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Strategy highlights

- Significant strategic shift
- Expansion to Anambra, Katsina, Niger, Yobe and Zamfara States
- Independent review indicated that outputs moderately exceeded expectation
- Unqualified audit opinion
- A year of intense activity and significant progress
A strategic shift

This annual report of the State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability (SPARC) programme covers the period August 2012–June 2013, the fourth year of implementation, and presents progress against work plans submitted in July 2012. The reporting period reflects a realignment of the operational year to 1 July–30 June to synchronise with Department for International Development (DFID) quarterly reporting.

Significant strategic shift

SPARC has been working in the five states of Enugu, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano and Lagos since the programme began in 2008. During the reporting period there was a significant strategic shift. In September 2012, we submitted a business case for expansion of the programme to five additional states and extension of the contract until August 2015 to DFID Nigeria. This was approved in November 2012. In June 2013 DFID and HTSPE Ltd. signed Contract Amendment No. 10 for the expansion and extension of SPARC.

Expansion to Anambra, Katsina, Niger, Yobe and Zamfara States approved

In anticipation of the formal contract amendment, we established offices in Anambra, Katsina, Niger, Yobe and Zamfara States. State Programme Managers were appointed for each of these offices, with the exception of Anambra which is overseen by the Enugu office.

Drawing on the experiences of our work to date, we held separate high-level meetings with each state in Abuja. Each meeting involved representatives from the state chosen by the State Governor. The outcome of the meetings was that SPARC and each State Government established an ‘agreed intervention approach’ to accelerate reforms.

Figure 1: SPARC in Nigeria

The five states where SPARC has been operating since 2008
The five states where SPARC began operating since 2012–2013
Agreed intervention approaches to accelerate reforms established between SPARC and State Governments in Anambra, Katsina, Niger, Yobe and Zamfara

Because of the deteriorating security situation in the north of the country, SPARC contracted Control Risks to advise on security and set up a security unit. The security unit started work in December 2012. Nevertheless, despite the measures put in place by the unit, travel by international consultants to the northern states was severely curtailed.

Deteriorating security situation in the north of the country severely curtailed travel by international consultants

The annual DFID review of SPARC, conducted by the Independent Monitoring and Evaluation Project, took place in January 2013. This ‘light touch’ review involved a desk study, visits to Enugu and Lagos, and discussions with stakeholders in the two states and at the federal level. The review team concluded that “the reports provided by SPARC that we examined, and validated with external stakeholders, were invariably accurate and reliable.” Taking account of the scores1 on the four outputs, SPARC scored A+, indicating that, overall, outputs moderately exceeded expectation:

- Output 1: Policy and strategy development, monitoring and evaluation improved: Score: A++ (outputs substantially exceeded expectation)
- Output 2: State public financial management improved: Score: A+ (outputs moderately exceeded expectation)
- Output 3: State civil service performance improved: Score: A (outputs met expectations)
- Output 4: Federal support to state governance improved: Score: A (outputs met expectations).

“The reports provided by SPARC that we examined, and validated with external stakeholders, were invariably accurate and reliable.”
Independent Monitoring and Evaluation Project review team
January 2013

In March 2013, SPARC received an unqualified audit for the period January 2010 to March 2012, confirming the financial integrity of operations.

Unqualified audit opinion

The year 2012–2013 has been full of activity. We have made significant progress and realised major achievements. The next section of this report outlines progress towards our outcomes. The final section presents our assessment of SPARC’s value for money, an issue of increasing concern and importance to us.

A year of intense activity and significant progress

1 Scored according to DFID’s new reporting and e-information system, ARIES
Achievements and progress highlights

- Nearly all activities scheduled for 2012–2013 were delivered as planned
- Quality of medium-term sector strategies improving across the board
- Higher budget allocations for education and health
- State governments are improving their ability to execute their budgets
- States in the expanded programme are taking real steps to streamline government operations and avoid duplication
- Support for the Nigeria Governors’ Forum State Peer Review Mechanism encourages states to become more accountable to the electorate
- Governance share fairs give all 36 states opportunities to share experiences about what works and to learn from others
- The new SPARC Resource Centre has been well received
- Human Resources Management Resource Suite launched
- 3,000 signed up for new SPARC Facebook newsletter
Achievements and progress

Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the use of public resources

The objective of the SPARC programme is to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the use of public resources in selected states. To meet this objective, we are working to improve the:

- Effectiveness of policies and strategies, and the consistency of medium-term plans and budgets with policies and resource envelopes
- Realism and predictability of multi-year budgets
- Capacity and competence of the public service
- Responsiveness of state governments to national initiatives to improve state performance.

SPARC also works to ensure that the lessons learned about improving performance in the states where we work are shared widely, well beyond our sphere of operation.

Sharing lessons learned

ACHIEVEMENTS

Between August 2012 and June 2013, we delivered more than 90% of all activities scheduled (compared to 70% in 2012 and 65% in 2011). In the five additional states, including Yobe, we delivered nearly all planned activities, despite the significant security challenges in northern Nigeria.

We delivered nearly all activities planned for 2012–2013

BETTER DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

We are improving the capacity and competence of partners to undertake robust, realistic and inclusive development planning. With SPARC’s support, the Lagos State Government developed the Lagos State Development Plan 2013–2025, a consolidated development plan that will guide its activities for the next 12 years. This is the first such plan and is important, given that different parts of the Lagos State Government claim to ‘speak for Lagos’. The agreement on the plan means that the State speaks with one voice on the development agenda, and that the plan thus has a greater chance of surviving changes in political leadership. This is very significant for development planning in Nigeria as Lagos State sets the pace and is emulated by other states.

Consolidated long-term development plan for Lagos sets the pace for other states

In Kano State we overcame initial difficulties following a change of administration and worked with the government to produce and launch the Kano State Development Plan 2012–2015. In Anambra State we documented the Anambra Integrated Development Strategy which clearly sets out, for the first time, the state development philosophy that guides governance. In Jigawa State we continued to support the Comprehensive Development Framework and in Enugu State the Vision 20:20 Medium Term Implementation Plan.

A review of 32 medium-term sector strategies (MTSSs) across the five states in which SPARC...
has been working since 2008 showed that the quality of strategies is improving across the board. There is also evidence that MTSSs are beginning to be better reflected in state budgets, particularly in Jigawa, Lagos and Enugu.3

Quality of medium-term sector strategies improving across the board

SPARC continues to contribute to DFID’s goal of improving Nigeria’s use of its own resources to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Working with other DFID state-level programmes, we played a part in increasing budget allocations to education and health. For instance, in Jigawa State, allocations to the health sector rose from 7% of the total budget in 2008 to 12% in 2012. Coupled with improvements in health-sector planning and budgeting, this led to a fall in maternal mortality from 3.7% in 2008 to 1.3% in 2011. The proportion of children fully immunised has also risen from 22% in 2008 to 62% in 2011. The share of the total budget allocated to education and health is becoming more predictable for most states. However, there continues to be a need to maintain pressure on governments to release more of the appropriations for these two sectors.

Higher budget allocations for education and health

MORE REALISTIC AND OUTPUT-FOCUSED BUDGETS

In general, budgets are becoming more realistic in the states where SPARC works. Governments are improving their ability to execute their budgets. Jigawa State executed 96% of its budget in 2011 and 94% in 2012. This level of budget execution compares favourably with that of any government anywhere in the world. For example, the United States of America executed 94% of its budget in 2012.4 Similarly, budget execution in Lagos State, at 89%, is at its best level for 12 years.

In the states where SPARC works governments are improving their ability to execute their budgets

In the five states where we recently started working we are already making inroads into improving budget credibility. In most Nigerian states, budget estimates exceed the revenue that can be realistically expected. In the short time that SPARC has been active in the five additional programme states, Niger State has reduced the gap between projected spending and the funds available by about 10%. The gap in Zamfara State is similarly narrowing. The position in existing programme states has not changed much: Jigawa and Lagos prepare realistic budgets, but Kano and Kaduna continue to prepare unrealistic budgets. However, even in some states where budgets are still unreasonable, execution of the budgets has improved, for example in Kaduna State.

The states in which we work are making greater efforts to improve internally generated revenue and reduce their dependence on federal allocations. With our support, often in partnership with the Growth, Employment and Markets in the States III (GEMS3) programme, Enugu State has doubled its internally generated revenue and Kaduna State is raising an additional £1 million every month from internal sources. More realistic budgeting means there is more money to fund development initiatives. Some states, such as Kano, are learning how they can generate more internal revenue from the experiences of Lagos State. Lagos generates over 60% of its total revenue from internal sources, whereas internally generated revenue across most Nigerian states is under 10%.

3 SPARC Report on Medium Term Sector Strategy Development: Their Content Standards and their Influence on State Budgets, April 2013
4 http://www.usfederalbudget.us/federal_budget_estimate_vs_actual
Enugu State has doubled its internally generated revenue

MORE COMPETENT, CAPABLE AND FIT-FOR-PURPOSE WORKFORCE
SPARC continued to improve the capacity and competence of the states' public services. Mandates are becoming clearer. States are becoming better at planning how to manage, develop and deploy their personnel to achieve their development objectives. In addition to helping clarify mandates in the five states that SPARC first engaged with, the states in the expanded programme are taking real steps to streamline government operations and avoid duplication. Despite extraordinary security challenges, Yobe State has now clarified the mandates of all its ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs). SPARC initially supported eight Yobe State MDAs through this process. The government then demonstrated its commitment to reform by drawing on its own resources to clarify the mandates of 16 further MDAs using the method introduced by SPARC. The ability to continue to undertake governance reforms in a conflict (rather than post-conflict) situation, as SPARC is doing in Yobe State, is a development phenomenon worthy of deeper study, and this is planned for next year.

States in the expanded programme are taking real steps to streamline government operations and avoid duplication

With SPARC’s support, the Katsina State Government has rid itself of 'ghost' workers, saving the State £1.4 million a year. Similarly, the Zamfara State Government undertook a staff verification exercise that resulted in the removal of 3,000 names from its payroll.

MORE TRANSPARENT GOVERNMENT BUSINESS
SPARC is working hard to encourage transparency and accountability to the public in all the states where we operate. In 2013, Zamfara State published its budget on the internet for the first time. The brand new website was financed entirely by the Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning. With our support Kano State has published the Kano State Development Plan and State Budget, and made them available to the public.

In Katsina State, SPARC and the State Accountability and Voice Initiative (SAVI), working within government and through the State House of Assembly, have encouraged the Auditor General to release the audited accounts for 2009, 2010 and 2011. This brings Katsina State accounts up to date for the first time in five years. In Yobe State, the Office of the Auditor General has financed and set up a brand new website, and published all previous audit reports.

Anambra, Lagos and Kaduna continue to deliver and publish timely final and audited accounts – generally producing final accounts within six months of the year end, and audits within a further three months.

Anambra, Lagos and Kaduna continue to deliver and publish timely final and audited accounts
SPARC also continues to work closely with SAVI, providing technical support to SAVI partners in areas such as budget analysis and budget oversight. This further encourages transparency and accountability by raising demand from state houses of assembly and civil society for better performance by the executive.

Similarly, our support for the Nigeria Governors’ Forum (NGF) State Peer Review Mechanism (SPRM) contributes to encouraging states to be more accountable to the electorate. Anambra State completed its peer review and reviews are in their final stages in Niger and Jigawa. Some states where SPARC is not active, such as Rivers, Delta and Ekiti, have also embraced the SPRM and many other states are keen to do so.

Support for the Nigeria Governors’ Forum State Peer Review Mechanism contributes to encouraging states to be more accountable to the electorate

ENHANCED DEVELOPMENT KNOWLEDGE AND SHARED LESSONS
SPARC is ramping up efforts to ensure that the lessons we are learning benefit practitioners beyond the states where we work. We have organised regional governance share fairs in the South East and South West Zones, and partnered with the World Bank and the NGF on a national public financial management event. These events are opportunities for all 36 states to share experiences about what works in their states and to learn from others.

Regional governance share fairs are opportunities for states to share experiences about what works in their states and to learn from others

We also share experiences in the wider development community. For example, at the 2013 UK Evaluation Society Conference, SPARC presented a paper setting out how the programme uses internal evaluations to inform decision-making and shape programme delivery. The paper won the meeting’s Best Paper Award. SPARC also spoke (by video conference) on how to achieve governance improvements in dysfunctional environments at the General Assembly of the Learning Network for Capacity Development in Brussels, in June.

In March 2013, we launched the first edition of the SPARC Resource Centre. The Resource Centre is a collection of new tools, new ideas and new approaches on improving governance and government processes. It has been well received by DFID, the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, the DFID-funded Governance and Social Development Resource Centre at the University of Birmingham, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations. Copies have been widely circulated to our state government partners and other states, for example Ebonyi, Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo, have requested copies.

The SPARC Resource Centre – a collection of new tools, new ideas and new approaches on improving governance and government processes – has been received well

In June 2013, we also launched our Human Resources Management Resource Suite, which provides guidance and resources on human resources management and development. The Resource Suite was launched by the Heads of Service of the ten states in which SPARC works.

**Human Resources Management Resource Suite launched**

During the year, SPARC also launched its Facebook newsletter and by the end of the year over 3,000 people had signed up to it. Articles have reached up to 400,000 users.

**3,000 signed up for new SPARC Facebook newsletter**

**PROGRESS**

We have made significant progress towards SPARC’s overall objective. In most states, 90% or more of scheduled programme activities were implemented in 2012–2013 (Figure 2). Only in Jigawa State were there some difficulties, chiefly in public financial management, where specific international expertise was needed which we could not deliver. This disappointed expectations, which were higher than in any other state except Lagos. Going forward, we will resolve this problem by improving management coordination and introducing public financial management communities of practice (CoPs).

The programme is on track. Progress is shown in Figure 3.

The annual review team confirmed the excellent level of progress by giving the programme an overall rating of A+. Work on policy and strategy was particularly strong, with a number of states bringing their medium-term plans to fruition, and setting up stronger frameworks for monitoring and evaluation. In general, budget processes and frameworks are getting stronger. The performance of the federal programme is particularly robust. Public service management reforms are taking somewhat longer, largely because by nature they are longer term and follow a stricter sequence in corporate planning.

Two areas require stronger management coordination – public financial management in Jigawa State as explained above, and the reform programme in Zamfara State in general, particularly in the area of public service management. In Zamfara, the programme started slowly, but has recently picked up speed. A number of stages in reform are nearly complete, which should result in far better ratings in the next assessment.

**3,000 signed up for new SPARC Facebook newsletter**

**In most states, 90% or more of scheduled programme activities were implemented in 2012–2013**

**Figure 2: Work plan delivery by state**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Delivery Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anambra</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katsina</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaduna</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enugu</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagos</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kano</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zamfara</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yobe</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jigawa</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Figure 3: Progress by state

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
<th>OUTPUT 1</th>
<th>OUTPUT 2</th>
<th>OUTPUT 3</th>
<th>OUTPUT 4</th>
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<tr>
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<td>G</td>
<td></td>
<td>A/G</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jigawa</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>R/A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaduna</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A/G</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kano</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td>A/G</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katsina</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A/G</td>
<td>A/G</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagos</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>A/G</td>
<td>A/G</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yobe</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A/G</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>R/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zamfara</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **G**: Fully achieved
- **A**: Partially achieved
- **R**: Not achieved

**Note:**
Outcome: The efficiency and effectiveness of selected state level governments’ use of public resources is enhanced.
Output 1: Policy and strategy development, monitoring and evaluation improved.
Output 2: State public financial management improved.
Output 3: State civil service performance improved.
Output 4: Federal support to state governance improved.
Value for money highlights

- SPARC has generated significant returns on investment and is increasingly cost-effective
- More realistic state budgets
- Changes have resulted in states making significant savings and generating more revenue
- SPARC support is helping give other development partners the confidence to invest in state governments
- SPARC has contributed to encouraging states to spend more on education and health
- Across the programme, the proportion of consultancy days provided by national consultants rose from 43% to 57% in the period 2010/11–2012/13
- SPARC is successfully encouraging state governments to take financial responsibility for governance reform initiatives
Value for money

The assessment of the extent to which SPARC is delivering value for money (VFM) is based on a detailed analysis conducted for the 2012 and 2013 VFM Working Papers.

**SPARC has generated significant returns on investment and is increasingly cost-effective**

**EFFECTIVENESS**

SPARC has generated significant returns on the investment it represents and is increasingly cost-effective (Figure 4: 1). SPARC has contributed to a key outcome, state government budgets which better reflect actual revenues. Realistic budgets are important because they mean states can deliver more effective and more predictable services. Since the start of the programme, SPARC has provided technical solutions that have contributed to the elimination of budget allocations of over £328,000,000 which states, in reality, would not have funded.

**More realistic state budgets**

SPARC support has contributed to changes which have resulted in states making significant savings and generating more revenue. For example, SPARC helped Kano and Jigawa States recover funds from dormant bank accounts, supported initiatives that improved revenues in Enugu and Kaduna, and helped remove ‘ghost’ workers from payrolls in Katsina and Zamfara. Through these initiatives, it is estimated that an additional £147,000,000 has been freed up for delivering basic services (Figure 4: 2) since the programme began.

**Changes have resulted in states making significant savings and generating more revenue**

SPARC support is helping give other development partners the confidence to invest in state governments.

Working in support of sister programmes, the Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN) and the Partnership for Transforming Health Systems II (PATHS2), SPARC has contributed to encouraging states to spend more on education and health. This has been done by helping to improve sector strategies, the predictability of sector budget releases and the way in which public services are managed (Figure 4: 4). This support, together with savings and higher revenues, has contributed to state governments spending an additional £366,000,000 on education and health (Figure 4: 5). This, in turn, has helped enrol an additional 1,500,000 children\(^5\) in primary and junior secondary schools (Figure 4: 6).

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\(^5\) ESSPIN Quarterly Progress Report, March 2013
Figure 4: Value for money

1. Since the programme began, for every £1 SPARC has spent in the original five states, the state governments with whom it works have made their budgets £10 more realistic, when compared to their average performance over 2007–2009.

2. Since it began, for every £1 spent, SPARC has helped state governments redirect £4 to the delivery of basic services through initiatives like increasing revenue collection, reducing the payroll and closing down dormant bank accounts.

3. In Lagos, for every £1 spent, SPARC has helped government access £42 in additional financing through helping to ensure conditions for release of two World Bank loan tranches are met.

4. Over 2009–2013, SPARC has spent an estimated £4,800,000 to improve the way in which basic services are delivered through developing more effective strategies and helping government organise better.

5. Since the start of the programme in 2008, for every £1 SPARC has spent, the state governments with whom it works have spent an additional £11 on health and education.

6. Over 2009–2011, for every £5 SPARC spent, one additional child was enrolled in a primary or junior secondary school in the five original SPARC supported states.
EFFICIENCY
SPARC continues to implement its policy of assigning full-time technical staff a greater role in supporting capacity development at the state level rather than engaging national consultants. This saved around £1,800,000 in 2010/11–2012/13 (Figure 5: 1). A further estimated £1,600,000 was saved by keeping administrative spending to around £1,000,000 despite expanding into five more states and scaling up the programme in Lagos, Jigawa and at federal level.

The budget execution of 70% reflects the debilitating effect of the precarious security situation in the country. This curtailed the ability of the programme to deliver its planned outputs in 2011/12. The measures put in place to allow SPARC to operate more effectively in this environment have been successful, and budget execution was 92% in 2012/13 (Figure 5: 1).

**SPARC budget execution was 92% in 2012/13**

The strategy of using Nigerian consultants (and international-calibre consultants based in Nigeria) in preference to flying in expatriate consultants continues, even as the programme expands to five more states. Across the entire programme, the proportion of consultancy days provided by national consultants rose from 43% to 57% in the period 2010/11–2012/13 (see Figure 5: 2), saving £300,000.

**Across the programme, the proportion of consultancy days provided by national consultants rose from 43% to 57% in the period 2010/11–2012/13**

SPARC is successfully encouraging state governments to take financial responsibility for governance reform initiatives which we currently support. These include funding the roll out of MTSSs in Lagos State, the annual review of the Change Programme in Kaduna State, the Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaire survey in Jigawa State and starting up SPRM in four pilot states. This adds up to a total of £1,000,000 provided by state governments – an amount that SPARC would otherwise normally provide.

**SPARC is successfully encouraging state governments to take financial responsibility for governance reform initiatives**

ECONOMY
SPARC’s main cost is consultancy fees. In the early stages of the programme, SPARC did not deploy large numbers of consultants, despite DFID’s concerns that the programme was too lean at inception. Instead, SPARC gradually scaled up technical assistance based on identified needs and the likelihood of success. As indicated previously, SPARC increasingly uses Nigerian consultants. As a result, the average fee has fallen by 16% over the period 2009/10–2012/13, saving around £1,000,000 (Figure 5: 3).

In implementing programme activities, SPARC ensures that it seeks the best value possible. This does not mean that we always opt for the cheapest products or services, but that we balance the initial cost against longer-term efficiency and effectiveness. We have negotiated discounts with hotels and training venues, sought no-cost alternatives to office locations and training venues (e.g. state government secretariats), and expanded the roles of existing staff rather than appoint new ones. It is estimated that through these and other economy measures we have saved £500,000 to date.
1. SPARC has made £3,400,000 in efficiency cost savings through increasing the technical roles of full-time staff and constraining administration spending increases – despite expanding into five additional states and scaling up in others.

2. For every £30 spent, SPARC has made efficiency gains worth £1 through increasing the proportion of inputs delivered by national consultants and crowding in over £1,000,000 in direct government funding of programme initiatives.

3. Since the beginning of the programme, SPARC has gradually improved delivery of work plan milestones to 90%, whilst at the same time reducing the average consultancy fee rate by 16% – saving £1,000,000.