

**Ghana's Strengthening Accountability Mechanisms (GSAM) Project is a five-year United States Agency for International Development (USAID) project that seeks to strengthen citizens' oversight of capital development projects to improve local government transparency, accountability and performance.**

WIDO in partnership with Care International Ghana has conducted intensive monitoring and dissemination of information on capital development projects of some selected District Assemblies in the Brong Ahafo and Ashanti Regions of Ghana. The GSAM project started from 2014 and will end in 2019. The project enables citizens to hold their local authorities accountable.

## **Background**

Studies have shown that citizens are poorly informed on local governance processes and the performance of their district assemblies. They have limited opportunities for independent assessment of the performance of their respective Assemblies. This creates an atmosphere for corruption, inefficiency and poor service delivery.

The GSAM project has thus designed an appropriate response to help bridge the information and accountability gaps, especially at the local level, by increasing information flow to citizens on District Assembly processes, particularly the planning and execution of capital development projects; and creating avenues for citizen monitoring, assessment and feedback.

The project contributes directly to Development Objective One (1) of the USAID Ghana Mission's Country Development Cooperation Strategy – Strengthened Responsive, Democratic Governance. Under this overarching objective, the project will contribute specifically to two of three intermediate results: Improved Local Governance Performance and Increased Government Accountability to Better-Informed Citizens.

## **Information & Advocacy Campaigns**

Through radio, town hall meetings, focus groups interactions, project performance bulletins, among others, citizens are informed about the performance of their district assemblies in the following areas:

1. Planning and budgeting of capital development projects;
2. Selection of contractors and service providers;
3. Award of contracts;
4. Implementation; and
5. All relevant details, etc.

This allows citizens to independently monitor and assess the performance of their respective Assemblies, citizens are stimulated to participate in District Assembly processes and therefore demand improved performance and service delivery from their respective assemblies.

## **CSO-led Citizen Monitoring & Oversight**

Citizens Scorecards to enable WIDO and citizens measure the performance of selected District Assemblies in the Brong Ahafo and Ashanti Regions of Ghana. In addition, WIDO monitors and document the progress of District Assembly capital development projects using information, communication and technology tools. The project has established an e-platform, [gsamproject.org](http://gsamproject.org), to aggregate information from the WIDO monitoring process as well as the scorecards for the purposes of analysis and dissemination.

## **CSO Capacity-Building**

WIDO receives capacity building and technical assistance from CARE Ghana and team of consortium to enable WIDO conduct intense and focused monitoring, advocacy and information campaigns as they relate to the planning and execution of capital projects. WIDO uses digital cameras to monitor the

progress and quality of capital projects and how to systematically gather data on capital projects in order to maximise their reliability.

### **Expected Benefits**

The GSAM project is expected to contribute significantly towards improving (engendering) accountable and responsive local governance, as a result of increased civil society participation and oversight of capital development projects. This should lead to improved service delivery and, ultimately, improved standards of living for citizens in the four project districts.

The has contributed to building stronger Civil Societies and citizenry capacities, and they are capable of monitoring capital development projects and leading other citizens to demand improved governance. In addition, citizens have become better-informed and empowered to participate effectively in local development, thereby promoting participatory local governance.