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Effective Technical Cooperation for Capacity Development

Malawi Country Case Study

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Joint Study on Effective TC for CD



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ABBREVIATIONS

CABS	Common Approach to Budget Support
CD	Capacity Development
CDSS	Community Day Secondary School
CGA	Country Governance Assessment
CHAM	Christian Health Association of Malawi
CPIA	Country Policy and Institutional Assessment
CSBI	Civil Society Budget Initiative
CSCQBE	Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education
DAS	Development Assistance Strategy
DFID	Department for International Development
DHRMD	Department of Human Resource Management and Development
EHP	Emergency Healthcare Package
FPE	Free Primary Education
GoM	Government of Malawi
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MEJN	Malawi Economic Justice Network
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MoEPD	Ministry of Economic Planning and Development
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoLVT	Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training
MPRS	Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy
MTTA	Malawi Teacher Training Activity
NESP	National Education Sector Plan
NTP	National Tuberculosis Programme
ODPP	Office of the Director of Public Procurement
OPC	Office of the President and Cabinet
PCAR	Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform
PFEM	Public Financial and Expenditure Management
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PoW	Programme of Work
PSMRP	Public Sector Management Reform Programme

SSTEP	Secondary School Teacher Education Project
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
TC	Technical Cooperation
TEVET	Technical, Entrepreneurial and Vocation Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

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PREFACE

In November 2007, the Government of Malawi began work on a study on effective Technical Cooperation for Capacity Development. This study has been undertaken by the Office of the President and Cabinet's (OPC) Public Sector Reforms Management Unit, with the support of a consultancy team contracted by the United Nations Development Programme. The study is intended to improve the design of future capacity development (CD) strategies by providing evidence on how to make better use of technical cooperation (TC). It also contributes to a joint study on effective TC for CD being conducted at the global level by 11 countries (Cambodia, Ghana, Kenya, Laos, Malawi, Malaysia, Pakistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Vietnam and Zambia) with the Asian Development Bank, Germany (BMZ/GTZ), Japan (JICA - Secretariat), UK (DFID), UNDP and World Bank.

The study has involved a range of inter-related activities, using the '*Conceptual Framework, Methodology and Analytical Approach*' which is guiding the overall global study. The OPC and the supporting local consultants have held interviews and focus group discussions with a wide range of key Government personnel involved in the design and implementation of TC. The study team has also administered perception surveys, consulted with representatives from civil society and the donor community, and identified and explored relevant examples of good TC practice. The findings from these activities are set out in this report.

The OPC and the consultants would like to take this opportunity to express their thanks to all who have participated in this study since its start in late 2007: Government officials, as well as the representatives of the donor community and civil society. Their assistance and insights have been invaluable. The study team are also grateful to UNDP and JICA for their advice, guidance and support.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

In November 2007, the Government of Malawi (GoM) began work on a study on effective Technical Cooperation (TC) for Capacity Development (CD). This study has been undertaken by the Office of the President and Cabinet's (OPC) Public Sector Reforms Management Unit, with the support of a consultancy team contracted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The study is intended to improve the design of future CD strategies by providing evidence on how to make better use of TC. It also contributes to a joint study on effective TC for CD being conducted at the global level.

1.2. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY

1.2.1. OVERALL APPROACH

The approach and methodology followed by the OPC in conducting the study is set out in the *'Conceptual Framework, Methodology and Analytical Approach'* paper, prepared for the global TC review. Together with a team of supporting local consultants, the OPC has carried out a review of relevant documentation and analytical work, and held interviews and focus group discussions with selected GoM staff as well as other relevant stakeholders from civil society and the donor community. These activities have allowed the OPC to:

- Make a broad assessment of the range of TC being provided in Malawi at the national level;
- Examine practices of TC and its contribution to capacity development under overall capacity development efforts in two key sectors: education and health;
- Explore contributing and impeding factors that have influenced the results of TC in the above sectors;
- Identify lessons learned, benchmarks, and recommendations for the better use of TC for capacity development in Malawi in future.



1.2.2. IDENTIFYING EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE IN TECHNICAL COOPERATION

At the same time, the OPC has identified a series of examples of good practice in TC for capacity development in Malawi. These examples have been researched during the course of the study, and have been used to test the following six hypotheses, set out in the global study's '*Conceptual Framework, Methodology and Analytical Approach*' paper:

TC works best under the following circumstances:

- **Leadership and Alignment.** When TC is located and coordinated within a country-defined and jointly agreed sector or thematic capacity development roadmap.
- **Commitment.** When the relevant country authority has the capacity and commitment to plan, manage and monitor TC selection and performance.
- **Flexible Design.** When TC inputs are adaptable to the changing needs of the beneficiary organisation, recognising that its potential may be unleashed or constrained in unpredictable ways.
- **Organisational and Individual Incentives.** When TC responds to the different needs of the organisation and its staff, including top management and the broader technical cadre.
- **Complementarity.** When TC is part of a broader package of assistance, including infrastructure, technology and possibly targeted staff incentives.
- **Learning and Networking.** When TC includes efforts to facilitate organisational learning and reflection, and enables formal and informal networking and mutual support.

For each good practice example, the OPC has identified the ways in which capacity has been strengthened by TC, the respective roles of the beneficiary organisation and the supporting donor, and the critical factors that have led to the success of the TC activity. These good practice examples are set out in detail in this report, and inform the study's overall conclusions and recommendations for future TC activities.

1.3. KEY DEFINITIONS

The '*Conceptual Framework, Methodology and Analytical Approach*' paper includes definitions for the key terms that have been used by the OPC during the course of this study. In particular, the framework provides working definitions for two key terms: '*capacity development*' and '*technical cooperation*'. These definitions are set out below, as a reference point.

1.3.1. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The study is based on a broad consensus of what constitutes capacity and capacity development.

Capacity: 'The ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully.'

Capacity Development: 'The process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time.'

Definitions used in OECD/DAC 2006

Capacity: 'The ability of people and organisations to perform tasks and produce outputs'

Capacity Development: Is defined as 'a process by which people and organisations create and strengthen capacity over time.'

Definitions from EC Institutional Assessment and Capacity Development. Why, what and how?

Capacity: 'That emergent combination of individual competencies, collective capabilities, assets and relationships that enables a human system to create value for others.'

Definition adopted in the ECDPM Study on Capacity Change and Performance 2007: Final Synthesis Report

The study is based on the assumption that capacity development involves change at various levels. This may involve changes of:

- legal mandates, roles and responsibilities;
- working practices and processes;
- patterns of authority;
- leadership and management approaches;
- internal systems, especially for planning, implementation, monitoring and use of information;
- knowledge and skills, as well as communication and learning processes;
- motivation, incentive and reward structures.

1.3.2. TECHNICAL COOPERATION

For the purposes of the study, TC is defined as:

- The provision of consultants or experts to provide advisory services;

- Scholarships and training activities;
- Institutional twinning and networking.

Other forms of donor support include: different kinds of project inputs (e.g., infrastructure, equipment); general and sector budget support; and other forms of financial assistance. A particular focus of the study is on the complementarity of TC with these other forms of support in achieving capacity development results.

1.4. STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

The findings from the study activities are set out in this report, the remainder of which has been divided into four main sections:

- Section 2 describes trends and patterns in the provision of TC at the national level, and presents the perceptions of government staff on the effectiveness of these TC activities.
- Section 3 explores in more detail the different forms of TC that have been provided in two key sectors: education and health. These sectors were chosen by the core group of stakeholders overseeing the study because of the high levels of donor involvement in each case.
- Section 4 identifies a series of six examples of good practice in these chosen sectors: TC activities which have had a measurable and sustained impact on local capacity, and from which lessons can be drawn.
- Section 5 provides a summary of the key issues and conclusions drawn from the study, and includes a series of recommendations that can be used to guide the design and implementation of future TC activities.

2. OVERALL SITUATION ANALYSIS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

2.1. TECHNICAL COOPERATION TRENDS AND PATTERNS

The Debt and Aid Division in the Ministry of Finance (MoF) has responsibility for the coordination and production of aid statistics in Malawi. It produces an Annual Debt and Aid Report with information on the volumes, distribution and predictability of disbursements from development partners.

The Division has made considerable progress in recent years, increasing the proportion of donor expenditures that are captured on budget. The data collected by the Division do attempt to disaggregate TC from financial support, though this has not been reported on in the first two Annual Debt and Aid Reports.

2.1.1. WHAT DO THE DATA FROM THE DEBT AND AID DIVISION SHOW?

The data available from the Debt and Aid Division's reporting systems allow some broad conclusions to be drawn about the nature of donor activities in Malawi. In particular, the data indicate the following:

- *A small number of donors provide the bulk of support.* In the last financial year, approximately three-quarters of the aid received by Malawi came from just five donors: DFID, the Norwegian Government, the EU, the World Bank and USAID. These five donors take the lead for the international community in supporting the country across most key sectors, including education and health. The relatively small number of donors in itself should help the Government in its efforts to ensure greater coordination of donor activities around its development plans.
- *Aid by modality.* Much of the aid delivered by the international community takes the form of project support. Such support amounted to two-thirds of total aid disbursed in 2006-7. Budget support is provided by four donors at present: DFID, the EU, the Norwegian Government and the World Bank, and accounts for one-sixth of total spending. This represents a deviation from the principles set out in the Paris Declaration, indicating that donors are not yet in a position to use the Government's own systems to the extent



that might be desired. A number of possible reasons exist for this: the limited capacity of Government departments in key fields such as procurement and financial management, the absence of sector policies against which budget support can be delivered, or the legal requirements of the donors themselves. However, as the MoF notes, the level of budget support during 2006-7 represents a significant deviation from that recorded in the previous year. Forecasts for 2007-8 indicate that budget support will account for approximately one fifth of total aid disbursed, indicative of an upward trend towards the target of 30% set out in the Government's own Development Assistance Strategy.

- **Aid by sector.** The data for 2006/7 indicate that the most significant proportion of donor spending, more than 40%, is targeted towards social development: a field which includes both the education and health sectors, which received 21% and 9.5% of development support respectively. The concentration of aid on one field has been the subject of considerable debate between Government and the donor community, with the former raising concerns during the Joint Country Programme Review in May 2007 that other key areas such as economic growth and infrastructure are not being given sufficient attention.

A more detailed breakdown of TC data is provided in Appendix C to this report. These figures do not provide complete coverage of all TC activities in Malawi, as not all donors disaggregate TC when reporting their disbursements. In some cases, when TC is delivered as part of a project, it cannot be separated out in this manner. However, these data are still useful in providing a broad overview of patterns of TC activity over the last two years.

The data indicate that over the period the distribution of TC according to functional sector has been consistent, with the governance sector accounting for more than 40% of all TC activity, and with the education and health sectors together receiving more than a third of all TC support. This pattern is in turn reflected in the distribution of TC across the five themes of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS), where the social development and improved governance themes have accounted for more than 80% of total TC funding in each of the last 2 years.

The data also allow for some observations to be made on the proportion of total aid disbursements which come in the form of TC. The proportions indicated for each of the functional sectors shown in Appendix C vary widely. In the most recent full financial year, for example, TC accounted for either 5% or less of total disbursement in sectors such as agriculture, gender and social protection, water and irrigation, transport, as well as trade and private sector development. In the governance sector, however, TC spending amounted to approximately K3.2 billion, out of the total K7.2 billion spent, indicating that TC activities are a far more significant component of overall donor assistance in this area. However, as already noted above, the data do not provide complete coverage, and given that such data are only available for the last two years, it is difficult to identify emerging trends or patterns in TC at this point.

2.1.2. WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION?

A number of other sources of information on national-level donor activities, including technical cooperation, are available. These include donor strategy documents, as well as project and programme evaluation reports. These also provide an indication of how patterns of TC have changed in recent years. From these, a number of observations can be made:

- *Support for implementation of the country's poverty reduction plans.* The launch of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) in 2006 reflects a major milestone for the Government. Increasingly, donor efforts now focus on key functions such as policy-making at the sector level, budgeting and planning, in order to ensure that the central and sector ministries have the necessary capacity to cascade the MGDS downwards and to ensure that planning and resource allocations accurately reflect the country's poverty reduction priorities.
- *Specialisation within the donor community.* Donors are increasingly focusing their efforts on a smaller number of sectors, reflecting their own experiences and lessons learned from past programmes. The portfolios of the EU and the World Bank, for example, are now focused more on growth, agriculture and infrastructure, with some support to Government in the field of social protection. Both look to DFID to build on its local experience and lead on the provision of technical cooperation to strengthen basic services, including education and health. This picture suggests that there has been some progress towards division of labour between donors, though there is still some way to go.
- *Capacity development, both inside and outside the public sector.* While the primary focus for technical cooperation remains the Government, donors have also committed sums to building capacity outside the public sector. DFID, for example, channels more than 90% of its support to Government institutions, but is paying increasing attention to non-government organisations. This reflects the findings of its most recent Country Governance Assessment (CGA), which underscored the need to strengthen accountability institutions such as CSOs and the media as part of the effort to enhance domestic accountability and responsiveness. This is an approach which other donors are also adopting: the EC, for example, with its programme to build capacity amongst non-state actors.
- *Strengthening capacity at the sub-national level.* The move towards the decentralisation of key Government functions has been a priority for Malawi for some years, since the passing of the Local Government Act. A substantial proportion of the health budget and a growing proportion of the agriculture and education budgets are now devolved to district assemblies to manage. Donors are therefore paying increasing attention to the development of capacity at the district and local levels, helping to strengthen their autonomy, capacity and accountability.

- ***An increased focus on public financial and expenditure management.*** The plan to move towards increased budget support is reflected in the increased levels of technical cooperation being provided by the donor community in the Public Financial and Expenditure management (PFEM) field. If levels of budget support are to increase, country PFEM systems will need on-going support. The Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) assessment undertaken in early 2008 and the concurrent UNDP-funded capacity needs assessment of financial management are expected to provide a framework for such support.

2.2. THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION

Malawi's long-term development vision was captured in Vision 2020: National Long-term Development Perspective for Malawi, prepared by the Government in 1999 with assistance from the UNDP and the World Bank. The first Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy (MPRS) was launched three years later in 2002, and set out the country's development goals in a comprehensive manner, providing a framework around which donors could provide technical cooperation.

The MPRS focused on four key themes: sustainable pro-poor economic growth; human capital development; improving the quality of life for the most vulnerable; and good governance. The MPRS also addressed a range of cross-cutting issues, such as gender, HIV/AIDS and the environment.

2.2.1. THE MGDS AND NATIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

The MPRS was implemented between 2002 and 2005, and has now been superseded by a new national development plan: the MGDS. The MGDS is based on five themes: sustainable economic growth; social protection; social development; infrastructure development; and improved governance. The MGDS also identifies six key priority areas, namely agriculture and food security; transport infrastructure development; energy generation and supply; irrigation and water development; integrated rural development; and HIV/AIDS management and prevention.

The new Strategy is considered to be a step forward from the MPRS. It provides greater clarity of desired outcomes, and identifies ways in which capacity constraints at the institutional and organisational level have the potential to impact on the Government's ability to achieve these outcomes. However, as with its predecessor, it does not focus on capacity development as a distinct issue. The Results Framework of the MGDS provides a monitoring and evaluation framework, which should be used by all partners to measure progress in achieving poverty reduction, growth and development goals. The first MGDS review took place in late 2007 and is currently under finalisation.

Box 1: Key Policy Milestones at the National Level

The Government has achieved a number of significant milestones in recent years in its efforts to strengthen relationships with the donor community at the strategic and policy level, and to ensure that donors have a clear development framework against which they can align their technical cooperation activities. These key milestones include:

- **The launch of Vision 2020 and the MPRS.** The Vision 2020 statement provides a high-level overview of the Government's vision for the social and economic development of Malawi over the medium term. The MPRS built on this document, setting out a range of activities to be undertaken by the Government and its national and external partners to reduce poverty, and was the result of extensive consultation with the donor community and national stakeholders.
- **The MGDS.** The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy was launched in 2006 as the successor to the MPRS. It is widely considered to be an improvement on the Government's earlier strategy, with greater local ownership, a stronger results orientation and recognition of the linkages between capacity constraints and outcomes. It provides a unified framework for the Government's efforts to tackle poverty and achieve economic growth.
- **Development Assistance Strategy.** Alongside the MGDS, the Government has prepared and recently launched its first Development Assistance Strategy (DAS). The DAS has been developed by the MoF, with input from donors and civil society, and sets out the Government's policies and priorities for improving aid effectiveness and donor coordination for the period from 2006 to 2011. It also explains how the Government and its development partners need to improve performance against their Paris Declaration agreements. The DAS provides a roadmap to improve the targeting and management of technical cooperation, and includes a series of actions which central and sector ministries and donors are expected to take to ensure that their efforts are more effectively coordinated.
- **Reviews of capacity across Government.** Alongside the development of these national-level strategic documents the Government, along with the donor community, has undertaken a number of review exercises to identify key capacity weaknesses. A public sector management review was undertaken in 1991 with the support of the World Bank, and a number of subsequent studies were carried out in the following decade, focusing on key aspects of governance and public sector management. A National Capacity Assessment was undertaken in 2004, and followed by a series of ministry reviews. UNDP is currently supporting capacity assessments of key functions such as human resource management, financial management, audit, project management and information technology. These underscore the severe capacity challenges facing the Government, and the deterioration in capacity which has been witnessed over the course of the last decade.
- **A number of capacity assessments have also been undertaken at the sector level,** specifically in health (the 2007 GTZ Human Resources Capacity Development Assessment), or are planned in the near future, as for education. It is important that any new assessments take account of existing reports/studies, to avoid the potential for duplication of effort.

Documents such as the MGDS and DAS indicate that the Government and its international partners have made considerable progress in strengthening the policy environment for technical cooperation in recent years. Whilst there are capacity development strategies in some sectors, there is as yet no overall national strategy for capacity development or public sector reform, or a clear champion for such a strategy at the national level.

However, it is important to note that efforts have been made in the past to put in place a policy framework for TC at the national level. In the late 1980s, the Government began work on a year-long assessment of TC, involving a broad spectrum of ministries, departments and agencies, with donor participation. Under the leadership of a National Task Force on Technical Cooperation, nine working groups carried out a series of detailed assessments of TC in Malawi, focusing on key sectors such as agriculture, education, health and transport. The result was a document entitled a '*Statement of Policy on Technical Cooperation for Human and Institutional Development in Malawi*', which provides an overview of trends in TC over the preceding decade and sets out key principles that should underpin the design and management of TC activities. However, whilst the Statement could provide a useful reference point for the development of any future TC policy, it appears that the document does not have a high profile across Government.

While not an operational TC policy, the draft Debt and Aid Policy has some guidelines on TC, specifically technical assistance (TA), which note that Government's preference is for increased capacity building support and eventual minimisation of TA. MoF and OPC are committed to developing a new Technical Cooperation Policy that will further guide the use and procurement of TA and seek to establish a system whereby resources will be pooled and managed by Government in support of a defined CD programme. In addition, a capacity development and training needs assessment will be carried out for each sector and development partners will be asked to support implementation of the resulting strategy. The aim will be to reduce the need for TA by enhancing the capacity of Government staff to discharge their functions effectively.

2.3. THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION

2.3.1. PROGRESS AGAINST THE PARIS DECLARATION

The 2006 Paris Declaration Monitoring Report emphasises that in order to help Malawi overcome capacity constraints in human resources and institutional capacity, it is imperative that donors provide TC in a coordinated manner. The Report indicates that, at present, 47% of TC is coordinated with country programmes. This brings the Government and its donor partners close to the target set of 50% coordination by 2010. It suggests that donors have responded well to need for coordinated TC that strengthens capacity.

However, there is still much work to be done by Government and donors alike. The World Bank's Aid Effectiveness Review of 2006 underscores the fact that while donors are aligning their development assistance with the national priorities from the MGDS, this alignment

applies at the strategic level, but not consistently so at the operational level. The Joint Country Programme Review for 2007 also highlights the fact that *'very few sector strategies are closely linked to the MGDS outcomes, making the strategic direction of Government unclear'*. The absence of a clear strategic framework at the sector level can hinder the ability of Government and its donor partners to design and implement TC activities that accurately reflect national priorities.

2.3.2. STRENGTHENING THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

A number of positive steps have been taken to strengthen the operational environment in which technical cooperation activities are designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated. For example:

- ***Design and planning of TC activities.*** The DAS provides guidance on the approach which central and sector ministries and their donor partners should take to identify capacity weaknesses, and to develop technical cooperation initiatives that respond to these weaknesses. The DAS recommends that working groups be established for each key sector, and that each sector working group be supported by a sub-group that is specifically focused on the identification of critical capacity constraints. The DAS therefore provides a high level roadmap, even if the document is not yet supported by a more detailed set of policy guidelines on the use of technical cooperation.
- ***Implementation of TC.*** Coordination mechanisms also exist in a number of sectors to support the implementation of technical cooperation activities. For example, a joint Government-donor Group on Financial and Economic Management (GFEM) meets regularly to coordinate the implementation of the Malawi PFEM action plan, as a result of which the GFEM and PFEM have established capacity building priorities for auditing and procurement. Similar groups have been established and are now operational in the following sectors: infrastructure, education, agriculture, governance, security, health, trade and private sector development, gender, HIV/AIDS and social protection. The Government's intention, as indicated in the DAS Action Plan, is that Sector Coordination Groups be established in all sectors.
- ***Monitoring and evaluation.*** A joint country programme review mechanism was launched by the Government and donor community in 2005. The first MGDS review took place in 2007 and is currently being finalised. These review processes allow Government and donor agencies to monitor and evaluate their activities on an annual basis, including technical cooperation. The process allows the Government and external partners to assess the extent to which activities have been aligned with the MGDS, to identify progress, and to develop joint plans of action for key sectors.

Box 2: SWOT Analysis of Operational Environment for TC

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Good working relationships between the Government and the donor community. The pool of effective donors in Malawi is small, aiding in donor coordination and alignment around the country’s development goals. ■ A sound overall framework is in place with the MGDS, against which technical cooperation activities can be designed and implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The absence of an overarching national-level capacity development strategy, to shape donor and Government plans and TC activities ■ Weak capacity to coordinate donor support at the central level. ■ Weak capacity to lead the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of TC activities in many sectors.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The launch of the DAS, with clear guidelines on how to improve the focus on capacity development and the coordination of donor-supported TC activities. ■ Emerging capacity development strategies in key sectors around which TC can be designed and implemented. ■ The establishment of a Public Sector Reform unit within the OPC, which provides a potential focal point for capacity development activities at the national level. ■ The availability of an existing Statement of TC Policy which, despite being more than a decade old, might serve as a template for a new TC policy document. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continued capacity constraints within central ministries limiting donors’ willingness to use Government systems to implement TC. ■ Poor progress on key public financial management and governance reforms, impacting on relations between Government and its development partners. ■ Electoral pressures inducing spending patterns that donors object to or disagree with.

2.4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

A number of sources of information provide an indication of the effectiveness and impact of TC at the national level. This study draws upon the results of diagnostic and evaluation exercises undertaken by the Government and donor community, a perception survey conducted as part of the study, as well as discussions with key Government informants in central and sector ministries.

2.4.1. THE RESULTS OF DIAGNOSTIC AND EVALUATION EXERCISES

Since the advent of democracy, progress on national-level efforts to reform the state and develop sustainable capacity has been reviewed and evaluated many times, with mixed conclusions. For example:

- **HIPC benchmarks.** As part of the Heavily Indebted Poor States (HIPC) initiative, the Government's capacity in the field of public expenditure management has been tracked consistently over a number of years. For the period between 2001 and 2004, Malawi's public expenditure management benchmark score declined from 7 to 5: an indication that the capacity of Malawi's public financial management system was deteriorating, particularly with respect to budget execution. However, recent PEFA assessments in 2006 and 2008 point towards a reversal of this pattern, with gradual improvements in key areas of financial management. This may be due in part to new leadership nationally and in MoF improving the operating environment.
- **Governance indicators.** In 2002, when the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) last gathered relevant data on the quality of governance and public sector management across the region, Malawi consistently ranked in the bottom half of the 23 countries surveyed for a range of key governance indicators. However, in recent years there are signs of an upward trend in key governance indicators, as suggested by the most recent DFID Country Governance Assessment, which notes '*significant progress in key aspects of governance*'. While the country continues to face major capability challenges in areas such as service delivery, macroeconomic management has improved, and the World Bank's 2005 IDA Resource Allocation Index report, based on the annual CPIA exercise, rates the quality of public sector management in Malawi as 3.5 out of 6, above the IDA average. Such trends suggest that technical cooperation provided by the donor community at the national level across the public sector may have a positive impact.

2.4.2. THE RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL PERCEPTION SURVEY

As part of this study, a perception survey was administered at the national level, to seek the views of key Government officials on the impact of technical cooperation. The results of this survey exercise are set out in the box below. A more detailed description of the methodology used in implementing this perception survey, as well as those administered at the sector level, is set out in Appendix D.

The national level perception survey on technical cooperation included a series of 15 questions, each worded in the form of a statement. Participants were asked to indicate in each case whether they agreed or disagreed against a rating scale (with 1 indicating strong agreement, 5 indicating strong disagreement). This table shows the scores recorded for every question, with the percentage of respondents allocated against the rating scale.

Box 3: Results of the National Perception Survey

Question:	Rating (with % score)				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Sector and thematic capacity development roadmaps have contributed to more effective use of technical cooperation (TC) for capacity development (CD)	16	32	32	10	10
2. Majority of the TC designs are appropriate and well targeted, meeting the demands of country development priorities	10	37	0	53	0
3. Central and sectoral ministries and organisations are always willing and able to lead the preparation of capacity development plans without the need for TC	5	32	26	21	16
4. TC has proved effective in contributing to improvements in both sector and organisational performance and results	42	26	11	21	0
5. Pooling TC funds from a number of donors is more effective in building capacity than separate, stand-alone TC from a single donor	58	11	21	5	5
6. The effectiveness of TC is increased when it is linked to a previous capacity assessment of the targeted organisation or group	68	26	0	6	0
7. TC has proved more effective when the design allows for a high degree of flexibility in response to changes in organisational priorities and needs	68	26	6	0	0
8. TC has proved more effective when it focuses on the needs of the entire organisation, rather than specific groups of individuals	63	32	5	0	0
9. The effectiveness of TC in building capacity is reduced by trained individuals leaving the organisation	53	26	5	5	11
10. TC proves to be more effective in organisations where there is a commitment to change and reform	68	26	6	0	0
11. TC proves to be more effective when it is linked to other forms of support, such as infrastructure and equipment provision	47	42	11	0	0
12. TC programmes have proved effective in building up staff confidence in their ability to complete their work and responsibilities	21	47	16	16	0
13. Individual consultants/experts perform better when their performance is regularly monitored by the senior staff in the beneficiary organisation	47	33	10	10	0
14. TC programmes have created a serious risk of foreign or local experts substituting for technical staff within their organisation	16	32	20	16	16
15. TC programmes have proved effective in increasing learning and reflection within organisations and helping to facilitate change	32	26	21	21	0

The results of the survey provide useful insights into the perceptions of key government staff with regard to TC at the national level – perceptions that were explored further through focus group discussions with survey participants.

Almost half of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that capacity development roadmaps have contributed towards more effective TC. The importance of establishing such roadmaps before providing TC was also highlighted in the focus group discussions, during which individual participants noted that *'TC should be matched with the needs as perceived by all the stakeholders'* and that for TC to be effective, a *'proper capacity assessment should be done before any TC is provided'*.

Participants in the survey were however divided as to whether the majority of TC designs at the national level have been appropriately designed and targeted. While 10% strongly agreed with this statement, more than 50% indicated their disagreement. Again, follow-up discussions with participants underscored their perceptions that TC design is a critical issue, with one participant noting the risk of *'poor identification of the needs and requirements of the given organisation arising mainly from imposition of decisions by the donors to the recipient'*. At the same time, there was a wide divergence in the responses to the third question posed, asking whether participants perceived that government departments were willing and able to lead in the preparation of capacity development plans without TC support. While 37% of those responding indicated that departments were willing and able to take the lead, the same percentage expressed their disagreement. While these perceptions are subjective views of government capacity, they do perhaps reflect the observation made earlier, that few sectors have yet been able to establish formal capacity development strategies. Indeed, follow-up focus group discussions confirmed that donor support is still perceived to be critical in preparing such strategies: individual informants noted the importance of *'joint roadmap development'* and the *'joint assessment of capacity needs'*, indicating that they consider it crucial for government departments and donors to work together in this area.

However, despite these perceptions, approximately two-thirds of respondents indicated their belief that TC has been effective in generating improvements in performance and results in their organisation. More than half of those participating in the survey also perceived that TC has been effective in increasing learning and helping to facilitate change. The importance which respondents placed on the transfer of skills and expertise is reflected in the comments made by individuals during the follow-up focus group discussions, with participants noting that TC is most effective when it acts as a mechanism for *'knowledge exchange'* through which *'technical staff are allowed to understudy technical experts'* or where a government department's *'top management is flexible to allow technical experts to work freely with technical staff'*.

The strongest positive response in the national perception survey came for question 10, with 94% of respondents indicating that they either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that TC is more effective in organisations where there is a commitment to change and reform. Such commitment is therefore perceived to be one of the most important issues in

determining the eventual outcome of TC aimed at developing capacity, a perception underscored by the frequent references to commitment and willingness to change expressed during the focus groups. Individual informants noted the importance of *'commitment on the part of the donor and the beneficiaries'*, *'positive political will'* and a *'conducive environment and support from the beneficiary sector'* as critical factors in determining TC success.

Three-quarters of participants also perceived that the impact and sustainability of TC is reduced when trained individuals leave their organisation. This reflects widespread perceptions, raised during follow-up interviews and focus group discussions, that training may not be an effective form of support, if it is not coordinated with broader efforts to strengthen capacity at the organisational and institutional levels: one informant, for example, perceived that TC could be hindered by a *'focus on individual capacity building needs as opposed to organisational needs'*. With issues such as HIV/AIDS and high staff turnover rates, technical cooperation activities that focus on training alone are often considered ineffective.

One of the most revealing results of the perception survey is that respondents were divided over the question of whether TC creates a risk of foreign or local experts substituting for Government staff. Given the high vacancy rates found in many key central and sector ministries in Malawi, this result perhaps reflects a degree of pragmatism on the part of Government officials. There is a widespread recognition that external experts may often have to play an operational role, as well as an advisory or capacity developing one.

The perception survey results and the commentary provided above should be read with some caution. Informants' perceptions may or may not be an accurate reflection of the real picture. The data do however provide useful insights into the attitudes of key government staff who have been involved in TC programmes at the national level. The purpose of the next chapter in this study report is to take matters further, by exploring perceptions of TC at the sector level, and then comparing the results of sector perception surveys with evaluations of TC that have been undertaken in recent years. This will help to form a more accurate picture of how TC really works, and whether or not the perceptions of study informants accurately reflect reality.

3. OVERALL SITUATION ANALYSIS AT THE SECTOR LEVEL

3.1. TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

3.1.1. EDUCATION SECTOR POLICY AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3.1.1.1. ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

Malawi's education sector has witnessed significant change over the last 15 years. The introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 1994 was a major policy decision, the impact of which is still being felt. Enrolment jumped by approximately 1 million in the wake of this move, and just over 80% of all children between the ages of 6 and 13 years are now enrolled in primary school. The Government can also point to a number of other significant achievements: young people's literacy has, for example, increased from 63% in 2000 to 76% by 2007.

However, the sector continues to face a range of major capacity weaknesses. The quality of education is poor, and nearly half of all pupils drop out before their fifth year of primary school. Education beyond primary level is limited to mostly non-poor households, and there is an acute shortage of teachers. Malawi's pupil to qualified teacher ratio is 84 to 1, one of the worst in Africa. Basic infrastructure is also weak, and only 20% of pupils have access to desks and chairs.

3.1.1.2. EDUCATION AT A TURNING POINT

The Malawian education system has now reached a critical point in its development. A draft education sector plan, the National Education Sector Plan (NESP), is in its final stages of preparation by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and sets out the Government's plan to strengthen the sector over the coming decade. The NESP is the result of extensive consultation with national stakeholders and the donor community, and focuses on improving quality and relevance at primary level, expanding equitable access at secondary level, as well as overall governance and management within the sector.

The capacity of the Government to translate the goals of the NESP into an implementation plan that drives choices and informs the actions of donors will determine the prospects for



the sector. The NESP provides an excellent opportunity to rally donors around a sector support operation, with the option of pooling support to ensure the implementation of core elements of the NESP.

Box 4: Key Policy Milestones in the Education Sector

The Government has taken a number of significant steps in strengthening the policy framework for Malawi's education sector. These policies and plans provide the foundation for donor support, and in particular for technical cooperation activities. Key milestones include the following:

- The introduction of *Free Primary Education* (FPE) in 1994. The introduction of Free Primary Education was a significant policy shift for the Government. It triggered a dramatic rise in primary school enrolments, and the expansion of the primary sub-sector has in turn put pressure on the secondary sub-sector. Much donor activity, including technical cooperation, has focused on helping to raise capacity levels to meet the dramatic changes in demand for primary school places.
- The launch of the *Policy and Investment Framework for Education*. The Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) was launched in 2000, setting out the Government's plans for the development of the sector over a twelve-year period. The PIF proposed five main objectives for the education system: increasing access; promoting equity; enhancing the quality and relevance of education; strengthening the capacity of key education institutions; and identifying ways to mobilise resources to ensure future investment in the sector.
- The publication in 2004 of the *Education For All (EFA) National Action Plan*, in response to international commitments made by the Government to widen access to quality education for all Malawians. The EFA Action Plan built on the Vision 2020 statement, the MPRS and the education sector PIF, and set out a series of objectives to enhance access, with accompanying implementation strategies.
- The preparation of the first *National Education Sector Plan (NESP)*. Work began on the NESP in 2003, and the document is now nearing completion. It is the result of collaboration between the MoEST and a range of local and international partners. The donor community has been heavily involved in its preparation, with agencies such as DFID, CIDA, GTZ, JICA, UNICEF, USAID, WFP and the World Bank lending support. The NESP supports the Government of Malawi's commitment to the realisation of the Malawi Growth Development Strategy (MGDS) and international protocols arising from the Education For All (EFA) agreement and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

3.1.2. TRENDS AND PATTERNS IN TECHNICAL COOPERATION

3.1.2.1. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES SET OUT IN THE NESP

The NESP, in its draft form, acknowledges the impact which capacity constraints could potentially have on the Plan's implementation. Many of the interventions planned under the NESP will require capacity development support. However, the NESP does not include a

distinct capacity development strategy. Instead, it sets out the steps that will need to be taken to ensure that such a strategy is produced.

The NESP recommends the appointment of an oversight committee to be located in the MoEST. This committee should be supported by a Technical Working Group on capacity development, which will assist in conducting thorough research in capacity needs and the subsequent development of a capacity development strategy for the sector. Although the NESP does not list in detail the activities which might flow from such a strategy, it highlights in broad terms the likely areas of focus:

- Promoting the NESP as the main planning reference document for the sector, and the strengthening of planning at decentralised levels to ensure synchronisation with the NESP;
- Re-clarifying the roles of institutions at all levels of educational management, including at the regional and district levels;
- Strengthening the policy, regulatory and monitoring and evaluation functions, and the further development of an effective Education Management Information System (EMIS);
- Supporting the effective decentralisation and devolution of management and service-level responsibilities to districts.

Although the sector therefore lacks a detailed capacity development roadmap, the emerging NESP provides an indication of the process by which such a roadmap could be developed, and the broad areas around which donors might focus their technical cooperation activities.

3.1.2.2. PATTERNS OF DONOR SUPPORT

As at the national level, precise information on the levels and focus of TC is difficult to obtain. However, from the available statistics it is apparent that donors play an extremely important role in the financing and development of the Malawian education system, with donor agencies such as the AfDB, CIDA, DFID, German Development Cooperation through GTZ/KfW, JICA, UNICEF, UNFPA, USAID and the World Bank contributing approximately 45% of total spending and more than 90% of development expenditure. From the information available, it is possible to identify a number of patterns in donor support to Malawi's education sector:

- *Supporting the transition to FPE.* Over recent years, donors have focused heavily on activities designed to strengthen capacity at the level of primary education. TC projects and programmes have been designed to respond to the massive shortfalls that the introduction of FPE exposed: human, physical and financial. Of the sums committed by donors, more than 85% have been allocated to activities at the primary level.

- *Enhancing the quality and relevance of education.* This has included a focus on the training of teachers, curriculum review and development, the strengthening of teacher training colleges and the improvement of school assessment systems.
- *Strengthening the role of the MoEST in education management and planning.* Donor resources have increasingly been directed toward the strengthening of key functions within the MoEST, reflecting its role as the institution responsible for setting policy, for national-level planning and standard setting. Technical cooperation has focused on enhancing planning and budgeting, the development of management information systems, as well as monitoring and evaluation.
- *Preparing for a sector-wide approach.* Efforts have focused on the development of the NESP, as well as other key strategic documents such as the National Strategy for Teacher Education and the MoEST HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan. Terms of reference for a SWAp secretariat have also been developed and a number of development partners have supported preparatory activities such as training key Government personnel on SWAps.
- *Promoting the devolution of education management and service delivery.* Although not a significant proportion of donor assistance in the sector, some efforts have been made to use TC to strengthen capacity at the sub-national level, working with district assemblies, communities and other regional and local institutions to enhance their role in education sector management. JICA, for example, has provided TC to improve planning at the district level under the NIPDEP initiative.

A summary of TC data in the education sector is included in Appendix C. This shows that over the two-year period for which information is available, education-related TC accounted for a significant proportion of the total sums which donors spent on TC activities: MK685 million in 2005/6 and then MK758 million in the following year. Although the data only covers a brief period, this is suggestive of an upward trend in TC spending. Indeed, education as a functional sector accounts for the third largest share of total TC, behind governance and health.

3.1.3. TECHNICAL COOPERATION COORDINATION MECHANISMS

With a move towards a full sector-wide approach regarded as a core target by both the Government and its external partners, a range of positive steps have already been taken to promote greater coordination of technical cooperation activities. For example:

- *Policy and strategy-making.* An education sector donor group is in place, led by DFID. The group of development partners in the sector is small, and this group meets fortnightly for information sharing and coordination purposes. It also works closely with the Government, having undertaken a Joint Sector Review with GoM for each of the last 5 years, except 2007. A code of conduct for the group also exists, setting out the working principles by which donor agencies are expected to abide.

The presence of such a donor group will help to foster the development of a coordinated approach around the objectives set out in the NESP, although it is recognised that efforts to harmonise will need to be stepped up considerably if the move towards a full SWAp is to be achieved.

- **Implementation.** Although progress towards the introduction of an education SWAp has been slower than expected, there are some positive examples of donors working closely together on the implementation of their programmes, including technical cooperation activities. GTZ, DFID, UNICEF, CIDA and USAID have, for example, coordinated their support for the MoEST's Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform (PCAR) initiative, working in close collaboration to support the Ministry in the development of new curriculum and learning materials. Similarly, the Government of the Netherlands and DFID have established a partnership arrangement through a memorandum of understanding, setting out partnership principles and funding arrangements for their education sector support programmes. The sector has also made significant progress towards the establishment of a pooled fund, which will finance core activities in the basic education sub-sector plan of the NESP. DFID, GTZ and CIDA will be the Government's initial partners in this pooled fund.
- **Monitoring and evaluation.** The Government and its donor partners have also established a joint country review mechanism, through which to monitor and evaluate the progress of their activities. The annual Joint Sector Review (JSR) provides a forum for all partners to work together to analyse trends, opportunities and challenges, and agree a plan of action for the coming year for the education sector. The JSR has been the main forum for thoroughly examining the benefits from and pre-requisites for developing a SWAp in strengthening the Malawian education system. It also provides the Government with an opportunity to feed back to the donor community its opinions on the effectiveness of technical cooperation activities that they fund, in terms of their alignment with Government priorities and their actual impact.

3.1.4. COMPLEMENTARITY WITH OTHER INSTRUMENTS FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Technical cooperation is just one form of support provided to the education sector by the donor community. Many of the programmes funded by donor agencies have included substantial components aimed at strengthening education infrastructure, and providing much-needed educational materials, particularly in the aftermath of the move towards FPE in the mid-1990s.

Indeed, the introduction of FPE in 1994 is the key event to which the sector is still adjusting. It exposed massive shortfalls, in terms of both physical and human capacity. Donors engaged in the education sector have therefore invested in the renovation of school facilities

and the development of new school infrastructure as a complementary form of support, alongside their TC activities.

3.2. TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN THE HEALTH SECTOR

3.2.1. HEALTH SECTOR POLICY AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3.2.1.1. ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

The Government recognises that a healthy population is a crucial goal for development. Health is one of the priority areas in the MGDS, and in order for Malawi to develop and achieve the Millennium Development Goals it is imperative that it should improve its population's health.

Health services in Malawi are primarily provided by Government institutions, by non-governmental organisations such as the Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAM) and, to a lesser extent, by the private sector. The major achievement of the Government in the last few years has been the adoption of a Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp) to the development of the country's health system. Although this does not immediately translate to improved indicators for the country, it has raised expectations of more effective health service delivery and improved performance against key health indicators. In addition, the budget allocation to health services has progressively increased since the adoption of the SWAp, confirming the commitment of both Government and its donor partners to the sector.

Indeed, there have been significant improvements in performance over the past few years. Cholera incidences have declined from 27,000 in 2002 to just over 300 in 2007. HIV counselling and testing and anti-retroviral treatment services have expanded from their 2004 levels. Malawi has also made progress with the tuberculosis cure rate, which reached 77 per cent in 2007 and is on track for the target cure rate of 85% by 2010. Progress has also been made in addressing the health sector human resource crisis, with salary top-ups for 11 health worker cadres helping to slow attrition rates.

Yet despite this progress, much remains to be done. Malawi's maternal mortality rates remain high even by regional standards. Malaria remains the number one cause of deaths among children and adults, while the high prevalence of HIV and AIDS has a significant negative impact on the health system, as well as the country's overall social and economic status. The health system itself faces numerous capacity weaknesses and constraints: an acute shortage of human resources, weak supply chain management systems for medical drugs and supplies, limited financial management and accountability mechanisms, as well as limited use of evidence in planning and policy-making processes.

Box 5: TC Use and CD in the Health Sector

In 2004, the Government launched a new Programme of Work (PoW) for the health sector. The PoW was prepared through a process of extensive consultation and in collaboration with development partners. The PoW was developed in order for the Ministry of Health (MoH) to implement a SWAp, and is considered central to the Ministry's pursuit of its objective of providing a minimum set of services under an Essential Healthcare Package (EHP). The SWAp provides a framework for donor support to the health sector and therefore acts as a guide for TC across the sector.

The PoW has six pillars which are considered central for the successful and effective implementation of the SWAp. These are: i) human resource development; ii) pharmaceuticals and medical supplies; iii) essential/basic health equipment; iv) infrastructure development; v) routine operations at service delivery level; and vi) central operations, including policy and systems and development.

The human resource development and central operations pillars are capacity development initiatives and signify a recognition that for the Ministry to deliver the EHP there is a need for capacity development at all levels in the sector.

Before implementation of the PoW and adoption of the SWAp the MoH did not have any specific policy on capacity development through TC. The sector was characterised by a proliferation of diverse types of TC with varied focus and emphasis, depending in many cases on what the donor wanted to implement in the sector.

Getting capacity development on course. In addition to the PoW, the Ministry has developed focused strategies and policies relating to capacity development. The Ministry has prepared several documents that are aimed at guiding capacity development in the Ministry and across the sector as a whole. The documents include: i) the Human Resources for Health Strategic Framework; ii) the Human Resources for Health M&E Framework; iii) the Health Sector Recruitment and Deployment Plan; iv) the Health Sector Training Policy; and v) the Human Resource Development Policy for the Public Health Sector.

The Ministry's Strategic Plan (2007-2011) explicitly spells out capacity development initiatives that will be implemented in the sector over the Plan's 5-year duration. It is envisaged that all the capacity development plans and efforts under discussion will be financed within the framework of the SWAp and its PoW.

The SWAp and PoW became operational before the launch of the MGDS, and the objectives and strategies set out within them were incorporated into the new national development strategy. The MoH hopes that donor support will increasingly be channelled through the SWAp and that this will provide the leverage for localising planning, enhancing ownership and increasing the long-term impact of health sector interventions.

Against this background, TC is considered to be a crucial element of wider donor support to the sector, as it:

- Helps to address the sector's acute human resources crisis, and supports the implementation of the PoW under the SWAp;

- Facilitates the major reforms underway within the health system, including decentralisation, the move from projects to SWAp and the introduction of service agreements with non-state partners;
- Supports the implementation of major vertical programmes (e.g. Global Fund HIV and AIDS support) which require a scaling up of donor funds;
- Brings in new ideas about health technology, infrastructure and experiences and best practices from elsewhere across the region and internationally.

3.2.2. TRENDS AND PATTERNS IN TECHNICAL COOPERATION

With the launch of the SWAp, support to the health sector is provided in three different ways:

- *Pool donors under the PoW.* Several donors, including Norway, Sida, DFID, UNFPA, World Bank and the Global Fund, are signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which underpins the SWAp. These donors provide sector budget support in support of the objectives set out in the PoW. Such pooled funding accounted for approximately US\$55m in 2005/6, the largest part of total donor spending.
- *Discrete donors, who are also MoU signatories.* A number of other donor agencies, including UNICEF, Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (through GTZ), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Icelandic International Development Agency (ICEIDA) and UNFPA are signatories to the MoU and provide discrete funding, through project-based support.
- *Donors who are active in the sector, but as non-signatories to the MoU.* A number of other development partners provide support, funding activities that are intended to strengthen capacity in key areas, but do so without having made a formal commitment to the SWAp MoU. These partners include the UNDP, UNAIDS, WFP, USAID, African Development Bank, EC Delegation and JICA.

The table below illustrates how resources have been allocated across the six pillars of the PoW over the last four years. The data indicate that the launch of the SWAp has led to a substantial increase in the level of resources available to support the sector, with the total PoW budget allocation more than doubling during this period. As the Health SWAp Mid-Term Review (September 2007) notes '*...the availability of funds to the districts has increased substantially from before the introduction of the SWAp*'.

Table 1: Budget Allocation According to the PoW Pillars

Pillar	2007/8 MK million	2006/7 MK million	2005/6 MK million	2004/5 MK million
Human resources	5,943.8	4,633	4,522.73	4,711.4
Pharmaceuticals, medicine and laboratory supplies	5,213.7	3,199	2,718.3	2,671.4
Essential medical equipment	1,321.7	1,231	1,467.9	148.67
Infrastructure	4,263.0	2,589	449.2	866.7
Routine operations (service level)	4,035.6	3,563	2,376.9	2,072.4
Support to institutional and systems development	4,308.0	1,241	1,243.7	318.9
Sub-Total	25,085.8	16,457	12,778.7	10,789.3

Source: Budget Documents 2003/4-2006/7

The Treasury estimates that for 2007-08 about 27% of donor funding to the health sector will be outside the budget (Summary of Project Support Managed Outside the Government System, June 2007). Nevertheless, the introduction of the SWAp has helped to harmonise most donor funding and rationalise interventions in the sector. The Government is increasingly aware of the levels of resources being allocated to the health system and taking a greater degree of control of the sector development agenda.

Within this broader framework, the statistics provided in Appendix C indicate that health sector TC has increased from MK881 million in 2005/6 to MK1.6 billion in 2006/7. It is, however, difficult to identify all the aid provided to the health sector, or to break down health-related TC into its different forms: training, expert advisory support or networking and twinning.

3.2.3. TECHNICAL COOPERATION COORDINATION MECHANISMS

Despite the SWAp, the sector continues to face problems of coordination. This is illustrated by the September 2007 Health SWAp Mid-Term Review, which revealed that many of the technical units in MoH continue to operate in isolation, and that as a result their training activities are not integrated with the Ministry's training policy. There continues to be a wide range of training workshops at the district level, emanating from different technical units targeting the same district or front-line staff. The numerous meetings and training workshops exacerbate the staffing constraints already faced at points of service delivery.

However, a number of mechanisms do exist to promote the coordination of TC activities within the health sector. The SWAp itself serves as a coordination mechanism, and the fact that many donors are now working under the SWAp as MoU signatories means that coordination of TC for capacity development has improved. The MoU sets out the

governance framework, under which a Health Sector Review Group acts as a policy and advisory forum, bringing together the MoH, donors, non-government service providers and a range of other relevant stakeholders. Underneath this, there are various SWAp Technical Working Groups which assist in coordinating TC interventions. The Human Resource Technical Working Group, for example, acts as a coordination mechanism for the achievement of the Human Resource for Health plan, which itself is central to human capacity development in the sector. At the same time, the Health Donor Group meets monthly and comprises all donors to the sector.

The implementation of the SWAp is itself underpinned by a technical support programme, which has been financed by DFID on behalf of all SWAp donor partners, and under which 14 Technical Assistants (TAs) have been mobilised to support the development of core MoH functions, including health planning and financing, financial management, human resource management, procurement, and monitoring and evaluation. As DFID's 2005 study of health sector TC notes, '*...the technical support programme of the SWAp donors is demand-driven, pooled and aligned*'. Given that this support is primarily related to systems strengthening to support the new pooled fund arrangements, it has also ensured that there is no danger of overlap or duplication with the TC supported by other donors active in the sector.

The 2007 Joint Country Programme Review notes that so far, under the SWAp, the dialogue between the MoH and its development partners is open and candid, supporting a spirit of partnership. The review also states that joint monitoring and evaluation of progress against the PoW through the SWAp governance structures offers an opportunity for coordination and alignment of activities.

Nevertheless, where a development partner is not participating in the SWAp, there is perceived to be less coordination and harmonisation with Government efforts. The SWAp Mid-term Review of September 2007 notes that there continues to be a multiplicity of missions and studies aimed at satisfying individual donor demands. At the same time some development partners are still not comfortable to commit fully to the SWAp, either because of headquarters' requirements and policies, or because of a lack of confidence in the strength of current Government financial management and procurement systems. In general, as pointed out in the DAS, the lack of clear Government guidance and leadership regarding the use of TC and other forms of intervention has not helped coordination among the development partners.

3.2.4. COMPLEMENTARITY WITH OTHER INSTRUMENTS FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

As discussed above, the Health SWAp provides a mechanism for harmonising the provision of donor support to the health sector. The SWAp details prioritised activities, with its six pillars signifying areas that need to be worked on and strengthened in order to make the objective of providing the EHP to all Malawians a reality. These include infrastructure,

technical equipment and drug supplies and other requirements that support health service provision at delivery points.

According to the Health Sector Human Resource Capacity Needs Assessment led by GTZ in 2007, there is a concern that ‘...efforts to provide the essential health care package have concentrated on the technical aspects such as staff, buildings, drugs and health programs without spending enough effort to think through on putting them all together in a way that works’. This suggests that attempts at coordination between different forms of support provided to the health system have not been effective.

However, the health sector does provide an excellent illustration of the way in which TC can be linked to other forms of support designed to enhance capacity. Alongside the SWAp, a number of donors are supporting a 6-year Emergency Human Resource Programme (EHRP), which includes salary top-ups of more than 50% for 11 key health sector cadres, as well as a sizeable expansion of training capacity and the deployment of volunteers, including from VSO, to fill critical skills gaps while more Malawians are being trained. The budget for the EHRP dovetails with the PoW, with participating donors including DFID and the Global Fund. Recent reviews and discussions with key informants suggest that salary top-ups and the payment of locum allowances have improved capacity at service delivery points.

3.3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION AT THE SECTOR LEVEL

3.3.1. IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

A number of sources can be used to explore the effectiveness of TC in the education sector. This study draws upon the following: high-level indicators of progress within the education system; a sector-level perception survey conducted with key government staff involved in education sector TC; discussions with key Government informants; as well as TC evaluation exercises undertaken by the Government and donor community.

3.3.1.1. OVERALL PROGRESS WITHIN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Recent reviews indicate that TC activities may be having a positive impact on capacity across the education system. However, the picture remains a mixed one, with review exercises emphasising the constraints still faced within the sector. For example:

- *Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.* Although the Government’s general progress towards the achievement of the MDGs has been slow, progress in the education sector does show some success. Malawi is on track to achieve the MDG for gender parity in primary and secondary education. However despite this, Malawi remains off-track in relation to Universal Primary Education, as measured by the

number of primary school-age children in school, their survival to standard 5 and youth literacy rates.

- *Results of key review exercises.* The most recent Joint Sector Review (JSR), undertaken in 2006, emphasises that progress has been made in recent years, with 10 out of 13 key education indicators improving in the last review period. 80% of children are now in school, and literacy has risen 13% from 1998 to 2005. However, many severe problems remain. Secondary access is poor, with only 60,000 pupils starting at secondary level in 2006, and only 7% of those starting primary school move on to secondary. Access to tertiary education also needs to expand if Malawi is to produce the professionals it needs. This picture is supported by the 2007 Public Expenditure Review (PER) exercise, which underscores the acute shortages of qualified teachers across the system, the large imbalances in the resources available to schools, and the continuing impact of HIV/AIDS on the effectiveness of the school system.

3.3.2. THE EDUCATION SECTOR PERCEPTION SURVEY AND INFORMANT DISCUSSIONS

As part of this study, a perception survey has been administered across the education sector, to seek the views of key Government officials on the impact of technical cooperation. The results of this survey exercise are set out in the box below.

The education sector perception survey on technical cooperation included a series of 15 questions, each worded in the form of a statement. Participants were asked to indicate in each case whether they agreed or disagreed against a rating scale (with 1 indicating strong agreement, 5 indicating strong disagreement). This table shows the scores recorded for every question, with the percentage of respondents allocated against the rating scale.

From the results of this survey, a number of observations can be made. Firstly, the majority of survey participants agreed strongly with the statement that joint working is critical to identify capacity requirements in an effective manner. Follow-up focus group discussions underscored this finding, with individual participants emphasising the importance of *'sector-owned planning and needs identification'* and noting that TC works best when an *'organisation has expressed the need for TC through its own needs assessment'*.

As many participants disagreed as agreed with the statement that past TC activities have been well targeted. These combined results are consistent with those of the national level perception survey, and suggest that donors and their government partners have not worked as collaboratively during the design process as they could have. Again, this finding was reflected in focus group discussions with those participating in the survey, during which participants pointed to the dangers of donors *'imposing what they want and not following what the beneficiary wants'*.

Box 6: Results of the education sector perception survey

Question:	Rating (with % score)				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Technical cooperation (TC) proves more effective when your organisation and donors work together on a capacity development (CD) needs assessment	85	15	0	0	0
2. Majority of the TC designs are appropriate and well targeted, meeting the demands of sector/thematic development priorities	15	30	10	40	5
3. TC programmes have proved more effective when the kinds of support can be regularly adjusted to meeting any changing needs of the organisation	60	35	0	0	5
4. Sectoral/thematic ministries and organisations are always willing and able to lead the preparation of capacity development plans without the need for TC	20	20	10	15	35
5. TC has proved effective in contributing to improvements in both sector and organisational performance and results	40	45	10	0	5
6. Pooling TC funds from a number of donors is more effective in building capacity than separate, stand-alone TC from a single donor	55	15	25	5	0
7. TC has proved more effective when it focuses on the needs of the entire organisation, rather than specific groups of individuals	65	25	0	0	10
8. The effectiveness of TC in building capacity is reduced by trained individuals leaving the organisation	60	35	0	0	5
9. TC proves to be more effective when it is linked to other forms of support, such as infrastructure and equipment provision	80	15	0	5	0
10. TC programmes have created a serious risk of foreign or local experts substituting for technical staff within their organisation	20	25	20	25	10
11. TC has proved to be more effective when the procurement process is directly under the control of the sector/thematic organisation	35	45	0	15	5
12. TC has proved to be more effective when the management process is directly under the control of the sector/thematic organisation	65	25	5	5	0
13. Local or regional consultants have proved more effective than international ones because they understand the country context better	50	25	5	10	10
14. Long term consultants have proved more effective than short-term ones because they have time to understand the organisational context and needs	55	15	0	20	10
15. Consultants have proven to perform better when they are fully monitored by the beneficiary organisation	55	40	0	5	0

More participants disagreed than agreed that organisations within the sector are willing and able to lead on the planning of capacity development activities, though opinions expressed on this issue varied considerably across the survey sample. The level of doubt about the ability of sector institutions to play a leading role was reflected in follow-up discussions, in which participants noted that the effectiveness of TC can be compromised when *'clear mandates and plans are not available'* or in the *'absence of clear objectives for the TC'*. Although it is expected that the NESP will provide a strong framework around which donors can align their activities, it has taken a considerable period of time to prepare and remains a draft document, and in its absence it has been difficult for donors to align TC with strategic priorities within the education sector.

Only one participant in the survey disagreed with the statement that TC has made a positive difference in the education sector. Again, this is consistent with the broadly positive response observed in the national level perception survey. It could be taken to reflect the progress which the Government has made in recent years, with the support of its external partners, particularly following the introduction of FPE. However it appears to conflict with the results of recent reviews which, as already noted above, indicate that many of the major capacity challenges facing the education sector remain. This suggests that TC is perceived to be having an effect at the individual or organisational level, but that such benefits have not fed through to the wider sector level. This issue is returned to in the next section, when considering the results of evaluations of education TC activities.

The education survey yielded a particularly strong positive response on the issue of complementarity, underscoring that TC is perceived to work best when closely linked to other forms of capacity development support. Focus group discussions and interviews with survey participants reflected this, with individuals noting that *'where necessary, TC should be linked to infrastructure and equipment provision'* and that the effectiveness of TC can be impeded when there is a *'lack of other forms of support to TC such as vehicles, qualified personnel and infrastructure'*. This response perhaps reflects the recent history of education sector development. The introduction of FPE, in particular, left the Government facing severe shortfalls, not just in human capacity but in terms of physical resources and infrastructure. Donor programmes have therefore frequently combined technical advice with other forms of assistance, and key officials now view this as the most effective way of supporting the sector.

Survey participants also confirmed that the pooling of donor funds to support TC activities is preferred to donors operating individually. This perhaps reflects the positive steps already taken by a number of donors, notably DFID and the Dutch Government, to work together and put in place mechanisms for joint financing. When combined with positive responses on the issues of Government control over the management and monitoring of technical cooperation this also confirms the desire to move towards a SWAp under which sector institutions play a stronger role in the day-to-day management of TC activities.

The perception survey results suggest that TC focused on the individual is likely to be less effective than support which takes into account organisational needs. This was reflected in the follow-up discussions with survey participants, who made frequent reference to the organisational context, stating that TC works best *'when the approach to looking at issues is holistic'*, and when there is a focus on *'capacity building of all levels'*. At the same time, the effectiveness of TC can be impeded when there is a *'poor understanding of the organisational context'*, and *'when TC does not meet the needs of the organisation'*. The concern that TC focused on the individual level may not be effective on its own is also consistent with the fact that many of the issues that reduce the impact of training at the national level – vacancies, high turnover rates, the impact of the HIV/AIDS crisis – apply equally strongly within the education sector.

3.3.3. EVALUATIONS OF TC ACTIVITIES

The results of the perception survey provide an insight into government officials' attitudes towards TC, and the impact which TC activities have had across the sector. However, the survey is not the only available source of relevant information. A number of donors have undertaken evaluations of the TC programmes they have funded in recent years, assessing their impact and identifying lessons that can be fed into future TC planning. These evaluations provide a valuable source of information, and can be compared and contrasted with the perception survey.

The survey indicates that the alignment of TC with sector needs and strategic priorities is critical, and recent TC evaluations are consistent with this finding. The World Bank's 2005 review of its capacity building work, for example, discusses the effectiveness of its Primary Education Project (PEP), which included a TC component focused on teacher development and support to strengthen core MoEST functions such as procurement. The PEP was launched as a rapid response to the shift in primary education brought about by FPE, suggesting that alignment between the TC activity and government priorities was strong at the policy level. However, the Bank's review highlights the potential danger of moving forward too quickly through the design process, as the PEP was fast-tracked, with little time given to analyse the capacity issues facing the primary education sub-sector. Indeed, the review notes that PEP did not *'contribute much to building institutional and organisational capacity, in part because the Ministry itself lacked a coherent capacity building vision and strategy'*. This underscores the way in which the absence of a strategic framework or a clear understanding of sector needs can undermine the impact of TC.

A similar conclusion can be drawn from the evaluation conducted by CIDA of its Secondary School Teacher Education Project (SSTEP). SSTEP was designed to enhance secondary level teaching through a diploma administered by the Domasi College of Education (DCE). However, the evaluation notes that the TC took place against a challenging backdrop. In the absence of a coherent strategic framework for the development of human resources within the sector, interventions aimed at enhancing teachers' skills, including SSTEP, have in

practice been designed and delivered on an ad-hoc basis. A significant impediment to the programme was the persistent under-resourcing of the Department of Teacher Education and Development (DTED) within MoEST, operating with just 25% of its full staff complement and without *'the physical, human and monetary capacity'* to direct education and development activities. As a consequence, SSTEP may be perceived as having done a good job in meeting individual teachers' needs, but has not necessarily met those of the system as a whole. This reinforces the finding from the perception survey, and also demonstrates how capacity constraints at the policy and strategic level within a sector can undermine efforts to use TC to develop capacity at other levels.

However, while TC activities work best when focused on organisational rather than individual needs, recent evaluations suggest that the TC design process still needs to take into account the likely benefits and costs which participants may face. A recent review of USAID's Malawi Teacher Training Activity (MTTA) found that teachers involved in the TC initiative have been well motivated because the support they receive is well aligned with their own goals. Teachers have been willing to put their own time and effort into improving their knowledge because they stand to gain from doing so, both in terms of their ability to present material to pupils and also in terms of their ability to update their credentials and boost their career opportunities. Alignment with individual needs was therefore considered to be a critical motivating factor.

At the same time, the MTTA evaluation also notes the challenges faced by participating teachers, including the costs which they incurred when involved in training activities. Teachers in rural areas frequently had to cover distances of several kilometres to reach teacher development centres – distances that were significantly greater than those which teachers in urban areas were required to cover. The evaluation notes that such differentials need to be taken into account when thinking about future TC, as the relatively higher costs faced in rural areas can act as a disincentive for teachers from some of the more under-resourced schools, where capacity constraints are greatest: *'future projects might consider the possibility of incentives for teachers in extremely understaffed schools to attend some professional development activities... they could, for example, include rewarding schools that have high professional development attendance rates with incentive packages that benefit all teachers and pupils'*.

The experience of teachers participating in the MTTA shows that while TC can bring benefits, it also has the potential to impose costs on those involved, both at the individual and organisational level. A similar lesson can be drawn from CIDA's SSTEP initiative. The SSTEP teacher diploma, administered by DCE, involved a programme of residential training at Domasi, combined with on-the-job learning. CIDA's evaluation notes that there was a potential trade-off between the implementation of SSTEP and the day-to-day functioning of schools. Facing their own resource constraints, few CDSSs were able to meet the learning conditions set by the Diploma with respect to the release time teachers were expected to have for working through modules and interacting with one another in study circles.

Relatively few graduates had their teaching loads reduced. The experience of SSTEP therefore suggests that TC programmes need to be designed in a way that is sensitive to the operations of target institutions, and that efforts to develop capacity for the longer term through TC may sometimes have negative short term consequences in terms of service delivery and day-to-day functioning, particularly in an environment where resources are so severely constrained.

The perception survey also highlights the importance of coordination between donors, with 70% of participants indicating that stand-alone TC from individual donors is less effective than pooled funding of TC or joint TC activities. This is consistent with the experience of SSTEP, CIDA's evaluation report noting that TC projects in the secondary sub-sector *'functioned largely in isolation from one another, this despite an often common focus on CDSS, science and math, and in-service training of school managers and teachers'*. As a direct consequence of this lack of coordination, opportunities in any one project with respect to capacities developed, system infrastructures built or networks established were not being taken up effectively or efficiently at a broader level.

The experience of SSTEP also highlights the ways in which material resource constraints can impact negatively on the effectiveness of a TC programme. In this case, in CDSSs, learning outcomes were limited, especially for the physical sciences, because of the absence of critical teaching materials and equipment. Teachers participating in the Diploma were unable to move beyond modules to test ideas in their teaching and build their confidence. This is consistent with the education perception survey, through which participating government staff emphasised the importance of complementarity between TC and other forms of financial or physical support.

A similar lesson can be drawn from another TC evaluation: that for the USAID Quality Education through Supporting Teachers (QUEST) programme. QUEST provided state-of-the-art training to teachers, including continuous assessment techniques, but did not provide essential learning inputs such as open space, print materials, books and pencils. As already noted with SSTEP, the absence of such materials hampered the attempts of teachers to use the new approaches that they had learned. USAID's experience with QUEST has helped to shape the design of the subsequent Malawi Education Sector Assistance (MESA) initiative, which was launched in 2003, and which is still focused on teacher development, but also encompasses the production and distribution of textbooks and other classroom resources.

Evaluations such as those for the SSTEP and MTTA initiatives also provide insight into the issues which determine the sustainability of TC within the education sector. In the case of SSTEP, CIDA's review highlights the way in which the likely long-term impact of TC has been affected by the wider environment in which targeted teachers work. The majority of school heads and teachers continue to function with only primary-level training, despite the introduction of the DCE diploma. As a consequence, as the evaluation states, *'few CDSSs exhibit a strong learning culture'*, within which teachers who have taken the diploma course

feel rewarded or supported in their attempts to engage with new ideas and change behaviours. The focus of the TC on supporting individuals rather than promoting change at the school level may have an impact on the programme's impact and future sustainability.

3.3.4. IN THE HEALTH SECTOR

The analysis of the effectiveness of TC in the health sector draws on information from the sector level perception survey conducted as part of the study, a literature review which includes reviews of TC conducted by Government and development partners, as well as interviews with key MoH officials and discussions with development partners.

From the outset, it should be noted that attempting to evaluate the effectiveness of TC with regards to capacity development in the health sector is not a straightforward process. DFID's own 2005 evaluation of health-related TC notes that the '*...evaluation of the TC so far has been more focused on an assessment of outputs than on the processes, relationships, and overall impact on sustainable capacity*'. Nevertheless, the available information does allow a number of observations to be made and conclusions drawn.

The results of the perception survey, administered across the health sector, to seek the views of key Government officials on the impact of TC, are set out in the box below. A more detailed explanation of the survey methodology is provided in Appendix D.

The health sector perception survey on technical cooperation included a series of 15 questions, each worded in the form of a statement. Participants were asked to indicate in each case whether they agreed or disagreed against a rating scale (with 1 indicating strong agreement, 5 indicating strong disagreement). This table shows the scores recorded for every question, with the percentage of respondents allocated against the rating scale.

The results from the health sector perception survey show that officials perceive TC to be more effective when a recipient organisation and donor work together on needs assessments. There was virtually unanimous agreement by all the participants in the survey on this issue. Almost 68 per cent strongly agree with this fact and an additional 27 per cent agree, with no one feeling otherwise. The message is that when a donor imposes a TC intervention which was not properly agreed by the recipient organisation, the TC intervention is likely to fail.

Box 7: Results of the Health Sector Perception Survey

Question:	Rating (with % score)				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Technical cooperation (TC) proves more effective when your organisation and donors work together on a capacity development (CD) needs assessment	73	27	0	0	0
2. Majority of the TC designs are appropriate and well targeted, meeting the demands of sector/thematic development priorities	0	41	32	23	4
3. TC programmes have proved more effective when the kinds of support can be regularly adjusted to meeting any changing needs of the organisation	50	41	9	0	0
4. Sectoral/thematic ministries and organisations are always willing and able to lead the preparation of capacity development plans without the need for TC	18	32	18	18	14
5. TC has proved effective in contributing to improvements in both sector and organisational performance and results	36	46	9	9	0
6. Pooling TC funds from a number of donors is more effective in building capacity than separate, stand-alone TC from a single donor	68	32	0	0	0
7. TC has proved more effective when it focuses on the needs of the entire organisation, rather than specific groups of individuals	64	32	4	0	0
8. The effectiveness of TC in building capacity is reduced by trained individuals leaving the organisation	50	50	0	0	0
9. TC proves to be more effective when it is linked to other forms of support, such as infrastructure and equipment provision	68	23	9	0	0
10. TC programmes have created a serious risk of foreign or local experts substituting for technical staff within their organisation	23	36	23	18	0
11. TC has proved to be more effective when the procurement process is directly under the control of the sector/thematic organisation	50	23	27	0	0
12. TC has proved to be more effective when the management process is directly under the control of the sector/thematic organisation	50	36	9	5	0
13. Local or regional consultants have proved more effective than international ones because they understand the country context better	14	32	26	14	14
14. Long term consultants have proved more effective than short-term ones because they have time to understand the organisational context and needs	41	22	5	18	14
15. Consultants have proven to perform better when they are fully monitored by the beneficiary organisation	55	36	0	0	9

All the development partners consulted alluded to the fact that co-design of the TC was a good practice and is likely to be a factor that contributes to the success of TC. Indeed, recent TC evaluations suggest some positive examples of collaboration between Government and its development partners during TC design. DFID's 2005 review notes that *'since the move to SWAp, the Ministry of Health is assuming a greater role in the identification of TC needs'*. MoH staff have been actively involved in drafting the terms of reference and job descriptions for TAs mobilised under the SWAp technical support programme, and as a consequence there is good ownership, with realistic and flexible work plans now in place. As DFID's report concludes *'... it is positive that expectations were jointly clarified at the outset'*. This suggests that the findings of the perception survey are consistent with the findings of recent TC review exercises.

There is also strong agreement amongst the participants in the perception survey that TC programmes have proved more effective when the kind of support can be regularly adjusted to meeting the changing needs of the organisation. There is recognition that flexibility in the design and implementation of TC benefits the recipient organisation because the TC can be fine-tuned to fit the local organisation's needs and conditions. This is in line with the findings from key informants who expressed concerns that some donors do not respond to challenges and requests made regarding TC. The issue was also identified in 2005 by the ODI's study on Drivers of Change and Development in Malawi, which argued that donors sometimes stick to agendas that are excessively headquarters-driven and therefore insufficiently responsive to Malawi's specific conditions. Changing situations and local adaptability make it imperative that TC should be flexible enough to take on board realities on the ground. Again, the flexibility of the work plans for TAs currently active under the SWAp support programme is an illustration of how donors are taking steps to ensure that health sector TC can be made responsive to changing needs and circumstances.

The survey suggests that there is a perception in MoH that TC is effective in contributing to improvements in both sector and organisational performance. In the MoH, this result may not necessarily signify that TC is effective as a capacity development mechanism, as TC is in some circumstances used to address issues to do with personnel shortages. In fact, the MoH is a high consumer of TAs due to severe vacancy rates, and their contribution helps the Ministry to ensure continuity of day-to-day operations. Recent TC evaluations, such as those conducted by DFID and GTZ, would appear to support this observation. DFID's evaluation notes that MoH officials often view TC as a stop-gap measure, *'enabling core MoH functions to be carried out and strengthened, whilst the long-term capacity of MoH to deliver is developed'*. As a consequence, TC is primarily there to *'help get the job done'*. The positive result from the survey does not necessarily demonstrate a link between the use of TC and the development of capacity within the sector.

On the question of whether there is risk from TA taking over and substituting for technical staff in MoH, the respondents were split. On one hand they complain of the high numbers of TAs, but on the other hand they appreciate their presence in the context of critical staff

shortages. The Capacity Needs Assessment conducted in the health sector by GTZ in 2007 provides evidence of the valuable gap filling role that TC can play. In discussing the TAs mobilised under the SWAp support programme it notes that *'where TAs were gap filling, there were high quality documents produced and a large volume of work accomplished'*. This can therefore be regarded as a *'success story in TA placement'*, despite the fact that the evidence of an impact on capacity and the transfer of skills from TAs to Ministry staff is mixed.

Unsurprisingly, the survey participants agree that pooling TC resources from a number of donors is more effective in building capacity than stand-alone TC from individual donors. The fact that a SWAp is now in place may account for such a strong positive perception, and this finding is consistent with the 2005 DFID TC review, which also reported that the Government would welcome further pooling of TC. The SWAp Mid-Term Review also expresses sentiments that pooling resources reduces transaction costs on the part of the Ministry and makes resources available to tackle pressing priorities.

Respondents to the perception survey were all in agreement on the fact that the effectiveness of capacity development through TC is reduced by the fact that trained individuals leave the Ministry for other jobs. The root of this problem may lie in the incentive structure. There is little incentive for staff with specialist skills to stay on in the Ministry. For example, the career development structure for doctors is not very attractive. Above a certain level, doctors' roles are normally administrative, taking them away from frontline service delivery. These administrative positions are few and unfortunately it means that many doctors do not see a career path, forcing them to leave for greener pastures. The GTZ-led Capacity Development Needs Assessment has recommended implementation of career development plans for all critical cadres and continuous professional development for the same as an incentive for retaining staff in the health sector.

About 86 per cent of the respondents in the survey feel that TC is more effective when the management process is directly under the control of the Ministry. Interviews with key officials in the Ministry revealed that they feel that in some situations development partners take charge of the TC management process, from identifying the area of need through to the monitoring and evaluation of the TC. However, recent TC evaluations and discussions with development partners do nevertheless suggest that donors are taking positive steps to transfer control and management of TC to the Ministry, but that they are hampered in their attempts to do so by the limited performance management culture in MoH.

DFID's 2005 study notes that the management and monitoring of TAs under the SWAp support programme rests with the MoH: line managers agree job descriptions and quality standards with them. As a consequence, *'TAs feel strongly accountable to MoH'*. The MoH is also responsible for procuring short term TC for SWAp implementation out of pooled SWAp funds, and this is viewed as a practical first step in developing MoH capacity to take over contracting and managing all TA. However the DFID study also notes that there are concerns about the *'weak and uneven'* management systems in the MoH, and the potential impact which these may have on the effectiveness of TC. Such concerns are also raised by

GTZ in its 2007 assessment report, which notes that while the management and monitoring of TAs under the SWAp is expected to rest with MoH directors, in practice *'most MoH senior managers do not monitor the processes and outputs of the TAs in their directorate'*. A similar issue is noted when looking at TAs provided by donors outside of the SWAp pool, and at lower levels within the health system where, according to GTZ *'the same problems of lack of skills and systems to undertake management performance by MoH employees exist'*. The findings of the perception survey, and the evidence of a limited performance management culture within the system, underscore the need for further support in this area if the impact of TC is to be strengthened.

Over 95 percent of the respondents perceive TC to be more effective if it focuses on the entire MoH and sector rather than specific individuals, a finding that is consistent with both the national and education sector surveys. This is also linked to experiences with the design and launch of the SWAp, which was developed through comprehensive consultations and therefore reflects the priorities of the sector rather than individuals. The needs assessment study led by GTZ discourages a piecemeal approach to capacity development and encourages a situation where capacity development should be approached in a comprehensive manner, taking into account the capacity needs of the sector as a whole.

The perception survey also suggests that almost half of those questioned value local and regional expertise, and consider this to be more effective than international expertise. This appears to be consistent with the feedback received by DFID during the course of its 2005 study. The study notes that the 14 TAs recruited under the SWAp come from a range of countries, including 4 Europeans, 1 Indian, 3 TAs from elsewhere in Africa and 6 from Malawi itself. As the study notes, the *'MoH clearly welcomes increasing use of Malawian experts as it can draw on them for advice after contract end... South-South cooperation has grown'*. This preference for local and regional expertise is consistent with the findings of the education perception survey, and the value placed on South-to-South cooperation is reflected in one of the good practice examples discussed in depth in section 4 of this report.

3.4. COMPARING AND CONTRASTING TC IN THE TWO SECTORS

The findings of the two perception surveys and the accompanying discussions with key informants allow for a comparison to be made between the two sectors targeted as part of this study. Malawi's education and health systems both face significant capacity constraints, and the different forms of technical cooperation provided by the donor community in each allow some broad observations to be made. The study activities also make it possible to highlight the key capacity-related issues that distinguish Malawi from other countries in the region.

Both sectors face similar capacity constraints: low levels of capacity to deliver services at the local level as well as weak core functions at the centre such as policy-making, planning, monitoring and evaluation. Overarching strategies to guide the development of each sector are now in place, with the SWAp PoW providing a framework for the health sector and the

newly-drafted NESP expected to fulfil a similar function in education. However, there is perhaps greater clarity of capacity development needs in the health sector, where a number of key strategic documents have been developed to expand on the key capacity issues to be tackled by the Government and its partners. While the NESP provides a high-level framework for Malawi's education system, there is recognition that further work is needed to put in place capacity development plans that will help ensure that the objectives set out in the NESP can be met.

There are also concerns amongst Government officials in both sectors about the extent to which technical cooperation is being accurately targeted to meet sector capacity needs. The perception surveys for the two sectors show broadly similar results, with respondents evenly divided on this subject, despite the fact that higher level strategies are now in place for each sector. This suggests that more needs to be done, by both Government and its development partners, to ensure closer engagement during the design of new TC initiatives.

Perhaps one of the key features of the local environment – and something which distinguishes Malawi from other countries in the region – is the extreme shortage of workers in key sectors, including both education and health. Vacancy rates are very high across the Malawi public service, but particularly so in the education and health systems. By 2003, the country had fewer than 4,000 doctors, nurses and midwives serving a population of approximately 12 million people. In the education sector, pupil-teacher ratios are amongst the highest in region, and less than half of those teaching at the secondary school level are properly trained to do so. At the same time, as the World Bank-sponsored National Capacity Assessment of 2004 highlighted, pay rates have eroded significantly within the public sector over recent decades, with salary levels by 2000 standing at 10% of their real value 20 years before.

The public sector therefore faces significant challenges in attracting and retaining qualified staff, and the extreme nature of these human resource constraints has a number of implications for Malawi, and the way in which Government departments and donor agencies work together:

- Firstly, much of the TC provided has focused on addressing staffing shortages. Teacher training and development has been a core priority for many of the donors active in the education system. Similarly, in the health sector, the development of human resources has been the largest pillar of the PoW since its launch.
- Secondly, the extent of the human resource crisis has led Government and the donor community to design new and innovative forms of support to complement more traditional forms of technical cooperation. In this regard, more progress has been made in the health sector, where the Emergency Human Resources Programme includes a salary top-up scheme, designed to improve working conditions for 11 key cadres.

- Thirdly, it has led organisations outside the public sector to play an increasingly important role in both the education and health systems, at the policy and operational level. Non-governmental organisations such as CHAM deliver a significant proportion of services, and because of this technical cooperation that is delivered to beneficiaries outside the public sector can have just as great an impact on overall levels of country capacity as technical cooperation designed to target the Government itself. The good practice examples which are set out in the following section of this report provide evidence of the importance of supporting such non-governmental organisations.

The resourcing issue also affects the way in which technical cooperation is perceived by Government staff, and the role which technical cooperation often fulfils. The perception surveys for the education and health sector – and the perception survey conducted at the national level – suggest that many respondents take a pragmatic view of the way in which technical cooperation is used. While some expressed concerns that technical cooperation creates risks of external advisers substituting for Government staff, similar numbers indicated that such a substitution effect may not necessarily in itself be a problem.

Instead, the priority for many respondents is to ensure that their department or ministry continues to function, with longer term capacity development viewed as a lower priority under some circumstances. This has implications for the way in which the Government and donor agencies work together to address needs in both the education and health sectors, and suggests the importance of balancing short-term operational objectives such as adequate service delivery with long-term goals for institutional and organisational change.

4. GOOD PRACTICES IN TECHNICAL COOPERATION

4.1. EXAMPLE 1: COUNTRY-LED TC PLANNING

4.1.1. INTRODUCTION

Malawi is faced with high unemployment, a high youth population and an education and training system that is seriously compromised. The Government recognises that the Technical, Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education and Training (TEVET) system has a key role to play as an engine of economic change, providing formal and informal skills training that generates employment opportunities and self-employment. The TEVET Authority (TEVETA), Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT) and Malawi Polytechnic responded to the situation by developing the TEVET Poverty Reduction Strategy and a 5-year strategic plan for TEVETA, setting out the steps necessary to put in place a system that was capable of producing highly skilled graduates to take their place as economic development agents.

The Enhancing TEVET Outcomes (ETO) project, funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), was designed to help the Government implement its plans. It linked TEVETA, the MoLVT and Malawi Polytechnic with three Canadian institutions: the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST), Bow Valley College and Red River College.

4.1.2. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The project was implemented through a series of five interlinked workstreams:

- Policy development: helping the MoLVT and TEVETA to design appropriate policies to determine the future direction of the TEVET system;
- Management training to implement change: supporting key managers to ensure that they developed the necessary skills to manage the intended reforms;
- Teacher training: developing and implementing a new teacher training programme;
- Entrepreneurship training: linking skill



training and essential workplace skills to foster self-employment success;

- Model college development: piloting new programme and management initiatives at selected colleges.

The implementation arrangements put in place for the ETO project also reflected lessons learnt from earlier CIDA-sponsored technical cooperation activities within the education sector. For each workstream, a joint working group was established, bringing together staff from both the Government and the Canadian implementing institutions. The management and coordination of the project was also embedded within Government systems, with one workstream of the project focused specifically on developing local capacity to manage the reform process.

4.1.3. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE OF SUCCESSFUL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The project has led to sustained development of capacity within the TEVET system. For example, it has:

- Helped the MoLVT and TEVETA to identify and implement significant policy and legislative changes, following a series of study tours and training programmes for senior officials. These changes have, for example, included the development of new policies which allow for autonomous governance of all Malawi's public technical colleges, ensuring that colleges themselves can play a more meaningful role in setting their own priorities and managing day-to-day training activities;
- Established a pool of master trainers in Malawi, a group of 11 individuals from the TEVET system with the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out future training and development activities after the project is completed. All 11 are still retained within the system, but there is a recognition that a larger pool will need to be established to ensure the sustainability of the project. As a result, a further 37 technical college instructors were funded through the Industrial Development Diploma by the project between 2006 and 2007, and there is an expectation that a total of 100 such instructors will have been groomed when the project ends. This will ensure a much wider resource pool of potential trainers from which the TEVET system can draw;
- Established successful twinning relationships between TEVETA staff and counterparts within the Namibian TEVET system, allowing each to share their experiences and knowledge with each other. Four Malawian TEVET managers have participated through this twinning arrangement, the aim being to draw on Namibian experiences to develop an Entrepreneurship Linkage Model, which connects skill training, production and essential workplace skills to foster self-employment success in the ETO project's pilot colleges. Rather than simply establishing a relationship with their Namibian counterparts, the TEVET managers are therefore drawing

directly on their experiences to introduce new forms of training and development in Malawi;

- Led to the preparation of strategic plans for two TEVET colleges, with these strategic plans now being used to guide the development of each college.

4.1.4. SUMMARY OF DONOR PARTNERS' ROLE IN ACHIEVING SUCCESS

The ETO project reflected CIDA's own country objectives, with its focus on strengthening the education system as a means towards reducing poverty and fostering economic growth. However, CIDA's role focused on facilitation rather than actively steering the project: the donor worked collaboratively with Malawian institutions during the design of the project, drawing on its past experiences across the education sector, and ensuring that the eventual management structure of the project allowed for a strong degree of local ownership and control.

The ETO project adopted a participatory partnership model, with a Joint Project Steering Committee co-chaired by the TEVET project coordinator, and working groups for each project component, drawing heavily on staff from the target institutions. By structuring the management of the ETO project in this way, CIDA ensured the active participation of the full range of key stakeholders within the TEVET system. CIDA also helped the MoLVT and TEVETA to identify linkages and synergies with other projects, helping to ensure that the project avoided possible duplication of activities and drew on lessons learned elsewhere.

4.1.5. CONDITIONS AND FACTORS THAT MAY PREVENT WIDER ADOPTION OF THIS APPROACH

The success of the ETO project is one that could be replicated by other Government institutions in other sectors. However, it requires that the institutions in question have a clear strategic framework for their own development in place: with an understanding of the challenges they face and the steps that need to be taken to address these challenges. The ETO project also succeeded because it brought together Government departments and international implementing partners with a strong rapport and established working relationships – at the organisational and individual level. This underscores the general observation that the impact of TC often depends on the reputation of the experts and advisers selected. However, it should be recognised that such strong working relationships do not always exist.

4.1.6. CONDITIONS THAT HELPED ACHIEVE SUCCESS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The success of the project was based on a number of key conditions:

- *Strong understanding of the TEVET system on the part of the implementing partners.* SIAST has supported the development of the TEVET system since the mid-1990s.

SIAST's nominated project coordinator was also closely involved in several previous joint education sector review exercises, and therefore understood well the key challenges facing the TEVET system.

- *Credibility of the implementing partners:* In addition to their relationships with key Malawian institutions, the implementing partners were regarded as leaders in the field, with strong technical knowledge and significant track record of developing TEVET systems across the wider region. This proved to be a particular asset to the project, helping the Malawian authorities to establish successful relationships with counterpart institutions in other countries such as Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- *Lessons learned from past activities well incorporated.* The overall management structure of the project reflected lessons learned from past reform activities – including the need to ensure a participatory approach to implementation. The workstream approach, with joint working groups directing activities in each workstream, also helped to ensure that the project was embedded within Government.

Overall, though, the key determinant of the project's success was the demand for change that came from the key Government institutions themselves. The TEVET Poverty Reduction Strategy paper and the TEVETA Strategic Plan provided the direction for the ETO project, ensuring that the Government had a strong understanding of the changes required, and allowing the MoLVT and TEVETA to take the lead in planning for technical cooperation.

4.2. EXAMPLE 2: FLEXIBLE AND RESPONSIVE TC DESIGN

4.2.1. INTRODUCTION

This good practice example involves the Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAM) and the Norwegian Fredskorpset exchange programme. Under this programme, CHAM has a twinning arrangement with Fredskorpset of Norway, St John's of God of Kenya and the Christian Health Association of Zambia (CHAZ). Every year CHAM identifies its capacity development requirements and, through the Fredskorpset programme, exchanges staff with the other constituent institutions.

The programme started in 2003 and at that time it involved CHAM staff visiting Norway. This was reviewed shortly thereafter, and a new South-to-South approach was adopted because of concerns that the knowledge and skills gained from the North-to-South exchange were more sophisticated and were perhaps not as easily applied to the Malawian situation. CHAM says that it prefers the South-to-South arrangement where exchange programmes are undertaken within the region: in Zambia and Kenya. CHAM has concluded that the experiences from this arrangement are more relevant and meaningful because the countries involved are at a similar level of development to Malawi. This good practice example

demonstrates the way in which a TC initiative has been adapted after its launch, to ensure that it is responsive to local requirements.

4.2.2. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The aim of the programme is to build capacity for professional members of staff from the participating institutions, by drawing on their respective skills and experiences. The funding agency is the Norwegian Fredskorpset. The participants in the programme are identified through a rigorous process that culminates in an interview and a two-week training course in Ethiopia.

The member institutions in the exchange arrangement are involved in the planning of the whole programme. In Malawi, CHAM is the coordinator of all activities under the Fredskorpset exchange programme related to health. The member institutions plan the activities and also carry out evaluations of the programme every year.

The members of staff who participate in the programme are attached to an organisation for 10 months and within that period they are supposed to learn all they can through hands-on experience, or to build the capacity of the host institution as much as they can. At the end of their tour they submit a comprehensive report detailing what they have achieved. In cases where the host institution feels that they need the person for a longer period, they place their request and the person is re-attached for a second 10-month period.

At the beginning of the tour, participants determine their objectives while attached to an institution. When a new participant goes to the CHAM unit he develops detailed terms of reference for himself and submits it to the unit where he will work as well as to the CHAM Secretariat. The CHAM secretariat then conducts monitoring visits on a quarterly basis to check progress. At the end of the visit, CHAM conducts an evaluation of the contribution made by the participant. CHAM has hailed this arrangement as “very helpful” in building capacity of its member institutions. The biggest strength is that the capacity development is done using hands-on learning and experience and coaching and mentoring.

4.2.3. EVIDENCE OF SUCCESSFUL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

There have been a lot of benefits to CHAM units from such tours by people from their partners. Some of the participants are highly knowledgeable and they have successfully transferred skills and knowledge to CHAM units.

For example, one participant from CHAZ was attached to Likuni hospital in Lilongwe. At Likuni, he worked on HIV and AIDS responses and was instrumental in designing and establishing an HIV and AIDS clinic at the hospital. He also helped the hospital establish other Community HIV and AIDS initiatives. According to Likuni Hospital Management, the skills gained from CHAZ helped the hospital to establish an association of women living with HIV and AIDS within the Likuni Hospital catchment area. The group organised a wide

range of activities in the area, including periodic sensitisation meetings which have proved very effective in mobilising people for HIV and AIDS testing.

The regular activities directed at sensitising the population around Likuni are said to have made many people go for treatment at Likuni, have reduced stigma and discrimination, and have led many people to access therapy. The management feel that the activities aimed at sensitising people in Likuni area on HIV and AIDS have led to a dramatic reduction in the numbers of people that now die at the hospital, as a greater proportion are now accessing anti-retroviral drugs compared to a few years ago.

4.2.4. COUNTRY CONDITIONS THAT HELPED ACHIEVE SUCCESS

The people involved in the programme come from countries that are similar in development as well as in culture. Their fresh look at and approach to the local situation enhance their capability to bring change to the host CHAM unit. In the process of implementing their ToRs, the participants are also learning from the host country. They bring best practices from their originating institution and they can learn the best practices from the host institution.

The other benefit from this arrangement comes from the fact that the capacity development is localised. CHAM units benefit at the local level and they are responsible for managing the TC at that level. The fact that the participants come from similar cultural settings and the fact that they find it easy to interact make skills transfer and capacity development easier.

4.2.5. SUMMARY OF DONOR PARTNERS' ROLE IN ACHIEVING SUCCESS

The funding partner does not interfere with the implementation process and is confident in the systems of implementation and management that have been set up. The funding partner is very flexible, because when it was discovered that North-to-South exchange was not working, the partner approved a South-to-South capacity development arrangement. This has greatly boosted the success of the programme. The arrangement empowers the local participants to determine their activities and implement them to their satisfaction and benefit within broad guidelines.

At the national level this is a very flexible arrangement with a lot of room for revising areas of emphasis if necessary. CHAM is in a position to give direction regarding what capacity requires to be built within the member institutions. For example CHAM was able to revise the North-to-South arrangement to their current preferred South-to-South arrangement.

At the CHAM unit level this TC is very flexible, because it does not define what areas need capacity development. The Units identify their capacity gaps and communicate to CHAM and CHAM helps them to identify an institution that can be helpful in building the identified capacity requirements.

Individuals that participate have the freedom to develop their capacity or develop an institution's capacity depending on their role. They make their plans, and the sending and receiving institutions simply provide the required environment for their hands-on learning or capacity development.

4.2.6. FACTORS THAT MAY PREVENT WIDER ADOPTION OF THIS APPROACH

This type of arrangement may be limited in terms of what can be learned from a South-to-South arrangement involving three countries. There would be more benefit if the coverage was widened in term of countries involved in the arrangement. On the other hand there should be recognition that due to technological changes and advancement, North-to-South arrangements on capacity development also have the potential to improve capacity.

4.2.7. LESSONS LEARNED

The involvement of the implementing partner in the design of TC greatly enhances the potential for success of the TC. The TC is having an impact and making changes at the local level. The amounts of money involved are modest but the results are worthwhile for CHAM. The South-to-South arrangement has a lot of potential in capacity development for countries like Malawi.

The relatively few strings that are attached to the TC have made it very popular among CHAM institutions. In addition to the capacity development function, the arrangement also acts as a motivator as well as a mechanism for retaining staff.

The major challenge for the programme is the short time which is allocated for participants to work at a facility. There may be little that can be achieved within the short period of 10 months. In the first 4 weeks, participants have to learn the local language and it takes them about 3 months to plan their operations effectively, leaving them with effectively six months to implement an intervention. It is felt that the initiative would be more effective if the period for attachment was increased to at least a year or more.

It might however be that the programme's effectiveness is derived from the short time that people are attached to the institutions. Attaching people for a long time at an institution will make them start thinking and acting like the local staff, and they may not be as innovative and responsive. The capacity development initiatives undertaken by the participants under the programme may emanate from a sense of urgency.

4.3. EXAMPLE 3: ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT

4.3.1. INTRODUCTION

This good practice example involves Technical Assistance to the National Tuberculosis Programme (NTP) in the MoH. The NTP was launched in 1964 on the recommendation of the World Health Organization. The NTP has been receiving assistance in different forms from many donors and, since 2002, has been receiving assistance from DFID, Norway and the Royal Netherlands TB Association (KNCV) under a basket funding mechanism which was later integrated into the SWAp.

Under the DFID assistance, NTP requested and received financial assistance and long-term Technical Assistance aimed at supporting programme activities and operational research. The NTP and DFID worked in collaboration to design and recruit the TA. NTP drafted the ToRs and selected a TA who was at that moment already working in Malawi, at the College of Medicine.

The TA was instrumental in the capacity development of the NTP staff in both management and technical areas. The TA was in the NTP for 6 years up to 2005, when the assistance was integrated into the SWAp.

4.3.2. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The TC was well designed and the NTP was involved in the design of the TC at a very early stage. The NTP developed the initial ToRs for the TA and was involved in the selection of the TA. While the ToRs were developed at the beginning, the TC was very flexible and the ToRs were later modified to reflect new emerging roles that the TA was taking on. The TA was mainly engaged to help develop capacity of the NTP through systems development and personnel capacity development through coaching, mentoring and skills transfer.

The management structure for the NTP was strong and there were clear guidelines and roles and responsibilities. The TA knew what he was supposed to do and he was assessed as and when required. The TA had a counterpart that was available throughout the contract of the TA, and this facilitated skills transfer and capacity development.

4.3.3. EVIDENCE OF SUCCESSFUL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

4.3.3.1. OVERALL RESULTS

The programme has managed to achieve a lot in the face of the challenges of HIV/AIDS and shortage of staff, and is lauded as one of the best in the world. This is due to the following reasons:

- The programme reduced the number of patients that could not be traced after starting TB treatment from 15 per cent to 3 per cent;
- Doctors working in Malawi now treat TB in a standard manner. There is a code of conduct for doctors in treating TB no matter where they received their training. This has helped to control drug resistance and keep it under 2 per cent, unlike other countries where the resistance in some cases has reached 30 per cent;
- In the face of HIV/AIDS and human resource challenges, Malawi boasts of an up to 77 per cent successful cure rate, and the rate is going up;
- The notification rate for TB is going down;
- The NTP's goals and objectives have been achieved. The programme is implementing all the activities in its strategic plan. This has meant that there is job satisfaction among the staff and as a result staff in the NTP rarely leave the institution, as everyone wants to associate themselves with achievements.

4.3.3.2. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The TA imparted financial management skills to the NTP manager in terms of record keeping and following up financial transactions and accountability. The TA emphasised the importance of transparency in financial matters and getting the NTP manager to show interest and follow up on the financial transactions taking place under the programme. With time, the NTP manager was able to follow all financial transactions starting from allocation to the institution, how much has been spent, how much is remaining, analysing reasons for under-expenditure or over-expenditure and recommending the way forward for each budget line.

The TC changed the financial management system of NTP. The NTP is now able to follow up any transaction. The institution can show how many days a voucher or a cheque takes in each office in the process of getting necessary approvals and signatures.

At the beginning of 2008, in management meetings the NTP reported on its financial management during the year. The Minister of Health was impressed and proposed that the whole MoH should adopt the system used by NTP. The NTP has had no audit query for the past two years or so, unlike many similar institutions.

4.3.3.3. RESEARCH

The TA developed capacity of the NTP to conduct research. He was instrumental in mentoring and coaching the NTP staff to concentrate on operational and relevant research areas that inform policy and the programme. The NTP gained this skill up to the point where Malawi has a claim to have hosted more operational research on TB than any other

country in the world. Many people come to Malawi to learn the best practice in the field. The NTP has to turn down many requests for learning visits from all over the world.

The TA also helped the team in the NTP to write position papers on the research study findings for informing policy and for policy changes. The NTP has managed to influence policy in the TB and HIV/AIDS area.

4.3.3.4. PUBLISHING OF RESEARCH STUDIES AND PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

The TA through coaching and mentoring built capacity in the programme staff on how to present research findings at international fora and also to publish research papers in relevant journals. So far the NTP is a leader in publishing TB research papers in the journals in Africa. Since 1996 the NTP has published over 50 articles in relevant journals.

4.3.4. CONDITIONS THAT HELPED ACHIEVE SUCCESS

The TC was instrumental in building capacity in the NTP and is largely responsible for the success that NTP has achieved. There were many reasons that the TC was a success including:

- The Technical Assistant was a highly qualified and experienced person and had knowledge of the country before being engaged. As a person, he was very humble and had rare listening skills and never took anything or anyone for granted despite his experience and qualifications;
- The management system was strong, including clear lines of accountability as well as the demarcation of roles and responsibilities;
- There was little staff turnover during the period of TC. The Director for NTP was a counterpart to the TA throughout the life of the TC.

4.3.5. DONOR PARTNERS' ROLE IN ACHIEVING SUCCESS

DFID adopted a hands-off approach as far as this TC is involved. The donor put the NTP in the driving seat very early in the design of the TC. The donor was involved in assessment and monitoring and evaluating the TC. At the end of the TA's contract NTP asked for an extension but DFID felt that there was need for transition and letting the NTP use the knowledge and skills learnt from the TA. This proved helpful, as the NTP is now very strong and working independently.

4.3.6. FACTORS THAT MAY PREVENT WIDER ADOPTION OF THIS APPROACH UNDER OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES

The character of the TA is very crucial in this type of TC becoming a success. One of the major obstacles to technical assistance effectiveness is the suitability of the TA to the situation on the ground. The TA should ideally get along well with the management and personnel in the department for him or her to build capacity in the institution. Another important factor is the qualification and experience of the TA, which should be such that s/he will be able to add value to the recipient organisation. The TA should be good at mentoring and skills transfer, as otherwise the technical assistance is not guaranteed to be a success. Thus, the success of such TC is mostly specific to its particular situation.

4.3.7. LESSONS LEARNED

Where there are clear guidelines and ToRs for a TA, the chances of success for the TA are increased. The ToRs should be reviewed from time to time to incorporate emerging organisational realities and needs.

Strong organisation structures with clear roles and responsibilities and reporting structures are some of the prerequisites for success of TA and achievement of TC objectives. A system for monitoring and evaluating the TA is needed for the proper management of the TA and TC. As for any staff, if the TA is performing well s/he needs to be encouraged and if not then their contract needs to be terminated.

Above all, TC should be demand-driven, to build local ownership. The recipient institution should be involvement in procurement and identification of the inputs and activities.

4.4. EXAMPLE 4: COUNTRY-LED TC IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT

4.4.1. INTRODUCTION

In January 2001, Norway and Sweden started to provide support to the College of Medicine to enable the college to increase its capacity, with the ultimate aim of increasing the number and quality of trained doctors in Malawi. After 6 years of support the College has managed to grow in terms of the programmes it offers and the size of its student intake. While Norway and Sweden supported the college in implementing its activities, the Netherlands Government was included in the project as a silent partner.

The Netherlands support concentrated on post-graduate development in clinical areas as an exit strategy for the support that they have been providing. In addition to the support from Norway, Sweden and Netherlands, the Government is also supporting the College through the SWAp. The training of doctors is an essential input into the effort of delivering the Essential Healthcare Package.

The TC provided by Norway and Sweden specifically aims at achieving the following objectives:

- To produce a minimum of 60 Malawian Doctors per year;
- To train Malawian staff in a specialist range of disciplines through 25 dedicated training courses; and
- To construct a Medical Library, hostels, cafeteria and student recreation facilities.

4.4.2. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS AND PROCESS

The programme is well aligned to health sector goals and objectives and has a solid implementation structure. The programme has a salary top-up allowance which has stabilised the human resource aspect at the College. It is expected that the MoH will take an active role in ensuring that these trained people do not leave the college after the TC has been phased out.

Government is in charge of the implementation and a committee comprising the donors, MoH and Treasury oversees the implementation of the programme. There has been ownership by GoM throughout the implementation process, and this has also been demonstrated by the Government's takeover of the remaining activities in the construction of the Library/Resource Centre.

4.4.3. EVIDENCE OF SUCCESSFUL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

The training of doctors is expected to increase the number of doctors and will improve the doctor-patient ratio. The project is on course to support the graduation of 60 doctors per year. There has been a 300 per cent improvement in the College intake between 2001 and 2007, from 88 students in 2001 to 313 in 2007. Another objective being actively pursued is increasing the intake of female students, which has improved from 17 students in 2001 to 97 in 2007.

The programme managed to train 25 members of staff in specialist disciplines and out of the 25 sent for training, 18 successfully completed their studies. The remaining seven continued to be trained. Specialists in basic medical sciences are rare and the challenge now is on the College of Medicine to retain them.

The TC has improved the ability of the College to grow. As the capacity (human, infrastructure and systems) is improved it has generated momentum for change. The College is able to design new programmes because of staff in the college that have been equipped with the right skills. Two new academic programmes began in January 2006, namely Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Technology and Bachelor of Science (Pharmacy). The two programmes will address some of the acute shortages in health personnel which are

affecting the ministry's efforts to deliver the EHP. The College is planning to introduce programmes in physiotherapy and dentistry.

The capacity development initiatives of the College have also included training in finance and financial management. The College has helped the University of Malawi to produce financial manuals that will improve the university's accountability to its stakeholders. As part of this effort the College has automated its accounting/financial management and reporting systems, helping to improve its accountability as evidenced from external audit reports. Audit queries have been minimised in the last two years.

The project is said to be a success even before realising the full results and it is felt that with time the impact of the project will increase. All health facilities in the country including CHAM facilities have started benefiting from the new graduates. There are more doctors in the CHAM hospitals now than before although this cannot all be attributed to the rising number of graduates per year. There is a complementing TC from DFID which is topping up salaries of the doctors in both CHAM and Government facilities.

About 90 percent of the doctors trained in Malawi College of Medicine work in Malawi and as the programme is progressively realising its potential the country will have more and more doctors working in Malawi, which will improve the doctor-patient ratio, which is targeted at 1: 38,000 by 2010.

4.4.4. COUNTRY CONDITIONS THAT HELPED ACHIEVE SUCCESS

The support for the College of Medicine was required by MoH in pursuit of one its strategic goals, that of human resource development. The programme was well thought through and has detailed intervention logic where the Ministry knew its goal and how to get there. The result of this effort is the quality doctors that are trained and these doctors will contribute to the delivery of the EHP.

4.4.5. DONOR PARTNERS' ROLE IN ACHIEVING SUCCESS

This TC demonstrates that for capacity development to be effective the recipient country needs to be in the driving seat, taking the lead in the implementation process. This helps in directing capacity development to priority areas. The Malawi Government is in the driving seat in implementing this programme. Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands directly fund this activity but it is the Government that is implementing activities on the ground. The Government coordinates the support from the development partners and it also co-funds the programme.

The introduction of the Netherlands Government as a silent partner enhanced the programme's potential to succeed. The Netherlands Government was content to supplement the programme's activities without seeking flag flying or other forms of recognition for its

support. It recognised that the TC was a national priority, and that its implementation was led by the Government.

4.4.6. SUMMARY OF FACTORS THAT MAY PREVENT WIDER ADOPTION OF THIS APPROACH

In general, the Government of Malawi prefers support in the health sector through pooling, rather than tied project support like this one. Although the project has been successful, its project nature has meant higher transaction costs for GoM.

4.5. EXAMPLE 5: COMPLEMENTARITY OF TC WITH OTHER SUPPORT

4.5.1. INTRODUCTION

In 2000, the Government embarked on a comprehensive approach to the development of the education sector under a Policy Investment Framework (PIF). This Framework stressed the importance of planning and enhanced strategic management at the district and local level, reflecting the broader move towards institutional strengthening of local government departments under Malawi's decentralisation initiative.

The JICA-sponsored National School Mapping and Micro-Planning Project was designed as a response to the objectives set out in the PIF, and was expected to contribute towards the wider goals envisaged for decentralisation in Malawi. Its overall goal was to improve planning and implementation capability in the local primary and secondary education sector, thus strengthening the capacity of district assemblies and school managers to play a more meaningful role in setting the direction of the education system and ensuring that planning at the district level could be used to guide policy and strategy at the centre.

The project included four inter-related components:

- Designing and establishing a suitable training system in micro-planning;
- Implementing training activities in a series of pilot districts, and supporting the development of education plans in each pilot;
- Identifying demonstration projects for each pilot, to kickstart the implementation of the newly-developed education plans;
- Identifying lessons from the pilot work, and using these lessons to roll out training and micro-planning across every remaining district in Malawi.

A key factor in the project's success has been the establishment of effective linkages between the TC provided in the pilot districts, and the provision of other forms of material assistance. By supporting demonstration projects in each pilot, JICA has helped to ensure that the education plans developed with the support of TC have been taken forward, and are being

treated as working documents. This has ensured momentum and improved the prospects for the sustainability of the TC.

4.5.2. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS AND PROCESS

The project was implemented by a team of nine international specialists, each with a particular field of expertise related to the education sector. However, this core international team had a clearly defined advisory role, which was to coach and develop a small team of selected Malawi Government counterparts and a team of trainers drawn from the MoEST, the Centre for Education Research and Training (CERT), the University of Malawi and the selected pilot district education offices. These counterparts and core training team took the lead in the development of the training programme and training materials, and in conducting micro-planning training workshops and demonstration projects.

At the same time, the project was overseen by a Steering Committee, chaired by the Secretary of Education and including the directors of each MoEST department as well as key representatives of international development partners. This Steering Committee played a policy role, providing guidance on strategic issues, whilst a Technical Committee, including the project counterparts, division managers and the Director of Education Planning, provided oversight at an operational level of all project activities.

4.5.3. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE OF SUCCESSFUL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

There is strong evidence to show that the project was effective in strengthening the institutional capacity of MoEST and the wider education system at the district and local level. For example:

- A core team of micro-planning trainers was successfully created, including a total of 14 education sector officials, drawn from across the headquarters, divisional and district levels;
- This team conducted training in micro-planning techniques for more than 30 key district officers and school managers in the pilot districts, and then for a further 80 officers in the remaining districts during the roll-out process.

Those trained by the core team indicated through training evaluations that they are now more confident of using data for planning, as well as of engaging with key stakeholders at the local level during the planning process. Although a number of those from the initial core team of micro-planning trainers have now moved on, the existence of a much wider pool of district officers with micro-planning skills suggests that the training will be sustainable.

Perhaps more importantly, the project has led to the development of draft District Education Plans (DEPs) by all 33 districts. Local stakeholders and district assemblies consider these DEPs to be of sufficient depth and quality to guide the management of the education system at the district level. Indeed, the DEPs are now regarded as a model for wider planning at the

district level, and are being used by district assemblies to guide the strengthening of the planning process in other key sectors.

4.5.4. COUNTRY CONDITIONS THAT HELPED ACHIEVE SUCCESS

A number of critical conditions underpinned the success of the project. These include the following:

- *The existence of a clear strategic framework to guide the design of the project.* The project was developed to reflect the objectives outlined in the PIF, and also reflects the wider Government ambition to strengthen the capacity for planning and management of service delivery at the district and local level, under the national decentralisation policy.
- *Strong coordination in the management of the project's implementation.* The management structure for the project drew together key Government departments as well as representation from the country's development partners. The Steering Committee included representatives of local government and the country's Decentralisation Secretariat, thus ensuring that the team implementing the project could draw on their wider experiences of decentralisation in Malawi. The involvement of donor agencies other than JICA also ensured that project activities were effectively coordinated with other related capacity development initiatives.
- *The delegation of implementation activities, and clear split of responsibilities between international specialists and local counterparts.* Much of the implementation work undertaken through the micro-planning project was led by the local counterparts and the accompanying team of core local trainers. The international specialists took a leading role during the initial stages of the project, providing training to the core trainers, but from that point forward their role became one of mentoring and guidance. The delivery of training in the pilot districts and during the roll-out programme was largely undertaken by Malawians. This ensured that it reflected local concerns and constraints. It was also a significant factor during the development of the DEPs, given local trainers' understanding of the key stakeholders who would need to participate during the planning process – local knowledge which international specialists would not possess.

However, most importantly, the TC was closely aligned with other forms of complementary support intended to strengthen district level capacity. The training and planning activities were accompanied by a series of demonstration projects in each of the pilot districts. These demonstration projects were intended to kickstart the implementation of the newly-drafted DEPs, ensuring that the DEPs themselves were used as working documents, and that the initial momentum developed by the project was not lost.

One such demonstration project, identified through consultation between the project team and the pilot districts, was focused on building capacity at the district level in relation to

data collection, interpretation, use and management, in advance of the 2001 school census: a core area for development, identified in a number of the newly-drafted DEPs. The project therefore provided training for school managers and district education officers, and complementary support in the form of computer equipment, to strengthen data management. The beneficial impact of this demonstration project is reflected in the increased levels of accuracy observed in the four participating districts in the 2001 census: data accuracy improved on average by 15%. This therefore provides an example of TC being effectively complemented by another form of material support.

4.5.5. SUMMARY OF DONOR PARTNERS' ROLE IN ACHIEVING SUCCESS

The donor partner for the project, JICA, played a key role in ensuring the project's eventual success. Its key roles were to:

- Work with the Government to identify a form of technical cooperation that would best respond to the need to strengthen capacity at the district and local levels in the education sector;
- Help ensure a sound management framework for the project, bringing together both the MoEST and other key parts of Government, notably the Ministry of Local Government and the Decentralisation Secretariat;
- Mobilise a team of international experts with the skills and credibility to develop and then guide the local implementation team;
- Work with its partners to identify complementary forms of support in the shape of demonstration projects, to ensure that the momentum generated by the development of the new DEPs was not lost.

This last role has proved to be particularly crucial. Many TC activities have focused on the development of new strategies and planning documents. However, there is a widespread concern across Government that such support may not be sustainable if complementary support is not provided to kickstart implementation.

4.5.6. LESSONS LEARNED

The education micro-planning project suggests a number of lessons for future technical cooperation activities:

- Firstly, ensure that technical cooperation reflects and is consistent with both Government and sector-level policy and strategic thinking;
- Secondly, where appropriate, ensure that management arrangements are designed in such a way as to promote coordination between the sector and the national level – something achieved in this case through the involvement of the local government ministry and Decentralisation Secretariat;

- Thirdly, ensure that the respective roles and responsibilities of any international experts and their local counterparts are made clear from the outset, and, where possible, try to maximise the role which local counterparts can play during implementation;
- Lastly, identify ways to ensure the sustainability of the technical cooperation provided. In this case, by supporting complementary key development activities identified through the district education planning process, the project ensured that the new DEPs were treated as working documents. This gave extra credibility to the new Plans, and confidence to those responsible for their implementation.

4.6. EXAMPLE 6: ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING AND SUSTAINED CHANGE

4.6.1. INTRODUCTION

The Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education (CSCQBE) was formed in 2000 and is comprised of 46 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) committed to the right to quality basic education in Malawi. The Coalition's activities include national budget monitoring, research, capacity development, advocacy on key education issues, and community mobilisation.

CSCQBE has been supported for a number of years by the Civil Society Budget Initiative (CSBI), a partnership of donors and civil society organisations which aims to build capacity for budget analysis in civil society organisations in selected low-income countries, including Malawi. To facilitate networking and cross-sharing among partner groups, CSBI convened the first annual training and exchange workshop for staff from all current CSBI-supported projects in December 2005.

4.6.2. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS AND PROCESS

The workshop was held in Uganda and hosted by the Uganda Debt Network (UDN). Participating CSOs – including the CSCQBE – shared case studies of their activities and progress, and engaged in the discussion of common challenges. They also participated in a site visit to UDN's own field offices, to learn more about its strategic direction, its activities and future plans. During the workshop, the CSBI also organised training for all groups, focused on subjects such as sector-specific budget analysis, coalition building, strategies for advocacy and working with media.

The workshop was therefore both a networking and a training event, with implementation undertaken on a shared basis by the CSBI, the host organisation and with substantial contributions from the participating beneficiaries from the various other countries.

4.6.3. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE OF SUCCESSFUL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The impact of the workshop can be seen in the achievements of the CSCQBE subsequent to the workshop. For example it has:

- Trained members of the Coalition's district networks in budget monitoring techniques and practices;
- Undertaken budget monitoring surveys, reviewing the way in which expenditure is targeted towards key policy objectives in the education sector;
- Engaged with MPs on the Education Committee and with the donor community in Malawi, raising with them critical issues for consideration in the framing of future budgets, and identifying key deficiencies in education spending;
- Completed position papers on deficiencies in the 2005/6 education budget and its implementation, which was presented by a large group of CSOs to the Minister of Finance in May before the budget was presented in Parliament in July.

As a result of these activities, the networking supported by the CSBI has helped to establish a community-led expenditure monitoring and analysis process in Malawi, increasing the capacity of CSOs to analyse and influence national and sub-national education budgets. This technical cooperation has also helped to ensure that Government commitments to allocate sufficient resources to priority areas in the education sector are closely scrutinised.

4.6.4. CONDITIONS THAT HELPED ACHIEVE SUCCESS

The success of this networking event reflects a number of crucial success factors, including:

- *Strong local demand on the part of civil society for closer engagement in the management and oversight of the education sector.* The CSCQBE brings together a wide range of CSOs in Malawi, acting as a focal point for their activities.
- *The bringing together of regional counterparts to share experiences.* This form of network has proven to be particularly effective because it draws together civil society organisations facing similar challenges and working in similar environments. The fact that one of these CSOs, the UDN, took the lead in hosting the workshop is evidence of the leadership role which the CSOs themselves took in organising this event.
- *A combination of practical and theoretical capacity development activities.* The workshop also included a balanced mix of theoretical training with the sharing of lessons learned and experiences in each country.

4.6.5. SUMMARY OF DONOR PARTNERS' ROLE IN ACHIEVING SUCCESS

The CSBI is supported by a number of donor institutions, including DFID, Sida and NORAD. However, the manner in which it operates allows the targeted beneficiaries considerable scope to shape the forms of technical support that CSBI provides. Assistance from CSBI most often takes the form of project support grants, coupled with technical assistance and mentoring, and the Initiative solicits proposals to engage established civil society groups in select low-income countries where the governance, information, and civil society environment is conducive to applied budget work, but where such work has not yet taken root.

In the case of this workshop, the CSBI played a facilitating role, bringing the various beneficiary CSOs together, but allowing them sufficient space to shape the agenda themselves. Much of the workshop was given over to the presentation of research papers from each CSO, with CSBI acting as a coordinator and bridge between organisations – helping them to identify common themes, shared experiences and possible lessons to be learned to feed into their future work.

4.6.6. LESSONS LEARNED

The success of this networking event suggests a number of lessons. Firstly, it underscores the critical role which civil society can play in holding Government accountable. It has been suggested that in the case of Malawi, civil society and non-governmental organisations do not always receive the degree of capacity development support that is consistent with the scope of their potential role. A number of civil society networks now exist in Malawi, at the sector and national levels, and technical cooperation on this demand side can be just as important as technical cooperation for supply side reforms within the public sector itself. Indeed, the impact of events such as this workshop suggest that technical cooperation for civil society can generate a greater impact for a lower investment.

However, it needs to be recognised that engagement with civil society remains a challenge, particularly as CSOs themselves are spread widely. There is a dilemma of building analytical capacity within the small secretariat of a large coalition, while much of the day-to-day work is conducted by coalition members, who themselves require training and supervision.

This example of TC also demonstrates the value of bringing together counterpart organisations from across the region. Organisations facing similar capacity issues and constraints are better placed to learn from each other, and this South-to-South form of cooperation is more positively received than other North-to-South twinning and networking arrangements in Malawi.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. CONCLUSIONS AND KEY ISSUES

The activities undertaken by the study team at the national and sector levels allow for a number of broad conclusions to be drawn about the factors that make for effective TC:

5.1.1.1. MAKING A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

Interviews with Government officials and recent donor evaluation exercises underscore the need to take a long-term view in fostering change, recognising the constraints that Malawi faces. TC activities need to be more realistic, more limited in their goals and objectives, and pursued over broader timeframes. A recent evaluation of the UNDP-sponsored Public Sector Management Reform Programme (PSMRP) reinforces this, acknowledging that the PSMRP's 4-year lifespan was too short to accomplish the ambitious goals and objectives that had been set. This need for a longer-term perspective is now being recognised and reflected in new donor strategies. DFID, for example, is in the process of agreeing a 10-year development partnership with the Government.

5.1.1.2. TARGETING INTERVENTIONS APPROPRIATELY

The national perception survey indicates that an accurate needs assessment is a key factor in the development of successful TC initiatives. However, the survey also suggests that in the past TC activities have not always been perceived to be well targeted. Nevertheless, there are examples from the two focus sectors for this study which provide evidence of the positive steps that have already been taken towards this end. In the health sector, for example, the MoH is now assuming a greater role in the identification of TC needs, with MoH staff actively involved in drafting terms of reference and job descriptions for TAs mobilised under the SWAp technical support programme.

A particular concern though, which is raised in recent TC evaluations from the education sector, is that TC is sometimes being implemented in a strategic vacuum. The CIDA-funded SSTEP is designed to strengthen the skills of teachers at the secondary level, but has been implemented in the absence of a wider strategy to guide professional development across the education system.



The result is that such interventions may have an impact at the individual level, but may not have a wider or longer-term development impact. Experiences such as SSTEP suggest that there is a need for the Government and its development partners to place more emphasis on helping target institutions to identify their own capacity weaknesses and to prepare accompanying capacity development strategies against which TC can be aligned.

5.1.1.3. UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL ECONOMY ISSUES, AND THE POTENTIAL COSTS AND BENEFITS ASSOCIATED WITH TC

Respondents to the national survey placed considerable importance on the commitment of organisations to change. This suggests that the Government and its donor partners need to establish a strong understanding of the incentives that underpin capacity building efforts, before embarking on TC programmes, and to identify ways of promoting such commitment.

This is consistent with emerging concepts at the international level, such as DFID's drivers of change analyses, and also reflects experiences documented in the two target sectors for this study. In education, for example, programmes such as the USAID-sponsored MTTA and SSTEP have been effective because they have responded well to teachers' needs and interests, and this alignment has helped to build a stronger sense of ownership and commitment. However, as shown by the case of SSTEP, there is a need to be sensitive to the potential costs of TC as well as the benefits, both at the organisational and individual level. Participation in TC activities, such as the SSTEP diploma, may come at the cost of disrupting day-to-day operations, and there is a need to weigh such costs during the TC design process.

5.1.1.4. USING LOCAL AS WELL AS INTERNATIONAL EXPERTISE

Feedback from interviews with key officials and from desk research indicates that donors are sometimes too quick to assume that international expertise is most appropriate. There is a perception that donors look to international advisers too quickly when designing TC activities, and that local expertise is not paid sufficient attention. That said, there are positive examples where local and regional expertise is being put to use, and donors are helping to foster a better understanding of the local skills that might be available to implement TC. An example of this is provided by the health SWAp technical support programme, under which several local and regional TAs have been mobilised with DFID's support. As DFID's 2005 TC study notes, efforts are also now underway to establish a local consultancy database to ensure that local resources are used, and such steps may provide a useful model for other sectors to follow.

5.1.1.5. RESPONDING TO SEVERE RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS

In particular, these good practice examples indicate the importance of designing technical cooperation in a way that is sensitive to the resource constraints seen in Malawi. The support provided by the Norwegian and Swedish Governments to the Malawi College of Medicine highlights the importance of this consideration. The technical cooperation

programme includes a package of salary top-ups and allowances that has helped to stabilise staffing levels and reduce staff attrition with the beneficiary institution. This in turn has ensured greater continuity, and stronger relationships between advisers and trainers working on the programme and their Malawian counterparts. It emphasises the importance of complementing technical cooperation with broader financial support in an environment where resources are severely constrained.

The support provided by JICA to strengthen planning at the local level in the education sector suggests a similar lesson. In this case, the project was designed in such a way as to allow for complementary financial resources to be made available to kickstart the implementation of newly-drafted district education plans, thus building confidence in the new planning process. Given these lessons, it is therefore recommended that Government and its donor partners take greater account of the need to combine TC with other forms of material and financial support, to enhance the long-term impact on capacity.

5.1.1.6. WORKING TO BUILD CAPACITY ON BOTH THE DEMAND AND SUPPLY SIDES

The good practice examples also highlight the importance of working on both the demand and supply sides in Malawi. The six examples set out in this report reflect a balanced mixture of TC targeted towards Government departments, and that aimed at strengthening non-governmental organisations.

Both CHAM and the CSCQBE have benefited from technical cooperation through the establishment of networking arrangements with similar organisations across the region. Such technical cooperation has proved beneficial on two counts. The support provided to CHAM has helped to strengthen service delivery in the HIV/AIDS field, while that provided to CSCQBE bolstered its role in scrutinising the education sector budget process.

The resourcing issues faced by the public sector in Malawi heighten the importance of non-governmental organisations at both the policy and operational levels, and it is recommended that this be taken into account by the Government and the donor community in the design of future technical cooperation programmes. A frequent concern raised by informants during the course of this study is the lack of a strong performance culture or accountability within the Malawian public sector, and under such circumstances technical cooperation which promotes stronger external scrutiny such as that provided to CSCQBE can be crucial.

5.1.1.7. DRAWING ON REGIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING EXPERIENCES

Malawi suffers from particularly low capacity in both the education and health sectors, and under such circumstances, it is critical that technical cooperation be sensitive to the level at which key institutions currently operate. A number of the good practice examples identified

through this study demonstrate the benefits of forging working relationships between Malawian institutions and their equivalents across the region.

The ETO project, the Fredskorpset exchange programme and the support provided to the CSCQBE all demonstrate that twinning can be an effective form of technical cooperation. Such South-South twinning has frequently proved successful, bringing beneficiary organisations closer to others in the region which have been through similar reforms and capacity development initiatives. In the case of the ETO project, the TEVET Authority has drawn heavily on the experiences of its equivalents across the region in identifying its own future development priorities. In the case of the Fredskorpset programme, the exchange of regional health workers has had a measurable impact at the local level in Malawi, as health professionals from the wider region are frequently more sensitive to local cultural issues and challenges than experts from other more developed countries.

5.1.1.8. COMBINING DIFFERENT FORMS OF TC

The good practice examples underscore the fact that technical cooperation programmes frequently work best when different forms of technical support are combined. The support provided by CIDA to the TEVET Authority provides a good illustration of this. While the ETO project involved training for managers and teachers, this support at the individual level was combined with support at the organisational level: helping to develop new strategic planning processes within the TEVET system and forging closer working relationships with counterparts from other TEVET systems in the Southern African region.

This particular example of good practice suggests that technical cooperation often works best when different forms of support are combined, with these different activities often reinforcing each other. A concern raised frequently by informants during the course of the study is that TC which focuses solely on capacity development at the individual level through training is often unsustainable in Malawi. With low salary levels and high attrition rates, newly-trained staff often have little incentive to remain in post, and training is frequently seen as a perk rather than a development opportunity. The ETO project highlights the value of combining different forms of TC.

5.2. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Based on the evidence collected in this study and the broad conclusions set out above, it is possible to identify a series of actions which the Government and its development partners should take to improve the effectiveness of TC in Malawi.

5.2.1. COUNTRY-LED TC PLANNING

TC has been proven to work best when it targets capacity weaknesses that have been identified by a Government department. The results of the national and sector perception surveys suggest doubts about the ability of Government departments in Malawi to lead in

the assessment of capacity development needs and planning. Nevertheless, a number of capacity needs assessments have been undertaken in key sectors in the last few years, including those most recently coordinated by the new Public Sector Reforms Management Unit (PSRMU) in the OPC. A number of actions are suggested:

5.2.1.1. FOR THE GOVERNMENT:

- (i) Use the recent work on capacity needs assessments undertaken through the PSRMU to prepare needs assessment and capacity development planning guidelines that can be disseminated across Government. These recent needs assessments provide a rich source of lessons that should feed into future capacity diagnostic work.

5.2.1.2. FOR THE DONOR COMMUNITY:

- (i) Consider providing support to strengthen the PSRMU, so that it can take the lead role in supporting Government departments in identifying capacity needs and preparing capacity development roadmaps against which TC can be aligned. Such support might, for example, include drawing on best practices in capacity development planning from other countries within the region.

5.2.1.3. FOR BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE DONOR COMMUNITY:

- (i) Promote greater coordination in such capacity diagnostic work, sharing information on planned needs assessments before they take place, to avoid the potential for duplication of effort and overlap.
- (ii) Establish a closer dialogue with non-governmental organisations during the assessment and planning process. Much diagnostic work has focused on Government departments, but the evidence presented in this report, including two of the good practice examples, demonstrates the vital role which NGOs play in Malawi, especially given the severe human resource constraints the country faces. It is important to understand the capacity constraints that NGOs face and to ensure that TC planning also takes account of their needs – as well as their perceptions of the capacity needs of Government itself.

5.2.2. DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT OF TC

The evidence presented in this report suggests that TC has had an impact on organisational performance and results in both of the sectors analysed. However, there is much that can still be done to strengthen the ways in which TC activities are designed and managed. Such actions should include the following:

5.2.2.1. FOR THE GOVERNMENT:

- (i) Strengthen leadership for TC at the centre of Government. A key step towards this end will be the development of a TC policy, setting out principles of best practice that can be used by Government departments to inform their discussions with development partners. Such a policy document was developed in 1990 and published by the MEPD. However, this document is now out-of-date and needs to be replaced.
- (ii) Clarify the respective roles of key central Government departments in relation to TC. The Debt and Aid Division in the MoF holds the responsibility for collecting and disseminating statistics on TC, and has taken the lead in the production of the DAS. However, other central departments, including the PSRMU and the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, have potential roles to play – the former acting as a source of knowledge on capacity diagnostics, the latter the key central department responsible for strengthening monitoring and evaluation across Government. All three should be involved in the design of a new TC policy.
- (iii) Establish focal points at the sectoral level for TC. A common concern raised in both the education and health sectors is that TC activities are sometimes fragmented. Opportunities to identify synergies are not always taken, and in many instances TC activities overlap with each other. The identification of individuals who can take responsibility for coordinating TC at the sector level will help to address this issue.

5.2.2.2. FOR THE DONOR COMMUNITY:

- (i) Provide support for the preparation of a national TC policy. Although a TC policy for Malawi was developed in 1990, this document is now out-of-date and needs to be replaced. While any new policy statement should draw on recent TC experiences in Malawi itself, and the conclusions identified in this report, it is likely that the preparation of such a policy will benefit from donor involvement, in particular by drawing on donors' experiences of TC in other countries.
- (ii) Strengthen capacity for TC management, both at the national and sector level. Recent experiences in the health sector, documented in the 2007 GTZ assessment and summarised in this report, illustrate the fact that there is much to be done to strengthen the ability of Government departments to manage TC directly themselves. The GTZ assessment, for example, points to the very limited role which MoH directors play in overseeing the performance of TAs. The insistence of some donors on retaining responsibility for procurement is an important constraint and donors should agree to joint selection, supporting local priorities, expanding the choice of TC providers and ensuring greater access to sources of local and South-South expertise. Donors should look to build into their TC programmes activities that will help to improve local management.

5.2.2.3. FOR BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE DONOR COMMUNITY:

- (i) Promote the use of local and regional expertise in TC. The work started by DFID and the MoH under the SWAp technical support programme, where a local consultancy database is being developed, provides a good example of the sort of action that might be taken within other sectors to promote the use of local and regional expertise. Government departments and their donor partners might also consider the way in which the procurement process for TC is designed and managed, placing greater emphasis in bidding criteria for local inputs, or the need for the transfer of skills from international experts to local and regional experts with whom they partner.
- (ii) Analyse the potential costs and benefits associated with proposed TC. Examples such as SSTEP and MTTA illustrate the ways in which TC can impose costs as well as benefits on those that participate in them. Government departments and donors should work together to explore the ways in which TC may affect both target individuals and organisations, and ensure that TC activities are designed in a way that is sensitive to the likely costs and benefits.

5.2.3. TC INFORMATION SHARING AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Evidence suggests that the information which can be used to guide decision-making on TC activities is improving. The MoF's Debt and Aid Division is now developing statistics that serve as a good starting point, and which are presented as an appendix to this report. Such data will allow the Government and the donor community to track TC trends in the future. At the same time, there are a number of recent TC evaluations which have been drawn upon in this report and which provide insights into the lessons that might feed into future TC efforts.

However, there is much to be done, and a number of actions are suggested:

5.2.3.1. FOR THE GOVERNMENT:

- (i) Ensure that available TC statistics are published regularly, as part of the Debt and Aid Division annual report. This will help to promote a wider understanding of trends and patterns in TC and the ways in which TC activities are being targeted towards different sectors.

5.2.3.2. FOR THE DONOR COMMUNITY:

- (i) Ensure greater transparency in terms of TC data. The information available on TC at present is incomplete and does not allow for detailed analysis of the ways in which TC is used: whether donors are funding training programmes, use of twinning arrangements; whether they are using international or local resources. A greater

degree of transparency will allow both the Government and other key stakeholders to establish a clearer picture of TC patterns.

5.2.3.3. FOR BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE DONOR COMMUNITY:

- (i) Identify ways to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of TC, at both the national and sector level. Steps are already being taken to strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems across Government, with a multi-donor Joint Programme of Support for M&E at the national level. However, the mechanisms through which different Government departments can share their experiences and learn lessons from each other with respect to TC are still limited. Discussions with informants in the education sector, for example, suggest that TC evaluations are rarely disseminated, and so lessons that might be fed into future thinking about TC are frequently ignored. Both Government departments and donors need to be more proactive in ensuring that there is a greater sharing of relevant knowledge and information on lessons learned from TC good practices.

ANNEX 1: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ANNEX 2: SUMMARY DATA ON TC IN MALAWI

Source: Debt and Aid Management Division, Ministry of Finance

Table 1: Breakdown of technical cooperation activities against functional sectors

Functional Sector	2005/6		2006/7	
	Value of TC (MK)	Percentage of Total TC	Value of TC (MK)	Percentage of Total TC
Education	684,676,945	20	758,234,592	11
Health/ HIV	881,802,081	26	1,625,262,266	24
Agriculture	-	-	50,998,973	1
Conservation, Tourism and Culture	-	-	9,077,727	0
Disaster Management	16,375,904	0	210,373,616	3
Gender and Social Protection	39,180,995	1	946,895	0
Governance	1,493,342,176	43	3,224,942,417	47
Humanitarian	73,493,613	2	-	-
Irrigation and Water Supply	-	-	132,954,211	2
Local/Rural Development	15,011,794	0	80,501,379	1
Trade and Private Sector Development	39,420,997	1	11,843,462	0
Transport and Infrastructure	126,969,471	4	56,688,516	1
Other	66,478,565	2	682,260,703	10
Total	3,436,752,541	100	6,844,084,756	100

Table 2: Breakdown of technical cooperation activities against MGDS themes

MGDS Theme	2005/6		2006/7	
	Value of TC (MK)	Percentage of Total TC	Value of TC (MK)	Percentage of Total TC
Sustainable Economic Growth	40,412,727	1	71,920,162	1
Infrastructure Development	126,969,471	4	189,642,726	3
Social Protection and Disaster Management	103,889,581	3	291,821,890	4
Social Development	1,611,100,625	47	2,383,496,858	35
Improved Governance	1,548,618,545	45	3,224,942,417	47
Other	5,761,592	0	682,260,703	10
Total	3,436,752,541	100	6,844,084,756	100

Table 3: Technical cooperation as a proportion of total support at the sector level

Functional Sector	2005/6			2006/7		
	Value of TC	Total Support to Sector	% of Total Support provided as TC	Value of TC	Total Support to Sector	% of Total Support provided as TC
Education	684,676,945	4,849,526,764	14	758,234,592	5,964,679,242	13
Health / HIV	881,802,081	11,991,077,506	7	1,625,262,266	17,749,171,621	9
Agriculture	-	2,310,467,492	-	50,998,973	4,235,540,749	1
Conservation, Tourism and Culture	-	196,167,016	-	9,077,727	505,352,779	2
Disaster Management	16,375,904	711,670,230	2	210,373,616	243,792,647	86
Gender and Social Protection	39,180,995	47,437,731	83	946,895	668,056,304	0
Governance	1,493,342,176	3,716,259,917	40	3,224,942,417	7,206,315,492	45
Humanitarian	73,493,613	11,302,994,128	1	-	5,923,572,199	-
Irrigation and Water Supply	-	550,092,250	-	132,954,211	2,562,738,629	5
Local/Rural Development	15,011,794	2,099,245,043	1	80,501,379	846,832,827	10
Trade and Private Sector Development	39,420,997	512,119,699	8	11,843,462	1,145,364,180	1
Transport and Infrastructure	126,969,471	6,473,343,509	2	56,688,516	1,530,566,312	4
Other	66,478,565	2,479,246,032	3	682,260,703	1,758,460,259	39
Budget Support	-	14,658,921,974	-	-	9,179,509,145	-
Poverty Reduction	-	1,855,352,888	-	-	3,075,473,585	-

ANNEX 3: PERCEPTION SURVEY APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The perception surveys undertaken as part of this study were implemented in a manner consistent with the Conceptual Framework supplied for the global study. The survey guidelines from the Framework recommend that *'each questionnaire be completed by between 20-30 sector/thematic ministry staff who have been directly involved in technical cooperation (TC) programmes. This could be done either through a single focus group meeting or by distribution and collection'*.

The consultants have followed this approach, with each perception survey being administered to between 20 and 30 key officials. The participants have been identified through discussions with the staff of the OPC and counterparts in the education and health sectors, to ensure that those chosen have had direct experience of working on TC activities in the last 5 years.

The perception surveys were administered in a series of focus groups, bringing together the selected participants. In each focus group, the consultants began by introducing the perception survey, explaining its purpose and providing participants with instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. Having done so, the consultants then facilitated an open discussion with the participants, to draw out their views on the effectiveness of TC in light of the responses they had given.