ntoroko, Hoima, Buliisa & Kanungu as well as in 2 non-oil producing districts namely, Kampala which is the political and administrative centre that provides leadership to the oil & gas sector; and Greater Mbale³. The project targeted the districts that are or (will be) directly or indirectly affected by the operations of the oil industry for purposes of comparing citizens' perspectives in the different circumstances and regions. The community meetings were held at the sub-county level, with exception of Mbale where it was agreed with the local leadership that an awareness raising meeting first be conducted with the political, administrative, cultural and religious leaders, CSOs and youth representatives before taking the debate to the sub-county level. It was also agreed that participants for the meeting come from Greater Mbale.

¹ . Also known as the upstream petroleum bill

² . Also known as the midstream petroleum bill

³ . Greater Mbale is comprised of Sironko, Manafwa, Bududa, Budaka and new Mbale districts that were carved out of the former Mbale district.

At the centre (Kampala), the project targeted Members of Parliament, Councillors (Kawempe division), and Government Technocrats in the Ministries, Department and Agencies involved in the industry, civil society organization representatives and development partners.

Particular attention was accorded to the views and perspectives of women, youth, the disabled, the elderly and child-headed homes who are often discriminated in such decision making processes. After the general awareness raising meetings, participants were divided into their gender groups of men, women and the youth to seek their individual and collective perspectives on the oil industry in general and the proposed petroleum bills in particular. The meetings also constituted a consultative process that was conducted at the sub-county level in the districts visited. The other key meetings conducted were with local political and administrative leadership and the opinion, cultural and religious leaders for their buy-in and acceptance of the project. These meetings were a follow-up on earlier meetings⁴ conducted in the said district areas and in particular they focused on the Public Finance bill 2012. However, WGI also used this opportunity to provide to citizens on the actions taken on the views earlier collected from the people on the upstream and midstream bills, the achievements and failures in respect to integrating citizens' views in the up- and mid-stream bills with MPs and the Executive arm of government.

3.0. Key Activities Conducted in the October – December 2012 Period

WGI conducted the following activities during the October – December Period 2012.

- 3.1. A team of Field Experts and WGI staff were commissioned to:
 - a) Conduct the awareness raising and consultation exercises in the 8 district areas cited above. The experts were selected from among the members of the Civil Society Coalition on Oil & Gas (CSCO) that were considered to have the requisite technical knowledge and experience about the petroleum industry, in general, and the proposed petroleum bills, in particular. This was in accordance to the design of the project that aimed at working with members of CSCO-a civil society coalition that is well versed with the oil & gas industry.
 - b) Conduct feedback on the actions taken on the views collected from the citizens in previous awareness raising and consultation exercises on the upstream and midstream petroleum bills; the successes and failures in integrating citizens' perspectives in the petroleum bills in parliament; and the challenges experienced from the executive arm of government.
 - c) Conduct citizens' awareness raising and consultations on the Public Finance bill 2012.
- 3.2. Conducted a feedback meeting with development partners to share insights about the citizens' perspectives on the up- and mid-stream petroleum bills 2012. This was intended to encourage development partners to use their political clout to persuade government to integrate citizens' perspectives in the petroleum bills. This meeting was attended by different donor representatives and members of

⁴ . On the upstream and mid-stream petroleum bills 2012.

civil society and the media. This meeting was held at Sheraton Hotel on the 23rd October 2012.



Photo 1: Feedback meeting with development partners on the citizens' perspectives about the up- and mid-stream petroleum bills 2012 at Sheraton Hotel Kampala, 23rd October 2012.

- 3.3. Conducted feedback on the up- and mid-stream petroleum bills and awareness and consultation discussions on the Public Finance bill 2012 with citizens in the 8 district regions cited above. The meetings on the Public Finance bill were conducted with local government leaders, religious and opinion leaders and community members. The meetings with community members comprised of a meeting where all participants were together and others where the participants were separated into different gender i.e. men, women and youth. The issue of the disabled was considered as a crosscutting issue. The meetings involved sharing information about the opportunities, gaps and implementation challenges and implications the bill presents to individuals, the existing legal and institutional framework, and the society in general, the economy and politics both at local and national level. The sessions desisted from making any suggestive or biased statements that could wrongly influence the opinion of the participants and allowed them to develop their own unbiased views on the bill. As part of enhancing participation, the consultative process on the Public Finance bill involved separate meetings of men, women and youth to seek their perspectives on the bill. These meetings were conducted during the period of 3rd November and 20th December 2012. The views gathered formed part of the discussions held with MPs during meetings organized under the auspices of CSCO.



Photo 2: Citizens' awareness and consultative meeting on the Public Finance bill 2012 Kanungu 18th – 19th December 2012.

- 3.4. Interactive radio talk-shows and spot messages were conducted on selected stations in the district regions visited to give feedback on the up- and mid-stream petroleum bills and discussion the Public Finance bill. Talk-shows were conducted on Liberty FM-Hoima, KBS FM⁵, Parcis FM in Arua, CBS-FM⁶ Kampala, Radio One FM Kampala, Step Radio FM Mbale FM. A spot message earlier produced in English was presented as a translation in local languages on these FM stations prior to and after the interactive talk-shows. This approach continues to be effective in delivering the desired message to the wider public. If resources allow, it is an approach that will continue to be used in subsequent engagements.
- 3.5. WGI Staff Capacity building: Staff capacity building activities have been and continue to be undertaken internally. For example;
- a) The Finance Department underwent a capacity building exercise that was facilitated by a professional from Makerere University Business School (MUBS).
 - b) Some of the other staff undertook training in Project Planning and Management; and Monitoring and Evaluation at Makerere University Main Campus

In addition, in-house training and experience learning on project planning, implementation and management have been undertaken focusing on research, communication and writing/reporting skills. This is proving to be an effective approach of transforming a staff that was initially less adept to the oil & gas industry, the petroleum bills, water related issues, research, policy analysis, communication and writing to one that is increasingly becoming expert.

⁵ . Kanungu Broadcasting Station

⁶ . Central Broadcasting Service

- 3.6. Holding task force monthly meetings at WGI: The Task force which comprised of Field Experts, WGI partners from the regions and WGI staff held monthly meetings during this period. The meetings were intended to harmonize implementation plans and agree on execution methods and processes.
- 3.7. Monitoring and Project Review: Monitoring team comprising of the Executive Director, one WGI staff and an independent consultant⁷ were commissioned to monitor the performance of the field Expert teams and assess effects of the exercise on local government and community perspectives on role of civil society in the oil & gas sector and whether or not the project was achieving its intended objectives and relevance.
- 3.8. Developing 5-year Strategic Plan for WGI: As part of the project, the DGF supported an initiative to develop a 5-year strategic plan for WGI for the period 2013-2018. A consultant was hired in collaboration with DGF to develop this strategic plan. By the time of reporting, the strategic planning process was still going on. The consultant met with WGI's staff to discuss the elements and ideas of the plan. The draft plan was intended to be presented to the WGI board for comments. A joint staff and board discussion on the strategic plan was envisioned later in January 2013. Also envisioned is a workshop where the strategic plan will be presented to other key stakeholders for comment and later finalization of the plan.

4.0. Outstanding Activities

- 4.1. Completion of the WGI 5-year strategic plan
- 4.2. Retreat of staff and Board
- 4.3. Second Feedback and dialogue meeting with development partners
- 4.4. End-of-Project Evaluation

Due to the above pending activities, WGI has applied for a paid-extension period to enable it complete the project. WGI looks forward to DGF's positive response.

5.0. Achievements/Effects or Impacts of the Project

- 5.1. The project has helped increase knowledge levels on the petroleum industry in general, the petroleum bills and the intricacies involved in the industry among the communities engaged in the 8 district areas visited and among the members of parliament. The project succeeded in changing uninformed or less informed individuals about the petroleum industry to persons that are better informed.
- 5.2. Taking the discussions on the petroleum sector to other non-oil producing districts has succeeded in grounding the fact that oil is a national resource whose benefits transcend across all districts, thus triggering interest in oil matters in non-oil producing districts i.e. making oil a national concern.

⁷ . Paul Kigala of Uganda Industry Research Institute (UIRI)

- 5.3. WGI, in collaboration with partner civil society organizations under the auspices of CSCO (chaired by WGI) organized meetings with members of parliament to share perspectives on the petroleum bills in respect to the opportunities, gaps and implementation challenges presented by the bills. As part of the discussions, civil society actors shared alternative clauses to the petroleum bills with members of parliament. This triggered heated debate in parliament that saw over 98% of the upstream and 50% of the midstream petroleum bills revised to include popular citizens' views. This was an unprecedented occurrence in parliament where over 70% of the MPs actively participated in the debate over an issue presented before parliament. This has proved the necessity for civil society to support the work of parliament from time to time. The kind of debate that ensued over the upstream bills is expected when the mid-stream and Public Finance bills are debated in parliament.
- 5.4. As part of our civil society engagement with members of parliament through CSCO, the MPs understood the gaps and implementation challenges enshrined in the proposed petroleum bills and subsequently suspended the passing of the bills into law to allow for sufficient debate and integration of citizens' views in the bills. This fulfilled one of the key project objectives.
- 5.5. The project has helped enhance the profile of WGI in Uganda and beyond. It has also built the capacity of WGI in terms of human, financial and technological resources and confidence. As a result, the role of WGI in the petroleum sector has steadily been appreciated by stakeholders.
- 5.6. The project enabled WGI establish and strengthen partnership with community based organizations and individuals in the 8 district regions visited. Thus expanding WGI's operational area and network.
- 5.7. The project has opened-up new areas of work that WGI and others civil society organizations could undertake to complete the task of integrating citizens' views in the petroleum industry such as the quest for amendment of the laws, monitoring compliance of the petroleum industry to national laws and regulations, further sensitization and community awareness raising at village levels, the need for community-based monitoring, addressing human rights and justice, offering paralegal services to communities affected by the petroleum industry, among others.
- 5.8. The engagement has triggered citizens' demand for more information and support from the government, industry, private sector and civil society. This is evidenced in the video documentary and audio-recordings produced by WGI
- 5.9. The project succeeded in sharing information with development partners who also convinced government to allow for more time for citizen's consultations and input into the petroleum bills debate in parliament.

4.0. Challenges

The challenges experienced by WGI both internally and externally in respect to the project included the following:

- 4.1. A relative uninformed society about the petroleum sector. This made it rather difficult to completely discuss and dissemination complex concepts and terminologies associated with the petroleum industry in general and the petroleum bills in particular.
- 4.2. Political sensitivity on the petroleum Industry: The apparent government intolerance to alternative views and perspectives about the petroleum industry instills fear and stifles freedoms of expression among the general population. This had an effect on the way communities and other stakeholders initially reacted to WGI and its work. This, however, changed and varied from place-to-place.
- 4.3. Differences in opinions between the Executive Arm of government and Parliament. Parliament was pervious to alternative views about the petroleum bill, while the executive wanted the bills in their original forms. This made the integration of key popular citizens' views difficult and has pitted the executive against parliament. This notwithstanding, over 90% of the citizens' views were captured in the bills.

5.0. Lessons learnt

- 5.1. A lot more citizen awareness on the petroleum industry and associated laws and regulations is necessary
- 5.2. Radio Spot messages were a powerful tool of disseminating key information on the petroleum industry to a wider audience.
- 5.3. Feedback is important as a responsible, transparent and accountability action to stakeholders, particularly project beneficiaries.
- 5.4. Although expensive, newspaper articles/ pullouts and simplified bulletins are effective tools to disseminating information to different stakeholder. These need to be encouraged and supported.
- 5.5. Working through local partners is an effective means of overcoming local bureaucracies, political impediments and eases WGI entry into local government environments. It is also an effective means of influencing citizens' attitudes, since the local partner is usually better known. In addition, partnerships at national level help in profiling WGI, advancing similar causes and offer skills and expertise that may be lacking in WGI. Such partnerships need to be strengthened.
- 5.6. Working as team is a better way of lesson learning, experience sharing and skills development.
- 5.7. There is need to extend policy advocacy to the village level.
- 5.8. The local government leaderships need the oil & gas information as much as the other citizens of the country.