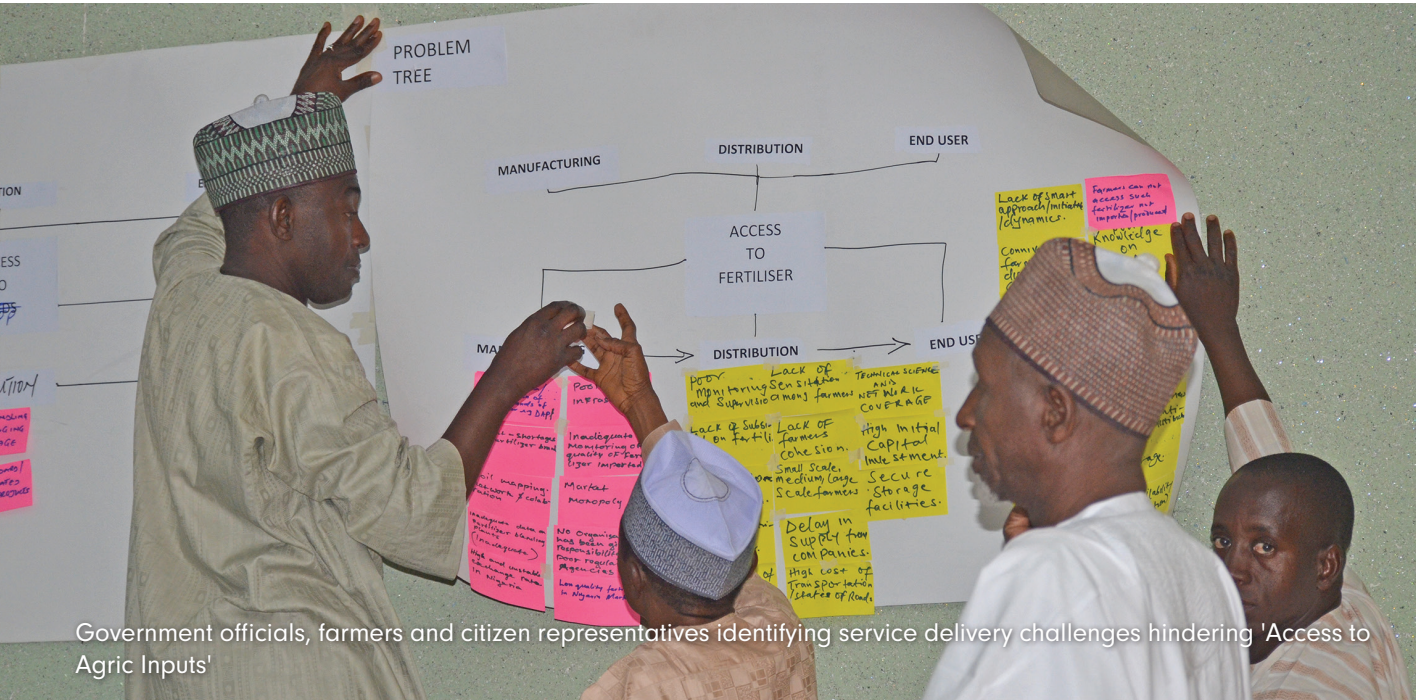


Reform for Better Service Delivery: PERL's Approach to Service Delivery Challenges



Government officials, farmers and citizen representatives identifying service delivery challenges hindering 'Access to Agric Inputs'

Background to PERL Service Delivery work:

In response to increasing citizens demand for more accountable and responsive governance that delivers the dividends of democracy, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) designed the Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn (PERL) to support Nigerian governments on how to prioritise, plan, resource, deliver, track and account for the delivery of public goods and services that respond to the needs of citizens.

PERL's three pillars are contributing to this objective while strengthening how citizens themselves engage with these processes.

PERL recognises that demonstrating the link between governance reforms and improved service delivery to citizens is critical. This recognition is at the heart of PERL's work on service delivery challenges. PERL's service delivery work, which seeks to identify and directly tackle the blockages to delivery of public goods and services, uses the local partner's language, terminology, processes and institutions. This approach helps partners to solve their own problems, and avoids the setup of a parallel system and the impression that the programme was trying to create a new structure in governance processes at Federal and State level.

PERL's understanding of Service Delivery Problems:

PERL's approach to service delivery work integrates the selection of problems, and links them with core governance to ensure a single, coherent and common approach to problem solving. The link to core governance means that the process is locally owned process and built around governments' planning, budgeting cycle and citizens' participation. In Nigeria, many state governments have developed State Development Plans and many more implement Medium Term Sector Strategies (MTSS) / Sector Implementation Plans in key sectors such as health, education, agriculture, etc. These plans also have some elements of citizen's voices in them, where governments have allowed for a participatory process and resources are allocated to responsible sectors in the annual budgets.

What Kind of Service Delivery Problem does PERL work on?

In simple terms, PERL facilitates delivery of public services through an agreed principle of **'follow the voice, follow the policy and follow the money'**. What that means is PERL supports the stimulation and channelling of improved policies that addresses service delivery problems, amplifies citizens' voices to have their needs addressed through improved policies and state plans and supports governments to strengthen their budgeting systems to spend their budgets in a manner that improves services for the people.

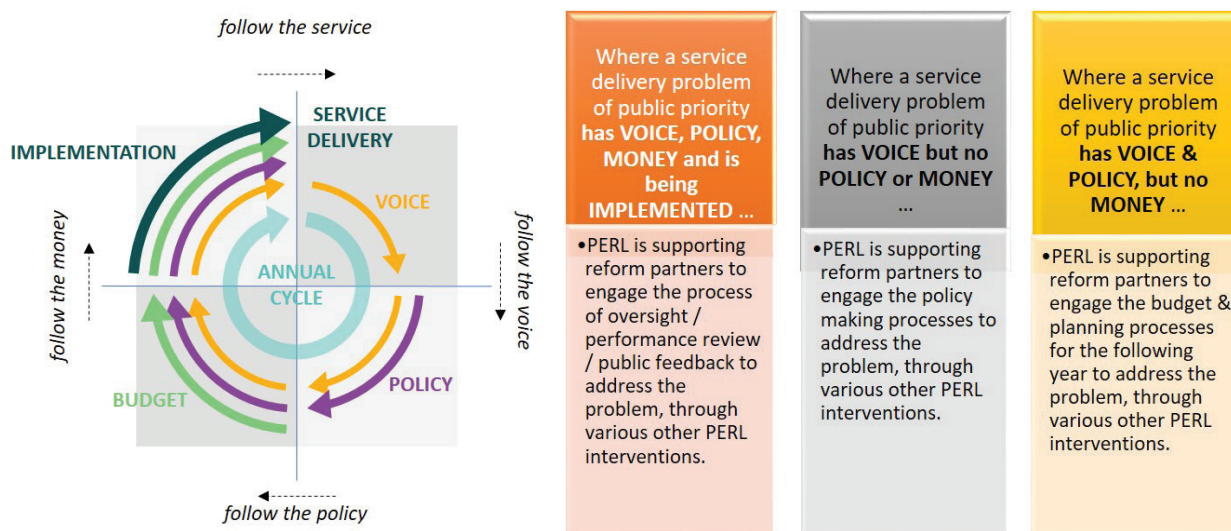
PERL Service Delivery work identifies a particular government service (that is within the policies, plans and budgets of government or identified through public dialogue or political manifestoes) to support citizens and government to work together to tackle service delivery challenges which affect citizens. This approach is also an effective way to showcase learning and adaptation resulting from participatory governance.

Less is more: The selection Process (Inception and Post Inception)

During the programme's inception phase, PERL developed an Approach Paper which outlined a process for identifying key service delivery challenges that could be tackled within the programme's resources and operating timeframe.

During the bridge period (November 2016 – March 2017), several factors, including DFID feedback on local ownership, the need to simplify processes and language, which allows for government structures and citizens' engagement led to a simplified and streamlined approach which replaced the perceived excessive criteria and tools used to select the service delivery problems.

Having reflected on progress made at each location, PERL developed a short, quick one-page generic process map and location-specific process maps for service delivery work based on local peculiarities and ownership. These process maps have been designed to ensure alignment with the pre-existing state planning and budgeting cycles, and indicate stakeholder leads in the various steps of the process.



Generic Process Map (and narrative) for Addressing Service Delivery Challenges

How PERL teams were supported

Several activities, tools and outputs were facilitated and achieved during the selection process during the Inception and Bridge period. These include:

1. **A Macro-Level Political Economy Analysis (PEA)** - which offers the opportunity for contextual understanding of the state political economy environment;
2. Development of a set of **guidelines** to help PERL delivery teams and partners to understand service delivery work, and to provide guidance for the process of selecting challenges as drivers for effective service delivery;
3. Facilitation of **service delivery learning event** - this afforded the opportunity for the State and sub National Facilitation Teams to understand the process and make input into the ways of working which would achieve the most in each of their locations;
4. Development of a **joint Approach Paper**, which has been tested during the selection process and through stakeholder engagements;
5. Development of **Stakeholders' Engagement Framework** to help facilitate actual engagement in selections of service delivery work;
6. Constitution of a **PERL working group**, made of representatives of PERL's three pillars, that provide technical oversight and regular communication and follow-up with the state, regional and federal delivery teams;
7. Visits and participation of **Service Delivery facilitators in meetings** at the state, regional and federal offices;
8. **Stakeholder Engagement Workshops** (applicable during Bridge period) to facilitate active partnerships around identified service delivery problems including strategic sessions to identify potential blockages and interventions for problem resolution.

Lessons Learned during the Selection Process - Inception and Post-Inception Phase

Inception Period:

1. Continuous mentoring by the PERL joint working group for state, regional and federal teams to fully grasp how to facilitate partners to undertake service delivery work;
2. Flexibility in the support and feedback from the delivery teams is important in learning and adaptation;
3. Sufficient time is needed in fostering understanding of service delivery problems and the challenges of selection process;
4. There is need to ensure that every team member understands the process.

Post Inception Period:

5. The transition in approach was quite challenging for the delivery teams as it required a full grasp of the implications of "follow the voice, follow the policy and follow the money" leading up to improved service delivery;
6. Emphasis on the move to implementing small bets and testing to see what works, rather than trying to identify a single issue to work on or three issues and committing to significant investment in advance;
7. Partners expectations need to be managed, where state and non-state actors often expected physical assets to be delivered by the programme, rather than using the state budgets to improve the services delivered to citizens.

Videos of interviews with key advisors are available on PERL Nigeria YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFTiqH9kgyeob3d6CAuT4Kw>