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# “We have to adapt and find the best solution for this context.“

## A Comparative Case Study of the Patterns of Success in two Swedish Technical Assistance Projects with Kenyan Government Agencies

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# Abstract

Technical assistance to public sector organisations is a much-debated topic and showcases a considerable size in contemporary international development assistance. Yet, the empirical evidence base on which factors contribute to the outcomes of projects within this field is surprisingly slim and diffuse. Particularly, the mechanisms through which different factors affect project outcomes remains understudied. This study aims to contribute to this research gap analyse which factors can be associated to successful project outcomes in two selected TA projects. Additionally, it seeks to uncover mechanisms through which the different factors have affected the performance of the projects. The analysed cases are two Swedish TA projects implemented at Kenyan governmental agencies between 2010 and 2020. The research design followed a comparative case study framework, using empirical data collected through semi-structured interviews and project-related documents. Employing an abductive analysis strategy, codes and themes were identified within the empirical material, indicating possible explanatory factors, which were subsequently substantiated through key arguments and concepts of Problem-driven Iterative Adaptation. Three main factors were found to have led to successful project outcomes: the projects engaged in collaborative processes of demand-driven and context-sensitive problem definition; the project designs were based on a holistic conceptualisation of the targeted problem and its root causes; both projects became more successful concerning relevance, impact, and effectiveness once they employed an adaptive and contextually responsive strategy for project implementation. As such, the results are line with the conclusions of previous studies, whilst additionally contributing with a detailed analysis of the mechanisms through which the factors affect the project outcomes.



Key words: Technical Assistance; Capacity Development; Project Outcomes; Public Sector; Problem-driven Iterative Adaptation; Sweden; Kenya

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| CD | - | Capacity Development |
| Danida | - | Danish International Development Agency |
| DFID | - | Department for International Development |
| DWBI | - | Data Warehouse and Business Intelligence |
| GoK | - | Government of Kenya |
| ICT | - | Information and Communications Technology |
| KNBS | - | Kenya National Bureau of Statistics |
| KRA | - | Kenya Revenue Authority |
| LTA | - | Long-term Advisor |
| MFAS | - | Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden |
| OECD | - | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OECD DAC | - | OECD Development Assistance Committee |
| ODA | - | Official Development Assistance |
| SCB | - | SCB Statistics Sweden |
| Sida | - | Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency |
| STA | - | Swedish Tax Agency |
| TA | - | Technical Assistance |

# 1. Introduction

A core questions of the development agenda as a practice of bi- and multilateral cooperation, whilst discussing different societal issues, has always been about the role of states and the public sector. The latter can be defined as "a totality of institutions, which are supported from the State and municipal budgets, and it provides public goods, which are not under any competition, and which [are] accessible to any individual" (Balabonienė & Večerskienė, 2015, p.315). To be sure, the role of the latter has been conceptualised differently in the various strands of development thinking throughout the decades. When international development assistance was first "formalised" in multilateral institutions such as the UN and the Bretton Woods organisations in the aftermath of World War 2, Western donors focussed on promoting economic growth and foreign investment in low- and middle-income countries, whereby state capacity was seen as a critical premise (Denney et al., 2017, p.5-6).

After the neoliberal agenda of "rolling back the state", the development community paid increasing attention to issues of corruption, governmental accountability, public sector management, and others (Carothers & de Gramont, 2011, p.3) under the *good governance* paradigm which emerged during the 1990s. The underlying assumption was that interventions addressing issues of governance would inspire a far-reaching, self-sustaining high standard of living to their citizens. This also implied a growing emphasis on local ownership and stakeholder involvement in development project (Denney et al., 2017, pp.6-7; Carothers & de Gramont, 2011, p.1).

However, critics of the dominant development paradigms lament that the focus remained on the transfer of "best practice" solutions based on the experiences and standards of Western countries, notwithstanding the increasing use of language of ownership, bottom-up process, and endogenous development (e.g., Cox & Norrington-Davies, 2019; Bazbauers, 2017; Denney et al., 2017). Consequently, a new generation of theories and approaches conceptualising development assistance to public sectors has emerged, which are commonly referred to by the umbrella term *Doing Development Differently* (DDD) (DDD Manifesto, 2014).

Practically, development assistance to public sectors has commonly taken the form of technical assistance (TA), defined in this study as efforts to enhance the capacity of a recipient partner through the transfer of skills, knowledge, resources, and technology by an external partner (see section 4.1.1). Initially, this was a symptom of the "temptation of the technical" (Carothers &

de Gramont, 2011, p.5); meaning, the assumption that the quality of governance systems could be improved by the singular transfer of specific expertise or technology. However, as Nastase et al. (2021, p.4) illustrate, the conceptualisation of TA has evolved in parallel to changes in the discourse since its emergence some 70 years ago. The authors demonstrate this evolution from its focus on developing individual competencies to encompassing principles of being sensitive to contextual dynamics, systemic complexity, and procedural issues.

As a result of the state re-entering development theories, TA to public sector reforms blossomed since the 1990s, becoming one of the foremost types of support to low- and middle-income countries (Andrews, 2013; Carothers & de Gramont, 2011, p.18). Some estimates suggest that approximately one quarter of all annual global aid is spent on TA (Denney et al., 2017, p.v; Greenhill et al., 2006, p.11). Whilst the validity of this exact number can be questioned, the suggested magnitude of TA is supported by other key facts. For instance, scholars estimate that the number of World Bank projects which at least partially included public sector reforms have increased from 469 in the 1980s to 3,325 in the 2000s (Andrews, 2013). Furthermore, in 2011, 11% of World Bank loans were allocated to support government institutions and the rule of law (Carothers & de Gramont, 2011, p.4). The IMF reports that CD to economic institutions such as finance ministries and tax authorities represents about a third of its transactions (IMF, 2021).

Despite the magnitude of TA and the extensive theoretical debates on development assistance to public sector organisations, the evidence base on what makes these TA projects[1] successful is considerably slim and diffuse, even though it is possible to detect an emerging area of research (Hudson & Marquette, 2015; Nastase et al., 2020; Denney et al., 2015; Carothers & de Gramont, 2011). This is surprising as robust empirical information about when, how, and why TA projects with public sector organisations lead to meaningful and sustained change would be highly relevant to development practitioners, donor organisations, and the scholarly debates on development theory.

[1] International development cooperation is often categorised using different terms, such as project and programme, all of which will be referred to as a project within the scope of this study.

# 2. Research Aim

Considering the need for substance in the literature, the goal of this study is to contribute to the recent interest in the empirical investigation of the factors which determine the impact and outcomes of TA projects at public sector organisation. By conducting a comparative case study of two TA projects at Kenyan governmental agencies, the study aims to understand the mechanisms through which different factors have affected the performance of the selected projects. Hence, the study poses the following research questions:

1. *What factors associated to technical assistance projects, which are implemented at public sector organisations, can be said to contribute to successful project outcomes?*
2. *What mechanisms of influence can be identified to explain the effects of these factors on the project outcomes?*

## 2.1 Delimitations

Given the large scale of possible approaches to investigating these questions, it is necessary to stipulate certain delimitations to render them operational. The most relevant consideration concerns the case selection, as this is an essential precondition for a comparative case study. The following were the parameters which informed the choices of cases which have been analysed in this study.

First, bilateral Swedish ODA is the source of funding for the projects. Sweden was chosen since it is an engaged actor within the international development arena. As the OECD (2020) reported, Swedish ODA represented 0.99% of domestic GNI in 2019, which makes it one of the most committed donors by this measure.

Second, the projects are subsumed under Sida's CD strategy, as CD represents a recognised form of TA (see section 4.1.1).

Third, the project timeframe was set between 2010 and 2020, since it is assumed that the outcomes of a project might take time to materialise. Thus, choosing projects which were implemented several years ago might be beneficial, as they hypothetically are more likely to have produced noticeable results. Conversely, excluding projects from earlier than 2010 might be warranted assuming that it might be more difficult to collect valid and reliable data for projects from that time, particularly when conducting interviews.

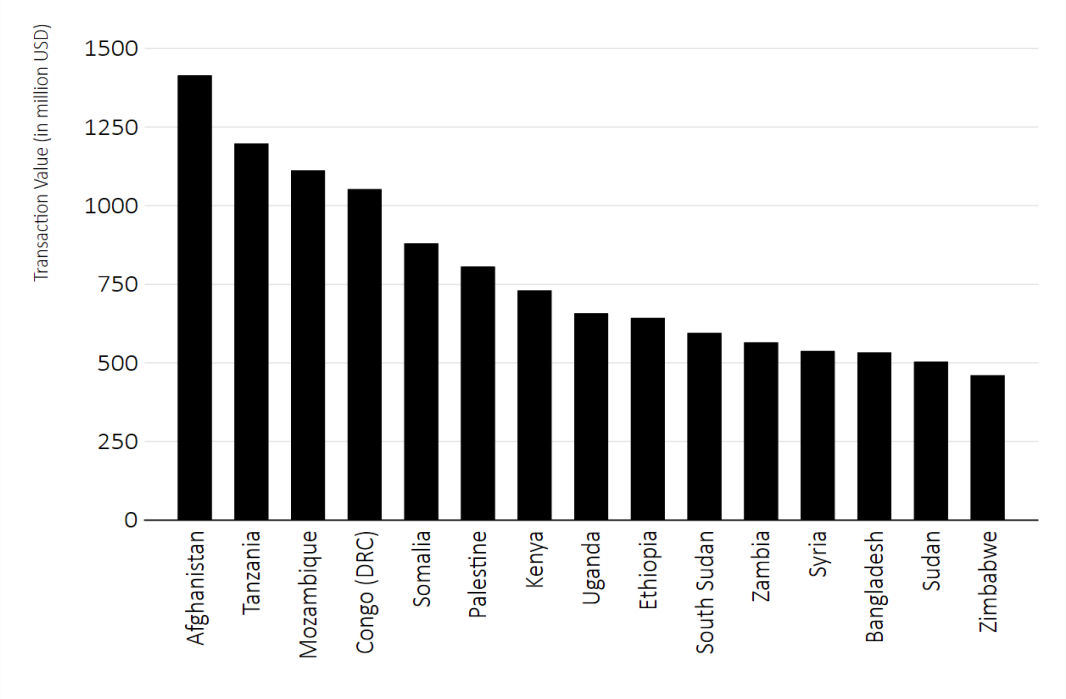


***Figure 1: Recipient Countries of Swedish ODA (sum of annual transactions)***

Based on the author's own calculations; Data: Open Aid, 2022

Forth, Kenyan national government agencies were chosen as recipients based on the following reasoning. Kenya has received the seventh-largest amount of Swedish ODA between 2010 and 2020, totalling 730.32 million USD (see Figure 1). Furthermore, out of the pool of public sector organisations, national government agencies were chosen to ensure a high degree of similarity between both cases.

This sampling strategy resulted in a list of projects taken from Sida's Open Aid website which could serve as suitable cases for study. Given the scope of this thesis, it was most realistic to analyse two cases. For the same reason, the final decision of projects was determined by with which project team was successfully contacted.

## 2.2 Disposition

This study is structured in the following way. First, in the following section, the current literature is introduced by summarising the most important theories on and approaches to development practice, as well as previous findings on which factors influence the outcomes of TA projects. Thereafter, I define key terms and concepts and introduce PDIA as the theoretical framework for understanding the mechanisms through which the identified factors have

affected the project outcomes in the investigated cases (section 4). Section 5 will provide a discussion of the methods for data collection and analysis, which were used in this study, before the TA projects, which were selected for analysis, and the broader context in Kenya are summarised (section 6). Lastly, section 7 details the main findings from the analysis process.

# 3. Literature Review

There is a broad array of literature which presents arguments on how development assistance in general and to the public sector *should* look like. Whilst it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list here, it is worth introducing some of the most prominent conventional and contemporary contributions.

As for the development orthodoxy, whilst not uniform in design, Andrews (2013) provides an illustrative summary of common claims and arguments in a model which he calls solution and leader-driven change. As this model suggests, orthodox approaches to TA can fundamentally be defined by three central claims. First, project success originates from the provision of established solutions in line with international "best practice". Second, the project implementation plan needs to be specified a priori and followed diligently. Third, projects require clear leadership from high-level authority figures.

Amongst the most renowned contemporary approaches are Problem-driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA), Thinking and Working Politically (TWP), and Adaptive Management, which can be related to DDD. Whilst being intrinsically separate approaches which set slightly different foci regarding the factors and mechanisms which promote project success, they share several commonalities in their principles (Nastase et al., 2021; Wigboldus et al., 2011; Andrews, 2013; Carothers & de Gramont, 2011). First, they advocate for focusing on developing local capacity; that is, TA projects ought to elevate the potential of recipient organisations to perform the supported tasks independently, instead of "doing the job for them". Second, TA projects should be built around concrete local problems, as opposed to offering pre-defined solutions. Third, local ownership is key to ensure the alignment of the project with local needs and preferences. Lastly, TA agents need to recognise the necessity of adaptive and iterative change during the implementation process.

Beyond these theoretical debates, several studies have investigated the factors and underlying mechanisms which determine the outcomes of TA projects in the public sector. Most studies employ single or multiple case studies within a specific region or country, which are funded or implemented by a particular development organisation (e.g., Sida, DFID). The following is a synthesis of the most frequently listed factors, presented by thematic groups, which could be identified during this literature review.

## 3.1 Factors related Project Inception and Design

Several scholars conclude that an in-depth inception stage with a timely and effective dialogue between the implementing and recipient organisation, as well as effective stakeholder engagement has benefitted project outcomes (Carneiro et al., 2015; Bayiley & Teklu, 2016; Allen et al., 2020; Booth & Unsworth, 2014). Furthermore, projects were more successful when the targeted problems are understood within their local context (Khang & Moe, 2008; Allen et al., 2020; Booth & Unsworth, 2014). Thus, subsequently, the project objectives were in line with the needed and available capacity of the recipient organisation (Carneiro et al., 2015), as well as the priorities of both partnership sides (Khang & Moe, 2008; Bayiley & Teklu, 2016; Davison et al., 2014). Lastly, when designing project activities, it proved to be beneficial to consider and work with local incentive structures to enhance their effectiveness and sustainability (Allen et al., 2020; Piron et al., 2021).

## 3.2 Factors related to Project Implementation

As for the implementation of projects, five main beneficial factors are listed in the literature. First, iterative implementation with the purpose of identifying the contextually best-fitting solutions has been lifted as a reason for success (Davison et al., 2014; Booth & Unsworth, 2014). Second, developing interventions on a system-wide basis has contributed to greater contributions of Swedish TA projects in the Western Balkans (Allen et al., 2020). Third, a sufficiently long project timeframe with continuity within the project staff has in many cases enhanced the sustainability of project outcomes, as it enables iterative learning an experimentation (Davison et al., 2014), and the development of relationships between the implementing organisation and local stakeholders (Davison et al., 2014, Piron et al., 2021).

Forth, projects were more successful when their team engaged in continuous monitoring and evaluation of the project progress, as well as contextual trends (Davison et al., 2014; Davison et al., 2014). As Carneiro et al. (2015) found, this relates to working in a results-oriented

manner, as it helped project teams to connect current project progress and contextual trends to the long-term objectives and thereby clarifies whether and what types of corrective measures were needed.

## 3.3 Factors related to Project Inputs

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the availability of adequate resources and commitment of the project partners was found to be important factors determining project outcomes (Piron et al., 2021; Bayiley & Teklu, 2016). Indeed, several studies indicate that sufficient capacity of the implementing organisation plays a pivotal role. This includes dimensions of competency of project staff in terms of project management skills, their sensitivity for and ability to engage with the local context, as well as their technical knowledge about the targeted problem areas (Davison et al., 2014; Piron et al., 2021; Bayiley & Teklu, 2016; Allen et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the nature of the support from the funding partner has also been identified as critical. In their synthesis study of seven projects implemented in different world regions, Booth and Unsworth (2014) find that flexible and strategic funding has been beneficial to project outcomes by enabling an adaptive and demand-driven implementation strategy. Furthermore, the Swedish Embassies as the representative funding partner to Swedish CD projects in the Western Balkans has functioned as a mediator between the project team and local stakeholders (Allen et al., 2020).

Conclusively, it can be said that, despite recent advances, as detailed above, the empirical evidence on the factors determining project outcomes remains patchy and inconclusive. Particularly, as Hudson and Marquette (2015) summarise the current state of the literature, "we need to understand the *mechanisms* [emphasis in original] better. What is it about a particular programme that makes it successful? Disaggregating such processes requires either in-depth longitudinal or comparative analysis, or both in order to rule different factors in or out" (p.8).

# 4. Theoretical Framework

## 4.1 Key terms and Concepts

### *4.1.1 Technical Assistance*

The most frequently cited definition comes from the World Bank which defines TA as "the transfer, adaptation, mobilization, and utilization of services, skills, knowledge, technology, and engineering to build national capacity on a sustainable basis" (WB, 1994). The definitions of most scholars are in line with the above, highlighting that TA implies "the transfer or adaptation of ideas, knowledge, practices and skills to foster development" (Bazbauers, 2017, p.246), which takes the shape of "non-financial support" (Nastase et al., 2021, p.3).

The following is the definition of this study: TA seeks to enhance the capacity of a recipient partner through the transfer of skills, knowledge, resources, and technology by an external partner. Capacity is understood as "the ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully" (OECD, 2011, p.2).

According to Nastase et al. (2020), one can differentiate between three types of TA to the public sector based on the relationship between the implementing and recipient partners. First, when pursuing capacity substitution, the implementing agent performs specified functions which the recipient partner is expected to perform. Second, in a capacity supplementation cooperation, the implementing agent complements the practices of the recipient partner through the provision of unique and specific expertise. Third, under CD, the implementing agent facilitates a "process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time" (UNDP, 2022).

### *4.1.2 Technical Assistance Project*

Reading through the definition of TA, it becomes apparent that the concept inherently implies the cooperation between at least two agents, who are engaging in a process with a certain goal and modality, in the broadest sense. This seems to suggest that TA implicitly occurs in the form of projects. Ofori (2013) offers a useful conceptualisation by defining projects as a "sequence of unique, complex, and connected activities having one goal or purpose that must be completed by a specific time, within budget, and according to specification. This can be contrasted from a routine set of activities or daily operations which are intended to be continuous process without

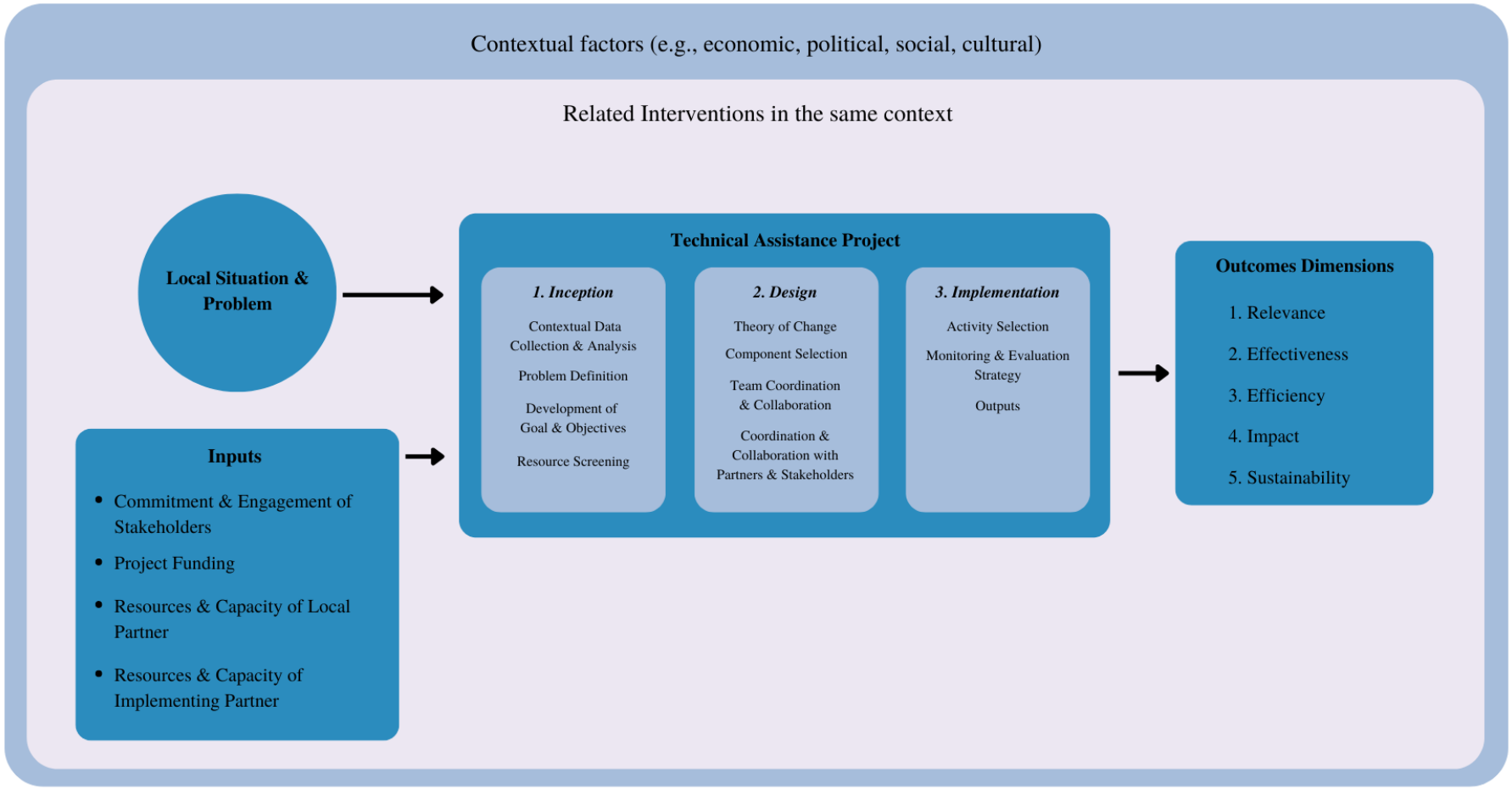


***Figure 2: Conceptual Model of a Technical Assistance Project***

a planned end" (p.16). Hence, a TA project has the purpose of transferring previously absent capacity to a recipient partner within a clearly delimitated timeframe and pool of resources.

Several scholars have provided models of TA project, each highlighting particular constituent elements (e.g., Khang & Moe, 2008; Allen et al., 2020; Carneiro et al., 2015). For this study, a generic model of a TA project has been developed (see Figure 2). The contributions of Allen et al. (2020) and Carneiro et al. (2015) served as sources of inspiration, whilst the finalised composition resulted from the author's personal considerations.

For the sake of clarity, each dimension of the TA project is conceptualised as distinct from one another and ordered as displayed to simplify the data collection and analysis process, as well as subsequent discussions. There are multiple possible approaches on how to structure TA project, which all entail different theoretical arguments on how these project dimensions are, can and should be related to one another (e.g., Andrews, 2013), none of which is prioritised by the model.

## 4.2 Outcome Dimensions

To facilitate meaningful research on the factors which contribute to project success, it is imperative to have a sound and robust conceptualisation of project outcomes. Indeed, many scholars have struggled with this challenge and utilised different approaches[2]. For this study, the evaluation criteria developed by the OECD DAC were utilised, with minor adaptations to suit the research design and empirical material (see Table 1). That is, the criterion "coherence" has not been included, as it was deemed marginally relevant to the empirical analysis. Each evaluation criterion corresponds to a question, which defines what type of outcome is referred to. OECD DAC provides a generic set of questions and suggests for them to be adjusted and reformulated to the specific context and needs of each project, which is to be evaluated (OECD DAC, 2022a). Accordingly, the evaluation questions, which are displayed in Table 1, have been modulated to the purpose of this study and represent the conceptual understanding of each outcome dimension, respectively. In this context, project success can be understood as the extent to which a project achieves high levels within the outcome dimensions. Hence, ideally, a very successful project has high relevance to the local context, achieves its goals

[2] Khang and Moe (2008) have synthesised a useful overview over different attempts to define project success from the research literature.

***Table 1: Project Evaluation Matrix***

| Dimension | Evaluation Questions |
|---|---|
| **Relevance** | To what extent is the project trying to address a substantial problem in its local context of implementation? |
| **Effectiveness** | To what extent is the project achieving its goals and objectives? |
| **Efficiency** | How well are the resources and input into the project used relative to the output? |
| **Impact** | What changes has the project produced? |
| **Sustainability** | What is the potential for the produced changes to last in the future? |

Based on OCED DAC's (2022a) Evaluation Criteria

and objectives, utilises the most efficient resources relative to the produced outputs, has a large impact on the locus of implementation, and produces sustainable results.

The use of OECD DAC's criteria can be motivated by two considerations. First, they allow for evaluations which go beyond the specificities of each project, respectively, and therefore allow for meaningful discussions and analyses across cases. This is particularly important to multiple case studies, such as in this case (Andrews, 2013; Hudson & Marquette, 2015). However, at the same time, they provide sufficient nuance and versatility to consider the quality in outcomes in a variable way, thus treating project outcomes as a matter of degree rather than a dichotomous question. Second, it is common practice in the landscape of Swedish development practice to use these criteria to evaluate interventions by development agents funded by Sida. Correspondingly, four of the evaluation reports and reviews used for analysis are structured in this way (Moran et al., 2019; van Gerwen & Madaya, 2021; Andersson & Anger, 2017; SCB-KNBS, n.d.).

Lastly, it might be wise to elaborate the difference between output and outcome, as both are integrated in the model of a TA project and there might be a risk to inflate their meanings otherwise. The dividing line is what can be directly influenced. Outputs are the directly produced results of project activities, which are concrete and clearly detectable. In contrast, outcomes are much more diffuse and refer to the substantial effects a project has on its context of implementation. For instance, a project activity might be to provide a workshop on how to use a specific computer software. In this case, the delivery of the workshop is the output, whilst the ability of participants to use the software independently could be an outcome.

## 4.3 Problem-driven Iterative Adaptation

Problem-driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) represents a comprehensive and descriptively detailed approach to development work with state governance and public sector institutions. Popularised by Matt Andrews, Lant Pritchett, and Michael Woolcock, PDIA seeks to build on the research literature on and practical experiences with state governance development and synthesise various suggestions and innovations for development work into an extensive and practicable framework (Andrews et al., 2017, pp.135-36).

PDIA sets a particular focus on the ways and mechanisms through which development projects are designed and implemented to solve concrete local problems (Lawson et al., 2020, p.21; Andrews et al., 2017, p.28). Conceptually, it is constituted by four principles, which will be explained consecutively in the following paragraphs. For this thesis, the principles will be associated to project design and implementation and managing the relationship with stakeholders. Note that these categories should not be understood as discrete and distinct. Rather, all principles are closely interlinked and interdependent, as will become evident below. During the elaboration, the theoretical effect of each principle on the outcome dimensions of a project will be highlighted.

### *4.3.1 Project Design and Implementation with PDIA*

**Employing a Problem-driven Focus**

As the label suggests, developing a project according to the problem-driven principle means that the project design puts an identified development problem at its centre. However, it is essential to not assume problems to be self-evident phenomena. On the contrary, Andrews et al. (2017) emphasise the need of active problem definition in accordance with the local context. As such, they describe the following ideal-typical process of project definition. First, a problem is rendered salient and relevant through collaborative consultation with key stakeholders (Ibid., p.143). Second, by deconstructing the problem into its unique root causes, it becomes possible to consider realistic activities to address the former (Ibid., p.153). Thus, in the last step, the resulting model of the deconstructed problem can be used to formulate an effective project design which addresses various root causes through targeted activities (Ibid., p.158). According to PDIA, an activity is effective because of the following characteristics. First, it receives sufficient material and social support from the project team and stakeholders. Second, it fits together with other activities to mount into a combined effect which solves the targeted problem

(Ibid., pp.158-59). The hypothesis here is that the aggregate effect of such activities mounts into an effective solution to the larger problem (Ibid., p.153).

Working in a problem-driven fashion requires an active dialogue between the project team and local stakeholders. The nature of the relationship between international donors and local recipients has far-reaching implications for the relevance and legitimacy of development interventions, dependent on which actor asserted more influence on the problem definition (Bazbauers, 2017). Therefore, the problem definition process results in the most relevant and effective project design, when there is an active dialogue between the project team and local stakeholders, which arrives at a mutual agreement of a concrete problem and a shared understanding of its root causes (Andrews et al., 2017, pp.142, 153).

Employing a problem-driven focus has important effects on the potential project outcomes. The emphasis on contextual sensitivity and fitting project objectives to local priorities and needs through stakeholder engagement constitutes the basis for local ownership of the project (Booth & Unsworth, 2014, p.4). Additionally, the inclusion of a wide and diverse base of stakeholders ensures that the problem definition corresponds to the experiences of the largest possible number of affected people, substantiating the project relevance. Furthermore, by leveraging local knowledge, a holistic conceptualisation of the problem can be generated which will benefit the degree of impact and sustainability of the results produced by a project. By addressing a myriad of root causes to a problem, the probability of effectively mitigating the latter will increase (greater impact), and the potential of it re-emerging in the future will decrease (greater sustainability) (Ibid., p.3).

**Embracing Experimental Iteration**

The second principle is concerned with how activities are selected and implemented best throughout the project period. Once again, PDIA emphasises the importance of coherence and fit between the context, in which the targeted problem is embedded, and the project components and activities (Andrews et al., 2017, p.168-69). The establishment of such fit, however, is constrained by an epistemological reality; it is difficult to know in advance, which activities will solve or mitigate a problem, especially when the latter is complex, and its context diffuse. The reason for this is captured well by Temenos & McCann (2013, p.344):

> "[…] we should not assume that the policies themselves, or their proliferation, are somehow "natural" or teleological. They are not naturally or unproblematically good or

> "best", and what is important about them is not so much that they move around in some abstract sense but that people move them around for particular purposes."

In line with this perspective, Andrews et al. (2017) propose a strategy which they call experimental iteration. The general idea is to implement various activity ideas in an experimental fashion, and to use previous experiences during the project implementation to iteratively reflect upon, plan and potentially adjust future activities (Ibid., pp.180, 188-90). As such, by implementing and evaluating several activities to address a particular causal factor, the most effective and efficient activity will emerge out of this process (Ibid., p.177). For this, the project team needs to harvest information continuously and effectively about the causal factors which is supposed to be addressed, the available resources, and the political and social structures which surround the causal factor (Booth & Unsworth, 2014, p.3). This allows for continuous adaptations and adjustments to the project activities, whereby the latter are rendered technically sound. Furthermore, it is ensured that they draw from factually available resources and support. As a result, experimental iteration will promote the overall project to realise its highest potential of effectiveness and efficiency.

### *4.3.2 PDIA's Approach to the Management of Relationships with Stakeholders*

**Managing the Authorising Environment**

One important implication of development problems is that they are intrinsically interrelated to local structures of authority. As already stated above, there is usually a myriad of stakeholders which are affected by a problem, and which have the ability and resources to influence the problem in different ways (Andrews et al., 2017, p.201-06). This makes it vital for project teams to receive the necessary support from specific stakeholders to be able to implement the project effectively and without any opposition. Particularly, by definition, the authority of people in power positions (both from the funding and recipient side) grants them considerable sway over the fate of the project at any stage (Ibid., p.195). Therefore, the relationship between the project team and the stakeholders is a crucial determinant of the effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of a project.

An adaptive, experimental, iterative, and flexible project design requires three specific types of support from authority agents. First, the support needs to be flexible, which is to say that the authority agents must be willing to grant adaptations and alternations to the project, rather than demanding the realisation of a particular stock of pre-planned results (Andrews et al., 2017,

p.198-99). Second, given PDIA's emphasis on broad stakeholder engagement, each authority agent must be willing to share their ownership of the project with other stakeholders (Ibid., p.199). Lastly, experimental iteration will most likely lead to short-term failures, as the project team seeks to identify the most suitable activities. Throughout the process, the authority agents need to showcase patience and resilience against the temptation of withdrawing support (Ibid., p.199). The sum of these three types of support is what Andrews et al. (2017) call an "authorizing environment" (p.194).

**Scaling up the project through Broad Stakeholder Engagement**

As already mentioned above, engaging a broad base of stakeholders from many different social and political positions in the project is an essential factor in achieving relevant, effective, and sustainable results. This type of diversity has important ramifications, as it helps connect people with the authority to promote and bring about change (through the project) to those people who most acutely experience the consequences of the problem and, thus, can most clearly identify it (Andrews et al., 2017, pp. 219-23). This is particularly valuable during the problem definition, as outlined above. It also helps to pool different types of expertise and knowledge which might help to facilitate experimental iteration through a more nuanced monitoring of the project progress (Ibid., pp.219-23). Hence, broad stakeholder engagement contributes to greater project effectiveness and efficiency, as it serves as a critical premise for identifying the most effective activities and widens the disposal of available skills and resources.

Stakeholder engagement strategies can broadly take three shapes. First, when leveraging, politically astute agents develop a general project, before generating support and acceptance around it. For this strategy, the implementing agent plays a central role in facilitating the project, whilst consulting other people to assist in developing and implementing activity ideas (Andrews et al., 2017, p.227). Second, convening and connecting is based on setting up formal and informal platforms and coalitions to bring different people with different resources and skills together to define the problem, design a project around the former, and implement it collectively and collaboratively (Ibid., 2017, p.227). Lastly, accumulating represents the polar extreme to leveraging, where there is no a priori organisational design for the project team to connect with stakeholders. Instead, relationships are established on an ad hoc basis and as spontaneous responses to circumstantial interactions and opportunities (Ibid., p.229).

# 5. Methods

## 5.1 Research Design

This study aims to explain the mechanism of influence which characterises the linkage between different factors and respective outcome dimensions in the most detailed fashion possible. TA projects are characterised by complex structures and dynamics. Hence, the influences of factors and their interplay must be understood in the context of each project (Punch, 2005, p.144; Robson & McCartan, 2016, pp.150-51). Therefore, this study employs a comparative case study design, since it allows for the analysis of nuances and specificities in the selected project cases and their context, whilst simultaneously substantiating the analysis through the contrasting of patterns between and within the project cases (Goodrick, 2014).

### *5.1.1 Generalisability of Results*

Case studies are inherently limited in their ability to produce generalisable results beyond of the scope of the cases they study (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.173). Thus, the results produced here cannot be assumed to represent the reality of other TA projects within Kenya or other countries. Nonetheless, there is still value in the results of this study. The underlying strategy is to develop coherent and theoretically sound propositions which contextualise and elaborate the mechanisms of how the identified factors influence the outcomes of a respective project. In that way, the resulting propositions and hypotheses can be analytically applied to and tested in the context of similar TA projects (Punch, 2005, pp.145-48; Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.173).

## 5.2 Data Collection

There are two types of data which constitute the empirical material collected for this study: grey literature in the form of project documentation and interviews with key informants from each of the two projects. Each source of data will be discussed in detail below.

The choice of combining the listed data sources is based on the following reasoning. While project documentation provides a thorough overview over many dimensions and components of the respective projects, the information it provides is contingent on the focus set in each respective document. As the former do not explicitly share the focus of this paper, information relevant to this study might potentially be omitted. To mitigate this risk, interviews were conducted to specifically investigate the project cases from the vantage point of the research

question, and, thus, complement the project documentation. Conversely, interviewees might not be able to recall specific facts about the projects, which might be clearly reported in the project records (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.361).

### *5.2.1 Interviews*

The first data source was interviews with key informants about the projects. That is, interviewees were selected based on their ability to provide valid and reliable information about the projects which they are associated to. As such, any member of the project staff in higher administrative role was considered suitable as an interviewee.

A snowball sampling strategy was employed to reach project staff which fit the specified criteria (see Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.281). The initially retrieved documents related to the projects were used as the starting point for this strategy, since they listed contact persons for the projects. By reaching out to the latter, I was kindly referred to project staff which could provide me with the required information. Additionally, in several instances, interviewees put me in contact with former or current colleagues. Since the people who referred me further have a decent overall understanding of the project, they were aware which people would function as suitable key informants. The final list of five interviewees was comprised of project managers, resident LTAs, and experts involved in the project inception stage, which were employed by SCB and STA, respectively (see Table A1).

As the interviewees were located at various countries during the time of interviewing, the most suitable meeting technique were digital video calls. Four interviews were conducted via Zoom, whilst one was held using Google Meet. This had two major advantages. First, by eliminating the issues related to geographical proximity, it broadened the pool of possible interviewees. Second, the build-in functions of the digital meeting software greatly simplified the recording of the interviews and the subsequent transcription of the produced audio files.

The chosen approach to the interviews was a semi-structured design. Consequently, I followed the overall structure of an interview guide and consulted the specific interview questions when needed. Additionally, punctual questions were formulated based on opportunities emerging from the interviews (see Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.285). The interview guide was developed using the conceptual project model (Figure 2), and Allen et al.'s interview guide (2020, Appendix 7) as reference points. However, I used my own considerations to refine the interview guide into its finalised version (see Appendix B).

The overall goal was to encourage the interviewees to reflect upon which factors and elements had a particular influence on the project outcomes. In general, all questions were formulated in an open-ended format and as clear, understandable, value-free, and unbiased as possible.

One main strength of semi-structured interviews is that they enable the interviewees to formulate their responses in a largely flexible manner. This allows for the free association and construction of knowledge according to the experiences and understanding the interviewees have, which increases the depth and substance of the produced knowledge (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.285, 289; Punch, 2005, p.172). Given the explorative nature of the research question, these characteristics make semi-structured interviews useful tools of data collection for this research project.

### *5.2.2 Documents*

The second source for empirical material was grey literature in the form of project documents. The population of suitable documents encompassed any document produced by the project team (e.g., strategy and policy papers, concept notes, and agreements), proposals and agreements with external partners such as Sida, and external and internal evaluation reports and reviews of the project performances. However, as there are no readily accessible project archives, two pragmatic sampling strategies were employed to retrieve and access documents. First, searches were conducted on Open Aid, Sida's website, and Google, whereby the following key words were used: the titles of the projects, as listed in the activity archive on Open Aid; and descriptions of the projects (STA/Skatteverket KRA cooperation; SCB/Statistics Sweden KNBS cooperation). Second, documents were requested from key informants with access to all project documentation. The final sample contained external and internal evaluation reports, mid-term reviews, and proposals for project extension/follow-up. Four documents stem from the KNBS-SCB cooperation, whilst three are associated to the KRA-STA cooperation.

## 5.3 Data Analysis

For the analysis of the collected data, a thematic coding analysis approach was employed. During this approach, the researcher aims to develop a coherent and compelling interpretation about specific dynamics in the data by relating coded elements or sections of the collected data to themes and concepts on a larger level of abstraction. In that way, consistent groups within

the data are used as indicators to support arguments about the theoretical relationships between different themes and concepts (Robson & McCartan, 2016, pp.467-480; Punch, 2005, pp.197-204). Practically, this was done through marking and note-taking in the interview transcripts and documents, and organisation of codes and themes in digital tables and spreadsheets.

During the analysis process, the material was combined through triangulation. As such, both sources were applied on an equal level to verify whether a particular fact or explanation found in one source is consistent with the explanation offered in other sources (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.171; Goodrick, 2014). The analysis strategy used for this study was structured in three stages, as elaborated below.

### *5.3.1 Description of the projects*

During the first stage, all two projects were summarised based on the following criteria and questions:

- *Key facts (e.g., budget size; time frame; location).*
- *Who were the partners involved in the project (Swedish, Kenyan, and others)?*
- *What were the goals and objectives of the project?*
- *Which activities and interventions were implemented during the project?*

Hence, the coding process emphasised deductive analysis, whereby the listed items functioned as the filter for the material (see Punch, 2005, p.200). The results of these project descriptions are elaborated in section 6.2 and displayed in Appendix C.

### *5.3.2 Evaluation of the Outcome Dimensions*

The second stage of analysis aimed to clarify what outcomes the project produced. This process was based on the framework laid out in Table 1. As such, the definitions of the outcome dimensions were used as pre-specified thematic codes to evaluate the projects in a deductive manner. The performance of both projects regarding each outcome dimension is illustrated in section 6.1 and summarised in Appendix D.

### *5.3.3 Investigation of Outcome-determining Factors*

The analysis of potential explanatory factors was approached following an abductive strategy, whereby each factor was considered against its hypothesised effect on one or several outcome

dimensions, whilst simultaneously considering the theoretical propositions and concepts which constitute PDIA. The choice of PDIA was based on the main themes which emerged from the material during initial inductive coding episodes. Hence, the second stage represented an iterative process of developing propositions from the data, and the subsequent verification of the former by testing them against additional data from the same and the other project, as well as by relating the results to the theoretical framework (Punch, 2005, pp.196-99).

Practically, this was done in two steps using Goodrick's comparative case study design (2014) as inspiration. First, each project was analysed separately using a contribution analysis approach which aimed to "identify verifiable [factors and] mechanisms through which the [respective project] can claim to have contributed to the identified outcomes" (Allen et al., 2020, p.38). The conceptual model of a TA project served as the guiding framework to initially structure the data according to the general project component. The goal is to find common patterns within the empirical data for each project to explain successful project outcomes. This was done in two ways. First, time-based and cross-component variations were used as a counterfactual to make intra-case comparisons (see Goodrick, 2014). Second, the information from different sources (i.e., documents and interviewees) has been compared to one another to establish commonalities in provided explanations for the respective project outcomes (Ibid.).

During the second step, the projects were compared to one another to determine commonalities in patterns of success, thereby building on the findings from the previous step. Additionally, when two or more projects showcased considerable differences in one or several outcome dimensions, possible explanations were developed based on these differences (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.479; Punch, 2005, p.204).

## 5.4 Limitations

Whilst the research design of this study is believed to be generally robust, there are, nonetheless, several limitations pertained to it, which must be highlighted and considered.

### *5.4.1 Limitations of the Data Collection Methods*

The aim of this study implies an analytical focus on a meso-level phenomenon (a TA project) and, thus, goes beyond the experiences of individuals. However, the information obtained from interviews and documents reflect the views, thoughts, and believes of the people which have

provided the respective information. As such, the material analysed in this study functions as a proxy for direct observations and investigations of the intrinsic nature of TA projects (McLennan & Prinsen, 2014, p.82).

Furthermore, it is reasonable to assume that many of the outcomes which a TA project might produce, require some time to fully manifest and become detectable. Hence, this poses several issues for the potential of the empirical material to adequately capture the project outcomes, as some effects might require a longer time to emerge and making it difficult to ascertain the sustainability of the results (Booth & Unsworth, 2014, p.7).

Lastly, as Small argues, qualitative research seeks to achieve saturation in information about the cases studied (Small in Robson & McCartan, 2016, pp.166-67). This means that after a certain point during the data collection, any additionally obtained empirical sources merely restates or reemphasises the information found in previous sources. As for this paper, it is important to note that the scope of available resources (most importantly time) did not suffice to reach satisfactory saturation. This might have strained the validity of the produced results, as potentially relevant empirical data was not included in the analysis of this study. For this, three reasons can be highlighted. First, the sample of interviewees excluded Kenyan project stakeholders, such as the primary receiving partner. Additionally, women are severely underrepresented in the sample of interviewees and authors of documents, although its effect on the study is expected to be minimal. Second, the time constraint limited the number of consulted interviewees and documents. Third, the analysis of documents is limited to the information provided by the former, implying that anything not included will remain undetected. Whilst the combination of interviews and document analysis is supposed to counteract the weaknesses of each source, respectively, this limitation is likely to remain to some extent.

### *5.4.4 Limitations to Data Analysis*

The biggest shortcoming of the analysis in this study is the lack of counterfactuals at hand. Ideally, the studied projects would provide the premises which enable meaningful investigation and comparison based on contrasting experiences, whilst showcasing sufficient similarities. However, these conditions are not satisfied by the cases under study here. As section 7.1 illustrates, both projects have been largely successful in most outcome dimensions. Nonetheless, there are several instances which allow for counterfactual comparisons concerning

particular elements of the projects. This, however, is the exception, must be kept in mind when reading and evaluating the validity of the results (comp. Andrews, 2013).

### 5.5 Ethical Considerations

To conclude the discussion of methods, some ethical considerations are warranted. First, the use of interviews required specific measures concerning informed consent and confidentiality. Therefore, the interviewees were informed about the background of the researcher in the beginning of each interview, as well as the aim and purpose of the research question. Afterwards, assurance was provided that the information they provide will be treated with the strictest confidentiality, and they were free to withdraw their consent to participate in the study at any time. Once this introduction was transacted, each interviewee was asked for their informed consent to participate in the study and for their allowance to the record the interview.

Second, as this study draws from attitudinal data and information collected by others to draw conclusions about the projects, I committed to representing their views in an adequate and accurate way and avoid distortions of information. This is particularly relevant, since the investigated topic constitutes the livelihood of the "participants" in this study.

## 6. Background

### 6.1 Public Sector Governance and Development Assistance in Kenya

The World Bank has classified Kenya as a lower middle-income country from 2011 onwards (WB, 2022; Prydz & Wadhwa, 2019). Since 1992, the political system in Kenya is defined as a multi-party system with a presidential order. As such, the president, being directly elected by the voters, functions as the head of government and state (EKJ, 2022). In 2010, Kenya received a new constitution, which aims to increase public participation within political processes and decision-making at a national and local level through extensive decentralisation. For this purpose, 47 new counties were established following the 2013 elections, with greater political and financial powers (MFAS, n.d.(b)). However, despite its democratic makeup, the political system struggles to maintain a fully functional democratic order, as indicated by an average Freedom House score of 48,75 out of 100 between 2017 and 2020 (Freedom House, 2022), and

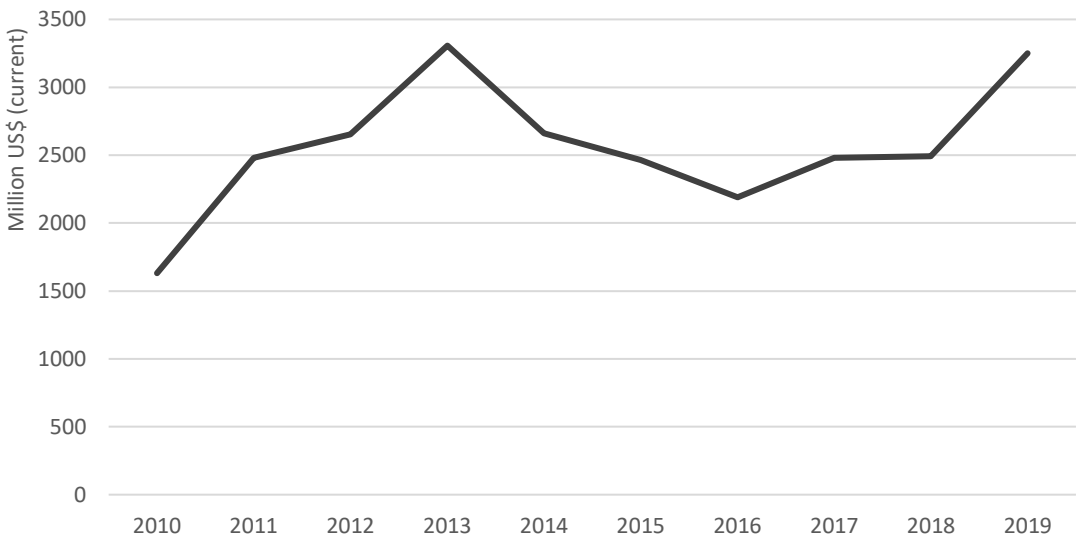


***Figure 3: Kenya - Net official development assistance and official aid received***

*Source: World Bank Databank, 2022a*

a range between 0.35 to 0.4 on a scale from 0 to 1 between 2010 and 2020 on V-Dem's liberal democracy index (V-Dem, 2022).

Kenya's state administration is struggling with widespread patron-client relationships between the political and economic elites and ordinary citizens, as well as cases of corruption (see Figure E1) (MFAS, n.d.(a), n.d.(b)). These phenomena constrain the quality of governance in Kenya and limit the ability of the government to act effectively. This is also reflected in moderate to low scores in government effectiveness (see Figure E2) and regulatory quality (see Figure E3) of the GoK.

Considering such issues and others, the GoK under President Mwai Kibaki launched the Kenya Vision 2030 agenda in 2008. It presents an extensive and ambitious development plan for the country, which is supposed to be achieved by 2030 and is constituted of three pillars (economic, political, social). The overarching goal is to "create a globally competitive and prosperous nation with a high quality of life by 2030, that aims to transform Kenya into a newly industrializing, middle-income country providing a high quality of life to all its citizens by 2030 in a clean and secure environment" (Kenya Vision 2030, 2022).

Additional to such domestic development initiatives, there is a broad base of international donors engaged in Kenya. Between 2010 and 2019, Kenya is estimated to have received official development assistance and aid with a total worth of about 25.6 billion US$ (current), which corresponds to an annual value ranging from 1.6 to 3.3 billion US$ (see Figure 3). Out of this total amount, Sweden provided a considerable share of support. According to the OECD DAC

(2022b), Sweden was the sixth-largest bilateral donor of ODA to Kenya between 2018-2019, and the tenth-largest donor, when also considering multilateral donor institutions.

## 6.2 Swedish Development Cooperation in Kenya

Compared to the other partner countries of Sida, Kenya has received the seventh largest amount of bilateral development assistance between 2010 and 2020 with a total transaction of 730.32 million USD. Sweden's strategies for development cooperation have been formulated using Kenya's Vision 2030 as their guiding principle (Sweden Abroad, 2022). For the inspected period, the MFAS has issued two separate country strategies which provided the framework for Swedish development cooperation within Kenya. The first strategy was in effect between 2009 and 2013 and focussed on the areas of democratic governance, natural resources and the environment, and urban development (MFAS, n.d.(a)). Its successor accounted for the years 2016 to 2020 and showcased slight alternations to the set focus. As such, it specified cooperation to be directed towards improved environmental quality and greater resilience to environmental impacts, climate change and natural disasters, strengthening democracy, gender equality and human rights, and greater possibilities for poor people to improve their living conditions (MFAS, n.d.(b)).

Additionally, the strategies specify some foundational principles which function as cornerstones the design of programmes and project subsumed under it. The MFAS require all activities to follow a rights perspective[3], which is to say that each project must be based on the extensive consideration of the "challenges, needs and conditions of poor people and society" (MFAS, n.d.(b), p.7). This implies that Swedish contributions must reflect an inherent contextual sensitivity, which is demand-driven and promotes local ownership (Ibid.).

The two projects analysed in this study have been implemented under the umbrella of the Kenya Strategy 2016-2020.[4] Both projects are summarised extensively in Appendix C. In general, they both represent development cooperation between a Swedish state agency and its respective Kenyan counterpart, in which a Swedish project team from the respective agency provided CD

[3] In the Kenya strategy 2016-2020, a rights perspective is defined as follows: "A comprehensive view of the challenges, needs and conditions of poor people and society is the foundation of development cooperation. The guiding principle is that economic, social and environmental conditions and processes are to be interpreted and managed in an integrated context" (MFAS, n.d.(b), p.7).

[4] The first phases of both projects have been initiated prior to this strategy. No information could be obtained regarding the strategy which these phases were associated to. As for the second phase, both projects are categorised under the Kenya Strategy 2016-2020 according to Open Aid (Open Aid, 2022a; Open Aid, 2022b).

to a recipient Kenyan agency. The projects were financed exclusively by Sida (van Gerwen & Madaya, 2020; Moran et al., 2019). In the following two sections, each project will be introduced in more detail.

### *6.2.1 Cooperation between KNBS and SCB Statistics Sweden*

This cooperation was a project between SCB and KNBS. Both organisations function as the central statistical agency within the public administration of each country, respectively. Preparatory activities were carried out in 2014, before the project formally started in 2015. Subsequently, two phases were implemented between 2015-2018 and 2019-2021. The main location was at KNBS' headquarters in Nairobi, to which several smaller study visits and field activities to Sweden and within Kenya were added. Across both phases, the project had an allocated budget of about 52 million SEK, which was provided by Sida (van Gerwen & Madaya, 2020; SCB-KNBS, 2018; SCB-KNBS, n.d.(b)).

At the time of project inception, KNBS was a relatively young agency, having been established in 2006 (van Gerwen & Madaya, 2020, p.18; SCB-KNBS, 2018, p.5). It operates under a semi-autonomous status under the supervision of the National Treasury and Planning Ministry (van Gerwen & Madaya, 2020, p.19) and has two areas of responsibility: the production, analysis and publication of publicly accessible statistical information and the coordination and supervision of Kenya's National Statistical System[5] (van Gerwen & Madaya, 2020, p.18; SCB-KNBS, 2018, p.5). As such, KNBS plays a pivotal role in monitoring and guiding the development efforts of the GoK, as defined under Kenya Vision 2030 (SCB-KNBS, 2018, p.5).

Within this context, the overall aim of the project was that "KNBS and the National Statistical System in Kenya have improved their institutional capacity to deliver relevant, reliable and timely statistical information, produced using sound statistical methods and practices in line with international standards" (SCB-KNBS, n.d.(b), p.5). This objective was further divided into two broad components. In the first component, the objective was to concretely improve KNBS' capabilities to produce certain statistics within selected thematic areas: economic, agricultural, environmental, and gender statistics. Component two aimed at improving KNBS' organisational capacity to structure, coordinate and plan internal working processes and resources. The working areas here were management and strategic planning, methodology, staff

[5] The National Statistical System is a network of government ministries, department, and agencies, as well as other producers of statistics, such as the Kenyan counties, in their functions to produce and supply statistics (SCB-KNBS, n.d.(b), p.7).

development and trainees, and ICT and systems development (van Gerwen & Madaya, 2022, pp.22-23; SCB-KNBS, n.d.(b)).

Lastly, given its far-reaching implications for virtually every societal area, the effects related to the pandemic with COVID-19 must be mentioned as a pivotal external factor which greatly impacted the implementation of the project. Hence, throughout the majority of phase 2, activities were carried out remotely (van Gerwen & Madaya, 2021).

### *6.2.2 Cooperation between KRA and STA*

The cooperation between STA and KRA was implemented across two project phases between 2014-2016 and 2017-2019, respectively. As in the other case, the main location of implementation was Nairobi, with several additional study visits and field activities in Sweden and Kenya. In total, the stipulated budget was 47.2 million SEK (Moran et al., 2019; STA-KRA, n.d.(a)).

KRA is the Kenyan taxation agency and, as such, is responsible for collecting and accounting for all revenues, as specified by Kenyan law. Additionally, it has an advisory role regarding revenue issues to the GoK (Moran et al., 2019, p.1). During the project, KRA operated under its 5$^{th}$, 6$^{th}$ and 7$^{th}$ Corporate Plan, which contained the internal agenda for organisational development. All plans were related to the same overall objectives: enhancing revenue mobilisation through a broader revenue base and greater compliance; improvements in administrative capacity of KRA; enhancing professionalism of staff and setting a customer focus; and improving the business climate, as related to revenue processes (KRA, n.d.(a), pp.13-14; KRA, n.d.(b), p.x).

The objectives and components of the project related directly to KRA's Corporate Plans. Overall, it aimed to "increase tax revenue, tax base and level of compliance with tax regulations" (STA-KRA, n.d.(a), p.11) by implementing three components. The risk management component, which was sub-divided into corporate risk management and tax compliance risk management, sought to strengthen risk-based decision-making to contribute to effective revenue collection and, make the use of scarce resources more effective. The second component (change management) addressed KRA's organisational capacity by enhancing a customer focus and promoting staff compliance with KRA's vision and values. The final component (DWBI) had a special position within the project, as it was directly dependent on

the procurement of a data warehouse system[6], which was financed by Danida, Sida and the GoK. As such, STA was not responsible for setting up the data warehouse but focussed their support on improving KRA's capacity to apply the former within its general agenda. Specifically, the data warehouse is supposed to improve decision-making for enterprises (STA-KRA, n.d.(a); Moran et al., 2019, pp.1-3).

# 7. Results

## 7.1 Evaluation of the Project Outcomes

This section presents the results of the outcome evaluation of the cooperation between KNBS and SCB, and the cooperation between KRA and STA, respectively. Overall, both projects can be said to have performed well and to at large extent have contributed to the changes which has been specified in their objectives. Nonetheless, there have been several minor shortcomings, as related to specific outcome dimensions. Appendix D contains a summary table for a general overview.

### *7.1.1 Relevance*

Both projects were highly relevant to both the Kenyan partners and the Swedish development agenda. An important benchmark for this is the extent to which the project objectives align with the policies and strategies of the involved partners.

The KNBS-SCB cooperation was corresponding to KNBS' strategic plans for 2013-2020, the policies and Kenya Vision 2030 of the GoK, and Sida's strategies and policies for development cooperation in Kenya (van Gerwen & Madaya, 2020). Additionally, the project was relevant to KNBS' role as coordinator within the NSS (SCB-KNBS, n.d.). These claims are substantiated by the high levels of satisfaction expressed by KNBS staff with the project priorities as reflected in the activities (Andersson & Anger, 2017, p.7-8).

Similarly, the objectives of the KRA-STA cooperation were aligned with KRA's Corporate Plans for the same period, as well as Kenya Vision 2030. For instance, KRA's 6$^{th}$ and 7$^{th}$ Corporate Plans, as well as the project objectives set the target to increase general revenue

[6] The final report by STA for phase 2 of the project defines a data warehouse to be "a central repository for selected transaction data from various operational systems" (STA-KRA, n.d.(a), p.12).

mobilisation through revenue base expansion and tax compliance (comp. KRA, n.d.(a), pp.13-14; KRA, n.d.(b), p.x; STA-KRA, n.d.(a), p.11).

### *7.1.2 Effectiveness*

Effectiveness refers to the extent to which a project realises the goals and objectives which it was supposed to achieve, which both projects managed to largely accomplish. However, in both cases some working areas remained entirely or partially unrealised.

Overall, most KNBS-SCB sub-components were achieved, such as support to economic and gender statistics, training of 68 KNBS statisticians and 8 young statisticians, which were part of the internship programme, as well as activities regarding organisational, planning and managerial capacities (van Gerwen & Madaya, 2019, p.28-29; Interviewee 2). Major deviations from the project plan occurred in the support to environmental and agricultural statistics and the set-up of new databases for internal ICT infrastructure, for which the envisaged targets were failed to be realised (van Gerwen & Madaya, 2019, p.29; Interviewee 2).

As for the KRA-STA cooperation, the project successfully implemented 95 of 111 planned activities, which corresponds to a negative deviation rate of 15% (STA-KRA, n.d.(b), p.16). As such, the project produced the planned outputs for the components on change management, risk management, and DWBI to a considerable extent (STA-KRA, n.d.(b), pp.17-20; Moran et al., 2019, p.26). However, due to interrelated nature of the latter two components with the DWBI component, their realisation was critically dependent on the progress within the external data warehouse procurement. Thus, since the data warehouse was not finalised during phase 1 and 2 of the KRA-STA cooperation (Moran et al., 2019, pp.16-20), it is not possible to determine with certainty whether the objectives of the risk management and DWBI component have been achieved (Ibid., pp.15, 21)

### *7.1.3 Efficiency*

Both projects showcased a justifiable use of available resources, relative to the results of the projects (van Gerwen & Madaya, 2020; Moran et al., 2019). However, some evidence indicates that the KNBS-SCB cooperation had a more consistent trend in budget depletion than the KRA-STA cooperation. As the external evaluation report for the former case points out, as of March 2020, the depletion rate was 85% with the probable potential to reach a high rate at the end of phase 2 (van Gerwen & Madaya, 2020, p.24). This prediction proved to be accurate, as the

project reached a utilisation of 99% (SCB-KNBS, n.d., p.18). In contrast, the KRA-SCB cooperation was severely over-budgeted from 2014 to 2017 with an average utilisation rate of 57%. Nonetheless, the project is estimated to have utilised 89% of the allocated budget by the end of phase 2 in 2019 (Moran et al., 2019, p.29).

### *7.1.4 Impact*

Impact is defined as the produced changes within the recipient partner organisation which can be attributed to the projects. Such an assessment is difficult to make, as it is difficult to isolate the causal effects of the projects on changes in their respective partner organisation from external influences. This is particularly apparent in the case of the KRA-STA cooperation. As noted by Moran et al. (2019), KRA has recorded increases in revenue collection and the tax compliance rate. However, there is a myriad of factors determining these phenomena, which makes it difficult to assess the individual influence of this project (Ibid., pp.32-35). Similarly, some factors determining the project impact lie without the realm of influence for the project team. For instance, a major concern for the KNBS-SCB cooperation is the extent to which the improved statistical products and organisational capacity of KNBS will be utilised by local stakeholders in policy- and decision-making (SCB-KNBS, n.d., pp.8-9, 20; Interviewee 2).

Despite these issues on a macro perspective, both projects seem to have had a considerable impact on the organisational capacities and processes, as related directly to the implemented components and activities. KNBS showcases a greater capacity to produce economic and gender statistics independently and has improved its organisational performance in planning and management of human, technical and financial resources both for daily production and when cooperating with other development partners (van Gerwen & Madaya, 2020, pp.7, 37). Concordantly, stakeholders have expressed their appreciation of KNBS as a credible and reliable partner and source of high-quality statistical data (van Gerwen & Madaya, 2020, p.39; Andersson & Anger, 2017, p.10).

In KRA's case, the evidence points towards a successful integration of a customer focus into the organisational structure and work (STA-KRA, n.d.(a), p.29). For instance, the main website has been redesigned to accommodate taxpayers (STA-KRA, n.d.(a), p.24; Moran et al., 2019, p.23). However, the training courses for in-house trainers were not formalised within KRA's general structure, thus inhibiting their long-term impact (Moran et al., 2019, pp.30-31).

### *7.1.5 Sustainability*

As for the sustainability, the evaluation reports of each project conclude that the immediately produced results and outputs have a high probability of last in the future. As already noted, KNBS' capacity to produce economic and gender statistics independently has improved considerably throughout the project. Thus, the agency can be expected to continue to provide related high-quality products (van Gerwen & Madaya, 2020, p.37; Interviewee 2). At KNBS, new departments have been established to specifically account for risk management and the data warehouse. Additionally, new strategies, policies and similar tools have been created during the project, which remain at KNBS' disposal going forward (Moran et al., 2019, pp.36-37).

Simultaneously, obstacles and risks to sustainability remain for both projects. For the KRA-STA cooperation, this is most acutely tied to the incomplete status of the data warehouse procurement, as of 2019. Given the interdependent nature of project components, it remains uncertain to what extent results in the former will be sustainable (Moran et al., 2019, p.37). Furthermore, the project experienced a deterioration of support from KRA's top management towards the end of the project. Therefore, it is unclear, how willing the top management is to utilise and safeguard the developed organisational capacities (STA-KRA, n.d.(a), p.33; Interviewee 4; Interviewee 5).

For KNBS, two major constraints remain. On the one hand, the agency has struggled with serious staffing shortages which poses a general risk to its working processes, including the areas and departments which were involved in the project (Interviewee 1; Interviewee 2). Second, the NSS has not been fully adapted to the decentralised sub-national structure, which was implemented in accord with the new constitution. That is, KNBS' presence on a county level remains peripheral, which limits the processing of statistical data from this level (van Gerwen & Madaya, 2020, pp.40-41).

## 7.2 Factors explaining the Project Outcomes

The previous section presented the evaluation of the two analysed projects in terms of their performance in the five specified outcome dimensions. These results constitute the basis from which the research question of this study can be investigated. Thus, by considering the collected empirical material through the lens of PDIA, three propositions can be made, which help to explain the outcomes of the projects.

### *7.2.1 Establishing a Problem Definition which reflects Local Experiences*

Within the framework of PDIA, the process of problem definition takes a foundational role since its results will be used as cornerstones for the development project at large. The concepts of problem construction play essential roles within this process, as it emphasises the need to collaboratively identify a problem based on contextual information and make it salient to its stakeholders. The empirical material provides evidence on the inception stages of the projects which can be associated to PDIA's approach to problem-driven work, and thereby helps to explain their relevance to the needs and priorities of their respective local partners.

To begin with, the pursuit for a locally embedded problem definition is an attitudinal matter, which is to say that the project teams need to be consciously and actively engaged in a process which produces the former. There are clear indications that this type of approach was present in both projects, as two interviewees emphasised:

> "You must understand and have a respect for what has been achieved before [at KNBS] and be humble about that and come in and see that: OK, but how can we improve this together? […] You have to understand the context. You have to adapt to the context, and you have to see that everything that we do in Sweden is not… […] In our Swenglish, we can say: "But in Sweden, we do this." But we're not in Sweden, and that's a different culture, different system. We have to adapt and find the best solution for this context" (Interviewee 2 about the KNBS-SCB Cooperation).

> "We have as a strategy, too, that what we do must be demand-driven. We should not have our own agenda. And we should all always take into consideration that what works in Sweden does probably not work in Kenya. So, understanding the context that [KRA] are in is super hard and super important" (Interviewee 5 about the KRA-KRA Cooperation).

As such, this highlights the sensitivity for the integrity and uniqueness of the local context and demand-driven focus, which systemically permeated the design and strategies of both projects. This focus of the projects partially originated from domestic guidelines such as MFAS' Kenya Strategy 2016-2020, which stipulates that all Sida-funded interventions in Kenya operate in a demand-driven fashion and apply a rights perspective (MFAS, n.d.(b), p.7-8).

Whilst this attitude of contextual sensitivity and demand-driven work constitutes an important basis to a relevant project design and objectives, they require considerate efforts to be put into practice. Both project teams were engaged in understanding the local context from multiple

angles to identify the most relevant and impactful problem areas. The following are the most noteworthy characteristics of these efforts.

Overall, both projects included extensive inception periods with several events for collective consultation of major stakeholders, as well as the investigation of the local context. As such, their inceptions were characterised by broad stakeholder engagement which enabled the investigation of the local contexts from the perspectives of multiple stakeholder groups and, thus, contributed to greater project relevance.

SCB and KNBS liaised for about half a year before the formal start of the project in 2015 (Andersson & Anger, 2017, pp.6-7). This included three to four meetings in Nairobi, as well as a study visit of KNBS representatives to visit SCB' headquarters in Stockholm and meet with its top management. Additionally, several meetings with users of statistics and other development partners who were engaged with KNBS at that time were held (Interviewee 3).

In the case of KRA and STA, the inception stage stretched from 2012 to 2013 and was constituted of several meetings between STA, KRA and the Swedish Embassy in Nairobi. These meetings had the specific purpose to collaboratively identify the ideal areas of support by SCB based on KRA's 5$^{th}$ Corporate Plan, the Kenyan strategy for public financial management reform 2013-2018, and the competencies which STA could provide (Moran et al., 2019, p.9). Furthermore, fact finding missions by three STA staff members to Nairobi were implemented, which included interviews with external stakeholders, such as several private-sector audit companies from Kenya to learn from their perspectives and experiences of working with KRA, as well as meetings with the South Africa Revenue Service to gain a more holistic understanding of the issues based on local and regional knowledge (Interviewee 4). Lastly, a study visit of KRA staff to STA's headquarters in Stockholm was facilitated (Ibid.).

Both project teams considered the policies and strategies of their respective partner agencies and the Kenya Vision 2030 carefully when planning the project design. In the case of the KNBS-SCB cooperation, the extension proposal for phase 2, which the project team submitted to Sida in 2018, motivates the relevance of the project by referring to Kenya's Third Medium Term Plan (MTP III) 2018-22, and KNBS's strategic plan 2013-17 (SCB-KNBS, 2018, p.4). The mid-term review for phase 1 claims that the same process was followed during the start of the project (Andersson & Anger, 2017, p.7). This is further supported by one interviewee from SCB.

> "We understood quite early that our support needed to be in line with the national strategical plans, the different plans for statistics. So, we worked quite a lot, making sure that everything we were doing was actually in line with their long-term strategies. And there we had a great help from the Director General because he really had a picture, an idea of where he wanted to head and what he wanted to develop" (Interviewee 3).

Likewise, STA and KRA's extension proposal to Sida for a third project phase emphasises the relevance of the project proposals to Kenya's national PFM Reform strategy 2013-18 and KRA's 5th, 6th & 7th corporate plans (STA-KRA, n.d.(b), p.4). According to Interviewee 5, this has been a critically important factor to the overall project outcomes:

> "[...] if you should have one factor for a successful project that it has to have the support and it has to be in line with their overall strategies, the direction they want to go. Our capacity building needs to support that" (Interviewee 5).

However, one difference between the projects can be noted regarding the engagement of the top management of the respective Kenyan agencies in clarifying the needs and priorities for their agency and how the projects can address them best. As Interviewee 3 stated in the quote above, KNBS' director general was strongly involved in highlighting his vision and priorities for the agency. In contrast, the project-internal evaluation report for phase 2 of the KRA-STA cooperation reflects upon the lack of clarification between the STA team and KRA's top management about their expectations for the project, as well as their preferences in type of support (STA-KRA, n.d.(a), p.39). This can be understood as a missed opportunity for collaborative problem construction which led to misunderstandings regarding the subsequent project design and implemented activities. For instance, the report states further that KRA expected STA to "provide complete guidelines, processes, procedures and IT support, rather than capacity building activities" (Ibid., p.40). Thus, from KRA's perspectives, such mismatches arguably reduced the relevance of the implemented activities.

### *7.2.2 Project Design based on Holistic Conceptualisations of the Problem and Context*

The project design constitutes the core element of a project, which ties together the targeted problem with the fundamental theory of change and specifies the problem areas, which will be addressed by the project. As such, it needs to translate the identified problem into a comprehensive and actionable implementation plan, which balances various needs and priorities of stakeholders, as well as questions about the availability of resources and capacities,

all the while maintaining the core principles of contextual sensitivity and local ownership of the project. The projects have managed this balancing act to produce effective and efficient research designs due to four practices.

First, both projects composed their project structure and components based on a holistic and systemic understanding of their respective targeted problem and potential risks associated to the project. In other words, the components which constitute each project, indicate that the project activities were designed to address bottlenecks and pitfalls from various angles which might contribute to the identified problem. This corresponds with the concept of problem deconstruction, as it is presented in PDIA. By doing so, the project teams have been able to detect interdependencies between different phenomena in their respective partner agency, which subsequently informed their component selections. Thus, the projects have been able to address each area more effectively, since they could leverage synergies between their components, and increase their levels of impact and sustainability of their results.

To turn to the SCB-KNBS cooperation first, whilst the initial goal was to develop KNBS' capacity to produce the specified types of statistics, SCB's project team concluded that the effective production of high-quality statistical data is premised by a sufficiently stable and functional organisational structure, which KNBS did not sufficiently provide (Interviewee 2; Interviewee 3). For this reason, the decision was made to include a component for organisational development support (van Gerwen & Madaya, 2020, p.23; SCB-KNBS, n.d., p.5). One interviewee summarised the decision as follows:

> "The production of statistics is dependent on having an organisation that supports it. So, one thing can't be had without the other. […] We saw the planning system was really, really bad at KNBS, which means that you're not utilising the scarce resources that you have in the best way. And that's monetary, but it also informs personnel. So, you could have that all surveys are coming at the same time, you know. And then everyone wants everyone on board on their surveys. So, it becomes an internal fight between resources. And you get these big humps and where you need a lot of resources. And then it goes down way where you have no resources […] and people sit idle basically. So, what we want to do is […] to flatten the line, so you use the resources in the best way. Making more efficient use of resources. So, that's sort of the hard planning fact" (Interviewee 2).

Similarly, the KRA-STA cooperation also combined one component about the substantial work of a taxation agency (DWBI) with two components on general organisational development (risk

management & change management). As such, the project design aimed to address various problem areas which were understood as mitigating factors to the functionality and efficiency of KRA as a taxation agency in terms of encouraging tax compliance and delivering excellent services to its customers (STA-KRA, n.d.(a), pp.11-12; Moran et al., 2019, p.2).

Second, when it comes to the selection of components and activities, the consideration of available capacities and resources at the recipient agency seems to have been a critical factor, which explains why certain components were implemented effectively and efficiently, while other components remained unrealised. It is crucial for the departments which are involved in certain project activities to be able to internalise the developed skills and resources, so that they can utilise them independently and purposively. This effect is highlighted well by the effective implementation of KNBS-SCB's sub-components on CD in economic and gender statistics. Interviewee 2 explains these successes with that "there were sufficient resources at KNBS to absorb capacity development. And I think that is something that is really important - that you have a counterpart that can absorb the capacity development."

Both projects provide counterfactual indications which support this argument. When discussing the tendency of over-budgeting in the KRA-STA cooperation within its first four years, Moran et al. (2019) interpret this trend as overestimation of KRA's potential to absorb the capacity developed under these components (p.29). As a result, it can be assumed that the components were less effective and efficient than expected throughout this period. The sub-components on agricultural and environmental statistics are arguably the most poignant counterfactuals to the argument above. In the context of the former the National Seasonal Survey, which was designed during phase 1, has never been implemented in phase 2 contrary to what was planned due to a lack of funding from the GoK (van Gerwen & Madaya, 2020, p.29; Interviewee 2). Similarly, the developed compendium for environmental statistics has not been published, the reason arguably being limited personnel resources in the responsible department at KNBS (Interviewee 3; Interviewee 2).

Third, both projects successfully harmonised the priorities and expectations of the implementing agency (SCB/STA), the recipient agency (KNBS/KRA), the GoK, and Sida as the funding organisation, which represented the main stakeholders to the project. This benefitted the extent to which the projects could be implemented effectively and efficiently, as Interviewee 5 emphasised: "[...] it is easier for us to help when [KRA] have the same agenda [as we have]." Thus, the development of the project design required clear and effective

communication between the involved parties. When contact was first established between KRA and STA, the former initially requested support in the form of procurement of the data warehouse from STA and Sida. Both organisations, however, do not commonly engage in procurement assistance, which necessitated a careful dialogue to reach the eventual compromise. The agreement stipulated that a data warehouse would be procured through the financing of Danida, the GoK, and Sida, whilst STA's support would focus on CD concerning the use of the former (Moran et al., 2019, pp.9-10).

Forth, a particular dimension of managing expectations is how to handle prevailing incentive structures within the local partner agency, as SCB's experience exemplifies. This corresponds with what is referred to as managing the authorising environment in PDIA. A widespread issue to development cooperation in Kenya is the common practice of paying out daily allowances (per diems) to civil servants working in the field. Therefore, development partners, too, are expected to schedule field missions and provide per diems at times, when implementing their projects. As the following quote illustrates, SCB was aware of this risk and therefore addressed the issue through direct measures:

> "We have a third-party agreement […] between Statistics Sweden, Sida, the Swedish Embassy and KNBS but also KNBS and Statistics Sweden. And there, we were really clear [that] if we go anywhere, Statistics Sweden will not pay any per diem rate. In this case in Kenya, then [KNBS] have to pay that amount themselves" (Interviewee 3).

### *7.2.3 Pursuing an Adaptive and Responsive Strategy for Project Implementation*

The core arguments put forth by PDIA's concept of experimental iteration is that projects are more successful in terms of relevance, impact, and effectiveness, when they remain adaptive, flexible, and responsive to contextual trends throughout their implementation. Whilst the projects did not apply this approach as such, their implementation strategies showcased similar characteristics during their first two project phases. In the case of the SCB-KNBS cooperation, SCB's project team adopted an adaptive implementation strategy following the mid-term review written by Andersson and Anger (2017). That is, the project team started to adjust activities and priorities to changes in the context of the project (Interviewee 1).

Similarly, STA's project team increasingly embraced a flexible implementation strategy over time, whereby activities were being selected and adjusted to KRA's short-term needs.

Practically, this was substantiated by the closer involvement of KRA staff in the planning of activities (Moran et al., 2019, p.11).

One of the benefits of an adaptive approach was touched upon by Interviewees from each project:

> "[The context] changed all the time. […] It changes, so it's difficult to say that [the project plan] was wrong at that time, when it was planned" (Interviewee 3 about the KNBS-SCB cooperation).

> "We try to change and adapt all along, even if a project proposal says... it describes what we think when we write the project proposal. We are trying to adjust that on what we learn during the time we work with them" (Interviewee 5 about the KRA-STA cooperation).

This implies that any initially planned components and activities were conceived and motivated by the circumstantial information which was available to the project team at that time. However, by the time the project was to be implemented, the initial circumstances might have changed, thereby rendering the project plan redundant to the newly emerging contextual reality, as hypothesised by the concept experimental iteration. For instance, as already mentioned, the National Seasonal Survey, which was part of the sub-component on agricultural statistics in the KNBS-SCB cooperation, was never carried out due to a lack of funding from the GoK. In the face of this issue, the project team decided to develop the capacity of KNBS' department for agricultural statistics to produce agricultural statistics by using specific data from the Household Budget Survey. As a result, the department was able to produce statistical data for the first time in KNBS' history (Interviewee 2).

The KRA-STA cooperation recorded a similar experience related to their CD support related to the data warehouse. The procurement of the warehouse, which was provided by a separate project, experienced repeated delays, which constrained the initial plan of KRA-STA's DWBI component. Instead, the project team focused DWBI-related activities on the development of preparatory capacity to aid future efforts at implementing the data warehouse (Moran et al., 2019, pp.20-21).

On the other hand, by maintaining contextual sensitivity and a willingness to adapt, unforeseen opportunities for project components and activities could manifest, which benefitted the overall impact and relevance of the project. For instance, STA implemented 17, instead of the planned

13, activities under the corporate risk management sub-component, which seems to indicate that this was prioritised by KRA (Moran et al., 2019, p.13).

The inclusion of the activity area on rebasing KNBS' national accounts followed a similar pattern, as Interviewee 1 highlighted:

> "[…] we added the rebasing of the national accounts as an output in the project which was not there from the beginning because we saw that there was a good opportunity. They were going to do this anyway. We had a really good expert and we saw that […] the prospect for achieving good results was there. So, then we took that in" (Interviewee 1).

The evidence above accentuates the value which an adaptive implementation strategy yielded to the analysed projects. Beyond that, the empirical material suggests further that there were several key aspects which have determined the extent to which the project teams were successful in employing this strategy.

To begin with, the projects benefitted from having a long-term engagement and perspective. In both cases, the notion is emphasised that institutional development, as practiced by the projects, requires a long timeframe to fully unfold and manifest. This contributes to the effectiveness of the project, as well as the sustainability of the produced results (Andersson & Anger, 2017, p.7; STA-KRA, n.d.(b), p.7; Interviewee 2; Interviewee 4).

Second, the resident LTAs stationed in Kenya have had central enabling functions for the adaptive strategies. One essential premise for working adaptively and flexibly is that contextual information about the performance of the project and its surrounding is collected and synthesised on a continuous basis. Furthermore, once a decision for adaptation has been made, it needs to be enacted effectively within the project locus. The role of the LTAs placed them at the nexus of this inflow of information and outflow of adaptive decisions. Their role was recognised by Interviewees from each project:

> "[…] having a long-term advisor on the on the ground there to pick up all those things, supports a lot of our implementation in our corporations. Then we can make sure that we can actually adapt to new situations quite fast" (Interviewee 3).

> "[...] we choose almost always to have a long-term expert in the country. And that is also to be closer to the country, to build relationships, to have someone that has a bigger chance of

really understanding the context and the culture. And the long-term experts are always the ones that are coordinating the short-term missions […]" (Interviewee 5).

Third, the funding organisations in theory have considerable leverage over the decisions and design of projects, as they could choose to only finance projects they favour. However, as argued by PDIA's authorising environment management, and adaptive approach requires the funding partner to be accepting or even endorsing of adaptations and consistent and resilient in its support, even in the face of short-term failures and misplaced resources. The interviewees indicated that Sida's support to both projects fitted this description and, thus, enabled an adaptive implementation strategy (Interviewee 1; Interviewee 3; Interviewee 5).

Forth, ad hoc adaptations to the project design pose a particular risk to the local ownership of the project if local stakeholders are excluded. Therefore, several instruments of frequent consultation between the main project stakeholders were established. At the highest level, the Project Steering Committees evaluated the progress of the project at large, monitored possible risks, and initiated adjustments to the project design (SCB-KNBS, 2018, p.19; STA-KRA, n.d.(a), p.39). Additionally, the KRA-STA cooperation included monthly meetings between the LTA, the KRA contact person and the component leaders to share information about the progress (STA-KRA, n.d.(a), p.35), as well as frequent meetings between LTA and the KRA contact person, separately, to discuss progress of project and planning of upcoming activities (Ibid., p.39). As such, it can be argued that both projects employed a convening and connecting strategy of stakeholder engagement, as the project team facilitated stakeholder dialogues.

Lastly, to maintain the stringency and effectiveness of the project, it is important to always consider any adaptation against the overall goals and objectives of the project. Otherwise, the ad hoc activities fail to align in purpose and to contribute a common goal (Interviewee 3; Interviewee 5).

# 8. Concluding Discussion

Development practice is a highly debated subject matter with suggestions for ideal approaches, principles and "ways of working" from various sources. This also applies to the field of TA in the context of governance and public sector issues. Within this field, the debates have arguably evolved into a new stage with the emergence of the DDD agenda and its associated theories and

approaches, such as PDIA, TWP and Adaptive Management. However, the empirical evidence base on what determines the quality of outcomes which a TA project with public sector organisations produces is still considerably slim and diffuse.

Considering this background, this study aimed to contribute to the empirical evidence by asking which factors can be associated to successful project outcomes in two Swedish TA projects implemented at Kenyan government agencies between 2010 and 2020. The chosen projects were between KNBS and SCB, and between KRA and STA, respectively.

Overall, both projects contributed to far reaching change within the performances and organisational processes of their respective recipient agencies. This is also reflected in the evaluations of the projects based on OECD DAC's criteria, with both projects reaching high levels for each outcome dimension and only selective areas of shortcomings and failure. Considering these performances, one should note that this has important ramifications for the validity of the results, as there is no firmly established counterfactual to substantiate the former. Thus, most results are based on congruencies between the project, except for certain findings, where meaningful differences were present.

Three main propositions were made to outline factors which have contributed to successful project outcomes. First, both projects engaged in collaborative processes of demand-driven, and context-sensitive problem definition, in line with the concept of problem construction. There are clear indications that the project teams showcased contextual sensitivity and designed the projects to reflect local demands. Practically, this was done by committing to an extensive inception process which included broad stakeholder engagement, collaborative problem construction and the active consideration of the strategic agenda set out by the respective Kenyan agency.

Second, the project designs were based on a holistic conceptualisation of the targeted problem and its root causes, reflection a practice of problem deconstruction. Thereby, four factors were found to be outstanding. Both projects addressed their targeted problems by synergistically addressing various root causes. More specifically, besides components about the particular field of practice of KRA and KNBS, the projects provided extensive support to organisational processes. Furthermore, components were more successful when they supported departments in the recipient organisation with sufficient capacity and resources to absorb the developed skills and capacity. Third, the project designs harmonised the priorities of the major

stakeholders through effective and clear communication. And lastly, it was beneficial to proactively address incentive structures.

Third, both projects became more successful concerning their relevance, impact, and effectiveness, once they employed an adaptive and contextually responsive strategy for project implementation, similar to PDIA's concept of experimental iteration. This enabled the project team to instate corrective measures in cases of contextual changes or when the progress was stagnant. Furthermore, they could identify and seize emerging opportunities for effective components or activities. Five factors might have contributed to the effective use of an adaptive implementation strategy: having a long-term project engagement; stationing a resident LTA in Kenya; receiving flexible support from Sida, which leaves room for the project team to make short-term adjustments; formalising local ownership in the project design; and ensuring continuous alignment of project objectives and activities.

By and large, the results of this study support the conclusions of previous studies (see section 3). However, most studies consider the factors separately, with little attention for their interdependencies and synergies. Hence, this study contributes to our understanding of the mechanisms through which some frequently highlighted factors affect project outcomes synergistically and, thus, represents a modest attempt at responding to Hudson and Marquette's (2015) call for more research on the linkages through which factors are interrelated.

Lastly, some critical reflections on the results are warranted. First, it should be noted that the results should not be understood as a test of PDIA as an approach to providing TA to the public sector. However, given the congruencies between some elements of the analysed projects and key concepts of PDIA, it possible to conclude that this study yields support to the fundamental logic of the approach.

Second, the two analysed projects were following the logic of CD, as opposed to the static transfer of technology, skills, and knowledge. Some of the central debates in the contemporary discourse on public sector development assistance is concerning the "temptation of the technical". Whilst the results of this study suggest that one factor which contributed to the overall success of the projects was their holistic design, which included interventions in organisational structures and processes, this should not be read as a test in line with this debate, since this study makes no comparison between two "opposing" cases in this regard. It might be fruitful for future research to further scrutinise this issue, as also recognised by Andrews (2013).

Thus, future research should further investigate the proposed mechanisms by establishing robust counterfactuals in a comparative case study design. Several lines of comparisons are possible here, as the discussion above indicates.

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# Appendix A: List of Interviewees

***Table A1: List of Interviewees***

| Cooperation between SCB Statistics Sweden and KNBS | Date of Interview(s) |
|---|---|
| **Interviewee 1** | 31.03.2022 |
| **Interviewee 2** | 31.03.2022; 22.04.2022 |
| **Interviewee 3** | 07.04.2022 |
| | |
| **Cooperation between KRA and STA** | **Date of Interview(s)** |
| **Interviewee 4** | 11.04.2022 |
| **Interviewee 5** | 28.04.2022 |

# Appendix B: Interview Guide

| General Record | |
|---|---|
| **Date & Time:** | |
| **Location:** | |
| **Interviewer:** | Lennart Weitzel |
| **Present interviewees:** | |
| **Associated Project/Programme:** | |
| **Recording Method:** | |

**Note**: Henceforth, whenever it is being referred to a project, both projects and programmes are implied.

## 1. Initiation of the Interview:

### 1.1. Introduction of interviewer: Lennart Weitzel

### 1.2. Introduction of the research project

1.2.1. What are the research questions? What is its aim?
1.2.2. What is the origin of the research project?
1.2.3. What is the purpose of the interview?

### 1.3. Do you permit me to record the audio of the interview?

### 1.4. Introduction of the interviewee

1.4.1. Who is the interviewee and what is/was her/his role in the project?
1.4.2. Do(es) the interviewee(s) have any initial questions?

## 2. Project Design:

### 2.1. Project Purpose and Goals

2.1.1. What was (were) the overall goal(s) of the project?
2.1.2. What was (were) the identified problem(s)?
2.1.3. How was the process of problem definition structured? Who was involved?
2.1.4. How did you assess the situation in the context of implementation?
2.1.5. Retrospectively, do you identify some problems with the goal(s) and problem definition of the project?
2.1.6. To what extent was the project design appropriate for the identified problem?

### 2.2. Strategies and Approaches underlying the Project Design

2.2.1. How was the preparation period structured?
2.2.2. Who was responsible for and involved in the design process of the project?
2.2.3. What was the Theory of Change of the project defined?
2.2.4. What were the key assumptions underlying the project design?
2.2.5. Which factors influenced the choices in project design?

### 2.3. Project Funding & Available Resources

2.3.1. What was the condition of funding for the project?
2.3.2. Did you find any useful resources already in place in the context of implementation? If so, how did you make use of/work with these resources?

## 3. Internal and External Collaboration and Coordination:

### 3.1. Internal Project Team Structure

3.1.1. How did the project team collaborate internally?
3.1.2. Was there a formal structure or hierarchy in place?
3.1.3. How did the project team communicate internally?
3.1.4. Which factors and practices helped improve the internal collaboration?
3.1.5. What challenges did the project face in internal collaboration?

### 3.2. Collaboration and Coordination with External Partners

3.2.1. Which external organisations and partners (from the public sector) were involved in the project?
3.2.2. How did the project team communicate with external partners and stakeholders? Example: other donors with similar projects
3.2.3. Which factors helped in collaborating with external partners?
3.2.4. What challenges did the project face in these partnerships?

## 4. Project Implementation:

### 4.1. Activities and Interventions implemented during the Project

4.1.1. What activities/interventions were planned under the framework of the project?
4.1.2. Which activities/interventions were eventually realised?
4.1.3. Who was the responsible agent for each activity?
4.1.4. How did you intend to assure the sustainability of the outcomes?
4.1.5. To what extent you think were the activities/interventions interlinked and harmonised?

### 4.2. Project Outputs and Outcomes

4.2.1. What outputs has the activities achieved?

4.2.2. What changes to communities, society, economy, and/or overall quality of government (i.e., outcomes) has the project achieved?

4.2.3. Which outputs have contributed to each outcome, respectively?

### 4.3. Contribution Analysis

4.3.1. Which project outcomes do you consider most relevant/important?

4.3.2. Has there been evidence of change in the targeted context, which can be related to the project output(s)?

4.3.3. To what extent are the outcomes/achievements likely to last/be sustained within the context of implementation?

### 4.4. Outcome Evaluation: Factors which contributed to Outcome Successes

4.4.1. In your opinion, which aspects of the project design and activity plan contributed positively to the outcomes of the project?

4.4.2. How did these aspects contribute positively to the outcome of the project?

### 4.5. Challenges and Problems during Implementation

4.5.1. Did the project encounter any major challenges or problems during the implementation?

4.5.2. How did the team try to deal with these challenges/problems?

4.5.3. What were the outcomes of these corrective efforts?

## 5. Contextual Influences:

### 5.1. Influence of External Factors

5.1.1. Which external factors have influenced the project design and designing process?

5.1.2. How did these factors influence the project design?

### 5.2. Changes in External Circumstances

5.2.1. Were there any key external events or developments which required changes or adaptations to the project design and implementation?

# Appendix C: Summary Table of the analysed TA Projects

| Category | Cooperation between KNBS and SCB Statistics Sweden | Cooperation Programme between KRA and STA |
|---|---|---|
| **Implementing Organisation:** | SCB Statistics Sweden | Swedish Taxation Agency (STA) |
| **Receiving Organisation:** | Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) | Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) |
| **Funders:** | Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) | Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) |
| **Project Team Structure:** | One project manager and one administrator at SCB's office in Stockholm;<br>One Long-term Advisor active in Nairobi;<br>Short-term Advisors from SCB, the private sector, and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (unclear numbers) | One Project Manager (STA) operating from Stockholm;<br>One Long-term Advisor;<br>Component Leaders (unclear number);<br>Short-term Experts for Project Components and Activities (unclear number) |
| **Location:** | Nairobi, Kenya | Nairobi, Kenya |
| **Timeframe:** | Preparatory Phase: 2014<br>Phase 1: 2015-2018<br>Phase 2: 2019-2021 | 2014-2019<br>Phase 1: 2014-2016<br>Phase 2: 2017-2019 |
| **Budget Size:** | Phase 1: 34 million SEK<br>Phase 2: 18 million SEK | Phase 1: 21 million SEK<br>Phase 2: 23.7 million SEK |
| **Goals and Objectives:** | 1. Component: Thematic Statistics Support<br>• Economic Statistics:<br>o Coverage and quality of structural and short-term statistics (developing the Business Expectations Enquiry (BEE) to the Quarterly Business Indicator (QBI) survey); the Business Register; Scope and compilation of price statistics (Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Producer Price Index (PPI)); National Accounts in line with international standards; Labour statistics; Survey methodology training (using SCB's STAC (Statistics in Action) courses) (Phase 2).<br>• Agricultural Statistics:<br>o Quality of agricultural statistics; Development of a sampling frame for agriculture statistics with the intention to expand the range of agricultural indicators; national seasonal survey (as an alternative to a full-scale agricultural census during Phase 2).<br>• Environmental Statistics (discontinued after Phase 1):<br>o Increase range and timeliness in environment statistics produced; increased collaboration in area of environment statistics and awareness among stakeholders. | 1. Component: Risk Management<br>• Objective: Risk-based decision-making applied that supports improved effectiveness in revenue collection initiatives; effective use of scarce resources through elimination of duplication and strategic resources allocated to high-risk areas; coordinated Risk and Business Continuity Management at corporate level and consistency in tax compliance Risk Management strategies.<br>• Sub-components:<br>o Corporate Risk Management<br>o Tax Compliance Risk Management<br>2. Component: Change Management<br>• Effective tax administration through enhanced customer focus and improved compliance of KRA staff with the KRA vision, core values and mission. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | • Gender Statistics:<br>  ○ Improve dissemination of gender statistics (prepare the 'women and men in Kenya' publication); increase awareness of gender statistics and use of gender aspects in decision-making (support to the Gender Statistics Technical Committee); Time Use Survey (TUS) to measure differences in time spent by men and women on unpaid care and domestic work (Phase 1)<br><br>2. Component: Organisational Development Support<br>• Management and strategic planning:<br>  ○ Development of a clear and defined communications function at KNBS; user-friendly dissemination practices; coordination and donor coordination mechanisms; human resources planning.<br><br>• Methodology, staff development and trainees:<br>  ○ Increase capacity of staff in basic and advanced statistical methodology; Improve quality of published official statistics; Improve quality and security of geo-databases.<br><br>• ICT and systems development:<br>  ○ Setting up a domain network; Setting up a structured storage solution; Introduction of a Web-based dissemination tool; Training of KNBS ICT staff. | 3. Component: Support to Data Warehouse & Business Intelligence System<br>• Definition "DWBI": "a central repository for selected transaction data from various operational systems" (STA-KRA, 2019, p.12);<br>• A functional Data Warehouse in place, providing a single view of the taxpayers, supporting a risk-based decision-making tax compliance approach.<br>• Procurement was done by Danida, GoK, and Sida. |
| **Sources:** | van Gerwen & Madaya, 2020; SCB-KNBS, 2018; SCB-KNBS, n.d.(b) | STA-KRA, n.d.(a); Moran et al., 2019; STA-KRA, n.d.(b) |

# Appendix D: Summary of Project Outcomes

| Outcome Dimension | Cooperation KNBS-SCB | Cooperation KRA-STA |
|---|---|---|
| **Relevance** | High relevance, indicated by project alignment with KNBS' strategic plans for 2013-2020, GoK's policies, and Sida's policies; KNBS staff and management acknowledged project relevance. | High relevance, indicated by project alignment with KRA's 5th-7th Corporate Plans, GoK's policies, and MFAS's Kenya Strategies 2009-2013 and 2016-2020. |
| **Effectiveness** | Largely effective; nearly complete achievements of objectives, apart from the working areas environmental and agricultural statistics, and ICT support; during phase 1, out of the 94 project targets, two target were partially, and four targets were not achieved | Largely effective, as 95 out of 111 activities were implemented as planned; achievements of objectives in Change Management and Risk Management component; considerable achievements of adjusted objectives for DWBI component. |
| **Efficiency** | Overall good efficiency with some possibilities for improvement; modest budgeting with good depletion rate, indicating good implementation and absorption capacity of KNBS. | Decent efficiency; project costs are justified by the results; initial over-estimation of KRA's absorption capacity, as indicated by over-budgeting, which was adjusted for by 2018-2019. |
| **Impact** | Great impact on internal organisational performance and capacity; improvement of KNBS' performance in planning and management of statistical production; external stakeholders acknowledge KNBS to be a reliable and capable agency and source of statistical data; uncertainty about potential for KNBS statistics to be used by GoK in policy- and decision-making. | Impact on the internal working processes of KRA, e.g., through an enhanced customer focus and internalised and institutionalised risk management processes; unclear impact on KRA's overall purpose and mission; records of increased revenue collection, tax base, and tax compliance rate, although with unclear causal link to the project. |
| **Sustainability** | Good potential for the sustainability of results in statistical production; uncertainty about sustainability of organisational changes due to continuous staff shortages and limited county-level presence of KNBS. | Expectable sustainability of the hands-on produced outputs for individuals and institutionally; created new departments responsible for risk management and the data warehouse; available policies, strategies, plans and similar for future use; several threats to sustainability; unfinished procurement process of the data warehouse; apparent lack of project buy-in from KRA top management. |
| | van Gerwen & Madaya, 2020; SCB-KNBS, n.d.; Andersson & Anger, 2017; Interviewee 2 | Moran et al., 2019; STA-KRA, n.d.(a); Interviewee 5 |

# Appendix E: Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) Kenya

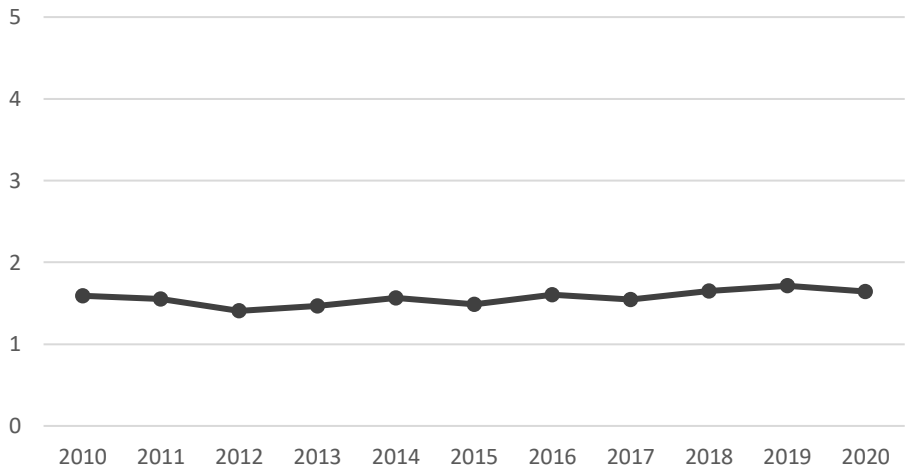


***Figure E1: WGI – Control of Corruption, Kenya***

Note: Control of Corruption captures perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as "capture" of the state by elites and private interests. Adjusted scale to range from 0 to 5.

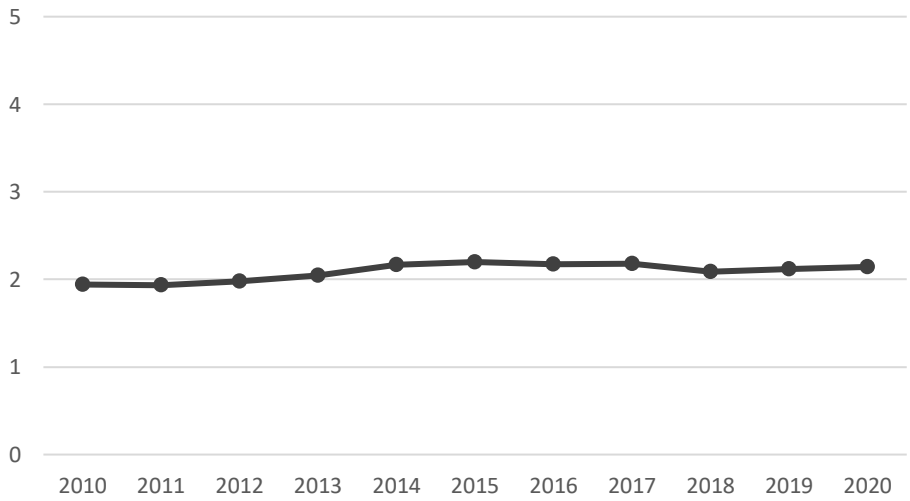


***Figure E2: WGI – Government Effectiveness, Kenya***

Note: Government Effectiveness captures perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies. Adjusted scale to range from 0 to 5.

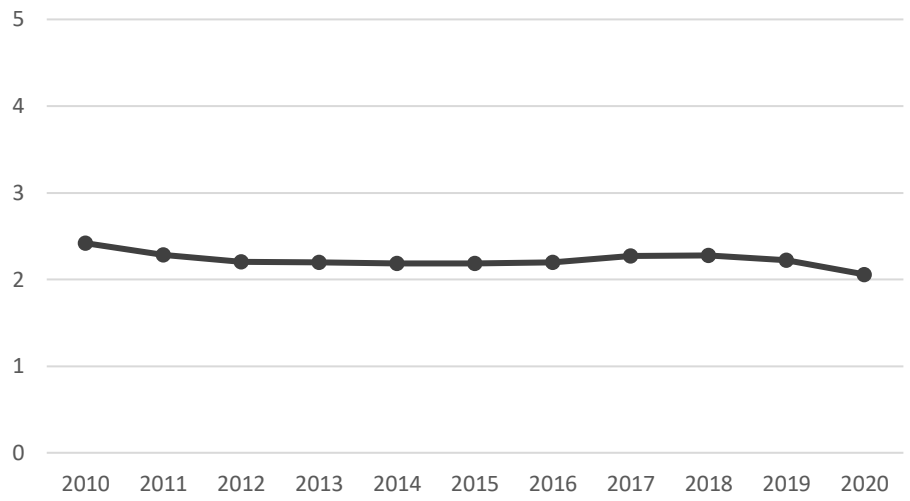


***Figure E3: WGI – Regulatory Quality, Kenya***

Note: Regulatory Quality captures perceptions of the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development. Adjusted scale to range from 0 to 5.

Data sources:

The data used for the construction of the Figures 1-3 in the Appendix E stems from the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), which are produced by Daniel Kaufmann (Natural Resource Governance Institute and Brookings Institution) and Aart Kraay (World Bank Development Research Group) (Kaufmann et al., 2010). The WGI is described as "a research dataset summarizing the views on the quality of governance provided by a large number of enterprise, citizen and expert survey respondents in industrial and developing countries. These data are gathered from a number of survey institutes, think tanks, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and private sector firms" (WGI, 2022). The dataset used for the presented graphs was retrieved from the World Bank Databank (World Bank Databank, 2022b).