



CEGAA's BMETA Approach

CEGAA's Budget Monitoring, Expenditure Tracking and Advocacy (BMETA) approach recognises that each country's or site's project approach is dependent upon their circumstances, their identified issues, needs, and capacity-building requirements. Below is a generic plan of BMETA action which needs to be domesticated in each country starting BMETA work. It is recommended that an impactful BMETA project should aim for a minimum of three years of work, with additional time allocated for consolidation and impact assessment.

| Activity | Purpose | Time requirement and Outputs |
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| Initial Scoping Visits to project site(s) | To meet with existing partners, to identify and meet with new ones, to discuss BMETA interests and issues, and to explore potential partnership arrangements. | 1 month Scoping Report. |
| Situational Analysis | To deepen the understanding of CSO capacity requirements – to enable more informed planning of the project. | 3 months Situational analysis and capacity assessment report. |
| Key Stakeholder Meeting | To build support and buy-in for the project, identifying potential challenges and mitigation efforts, and some roles and responsibilities. | 1 month 1 meeting report and participant agreements documented. |
| Partnership establishment, agreeing on MOU, roles & responsibilities, etc. | To enable all the partners to reach agreement through discussion and consensus building, and to have a clear MOU guiding the roles and responsibilities. Our experience is that this takes some time. | 3 months Signed MOU with all partners. |
| Development of Capacity-Strengthening Plan | Development or adjustment of training curricula to meet country's specific needs. | 3 months Capacity building plan and Curriculum for 1 st training. |
| Delivery of First Training Workshop (in-country) | To transfer and strengthen skills in BMETA research, to develop the project's methodology and tools, to plan the research component. Thereafter the team will submit their research proposals for ethical approval. | 1 month Training report. Pre- and post-training tests to evaluate participants' knowledge gain. |
| BMETA Research and monitoring | Applying the methods and tools decided upon, the country teams embark on their data collection, monitoring, analysis, preparation of findings in suitable formats. | 7 months Detailed research/ monitoring methodology and tools designed. |

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| | | Progress reports identifying challenges. Monitoring/ research report/ briefs/ media coverage. |
| In-situ technical support through field visits | To provide relevant, timeous, practical assistance to country partners throughout their monitoring timeline, to trouble-shoot and ensure quality and rigour of methods and analysis, to assist with presentation of findings. | 7 months Visit reports identifying problems and trouble-shooting solutions. |
| Stakeholder Meetings/ Public hearings / Advocacy planning | To present findings, discuss and agree on advocacy objectives, campaign and actions required, agree on action plans, responsibilities, etc. | 3 months Meeting report. Advocacy plan. Roles and responsibilities identified. |
| Roll-out of advocacy activities | Each country implements their advocacy campaign, requiring lump sum of funding for these. | 9 months Report on activities undertaken. Media tracking to measure coverage. Public hearings. Parliamentary submissions. Budget briefs. |
| Ongoing technical support | To provide assistance with difficulties faced etc. Both in-situ visits and electronic correspondence provided. | 9 months Visit reports with trouble-shooting details. Recommendations for improving impact. |
| Evaluation of Impact of project | Assess achievement of short-term and long-term objectives, identify reasons for limitations, adjust project to address these. | 3 months Evaluation report. Recommendations for improving impact. |

CEGAA'S APPROACH TO BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

The building and strengthening of skills, competence and knowledge is critical to our success. The approach that we have developed over the four years of our operation recognises that this is not a rapid process, nor is it based on only one intervention, but requires a long-term commitment and partnership between CEGAA and our civil society partners. **In addition, the selection of potential partners and forming of strong partnerships takes careful assessment, dialogue and negotiation.** Some of the core activities conducted in building our partnerships include the following:

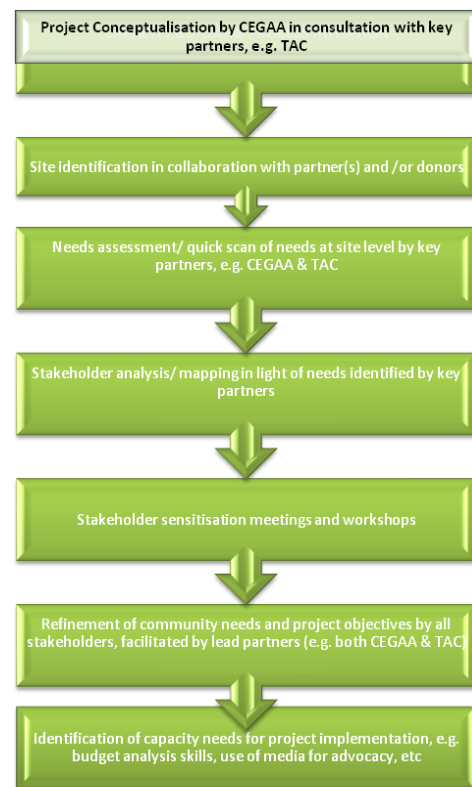
1. Seeking potential partners in our countries of operation – those CSOs that wish to use budget monitoring, expenditure tracking and financial management skills to enhance their advocacy objectives of improved public policy and its delivery;
2. Developing a partner capacity assessment tool which will measure the relevance of budget monitoring for their work, their level of interest and commitment to undertaking BMET work, their capacity and potential skills for the somewhat technical research and analysis;
3. Assisting our partners to undertake a situational analysis that reviews their context, identifies issues to be addressed and solutions, measures their own capacity to implement the appropriate budget monitoring project, and identifies potential gaps or weaknesses in their skills and knowledge;
4. From the situation analysis and our initial scoping visits which will include meetings with relevant persons, we then develop country strategic papers that guide our interventions in each country;
5. Based on this analysis, our process involves developing with our partners the most strategic advocacy goal and objectives, the budget-specific advocacy objectives feeding into this

framework, the required budget monitoring and research, and designing a capacity-building plan that meets their identified needs for skills and knowledge enhancement in budget monitoring;

6. Supporting our partners to raise awareness of their envisaged project, securing the buy-in of additional CSO partners interested in the issues and wishing to support the project, as well as securing the agreement (even if only tacit) of the relevant public officials who may be the target audience of the advocacy campaign;
7. Rolling out the capacity-building plan (refer to next section with further details on capacity-building) which may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Providing guidance in the development of methodologically sound terms of reference for the budget monitoring;
 - b. Informing selection of the most appropriate tools – these may be for community monitoring, budget monitoring, expenditure tracking or costing – and adjusting or developing these as required;
 - c. Providing initial training to build or strengthen the skills required to undertake the monitoring and utilisation of the tools selected. CEGAA has developed a range of modules for various training workshops, and these are adjusted for each partner’s specific needs;
 - d. Providing ongoing technical support during critical phases of the project – ensuring the application of sound research methods in the collection and analysis of the budgetary or service quality data, validation and presentation of the findings, and their transformation into powerful evidence-based advocacy demands;
 - e. Providing training or guidance in the development of the advocacy campaign utilising and presenting the findings in impactful ways, applying a range of strategies to ensure maximum outcomes (which may include public hearings, parliamentary submissions, social media mobilisation, or summarised research briefs for policy-makers), and monitoring the effects of these efforts.
8. Ongoing exchange of experiences and skills between ourselves and partners, as we each learn from the process, measure our impact, and adjust our focus and approach accordingly. Refer to the following section for more detail on the capacity-building approach.

Clearly, this approach requires a serious commitment of resources: time (at least three to four years), financial and human capacity. We have learnt that without these elements, the project’s impact is undermined, if not derailed. CSOs engaging in budget monitoring work therefore require support in all these areas. In providing the capacity-building component, CEGAA requires that our partners have access to adequate funds to enable them to commit the human resources and time required for their project – not only for their monitoring activities, but also for their advocacy strategies, which are often underfunded, and consequently achieve limited impact.

For our part, we require financial support to provide our capacity-building services. This funding is needed to cover not only our own human resources, but also the costs of undertaking the actual activities to deliver the services, and these include several site/field visits, meetings between partners, larger stakeholder meetings, training workshops, technical support visits, electronic engagement and communications. We have found that technical skills transfer during all the project phases is most effectively accomplished on-site, ensuring relevant, timeous and practical learning for our partners.



1. CEGAA’S CAPACITY BUILDING APPROACH

The CEGAA capacity development approach assumes that capacity-building is a process of empowering individual citizens, civil society organisations, social groups, researchers and even state officials with skills to mobilise one another or others for collaborative efforts to change undesirable conditions for realisation of human rights. In this approach, “capacity” is defined beyond training workshops and seminars, to encompass all activities that lead to social accountability, such as problem definition concretised in concept notes and funding proposals, social mobilisation, stakeholder identification and sensitisation, coalition-building, community needs assessments, campaign development, writing advocacy messages, training on particular topics of interest such as budget monitoring, and various forms of research.

CEGAA supports its partners in South Africa and elsewhere with capacity-building using a combination of these collaborative efforts. Partners are best capacitated by participating in activities rather than by receiving trainings alone.

Technical support provision is the ultimate method of building capacity as CEGAA staff avail themselves to work hand-in-hand with partners, providing them with technical skills where necessary, in line with project goals. It is common knowledge that trainings can raise awareness and give trainees skills to perform certain functions or analyses; however, in reality, trainees need extra support to put their learnt skills into practice. This is even more important where financial analyses are involved. Budget analysis and expenditure tracking require careful attention to be paid to the fundamentals of

Situational analyses may be conducted as a secondary study, without the ethics requirement. However, other forms of research development require that scientific research proposals be developed, and ethics application(s) be considered for research involving human subjects. Complete research tools need to be developed, as well as Informed Consent procedures for the primary research. This process would involve CEGAA’s partners so that they learn from the process and can be capacitated and supported to deal with similar processes on their own in the future. For meaningful capacity development, the research assistants or data collectors should be members of the community seeking or being supported to do the research so that research skills are developed at local level. Therefore, the research teams will need to be trained thoroughly on research tools and survey administration and be given an opportunity to test (or pilot) the research tools for accuracy and appropriateness of questions and to test for bias. However, field supervision by CEGAA and experienced research partners is needed.

Depending on the type of information collected, and the purpose of the research, CEGAA and research partners may employ a statistical computer package to analyse the data. This may limit other partners’ involvement in this stage of the research process, but draft findings will need to be shared and discussed extensively to ensure that all partners understand what the information is telling them, and will be able to use it for their advocacy purposes. The preliminary research results would then need to be presented at various fora for validation purposes and to identify gaps that other stakeholders may observe. Again, this process must involve CEGAA’s CSO partners to ensure that their research analysis and dissemination skills are improved. Once the monitoring team is confident of the accuracy and sufficiency of information to make conclusions, various report formats may then be prepared for various audiences, with the goal of advocating for better public services. Various dissemination avenues may be planned for origination or leveraged through partners, such as workshops, conferences and strategic meetings. For the ultimate social accountability process, public hearings and activist mechanisms such as demonstrations may be deemed necessary.

Notably, community monitors (citizens, groups, and coalitions) are encouraged to use their background experiences and information from the ongoing community monitoring activities to inform all process of capacity-building: trainings, research design, budget analysis, expenditure tracking, community monitoring and advocacy strategies. This seeks to ensure that new skills are relevant to the situation(s) and that they make sense to the individuals and groups receiving them.



It is also important to emphasise that budget and community monitoring is not an end in itself; various strategies will be required to ensure that information or evidence generated from the monitoring activities is used to improve the lives of the people needing public services. Among such strategies is the formation of Action Teams tasked with ensuring that monitoring issues are addressed by responsible government agents and/or service providers. CEGAA recommends that such teams should include both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to promote accountability and enforce responsibility for corrective action.

2. THE CITIZEN REPORT CARD (CRC) FOR COMMUNITY MONITORING CAPACITY

CEGAA seeks to utilise relevant community monitoring tools for community empowerment and generation of powerful evidence for social accountability. Through the IBP’s Partnership Initiative, CEGAA has been exposed to various community monitoring tools such as social auditing, citizen report

cards, community score cards, physical verification and procurement monitoring. These tools are good for monitoring of policy and budget implementation in the public sector, but they need to be carefully assessed for appropriateness in CEGAA's budget monitoring work. After careful consideration of the pros and cons of each tool, CEGAA has strategically decided to utilise citizen report card for various reasons, outlined below.

The Citizen Report Card (CRC) is defined as a simple but powerful tool to provide governments with systematic feedback from users of public services. By collecting feedback on the quality and adequacy of public services from beneficiaries, the CRC provides a rigorous basis and a proactive agenda for communities, civil society organisations or local governments to engage in a dialogue with service providers to improve the delivery of public services.

This tool tries to address critical themes in the delivery of public services such as access to services, quality and reliability of services, problems encountered by users of services, and responsiveness of service providers in addressing these problems. The CRC facilitates open and proactive discussions on government performances, empowering citizens or groups to play a watch-dog role by monitoring public service agencies and local governments. CEGAA supports the application of the CRC in its work because of the following:

- The CRC is a systematic research survey that employs scientific measures to collect valid information.
- It follows strict measures such as the requirement for ethical approval for research involving humans, in this case families and individuals in need of specific public interventions.
- It provides credible evidence that can be staged at various platforms without questions of integrity.
- Governments tend to undermine sound community monitoring mechanisms that have not followed strict research protocol. The CRC provides citizens and CSOs with the credibility they require to engage with policymakers on an equal echelon.
- CEGAA and partners will design the research tools in-house as a research capacity-building exercise for those partners less inclined towards or relatively inexperienced in research.
- They will train their own members on research methods to administer the CRC tools at community and government service delivery levels.
- The information collected will be analysed in-house, though with lesser involvement of the community members who collected the information because of their limited knowledge of statistical packages; nonetheless, the draft summaries of information will be tabled for examination by these monitors to check for logic, gaps, etc.
- Once the analysis is final, the community monitors will be given an opportunity to present the information back to the community and government facilities, with support from CEGAA and partners' research co-ordinators.
- CEGAA and partners will facilitate the formation of Action Teams, as described earlier, and ensure their own representation for influence in the deliberations and decision-making.

2.1. Programmatic Outcomes

In terms of our programmatic activities in South Africa and the African region, we wish to achieve the following outcomes:

- Technical support provided to already existing coalitions of non-governmental partners, including people affected by the situation under investigation, that will actively participate in community monitoring of budget formulation and service provision/ implementation.
 - Specific examples of technical support include working with partners on budget and expenditure analyses, research design and advocacy strategy development.
- Capacity built or strengthened of interested partners, to develop their BMET projects.
 - Success measured by ability of partners to implement budget monitoring and expenditure tracking work on their own, with limited technical support from CEGAA, as experienced in the Oxfam NOVIB multi-country project.
 - Partners proactively integrate BMET work into their routine activities, as well as acquisition of funds to sustain this work. For example, TAC expansion project in South Africa.
- Transfer of new budget monitoring skills to community monitors performing budget monitoring at community level for effective advocacy.
- Budget monitoring and expenditure tracking are integrated into community monitoring activities.
- Improved governance through facilitated and improved community involvement in local government structures.
- Facilitated and strengthened community-level advocacy campaigns to ensure the improvement of public services, specifically with regard to health and anti-poverty services.
- Enhanced social accountability through community– government interface meetings.
- Expansion of budget monitoring and expenditure tracking work to other areas of public policy.
 - CEGAA’s involvement in this expansion very important from the capacity development and technical support perspectives, however partners are empowered to institutionalise BMET work for sustainability. This would allow CEGAA to smoothly exit the partnership in a period of five years, and develop new partnership where needed.
- Community engagement with government leadership through meetings, budget briefs and public hearings on budgeting, expenditure tracking and service delivery.