

Abstract

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) was established under the Constituencies Development Fund Act 2003. Its purpose is to take development projects to the citizens at grass roots level within the shortest time possible, in order to alleviate poverty. However, the utilization and management of the fund remains a major concern. The study examines the extent to which the Fund programs are consistent with national development goals, the administration of the Fund on the basis of its guiding regulations, the extent to which the Fund project cycle is participatory and the adequacy of its legal framework. Both primary and secondary data from five sampled constituencies show that: most of projects financed by the Fund are consistent with the national development priorities; institutions for decision-making are weak; mechanisms for transparency and accountability are absent; there are design problems, particularly with regard to insufficient technical staff with essential skills to assist communities in preparing and implementing projects; there is lack of adequate community participation in project selection, execution, selection of committees, and monitoring and evaluation (M & E); and there exists very low awareness levels. There are legal challenges, political interference and confusion as to CDF and Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) should be merged and controlled by the Members of Parliament (MPs) or the councillors. The recommendations made include: the necessity of formulating strategic plans for all the constituencies; amendment of the Fund Act; consolidation of the various constituency based funds; deployment of development co-coordinators at the constituency level; development of grass roots focused procurement systems; enhancement of civic education for awareness; promotion of M & E; standardization of designs and technical parameters; and creation of a citizens report card.