The Independent Monitoring and Evaluation Project for the DFID Nigeria State Level Programmes (IMEP)

Final Evaluation of the DFID Nigeria State Level Programmes:
Final Evaluation Report

Volume 1:
Executive Summary and Main Report

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Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

Overview

Since 2008, DFID has spent over £400 million on four State Level Programmes (SLPs) in Nigeria. The objective of the SLPs was to contribute to Nigeria's progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The SLPs were designed as a comprehensive "suite" of programmes to improve public finance and management (SPARC), build capacity for voice and accountability (SAVI) and strengthen the management and delivery of basic services in education (ESSPIN) and primary healthcare (PATHS2). All four SLPs were implemented in five Nigerian states (Enugu, Jigawa, Kano, Kaduna and Lagos). In addition SPARC and SAVI expanded into a further five states from 2012 (Anambra, Jigawa, Katsina, Niger and Yobe), and ESSPIN was also implemented in Kwara throughout.

The original concept of the SLP suite included a fifth set of projects working on growth and employment (the GEMS programme). However, GEMS was not implemented in a coordinated way with the other SLPs and had significant differences in approach. It was therefore not a focus of this evaluation.

The objectives of the evaluation were:

1. To assess the results achieved and the impact of the SLPs;

2. To assess the validity of the underlying intervention logic and lessons for future DFID engagement at state level in Nigeria;

3. To identify lessons for DFID and other stakeholders (including Nigerian states and federal government).

The evaluation is the culmination of the Independent Monitoring and Evaluation Project (IMEP) which has monitored and evaluated the SLPs since 2011.

Evaluation approach

The SLP evaluation addresses critical questions for DFID and Nigeria about the performance of a diverse suite of programmes operating in a complex range of contexts. This poses a significant challenge to evaluability. The SLP evaluation also faced other evaluability contrainsts including the poor coverage and quality of many Nigerian data sources (for instance on maternal and child health and education), the lack of a consistent framework for defining results across the SLPs, and the lack of an adequate counterfactual against which to assess state level results achievement.

The SLP evaluation took an innovative approach to building the evidence base and collecting the data required for final evaluation of the SLP suite. This has allowed the evaluation to provide answers to the evaluation

questions where traditional evaluation approaches would not have been possible.

IMEP was designed to provide independent and in-depth review of all the SLPs. These annual, mid-term and completion reviews form an important part of the evidence base for this evaluation. The final reviews of the SLPs were specifically enhanced to ensure that additional evidence required to address the evaluation questions was collected.

In addition to evidence from the enhanced reviews the evaluation drew on a range of other sources including: specifically designed evaluation studies, studies and research undertaken by IMEP, third party data and studies carried out by the SLPs themselves. The quality of all the evidence collected from these sources, including potential biases, was carefully assessed and findings from different sources triangulated.

The Final Evaluation synthesis is structured around the intervention logic and theory of change for the SLPs, both individually and collectively as a "suite". The intervention logic was traced from outputs produced, mainly in the form of capacity and systems development, through to outcomes and impact, primarily in the form of maternal and child health status, basic education access and learning outcomes. Key assumptions of the intervention logic were identified and tested as far as possible. The results (mainly at outcome level) for each SLP were compared across the five states and the development performance of the SLP states compared to that of others in Nigeria.

Whilst there are challenges with attributing results the evaluation provides important findings that help to understand both the validity of the suite approach and the collective results achieved. The evaluation finds that the evidence was sufficient to support firm conclusions about the achievements and limitations of the SLPs and to identify factors that may explain observed performance, though not to measure the relative significance of these factors. The findings of this evaluation can reliably contribute to accountability for DFID's investment in the SLPs and inform DFID's future approach to programming in Nigeria.

Conclusions

The evaluation found that the SLPs had contributed across the five states to improvements in capacity and systems and provided demonstrations of successful approaches to improving service delivery. However, there was limited evidence that improved sector management processes and successful delivery of capacity development has translated into improved system performance or development results. The type of improvements delivered by the SLPs may be necessary, but were not sufficient, to lead to improved system performance and service delivery.

The main programme successes found by the evaluation were:

- The SLPs have been well aligned with Nigeria's development needs, as well as with the broader context of consolidation of democratic governance.

- The SLPs have been flexible and adaptive in tailoring initiatives and engagement approaches to different contexts.

- The SLPs have contributed to increases in public expenditure on education and health in the states in which they have worked.

- There have been some examples of effective synergy between the SLPs, and SPARC and SAVI in particular have worked closely together.

- Individually:

  o SPARC has strengthened core State Government business processes.

  o ESSPIN and PATHS2 made important contributions to building the capacity of State Governments for improved education and health sector and service delivery management.

  o SAVI has strengthened the capacity of partnered civil society organisations, media and State Houses of Assembly.

  o ESSPIN and PATHS2 have strengthened School Based Management Committees and Facility Health Committees to function as agents for voice and accountability.

  o ESSPIN and PATHS2 have successfully demonstrated and supported the implementation of affordable and replicable approaches to improving the delivery of education and health services.

  o The SLPs have generated an impressive body of well-documented lessons and experience.

However, the Final Evaluation also found that there have been significant limitations to the achievements:

- There is little evidence that improved sector management and service delivery has yet led to state-level improvements in learning outcomes or other measures of education system performance, or to reductions in infant or maternal mortality.

- There is a clear pattern of high levels of achievement in the production of planned outputs, but of more limited achievements at the impact and outcome level, and more generally for the translation of improved capacity into either improved system performance.

- There is little evidence that there has been any large or systematic improvement in the accountability environment in the SLP states.

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- The overall results achieved have varied significantly by state and across programmes, with Jigawa and Lagos generally the strongest performers, and Kaduna the weakest.

- There are threats to sustainability – particularly where continued state spending is required to implement and consolidate improvements to management.

There are several potential explanations for the pattern of performance of the SLPs, though the evidence is generally not sufficient to allow the relative importance of each factor to be estimated with confidence:

- There has been a lack of sustained federal leadership of public management or sectoral reforms reform during the period up to 2015.

- The severe fiscal problems faced by Nigeria from late 2014 onwards have threatened the sustainability of initiatives and capacity that had been developed in the health and education sectors, as State Governments were unwilling or unable to provide adequate fiscal support.

- The political context in the SLP states has not provided consistent support across time and states for reforms to improve governance and service delivery.

- The significance of Human Resource Management (HRM) issues was underestimated in the original design of the health and education interventions.

- There have been continuing important institutional constraints on State Government service delivery, which have not been addressed.

- The critical role of local government in effective service provision has only been addressed to a limited extent by the SLPs.

Whilst the SLPs have been managed in an increasingly responsive and efficient way over time, features of SLP design and management have probably reduced impact compared to what might have been achieved:

- The design and contracting process militated against effective coordination.

- DFID has not had any effective process for managing its portfolio at state level.

- Political economy analysis has not been fully utilised to guide decision-making.

- The timeframe for achievement of the higher level (particularly impact) objectives of the SLPs may have been unrealistic.

Lessons for DFID

The following lessons for DFID's strategy and portfolio of activities in Nigeria can be drawn from the Final Evaluation:

- Alignment on the Sustainable Development Goals (as on the Millenium Development Goals) remains a desirable objective but these need to be translated into specific national and state commitments.

- A long-term perspective for donor engagement is required.

- Flexible modes of engagement that allow resources to be switched between states to be used to support states where there is evidence of reform commitment are likely to have a greater impact than approaches that limit engagement to a small number of states.

- Improved service delivery requires strengthening centre of government functions and accountability, and improved sector policies and management.

- Institutional constraints need to be recognised and addressed.

- Advocacy work focusing just on upstream policy and planning delivered limited results without corresponding attention also being paid to downstream implementation issues.

- Strong federal leadership of reform initiatives can be an important contributor (and may be a precondition) for successful engagement at state level.

- DFID has had a persistent problem of 'silo management' that has militated against effective cross-sectoral approaches.

- A more consistent approach across programmes to the conceptualisation of theories of change and to results definition and measurement would make it easier to assess DFID's contribution to development achievements.

Further lessons can be drawn for DFID's engagement at state level:

- Political leadership and reform commitment at state level is critical for determining the scope for successful support.

- The experience of the SLPs has shown that it is possible for DFID to engage effectively at state level to build capacity for planning and management and to achieve reform to improve service delivery and access.

- Analytical work can help to understand the constraints on effective service delivery and achieving improved development performance, as well as to help build consensus and commitment.

- DFID may have some scope to influence the degree of political commitment to reforms at state level, but this influence is likely to be limited.

- The electoral cycle (at both federal and state level) plays a critical role in determining the reform environment.

The SLPs have shown that effective engagement on sectoral policy and service provision requires taking the following into account:

- HRM issues are of central importance in explaining constraints on improved performance in health and education service delivery.

- Engagement with local government is essential.

- The significance of key institutional and organisational constraints needs to be recognised and addressed.

- More information is needed about the quality, effectiveness and delivery of public expenditure.

- A systems reform perspective for health and education to inform DFID's overall approach needs to take account of the role of the private sector.

- Paying more attention to the articulation and systematic testing of critical assumptions in the intervention logic of DFID programmes may improve their effectiveness.

Lessons for Nigerian stakeholders

The following lessons for Nigerian policy makers (at state and federal level) and other stakeholders can be drawn from the evaluation:

- Lack of strong federal leadership of a reform agenda can limit progress at state level.

- It is important to recognise and address critical institutional constraints.

- There is inadequate data available to make robust comparisons of state development performance.

- There is a significant step from improving the efficiency and effectiveness of use of public resources, and from the better management of services, to concrete improvements in development outcomes and citizens' lives.

- The political challenge of improving services is significant.

- State Governments can make progress in improving governance and service delivery when they set out and drive through a reform agenda.

- Effective use of aid depends on leadership and on providing a consistent reform direction which is backed by the predictable provision of resources.

- Advocacy that focuses only on policy and planning (and not on service delivery as well) may deliver limited results.

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Recommendations to DFID

The evaluation makes the following recommendations to DFID:

1. DFID should strengthen the management of its engagement at state level by:

   a. developing strategic frameworks for the main states in which DFID programmes operate, including results frameworks aligned so far as possible with state priorities, and theories of change at state level;

   b. investing in understanding the political context and state-specific obstacles to effective service delivery and development progress; and

   c. ensuring that its level of spending and type of engagement in states reflects the prospects for programmes succeeding.

2. DFID should engage in continuing dialogue and cooperation with Federal and State Governments to understand and build consensus on how to address institutional and organisational constraints to improved service delivery.

3. DFID should continue to emphasise the importance of linkages between governance, accountability and service delivery for achieving development progress in Nigeria in its programmes, while paying increased attention to HRM and to the role and capacity of local government.

4. DFID needs to ensure that critical design assumptions for its programmes are identified as early as possible, and that their validity is systematically tested throughout programme implementation, and that so far as possible a common conceptual framework across programmes is used for doing this.

5. DFID should ensure that voice and accountability interventions are designed with a greater emphasis on how they may achieve broader impact, and with more emphasis on objective measures of the performance of accountability programmes, rather than exclusively relying on expert assessment.

6. DFID should conduct a separate evaluation of the GEMS Suite at or near the end of programme implementation.

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Table of abbreviations

ANC	Antenatal care
AOP	Annual Operation Plan
APC	All Progressives Congress
AR	Annual Review
BCIA	Big Common Impact Area
BEMST	Bureau of Establishments, Management Services and Training
BEOC	Basic Essential Obstetric Care
BMO	Business membership organisation
CDF	Comprehensive Development Framework
CEOC	Comprehensive Essential Obstetric Care
CMS	Central Medical Stores
CoFO	Certificate of Occupancy
CPS	Citizen's Perception Survey
CS	Composite Survey
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CUBE	Capacity for Universal Basic Education
DCED	Donor Committee for Enterprise Development
DEEPEN	Developing Effective Private Education Nigeria
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DHIS	District Health Information System
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DMCSA	Drugs, Medical Consumables and Supplies Agency
DRF	Drug Revolving Fund
ECA	Excess Crude Account
EDOREN	Education Data, Research and Evaluation in Nigeria initiative
EEG	Export Expansion Grant
EMIS	Education management information system
EmOC	Emergency Obstetric Care
ENVMTIP	Enugu Vision Medium-Term Implementation Plan
EQ	Evaluation Question
ESSPIN	Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria
FEPAR	Federal Public Administration Reform Programme
FHC	Facility Health Committee

FMCH	Free Maternal and Child Healthcare
FMOH	Federal Ministry of Health
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEMS	Growth, Employment and Markets in States
GES	Growth Enhancement Support
GHSC	Gunduma Health System Council
HMIS	Health Management Information System
HRH	Human resources for health
HRM	Human resources management
IGR	Internally generated revenue
IMEP	Independent Monitoring and Evaluation Project
IMR	Infant mortality rate
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
IQTE	Islamiyya, Qur'anic, Tsangaya education
JIMSO	Jigawa Medicare Supply Organisation
LGA	Local Government Area
LGEA	Local Government Education Authority
M4P	Making Markets Work for the Poor
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDA	Ministry, Department, Agency
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MMR	Maternal mortality rate
MNCH	Maternal, neonatal and child health
MNCH2	Maternal Newborn and Child Health Programme Phase 2
NGN	Nigerian Naira
NPHCDA	National Primary Health Care Development Agency
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MTSS	Medium-Term Sector Strategy
NDHS	Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
ORT	Oral rehydration therapy
PATHS2	Partnership for Transforming Health Systems (Phase 2)
PCR	Project Completion Report
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PEA	Political economy analysis
PEFA	Public expenditure and financial accountability

PPD	Public–private dialogue
PPEMs	Public–private engagement mechanisms
PERL	Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn
PFM	Public finance management
PHC	Primary health care
PHCUOR	Primary Health Care Under One Roof
PPMCH	Partnership for the Promotion of Maternal and Child Health
SAVI	State Accountability and Voice Initiative
SBA	Skilled birth attendance
SBMC	School-Based Management Committee
SDP	State Development Plan
SDRF	Sustainable Drug Revolving Fund
SDSS	Sustainable Drug Supply System
SDSSMC	Sustainable Drug Supply System Management Committee
SEAT	Self-Assessment Evaluation
SHC	Secondary health care
SHOA	State House of Assembly
SIP	School Improvement Programme
SLGP	State and Local Government Programme
SLP	State Level Programme
SMO	Social Mobilisation Officer
SMoE	State Ministry of Education
SMoH	State Ministry of Health
SOP	Standard operating procedure
SPARC	State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability
SPHCDA	State Primary Health Care Development Agency
SPHCMB	State Primary Health Care Management Board
SSO	School Support Officer
SUBEB	State Universal Basic Education Board
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UBEC	Universal Basic Education Commission
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WHC	Ward Health Committee

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

This report presents the Final Evaluation of DFID's State Level Programmes (SLPs) in Nigeria, which was carried out by the Independent Monitoring and Evaluation Project (IMEP). The objective of the SLPs has been to contribute to Nigeria's progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in particular through enabling more effective and efficient use of Nigeria's own resources. The SLPs were originally conceived as an integrated "suite" of interventions comprising five programmes:

- State Partnership for Accountability, Responsiveness and Capability Programme (SPARC), which focuses on public management and finance;

- State Accountability and Voice Initiative (SAVI), which focuses on the development of civil society and state houses of assembly;

- Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN), which focuses on primary education and school improvement;

- Partnership for Transforming Health Systems (PATHS2), which focuses on maternal, newborn and child health; and

- Growth and Employment in States (GEMS), dealing with the business enabling environment and private sector development.

The SLPs were designed to work primarily at state level, though ESSPIN and PATHS2 had significant federal-level components.[1] They were initially intended to work in five states (Enugu, Jigawa, Kano, Kaduna and Lagos). Implementation of the SLPs began in 2008, building on earlier DFID initiatives in some of the same states. Implementation of the SLPs (except for GEMS) will largely be completed by the end of 2016, with a combined spending of over £400 million for SPARC, SAVI, ESSPIN and PATHS2 (see Table 2).

The Final Evaluation builds on and uses a wide range of analytical work undertaken by IMEP since 2011. This has included:

- Annual Reviews (ARs) that IMEP has undertaken on the SLPs since 2011, culminating in Project Completion Reviews (PCRs) carried out during 2015 and 2016, explicitly enhanced to provide evidence for the Final Evaluation;

- Mid-Term Reviews (MTRs) of each of the SLPs and of the SLP Suite;

- reviews of data quality (both SLP and third party);

- research to inform the implementation of the SLPs; and

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[1] SPARC had some Federal level components but the main DFID engagement at federal level on public finance and management reform was through the Federal Public Administration Reform Programme (FEPAR).

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- household surveys of citizens' perceptions.

Additional analytical work, including primary data collection and secondary data analysis, was carried out specifically for the Final Evaluation. The additional work included a review of coordination and management issues, an empirical analysis of comparative state development performance, a summary of political economy studies, and capacity development studies for ESSPIN and PATHS2. The evaluation has also drawn on analytical work undertaken by the SLPs.

Full details of all of the sources of evidence used in the evaluation can be found in Section 4 below with additional details in Annex A.

1.2 Purpose and objectives of the Final Evaluation

The Final Evaluation of the SLPs is intended to contribute to providing accountability for UK taxpayers and the Federal Government of Nigeria for the more than £500 million that has been spent on the SLPs by DFID, since 2008, as well as for a wider stakeholder group – including partner State Governments and the ultimate beneficiaries. This has required documentation and analysis of the results that have been achieved by the SLPs, including identifying whatever empirically and conceptually valid conclusions may be drawn about the attribution of results.

In addition, the Final Evaluation identifies lessons that emerge from the SLPs for a range of stakeholders: for DFID, to inform future programming decisions; for the executive branch of the Federal and State Governments of Nigeria, to inform policy actions; and for other stakeholders beyond the executive (for instance in legislatures, the media and civil society). These lessons relate to supporting effective action by State Governments to address systemic challenges and to improve the delivery of basic pro-poor services.

The specific objectives of the Final Evaluation are the following:

1. To assess the results achieved and the impact of the SLPs.

2. To assess evidence regarding the validity of the underlying intervention logic of the SLP Suite and lessons for future DFID engagement at state level in Nigeria.

3. To identify broader lessons for DFID and other stakeholders (including Nigerian states and federal government) that emerge from the SLPs.

1.3 Scope of the Final Evaluation[2]

The potential scope of the Final Evaluation included all the results (impacts – direct and indirect, outcomes and outputs) and activities of the SLPs, in all the states in which any of the programmes have operated, over the whole of the period from 2008 until 2016. However, such a scope would be too broad for any plausible assessment of contribution to be made and unfeasible in relation to the resources available for carrying out additional data collection and analysis. As a result, the principal focus of the Final Evaluation has been on the results and activities of SPARC, SAVI, ESSPIN and PATHS2 in the five states in which they have all been implemented (Enugu, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano and Lagos – termed the 'SLP Suite states' for the purposes of the evaluation). The evaluation has examined the results achieved in relation to the objectives of the SLPs, but it has also sought to assess performance against DFID's broader cross-cutting objectives, particularly in relation to gender and equity.

Two further issues for the scope of the Final Evaluation are its timing in relation to the implementation of the SLPs and, related to this, the balance between its formative and summative objectives. The main Evaluation activities have taken place while the four programmes have been in their final year of implementation, although evidence has included IMEP-conducted annual reviews and analytical work ongoing since 2011. Project Completion Reviews (PCRs) for SPARC and SAVI were completed in time to be fully reflected in the Final Evaluation, while full findings from the Provisional PCR covering the northern states for PATHS2 have also been taken into account (as well as the main findings of the PCR covering the southern states completed in September 2016). However, due to programme extension ESSPIN's PCR will not be completed until early 2017. In the case of ESSPIN, the 2015 annual review was therefore enhanced to provide additional evidence for the Final Evaluation.

The timing of the evaluation means that it has generally been possible to make assessments of programme achievements over almost all the period of SLP implementation. However, it has not been possible directly to assess the extent to which results and capacity developed have been sustained beyond the end of programme implementation.[3] The timing of the evaluation did though allow lessons and preliminary findings to be drawn on for the design of the Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn (PERL), the successor programme to SPARC and SAVI, as well as for the development

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[2] It should be noted that full Terms of Reference for the Final Evaluation were not prepared. It was noted in response to the SEQAS Review of the Inception Report that clarity regarding, and expectations for, the Evaluation were dealt with in several ways, primarily through the participatory approach of shaping the Evaluation design through a collaborative approach paper for the Evaluation, which was worked on with SLP and DFID's participation, as well as through workshop events, bilateral discussions and the overall Terms of Reference for IMEP, as well as through the role of the Steering Committee in representing the wider stakeholder group in reviewing the Inception Report.
[3] The exception is for PATHS2 in the three northern states, where implementation had ended in January 2015. However, a DFID successor programme (MNCH2) was in place in these states.

of DFID's new five year business plan for Nigeria. Findings are also being drawn on for the design of DFID's planned education sector programme.

The focus on four programmes in the five states has the advantages that:

- Data on state-level health and education outcomes (but not economic development indicators) are available, so that comparisons can be made between the varying performances of states in relation to MDG-related indicators over the period of SLP implementation.

- By focusing on the states in which these four programmes operated, some test can be made of the original intervention logic of the Suite, which emphasised the need to engage simultaneously with governance and accountability (particularly in relation to centre of government functions) as well as with service delivery.

- This focus also allows an analysis of issues relating to coordination between, and management of, the SLPs and of DFID's overall approach to state-level engagement, including the use of political economy analysis (PEA).

While the principal analytic focus has been on the four programmes in the five core states, consideration has also been given to the totality of the programme experience (including in other states and at federal level) where feasible, relevant or necessary for the identification of lessons and the overall assessment of results achieved.

The GEMS Suite has not been a focus of the SLP Final Evaluation for the following reasons:

- Three of the four GEMS projects started two years later than the other SLPs, in 2010, and one started in 2012. Two of the four GEMS projects are not due for completion until 2017 (and GEMS 2 terminated early in 2013 partly as a result of IMEP review), so it would be too early to assess the overall impact of GEMS.

- IMEP carried out a Lesson Learning Review of the GEMS Suite in November 2015, and of the experience of the terminated GEMS 2 in May 2014, so there was little value to be added formatively from additional evaluation at this point.

- The GEMS projects as they were in fact implemented were not focused on the same core set of states as the other SLPs, so that it is not possible to assess the effect of a whole SLP Suite including GEMS.

- The GEMS projects used fundamentally different approaches from the other SLPs (which emphasised capacity and system development). They were based mainly on the Markets for the Poor (M4P) model, and had different objectives – focusing on income and employment generation.

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- There were, in practice, few synergies, and there was little direct collaboration, between the GEMS projects and the other SLPs, so additional analysis of the GEMS projects was not considered as likely to contribute significant evidence to answer the EQs.

An adequate evaluation of the GEMS projects would require a separate and completely different approach from the evaluation for the other SLPs, as well as additional resources. Final Evaluation activities for the GEMS projects have therefore been restricted to the preparation of a summary report (Annex C) drawing together the main findings of IMEP's PCRs and ARs for the GEMS projects, and of the GEMS lesson learning study that IMEP carried out in 2015.

1.4 Evaluation questions

The evaluation questions (EQs) that the Final Evaluation has addressed are set out in Table 1, along with the OECD DAC Evaluation Criterion associated with each EQ. Annex E summarises how the list of questions has been amended since the Inception Report.

Table 1   Evaluation Questions and Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Question	Evaluation Criterion
A. Have the SLPs (individually and collectively) been appropriately designed, implemented and managed to achieve the objectives of key stakeholders?	
A.1 Has the intervention logic behind the SLP Suite concept and the SLPs proved to be valid?	Relevance
A.2 How well aligned have the SLPs been with the objectives of (a) DFID; (b) Federal, State and Local Governments; and (c) the interests of service users and citizens?	Relevance
A.3 How effective have SLP governance and management arrangements been?	Efficiency
B. Have the SLPs achieved their objectives?	
B.1 What results have the SLPs achieved and to what extent have the objectives of the SLPs been achieved?	Effectiveness
B.2 What explains the results and the extent to which objectives have been achieved?	Effectiveness
C. What has been the impact of the SLPs?	
C.1 How far have the SLPs contributed to the achievement of the MDGs in Nigeria, and to addressing gender, poverty and equity issues?	Impact
C.2 To what extent have the SLPs contributed to more effective and efficient use of Nigeria's own resources?	Impact
C.3 What explains the impact achieved?	Impact
C.4 Have the SLPs provided value for money?	Efficiency
D. To what extent are the results achieved (in terms of improved systems and processes, as well as development outcomes) likely to be sustainable?	
D.1 To what extent are different stakeholders committed to maintaining reforms or systems improvements?	Sustainability
D.2 Are improved approaches affordable (given the fiscal context)?	Sustainability
D.3 Has the ability of citizens to demand better governance and services and to hold governments and service providers accountable improved?	Sustainability
E. What lessons can be learned for the future?	
E.1 How effective has been the process of identifying and learning lessons from the SLPs?	Efficiency
E.2 What are the lessons for different stakeholders?	

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1.5 Management and governance of the Final Evaluation

1.5.1 Design process

The IMEP contract was envisaged by DFID as providing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) support for the SLPs that was independent of both DFID and the SLPs, principally through producing in-depth independent ARs, Mid-Term Reviews (MTRs), and PCRs, but also through assessments of data quality and other sources. The design also included this Final Evaluation.[4]

In addition to the initial design of IMEP an evaluation strategy for the SLP Suite was prepared in January 2013. Further consultation and quality review took place during 2013 and 2014. The results of the results of the consultations along with further analytical work were used to prepare an updated evaluation approach paper which was discussed with a stakeholder group in Abuja in May 2015.

The full Final Evaluation Design was presented in an Inception Report finalised in August 2015.[5] The evaluation approach that it set out was based on the following principles:

- Minimising the additional burden on stakeholders beyond the PCR process;

- Making the greatest possible use of IMEP's review processes and analytical work;

- Drawing on a wide range of data sources including research and analysis undertaken by the SLPs (while acknowledging the risk of biases) while relying so far as possible on independent data collection;

- Undertaking primary data collection on a limited and selective basis (given the overall resource constraints) to fill gaps and triangulate findings from other sources.

The Inception Report set out a full set of Evaluation Questions (EQs) and the data collection and analysis process for answering them. Some amendments to the EQs were made during the process of data collection and analysis (see (see Annex E). The Evaluation Framework is set out in
Table 7 and Table 8.

1.5.2 Budget

The core budget for the Final Evaluation under IMEP was £236,625. In addition to the core cost many elements of IMEP's overall budget during the period from March 2015 to September 2016 directly contributed to the Final Evaluation. The final enhanced ARs and PCRs of the SLPs cost £605,686. IMEP also conducted and contributed to studies of capacity development in

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[4] The IMEP PCR provides an overview and assessment of IMEP's activities and performance as a whole.

[5] It should be noted that while IMEP's Terms of Reference include carrying out the Final Evaluation no separate detailed Terms of Reference for the evaluation was prepared by DFID outside of the consultative process detailed here.

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education and health (co-funded with other DFID programmes) with total budgets of approximately £175,000 and £152,000 respectively. Though not explicitly focused on the final evaluation the IMEP 2015 Citizens Perception Survey (costing £720,709) forms part of the evidence drawn on for the evaluation. Other IMEP work, including data quality assessments and research work also inform the evaluation. The total spend on IMEP over six years was £7 million.

1.5.3 Governance arrangements and stakeholder engagement

Oversight and guidance for the Final Evaluation was provided by a Steering Committee with representation from the SLPs, DFID, State and Federal Governments of Nigeria (the Permanent Secretary for Budget and Planning in Jigawa State, and the Director of M&E Department at Federal Ministry of Budget and National Planning) and an independent senior Nigerian evaluator. The objectives of the Steering Committee were to ensure the quality, objectivity and independence of the Evaluation, and to provide advice and strategic guidance, particularly in relation to the dissemination of the Evaluation findings. The Steering Committee met initially to review the Inception Report then subsequently to review and comment on drafts of the various studies undertaken for the Evaluation, to discuss preliminary findings and conclusions.

The main route by which the views, interests and perspectives of wider stakeholder groups were addressed in the Final Evaluation was through the data collection processes for the ARs and PCRs of the SLPs. Annex A provides information on the stakeholders consulted during the various data collection processes. Some of the studies specifically undertaken for the Final Evaluation also involved the collection of primary data from stakeholders.

An important feature of the AR and PCR processes conducted by IMEP (as the major evidence sources for the Final Evaluation) was that these were designed to be more explicitly independent of DFID than is usually the case with DFID's project management procedures. ARs and PCRs were led by highly experienced subject leads and were deeper and more resource-intensive exercises than would be normal DFID practice. The PCRs were based on Approach Papers that set out how they would address explicit terms of reference for each Review, as well as producing a separate summary document on evidence for the Final Evaluation.[6] The subject leads who led the AR and PCR processes have also reviewed and commented on the Final Evaluation findings.

1.6 Report structure

This report is organised as follows. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the SLPs within the broader context of DFID's strategy and engagement in

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[6] Annex A provides details of the data sources used for the PCRs and ARs, including the range of stakeholders and key informants consulted, and the analytic work that was drawn on.

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Nigeria, and presents a framework that integrates the theories of change for the SLPs. Chapter 3 describes the Nigerian federal, state and policy context within which the SLPs have been implemented. Chapter 4 presents the evaluation questions, the methodology, design, and summarises the main features of the evidence base that has been used to answer the evaluation questions. Section 5 assesses the results achieved by the SLPs, including a comparison across programmes and states. Section 5 also presents findings on sustainability and efficiency, including value for money. Section 6 seeks to explain the pattern of results achieved, including through assessing the extent to which the theories of change for the SLPs and for the SLP Suite as a whole have proved to be valid. Section 7 summarises the overall conclusions from the Evaluation. Section 8 presents lessons for DFID and other stakeholders, and recommendations for DFID.

Additional information is presented in annexes. Annex A provides details on the sources of evidence that have been used for the Evaluation. Annex B presents information on the results achieved by the SLPs in each of the five SLP Suite states. Annex C summarises the theories of change of the SLPs. Annex D summarises IMEP's analysis of the GEMS Suite. Annex E explains changes in the EQs that have taken place between the Inception Report and the Final Evaluation Report.

2 The DFID State Level Programmes and the SLP Suite

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the place of the SLPs within the wider context of DFID's Nigeria programme (and specifically of DFID's engagement at the state level), over the period since 2007. The focus and implementation of the SLPs was influenced both by UK policy changes and responses to the Nigerian context. This Chapter sets out the concept of the 'Suite' as it was originally envisaged by DFID and provides a summary of the main features of the four SLPs as they have in fact been implemented. The chapter also provides an overview of DFID's approach to managing its state-level engagement, noting that DFID developed no overall business case or theory of change for the SLP Suite and that the implementation history of the SLPs is complex and is not set out in full in any other document.

2.2 The Suite concept and the SLPs

The concept of the SLPs as a 'Suite' of programmes to be implemented together in the same states, as set out in the submission to the DFID Secretary of State in November 2007, was based on lessons derived from the predecessor programmes to the SLPs.[7] The submission[8] argued that experience from these programmes had shown that:

> 'Achieving a transformation in the capacity of State Governments to deliver effective public services and to support growth requires that our programmes are mutually reinforcing and focus explicitly on systemic change. Only some of the weaknesses which undermine the effective delivery of education or health care are sector specific. Core problems around the management of finance and people cut right across the Government system and need to be tackled simultaneously at both sectoral and central levels… Interdependence between the programmes is central to their design and is reinforced at the purpose level, with public financial management and public sector reforms supported by SPARC facilitating reforms in the sectors, and with sectoral level reforms driving and feeding into the central reform process from below.'

The original Suite concept, set out in 2007, envisaged three sectoral programmes covering education, health and economic growth, with a single governance programme of two components, one focusing on the supply and the other on demand sides of government reform. The five states initially

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[7] The State and Local Government Programme (SLGP) from 2001 to 2008; Capacity for Universal Basic Education (CUBE), Phase 1 from 2002 to 2006, Phase 2 from 2006 to 2008; Partnership for Transforming Health Systems (PATHS) from 2002 to 2008.
[8] See Suite MTR 2012, p.21.

selected for the implementation of the Suite were Cross River, Enugu, Kano, Kaduna, and Lagos.

The selection of states was mainly based on these having been identified as 'better performing' states in a 2005/6 benchmarking exercise carried out by the Nigerian Federal Government, while also taking account of their populations, poverty levels and record of working with development partners. Cross River was subsequently replaced by Jigawa, reflecting an increased desire by DFID to focus aid on poor states in northern Nigeria.

The process of implementation of the SLPs has evolved in several ways from the original Suite concept:

- First, the envisaged single governance programme was divided into two (SPARC and SAVI). The voice and accountability components of the education and health programmes, however, remained part of ESSPIN and PATHS2. SPARC and SAVI have subsequently expanded their implementation beyond the original Suite states, so that by 2012 SPARC was also operating in Anambra, Katsina, Niger, Yobe and Zamfara, and SAVI in Katsina, Yobe and Zamfara.

- Second, while ESSPIN and PATHS2 have been implemented in all five of the original SLP Suite states, ESSPIN has also been implemented from the start in one further state, Kwara. Unlike SPARC and SAVI, ESSPIN and PATHS2 have not been rolled out into additional states, although several new DFID health and education programmes have subsequently been implemented, both in the SLP states and elsewhere.

- Third, while the principal focus of the SLPs was at the state level, both ESSPIN and PATHS2 also contained federal-level components. A separate DFID programme (the Federal Public Administration Reform Programme (FEPAR)) supported federal-level public administration reform, though SPARC has also had a federal workstream designed to strengthen the Federal Government's support and incentives to states to improve performance.

- Fourth, implementation of the economic growth programme GEMS did not begin until 2010, and took a significantly different form from the original design concept. The original intention was to improve the performance of key sectors and the overall investment climate to contribute to the achievement of the poverty reduction MDGs. As implemented, GEMS was transformed into a set of sectoral programmes covering red meat and leather (GEMS1), construction and real estate (GEMS2) and the wholesale and retail sector (GEMS4). One programme (GEMS3) was concerned with improving the business environment. By 2014, GEMS3 was operating in Cross River, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kogi, Lagos and Zamfara. GEMS1 worked initially in Kano, Kaduna and Lagos, and subsequently expanded operations into Aba (in Abia State) and Onitsha (in Anambra). GEMS2 focused its work on Lagos, Kaduna

and Kano but was closed early at the end of 2013. GEMS4 operates in tn states (Kaduna, Kano, Lagos, Abia, Cross River, Enugu, Bauchi, Katsina, Jigawa and Plateau) but most activities are focused on Kaduna, Kano and Lagos.

A comparative summary of the main features of the four SLPs is provided in Table **2**.

2.3 DFID's strategy and engagement in Nigeria and in the states[9]

As noted above, the SLPs developed out of earlier DFID projects addressing governance, health and education at state level. The SLPs were developed within the context of DFID's joint Country Partnership Strategy for 2005–9 with the World Bank, which aimed to support Nigeria's priorities for development in the areas of economic growth and poverty reduction, improving governance and accountability, and improving human development.

The concentration of the core of the programme on a small number of states (with some parallel engagement at federal level) was intended to avoid spreading resources too thinly and to maximise the impact of the resources DFID provided. DFID's Minister of State for International Development noted in evidence to the House of Commons International Development Committee in 2009[10] that:

> '… it is clearly more sensible to work in those states and with those institutions that are most keen to have access to expertise and advice and who are most committed to trying to tackle poverty in their areas.'

One initiative to strengthen management and coordination across the SLPs in 2009 was the preparation of Structured Approach Papers, which were intended to guide SLP contractors in handling common themes and issues confronting the programmes – particularly for the joint development of Medium-Term Sector Strategies (MTSSs). In practice, some envisaged coordination mechanisms between the SLPs (such as the National Programme Manager Steering Committee, and the State Government SLP Steering Committees) functioned only to a limited extent or not at all. However, there were regular meetings between SLP teams in each state, chaired by SPARC.

The election of the Coalition Government in the UK in May 2010 prompted a review of DFID's Nigeria programme as part of a general bilateral aid review. The results of this review were reflected in the Operational Plan 2011–2015 for DFID Nigeria whose main features, compared to the joint Country Partnership strategy under which the SLPs were developed, were the following:

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[9] This section is mainly based on the Coordination and Management Review carried out for the Final Evaluation.
[10] International Development Committee (2009)

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- An increased emphasis on the achievement of measurable and attributable development results, as opposed to the strengthening of sector management systems and the piloting of approaches to improving school performance and learning outcomes, which underlay the original concepts of PATHS2 and ESSPIN.

- An emphasis on value for money, involving attention to measures of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity.

- An increase in the relative emphasis and planned spending on 'Economic Growth and Wealth Creation.'

- Increased spending to reflect the strategic importance accorded to Nigeria, and the commitment to spending 0.7% of UK GDP on aid, which drove a substantial increase in the UK's aid spending over the whole of the period.

- An increase in the number of DFID projects, and an expansion into additional states, including but not restricted to eight focal states (the original SLP states plus Katsina, Yobe and Zamfara) in which DFID sought to develop 'in-depth state partnerships'.

One initiative designed to provide a greater focus on results was the establishment of 'Big Common Impact Areas' (BCIAs) during 2010, which were intended to provide a common results framework across DFID projects. However, the BCIAs were prepared just after the SLPs had completed two-year work programmes, and so they largely summarised already-planned activities, rather than involving any joint reprogramming.

DFID sought to develop a stronger approach to state-level engagement from 2012 onwards. In April 2012, DFID Nigeria management highlighted the need to encourage systematic analysis at state level (for instance, through state peer reviews), and that SPARC and SAVI would play a key role in moving into new states (such as Anambra and Niger), while decisions about state engagement should be informed by an analysis of both political will and technical capacity in each state.

A review by DFID's SLP Core Group in May 2012 noted that attention should move beyond the SLPs to the management of the whole DFID portfolio in each state, while continuing to implement the principle that governance and improving service delivery needed to be addressed jointly. DFID's state-level representation (subsequently organised as a Regional Team) was emphasised, with the objective being to exploit identified synergies between programmes, rather than to require comprehensive collaboration. Several management implications for DFID were noted, including the importance of regular (though not annual) state-level review processes and results reporting that looked across DFID's engagement in each state as a whole, and the need for consultative processes to inform decision-making.

Table 2   Main features of the SLPs

	SPARC	SAVI	ESSPIN	PATHS2
Intended outcome	Efficiency and effectiveness of selected State Governments' use of public resources enhanced	State Houses of Assembly, civil society, media and citizens demonstrate more effectiveness in demanding better performance from government and holding government to account	Quality of, and access to, basic education improved equitably and sustainably	Improved financing, planning, and delivery of sustainable, replicable, pro-poor health services for common health problems, to support Nigeria in achieving the MDGs
Main outputs	(i) Policy and strategy development, M&E processes improved; (ii) state public financial management processes improved; (iii) state civil service performance processes improved; and (iv) federal support to state governance improved	(i) Civil society demonstrates a replicable and sustainable approach to issue-based advocacy and monitoring; (ii) civil society demonstrates a replicable and sustainable approach to facilitating public involvement in government budget and planning processes; (iii) more open and inclusive systems of communication and improved understanding between citizens, civil society, media, State Houses of Assembly and government; (iv) improved systems of transparency, public engagement and financial oversight in State Houses of Assembly; and (v) other development partners take a more sustainable and replicable approach to strengthening voice and accountability	(i) Strengthening federal government systems to support states' implementation of school improvement; (ii) improving the capability of state and local governments in regard to the governance and management of basic education; (iii) strengthening the capability of primary schools to provide improved learning; and (iv) improving community participation in school improvement	(i) National health sector governance and management systems improved; (ii) state and Local Government Area (LGA)/district health sector governance and management systems to support appropriate health services improved; (iii) replicable model to deliver quality maternal and child health services demonstrated in selected LGAs; (iv) ability of citizens and civil society to demand accountability and responsiveness from the health system improved; and (v) capacity of citizens to make informed choices about prevention, treatment and care strengthened
Additional states	Anambra, Katsina, Niger, Yobe and Zamfara in 2012. Federal component	Zamfara, Katsina and Yobe in 2011, Anambra and Niger in 2013	Kwara from 2008 (Enugu only from 2010). Federal component	Federal component
Spending	£62 million (compared to a final budget of £65.1 million)	£30.8 million out of a final budget of £33.7 million (to end 2015)	Anticipated to be £134.6 million	Total budget £176 million
Completion	April 2016	April 2016	January 2017	Three northern states, January 2015; two southern states September 2016

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Subsequently, State Engagement Strategies have been developed for DFID's focal states, mainly covering the period from 2013 to 2015. The Engagement Strategy documents were intended to highlight DFID's current priorities in each state, outline key contextual information about the state and key stakeholders, and to provide a basis for policy direction and consistent messaging on DFID's priorities and approach in each state. Each Strategy included an identification of actions required to address priority issues and a summary statement of the main development challenges and the main focus of DFID attention (labelled as a 'theory of change'). While the articulation of 'priority issues' provided a basis for taking a perspective that looked across the DFID portfolio in each state, there was no attempt to develop an overall state-level results framework.

Table 3 shows the states in which DFID projects have operated during the period of implementation of the SLPs, with the core SLP states highlighted (as are DFID's three other focal states). The table shows that many other DFID projects have operated in the five SLP states, including programmes with similar objectives to the SLPs (particularly in health, education and accountability). The state which has seen the largest number of DFID projects implemented is Kaduna with 22 programmes, followed by Kano with 21, and Lagos and Jigawa with 20 each. All the focal states have had more DFID projects than any of the non-focal states, but it is notable from this table that there is significant variation in the profile of DFID's engagement by state, including for the SLP Suite states.

The Evaluation did not identify a clearly articulated strategic rationale for the pattern of DFID engagement across states. An analysis of DFID's state-level spending for 2014/15 (comparable figures are not available for other years) showed that the SLPs excluding the GEMS programme accounted for 41% of DFID spending in the five SLP states (54% including GEMS) and 29% of DFID's state-level spending in Nigeria as a whole.[11] So even in the SLP Suite states the four SLPs represented less than half of DFID expenditure.

From April 2015 onwards, the structure of DFID's Regional Team was changed. Previously, state representatives in Lagos and Enugu had reported directly to the Deputy Head of Office, while other state representatives reported to DFID's office in Kano. Under the new structure, the intention is that all the state representatives operate as a single team with a common reporting structure, so as to improve lesson sharing across states and to strengthen regular coordination processes. The Coordination and Management Review noted that the continuing combination of an increase in DFID Nigeria's overall programme funding and a squeeze on administrative budgets (impacting in particular the extent to which Abuja-based advisers could spend time in the field) was leading to greater emphasis on the role of the Regional Team in managing DFID's engagement in states.

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[11] Review of Coordination and Management Issues, Table 1.

Table 3   DFID Projects by state of operation

	DEEPEN	GEP3	ESSPIN	TDP	SSI	EDOREN	ENR	FP	PATHS2	SHAWNII	W4H	WINNN	MNCH2	SUNMAP	Humanitarian	FEPAR	SPARC	SAVI	J4A	M4D	CDGP	V4C	NSRP	CONCUR	V2P	DDIN1	DDIN2	GPF	EFINA	GEMS1	GEMS3	GEMS4	MADE	NIAF	PMK	FOSTER	Solar NP	PDF	ENABLE II	IMEP	RIF	Total
Abia							X	X																						X										X		4
Adamawa							X	X															X																			3
Akwa Ibom							X	X															X										X									4
Anambra							X	X					X				X	X							X	X								X						X	X	10
Bauchi		X					X	X	X														X												X							6
Bayelsa							X	X																X									X									4
Benue							X	X	X																X																	4
Borno							X	X						X									X																			4
Cross River							X	X																						X	X	X								X		6
Delta							X	X															X			X							X									5
Ebonyi							X	X																																	X	3
Edo							X	X																									X									3
Ekiti							X	X																																	X	3
Enugu		X					X	X	X				X				X	X	X															X						X	X	11
FCT							X	X					X					X								X			X	X	X	X	X	X						X	X	13
Gombe							X	X																										X								3
Imo							X	X																										X								3
Jigawa			X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X									X	X			X		X				X	X	20
Kaduna			X				X	X	X	X		X	X				X	X	X	X					X	X			X	X	X	X		X	X	X				X	X	22
Kano			X				X	X	X		X		X	X			X	X	X	X			X						X	X	X	X		X	X	X				X	X	21
Katsina		X		X			X	X	X	X		X	X	X			X	X												X	X			X						X	X	16
Kebbi							X	X				X																						X								4
Kogi							X	X																		X														X		4
Kwara			X				X	X																																X		4
Lagos	X		X				X	X	X				X				X	X	X							X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	20
Nasarawa							X	X																X										X						X		5
Niger		X					X	X						X									X	X	X									X	X					X		10
Ogun							X	X						X																											X	4
Ondo							X	X																								X		X							X	5
Osun							X	X																																	X	3
Oyo							X	X																				X														3
Plateau							X	X																		X	X		X											X		6
Rivers							X	X																		X			X						X	X						6
Sokoto		X					X	X																										X								4
Taraba							X	X																										X								3
Yobe							X	X			X	X	X	X			X	X								X														X		10
Zamfara		X		X			X	X		X	X	X	X				X	X				X								X	X			X	X					X	X	17
Federal			X	X	X	X		X						X		X	X	X	X							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		24

Source: Review of Coordination and Management Issues, Annex B (updated with DFID input to reflect 2014-15 footprint)

Implementation of the successor programme to SPARC and SAVI (PERL) began in April 2016. The design of PERL included developing a joint results framework for the components covering public sector governance and strengthening accountability mechanisms, although implementation of each component (including a third focused on learning) is contracted separately. The principal focus of the programme is on three states in the north-west: Kaduna, Kano and Jigawa. It also envisages regional operations in the south and conflict-affected north-east (Borno and Yobe States). Some aspects of the capacity development activities supported under PATHS2 are being taken forward under the Maternal Newborn and Child Health Programme (MNCH2), which is being implemented in Jigawa, Kaduna, Katsina, Kano, Yobe and Zamfara. The process of designing a successor programme to ESSPIN for the education sector is underway.

2.4 Theory of change for the SLPs and the SLP Suite

2.4.1 Challenges in the formulation and interpretation of theories of change for the SLP Suite

The process of the development and articulation of theories of change[12] and of SLP implementation poses several challenges for a theory-based evaluation approach that seeks to test the validity of the intervention logic underlying the programmes. Specific challenges are:

- DFID did not fully articulate how the SLPs were supposed to work together and did not develop a theory of change either for the SLP Suite as a whole, or for its engagement in each state, although the Suite MTR in 2012 sought to identify key assumptions of the SLP Suite intervention logic, as set out in Box 1. A limited form of 'theory of change' for state engagement was developed as part of DFID's State Engagement Strategies for 2013–15. However, this comprised a summary statement of development challenges and the proposed focus of DFID activities in each state, rather than an attempt to elucidate the intervention logic in a testable way.

- Although the SLPs were envisaged as part of an integrated approach to state engagement with a common high-level (impact) objective, the processes of theory of change development for each programme were entirely separate. As a result, the theories of change that have been developed differ significantly from each other, both in how causal links are represented and conceptualised, and in the types of results that are defined as outcomes and impacts (in terms of how causally remote they are from the programme's activities). In addition, there are differences in how the theories of change have been used in programme implementation.

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[12] Annex C summarises the theories of change for SPARC, SAVI, ESSPIN and PATHS2.

Box 1: Elements of the intervention logic underlying the SLP Suite

Nigeria has sufficient resources of its own to make improvements towards attainment of the MDGs and DFID's resources should be used to help that happen.

Weak governance and government systems, and limited accountability, are the reasons that Government of Nigeria resources are not currently being used effectively.

It is impossible to work effectively in all the states, and DFID resources should be focused on those states that show a willingness to reform and address these problems ('better performing states') – and on those states whose governments share the same development goals and priorities as DFID.

Reforms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing – reforms in line ministries must be complemented by reforms in the operation of the centre of government and of LGAs.

Reforms face capacity constraints so technical assistance will assist governments that want to reform to improve in planning, budgeting and managing.

These reforms will enable government resources to be used more effectively towards improving basic services that will contribute to progress towards achieving the MDGs.

This must be complemented by actions to increase the effective demand from the population for improved services and more accountable government.

Given the limited capacity of State Governments and the importance of knowledge and expertise in specific areas, the assistance is contracted out to sectoral-based programmes that cover multiple states.

Gender and social inclusion are expected to be coherently addressed by the programmes.

Source: SLP Suite MTR (2012) SLP Suite MTR (IMEP, 2012)

- There have been some significant changes in the objectives and focus of the SLPs over time. This has reflected the responsive and adaptive nature of SLP implementation, but also (particularly for ESSPIN and PATHS2) a change in the emphasis of DFID's approach (the increased focus on development results and value for money) after the election of the Coalition Government in the UK in 2010.

- The theories of change of the SLPs were articulated to varying degrees of detail. Key assumptions were not generally been fully identified or have only been identified towards the end of programme implementation. SLPs have not systematically tested these key assumptions.

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2.4.2 Theories of change of the SLPs

The main features of the theories of change of the SLPs are summarised below, based on the documentation prepared by each SLP and as reviewed in the PCRs and final ARs. Fuller details are provided in Annex C.

SPARC

SPARC's theory of change is summarised in the proposition that:

> 'if State Governments apply quality technical advice it will lead to better and sustained policies and strategies for development, management of public finance and staff, and better basic services can be delivered to improve citizens' lives', noting that 'this logic depends on many assumptions holding, including the existence of political will to apply improvements and sustain them, prioritisation of expenditure towards the MDGs, and collaboration between DFID programmes.'

The theory of change was finalised in 2014, following revisions to improve the definition of the results chain, specifically through adopting an intermediate impact statement focusing on 'better delivery of basic services'. This narrowed the step between the outcome (improved efficiency and effectiveness of use of public resources) and impact (achievement of MDGs) objectives.

SAVI

SAVI's theory of change differs from those of the other SLPs in that it is not articulated around identifying how the programme is intended to achieve impact, but was intended more as a working tool to guide staff and partners.

As finalised in 2012, the SAVI Theory of Change 2012 identified six stages of partnership with demand-side (civil society organisations (CSOs), media and State Houses of Assembly) actors to strengthen their ability to hold government to account. These were: (i) identifying existing capacities and self-assessment; (ii) internal changes in organisation and values; (iii) building linkages between demand-side actors; (iv) building linkages between demand-side actors and government; (v) promoting replication by other demand-side actors; and (vi) broader scale-up.

ESSPIN

ESSPIN's detailed theory of change was only finalised during 2015. The overall approach of ESSPIN has been to seek to bring about better learning outcomes for children of basic school age by building organisational and individual capacity at all four levels (federal, state, local government and school/community). The School Improvement Programme (SIP) has been the main instrument to achieve this, supplemented by measures at each level to improve governance, and by community-level measures to improve accountability. The approach has been based on the theory that for governance reforms to be sustainable, they must be state-led (and Federal Government-led), with key decisions implemented through state structures.

PATHS2

There has been no full articulation of PATHS2's theory of change. However, the key elements of PATHS2's intervention logic may be summarised as

addressing poor public and private health systems, and barriers to access, by supporting health systems development, providing training, equipment and commodities, and strengthening communications and accountability. This was intended to lead to outputs in the form of better systems, improved capacity, improved health-seeking behaviour, and greater accountability. At the outcome level, objectives were improved funding and management of health services and improved access to quality services, leading to impact in terms of a reduced infant mortality rate (IMR) and a reduced maternal mortality rate (MMR).

2.4.3 Integrated framework for the SLP intervention logic

Figure 1 below attempts to capture the core features of the intervention logics of the four SLPs within a single framework. The main elements are the following:

- The results chain identifies impact-level results (improved health and education outcomes, improved service access), outcome-level results (improved service delivery, improved budget and sector policy and management), and output-level results (improved capacity). It is important to note that this classification does not map directly on to the way in which impacts, outcomes and outputs are defined in the results frameworks for the SLPs, which differ significantly from each other in regard to the forms that the results frameworks take and the types of results defined at each level. This is discussed further in Chapter 4.

- The key causal relationships are that improvements in State Government capacity and systems (both in the sectors and at the centre of government) lead to improved policy and management (including strengthened budget performance). This can increase both the level of public expenditure on priority services (through realising savings, and better prioritisation through the budget process) and the efficiency of public expenditure (through better policies and stronger management of services). These improvements in policy, management and expenditure lead to improved service delivery (specifically in education and health), and so to improved access to and use of health services – which should ultimately contribute to improved health outcomes.

- In addition, a strengthening of voice and accountability processes is envisaged as contributing to improved policy and public management, and improved service delivery, through empowering citizens and service users.

- SPARC has focused principally on improving centre of government capacity and systems (especially those related to planning and budgeting) through the provision of technical assistance to State Governments.

- SAVI has focused on strengthening accountability mechanisms, specifically through technical assistance and related support to State Houses of Assembly, the media, and CSOs.

- ESSPIN and PATHS2 have provided technical assistance to state-level organisations to strengthen planning, budgeting and policy-making. In addition, they have also provided significant levels of support to the Federal Government and to the local government level.[13] They have developed approaches to improving service delivery, and supported increased accountability at the community level (through School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs), and Health Facility Committees).

Figure 1 highlights the potential significance of political leadership (at federal and state level) and of the use that DFID may make of its influence. State political leadership is shown as being central to the processes by which capacity improvements are translated into improved sector policy and management, and improved budget and public management. The role of federal political leadership is linked (in the SLP theories of change) most directly through the education and health sector initiatives at federal level that ESSPIN and PATHS2, respectively, have supported. DFID's role is shown as less clearly linked to particular causal relationships, given that much of the direct engagement with State Governments in implementation was delegated to the SLPs. However, DFID Advisors, state representatives and senior management of the DFID Nigeria office have all played some role in engagement with State Governments as well.

Figure 1 emphasises state and federal political leadership, since the extent to which there is support for a clear agreed reform process will influence both the extent to which capacity and system strengthening occurs, and the extent to which this is translated into improved policies, and budget and sector management. This framework also highlights the potential significance of DFID, which may potentially influence the success of the programmes through its interactions with the SLPs (e.g. to ensure effective coordination), and with State and Federal Government.

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[13] SPARC is also providing some support at local government level. DFID's FEPAR programme has provided support to public finance and management reform at federal level.

Figure 1   Summary of SLP intervention logic
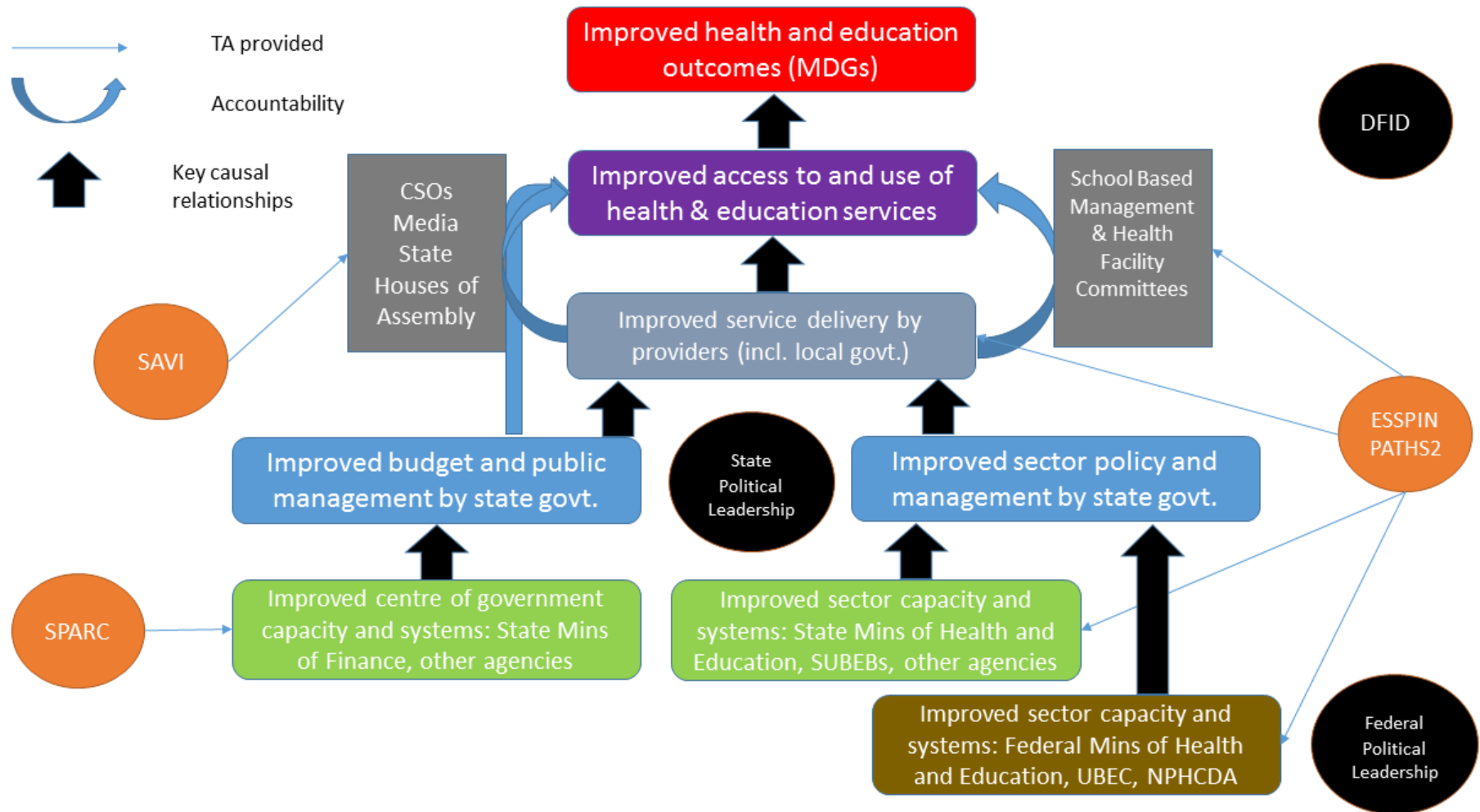
Based on this framework, the Final Evaluation has identified and sought to test key elements of the assumptions of the intervention logic of the SLP Suite, including those assumptions set out in Box 1. Specific questions related to these assumptions are set out in Section 4. Significant general assumptions for the intervention logic include the following:

1. Sufficient fiscal resources have been available to states (once effectiveness and efficiency of resources use have been improved) to enable improved policies, systems and procedures to be implemented.

2. Technical assistance has been an effective instrument for building (individual and organisational) capacity.

3. Improving budget and public management, sector policy and management, and accountability, have been necessary and jointly sufficient to improve service delivery, use and development outcomes (i.e. that other constraints – such as insecurity, infrastructure, cultural factors, inadequate human resources and dysfunctional institutional arrangements – have not been binding on achieving progress).

4. Reforms at sector and centre of State Government level have been mutually reinforcing and interdependent, and SLPs have collaborated effectively to realise synergies.

5. State Governments and other influential stakeholders (including the Federal Government) have been committed to reforms (ensuring improved systems and processes are implemented and resources committed).

6. Increasing effective demand for improved services and more accountable government from voters has reinforced political commitment to reform.

7. Where stakeholder commitment has varied between states, DFID has been able to focus resources on states that have shown a willingness to reform, and has been able to use its influence to encourage reform where the level of commitment is lower.

3   The Nigerian context

3.1   Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the federal- and state-level context over
the period during which the SLPs have been implemented. It focuses on
aspects that are of most relevance to the intervention logic of the SLPs.
Section 3.2 describes the main federal electoral events over the period and
salient features of the security, economic growth, fiscal management, and
education and health policy and institutional environment. Section 3.3
summarises evidence relating to Nigeria's performance against the MDGs,
highlighting the weakness of the evidence base as well as the failure to meet
most of the targets for child and maternal health. Section 3.4 notes the high
level of autonomy enjoyed by State Governments under the Nigerian
constitution, and draws on a summary of PEA (undertaken at various points
during SLP implementation by SPARC and SAVI) to identify the likely
significance of reform drivers in the SLP states, and how reform conditions
have changed in the states over the period, particularly as this is linked to
the gubernatorial electoral cycle.

3.2   The federal and national context

SLP implementation has taken place during a period of consolidation of
democratic governance in Nigeria following the end of military government
and the establishment of the Fourth Republic in 1999. Many of the structures
of government that have been in place during this period, and many of the
policy directions that have been followed, were set out by the Government of
President Obasanjo from 1999 to 2007 and continued under Presidents from
the People's Democratic Party (PDP) up until 2015. President Obasanjo was
succeeded in 2007 by President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, but his period of
rule was curtailed by his illness and incapacitation, which led to Vice-
President Jonathan taking over as Acting President in February 2010.
Jonathan formally assumed the Presidency following the death of his
predecessor in May 2010. He won the 2011 Presidential election but was
defeated by Muhammadu Buhari, representing the All Progressives
Congress (APC), who assumed power in May 2015 after a peaceful and
orderly handover process (itself an important step in democratic
consolidation).

During the period of SLP implementation, despite some significant initiatives
(such as the Health Strategic Plan and the eventual approval of the National
Health Act), only limited progress was made in taking forward effective
measures to improve the inclusiveness of economic growth, improve
economic management, and to strengthen education and health policy-
making and service delivery.

President Buhari campaigned with a strong focus on addressing corruption
but it is not yet clear that this has led to a strengthened policy framework for

improved growth, economic management and the achievement of improved results in the health and education sectors.

Key features of the national and federal policy context over the period of the SLP implementation are summarised below.

3.2.1 Security context

The emergence of the Boko Haram insurgency from 2009 onwards had a severe regional impact in the north-east: a state of emergency was declared in three north-eastern states in May 2013 and there has been violence, economic disruption and population displacement – including a particular threat to schools. The insurgency also involved terrorist attacks across a wider area of the country, including in north-western states in which the SLPs were being implemented, especially Kano, as well as in Abuja. This resulted in the withdrawal of DFID's international staff from Kano, and significantly affected SPARC and SAVI operations in Yobe, but the direct impact of the Boko Haram insurgency was relatively limited in the SLP states.

Table 4   Fatalities due to political violence, 2010-2015

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Enugu	2	0	11	11	8	15
Jigawa	0	0	1	9	17	2
Kaduna	20	851	269	140	538	432
Kano	6	19	339	186	359	89
Lagos	15	4	17	35	62	25

Source: CS3 Report

The worst political violence in the SLP states occurred however in Kaduna, as shown in Table 4, as a result of interethnic conflict, raids on villages by armed groups, and clashes between the civilians and military.

A study by ESSPIN (Coinco, 2014) used Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques to examine community views on causes of violence and conflict (particularly those affecting education) in Jigawa, Kano, and Kaduna. The main systemic drivers of conflict identified by communities were:

- Political competition during elections which led people to retreat to entrenched political and religious identifies which further exacerbated tensions;

- In Kaduna and Kano, the perceived failure of the justice system to investigate and prosecute people involved in past conflicts and violence, in spite of formal charges being made and evidence being available.

- Weak institutional capacity, or perceived lack of government will, to maintain peace and security.

- Poverty, unemployment and low literacy rates which were seen as facilitating the radicalisation of people by charismatic leaders around religious and political identities;

- An entrenched belief in a significant section of the population of northern Islamic communities that 'western education' is against Islam and promotes 'western values' which are contrary to northern Nigerian Islamic traditional beliefs and values.

- Conflict and violence in Kaduna in particular was seen to be in 'a chronic and latent state, which is easily triggered and may rapidly result to widespread communal conflict and violence.'

3.2.2 Economic performance[14]

Over most of the period of SLP implementation, Nigeria has enjoyed rapid growth by historical standards, with real GDP per capita increasing by 6.8% per annum over the decade from 2005 to 2014, driven mainly by growth in the non-oil sector and private consumption. While the economy has therefore become more diversified, with services now accounting for more than 50% of GDP and the oil sector 13% in 2013,[15] the oil sector has remained of critical importance for foreign exchange and fiscal revenue. Infrastructure (including the power sector) has remained a major constraint on economic growth performance, and limited formal sector employment creation has restricted the extent to which the benefits of economic growth have reached the poor. Economic growth has subsequently fallen sharply as oil prices have fallen. GDP growth was around 3.2% in 2015. In July 2016, the IMF forecast that Nigeria's GDP would contract by 1.8% in 2016,[16] and economic growth was negative in the first two quarters of 2016.

3.2.3 Fiscal management

At the federal level there were public finance reform initiatives from 2003 to 2007, during the first tenure of Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala as Federal Minister of Finance and her chairing of the Presidential Economic Team. The write-off of a substantial proportion of Nigeria's external debt in 2005/6, and relatively strong oil prices, substantially improved the fiscal position of the Federal Government up to 2009.

However, the fiscal situation weakened after large public sector wage increases were granted in 2009. These contributed to expenditure falling behind revenues in 2009 and 2010, and a current fiscal deficit re-emerged in 2013 and 2014. The subsequent collapse of oil prices during 2014 led to a decline in projected oil revenues from 5.8% to 3.4% of GDP for 2015. The rapid expansion of government expenditure since 2006 has meant that

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[14] This and the following sub-section draw on OPM/TPP (2015).
[15] Data from International Monetary Fund (IMF) quoted in OPM/TPP (2015).
[16] IMF (2016).

insufficient reserves were built up in the Excess Crude Account (ECA) to buffer the fiscal position against the oil price fall.

Figure 2 shows, first, how Nigeria's fiscal position was weakening even before the 2015 oil price collapse and, second, the trend of a decline in both consolidated revenue and consolidated public expenditure to levels which are significantly below those of other countries at similar levels of GDP per capita.[17]

Figure 2 Consolidated fiscal revenue and expenditure in Nigeria (% GDP)
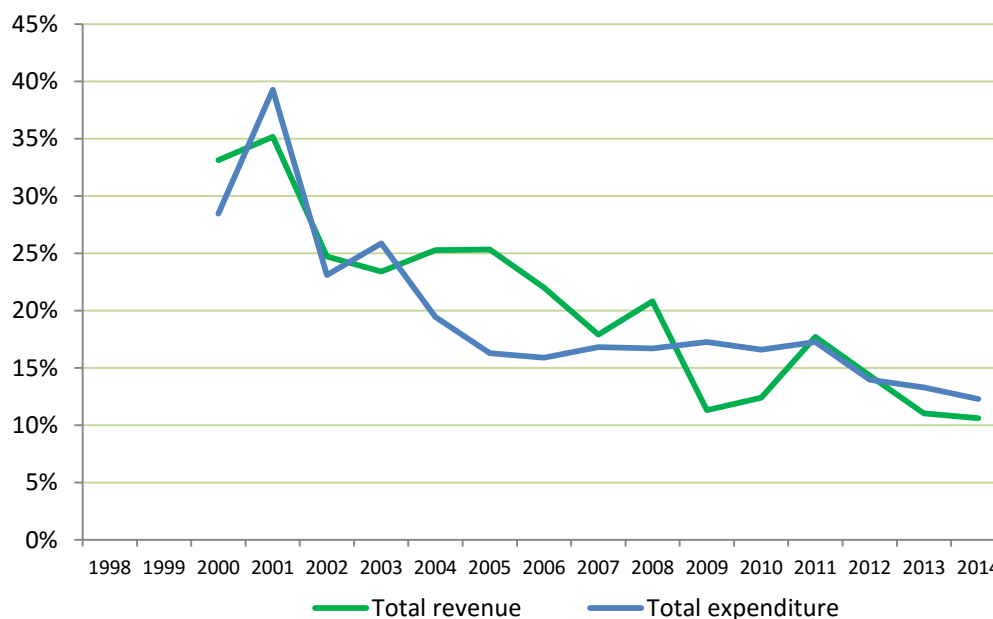
Source: OPM/TPP (2015) based on IMF data

Public finance reform initiatives also stalled after 2007. During the period up to President Jonathan's election in 2011 there were four Ministers of Finance and little progress on public finance reform. Under Minister Okonjo-Iweala's second term of office as Minister of Finance from 2011 onwards further technical improvements to federal public financial management (PFM) systems were made, but there was little progress in strengthening the overall quality of fiscal management, or in diversification of the tax base or increases in the tax effort. Federal budgets have remained unrealistic and subject to high levels of discretion in their execution. This lack of high-level budget discipline has undermined initiatives such as the MTEF and MTSSs, which aimed to provide a stronger strategic framework linking policy and public finance and greater predictability in public finance planning. Attempts to develop a strengthened framework of management for the petroleum

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[17] OPM/TPP (2015, p.12) notes that 'low income countries average consolidated public expenditure of around 20% of GDP, and middle income countries around 31%. This suggests there is substantial scope for increasing revenue effort. This is reinforced by the fact that non-oil revenues account for only around 4.5% of GDP in Nigeria, compared to 10 to 15% in other oil producers.'

industry, which would potentially have a strong positive impact on fiscal management, were also unsuccessful.

3.2.4 Education and health: Institutional and federal policy context

Basic education[18]

Under the Federal Constitution, responsibility for basic education in Nigeria is shared across the Federal Government, State Governments and local governments. The Federal Government is responsible for determining policy, setting national standards for the sector and maintaining the regulatory framework. State Governments are primarily responsible for the delivery and management of education services, in collaboration with local governments. Since 1999, the central policy initiative guiding the provision of basic education in Nigeria has been the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, which aims to provide nine years (six years of primary and three years of junior secondary) of free education for every child. This institutional and policy framework has remained in place over the whole period of SLP implementation, and there were no major education policy initiatives over this period.

The key agencies that coordinate the implementation of this national programme are the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) at federal level and its branches at state level, the State Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs). The UBEC manages the Intervention Fund, the primary source of Federal Government funding for basic education, and, together with the Federal Ministry of Education (FME), provides leadership on basic education policy. Grants from this Fund are distributed annually to all states that are able match UBEC funding (on a 50–50 basis) to the SUBEB, via the state education budget. The main source of revenue that State Governments use to match UBEC funding is the transfer from the Federation Account managed by the Federal Ministry of Finance. These funds are not earmarked for education and can be used for whatever purpose the state decides; however, they represent the main source of revenue for funding education in most states. At the state level, the relationship between SUBEBs, which handle this funding, and State Ministries of Education (SMoEs) and their agencies can be a source of tension. While over most of the period of SLP implementation, nearly all states have accessed funds equal to their whole entitlement, from 2013 onwards there have been increasing delays in this occurring as fiscal pressures have increased.

Primary health care

In contrast to the situation with regard to basic education, the period of SLP implementation has been one in which there has been active discussion of institutional and policy reform for the health sector, around the National Health Act. This is intended to provide a strengthened policy framework for the sector, including specific funding commitments (through the Basic Health Care Provision Fund). It was finally signed by the President in December 2014, having been under consideration throughout the period of SLP

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[18] This sub-section is based on Jones *et al.*, (2014).

implementation, with final signature delayed in part because of concerns about the affordability of the Basic Health Care Provision Fund.

The PATHS2 PCR (2016, p.18) concluded that the policy environment for health at both federal and state level was stronger than it had been during the period of implementation of the predecessor project (PATHS1):

'there has been a steady trend towards more coherent strategizing around health and greater common purpose between the levels of government. This included the National Health Strategic Development Plan as an overall framework and more recently the Health Act.'

Despite this, the institutional arrangements for primary health care (PHC) in general in Nigeria have remained problematic.[19] Constitutionally, responsibilities for PHC have been diffuse and overlapping, with each level of government (federal, state and LGA) having some role in relation to service provision, financing, human and other resources, and supervision in regard to PHC. In most states, most (but not all) PHC facilities have been managed through the LGA PHC Departments and the PHC Department of the Ministry of Local Government, with one consequence being that State Ministries of Health (SMoHs) lacked effective mechanisms for financing and for exercising management control over the whole state PHC system. The National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) has been promoting the concept of 'Primary Health Care Under One Roof' (PHCUOR), which is enshrined in the National Health Act. This has envisaged establishing State Primary Health Care Development Agencies (SPHCDAs), which would take over the management and financing of the whole state PHC system from local government. While a few states (such as Adamawa) have successfully implemented this model, none of the SLP states have fully implemented it (though, as discussed in Chapter 5, the Gunduma Board system in Jigawa has some of the same characteristics).

3.3   Nigeria and the MDGs

According to the Nigerian Government's assessment[20], Nigeria has not met most of the targets for child and maternal health MDGs, although there have been improvements in key indicators, and there is evidence of improvements in the period since 2004, following minimal improvements or deteriorations during the earlier period of military rule. However, major doubts about the quality of data remain, and the official figures on which these estimates are based may overstate the extent of progress.

In relation to the health MDGs, the target for reduction of under-five mortality was a reduction from 191 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 63.7 by 2015. The reported latest measure was 89 in 2014 (the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates the figure to be 113), with all this improvement taking place during the period since 2004 (by when child mortality had increased to 201

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[19] This section draws on Jones, S., T. Nwachukwu and K. Oyo (2015).
[20] See OSSAP-MDGs (2015).

per 1,000 live births). The target for reduction of infant mortality was from 91 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 30.3. The latest reported outcome (for 2014) is 58. Again, the indicator had deteriorated to 100 by 2004.

The MDG for the MMR (a reduction from 1,000 to 250 per 100,000 live births) was reported as having been achieved (243 by 2014), with, again, the bulk of improvement being achieved over the last decade. However, WHO estimates show much less progress, with a reported MMR of 820 in 2014.[21] The targets of universal coverage for birth attendance by skilled health personnel, contraceptive prevalence and antenatal care (ANC) coverage were far from being achieved, though again there have been improvements over the last decade (from 36.3% to 58.6%, 8.2% to 18.4%, and 61% to 68.9% respectively).

In relation to education, reported data on net enrolment in primary schools have seen large (and unexplained and implausible) shifts from year to year, reflecting the severe weaknesses of data systems (annual school censuses). Consequently, it is difficult to assess performance, though it is clear that net enrolment remains well below the target of 100%. The Primary Six completion rate has seen no improvement since 2000, and was reported to be 82% in 2013. There have, however, been improvements in gender equality in education.

There are major differences in performance across states for all indicators, with the continuing poor indicators in the north-east and north-west zones explaining the bulk of non-achievement of national targets, which have largely been achieved in the south.

3.4 The state context[22]

A key feature of the Nigerian context is the high level of autonomy that the Constitution guarantees to each of the three levels of government (the Federal Government, State Governments and local governments). This includes guaranteed shares of selected fiscal revenues (including oil revenues) through the Federation Account, which are (in principle) transferred directly to State Governments and local governments, and for whose use these levels of government are not accountable to the federal government. While the Constitution links responsibilities for education and health provision to different levels of government it does not prevent each level of government acting at each level, so that there tend to be complex and overlapping institutional arrangements – for instance, the Federal Government, State Governments and local governments may all be directly involved in both PHC and secondary health care provision.[23]

While LGAs enjoy a high level of constitutional independence, in practice this autonomy is severely circumscribed by the power held by State Executive

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[21] WHO (2015)..
[22] This is based on the evaluation's Summary Report on Political Economy in the States and hence on PEAs conducted by SPARC and SAVI between 2009 and 2016.
[23] See for example OPM (2011).

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Governors to indefinitely suspend elected local governments and appoint leading district officials, and the *de facto* control of local government finances at state level exercised through State Ministries of Local Government. States do enjoy a high level of effective autonomy from Federal Government, so that the extent of state-level political commitment to reform objectives (and particularly the reform commitment of the State Executive Governor) is of great significance for reform prospects.

The PEAs that have been conducted[24] (by SPARC and SAVI) over the period of implementation of the SLPs provide an assessment of the factors influencing the positioning of states on a continuum from those where politics is driven by purely personalised and patronage concerns to those where political leaders are committed to the delivery of public goods and services for the benefit of citizens as a whole, rather than to narrow groups of political clients.

Prospects for sustained accountable and performance-driven governance tend to be most favourable in states with a relatively strong and diverse economic and tax base, without severe ethnic and religious tensions, with elites with diverse interests, political competition that is not exclusively focused on controlling patronage, the absence of dependence on political 'godfathers', and with checks on executive authority. A determined, reform-minded governor may still be able to succeed in the absence of these conditions, and may benefit from the centralisation of power and weakness of checks and balances. Reform processes to improve governance that are heavily reliant on an individual governor are, however, likely to face a risk of later reversal.

In addition to the structural (economic and social) differences between states, specific features of the state political context which may vary more rapidly over time, as well as between states, also influence the prospects for effective governance and reform. Key features include: (i) the freedom of action that the governor has in regard to being beholden to particular interests (for instance those who have financed his campaign); (ii) the extent of the centralisation of executive power (a high degree of centralisation may undermine accountable governance but may also empower a reform-minded governor); (iii) the effectiveness of checks and balances on executive power; (iv) political stability (threats to the position of a governor may encourage the use of patronage, or short-term enrichment if tenure in power is expected to be short); (v) relations with the Federal Government (strong relationships can help reform if there is federal leadership, but antagonistic relationships may also encourage state initiatives); and (vi) local government capacity and independence.

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[24] This analysis was summarised and its quality as evidence assessed as part of the Final Evaluation. See Annex A for further details.

Table 5 shows how each of the identified factors is assessed as having influenced the nature of governance in the five states. Each factor is rated according to whether it has contributed to, hindered, or had a limited impact on reform. As noted above, the effect of some factors (e.g. centralisation of executive power if this is used to drive reforms, or local government independence if this leads to limited implementation of state policies) may have opposite effects, depending on the context. Taking these factors together, an overall rating is provided regarding whether or not the context has been conducive to accountable and performance-driven governance (final row of the table).

Table 5 indicates that Lagos and Jigawa have provided the best conditions for reform over the period of SLP implementation, but for very different reasons. In Jigawa reform progress has mainly been the result of an independent, reform-minded governor, who has been able to exercise unchallenged power. In Lagos, the existence of a diversified elite, a business sector that does not depend solely on political connections, a strong local tax base, and checks and balances on executive power have been more important factors.

Table 5   Impact of reform drivers in the SLP states

	Enugu	Jigawa	Kaduna	Kano	Lagos
Economic base	+	-	.	.	++
Ethnic/religious/social divisions	.	-	-	.	.
Composition of elites (existence of business elites with interests outside politics)	+	-	.	.	++
Freedom of action of the governor	-	++	-	-	.
Centralised executive power	-	+	-	-	+
Checks/ balances on executive	+	.	+	+	+
Political stability	.	+	--	-	.
Relations with Federal Government	+	+	.	.	++
Local government capacity and independence	.	.	.	.	.
Overall reform conditions 2008–2015	.	+	-	-	+

++	Factor has had a strongly positive influence on accountable and performance-driven governance
+	Factor has had a positive influence on accountable and performance-driven governance
.	Factor has not significantly influenced accountable and performance-driven governance
-	Factor has had a negative influence on accountable and performance-driven governance
--	Factor has had a strongly negative influence on accountable and performance-driven governance

Reform drivers have not stayed constant over time, and each state has witnessed periods of stronger or weaker reform drives. The broad trends are indicated in Table 6 below, which shows how overall reform conditions have changed through the electoral cycles.

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Table 6   Favourability of reform conditions in the SLP states

	1999 – 2003	2003 – 2007	2007 – 2011	2011 – 2015	2015– 2016
Enugu	+	-	-	.	.
Jigawa	-	-	+	+	.
Kaduna	+	+	-	-	+
Kano	-	+	-	-	.
Lagos	+	+	+	+	+

+	Periods of more accountable and performance-driven governance
.	Periods without clear reform direction
-	Periods of worsening accountability and performance-driven governance

The pattern described in Table 6 have been driven to a large extent by changes in political leadership following gubernatorial elections. The personality, background and reform-mindedness of the Governor have a strong influence over the reform direction. Although Governors have significant powers, they are clearly affected by the political economy context, which constrains or facilitates their pursuit of a policy agenda.

It is important to note that new Governors were elected in all five states in 2015. The extent to which these new Governors are committed to and able to take forward the reform initiatives that the SLPs have promoted will be critical for the sustainability of the SLPs' achievements. The particularly severe fiscal situation facing states in 2015–16 poses both challenges for sustainability but also opportunities for reform. In several states it remained unclear at the point at which the latest PEAs were undertaken to what extent the new Governors were likely to be able to take forward coherent reform programmes.

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4 Evaluation methodology and design

4.1 Summary of the Final Evaluation approach

The Final Evaluation is the culmination of IMEP's support to M&E of the SLPs since 2011. Several factors have informed the Evaluation approach, as set out in the Inception Report.

1. Reflecting resource constraints and the desire to reduce the burden of data collection processes (particularly for Nigerian stakeholders) the Final Evaluation has been designed to build on the AR and PCR processes that were already part of the work of IMEP.

2. The evaluation makes extensive use of information collected by and for the SLPs, and by IMEP in its support work for the SLPs. Together, these approaches build on work that was already being done by IMEP and others, seeking to maximise the value of that work while acknowledging and accounting for any potential biases.

3. The Evaluation approach has recognised the weaknesses of available secondary data and the challenges posed by the scale, complexity and responsiveness of SLP implementation in a difficult environment. This has imposed limitations on the approaches that could be taken. Selective primary data collection was conducted to fill gaps and to triangulate evidence from other sources.

The evaluation approach is structured around the intervention logic and theory of change for the SLPs Suite as a whole and for individual SLPs (as developed by each SLP and reviewed in the SLP PCRs). The theory of change for the SLPs as a whole, outlined in Chapter 2, was developed as part of this evaluation and provides the basis for synthesising the results of the assessments of each individual SLP and evaluating them as a Suite.

The evaluation has involved comparison of the development performance of the five SLP states with other Nigerian states and an assessment of the results claimed by the SLPs (principally at outcome level). SLP results have been compared across states and programmes and triangulated with other studies and data. The performance of the SLPs in producing the agreed outputs (many of which involve capacity building) that were envisaged as leading to SLP outcomes has also been analysed.

An assessment has been made of the evidence for the validity of key assumptions in the SLP and Suite theories of change, recognising the constraints discussed in Section 2.5. The Final Evaluation brings together these findings around the SLP Suite theory of change and supplements them with additional analysis based on a comparison of trends in development and resource mobilisation indicators in SLP and non-SLP states.

The theory of change also provides an overall framework for the analysis of sustainability. Relevance is evaluated through an assessment of the alignment of SLP interventions with the priorities of government and citizens,

and the existence of joint planning and diagnostic mechanisms. Value for money was assessed using programme-level indicators defined by each SLP.

The Final Evaluation has generally involved two levels of expert assessment and synthesis. The first has taken place for each SLP, through the PCR/AR process. The second has involved drawing together the findings from the PCRs/ARs and the additional analysis summarised above in order to; first, draw comparative conclusions across the SLPs and, second, to answer EQs specifically in relation to 'Suite-level' issues, such as the effectiveness of coordination between the SLPs and DFID's state-level engagement approaches.

The fact that independently made assessments of each of the SLPs have been drawn together in a consistent framework for the Final Evaluation adds value to the assessment process for each SLP. This is particularly the case when this process of synthesis identifies either strong common patterns of performance across the programmes or differences in performance for which evidence to support plausible explanations of observed results is available.

The overall approach for the Final Evaluation could be characterised as a form of "synthesis evaluation"[25] in its final stages, but with the benefit of being able to draw on additional research and of being able to exert some level of influence on the core evidence to be synthesised, to ensure that it addresses the range of evaluation questions.

4.2 Evidence sources

This section summarises the main sources of evidence have been used to address the EQs, as set out in
Table 7 in section 4.3 below. More details on these sources are provided in Annex A which outlines for each source the main purpose, authors, contents and data used. It also provides a short commentary on data quality and potential biases.

4.2.1 Enhanced PCRs

A key source of information for the Final Evaluation has been the enhanced PCRs, and (in cases where the Final Evaluation is taking place before projects have been completed[26]) ARs for each of the SLPs. IMEP has been responsible for developing detailed terms of reference for these exercises (having carried out ARs since 2011), and for quality control, to ensure a consistent approach across all the SLPs, as well as for the selection and management of the PCR/AR teams. IMEP's management of the PCR and

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[26] PCRs for SPARC and SAVI were produced in May 2016. Since ESSPIN and PATHS2 had not been completed by the time of the preparation of information for the Final Evaluation, the latest (2015) ARs were used for ESSPIN, and for PATHS2 in Enugu and Lagos. A PCR for PATHS2 in the three northern states was produced in October 2015. A final PCR for PATHS2 was produced in September 2016. The PCR for ESSPIN is due to be completed in January 2017.

AR process has also provided independence from DFID, while the quality of the expert assessment that the PCRs involve has been assured by IMEP's selection and management of Subject Leads for each SLP.

The PCRs/ARs provide assessments of the extent to which each of the SLPs has produced the outputs planned and overall assessments of outcomes achieved, programme performance, lessons learned, as well as value for money and financial performance. The PCRs/ARs include assessments of the substantial body of quantitative and qualitative analytical work that the SLPs have undertaken on aspects of their results, lessons learned, and evidence on the validity of theories of change.

In addition to producing information within DFID's standard reporting format for PCRs, the process was enhanced by additional primary data collection and analysis of other sources explicitly to assess evidence in relation to each of the Final Evaluation EQs. An additional report summarising evidence in relation to the EQs was produced for each PCR and for the ESSPIN 2015 AR. The SPARC and SAVI PCR (which was undertaken as a joint exercise with two other DFID projects, FEPAR and V2P) produced a further report which provided an 'Assessment of collaboration between SPARC, FEPAR, SAVI, V2P and other programmes'. Each of the PCRs and ARs also include comprehensive narrative reports to accompany DFID standard reporting requirements.

The 'enhanced' ARs and PCRs are therefore significantly analytically deeper exercises (undertaken within a common framework across the SLPs) than would normally be the case for a DFID review. Details of the process, information reviewed, and stakeholders and key informants interviewed for each of the PCRs and ARs used for the Final Evaluation are included in Annex A.

4.2.2 Studies undertaken for the Final Evaluation

Further analysis was undertaken of SLP results as reported in the PCRs/ARs (principally at outcome level) specifically for the five SLP Suite states, to allow comparisons of results achieved between states and programmes over the whole period of SLP implementation, using baseline (2008) and endline (2015) values of selected indicators. This **Summary of Results in the SLP Suite States** is presented in Annex B.

The **Comparative States Study** provided an empirical analysis of data on the development performance of all Nigerian states, comparing key indicators (principally those related to the achievement of the MDGs) at the start of SLP implementation with the most recent measures available. The purpose was to determine whether there was evidence of any systematic differences between the performance of the SLP Suite states and other states, consistent with a contribution by the SLPs to improved development performance. The study involved a detailed review of, and commentary on, the quality and availability of relevant information sources. The core of the analysis focused on comparisons of selected health and education indicators from the 2008 and 2013 Demographic and Health Surveys (DHSs).

A **Review of Coordination and Management** issues for the SLP Suite involved primary data collection through key informant interviews and questionnaire-based data surveys of DFID staff and SLP managers, as well as a review of documentation on DFID's country strategies and state-level engagement. This review also drew on earlier IMEP studies, including the MTR of the SLP Suite. The review provided evidence relating to DFID's management of the SLP Suite as part of its wider approach to state engagement in Nigeria, as well as examining coordination arrangements between the SLPs and evidence relating to synergies between them.

A series of studies of the political economy context in the SLP states was carried out between 2009 and 2015 by SPARC and SAVI. For the Final Evaluation, a **Political Economy Summary** was undertaken to synthesise these earlier studies to provide comparative information between states and over time on the main features of the political context in the SLP states. This study also examines how PEA has been used to inform SLP implementation. This study has been used to provide information on the state context (Section 3.2 above), and to assess the extent to which the comparative performance of states (and of SLPs in the states) might be explained by the political context.

Two additional studies were undertaken on the experience of, and lessons from, the capacity building activities undertaken by ESSPIN and PATHS2. The **Capacity Development Studies** involved reviews of capacity development results data from each programme, supplemented by primary data collection at State Government-, local government- and school/health-facility level in selected states. Primary data collection included structured interviews and focus group discussions with government staff who had been recipients of capacity development support (at federal government, state government, and local government level, and with frontline service providers in schools and health facilities), and with community members involved in health facility committees and school based management committees. The capacity development study for education was undertaken by Education Data, Research and Evaluation in Nigeria (EDOREN) (a DFID-financed project undertaking research and evaluation in education), in collaboration with IMEP and ESSPIN, and principally funded by EDOREN and ESSPIN. The capacity development study for health was undertaken by IMEP, in collaboration with (and principally funded by) PATHS2. A common conceptual framework was used for the two studies to enhance the comparability of findings.

4.2.3 Other IMEP Studies

The **Citizens' Perception Surveys** (CPS) were conducted by IMEP in 2013 and 2015 in ten states (following a previous survey carried out in 2010 in five states by SPARC and SAVI). The objective of the CPS was to measure and track changes in citizens' perceptions on:

- Service delivery in education, health, security and basic infrastructure;

- The extent to which citizens consider that they are currently able to advocate for and claim their rights to state government provided services; and

- Access to effective mechanisms for holding state government accountable for the successful delivery of these services.

For the CPS 2015, 12,965 interviews were conducted across 10 states from May to June 2015.[27] Full details of the methodology and a discussion of the comparability of the results over time are provided in the CPS (2015) and summarised in Annex A. Overall, the scale, ambition, and rigour of the survey increased in each round, drawing on lessons from the earlier rounds to reduce bias. However, while this means that the accuracy of the findings is likely to have increased, the changes in methodology reduce the extent to which findings are comparable over time.

4.2.4 Studies carried out by the SLPs

The three rounds of the ESSPIN **Composite Surveys** (CS1, CS2, and CS3) were carried out in 2012, 2014 and 2016.[28] The survey covered a wide range of indicators at the teacher, head teacher, school-based management committee, and learner levels. The aim was to understand change in schools over time, and whether schools which received intervention through ESSPIN (i.e. the SIP) have been more effective and have worked better than those which did not, as well as reporting on the quality of public schools in general.

Full details of the survey methodology are included in the CS3 report and summarised in Annex A. The surveys aimed to visit the same schools in each round with 735 schools visited (16 of which were replacements for schools that no longer existed or otherwise could not be sampled) across the six states for CS3. The sample design in both CS2 and CS3:

"prioritised the ability to draw conclusions across the six states, conceding that it would not always be possible to obtain statistically significant estimates within each state, given a high degree of variability in the types of schools that are found in some of the states"

The major methodological challenge for the Composite Surveys was that the pattern of rolling out of interventions meant that it was not possible to compare "SIP schools" with a control group. Instead, measures of SIP impact were made based on the intensity and duration of SIP support provided to schools. In relation to measuring impact, it was also noted in the CS3 report that it was:

"not completely able analytically to separate ESSPIN intervention from other unmeasured differences between states – such as, for example,

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[27] Data collection took place two to three months after elections. This was judged potentially to have influenced findings to the extent that state election campaigns emphasised accountability and corruption, possibly leading to more critical views from respondents. Changes of Governor and of ruling party may also have affected perceptions.

[28] The Composite Surveys were carried out by Oxford Policy Management, under contract to ESSPIN. The findings of Composite Survey 3 and comparisons with earlier rounds are presented in Cameron et al. (2016).

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the policy environment and functioning of the education system at the state level."

However the Composite Survey is the highest quality data source on results available for the evaluation in terms of its relevance, rigour, and independence.

The **SPARC econometric study**[29] involved estimating models that compared public financial management outcomes between SPARC and non-SPARC states, and examining the extent to which the level of SPARC support provided (in terms of programme presence and expenditure) was associated with better PFM indicators. These state-level public financial management indicators included total expenditure and its composition, sectoral expenditure (health, education) and budget execution rates. These indicators cover the period 2008 to 2013. The empirical analysis used a number of control variables including population density, poverty rates and literacy. The data sources include the World Bank supported PFM database and SPARC administrative data. The analysis included comparing the performance of the five original states with those in which SPARC started work in 2011. Further analysis compared the average performance of the SPARC-supported states with those states that had not received donor support. A limitation of the study was that it was based on cross-sectional analysis and was able to control for only a very limited number of other factors. The IMEP comparative states analysis had results which supported a number of the study's conclusions. Both studies suffer from potential biases introduced by the fact that the SLP states were not selected randomly.

SPARC also produced a Governance Trends Analysis annually from 2014 to 2016 (SPARC 2016b). This combined data from a range of sources[30] to attempt to provide a comparative overview of trends in state performance focusing on government (official statistics), citizen and external/expert perspectives on performance in the SLP states. While this combination and comparison of data may provide an informative basis for model for strengthening monitoring of performance in the states in which DFID is operating, it does not provide additional data beyond the other sources used by the evaluation so has not been treated as an additional source.

4.3   Methods for answering the EQs

This section provides details on the methodology that has been used for answering each of the EQs. For each EQ, there is a discussion of the

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[29] SPARC (2016a).
[30] The sources used were 1. The Annual School Census (ACS); 2. The Citizens' Perception Survey (CPS); 3. The Demographic and Health Survey (DHS); 4. The Public Financial Management (PFM) database; 5. The Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) assessment and State Evaluation & Assessment Tool (SEAT) results; 6. The State Voice and Accountability Initiative (SAVI) governance assessment. For the 2015 analysis the following sources were also included: 1. The Education Self-Assessment (ESA) results; 2. Selected PATHS2 logframe indicator measures as reported by PATHS2; 3. The District Health Information System 2 (DHIS2) database.

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interpretation of the question and the judgement criteria that have been used to make the evaluation assessment, a summary of the sources of evidence used, a commentary on evaluability issues, including an assessment of the quality of this evidence available, and the approach that has been used to combine sources of evidence to draw conclusions. This evaluation may also be instructive for DFID in indicating what may and may not be achieved through this form of synthesis approach based on using (and building on) information generated through DFID's project management processes.

The main sources of evidence that have been used to answer each EQ are summarised in
Table 7.

Table 7   Evaluation Framework: EQs and main sources of evidence

Evaluation Questions	Sources of evidence used (Location of answer to EQ in Report)
A. Have the SLPs (individually and collectively) been appropriately designed, implemented and managed to achieve the objectives of key stakeholders?	
A.1 Has the intervention logic behind the SLP Suite concept and the SLPs proved to be valid?	See Table 8 for details of sub-questions and sources of evidence for these (Section 6.4)
A.2 How well aligned have the SLPs been with the objectives of (a) DFID; (b) the Federal Government, State Governments and Local Governments; and (c) the interests of service users and citizens?	SLP PCRs and ARs: KIIs with wide range of stakeholders in each SLP Political Economy Summary: evidence on state government reform commitment Capacity development studies for health and education: evidence on engagement with Federal Government, KIIs with state and local government staff Coordination and Management Review: DFID policies over the period of SLP implementation (Section 6.2)
A.3 How effective have SLP governance and management arrangements been?	SLP PCRs and ARs: assessment of governance and management performance Coordination and Management Review: evidence from SLPs and DFID staff on cross-programme coordination issues and DFID's management of the SLPs (Section 5.9.1)
B. Have the SLPs achieved their objectives?	

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Evaluation Questions	Sources of evidence used
	(Location of answer to EQ in Report)
B.1 What results have the SLPs achieved and to what extent have the objectives of the SLPs been achieved?	SLP PCRs and ARs: comprehensive assessment of SLP outputs and outcomes against targets (summarised in Annex B)
	Capacity development studies for health and education: additional detail on ESSPIN and PATHS2 results including stakeholder perspectives
	Education Composite Survey: Primary data on school performance and quantitative estimates of impact of SIP on aspects of school performance
	Citizens' Perception Survey: Primary data on citizens' perceptions of aspects of governance, accountability and service delivery
	(Sections 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6)
B.2 What explains the results and the extent to which objectives have been achieved?	SLP PCRs and ARs: analysis of validity of intervention logics of SLPs
	Political Economy Summary: evidence on comparative state reform commitment
	Capacity development studies for health and education: KIIs on capacity development performance and links to outcomes
	(Section 7.3)
C. What has been the impact of the SLPs?	
C.1 How far have the SLPs contributed to the achievement of the MDGs in Nigeria, and to addressing gender, poverty and equity issues?	Comparative state study: quantitative analysis of secondary data on comparative performance of SLP states with other Nigerian states
	SLP PCRs and ARs: summaries of how gender and equity issues addressed by SLPs
	(Section 5.7)
C.2 What explains the impact achieved?	SLP PCRs and ARs: evidence on intervention logics of SLPs
	Political Economy Summary: evidence on comparative state reform commitment
	Capacity development studies for health and education: review of contextual factors affecting state health and education performance
	(Section 7.3)

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Evaluation Questions	Sources of evidence used
	(Location of answer to EQ in Report)
C.3 Have the SLPs provided value for money?	SLP PCRs and ARs: summary analysis of value for money, based on common framework
	(Section 5.9.3)
D. To what extent are the results achieved (in terms of improved systems and processes, as well as development outcomes) likely to be sustainable?	
D.1 To what extent are different stakeholders committed to maintaining reforms or systems improvements?	Political Economy Summary: evidence on reform commitment (including of Governors elected in 2015)
	SLP PCRs and ARs: assessment of sustainability prospects
	(Section 5.8.1)
D.2 Are improved approaches affordable (given the fiscal context)?	Capacity development studies for health and education: evidence on effects of fiscal stress during 2015 on continued funding of SLP-supported initiatives
	SLP PCRs and ARs: summaries of evidence on affordability
	(Section 5.8.2)
D.3 Has the ability of citizens to demand better governance and services and to hold governments and service providers accountable improved?	Political Economy Summary: evidence on changes in nature of political competition in states
	SAVI, ESSPIN and PATHS2 PCRs and ARs: evidence on state- and community-level accountability mechanisms
	(Section 6.4)
E. What lessons can be learned for the future?	
E.1 How effective has the process of identifying and learning lessons from the SLPs been?	SLP PCRs and ARs: Summaries of use of M&E evidence
	Coordination and Management Review: assessment of lessons from earlier DFID experience and SLP Suite MTR
	(Section 5.9.2)
E.2 What are the lessons for different stakeholders?	SLP PCRs and ARs: Summaries of lessons for each SLP
	Capacity development studies for health and education: lessons identified from capacity development experience
	Other documentation from SLPs reviewing experience and identifying lessons
	(Sections 8.1, 8.3)

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4.3.1 Impact, effectiveness and validity of the intervention logic[31]

The approach to assessing the results achieved by the SLPs, and the contribution made by the SLPs, has involved reviewing the results identified at each level (impact, outcome and output) for each of the SLPs, evidence on comparative development performance at state level, and a testing of key assumptions in the theories of change linking the production of outputs by the SLPs to higher level results. This has been done, to varying degrees, for each of the SLPs and for the overall suite intervention logic.

For each of the SLPs, PCR teams examined the extent to which results have been achieved along the results chain, generally expressed within a theory of change developed by the SLP and providing a statement of how they believed the programmes had brought about change. These results statements were assessed by the review teams.

A second approach, assessing evidence regarding contribution at the impact level, involved a quantitative comparison of the development performance (against indicators related to health and education MDGs) of the five states in which the SLPs have been implemented since 2008, as compared to other Nigerian states (which are taken to provide an approximate counterfactual), and to selected comparator states. The purpose of this analysis was to identify whether there is evidence of any systematic differences in the performance of this group of states compared to others in Nigeria. If evidence was found that the development performance of this group of states is better than that of other Nigerian states, this would be consistent with the hypothesis that the SLPs led to a positive development impact, but would not necessarily establish that the SLPs caused this improved performance.

A similar analysis also provided evidence for selected outcome-level indicators of resource mobilisation and budget management, which allowed for some triangulation of findings.

4.3.2 Impact: Contribution to achievement of the MDGs (EQ C.1)

The development impact of the SLPs has been defined in terms of their contribution to improved progress towards achieving the education and maternal and child health MDGs, as these are the development outcomes that relate most directly to DFID's original objectives and to the underlying intervention logic of the SLP suite, and provide the overarching concept of impact for the SLPs.[32]

If the SLP Suite states have performed better (statistically significantly) than other Nigerian states against these indicators this would constitute prima

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[31] EQs A.1, B.1, B.2, C.1, C.2, C.3.

[32] The extent to which the SLPs have addressed gender, poverty and equity issues depends in part on their overall performance against those indicators that relate most directly to these issues. For both ESSPIN and PATH2, gender (particularly the number of girls in education and a strong focus on maternal health) and poverty and equity (e.g. education for hard to reach and potentially socially excluded groups, like nomads) were emphasised in the programme results reporting systems. The focus on these issues was less emphasised in results reporting for SPARC and SAVI.

facie evidence that there could have been a positive development impact from the SLPs. If there was not better performance this would be challenge to any claimed impact. In both cases this is limited by the extent that the SLP state to non-SLP state approach can be seen as providing a valid counterfactual.

The Comparative State Study reviewed the quality and availability of data, drawing on earlier reviews of the quality of data sourced undertaken by IMEP. It concluded that the DHS provides the only reliable and comparable data source on population-based health and education indicators on which this assessment can be made (i.e. a comparison across states and over the period of implementation of the SLPs), though some important weaknesses remain in the quality of the DHS data. As a result data on maternal and child health, and education enrolment indicators was selected.

Complete comparative data are only available for 2008 and 2013, so only part of the impact of the SLPs would be expected to have occurred by 2013 and to be measurable. There are major weaknesses in the quality of national data available for assessing education performance over time. This relates, first, to the poor quality and coverage of the Annual School Census, which would have provided information on enrolment and, second, to the lack of comprehensive and comparable data on learning outcomes across states.

The non-SLP states were treated as an approximate counterfactual for the SLP states, meaning that they give an indication of how outcomes in SLP states might have evolved in the absence of the programmes. In practice, the number of non-SLP states included as a comparison group varied by indicator according to the coverage of the dataset from which the indicator is drawn, but ideally the comparison group includes all non-SLP states. Results were also presented comparing the performance of the three SLP Suite states in the north-west (Jigawa, Kano and Kaduna) with the other states in the north-west (Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara).

Where estimates were constructed for the Suite and non-Suite states as separate groups, weights were calculated based on the relative population shares of the state groupings to adjust for their different population sizes. Some further empirical investigation has clarified that weighting does not make a significant difference to the findings, compared to the use of non-weighted data. The findings were presented in the form of differences (between the SLP and non-SLP states) in percentage point changes over time.

While the exercise is instructive in terms of assessing evaluability, there are two main reasons why the findings of the Comparative State Study analysis cannot be used to make any strong causal claims about the impact of the SLPs. The first is that the secondary data on which the analysis is based suffer from significant limitations of scope and quality. The second reason relates to the fact that the states where SLPs are implemented were not randomly selected. The choice was initially based on the states that were thought to have the greatest commitment to reform – implying that they would

be expected to be better than average performers – though the Political Economy Summary suggests that in fact commitment was variable in the states during implementation.[33]

4.3.3 Effectiveness: Objectives and results achieved (EQ B.1)

In terms of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Development Assistance Committee criteria, effectiveness is in principle judged in relation to the achievement of objectives – specifically, objectives at the level of outcomes achieved. However, there have been frequent revisions of the SLP objectives over the whole period of implementation and this limits the usefulness of comparisons of performance against final milestone values alone. It has therefore been important in judging the effectiveness of the SLPs to consider evidence on the results achieved by the SLPs (as defined in the SLP logframes and relating mainly to capacity that has been developed and systems that have been strengthened), as well as how far outcome milestones have been met. For some indicators for which baseline information at the state level exists it has been possible to assess the change in the outcome indicator over the whole period of SLP implementation.

Information on results and the achievement of objectives is included in the PCRs and ARs, and the performance of the SLPs against these milestones was assessed in the PCRs/ARs. A challenge for comparative assessment (and for viewing the SLP Suite as an integrated set of programmes) is that there are some significant differences between the SLPs in regard to the approach to the definition of impact, outcomes and outputs between the programmes.

The main features of results reporting for each of the SLPs (focusing principally on state-level outcome measures) are the following:[34]

- For SPARC, outcome measures defined at the state level are based on either public expenditure and financial accountability (PEFA), or self-assessment ratings, and reflect features of public management (mainly PFM) performance. These ratings generally appear to be objective and anchored (for PEFA) in widely used measures of public management performance. Some of the outcome indicators (e.g. budget credibility) are based on objective measurement rather than expert assessment. Outcome measures reflect features of system performance and management, but are not measures of changes in the effectiveness and efficiency of resource use.

- For SAVI, results measures are in all cases aggregations of ratings from expert assessments. Impact measures are assessments of the accountability and responsiveness of state and local

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[33] Some exploratory work was done to try to address this. This included a statistical matching of states. Subsequently, as part of the Comparative States Study the technique of synthetic control analysis was also examined to address selection bias. It was concluded that neither of these approaches was sufficiently robust to generate usable findings.

[34] Further information on outcome definition and measurement for the SLPs is included in Annex B.

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governmentsand dimensions covered include the effectiveness of representation of all citizens (and of women), the autonomy of civil society, the quality of dialogue between government and civil society, access to information, and the inclusiveness and scrutiny of the budget process. Outcome reporting is similarly based on expert assessment, focusing on the functionality as agents for voice and accountability of State Houses of Assembly, civil society and the media. It also includes a measure of demonstrable changes in policy and implementation where there is evidence of attribution to SAVI.

- State-level outcome indicators for PATHS2 are mainly population-based measures of service utilisation from household surveys (e.g. proportion of pregnant women making at least four ANC visits, proportion of births attended by skilled birth attendants, proportion of children under five with diarrhoea receiving recommended treatment), measures of health service client satisfaction, and annual per capita public expenditure on health. Progress in strengthening systems (for instance planning and budgeting) is reported at output level.

- Outcome reporting for ESSPIN does not allow clear comparisons of changes in system performance between states over the whole period of the SLPs in the way that is possible for PATHS2. The outcome Statement for ESSPIN focuses on 'Quality of, and access to, basic education improved equitably and sustainably'. Some ESSPIN outcome indicators relate mainly to ESSPIN interventions (for instance, the number of children benefitting from the SIP, the number of additional children in school in focus local government education authority areas, and the number of marginalised children with improved access to basic education), rather than measures of overall state-level system performance. One outcome indicator measure of system performance, however, is the proportion of public primary schools that meet the benchmark for a good quality school. There is an expenditure outcome measure related to the release of funds for school improvement, but not a measure equivalent to that for PATHS2 (i.e. annual per capita state expenditure on health). This is measured by the Composite Surveys carried out in 2012, 2014 and 2016, which also provide information on learning outcomes (an impact measure). Comparative output reporting covers (based on annual self-assessment) the quality of governance and management of basic education, against a 2009 baseline assessment. Other output indicators are available for 2015 that make possible comparisons between states, but not over time.

A consistent approach to the definition of state-level results across the SLPs would be the following:

- Impact, defined in terms of development results (e.g. improved indicators of health and education status at state level).

- Outcome, defined in terms of improved system performance and service delivery (including at state level).

- Outputs, defined principally in terms of improvements in the capacity of targeted organisations and the strengthening of systems (e.g. budget processes).

This approach puts outputs further along the results chain than would be normal in DFID programme results chains (reflecting the limitations of the three-level results chain model for the SLPs). As the summary above shows, the approaches used by the SLPs differ from this in the following ways:

- SPARC's outcome measurement includes aspects of system performance (like budget execution), but also some capacity-related measures (like strengthened policy, planning and budget processes).

- SAVI's definition of impact relates to system performance (accountability and responsiveness of governments), while outcome measures relate to capacity development achieved.

- ESSPIN's outcome measures are only to a limited extent focused on comparative system performance.

Information on results and the achievement of objectives is included in PCRs and ARs. This was thoroughly reviewed through the PCR/AR process and discussed with a wide range of stakeholders by the IMEP team. PCRs for all the SLPs except ESSPIN had been completed during the period of the Final Evaluation. The fact that the PCR for ESSPIN has not been completed (as well as the nature of ESSPIN's outcomes) means that the results-reporting evidence available for ESSPIN is in some respects – and particularly for making comparisons between states – weaker than for the other SLPs. However, the three rounds of the Composite Survey (undertaken in 2012, 2014 and 2016) provide strong evidence on changes over time for key education indicators and for the results of ESSPIN support. The education and health capacity studies provide further detail on the results achieved by ESSPIN and PATHS2. In addition, the Citizens' Perception Survey provides information on changes in public perceptions of governance, accountability and service provision over the period of SLP implementation in the five states. This analysis also makes use of the SPARC governance trends analysis, which provides a comparison of state performance based on education, health and governance indicators.

Annex B summarises those indicators of SLP results achievement (a subset of the complete list of SLP indicators) that can be used to make comparisons of performance over time and between states, focusing on outcome and output reporting. This has been presented in the form of summary indicators representing a baseline assessment at the start of SLP implementation, and a latest result (usually for 2015). This makes it possible to compare performance over time and between states and SLPs, and to provide a ranking of relative performance.

A major issue for the Final Evaluation is the extent to which we can assess the contribution of the SLPs to the changes in outcome indicators. The more ambitious and systemwide the specific results measures are for the SLPs, the more problematic it is to determine the extent to which the SLP has contributed to the results observed. For instance, some of ESSPIN's outcome measures relate to the number of schools in which the SIP has been implemented, and the number of children that this has benefitted. These results can be attributed directly to ESSPIN. By contrast, output measures for PATHS2 have included the proportion of pregnant women making at least four ANC visits – a measure whose achievement depends on a range of factors beyond the outputs that PATHS2 has produced.

The PCRs/ARs involved an expert assessment of the results claims made by the SLPs and supported by evidence from the SLP reporting systems, based on the experience of IMEP's engagement with the SLPs through ARs and other data collection and analysis activities. Full details of the process and evidence used are set out in Annex A.

The Final Evaluation process has included a further round of expert assessment in which the findings of the PCRs/ARs have been compared. This comparison has been used to draw conclusions about likely explanations of the results achieved. The comparison of state-level performance has drawn on the assessment of changes in, and levels of, political commitment to governance and service delivery improvement from the Political Economy Summary.

4.3.4 Validity of SLP and Suite intervention logic (EQ 1.1)

The logic of a development intervention is a description of the causal processes by which the specific activities of the intervention are anticipated to contribute to achieving the intended results, and the conditions under which the planned causal processes should hold. A judgement on the validity of an intervention logic encompasses the following (for each SLP and for the SLP Suite):

1. How clearly and completely was the intervention logic articulated, particularly in relation to specifying key causal mechanisms and conditions required for them to work?

2. To what extent was the logic of the intervention as designed consistent with available evidence and likely to be successful?

3. To what extent did the causal processes in fact function during implementation, and to what extent did the key conditions for success hold?

The following sources of evidence have been used to assess the validity of the intervention logic of the SLPs:

- Evidence relating to the results achieved at different levels by the SLPs, as reported and externally assessed in the SLP PCRs/ARs. This is the starting point for assessing whether, prima facie, the intervention logic has held - specifically to assess if planned outputs

have been produced, and whether this has led to the intended outcome and impact.

- Statements of the theories of change (as summarised in Section 2.2 above) and analytical work on the validity of the theories of change that SLPs have undertaken or commissioned. This has been used to assess how fully and adequately the intervention logic was articulated, and the evidence presented for its key elements and conditions. Each PCR/AR involved an expert assessment of the quality of this evidence and the extent to which it validated the intervention logic of each SLP.

- The capacity development studies for ESSPIN and PATHS2, which collected additional primary data on (in particular) the outputs produced by the SLPs aimed at building capacity for improved health and education sector management and service delivery at each level of the system (Federal Government, State Government, local government, facility/school and community), and the extent to which this had been translated into improved education and health system performance.

- The Coordination and Management Review examined issues and evidence relating to the implementation of the Suite approach – in particular, DFID's management of and approach to state engagement.

- The Political Economy Summary provides evidence on the political context and level of commitment to reform in each of the SLP Suite states.

The process of combining sources of evidence has not required reconciling any significant inconsistencies as a generally similar picture is apparent from the different sources (and indeed across the SLPs). The analysis has involved two levels of expert assessment of source material that has largely been produced by the SLPs – first in the PCR/AR process, and then through synthesis and comparison for the Final Evaluation.

On the basis of the SLP Suite intervention logic set out in Section 2, a set of additional evaluation sub-questions were identified to provide a framework for these assessments and to test whether the intervention logic has proved to be valid. These questions address some of the main assumptions that underlie the Suite logic as set out in Section 2.4.3 above.

These questions and the sources of evidence used to answer them are setout in Table 8.

A critical element of EQ A1.1 relates to the effectiveness of budget execution – improvements to planning and prioritisation of expenditures in the budget only translate into more effective use of resources if the budget is in fact implemented. In terms of the composition of expenditure, more effective and efficient use of resources would generally imply a move in social sector expenditures away from capital expenditure, which has high political visibility

and can generate patronage opportunities through contract awards, towards a focus on strengthening the management and quality of service provision.

The main sources of evidence for EQ A1.1 are the SPARC econometric study (which examines whether there is evidence as to whether the states that have received SPARC support have had better budget execution, and whether they have spent more public funds on health and education services), the Comparative State Study (which examined differences in governance and accountability indicators between the SLP Suite and other Nigerian states), and the health and education capacity studies (which provide evidence about the extent to which sectoral policy, planning and service delivery systems have been strengthened).

The summary of state results information (in Section 5) provides evidence on progress in capacity and systems development for centre of government functions, and for the building of systems for improving accountability to citizens and service users, as well as some evidence on changes in public expenditure patterns.

Question A.1.2 is addressed using evidence from the Capacity Development Studies, and output reporting in the PCRs and ARs.

The answer to EQ A.1.3 draws on the Capacity Development Studies and the PCRs and ARs. However, while it is possible to identify constraints that have impacted on performance it is difficult to make a rigorous assessment of the comparative significance of each factor.

The approach to answering EQ A.1.4 and EQ A.1.5 similarly draws on the Capacity Development Studies and the PCRs and ARs, but also on the Review of Coordination and Management. While it is possible to identify ways in which centre of government and sectoral reforms have been complementary in line with the envisaged intervention logic it is in practice difficult to establish clear criteria for judgement to assess the extent of mutual reinforcement. It is more straightforward to identify and assess the effectiveness of collaboration between SLPs.

Evidence to address EQs A.1.6 and A1.8 comes principally from the Political Economy Summary. This source also contributes to addressing EQ A.1.7, while additional evidence is provided by the CPS.

Table 8   Evelution sub-questions on validity of the SLP intervention logic

Evaluation sub-question	Sources of evidence used
A.1.1 Have reforms (at the sector and centre of government levels) enabled government resources to be used more effectively towards improving basic services? Has public expenditure on priority services (a) increased and (b) become more effective?	PCRs and ARs: evidence on improvements to planning and budgeting systems Capacity Development Studies: evidence from KIIs on improvements to planning and budgeting systems SPARC Econometric Study: quantitative analysis of comparative public finance management performance and on budget execution Comparative States Study: quantitative analysis of comparative public finance management performance and of public expenditure on health and education
A.1.2 Has technical assistance been an effective instrument for building individual and organisational capacity?	PCRs and ARs: evidence on capacity development outputs Capacity Development Studies: evidence on capacity development experience (KIIs)
A.1.3 To what extent have other constraints (e.g. insecurity, inadequate infrastructure, cultural factors, inadequate human resources, dysfunctional institutional arrangements) prevented the achievement results in line with the envisaged intervention logic?	PCRs and ARs:overview assessment of factors constraining performance Capacity Development Studies: evidence on institutional constraints and human resources management
A.1.4 Have reforms supported by the SLPs in line ministries and at the centre of government been mutually reinforcing and interdependent?	As for A 1.5 below
A.1.5 Have SLPs collaborated effectively to realise synergies?	Assessment of Collaboration between SPARC, FEPAR, SAVI, V2P and Other Programmes: overview of evidence on synergies realised Review of Coordination and Management: assessment of experience of cooperation based on KIIs and surveys
A.1.6 Have State Governments and other influential stakeholders been committed to reforms?	Political Economy Summary: Comparative evidence on changes in state reform commitment

Evaluation sub-question	Sources of evidence used
A.1.7 Has effective demand from voters for improved services and more accountable government increased?	**See evidence sources for D.3 in** Table 7
A.1.8 Has DFID focused resources on states that have shown political commitment to reform?	Review of Coordination and Management: (limited) data on pattern of DFID spending and identification of priority states SPARC and SAVI PCRs: evidence on favourability of reform environments in states
A.1.9 How effectively has DFID used its influence to encourage states to adopt reforms and to ensure an effective strategic approach across its portfolio of activities as a whole in the states in which it works?	Review of Coordination and Management: evidence on DFID's approach to state engagement and development of DFID's state level Nigeria portfolio

Answers to EQs A.1.9 and A.1.10 draw on the Review of Coordination and Management to examine DFID's actions and decision-making, informed also by the Summary of the analysis of the Political Economy context in each state. However, very limited information is available on the pattern of DFID's expenditures by state, so it has not been possible to map this against indicators of political commitment.

4.3.5 Limitations: Evaluability of attribution and explanation of results (EQ B.1, B.2, C.1, C.3)

As set out in Section 4.1 above, the approach followed by the Final Evaluation to attribute impact and results has been: first, to test whether there is any evidence that the development performance of the SLP Suite states has been stronger than that of other Nigerian states; second, to examine the extent to which results have been achieved along the results chain for each of the SLPs; and third, to assess evidence on the extent to which key assumptions in the intervention logic for the SLPs and for the SLP Suite as a whole were valid and have in practice held.

As discussed above, the information available for making decisive quantitative estimates of differential performance between states is limited in important ways, though it should be sufficient to identify any major systematic differences in performance. There is a strong evidence base on the results achieved by the SLPs, including to support attribution at the output level related mainly to the strengthening of the capacity of key organisations and the strengthening of management and service delivery systems.

The major attribution challenge is at the outcome level (i.e. the extent to which system performance and service delivery actually improved as a result of the outputs that the SLPs provided). As noted above, the quality of evidence on the validity of key assumptions in the intervention logic of the SLPs varies and, in many respects, this evidence is incomplete. However, the fact that independently made assessments of each of the SLPs have been drawn together in a consistent framework for the Final Evaluation provides increased confidence in the overall findings. This is particularly the case when this process identifies either strong common patterns of performance across the programmes, or differences in performance for which evidence to support plausible explanations of the observed results is available.

It has been possible to draw on analysis undertaken separately by each of the SLPs in which they have articulated and tested elements of their theories of change, enhanced by analysis undertaken specifically for the Final Evaluation. However, as discussed above in relation to the EQ on the validity of the SLP intervention logic, this has been done to varying degrees by the SLPs. In particular, the extent to which the risks and assumptions have been articulated and tested has varied between the SLPs. In general, SPARC has undertaken the deepest and most systematic assessment of its contribution.

4.3.6 Alignment with stakeholder interests (EQ A.2)

Alignment with stakeholder objectives and interests is potentially evidenced by some or all of the following:

- consistency with stated policy objectives (for DFID and Federal and State Governments). However, stated policy objectives may not necessarily reflect actual priorities as evidenced by government actions, for instance in relation to expenditure priorities;

- formal processes of agreement between DFID, the SLPs and Nigerian stakeholders, during which objectives and priorities were assessed against or driven by Nigerian development priorities;

- evidence of strong joint commitment to SLP implementation by Nigerian partners (for instance through the level of engagement by senior politicians and public servants, expenditure priorities and supporting initiatives taken);

- the use of evidence and research to identify stakeholder understanding of weaknesses in service provision and priorities for system improvement; and

- the use of information collected directly from citizens and service users to inform the design and implementation of the SLPs.

The following sources of evidence were used to answer this question:

- The Political Economy Summary provides assessments (from the PEAs undertaken between 2009 and 2015 by SPARC and SAVI) of the level of commitment of State Governments to governance reform and development objectives at selected points in time during the period of implementation of the SLPs.

- The capacity development studies of ESSPIN and PATHS2 included interviews with senior state officials and some other stakeholders, covering issues of alignment with state objectives and perceived needs and priorities in regard to improving service use.

- Self-assessment reviews and some other studies (for instance analysis of assumptions in theories of change) by the SLPs have addressed issues of alignment, ownership and commitment – findings in relation to these were assessed by the review team and are summarised in the PCRs.

- DFID's strategic documents have set out priorities for the DFID Nigeria programme, while interviews with DFID staff have provided an additional data source (reported in the Coordination and Management Review). These provide strong evidence about DFID's objectives and the development of these objectives over the period of SLP implementation.

- Surveys of service user satisfaction in health and some other primary data collection (for instance the Citizens' Perceptions Surveys) provide direct or indirect evidence on service user and citizen views

of changes in the quality of services. Additional information was collected from community interviews for the education and health capacity studies.

4.3.7 How effective have SLP governance and management arrangements been? (EQ A.3)

Effective programme management is evidenced by implementation in line with plans and budgets, and successful delivery of planned results, particularly at input and output level, and the adequacy of management procedures (e.g. for identifying and responding to risks). Evidence of effective management of the set of SLP interventions would include a clear articulation of the relationship between the SLPs and the existence and use of a process for addressing cross-sectoral issues, and identifying and exploiting synergies between the SLPs. Evidence of effective state-level engagement by DFID would include a clear process of identifying priorities at state level and monitoring of state-level performance, as well as the overall performance of DFID programmes in states.

The PCRs provide detailed evidence on the management performance of the SLPs as it has affected implementation, including the approach to managing risks, as well as evidence on the performance of the SLPs against budgets and plans. An expert assessment of the available evidence to answer this question for each SLP was made as part of the PCR/AR process.

The Coordination and Management Review examined management arrangements for the Suite and for DFID's state-level engagement, through a review of documentation on coordination arrangements and DFID's approach to state-level engagement, and questionnaire-based surveys and key informant interviews with DFID staff and SLP managers.

The evidence base for answering this question is strong, and there were no significant inconsistencies between the evidence from different sources.

4.3.8 Have the SLPs provided value for money? (EQ C.4)

Each of the SLPs has developed and applied a detailed value for money framework, including defining value for money metrics at different levels, using the standard DFID criteria of economy, efficiency, effectiveness—and to some extent equity. Elements of a common approach to value for money analysis were developed across the SLPs following guidance from IMEP.[35] In practice, the scope for making evaluation judgements is largely restricted to assessing reported performance against these indicators. This was done through the PCR/AR process. The PCRs note the difficulty in interpreting some of the indicators, and also that some of the indicators may be overly detailed in relation to the value of the information that they contain.

There is no broader framework of analysis or indicators available for making assessments of value for money beyond the individual programme level (for instance for each state or for the Suite of SLPs as a whole). The value for

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[35] IMEP, 2014, A Common Framework for Value for Money Analysis in State Level Programmes, Independent Monitoring and Evaluation Project, 23rd April.

money frameworks used are in many respects overall assessments of the effectiveness of management (assessing results performance, assessing costs against agreed ceilings and benchmarks, assessing evidence of risk management practices), and only partly relate to the question of costs in relation to results achieved.

Only for PATHS2, where modelling of the costs of lives saved (through reduced maternal and infant mortality) was undertaken, are there estimates of value for money that are related to development outcomes, rather than the delivery of inputs and the production of outputs. This modelling was undertaken by PATHS2 using the well-established Lives Saved Tool (LiST) methodology, which estimates lives saved based on improvements in the coverage of specific services and treatments.[36] Also available are estimates prepared by SPARC of the savings for state budgets generated by specific interventions that SPARC has supported.

However, the extent to which the modelled results and savings can be attributed to the DFID interventions depends on assumptions related to counterfactuals (i.e. the extent to which the improvement in health service access that has occurred in the SLP states is the result of PATHS2 interventions) that cannot be fully tested on the basis of the information available. These estimates therefore provide a useful indication of the potential financial scale of impact from selected interventions but cannot be definitively attributed to the SLPs.

4.3.9 To what extent are the results achieved (in terms of improved systems and processes, as well as development outcomes) likely to be sustainable? (EQs D.1, D.2, D.3)

Sustainability depends on the extent to which the results achieved and capacity built will be, respectively, maintained and used beyond the lifetime of the support provided by the SLPs. Since the Final Evaluation has been taking place during the final stages of SLP implementation it has not in general been possible to directly assess whether results have been maintained and capacity used beyond the end of programme implementation (though this has been possible to some extent for PATHS2 in the northern states, since implementation was completed in January 2015). The assessment of sustainability therefore requires indirect measurement, through focusing on the evidence regarding whether conditions hold that are likely to favour sustainability.

In the short to medium term, continued donor support may allow a continuation and strengthening of results, but in general sustainability depends on: (i) the extent to which key stakeholders are committed to maintaining reforms or systems improvements; (ii) the affordability of the improved approaches; and (iii) the extent to which an effective political demand for better services and stronger governance and accountability has been created.

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[36] See: http://livessavedtool.org/.

An expert assessment of stakeholder commitment was provided in each of the PCR/ARs. The Political Economy Summary draws on assessments made in the SPARC and SAVI PEA (undertaken in the wake of the gubernatorial elections in the five SLP Suite states in 2015) of the likelihood of strong reform commitment, as well as more general findings related to the extent to which the reform commitment in states was likely to be maintained over time. The health and education capacity studies provide information on the extent to which some initiatives supported by PATHS2 and ESSPIN were in fact being fully funded by states during 2015, as well as the views of key stakeholders in State and local governments.

The PCRs/ARs provide an expert assessment of the affordability of systems and processes developed by the SLPs, noting that the SLPs have in general been designed and implemented with a view to developing approaches and models that would be affordable within the state fiscal context. For SPARC, some additional information is available, in the form of a series of case studies commissioned by the SLP that assess affordability as well as other dimensions of sustainability. The health and education capacity studies identify some examples of cases of initiatives not being financed, reflecting either a lack of affordability or low stakeholder commitment.

The SAVI PCR assesses progress in strengthening accountability in the SLP states. The ESSPIN and PATHS2 PCRs/ARs summarise evidence on initiatives to strengthen community involvement in education and health service provision. The Political Economy Summary provides a perspective on the period since the re-establishment of democratic governance in 1999 in relation to how far political competition in the SLP states has moved away from seeking to control patronage towards responding to a demand for improved services and accountability. The citizens' perceptions surveys also provide information on the expectations and experiences of service users. These information sources provide some relevant examples and identify key issues, but they fall short of being sufficient to provide a rigorous assessment of the change in the political context.

5 Overview of results achieved

5.1 Introduction and overview

This chapter presents an overview of the results achieved by the SLPs, including comparisons of performance across the five SLP states, and consideration of sustainability and efficiency issues. The next four sections present evidence relating to the results achieved (focusing on capacity development and improvements in systems and procedures – output level – and in the performance of systems – outcome level) in each of the four main results areas, corresponding largely to the results reporting frameworks for the four SLPs:

- governance and public management (SPARC);
- voice and accountability (SAVI, but also including community initiatives by ESSPIN and PATHS2);
- education (ESSPIN); and
- health (PATHS2).

These are based on the following sources:

- PCRs for SPARC, SAVI and PATHS2, and the 2015 AR for ESSPIN (and the summary documents on evidence for the Final Evaluation prepared following the PCRs and ARs), and the analysis of results by state presented in Annex B;
- the CPS;
- other data sources such as the ESSPIN Composite Survey; and
- the ESSPIN and PATHS2 capacity studies.

Section 5.6 provides a comparative summary of the results information by SLP and by state, which additionally draws on the SPARC governance trends analysis. Section 5.7 presents the findings from the quantitative analysis undertaken for the Comparative State Study, which has assessed evidence on the impact of the SLPs by comparing the development performance of the SLP states in terms of health and education indicators with other Nigerian states. Section 5.8 assesses the sustainability of the results achieved, and Section 5.9 assesses the effectiveness of SLP management arrangements, the process of identifying and learning lessons from the SLPs, and the evidence on value for money.

5.2 Results achieved: Governance and public management

The PCR for SPARC found that positive results have been delivered (at output level) in strengthening the core business processes of government in the majority of the ten states in which it has worked in the following areas:

- Policy and strategy, and M&E. In particular: implementation of more rigorous, policy-based state development plans (SDPs); alignment of medium-term sector strategies with the priorities in the state development plans and the available funding; mainstreaming of gender and social inclusion objectives into these development plans; more effective M&E of results through the inclusion of explicit targets in the plans, introduction and building the capacity of state bureaus of statistics and the creation of a community of practice to enable practitioners to share experiences, and; the beginnings of annual performance reporting by sectors.

- PFM. In particular: strengthened budget processes resulting in the approval of more realistic and credible spending plans and the adoption of a structured approach to establishing affordable budget ceilings through the use of the Economic Fiscal Update, the Fiscal Strategy Paper and the Budget Policy Statement. There is now a significant demonstrable link between the costing of new policy initiatives (policy), investment decisions (planning), and recurrent cost implications (budgeting).

- Public sector management. In particular: organisational mandates have been mapped in all ten states, with the potential for eliminating duplication and achieving significant cost savings; corporate planning has been completed in a selection of states and ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs); new human resources management (HRM) policies and guidelines have been adopted; and service charters are being rolled out to encourage the public's engagement in monitoring service standards.

In addition, some specific sustainable successes were identified, including the introduction of multi-year budgeting in Kaduna; performance review mechanisms in Kaduna and Jigawa; in-year budget reporting in Lagos; and the establishment of the Enugu State Planning Commission. It was also noted at the federal level that SPARC assisted with the design and implementation of the Conditional Grants Scheme, which distributed debt relief funding to state and local governments. These grants resulted in improved school enrolment and increased access to health centres, together with increased immunisation and ANC.

However, the PCR for SPARC concluded that the programme 'substantially did not meet expectations' in relation to planned outcomes for the effectiveness of policies and strategies, and in relation to the consistency of medium-term plans and budgets with policies and resources envelopes, and 'moderately did not meet expectation' for realism and predictability of multi-year capital and recurrent budgets. Expectations were met or exceeded for the effectiveness of core MDA support for government systems, and the responsiveness of State Governments to national initiatives.

Annex B provides information on achievements for SPARC's outcome indicators for the five SLP states, comparing a baseline situation in 2008, a

midline in 2012, and an endline in 2015. There is significant variability in performance over time and between states for the different indicators. Table 9 compares baseline and endline values of outcome indicators. According to this measure, Enugu and (probably, if PEFA data were complete) Jigawa were the best performers in terms of the number of indicators for which improvements have occurred. Kano has had the worst performance, with most outcome indicators worsening and none showing significant improvement. Kaduna and Lagos present a mixed picture, with some indicators showing significant improvements and others showing deterioration. None of the four states for which comparative PEFA scores were available achieved an improvement in budget execution between 2009 and 2015.

The state-level pattern of performance in relation to the achievement of outcome targets (rather than the absolute level of achievement shown in Table 9) and production of outputs is summarised in Table 10, with the SLP states highlighted. This shows clearly both the much greater variation in achievement at outcome than output level between the states and the large gap between outcome and output performance for the SLP states (with the exception of Lagos). This is most marked for Kaduna, which achieved only 17% of outcome targets but 94% of outputs.

Table 9   Summary of SPARC outcome performance, direction of changes, 2009–15

	Policy and strategy	M&E	Budget credibility	Budget comprehensive-ness	Policy-based budget	Budget execution	Accounting, recording, reporting	External scrutiny and audit	Public service organisation and management	Human resource management
Enugu	Blue	Blue	Red	Blue	Blue	Grey	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue
Jigawa[37]	Blue	Blue							Blue	Grey
Kaduna	Grey	Blue	Grey	Grey	Blue	Grey	Grey	Red	Red	Red
Kano	Grey	Grey	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Grey	Red	Grey
Lagos	Red	Red	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Red	Blue	Blue

Red: deterioration; Grey: no change; green: improvement; white: no data available.

Rating of aggregate PEFA/Self-Assessment Evaluation (SEAT) indicator

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[37] No PEFA was undertaken for Jigawa in 2015, so comparable indicators of budget performance are not available.

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Table 10 SPARC outcome and output performance by state

State	Outcome performance (%)	Output performance (%)
Anambra	100	100
Lagos	83	91
Yobe	75	94
Niger	75	92
Zamfara	75	86
Jigawa	66	91
Kano	58	89
Enugu	50	96
Katsina	33	75
Kaduna	17	94

Source: SPARC PCR.

In terms of wider impact, SPARC claimed[38] (based on empirical modelling derived from the Econometric Study) to have contributed to additional spending by states of £1.125 billion, of which £437 million was spent on education and health services, contributing to over two million more children being enrolled in primary schools, and almost 300,000 children receiving vaccinations. However, this claim depends on assumptions and comparison with counterfactuals whose validity cannot be fully established.

The CPS provides evidence relating to citizens' satisfaction with governance. For the
For the indicator[39] 'how State Government decides to spend money on public services' (

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[38] SPARC Working Paper 'Value for Money'. February 2016
[39] While this indicator captures only some aspects of satisfaction with government management of resources, the findings for this indicator were strongly correlated with indicators measuring other aspects.

Figure 3), Jigawa had the highest level of satisfaction in 2015, with similar scores in the previous two surveys. Lagos was rated second, with some improvement in satisfaction over time. Enugu and Kaduna had very low levels of satisfaction and in both these states and in Kano there were sharp falls in satisfaction between 2013 and 2015.

Figure 3 How well does government decide to spend money on public services?

Percentage responding 'very well' or 'well'
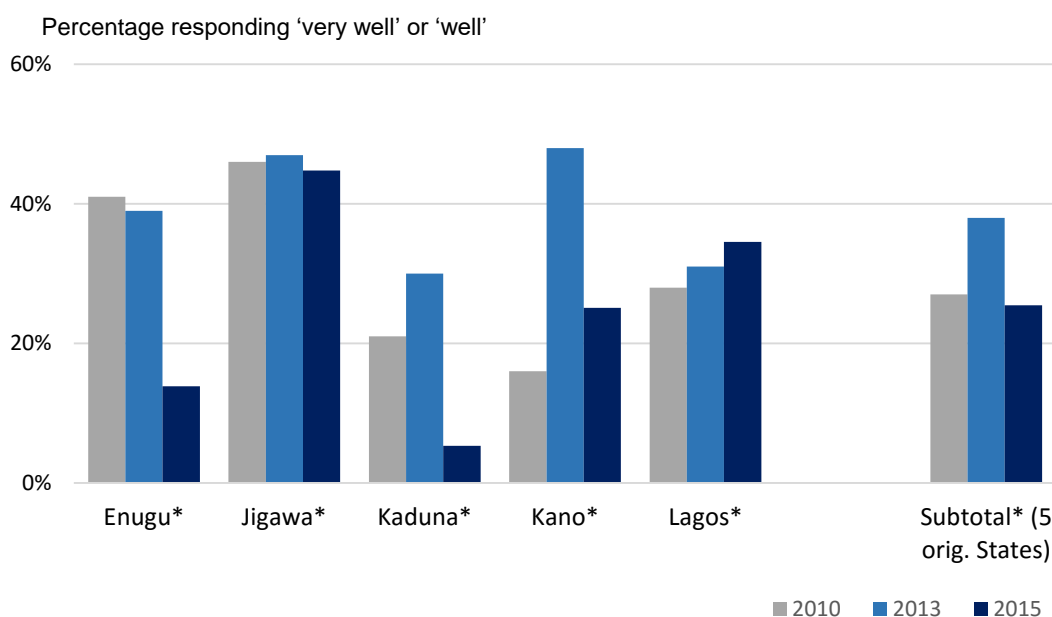
Source CPS (2015)

5.3 Results achieved: Voice and accountability

The overall assessment in the SAVI PCR was that the programme has demonstrated inclusive, sustainable and replicable models of engaging citizens in key policy, planning, service delivery and accountability processes. In addition, SAVI has tracked 157 case studies where there is evidence that citizen engagement facilitated by SAVI and its partners has contributed to improved policies and practices, resulting in better service delivery and development outcomes.

SAVI made a significant contribution to building capacity for advocacy work in civil society, media and State Houses of Assembly using its facilitated partnership approach. It has strengthened connections between these three groups of demand-side actors and has effectively connected them to policy and planning processes managed by the executive. As a result of SAVI engagement, State Houses of Assembly have become more open and transparent, and in some states are performing their executive oversight functions more effectively. Media has become more engaged in reporting governance issues and connecting citizens to policy discussion. There are strong indications of SAVI's broader influence, including numerous examples of where elements of SAVI's approach are being replicated by other organisations in Nigeria and internationally. However, it was also noted that

SAVI's results have mainly been restricted to islands of success, and there has been little change in the broader political economy factors that have generally acted to undermine public accountability.

The PCR concluded that SAVI has demonstrated that it is possible to strengthen citizen engagement in governance and accountability processes, and to use this to drive improvements in policies and their implementation, though this has been focused mainly on policy and budget preparation for service delivery rather than monitoring and advocacy concerned with subsequent delivery. SAVI's work has been almost entirely at state level.

There has been significant reported progress in strengthening the accountability and responsiveness of state (and local) governments across all states. However, the PCR found reasons for querying the robustness of the SAVI governance index, which was derived from assessments carried out by experts recruited by SAVI, and may have overstated improvements over time. While SAVI results reporting suggests there have been substantial improvements in the capacity of State Houses of Assembly, civil society, and the media as agents of voice and accountability, this reporting may overstate the impact of these changes on the actual behaviour and performance of government, particularly when the SAVI results reporting is compared with the less positive assessments of change derived from the Political Economy Summary.

Noting these reservations about measurement, SAVI's performance in the five SLP states is five SLP states is presented in

Table 11. This summarises and compares the change in the impact and outcome indicators over the periods for which they have been measured (generally 2010 to mid-2015), for which full information is provided in Annex B. All five states show improvements on the aggregate impact measure, with the range of reported improvements between states being relatively narrow. There is more variability at the outcome level. Jigawa, Kano and Enugu are generally stronger performers at outcome level then Lagos and Kaduna (which is the worst performer on three of the four outcome indicators).

Table 11 SAVI summary of impact and outcome indicators

	Impact: Accountability and responsiveness of State Government and local government	Outcome: Functionality of State Houses of Assembly as agent for voice and accountability	Outcome: Functionality of civil society as agent for voice and accountability	Outcome: Functionality of media as agent for voice and accountability (Baseline 2012)	Outcome: Cumulative number of policy and implementation changes with some attribution to SAVI approach
Enugu	1.3 (4)	1.5 (2)	1.5 (2)	0.7 (1)	12 (4)
Jigawa	1.7 (1)	2.8 (1)	1.5 (2)	0.1 (3)	42 (1)
Kaduna	1.7 (1)	0.5 (5)	0.6 (5)	-0.2 (4)	11 (5)
Kano	1.2 (5)	1.5 (2)	1.7 (1)	-0.2 (4)	18 (2)
Lagos	1.5 (3)	0.7 (4)	1.4 (4)	0.3 (2)	16 (3)

Source: SAVI PCR. See Annex B for further details. The first figure in each of the first three columns is the absolute change in the SAVI governance index measure over the period of implementation. The bracketed figure in each column is the rank of each state for that indicator.

In addition to SAVI's capacity building activities, ESSPIN and PATHS2 sought to promote voice and accountability at the school and health facility level through support to SBMCs and Health Facility Committees. ESSPIN and PATHS2 also provide some support to CSOs operating at state level.[40] PATHS2 has supported the establishment of over 3,000 Facility Committees across the five states, with 80%–90% of interviewees considering that Facility Committees had contributed to improving service provision in four of the states – the proportion was 66% in Lagos (see Annex B, Section B.4.3). ESSPIN identified 9,611 schools with functioning SBMCs (over half of them in Kano) by 2015 (see Annex B, Section B.3.3).

No attempt was made in the PCRs for SAVI to estimate the development impact from SAVI's activities because the possible causal link was too tenuous.

In relation to gender, of the 157 documented SAVI case studies with demonstrable changes in policy and implementation, 65% were claimed to be linked to changes relevant to gender and social inclusion and/or were judged to have strengthened the voices of women and other socially excluded groups. 39% of the case studies provided evidence of government actively promoting the voice of excluded groups. SAVI's approach has involved sensitising partners on gender and social inclusion issues through training and mentoring.

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[40] Unlike SAVI, whose approach avoided the direct funding of CSOs, this support included direct financial support to fund advocacy activities.

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On citizens' perceptions of accountability, Lagos and Jigawa scored significantly better than the other three states on the indicator 'ability to take action against people in authority' (Figure 4), and satisfaction increased between 2013 and 2015 in these two states, while satisfaction fell in the other three states.

Figure 4 Ability to take action against someone in authority who has violated rights

Percentage responding 'strongly agree' or 'agree'
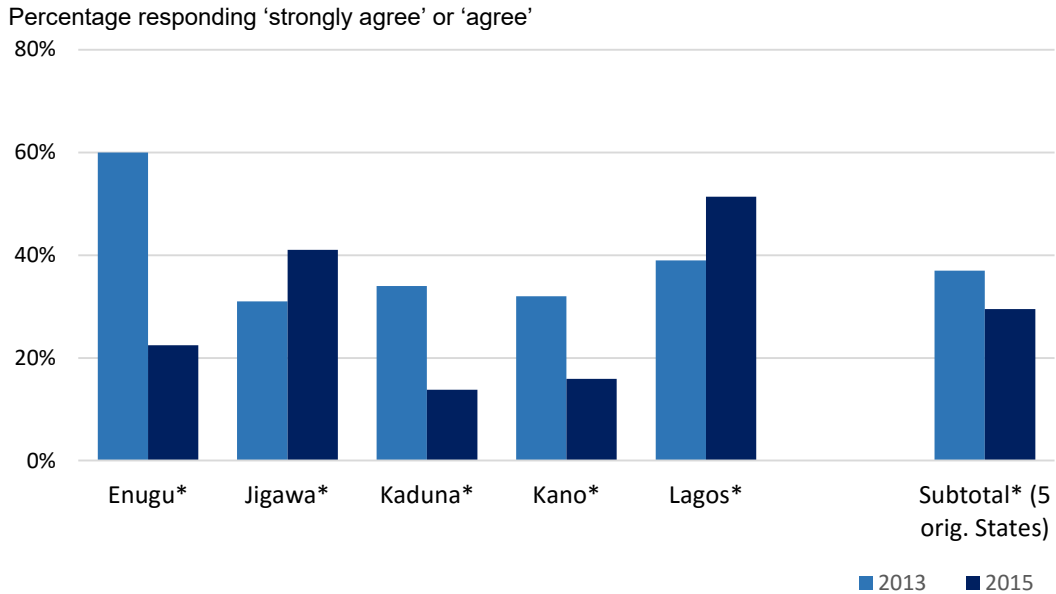
Source: CPS (2015), Figure 17. 'If I feel that my rights have been violated by someone in authority (police, school, hospital) I can take official action against them.'

5.4 Results achieved: Education

The 2015 ESSPIN AR found that there was progress in relation to the outcomes for increased access to education and increased funding for school improvement. Targets for outcomes (number of additional children in public primary schools, number of marginalised children with improved access to basic education, level of resources available for school improvement, number of children to benefit from the SIP) were met or narrowly missed.

Based on results reporting information for ESSPIN it is not possible to assess the relative performance of different states or the aggregate results achieved, in terms of changes in state education system performance. This is because of the lack of baseline data (for the period around 2008), and a focus of results reporting at outcome level on the implementation of ESSPIN

initiatives (particularly the SIP), rather than of basic education system performance at the state level as a whole.

At the output level the self-assessment process used to rate progress in the capability of State Governments and local governments for governance and management of basic education suggests there has been significant progress in all states except Enugu. Additional output measures related to the number of schools, head teachers and teachers who have received support by state. Aggregate output targets (planned milestones) for ESSPIN for 2015 were largely met though performance in achieving milestones varied by state and indicator. Further details are provided in Annex B, Section B.3. However, it is difficult to draw conclusions about comparative state performance of education systems from these indicators.

The core achievement of ESSPIN has been the implementation of the SIP in almost 16,000 schools by June 2015, covering 5.2 million children (of whom 2.5 million were girls). Table 12 shows the proportion of schools in each state that received SIP support. Kaduna and Kano in particular have not succeeded in rolling out implementation of the SIP as planned as funds were not released to allow this to happen.

Table 12 Percentage of schools receiving full package of intervention

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Enugu	0	0	8	8	25	99	99
Jigawa	8	8	0	15	37	100	55
Kaduna	4	4	14	19	11	74	0
Kano	5	5	0	5	100	0	0
Kwara	100	100	0	0	100	100	100
Lagos	10	10	60	100	40	100	100
Total	0	0	8	8	25	99	99

Source: Cameron et al. (2016), Table 5.

One measure of ESSPIN's impact is the number of additional children in public primary schools in the focus Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs) on which ESSPIN was working. By 2015 this was estimated by ESSPIN to be almost 380,000 (of whom about 48% were girls). However, assessing the extent to which this increase can be attributed to ESSPIN's interventions is not possible in the absence of a rigorous counterfactual comparison.

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The Comparative States Study, looking at the period 2008 to 2013, found that the gross primary school attendance rate in SLP states increased by about 8 percentage points, around 3 percentage points more than in non-SLP states, although the difference in the trends was not statistically significant. The overall trend in the net primary attendance rates were essentially flat in both groups of states. In states of the North–west region only, there was an increase in both gross and net primary school attendance rates. However the increase in the three SLP states (Jigawa, Kano and Kaduna) was less than in the other states of that region, and for the net attendance rate the better trend in the non-SLP states was statistically significant. Although the time period is somewhat different, this analysis does not provide support for the hypothesis that ESSPIN brought about an above-trend improvement in primary school attendance.

The education capacity development study (see Box 2) confirmed that significant progress had been made by ESSPIN in building capacity at each level of the education system and in strengthening core education management systems. However, weaknesses in the institutional environment and lack of financial resources were judged to be constraining the extent to which State Government-level (and particularly local government level) improvements were translated into better school-level performance.

Box 2   Findings of the ESSPIN capacity study

At the **federal** level, ESSPIN has been successful in assisting key federal organisations to perform their functions of developing improved education policies and national systems for monitoring learning, providing quality assurance to schools, and supporting SBMCs. However, progress in implementing these initiatives has been constrained by the weak arrangements for national coordination and management of the basic education system, and by a lack of high-level political support, particularly to ensure adequate funding.

At the **state** level, ESSPIN has built capacity in four areas: planning and budgeting; service delivery (including human resources and procurement systems), quality assurance, and community involvement in schools. It has also built organisational capacity to implement the SIP. The findings of the state self-assessments and of the interviews carried out as part of this study indicate that ESSPIN has been effective in improving the performance of these functions. Most state officials report that ESSPIN's interventions have contributed to strong systems for planning, budgeting and M&E that can be operated without continued support. Officials also report that key policy documents are being produced and followed, and that newly acquired skills are being regularly used. However, weaknesses in the institutional environment are constraining the extent to which these capacity improvements are translating into better school-level outcomes. One aspect of this is the lack of effective integration of activities across departments within SUBEBs. Another key institutional constraint is the limited alignment between budgets and actual expenditure at the state level. ESSPIN has made progress in building capacity in all six states. Current levels of capacity vary across the six states – Lagos, Kaduna and Jigawa have been the best performers, followed closely by Kwara and Kano. Performance has lagged significantly in Enugu, particularly in the development of a quality assurance system.

At the **LGEA** level, progress has been mixed. ESSPIN has worked with LGEAs to build capacity in planning, budgeting, educational management information systems (EMISs) and quality assurance, and has also trained School Support Officers (SSOs) and Social Mobilisation Officers (SMOs). ESSPIN has generated gains in each of these areas. However, the performance of LGEAs continues to be constrained by insufficient financial resources, authority and skills. While LGEAs have various responsibilities, they have limited control over the functions and financial resources that are required to carry these out. Both are largely concentrated at the state level, with little indication that states are willing to devolve these to a significant extent to LGEAs. In addition, further improvements in skills at this level are required. ESSPIN recognises this and LGEAs will form a core focus of its activities over the next two years. LGEAs are a critical link in the transmission of state-level capacity improvements to the school level and ESSPIN's work on this front is likely to boost its overall impact.

At the **school** level, the study finds evidence of enhanced capacity. For instance, school development plans are being prepared (evidence that they are being implemented is more limited), head teachers recognise that pedagogical support is a key part of their role, and SBMCs are monitoring teacher attendance. However, numerous contextual factors are restricting the transformation of these gains into significantly better learning outcomes. These include: the very poor state of infrastructure of many primary schools; chronic shortages of basic resources for teaching and learning (textbooks); head teachers who are not recruited on the basis of leadership and management skills and so may have limited capacity to benefit from training in these areas; limited capacity of the existing teacher stock to benefit from training and support so that they can deliver on the attainment of basic skills in literacy and numeracy; low levels of teacher motivation to improve performance even when support is provided; and erratic budget execution, which can leave teachers without salaries for as much as four months.

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The Composite Surveys undertaken in 2012 (CS1), 2014 (CS2) and 2016 (2013) provide robust empirical information on the performance of schools that have benefitted from the SIP in the six states in which ESSPIN has operated.[41]

The CS3 study found that:

- there have been marked improvements since 2012 (and particularly since 2014) in school development planning, SBMC functionality, inclusiveness and overall school quality;

- schools that received more ESSPIN intervention had more effective head teachers, are better at school development planning, and are much more likely to have well-functioning SBMCs in which women and children participate;

- the estimated effect of a year of full ESSPIN intervention (on the proportion of schools meeting the quality standard) was 5.2% for head teacher effectiveness, 5.1% for SBMC functionality and 9.4% for overall school quality;

- 'Children's learning outcomes have improved for grade 4 numeracy, but worsened in grade 2 English literacy and numeracy, with no significant change in grade 4 English literacy. ESSPIN intervention is associated with higher scores, even controlling for the state that the school is located in, learners' socioeconomic status, and pre-existing school facilities' (p.1)

- ESSPIN interventions are also associated with improved learning outcomes, with the effect being greater the more intensive and longer-lasting the support, though this effect was judged to be modest in magnitude:

  'Learning outcomes appear to be better for learners whose schools have received more ESSPIN intervention. For all four tests, the estimated effect of a year of full intervention is positive, but it is only statistically significant for the literacy tests. The estimated effect is modest in magnitude: it is in the range of 0.04 to 0.12 standard deviations. In schools with more ESSPIN intervention, there appear to be fewer learners in the lowest achievement bands and more learners in the higher achievement bands.' (p.62)

  However, this positive impact was not sufficient to lead to improved learning outcomes in aggregate across each state. This appeared to reflect the fact that positive effects wore off when support ended, and that for schools receiving a short duration of support the positive effect was small.

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[41] At the time of writing, aggregate findings from CS3 are available, but not state-level reports.

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- Teacher competence fell between 2012 and 2014, but recovered by 2016. The study found that teachers trained through ESSPIN were significantly more competent than other teachers, but even among these teachers, only a small proportion made it to the highest performance bands;

- Despite the marked improvements since 2012, (p.9) 'high proportions of schools across the six states[42] still do not meet ESSPIN's standards for a good school. In 2016, 18% of schools meet the standard on head teacher effectiveness, 19% on school development planning, 11% on inclusion, 44% on functional SBMCs, and 18% or 4% on overall school quality (depending on the indicator we use).'

In relation to gender and equity, ESSPIN has sought to increase school enrolment (around half the increase is accounted for by girls), and promoted initiatives directly targeted at groups that are socially excluded from education. Many specific initiatives were identified in the 2015 AR, including encouraging a focus on inclusive education, and (for instance in Kano) to encourage greater participation by girls in education.

The Comparative State Study found an improvement in the gender parity index for primary schools in the SLP states. This was larger than in the non-SLP states, both for all states and for those in the North-west region, although the difference was not statistically significant. Nevertheless the differences are consistent with ESSPIN having contributed towards improvements in gender parity.

On the CPS indicator of citizen satisfaction with education (the government ensuring a primary school place for every child – Figure 5), Jigawa and Lagos scored significantly higher than the other states in 2015 (and had seen some increases in satisfaction over time), while Kaduna scored significantly lower and had seen a significant fall in satisfaction. While satisfaction in Kano had fallen between 2013 and 2015, Kano had the largest improvement in satisfaction between 2010 and 2015 out of the five.

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[42] Including Kwara.

Figure 5 Government ensures a place in primary school for each child

Percentage responding 'very well' or 'well'.
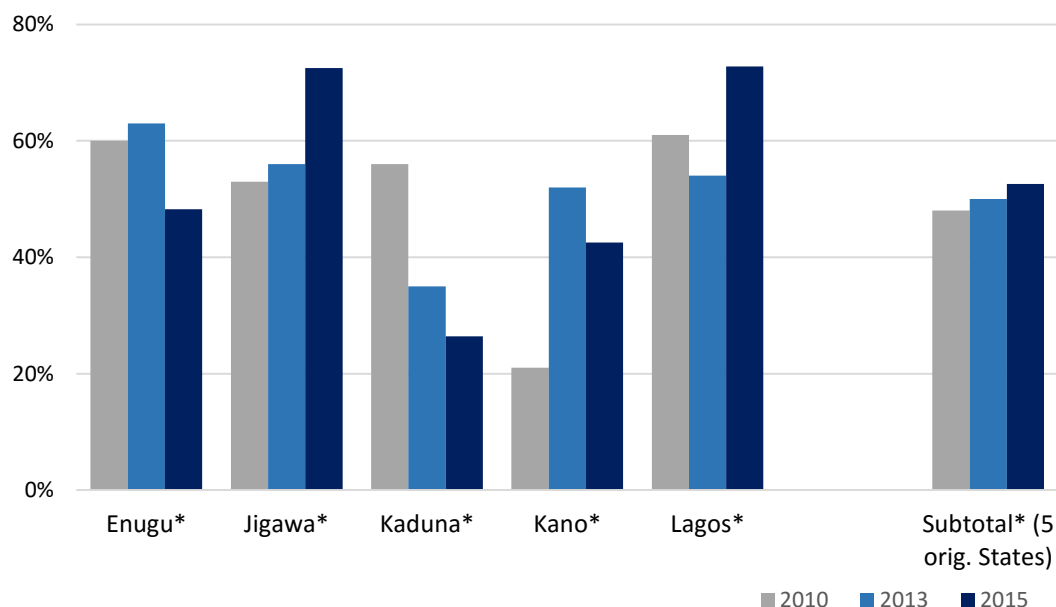
Source: CPS (2015)

5.5   Results achieved: Health

PATHS2 was assessed in the 2015 PCR/AR (followed by the 2016 PCR) as having achieved targets in all five states for increasing the proportion of pregnant women making at least four ANC visits, and as having come close to achieving the targets for the proportion of births attended by skilled birth attendants. There was also a high level of achievement of milestone targets for outcomes related to the additional number of births delivered with skilled birth personnel in targeted sites, the proportion of children under five receiving recommended diarrhoea treatment, levels of reported satisfaction with health services, annual per capita public spending on health, and the quality score for maternal and child health services (in Enugu and Lagos).

Annex Section B.4 summarises the performance of the state-level outcome measures as assessed by the PCR, based on surveys undertaken by PATHS2. It reported generally strong increases in the indicators across all states (with the possible exception of Lagos, which already had at baseline a relatively strong performance).

However, some substantial reservations about data quality in the PATHS2 surveys were raised in analytical work conducted by IMEP. [43] The

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[43] See in particular, Omoluabi, Megill and Ward (2015).

Comparative State Study provided an opportunity to triangulate the findings from the PATHS2 surveys. It compared trends in SLP and non-SLP states for a number of PATHS2 health indicators, or ones that were very similar. It found an improvement in the proportion of women receiving (any) antenatal care and the proportion of children with diarrhoea receiving ORS treatment. Improvements were larger than in the non-SLP states and the difference in the trends between the two groups of states was statistically significant. However the improvements were much more modest than those reported by the PATHS2 survey: 9 and 12 percentage points respectively. It also found a much more modest increase in the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (2 percentage points for the SLP states as a whole, 4 percent for the northern SLP states) and these improvements were slightly larger than in non-SLP states but were not statistically different.

The reference periods for the two comparisons were close enough to expect similar findings (2012 to 2014 for the PATHS2 surveys and 2008 to 2013 for the DHS). Given that some problems had been identified with the PATHS2 surveys, the evaluation judged that these more modest improvements found in the comparative analysis were more likely to be correct.

This suggests that there have been improvements in the uptake of some key primary services of around ten percentage points in the SLP states. This is appreciable, although substantially less than reported by PATHS2.

The main failure at the outcome level identified by the PCR relates to the target for the proportion of public PHC facilities in supported areas that meet minimum standards for human resources, equipment and infrastructure to deliver maternal, neonatal and child health (MNCH) services, with an achievement rate of only 5.5%, compared to a target for 2015 of 40%.

Overall PATHS2 scored highly for the achievement of both output and outcome targets. There has been a high level of implementation of reforms to strengthen health system management across all states. More information on this is provided in Annex B, Section B.4.

The PATHS2 capacity development study (see Box 3) found that the programme had contributed to significant improvements in capacity at Federal Government, State Government and local government level to govern, plan and budget for health services, though there were concerns about sustainability – particularly in the light of recent financial stress, the breadth of PATHS2 engagement with local governments was limited. Since little progress has been made in regard to the agenda of improving the coordination and management of PHC through bringing 'PHC under one roof', the capacity and motivation of local governments remained of critical importance.

In relation to gender issues, PATHS2 has had a specific focus on maternal health, and in each of its output areas PATHS2 supported initiatives including

developing policy, systems, organisational and community-level structures to enable women to influence how policy, systems and services can better meet their needs, directly and through CSOs.

Figure 6 Government provides medical treatment at a nearby facility

Percentage responding 'very well' or 'well
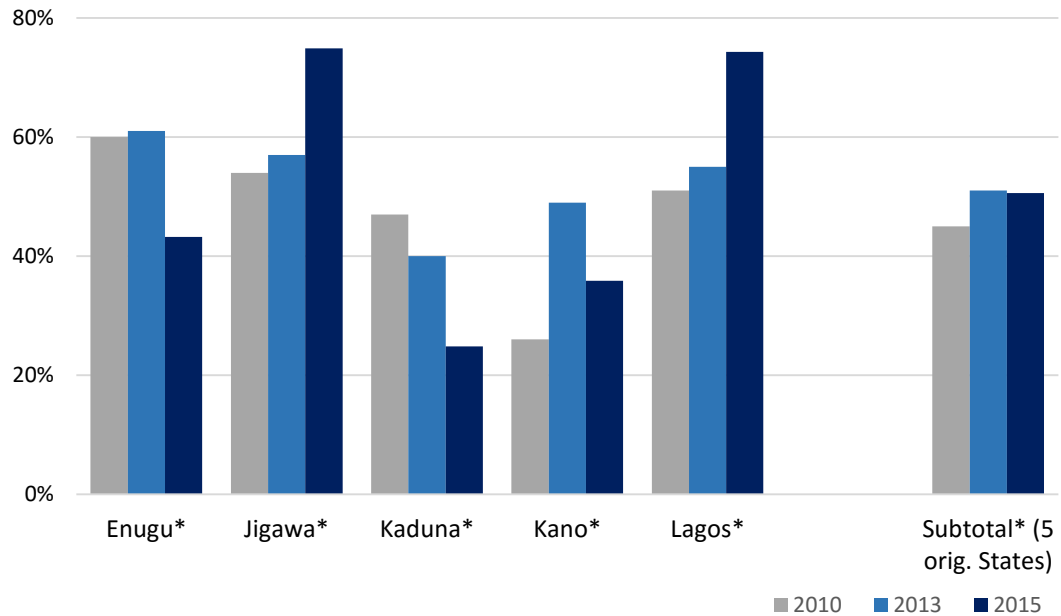
Source: CPS (2015)

For the CPS health satisfaction indicator (provision of medical treatment at a nearby facility – Figure 6**Error! Reference source not found.**), Jigawa and Lagos were rated substantially better than the other states, and both showed similar patterns of improvement over time. Kaduna had the lowest rating, and like Enugu and Kano saw a significant fall in satisfaction since 2013.

Box 3: Findings of the PATHS2 capacity study

Federal level: PATHS2 has played an important role in developing capacity at the federal level for each of the areas of activity studied – policy and planning, health management information system (HMIS) development, human resources for health (HRH), and the National PHC Development Agency (NPHCDA). Much of the capacity development remains relevant and useful, although concerns were expressed about meeting expectations in regard to planning, policy and research, and about the insecurity of funding for HRH development. The capacity development achieved has not been consolidated by the provision of adequate federal government funding for implementation and maintenance of the systems that have been built and so there are significant concerns about sustainability. PATHS2 contributed to the eventual passage of the National Heath Act, which should provide an improved national framework for health policy.

State level: There have been significant improvements in capacity at state level to govern, plan and budget for health services, although continuing investment needs to be assured in order to sustain these improvements. In each of the states, arrangements for the procurement, supply and affordable availability of drugs have been radically improved. Capacity has been developed to capture health-related information and to transmit, summarise and use it for planning and evaluation purposes. However, data capture remains incomplete and the benefits of the investment made by PATHS2 will be lost unless there is continuing spending to support the maintenance of the HMIS. The arrangements for staffing the health system remain inadequate, with responsibilities continuing to be diffuse and poorly defined in each of the focal states except Jigawa. The consolidation of PHC functions under SPHCDAs has the potential to unify the planning and provision of health care and leadership of all aspects of HRH, but this has not taken place in the states in which PATHS2 has worked.

LGA level: PATHS2 was successful in the LGAs in which it provided support in Enugu, Kano and Jigawa in building local government capacity in planning and budgeting, HMIS management and drugs supply. However, the sustainability of the gains made in planning and budgeting and the HMIS system is fragile due to a lack of funding to maintain the systems – whereas the drug supply system is fully self-sustaining. Only in Jigawa, with the Gunduma Health System, is there a robust link between state level and LGA level, which enables state-wide plans to be operationalised effectively at LGA level and the implementing officials to be held to account for their performance by the Gunduma Board senior management.

Facility level: Staff, FHCs and communities in each of the three states report significant gains as a result of PATHS2's activities relating to: service availability and uptake; health improvement in terms of reduced mortality; staff competence in key – especially life-saving – skills; improved efficiency and morale through better managerial support and community engagement; improved physical environments; drug availability; and referral arrangements. It is also true that the gains are not universally available and it is difficult to measure the level of coverage achieved. There is a lack of ongoing investment and unless this can be made good the system will at best remain at its current level of performance – and might even in time revert to pre-PATHS2 levels of performance.

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5.6   Overview of results achieved, by SLP and state

5.6.1   Results achieved by SLPs

The main results in relation to governance, voice and accountability, education and health are the following:

- The SLP output results reporting (as assessed in the PCRs and ARs) shows a generally strong performance by all the SLPs in terms of achievement of milestone targets, [44] though the revision and redefinition of targets and indicators makes the interpretation of performance in achieving milestones problematic as an indicator of achievement.

- SPARC has generally successfully built capacity and improved systems to strengthen public finance and management. However, the extent to which these have been translated into improved system (in particular budget) performance has been significantly less. There is though evidence of improved efficiency and budget savings from some initiatives that SPARC has supported. There has been a high level of variability of achievement across the SLP states, though the ranking of relative performance across states varies according to the measures used and the time period considered. Jigawa and Lagos generally rate highly, and Kaduna poorly.

- SAVI has successfully built capacity in the organisations with which it has worked, and has contributed to policy and implementation initiatives. Performance has generally been strongest in Jigawa and weakest in Kaduna. However, the robustness of SAVI's performance scoring may be queried, particularly at the impact level, so that it is difficult to make a rigorous assessment of the extent to which the voice and accountability environment has in fact improved across states. CPS indicators related to perceptions of voice and accountability generally show positive trends in Jigawa and Lagos, and negative ones in the other states.

- ESSPIN has demonstrated that its approach to school improvement through support at each level of the system does generate results, provided that support is maintained at a sufficient intensity and for a sufficient length of time. However, the size of the effect and the level of support provided (including the level of state financial resources committed) appear not to have been sufficient to lead to major changes in education sector performance at state level, though the data available to make state level comparisons are inadequate.

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[44] In ARs, all four of the programmes (except ESSPIN) have received programme score ratings in ARs and PCRs of A+ for all years since 2013, indicating that the programmes have all 'moderately exceeded expectations'. ESSPIN was rated at A for 2012–3 and for 2014–5.

Performance in reform implementation appears to have been weaker in Enugu than in the other states.

- In relation to health, there has been progress at outcome level (relating principally to indicators of the use of maternal and child health services and public expenditure on health) across all five states. PATHS2 reporting focuses on state-level performance indicators, which facilitates this comparison, though there are some weaknesses in data quality.

The difference in outcome reporting approaches between ESSPIN and PATHS2 makes it difficult directly to compare results achieved in education and health. While PATHS2 outcome reporting focuses on state-level performance, attributing these state-level changes to PATHS2 is more difficult than attributing outcomes for ESSPIN, where outcomes are much closer causally to the outputs. Also, the national picture over the period of SLP implementation has been one of progress on maternal and child health service provision. These issues are discussed further in the following chapter.

5.6.2 Results achieved by state

The overall pattern of performance by state shows that Jigawa and Lagos have generally performed well across a wide range of indicators for all four programmes, including improvements in citizens' satisfaction. The picture in Kano and Enugu is mixed. Kano showed some evidence of improvements in health and education but with a deterioration in budget management. Enugu showed some improvement in budget management and health, but appears to have performed poorly on implementing reforms in education. Kaduna's performance appears to have been the worst, though with some positive achievements for health. In each state, there is a clear pattern across all four areas of the highest satisfaction levels in the CPS being in Jigawa and Lagos, and the lowest in Kaduna.

5.7 What has been the impact of the SLPs?

As is discussed in Section 2.3.1, Nigeria has not met most of the targets for child and maternal health MDGs, although there have been improvements in key indicators, and there have been large improvements in the period since 2004, following minimal improvements or deteriorations during the earlier period of military rule. There are major differences in performance across states for all indicators, with the continuing poor indicators in the north-east and north-west explaining non-achievement of targets, which have largely been achieved in the south.

The main evidence base for answering this question is provided by the Comparative State Study, which used quantitative data on health and

education performance across Nigerian states to test whether there were any significant differences in the performance of the SLP Suite states compared with others. Some additional evidence is provided by the PCRs/ARs for education and health in relation to wider impact, while each of the PCRs/ARs made an assessment of evidence in relation to how successfully each SLP had addressed gender (and to some extent) equity issues.

The quantitative analysis at impact level compared progress in performance against health and education-related MDGs in the SLP states with other states in Nigeria.

With respect to health outcomes, the SLP states were found to have experienced greater improvements than non-SLP states in several indicators related to service use. Against a backdrop of positive progress nationally, SLP states are shown to have progressed significantly faster in increasing the percentage of children under five with diarrhoea who received oral rehydration therapy and the proportion of women who received ANC from a skilled provider. However, there is one indicator of health-seeking behaviour that improved significantly more in non-Suite states (the percentage of children sleeping under insecticide-treated nets or in sprayed dwellings).

The results on indicators of actual health status are mixed. There are greater declines in SLP states in child mortality than in non-SLP states over the period of the interventions, but the difference is not statistically significant, and no corresponding decreases are found in infant mortality. Anthropometric indicators appear to have actually deteriorated in SLP states relative to non-SLP states, although the evidence is not conclusive since these indicators are believed to suffer from measurement error.

Altogether, the picture that emerges from the analysis of health outcomes is that the SLPs may have been associated with some improvements in the utilisation of health services, in a manner that is consistent with the investments of the PATHS2 programme. However, this has not been accompanied by similar improvements in the final health status of citizens.

In a more limited comparison of health outcomes focusing just on states in the north-west, the results were similar to those for the country as a whole. Greater improvements for the Suite states were observed for seven out of the 12 health-related indicators. Statistically significant improvements were found for the percentage of children under five with diarrhoea who received oral rehydration therapy, the proportion of women who received ANC from a skilled health worker, the percentage of pregnant women tested for HIV, and for full immunisation rates. Similarly to the national picture, the SLP states in the north-west performed worse than non-SLP states in the same region against anthropometric indicators.

The evidence on education-related indicators is also mixed. The analysis suggests that gross primary school attendance rates have increased faster

in SLP states than in non-SLP states, but the increase is not statistically significant and there have been no positive changes in primary school attendance rates in either the SLP or non-SLP states. The results on secondary school attendance rates suggest a deterioration in the SLP states relative to non-SLP states. In terms of the inclusivity of school attendance, the gender parity index for primary and secondary schools show a greater improvement in SLP states, but the differences are not statistically significant.

In sum, the findings do point to some improvements in the performance of the SLP states that are broadly consistent with the overall Suite logic, especially with regard to their intermediate objectives of improving state-level governance. However, the analysis does not find compelling evidence to suggest that the Suite effectively achieved its final objectives in improving Nigeria's progress against the MDGs. It should, however, be noted that data for making this comparison are only available to compare 2008 with 2013, so results that have taken longer to emerge would not be captured by this analysis. It may be informative to carry out further analysis when the results of the next DHS are available (2018).

5.8 Sustainability of the results achieved

Sustainability for each of the SLPs was assessed in the PCRs/ARs. The capacity development studies for health and education and the Political Economy Summary have provided significant additional information on aspects of sustainability, the latter specifically in relation to assessments of the likely commitment to reform of the new governors elected in all five SLP states in 2015.

5.8.1 To what extent are different stakeholders committed to maintaining reforms or systems improvements?

The PCRs provided a generally positive assessment of ongoing stakeholder commitment in relation to likely sustainability, but with some reservations:

- Evidence was presented in the SPARC PCR that out of 20 case studies conducted by SPARC 41% met sustainability criteria related to new processes, procedures or systems being routinely undertaken and accepted as a priority, with a further 53% rated as partially sustainable.

- The SAVI PCR found that there is a strong sense of commitment to SAVI's behavioural change objectives among key partners (in civil society, media, and State Houses of Assembly) that has been built on advice and mentoring rather than financial support. However, SAVI's model of Advocacy Partnerships was judged as having reached only a relatively small section of civil society. In the states

into which SAVI has expanded more recently, a broader approach has been followed, but this engagement was judged too recent to have built strong and sustainable commitment. Sustainable commitment in State Houses of Assembly was made more difficult by frequent turnover of elected members and the influence of political patronage, but commitment was judged to be particularly strong in Yobe, Enugu and Jigawa.

- ESSPIN's Sustainability Plan (developed in 2015) emphasised developing capacity at state and LGEA level, improving evidence and learning for school improvement (through the Composite Surveys), leveraging government resources through political engagement, and building partnerships that support school improvement. The 2015 AR judged that progress was being made in each of these areas but that sustainability depended critically on continued state funding at least at the level that had been provided between 2012 and 2015 to school improvement.

- The PATHS2 PCR noted that many PATHS2 interventions have been taken over fully by governments, with budgets provided. However, the fiscal stress from 2015 has meant that funds release is not guaranteed, with particular concerns in the northern states about the release of funding for HMIS and human resources interventions. Attention to building commitment in the northern states had focused on government and on the successor DFID project (MNCH2), so it was not clear that wider commitment existed, though commitment was judged to be strong in SMoHs, SPHCDAs and local government health teams. For the southern states, the 2015 AR noted that there had been a focus on identifying 'institutional homes' for initiatives as a mechanism for building commitment and achieving sustainability. While progress had been made with this it was judged to be uneven, particularly in Lagos.

The Political Economy Summary has shown that high-level political commitment (from State Executive Governors) to the direction of reforms promoted through the SLPs has varied over time and between states over the period of SLP implementation. The extent to which governors have felt a need to focus on patronage to protect their political positions has been a critical determinant of willingness to implement measures that reduce executive discretion over public expenditure, and to move away from high visibility infrastructure investment-generating patronage opportunities, towards strengthening service delivery systems. Jigawa has seen the most sustained political commitment to reforms. Lagos has had a high level of continuity in the reform priorities pursued by government but this has not embraced all the objectives that the SLPs have sought to promote.

In all five states, new governors were elected in 2015. The immediate prospects for sustainability therefore depend on the extent to which these new governors take ownership of the reform programmes, and are able and willing to carry through a wider reform agenda which builds on the capacity that the SLPs have helped to develop. The fiscal difficulties that State Governments have faced (resulting principally from the collapse of oil prices and revenues from late 2014 onwards) provide opportunities for reform to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public expenditure – there is also evidence that past reform efforts in SLP Suite states have been prompted by fiscal problems. An immediate effect of fiscal stress has been to limit the availability of financial resources to maintain some initiatives that the SLPs have promoted, such as HMISs.

A further factor is the attitude and priorities of the Federal Government since 2015, and the extent to which it is providing leadership and incentives to reinforce reform efforts at state level. To date, however, it is not clear that this leadership is being provided in education. The emphasis of the major Federal Government policy initiatives has been on school feeding and teacher recruitment, rather than on the issues of teacher quality and effective management, leadership and supervision that ESSPIN and other DFID interventions have highlighted. There has been some leadership from the new Federal Government in the areas of public finance, through initiatives such as zero-based budgeting and the removal of ghost workers from payrolls. In the health sector, the signing of the National Health Act in December 2014 (to which PATHS2 contributed) has provided a framework for an improved public health system but only limited steps have been made so far towards its implementation.

5.8.2 Are improved approaches affordable (given the fiscal context)?

The PCRs/ARs assessed the ongoing affordability of the initiatives supported by the SLPs. For SPARC, the governance reforms promoted were designed not to involve substantial additional costs for initial set-up or continued implementation. The case studies carried out by SPARC found that 82% met the affordability criterion. For SAVI, the behaviour change approach has not depended on large-scale financial support to partners. However, the facilitated partnership model for promoting behaviour change is relatively costly. Thus, behaviour change may be sustained at low cost where it has occurred but may not be replicated further. ESSPIN's support model was designed to be affordable within agreed budget envelopes, so this depends on whether budgeted resources are available and released for this purpose. The PATHS2 PCR and AR noted some affordability concerns related to the costing of the cluster service delivery package, and the rapid replication and internal sustaining of the clusters.

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The capacity development studies also noted that there are some initiatives in the health (particularly) and education sectors which have encountered problems of fiscal sustainability in the difficult fiscal environment from 2015 onwards.

A major structural issue for affordability (for health and education spending) is whether Nigeria (at both federal and state level) succeeds in improving its tax collection efforts. The current context is one in which tax revenues as a proportion of GDP are extremely low compared to other countries at similar levels of GDP.[45] The focus of reforms promoted by SPARC has been on improving the efficiency of public expenditure, and both ESSPIN and PATHS2 have sought to develop approaches to service delivery that are affordable within the fiscal envelope available. There has also been a strong emphasis on planning services within a realistic medium-term fiscal envelope. There appears therefore to be no fundamental problem in regard to the affordability of the approaches promoted for service delivery: the issue is the priority accorded to health and education service delivery and strengthening in the face of other political priorities, and the willingness and capacity to improve tax take.

5.9 Efficiency: management, learning and value for money

5.9.1 How effective have SLP governance and management arrangements been?

The PCRs and ARs generally judged the management performance of the SLPs individually as strong (and improving over time) – reflected in particular in the performance in delivering inputs and outputs against agreed timetables and budgets. Work planning and management arrangements with state-level partners were also effective, reflecting the good relationships developed with partners. The main governance and management weakness has been the lack of a structured process of agreement and review with state governments on overall priorities and the role of DFID support in achieving them, as opposed to intervention-specific management. This has in part reflected the general lack of state government processes for ensuring the alignment of donor support with state development plans – except in Lagos and more recently in Kaduna.

The PCRs also identified examples of effective coordination and collaboration between the SLPs, with cases where this has helped each programme achieve its separate objectives. The axis of cooperation between SPARC and SAVI has been strong, but linkages with other programmes (and the rest of the DFID portfolio) have generally been significantly weaker.

The effectiveness of governance and management arrangements across the SLPs and in relation to DFID's state engagement is assessed in the

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[45] See OPM/TPP (2015) op. cit.

Coordination and Management Review. This found that DFID has had limited capacity to exercise strategic management of the Suite, and has not undertaken effective oversight or risk management across the SLPs as a whole. Factors contributing to this have included a lack of clearly defined accountabilities within DFID Nigeria for the Suite (or for the effectiveness of engagement in a particular state) as a whole. This has been exacerbated by the variable effectiveness of the devolution of authority to DFID State and Regional Offices and high levels of advisory staff turnover. DFID's programmes operating in states have remained largely separately designed and managed, with results frameworks and accountability for them focused on activities directly under the control of each SLP, rather than on joint results at the state level.

While there have been some initiatives to strengthen the role of DFID's state representation, these fundamental constraints appear to remain in place: DFID State Engagement Strategies do not articulate clearly a comprehensive 'One DFID' approach, or a fully developed analytical basis or adequate theory of change. Where there are relatively strong initiatives by states to set out clear development plans and priorities, and a willingness actively to manage donor coordination mechanisms around these (most notably in Kaduna and Lagos), this does appear to encourage better coordination within the DFID portfolio.

5.9.2 How effective has the process of identifying and learning lessons from the SLPs been?

Each of the SLPs has placed a priority on the identification and communication of lessons and each has developed a large body of analytical and research material that has been made available through project websites, as well as through targeted publications (for instance in the form of briefing notes) and workshops. Each of the SLPs has also engaged with partners (particularly officials from State Governments) in joint processes of self-assessment, which have included identifying lessons from experience. The projects have therefore collectively produced a valuable set of resources relating to the experience of the wide range of initiatives that they have each pursued.

The great diversity of experience across many different initiatives and contexts that the SLPs have documented poses some challenges for summary and for highlighting the most critical overall lessons. Each of the SLPs has, however, attempted to do this, including through producing or commissioning studies focused on lessons.[46] These lessons were assessed and reviewed in the PCRs and ARs.

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[46] See Booth and Chambers (2014) and PATHS2 (2015).

The major challenge will be to ensure the continued availability and active communication of the knowledge generated from the entire SLP experience to a wide range of Nigerian stakeholders beyond the lifetime of the projects, as well as ensuring that lessons are brought to bear in the design of future DFID, and other donor and government, programmes.

The latter point is particularly significant, since there have been consistent failures by DFID to learn from earlier experience – for instance from the predecessor projects to the SLPs – as identified in earlier IMEP work, including the Suite MTR. Specifically, these failures have included: the tendency of DFID programmes to operate in sectoral silos that are deeply rooted in DFID culture and management practice and exacerbated by a high turnover of advisory staff; a lack of joint results frameworks across programmes that would encourage structured cooperation towards joint goals; and insufficient strategic management of DFID's whole portfolio of activities at state level.

Specific lessons learned from the SLPs are presented in Chapter 7.

5.9.3 Have the SLPs provided value for money?

Value for money is assessed in each of the SLP PCRs, against indicators developed within DFID's general value for money framework and using IMEP's guidance on a common value for money framework across the SLPs:

- SPARC was judged in the PCR as 'most likely' to represent value for money based on the evidence in favour of the theory of change, high scoring across outputs in ARs, costs being kept within agreed ceilings and the fact that costs show downward trends, including specific tracked costs savings, together with evidence of good value for money practices in terms of DFID's assessment criteria. Where it was possible to estimate the efficiency savings to State Governments from specific reforms that SPARC had supported (such as reducing the debt stock in Enugu and pension contribution reforms in Jigawa), these were estimated to be significantly above the costs incurred by SPARC to implement them.

- For SAVI, it was noted that the benefits of the programme were difficult to quantify or assess in monetary terms, while cost effectiveness comparisons were complicated by programmes operating in different contexts and using different approaches, so that it was not possible to provide a credible cost–benefit analysis. It was also judged that it was 'most likely' that SAVI's work represented value for money, based on: consistent positive assessments of value for money indicators and outputs milestone achievement during ARs; spending in line with budgets; and evidence of good value for money practices, such as tracking costs savings and benchmarking of input costs. SAVI documented 157 cases where its interventions were

judged to have contributed positively to changes in policies and implementation. In most cases, it was not possible to compare results achieved and costs incurred, but several examples of improved efficiency and reduced waste of public resources can be identified.

- The 2015 AR concluded that ESSPIN continued to represent value for money based on evidence of the positive results in terms of improved state-level capacity, school quality, head teacher effectiveness, SBMC functionality and social inclusion. This was despite less positive results in terms of local government capacity, teaching skills and learning outcomes. There was a positive trend in the reduction in unit costs of activities, particularly through the scaling up of the SIP.

- The PCR (focusing principally on the three northern states) found that PATHS2 provided value for money, and was assessed as highly cost effective against WHO guidelines, in terms of estimated cost per life-year saved (mainly resulting from estimated reductions in infant mortality). In terms of economy, there was evidence of good personnel cost management, including reducing reliance on short-term consultants. Through most of the programme, the share of expenditures on outputs rather than administration and management and other overheads increased sharply (from 26% in the inception year to 79% in Year 5). However, the allocation of resources for the extension phase in the northern states was judged to have been inefficient, as it led to much higher administration and management costs.

The overall assessment is that value for money has been high, but this relates largely to performance at the input and output level, given the generally limited evidence of impact having been achieved, and the difficulty of establishing attribution that would be required to validate the estimates of Lives Saved claimed by PATHS2 and of additional social expenditure by SPARC.

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6 Validity of the SLP intervention logic

6.1 Introduction

This chapter builds on the evidence relating to the pattern of results achieved that was set out in Chapter 5 to assess the extent to which the intervention logic of the SLPs proved to be valid. Section 6.2 begins by summarising evidence on alignment with stakeholder objectives. Section 6.3 summarises performance along the results chain for each of the four SLPs in turn. Section 6.4 then examines evidence in relation to the key common assumptions underlying the SLPs and the SLP Suite as a whole.

6.2 Alignment with stakeholder objectives

The PCRs for all the SLPs found that there was a high level of alignment between the SLPs and objectives expressed by the State Governments. This was reflected in particular in the close working relationships that were developed with senior state officials and the strong emphasis in all four SLPs on joint planning and selection of activities, and the deep involvement of state officials in self-assessment and review processes. Numerous examples of state commitment to specific SLP reform initiatives were cited, with core SLP-supported activities being integrated into state development and sector planning processes. Only a few examples of weak alignment were cited: one was the Service Development Strategy prepared by PATHS2, which did not involve significant State Government participation.

A similar pattern was found with local governments, though the scope and depth of SLP engagement was generally much more limited than at state level, and the resources and decision-making authority of local governments was more limited. Federal Government engagement (principally from ESSPIN and PATHS2) was also strongly aligned with agreed policy priorities. Generally, the SLPs had more limited direct engagement with communities, but service user perspectives were captured through some data collection, as well as through the community involvement at school and health facility level, which was integral to the models of intervention for the health and education sectors.

While the evidence of alignment with federal and state policies and priorities presented in the PCRs is strong, some of the limitations of this alignment are identified in the Political Economy Summary, and in the education and health capacity development studies. In particular, the latter studies noted at federal level that while SLP-supported initiatives were strongly aligned with expressed government sectoral priorities, the extent of leadership and financial commitment to implement these priorities was limited. Similarly, but to a lesser extent, it was apparent that some state-level SLP initiatives (for

instance on HMIS) were not receiving sufficient financial support to be effectively implemented. The Political Economy Summary assessed the level of state commitment to governance, accountability and service delivery reforms and found that this was variable across states and over time (only being consistent through the whole period in Jigawa and Lagos), although formal commitments to these objectives existed in all states.

The overall conclusion is that the close partnership working arrangements developed by the SLPs generally ensured strong alignment with government policies and priorities. However, high-level political commitment to expressed development goals, at federal level and in some states, was often fragile in the face of competing political pressures, so that political leadership and financial commitment to initiatives developed with the SLPs were considerably weaker than the high level of cooperation around jointly developed visions that was apparent at the technical level.

6.3 Overview of SLP performance along the results chain

6.3.1 SPARC

The evidence presented in Section 5.2 shows that SPARC had a good record of achievement at the output level (relating principally to the strengthening of government systems and processes). However, the record of achievement at the outcome level (relating to the improved performance of government systems and processes) was much weaker, as well as more variable by state. Modelling evidence suggested that SPARC's involvement in states had encouraged additional government expenditure, including on education and health. However, the attribution assumptions underlying this claim cannot be fully validated.

In addition to the overall pattern of results, case study evidence presented by SPARC (and reviewed in the PCR) showed a similar picture. This evidence showed that there was a high rate of application by State Governments of technical advice provided (nine out of 10 cases), with seven of these leading to better polices and strategies, and five leading to improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of the use of public resources. The case study evidence on the extent to which outcomes and impact were achieved was much weaker. This 'suggested' that four cases out of the 10 have resulted in the delivery of better basic public services (including the work of SERVICOM in Kano and the Enugu State Planning Commission), and that in three cases there had been improvement in the lives of Nigerian citizens (including in Jigawa, where the gross school enrolment rate improved and the MMR was reduced). The small number of case studies means that these findings cannot be seen as representative, but are likely to be illustrative, of the main features of experience. SPARC's own analytical work suggested that varying levels of political commitment

were likely to be key determinants of the extent to which initiatives to strengthen governance were successfully implemented.

6.3.2 SAVI

The evidence presented in Section 5.3 showed that SAVI was successful in building capacity for advocacy work with its selected partners. Case studies carried out by SAVI suggested that in many cases this had led to improved public policies and service delivery.

The SAVI PCR noted that over time SAVI's strategy has shifted towards the later stages of its theory of change, particularly building connections between non-state actors and government, and replication. There has also been a relative shift from a principal focus on civil society to more engagement with media and State Houses of Assembly (Stage 3, 'triangle'). The PCR concluded that there is evidence that SAVI has worked effectively in building capacity at the first five stages, but with limited evidence of wider scale-up (Stage 6).

SAVI's theory of change, however, (unlike that of the other SLPs) focuses on steps in the process of building capacity and then broadening and replicating this. It does not examine the mechanisms by which this capacity is translated into a wider improvement in the voice and accountability environment in each state (and hence to improved government performance and development results). Instead, the analysis has focused on individual initiatives. There has not been any analytical work undertaken on the key assumptions relating to this potential wider impact.

6.3.3 ESSPIN

As discussed in Section 5.4, ESSPIN's results framework does not provide a strong basis for making comparative assessments across states of the extent to which ESSPIN may have contributed to overall improvements in education system management. However, the high-quality survey school-level evidence from the Composite Surveys provides a stronger basis for assessing the impact of ESSPIN than exists for the other SLPs, because of the focus on learning outcomes. The capacity development study also showed that there had been strong performance in building capacity at each level of the basic education system where ESSPIN had focused its support, but that there were concerns about sustainability once support ceased, and about the level of financial resources.

The evidence from the Composite Surveys and from the capacity development study suggests that the ESSPIN theory of change, based around the implementation at school level of the SIP, with support to the strengthening of policy, management and supervision throughout the system, is fundamentally valid, in that full implementation of ESSPIN support is robustly associated with improvements in school quality, head teacher effectiveness, SBMC functionality, and learning outcomes.

However, these positive effects were found to be relatively limited in magnitude and likely to wear off over time without continued support. Multiple factors can plausibly be judged as likely to have contributed to the performance observed. These included: the dilution of the effectiveness of SIP support as the programme was rolled out through a cascade model[47] and as sustained support for teachers in the classroom became dependent on SSOs and head teachers; fundamental weaknesses in teachers' skills and motivation levels, which may limit the extent to which they can benefit from the support provided; as well as continuing school overcrowding and lack of resources, related to deeper institutional constraints and inadequate funding.

While the ESSPIN Learning and Evidence Framework provides a good articulation of the key assumptions and reviews evidence on them, it appears that this was developed too late in the process of programme implementation to have guided evidence-gathering so that critical questions about the validity of assumptions could be tested. It is therefore, on the evidence that is currently available, not possible to identify the relatively significance of each of these factors in explaining observed performance.

6.3.4 PATHS2

The evidence base for assessing the validity of PATHS2's theory of change differs significantly from that for ESSPIN, in that while there is a stronger basis for comparing performance between the SLP states than there is for ESSPIN, there is less high-quality evidence about health outcomes and the quality of service delivery. In addition, no full theory of change for PATHS2 was ever developed. As a result, the key assumptions in the intervention logic were not systematically identified or tested.

PATHS2's results reporting and the findings of the capacity development study point to strong achievement at the level of outputs (improvements to systems, policies and processes). There has also been a generally strong performance at the outcome level across the states in relation to specific service provision and use indicators (proportion of pregnant women making at least four ANC visits, proportion of births attended by skilled birth attendants, and proportion of children under five receiving recommended diarrhoea treatment). There is, however, less evidence of this being translated into development results (at the level of MMR and IMR reduction as measured by the DHS). While there has been progress in improving the use of maternal and child services in all five states, this has taken place against a general national pattern of improvement and it is not evident that the SLP states have outperformed other states in this respect.

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[47] In Kano this was judged by the PCR as 'highly likely to result in weakening in the transmission and uptake of key messages', leading to reduced effectiveness.

The PCR identified several possible explanations for why stronger performance at the outcome and impact level may not have been achieved:

- the lack of a vehicle for demonstrating service delivery improvement strategies in the programme's first three years;

- uneven and incomplete service delivery strategy implementation;

- slow scale-up of innovations;

- low availability of qualified human resources;

- continued inadequate public spending on health (particularly non-staff spending) despite increases in spending; and

- continued obstacles to health-seeking behaviour despite the delivery and receipt of improved health messages.

However, there is insufficient evidence to assess the relative significance of these factors. A stronger *ex ante* focus on identifying key assumptions, and the design of implementation with a greater emphasis on testing them, might have made it more feasible to draw firm conclusions about the reasons for the performance observed.

6.3.5 Review and comparison

Reviewing evidence across the four SLPs suggests some similarities across the programmes. There is strong evidence that capacity has been built, and systems strengthened, and evidence that service provision has improved (where ESSPIN and PATHS2 support has been provided), though the extent to which this has been achieved has varied from state to state. However, output-level and some outcome-level achievement has not systematically translated into significantly improved development performance (for instance at the level of reductions in mortality rates and improvements in learning outcomes in schools), while the overall performance of state budget systems has not improved as much as was intended, and it is not clear that the general voice and accountability environment has improved in the five states.

The intervention logic has generally proven to hold strongly at the level of links from inputs to outputs, and (more weakly) from outputs to outcomes (though these have not been consistently defined across the SLPs). It is, though, difficult to identify the specific assumptions that have broken down for each SLP, since in general there are multiple plausible explanations for this failure. Analytical work has been done by (particularly) ESSPIN and PATHS2 on identifying assumptions, but this has generally been too late in the implementation process for these to have been systematically tested.

In relation to the presentation of the SLP intervention logic set out in Figure 1, there has been a high level of achievement of capacity and system improvement at centre of government and sector levels. This has generally been translated into improved sector policy and management, but there has

(at least in some states) been less success in translating into improved budget and public management (though it has led to increased public spending on health and education). Limited implementation of initiatives developed at Federal level means that these initiatives do not appear to have significantly influenced state governments. There has been some progress in improving service delivery (though this has been constrained by continuing weaknesses of local government capacity), and service access and use but this has led only to limited improvements in health and education outcomes. There has been improvement in voice and accountability at the frontline of service delivery, and in CSO, media and State House of Assembly capacity to engage on policy issues – though it is difficult to identify systematic improvements in services as a result.

6.4   Evidence on key assumptions in the SLP Suite intervention logic

This section summarises evidence on the additional EQs on the assumptions of the SLP intervention logic. These questions relate both to the overall intervention logic of the SLP Suite as a whole, and to assumptions that apply across the SLPs individually.

A.1.1 Have reforms (at sector and centre of government) enabled government resources to be used more effectively towards improving basic services? Has public expenditure on priority services (a) increased and (b) become more effective?

There is good evidence that the SLPs have strengthened the capacity of State Governments to plan and budget for resources more effectively and efficiently, both in aggregate and at the state level. There has been significant progress in implementing upstream measures that have strengthened budgeting, planning and management processes. However, these have not been fully implemented to ensure that budget and management systems have fundamentally changed. In particular, a significant level of discretionary control over public resources has continued. Planning and budgeting has also improved at local government and school/facility level, but this has happened in the specific areas that have received support, rather than across the whole state.

The capacity development study for education found that ESSPIN had succeeded in strengthening state-level capacity for planning and budgeting, service delivery, quality assurance, and community involvement in schools, with a significant strengthening in all five states (though Enugu lagged behind the other states). Similar results in strengthening planning and management capacity were achieved at local government level, where interventions occurred, as well as in progress with school-level planning and management (for instance the preparation of School Development Plans). However, weaknesses in the institutional environment, and continued inadequate funding at school and local government level, constrained the extent to which

these improvements were implemented and translated into better service delivery and school-level outcomes.

In health, the capacity development study found that across all five states there were significant improvements in the capacity at state level to govern, plan and budget for health services. Particular progress had been made in strengthening arrangements for the procurement, supply and affordable availability of drugs. Progress had also been made in strengthening the HMIS, but data capture remains incomplete and the system remains under-resourced. A similar pattern of capacity development was evident at the local government level, but there had been little progress in moving towards the objective of integrated management of public health 'under one roof', except in Jigawa. Improvements in management and service delivery were evident at facility level, but it is not clear how far this has been achieved beyond the specifically supported facilities.

For both the education and health sectors, the limited progress made in addressing HRM issues appeared to be a significant factor in limiting the extent to which public resources have been used effectively to provide services.

The SPARC econometric study found that SPARC-supported states performed better than other Nigerian states in relation to budget execution for health and education (i.e. aggregate expenditure out-turn compared to the original approved budget), and in relation to the composition of expenditure out-turn compared to the original approved budget. There was also evidence that the extent of improvement was positively associated with the level of expenditure under the SPARC programme, and that the positive association was mostly driven by the five SLP Suite states where SPARC interventions started earliest.

The Comparative State Study also finds some support for the claim that the SLPs were associated with some improvements in measures of resource management quality, although data to make this assessment are only available to compare 2008 and 2012. Out of six indicators of public finance, SLP Suite states performed better than non-SLP in all but one. Over the period 2008 to 2012, budget shares allocated to health and education increased in SLP states more than in non-SLP states, as did budget execution rates and expenditure per capita on health.

Data from the Afrobarometer survey, comparing the period 2004/6 with 2014/15, found that for perceptions of the quality of supplies in health facilities and public schools, there were substantially larger improvements in SLP Suite states, relative to non-SLP states. There were also modestly above-trend improvements in the SLP states in regard to citizens' perceptions of the extent of corruption at various levels of government.

There is therefore evidence that budget execution for education and health has improved in the SLP states, and more generally that this improvement is associated with the scale and duration of SPARC support. There is evidence that state spending on health has increased (though there are weaknesses in the data available in this regard). The Comparative State Study provided some evidence that education expenditure increased. There is a lack of evidence available at a more detailed level on how effectively and efficiently public spending is used. The SPARC PCR noted that the lack of detailed studies of public spending processes (such as Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys) was an important gap in the evidence.

A.1.2 Has technical assistance been an effective instrument for building individual and organisational capacity?

The strong record of capacity development at organisational level across all the SLPs (measured in particular in terms of the production of outputs) suggests that technical assistance has proved generally to be well-delivered and to be an effective instrument. Significant organisational and individual capacity has been built, though there are threats to the sustainability of the capacity development that has been achieved.

In general, the SLPs have proved highly successful in developing effective working relationships at the technical level with senior officials and specialists and other stakeholders at state level. There has been sufficient organisational and individual capacity available at state level for initiatives focused on developing improved systems to be largely successful, although turnover of senior staff at state level has in some cases caused disruption to the progress of reforms.

Where the SLPs have directly engaged at the local government level in particular LGAs (mainly through ESSPIN and PATHS2, and to a more limited and recent extent through SPARC) there has been success in strengthening capacity and systems, though progress appears weaker and more fragile than at state level because of institutional and financial constraints on local government. However, it has been difficult for the SLPs to have systemic effects across local governments because of their large number relative to the resources available, in a context where there have not generally been significant initiatives to address institutional constraints on local government.

A.1.3 To what extent have other constraints (e.g. insecurity, inadequate infrastructure, cultural factors, inadequate human resources, dysfunctional institutional arrangements) prevented the achievement of results in line with the envisaged intervention logic?

The insufficient attention paid to the systematic identification and testing of the intervention logic of the SLPs has meant that it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about the relative significance of different factors in explaining

the results achieved (specifically the high level of achievement at the output level, and the more limited achievement of outcomes).

Insecurity has hampered education and health delivery to some extent (particularly in Kano and Kaduna), but in general the SLP states have been less affected by insecurity than some other parts of the north. The CS3 study reported (p.13) that:

'Almost two-thirds of fatalities due to violent conflict during 2010-2015 were in Kaduna, where many stakeholders have stated that this had adverse effects on the education sector. Conflict in Kaduna has included inter-ethnic conflict, raids on villages by armed groups, and clashes between military and civilians. During discussion with stakeholders, it was reported that armed robberies, attacks and kidnappings are common in certain areas in Kaduna. In some cases, whole communities are displaced as a result. Children are taken out of schools by the parents as they move away which disrupts their learning process. In addition, some schools have become more insecure and there have been reports of attacks not only on communities but also on schools directly. The security situation in Kaduna has led to the closure of a number of primary schools, some of which have remained closed during the whole year.'

The security situation did not emerge as a factor of major significance in regard to affecting political commitment to reform, at least in the five SLP states over this period. Kano was the state worst affected by the Boko Haram insurgency and associated violence. The security situation had two main direct effects for the SLPs. The first was the threat to service delivery in education and health. For instance, the deterioration of the security situation was found to have had multiple negative impacts on health service delivery, funding, and the morale and motivation of staff in the most affected areas.[48] The second was increased security risks for programme and DFID staff, which led, specifically, to the closure of DFID's office in Kano.

Cultural factors (at the level of social attitudes to education and health) do not appear to have been a binding constraint on increased use of maternal and child health services, or to the implementation of the SIP and increases in educational enrolment.

Weaknesses in HRM systems were identified in both the education and health systems as having negative effects on the quality and motivation of staff, which did appear to be constraining the achievement of results.

While there were, as noted above, significant improvements in management systems and processes, to which the SLPs contributed, significant features of the institutional environment appear to remain constraining factors. These

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[48] PATHS2 (2015).

include the lack of progress in consolidating the management and financing of PHC, the relationships between SUBEBs and SMoHs, and the structure of fiscal relations between different levels of government – including low levels of tax effort, the heavy dependence of most states on uncertain and fluctuating oil revenues, and the *de facto* direct control of (and discretionary intervention in) local government finances by states which militates against effective management and accountability at local government level.

A.1.4 Have reforms supported by the SLPs in line ministries and at centre of government been mutually reinforcing and interdependent?

As discussed in the answer to the following question below, there has been relatively little direct collaboration between SPARC, and ESSPIN and PATHS2 on the design and implementation of centre of government and sectoral-level reforms, though SPARC has helped to develop a framework of procedures and systems within which sectoral policies and budgets have been taken forward. There has therefore been an overall level of consistency between the centre of government and line ministry reforms. The mixed record in improving budget discipline has militated against more effective mutual reinforcement of reforms (though there is some evidence from the SPARC econometric study that education and health budget execution has been stronger than aggregate budget execution).

A.1.5 Have SLPs collaborated effectively to realise synergies?

Evidence for three main types of synergies between the SLPs (in addition to the extent to which SLP-supported reforms have been mutually reinforcing) has been assessed.

The first is the extent to which information, lessons and services have been shared between the SLPs and with DFID (potentially increasing both the effectiveness and efficiency of the Suite compared to individual programmes). There has been extensive documentation produced on the lessons emerging from the SLPs, and these have been discussed and shared between the SLPs and with the rest of the DFID portfolio. There have generally been close formal and informal relationships between SLP staff in the states where they have worked.

The second is the achievement of greater influence on, and access to, policy-makers (for the SLPs and for DFID) as a result of the overall scale of DFID support through the SLPs, and potentially of DFID's broader state-level engagement. There is little evidence of the scale of DFID's engagement in states being effectively leveraged to increase influence in states beyond that of individual SLPs, and DFID has not generally implemented its engagement in states in a strategic way to maximise influence. The SLPs have individually had significant influence on, and access to, policy-makers, and on some occasions have acted jointly at state level, but this does not appear to have been based, in general, on DFID's broader engagement.

The third is the ability to develop and implement strategies for effective engagement at each level, from policy-making to service delivery in the field, informed by perspectives across the whole policy-making and service delivery process. There have been close working relationships and joint initiatives between SAVI and SPARC, which have sought to coordinate engagement on strengthening governance and accountability.

The assessment of collaboration undertaken as part of the SPARC and SAVI PCRs concluded (p.17) that:

> 'Generally, collaboration between SPARC and SAVI has been much stronger than between SPARC-SAVI and the other SLPs. There are some key differences in the ways the SLPs have worked that explain these differences. ESSPIN and PATHS2 have tended to command greater interest from the executive because they are providing financial support, whereas SAVI and SPARC can only offer technical assistance.

> There are some good examples of collaboration between SAVI, PATHS2 and ESSPIN … including SAVI and PATHS2 in Kaduna and SAVI and ESSPIN in Enugu. Generally, these have arisen on an ad hoc basis in cases where staff from the different projects have good interpersonal relations and have been proactive in looking for opportunities to collaborate.

> SAVI and other SLPs have applied different approaches to supporting civil society, which have sometimes worked at cross-purposes. PATHS2 and ESSPIN have continued to provide grants and contracts to civil society partners who are also working with SAVI, which has sometimes clashed with SAVI's facilitated partnership approach. SAVI has consistently argued that the payment of grants can distort civil society agendas and causes tensions within groups who do not have strong organisational and governance structures. In spite of SAVI's own advocacy towards other donor programmes, there has not been much progress in aligning practices towards supporting CSOs, and there is as yet no common code of conduct.'

Engagement at the state level has not generally been informed by perspectives across, for instance, the whole sector of health or education (where DFID has typically had several programmes in each sector in each state). There has been an absence of analytical work, such as Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys, which take a perspective that looks across the whole policy-making and service delivery process. The approach of each SLP has principally been driven by its own objectives, and collaboration has taken place where this has been mutually beneficial in terms of these objectives.

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A.1.6 Have state governments and other influential stakeholders been committed to reforms? How has stakeholder commitment varied between states?

As discussed in Section 6.2 above, the SLPs developed strong and effective working relationships at a senior technical level in all the states. However, the Political Economy Summary found that there was sustained political commitment to reforms and to achievement of the MDGs and development goals over the bulk of the period of SLP implementation only in two of the five SLP states: Jigawa and Lagos – although in Lagos the state's priorities for public sector reform did not fully accord with those emphasised by the SLPs.

There has been a high level of political commitment to the strengthening of PFM in Jigawa, and to improving human resource and public service management in Lagos. Other improvements appear to have taken place based on strong ownership from particular senior officials - this being strongest in Enugu.

There was some improvement in commitment in Enugu after 2012, but neither Kaduna nor Kano has presented a favourable environment for achieving development goals over most of the period, despite high-level political support for some initiatives in each state (particularly for education in Kano). In each of these states, the political context has favoured weak budget discipline (with continued discretionary interventions in resource allocation) and a relative emphasis on large and visible capital investments, rather than systemic reform.

The SLPs have successfully applied adaptive approaches to working in often difficult political contexts, and to developing consensus around agreed reform agendas. Examples include the Steps Approach developed by SPARC to inform decisions about the level and type of support that should be provided to states, based on evidence of ownership, commitment and implementation, and ESSPIN's process of state-level political engagement focused on establishing forums for the sharing and analysis of information on education system performance to develop consensus within states and to facilitate learning across states.

It is important to note that reforms vary in how directly they confront political interests. For instance, improvements to budget credibility and budget execution reduce the extent of discretionary control over expenditure, which may reduce opportunities for patronage and the direct reward of political supporters.

The engagement of ESSPIN and PATHS2 at federal level was successful in building capacity and systems for improved sector management in key priority areas. However, sectoral policy leadership by the Federal Government in health and education was not strong enough to take forward the implementation of all of these measures.

A.1.7 Has effective demand from voters for improved services and more accountable government increased?

The SAVI PCR concluded that there has been improvement in the capacity of some potentially important state-level accountability mechanisms (State Houses of Assembly, civil society, media), although the Final Evaluation review has concluded that this reporting may overstate the significance and impact of this. It was also noted that SAVI had not directly engaged with citizens and service users, so its impact at this level depended on whether the strengthening of media, civil society and State Houses of Assembly effectively channelled their voices.

The ESSPIN and PATHS2 PCR/ARs summarised evidence that initiatives to strengthen community involvement in education (through SBMCs) and health (Health Facility Committees) have yielded some positive results at local level. However, it does not yet appear that these initiatives, while being successful in building capacity, have been sufficient to provide a significantly strengthened effective demand for better governance, and some concerns about sustainability remain.

Most of the improvements that can be identified as resulting from the SLPs relate to the strengthening of management and systems within the public sector (with strong leadership from senior officials), rather than being directly a response to more effective civil society pressures.

The Political Economy Summary suggests that there has been some increase in the extent to which political competition focuses on issues of competence and service provision, as opposed to patronage sharing, especially compared to the situation after the initial return to democracy in 1999, though this has been very uneven across the five SLP states. The strong emphasis on corruption and government performance in the 2015 Presidential Election reflects this. There does appear to be evidence that there are strengthening political incentives for effective delivery of priority services, though the tendency to revert to patronage-sharing politics under conditions of political stress remains strong. It is difficult, though, to attribute these changes to the SLPs, though their general thrust towards supporting evidence-based policy, increased accountability and more effective public sector management and governance is line with these trends.

A.1.8 Has DFID focused resources on states that have shown political commitment to reform?

Comprehensive comparable data on the allocation of funding between states for the SLPs is not available. The fact that there does not appear to have been a systematic attempt by DFID to monitor the totality of flows to each state (from SLPs and other DFID programmes) highlights the fact that this does not appear to have been a focus of DFID attention. DFID did threaten to end engagement in Enugu, which appears to have had some effect in terms of strengthening government engagement.

Each of the SLPs individually has in practice directed its resources to where specific initiatives that they were supporting appeared to have most support. The successor programme to SPARC and SAVI (PERL) is principally focused on Kaduna and Kano (which have had mixed but generally poor records of performance under the SLPs) and Jigawa (which has been consistently the strongest performer). The expansion of SPARC and SAVI into new states from 2012 was not guided by an assessment of the reform commitment of states. In practice (as assessed by the PCRs), among these additional five states, Yobe provided a favourable context, Anambra and Niger an adequate one, and Katsina and Zamfara were difficult.

A.1.9 How effectively has DFID used its influence to encourage states to adopt reforms and to ensure an effective strategic approach across its portfolio of activities as a whole in the states in which it works?

DFID portfolio management has played hardly any role in ensuring a mutually reinforcing approach to reform between DFID programmes at state level, or between state and federal level.

As summarised in the Coordination and Management Review, the design process for the SLPs militated against the original design concept for the Suite (envisaging a mutually reinforcing process of addressing governance and service delivery constraints in states with a demonstrated willingness to reform) through the fact that each programme was separately designed and managed, without effective cross-sectoral perspectives or mechanisms to require the achievement of results jointly.

There has been a continuing dilution of the significance of the SLPs within DFID's state engagement as DFID's commitment to spending in Nigeria increased. The Suite influenced DFID's state programme structure to the extent that governance and accountability through SPARC and SAVI has been at the core of DFID's interventions in those states with which it regards itself as most deeply involved. The GEMS programmes have never been effectively integrated into a single approach and DFID's pattern of engagement in the states in which it works as a priority has not been based on a replication of the SLP Suite concept. The clear link to systemwide sector reform in education and health was not taken forward beyond the original five SLP states, while the link to growth-focused programmes was never in practice implemented as a core part of the Suite approach.

There has been a move away in DFID's overall portfolio from the model of trying to support comprehensive organisational reform of the state basic health and education systems (which was the objective of ESSPIN and PATHS2) towards more limited forms of (results-focused) sectoral intervention. There has also been a lack of focus on local governments, despite their key role in service delivery and accountability, until relatively late in the implementation process.

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7 Conclusions

7.1 Achievements of the SLPs

The SLPs have successfully supported Nigerian stakeholders to achieve results in several important ways:

- The SLPs have been **well aligned** with Nigeria's development needs, as well as with the broader context of consolidation of democratic governance that has been taking place under the Fourth Republic since 1999. The framework of support to achievement of the MDGs has been accorded a prominent place in Federal Government policy, and the focus on strengthening basic education and health systems (particularly maternal and child health) is central to Nigeria's development challenge, especially in the northern states.

- The SLPs have been **flexible and adaptive** in tailoring initiatives and engagement approaches to different contexts. They have in many cases developed strong, sustained and effective working relationships with senior officials in State Governments, which has helped build consensus around key priorities for reform. They have responded to the challenge of thinking and working politically in often challenging environments, and supported state-led reform initiatives when there has been a political impetus behind them.

- The SLPs have been **managed in an increasingly responsive and efficient way** over time, which has provided value for money (in terms of the costs of supplying inputs and delivering outputs).

- SPARC has **strengthened core State Government business processes** in most of the 10 states in which it has been implemented, including in relation to planning, policy, strategy, PFM and aspects of public sector reform.

- ESSPIN and PATHS2 **made important contributions to building the capacity of State Governments for improved education and health sector and service delivery management**, and there is evidence of **improvements in the measured quality of schools**. Similarly, in the health sector there is evidence of **improved access to MNCH services** in the states that PATHS2 has supported.

- SAVI has **strengthened the capacity of partnered CSOs, media and State Houses of Assembly** (and ESSPIN and PATHS2 have strengthened SBMCs and Facility Health Committees (FHCs)) to function as agents for voice and accountability.

- ESSPIN and PATHS2 have successfully demonstrated and supported the implementation of **affordable and replicable approaches to improving the delivery of education and health services**, and increased access to, and use of, improved education and health services. ESSPIN has succeeded in improving the quality of the schools with which it has worked. The evidence from CS3 also suggests that implementation of the SIP can lead to improvements in school quality and in learning outcomes, though this requires continuing sustained investment.

- There are numerous **specific reform initiatives with measurable results** to which the SLPs have contributed. Examples supported by SPARC include debt restructuring in Enugu and pension contribution reform in Jigawa.

- The SLPs have contributed to **increases in public expenditure on education and health** in the states in which they have worked.

- The SLPs have generated an impressive body of **well-documented lessons and experience**.

- There have been some examples of **effective synergy** between the SLPs, and SPARC and SAVI in particular have worked closely together.

- The experience of the SLPs has generally **validated the hypothesis underlying their design** that improvements in Nigeria's development performance require a strengthening of public sector governance and an improvement in the effectiveness of the use of Nigeria's resources and the quality and coverage of service delivery, and that donor support can help to achieve this strengthening. However, improvements in capacity and systems have been shown to be necessary but not sufficient to lead to improved system performance.

7.2 Limitations of achievements

However, despite these important achievements, the Final Evaluation has found that there have been significant limitations in regard to what has been achieved in relation to the objectives of improving Nigeria's development performance. The main limitations are the following:

- There is **little evidence that improved sector management and service delivery has yet led to state-level improvements in learning outcomes or other measures of education system performance, or to reductions in infant or maternal mortalit**y, compared to performance in other Nigerian states that have not

received the same level of support – though there are important weaknesses in the data available on which to base such judgements.

- There is a clear pattern across each of the SLPs of a high level of achievement in terms of the delivery of inputs and the production of planned outputs, but of **more limited achievements at the impact and outcome level, and more generally for the translation of improved capacity into either improved system performance**. For instance, while planning and budgeting systems and processes have been strengthened, this has only partly translated into improvements in budget execution and other aspects of fiscal management.

- While the voice and accountability interventions provided by SAVI (and to a lesser extent at sectoral level by PATHS2 and ESSPIN) appear to have had some success in strengthening the capacity of the target organisations, and to have contributed to specific reform initiatives, there **is little evidence that there has been any significant or systematic transformation of the accountability environment** in the SLP states, particularly in regard to leading to any broad or substantial improvement in effective demand for high-quality services.

- The overall results achieved have **varied significantly by state and across programmes**, with Jigawa generally the strongest performer, and Kano and Kaduna generally the weakest.

- Despite support among state stakeholders for continued implementation of initiatives that the SLPs have taken forward, there are **threats to sustainability** – particularly where continued state spending is required to consolidate and implement improved management approaches.

7.3 Explanations of performance

The Final Evaluation has identified several features of the context of implementation that may be identified as potential explanations for the pattern of performance of the SLPs, though the evidence is generally not sufficient to allow the relative importance of each factor to be estimated with confidence.

- **There has been a lack of sustained federal leadership of reform during the period up to 2015.** Although there were some initiatives in relation to PFM reform, and sectorally in relation to education and health (culminating in the eventual signing of the National Health Act), these did not provide a strong direction for, or incentives to encourage, State Government reform efforts, while the weakening of

fiscal discipline contributed to severe fiscal problems when oil prices eventually collapsed in 2014. The Presidential election which took place in 2015 may potentially turn out to be an important opportunity for reforms focused on governance and accountability, but the new Federal Government has so far provided only limited effective direction at the sectoral level, and has yet to satisfactorily address the major challenges of the fiscal situation.

- The **severe fiscal problems** faced by Nigeria from late 2014 onwards have led to problems in regard to sustaining the initiatives and capacity that had been developed in the health and education sectors, as State Governments were unwilling or unable to provide adequate fiscal support. This has caused particular problems as the programmes have reached the end of implementation. However, Nigeria's dependence on oil revenues has meant that such fluctuations are an inherent problem of fiscal management and the problems since 2014 show that there has been insufficient progress in establishing mechanisms to stabilise the fiscal impact of oil revenue fluctuation, or in the broadening or deepening of the tax base.

- The **political context in the SLP states has been variable in relation to the degree and consistency of support for reforms** to improve governance and service delivery. There has been a sustained impetus for reform from the Governor in Jigawa over the period of SLP implementation. There has also been a strong reform commitment in Lagos, though this has not encompassed the whole of the reform agenda that the SLPs have promoted, and Lagos has not in fact been a particularly strong performer in relation to the SLP results achieved. In the other three states, there have been periods of selective interest in reform, interspersed with periods during which there has been a strong focus on patronage politics. Such periods reflect situations where governors have been beholden to influential supporters or have faced factional conflicts. During these periods, fiscal discipline has tended to be undermined, with a strong relative emphasis on capital spending, which has political visibility and creates opportunities for favouritism in contract awards, compared to spending on service provision and a focus on systemic reform.

- It appears that **the significance of HRM issues was underestimated in the original design of the health and education interventions**. In addition, it appears that HRM was not made enough of a focus for the centre of government reforms, compared to budget management. Weaknesses in the quality and management of staff appear to have been a much greater constraint on the ability of capacity development-focused reforms to bring about

improvements in performance than had been anticipated. While these issues have been receiving increasing attention, this has generally begun too late in the process of SLP implementation for improvements to be realised. In addition, attempts to address human resource weaknesses may confront important political constraints because of the role of providing access to employment opportunities as a form of patronage.

- There have been **continuing important institutional constraints on State Government service delivery**, which have not been addressed. Most significantly these include the limited progress in consolidating the management of PHC ('under one roof'), and the unresolved tensions in the relationship between SUBEBs and SMoEs, as well as the problems for coherent fiscal management that are inherent in how Nigeria's federal system operates.

- **The critical role of local government in effective service provision has only been addressed to a limited extent by the SLPs.** Improvements in state-level planning and budget execution are at best a necessary rather than a sufficient condition for improved service provision, because schools and health facilities are overseen and managed by local government. Local government is far weaker than capacity in State Governments. The SLPs have focused increasing attention on local government as their implementation has proceeded, and have achieved progress in those areas where intensive support has been provided, but the scale of the challenge, across many dozens of LGAs, appears to be far beyond what could plausibly be addressed by donor support, particularly in the absence of initiatives to address the institutional constraints of the Nigerian federal system.

These features of the context may have militated against the possibility of bringing about substantial improvements in development performance however the SLPs were implemented, since most of these factors were probably beyond the plausible scope of influence of a set of donor programmes.

However, there were also features of how the SLPs (and DFID's portfolio as a whole) was designed and managed which have probably reduced impact compared to what might have been achieved. Specifically:

- The original design concept of the Suite assumed that there would be a high level of coordination and synergies between the SLPs. However, the **design and contracting process militated against effective coordination**, in particular through the absence of any common results framework. In practice, over time the SLPs developed pragmatic ways of working together where there were

perceived synergies, but the model of an integrated approach has not in practice been realised.

- **DFID has not had any effective process for managing its portfolio at state level** (both for the SLPs and for other DFID programmes) so as to ensure that there is a consistent approach across the portfolio in each state that is informed by a strong and regularly updated understanding of the context.

- There has been a significant investment in the use of PEAs by SPARC and SAVI. However, this **PEA** has largely been limited to state-level contextual analysis, **has not been fully utilised to guide decision-making**, and high-level analysis of the political context at state level has not been well-integrated with sector-level analysis. A strong lesson is that it would have been desirable to have had more PEA focused on specific issues and problems, in addition to the context as a whole.

- There have been **important limitations in the extent to which the SLPs have been able to respond to the findings from PEA, as well as to the lessons from their implementation experience**. Probably the most important of these has been the commitment to sustained engagement in particular states, even when in several cases the reform environment has been relatively unpropitious over a number of years. The SLPs have developed ways of increasing and reducing the amount of resources used to reflect the level of commitment provided, but it is difficult not to conclude that resources have been used in contexts where there have been limited prospects for success, while the design of the interventions has limited the extent to which genuine reform initiatives in states outside the original group could be supported.

- **The extent to which the timeframe for achievement of the higher level (particularly impact) objectives of the SLPs was realistic has been unclear**. DFID's policy shift from 2010 increased the focus on achieving development results (as compared to a focus on strengthening capacity and system performance), including the introduction for ESSPIN of targets that went beyond the MDGs to include improvements in learning outcomes. However, the evidence base for setting realistic targets at impact level was weak, and it is difficult to assess whether it was in fact plausible to expect that improved capacity and systems performance could lead to measurable improvements in learning outcomes over the period from when this shift occurred until the end of ESSPIN implementation.

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8 Lessons and recommendations

8.1 Lessons for DFID

8.1.1 DFID's strategy and portfolio in Nigeria

The following general lessons for DFID's strategy and portfolio of activities in Nigeria can be drawn from the Final Evaluation:

- Alignment on the Sustainable Development Goals (as on the MDGs) remains a desirable objective because of their clarity and legitimacy as a focus for international cooperation. However, **these need to be translated into specific national and state commitments** (for instance in the national and state planning process), based on a shared analysis of needs and priorities for action, around which alignment can occur. This can be part of the framework for support in individual states and at national level

- **A long-term perspective for donor engagement is required.** Despite the formidable short- and long-term development challenges that Nigeria faces, sectoral results have shown incremental improvement over time and there has also been a trajectory of consolidation of democratic governance in Nigeria over the last 15 years. This process may, as has been envisaged in DFID's Operational Plan[49], lead to a virtuous circle of increasing prosperity and strengthening democratic institutions and governance, though this outcome is far from guaranteed, and concepts like 'transformational change' (which can be read as implying a permanent shift to a higher development trajectory) should be used with care as development progress in Nigeria is likely to continue to face major risks, both political and economic. This process can only happen with effective Nigerian leadership and initiative, to which aid donors need to provide appropriate forms of support. Donor initiatives have limited scope for leading or driving change but should be

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[49] DFID's Operational Plan for Nigeria: 2011–2015 (DFID, 2011) notes that:

'A peaceful, more democratic and prosperous Nigeria, meeting the basic needs of its citizens, is possible within a generation. Progress in Nigeria will only be achieved by reducing internal conflicts, deepening democracy, and building the confidence of investors…'

'In understanding how Nigeria will change, better governance and growth are interdependent. Recent changes in Nigeria include a growing business and middle class demanding better government. Growth diversifies tax revenues, reducing states' reliance on oil revenue, and makes a taxpaying public expect better services. This change is happening in Lagos State. A growing business and middle class is demanding more from the state government, which in turn is delivering more. Our continued support to Lagosian reformers – both public and private sector – will help improve the lives of huge numbers of poor people in this mega-city but will also provide a model for other states to follow. Further progress across more states will create a future where external aid and technical assistance could be irrelevant within a generation.'

designed to respond to opportunities and reform initiatives where and when they emerge. They also need to be robust in the face of potential setbacks and partial retreats from reform.

- The requirement for strong reform leadership for results to be achieved poses a challenge if examples of effective leadership and initiative may not occur in the areas of greatest development need, and if the environment may be relatively unfavourable for long periods of time (as it was in Kaduna and Kano over much of SLP implementation), or may switch rapidly, especially after an election. There is a danger that support provided in these conditions may have little impact and may be wasted. **Flexible modes of engagement that allow resources to be switched between states to be used to support states where there is evidence of reform commitment are likely to have a greater impact** than approaches that limit engagement to a small number of states, even if these states may at the time when decisions are made provide a relatively favourable political context.

- **Improved service delivery requires strengthening centre of government functions and accountability, and improved sector policies and management**. The logic underlying the SLP Suite that sustainable and systemic change to improve development performance through improved service delivery requires strengthening centre of government functions (especially planning and finance) and accountability, and improved sector policies and management, particularly at state level, remains valid. This perspective needs to continue to inform DFID's engagement in Nigeria, but with a recognition that while necessary, this is far from sufficient to achieve development results. Sustained investment in system strengthening is likely to be required over 10–15 years or more, which goes beyond individual project life-cycles. There are alternative ways in which the link between governance and accountability and service provision can be taken forward in programming that do not require a structure of programming like the SLP Suite.

- **Institutional constraints need to be recognised and addressed.** Pilot initiatives to test and demonstrate new approaches will have limited prospects of uptake and successful replication, and initiatives focused on the direct achievement of results will have few prospects of sustainability, without successfully addressing underlying institutional constraints. This implies that all DFID interventions should be nested within a wider theory of change (at both national and state level) which maintains a focus on critical institutional

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constraints and how they affect development and effective engagement prospects.

- The SAVI model of 'facilitated partnership', focusing on providing **technical assistance and mentoring was judged to be more effective than a challenge fund model** of providing grants to civil society, particularly as it has moved towards a broader and more flexible form of engagement, and focused on strengthening connections between civil society, media and State Houses of Assembly. It was also found that **advocacy work focusing just on upstream policy and planning** (including the preparation of new legislation) **delivered limited results without corresponding attention also being paid to downstream implementation issues**.

- Strong federal leadership of reform initiatives can be an important contributor (and may be a precondition) for successful engagement at state level, through providing reform models, resources and incentives. **State-level engagement needs to be linked to continuing engagement at federal level**, either directly by DFID or in collaboration with other donors and international agencies.

- **DFID has had a persistent problem of 'silo management' that has militated against effective cross-sectoral approaches**. Addressing this would require management of DFID programmes against broader cross-sectoral (e.g. state-level) results frameworks, which need to be reflected in the objectives of individual programmes, as well as a broader theory of change – both at national and state level.

- **A more consistent approach across programmes to the conceptualisation of theories of change and to results definition and measurement would make it easier to assess DFID's contribution to development achievements.** The lack of a common framework across the SLPs has made it more difficult to compare programme performance, or to get a coherent view of the joint impact of DFID programmes working on related issues in the same state.

8.1.2 Effective engagement at state level

Further lessons can be drawn for DFID's engagement at state level:

- **Political leadership and reform commitment at state level is critical for determining the scope for successful support**. In relation to SPARC's experience, it was concluded that: governance reform is not linear and different approaches are required in different contexts; the greatest prospects for success occur where the State Government is driving its own reform agenda; and a multi-faceted, flexible, adaptive and politically informed approach is needed for

effective engagement. For PATHS2 it was found that the general political atmosphere at the national and state level dictates the pace of sectoral governance reform, while appropriate advocacy measures are helpful in securing commitment and engagement of government personnel in the health sector. Similarly, for the education sector political engagement and policy dialogue with senior officials and decision-makers in State and Federal Governments is important in order to help achieve education sector objectives. High-level political commitment (at both federal and state level) is necessary in order for capacity development initiatives to be sustained.

- The experience of the SLPs has shown that **it is possible for DFID to engage effectively at state level to build capacity for planning and management, and to achieve reform to improve service delivery and access.** However, more effective approaches to the management of DFID's portfolio of activities at state level are required to increase impact. This would include: (i) a clearer and more structured process of agreement of a results framework with State Governments – ideally developed in response to (and coordinated with) State Government-led initiatives (as with the Kaduna and Lagos Development Plans); (ii) a more fully articulated theory of change to guide state-level engagement; and (iii) more emphasis and resources being devoted to understanding the developing state context across the whole DFID portfolio.

- **Analytical work can help to understand the constraints on effective service delivery and achieving improved development performance**, as well as to help build consensus and commitment. Examples include greater use of PEA of specific issues and challenges (in addition to analysis of the context as a whole), and Public Expenditure Tracking and related studies to improve understanding of the factors constraining improved development performance and effectiveness of DFID-supported interventions. For both SPARC and SAVI the importance of using PEA to inform effective and constructive engagement was highlighted, though in the case of SAVI it was noted that more use of problem-focused PEA (as opposed to more general state-level analysis) would have been useful. The creation of evidence from small-scale implementation of programmes and policies was found to be important for securing support and commitment from government for scale-up in the health sector.

- **DFID may have some scope to influence the degree of political commitment to reforms at state level, but this influence is likely to be limited**. There are examples (Enugu in 2012) of cases where DFID appears to have been able to exert some influence to

encourage a stronger reform trajectory. If DFID manages to strengthen the strategic management of its state portfolios and its engagement in states, it may increase the influence that it can bring to bear. However, in general the level of influence is likely not to be strong, so DFID needs to be able to respond rapidly to either positive or negative shifts in political commitment, recognising that such changes may be difficult to predict and may remain endemic in Nigeria's political economy.

- **The electoral cycle (at both federal and state level) plays a critical role in determining the reform environment.** There needs to be a recognition in the management of the state-level portfolio that the electoral cycle is of central importance for determining the receptiveness of the reform environment at state level, with key decision points about resources provided being linked to evidence of reform commitment. It should also be recognised that the level of reform commitment can rise and fall within the life of a single administration: therefore, flexibility is important.

8.1.3 DFID's engagement on sectoral policy and services

The SLPs have shown that effective engagement on sectoral policy and service provision requires the following to be considered in the design and management of specific programmes:

- **HRM issues are of central importance in explaining constraints on improved performance in health and education service delivery**, and need to be addressed in the design and implementation of all future interventions, including through analysis to understand the political significance of human resource decisions (such as the use of recruitment as a form of patronage).

- **Engagement with local government is essential.** Service provision (under current institutional arrangements) depends critically on local government, and a strategy to improve local government capacity and performance (or to take service provision out of direct local government control) needs to be an integral part of an effective strategy. The SLPs have had some positive experience of engagement with local governments (and previous DFID programmes have worked with local government), but the lessons from this need to be taken into account in the design and management of future interventions. There needs to be a focus on mechanisms of intervention that can achieve impact across a large number of local governments, since intensive engagement in a small number of LGAs is unlikely to be replicable or sustainable.

- **The significance of key institutional and organisational constraints needs to be recognised and addressed**, in particular the need to effectively implement the objective of integrated management of public health services, and to address the often-dysfunctional relationship between SUBEBs and SMoEs. A strategic perspective needs to be adopted, first to support measures (at federal and state level) to address institutional constraints, and second to make a realistic assessment of how continuing institutional constraints may limit the prospects for effective interventions.

- **More information is needed about the quality, effectiveness and delivery of public expenditure.** Improved planning and budgeting, processes as well as measures such as expenditure per capita on health and education, do not always translate into effective use of resources. Public expenditure tracking and related studies should be used to monitor and assess the effectiveness of spending and its impact on service delivery.

- A systems reform perspective for health and education to inform DFID's overall approach needs to take account of the **role of the private sector** as service providers, which has been relatively neglected by ESSPIN (although other DFID education projects have engaged with the private sector) and (until its later stages of implementation) PATHS2.[50]

- Paying more attention to the *ex ante* **articulation and systematic testing of critical assumptions in the intervention logic of DFID programmes may improve their effectiveness**, particularly focusing on assumptions linking outputs to outcomes and impacts, so that the failure of key assumptions to hold can be identified at an earlier stage.

8.2 Recommendations for DFID

Based on the evidence of the Final Evaluation, the following recommendations are made for DFID.

1. DFID should strengthen the management of its engagement at state level by:

    a. developing strategic frameworks for the main states in which DFID programmes operate, including results frameworks

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[50] Developing Effective Private Education Nigeria (DEEPEN) has worked on the enabling environment for private sector provision of education in Lagos State. PATHS 2, in its extension phase 2014–2016, has worked on support for private–public partnerships in health in Lagos and Enugu.

aligned so far as possible with state priorities, and theories of change at state level;

b. investing in understanding the political context and state-specific obstacles to effective service delivery and development progress; and

c. ensuring that its level of spending and type of engagement in states reflects the prospects for programmes succeeding.

2. DFID should engage in continuing dialogue and cooperation with Federal and State Governments to understand and build consensus on how to address institutional and organisational constraints to improved service delivery.

3. DFID should continue to emphasise the importance of linkages between governance, accountability and service delivery for achieving development progress in Nigeria in its programmes, while paying increased attention to HRM and to the role and capacity of local government.

4. DFID needs to ensure that critical design assumptions for its programmes are identified as early as possible, and that their validity is systematically tested throughout programme implementation, and that so far as possible a common conceptual framework across programmes is used for doing this.

5. DFID should ensure that voice and accountability interventions are designed with a greater emphasis on how they may achieve broader impact, and with more emphasis on objective measures of the performance of accountability programmes, rather than exclusively relying on expert assessment.

6. DFID should conduct a separate evaluation of the GEMS Suite at or near the end of programme implementation.

8.3 Lessons for other stakeholders

Lessons that are relevant to the Nigerian Federal Government, State Governments and civil society are identified as follows, for a) achieving effective reform to improve governance and service delivery, b) making the most effective use of aid, and c) for advocacy.

The review of the SLPs' experience of working with Federal Government highlights the following issues that have a broader relevance for achieving Nigeria's development goals (beyond the success of a particular donor programme):

- **Lack of strong federal leadership of a reform agenda can limit progress at state level.** The experience of the SLPs suggests that more effective federal leadership of reform is required, in terms of sectoral strategy and policy, to provide direction and incentives for states to successfully reform, than was provided over most of the period of SLP implementation.

- The limited impact (in terms of concrete development results) achieved to date despite the SLPs' successful capacity building initiatives shows **the importance of recognising and addressing critical institutional constraints**. Nigeria's inter-governmental fiscal relations and weak budget management continue to limit the effective and efficient use of public resources, despite significant progress that has been made at federal and state levels in building improved budget systems. The management of the health and education systems remains inefficient in part because of overlapping and unclear mandates and responsibilities between levels of government and sectoral organisations. Important progress has been made in setting out reform directions (for instance through the National Health Act), but these have not yet been fully implemented. HRM is consistently weak throughout government, limiting the prospects for improving service delivery.

- **There is inadequate data available to make robust comparisons of state development performance.** Improving data collection and analysis to allow empirically robust comparisons of development experience between states will be important, both in terms of providing evidence to inform policy and spending choices, and to improve learning from state experience.

The following main types of lesson can be identified for State Governments, while the substantial documentation of experience from the SLPs provides a rich source of ideas and lessons that are of value both for the states in which the SLPs have worked, and others across Nigeria:

- There is a significant step from improving the efficiency and effectiveness of use of public resources, and from the better management of services, to concrete improvements in development outcomes and citizens' lives. **Additional data collection and analysis** may be required to understand and establish this link empirically and to identify blockages and areas for attention.

- **The political challenge of improving services is significant**. It remains politically attractive for State Governments to maintain discretionary control over spending, and to emphasise visible capital investment in schools and health centres. However, evidence

suggests that the real constraints to improving service delivery relate to management and incentives.

- **Progress is achievable**. State Governments can make impressive progress in improving governance and service delivery when they set out and drive through a reform agenda. Important examples of this can be found in all the states in which the SLPs have been implemented.

- **Effective use of aid depends on state government leadership** and on providing a consistent reform direction which is backed by the predictable provision of resources. State Governments need to articulate clear strategies around which providers of aid can align. SDPs and joint planning with donors can be useful mechanisms for identifying priorities and gaps where assistance is required. By doing this, State Governments can largely determine how effectively aid is used.

For Nigerian civil society, the SLP experience suggests that **advocacy work focusing just on upstream policy and planning** (including the preparation of new legislation) **can deliver limited results**. Corresponding attention should also be paid to downstream implementation issues, including the quality and effectiveness of expenditure in key areas such as health and education.

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