

## **Abstract**

**Purpose** – Aims to explore and explain the extent partner organisations in Nigerian local regeneration partnerships demonstrate accountable and transparent practices in their partnership working. With some partnerships, able to attain set objectives, while others have failed to meet partnership expectations the implication of these practices in the country becomes worthy of consideration.

**Methodology/approach** – Using an interpretive, inductive and explanatory approach, data was collected through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders involved in five infrastructure PPPs – a Bus Transport (BT) Partnership, a Rail Partnership, Kappa Housing Partnership, Gamma District Partnership and a Toll Road Partnership and analysed using thematic analysis.

**Findings** – Five local regeneration partnerships were established with the partnerships having shared vision and common concerns in addressing the provision of infrastructure and public services in Nigeria. Due to the institutional nature of the empirical context of Nigeria, specifically in terms of accountability and transparency in partnerships operations, the five partnerships experienced varying levels of success based on the extent the agreed upon contractual agreements were met and the partnerships delivery on the agreed objectives.

**Originality/value of paper** – This paper illustrates that much attention needs to be given to the extent to which partner organisations are given an opportunity to participate in the collaboration process in Nigerian local regeneration partnerships, the accountability that partners exhibit for actively engaging in the partnership process and the degree to which transparency exist between the partners within the partnership.

**Keywords** - Accountability, Transparency, Local Regeneration Partnership, Management Strategies, Nigeria

**Paper type** - Extended Abstract

## 1. Introduction

Partnership arrangements have been flourishing in the African context in recent years after many years of implementation in the Anglo-saxonised world during the 1990s and 2000s. It is evident from literature that the collaboration process from the formation stage through to the evaluation stage can be a difficult journey for public and private sector partners. Although, collaborations are usually taken to be a good thing, Asthana, Richardson and Halliday (2002) argue that it is significant to determine the conditions or factors that increase the probability of successful collaborations emerging. Himmelman (1996, p.28), defines collaboration as “exchanging information, altering activities, sharing resources and enhancing the capacity of another for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose”. In the context of PPPs, Gray (1996) offered a framework conceptualised along two dimensions in which she classified different inter-organisational collaborations; the factors that motivate partners to collaborate and the type of outcomes expected. According to this framework, collaborations involving collective strategies on how partners can implement a shared vision can be labelled as partnerships, whereby through their collaborative capacity, the partners gain appreciation of their interdependence.

In some national contexts, the selection of partners for collaborative schemes such as local regeneration partnerships undergo a public tendering process, as is the case in the empirical context of the research; where government organisations are suggested to dominate the tendering process by setting out the bidding guidelines for potential partners (Camen, Gottfridson and Rundh, 2011; Mouzas and Ford, 2007). In this context, the factors determining whether or not collaboration with any organisation would developed is clearly specified in advance, this gives all potential partners the same opportunity to compete to be awarded the contract (Blomqvist, Hurmelinna and Seppanen, 2005). Furthermore, the value of collaboration could be identified within the capacity of partners from different organisations to combine their resources and expertise in order to create and sustain successful partnership working; this notion has been termed collaborative advantage (Kanter, 1994; Huxham 1996). Apostolakis, (2004) and Kanter (1994) further argue that, collaborative advantage defines a high value and ambitious form of collaboration and it is vital to the growing practice of partnerships. Consequently, when partners are encountering challenges in operationalizing their strategies, according to Huxham and Vangen (2004), the main values of the concept of collaborative advantage can raise the profile of collaboration and legitimise it as an activity worthy of resource investment. It has been pertinent in collaborative work to identify and form bases in which individual participants/organisations likewise funding institutions increasingly require tangible evidence based on certain performance criteria that their investments are generating intended outcomes and are achieved within a specific timeframe (Bovens, 2010). Partners therefore need to engage in a continuous process of encouraging the collaborative processes within the partnership working.

This paper explores and explains the extent partner organisations in Nigerian local regeneration partnerships demonstrate accountable and transparent practices in their partnership working. Partnership working has been associated from literature with the extent to which all partners are given an opportunity to participate in the collaboration process, the accountability that partners exhibit for actively engaging in the partnership process and the degree to which transparency exist between the partners within the partnership.

## **2. Theoretical Considerations**

### **Transparency in decision-making processes**

Transparency refers to the visibility of decision-making processes and it is a requirement, which is grounded in governance ethics, of each partner organisation's right to know about matters and decisions that affect the partnership process (Lockwood, 2010). Decision support systems such as detailed information indicating the reason behind each decision reached and the clarity and justification of every course of action is vital (Willems and Van Doreen, 2012). Akkermans, Bogerd and Doremalen (2003) argue that transparency in partnerships is as a result of reinforcing dynamic interactions between partners. They also state that the more partners work closely together, the more they will trust each other and the more mutual their collaborative working. This in addition will improve their performance level when working together, while further improving transparency in the collaborative process. Performance reporting is also an important element of transparency, as it is essential that these partnerships regularly disclose their progress through various mechanisms such as annual reports, reports of achievements as against intended goals and management effectiveness evaluations; this kind of information supports the accountability of partnership's (Forrer *et al.*, 2010; Lockwood, 2010).

- **Collaborative commitment**

Partners need to be committed to creating something new or adding new value to the partnership arrangement. According to Coote *et al.* (2003), commitment exists when partners believe the collaboration is worth working on, but warrants maximum efforts to maintain or enhance it. Furthermore, commitment counters opportunism and determines transparency (Doz, 1996), as well as the willingness to collaborate, the propensity to enhance effectiveness because the partners can put their efforts towards desired outcomes (Coote *et al.*, 2003; Goodman and Dion, 2001).

- **Collaborative communications**

The importance attached to opening up and ensuring wider channels of communication can affect how decisions are made and how the partnership's working is taken forward (Andrews and Entwistle, 2010). Kasper-Fuherer and Ashkanasy (2001) argue that communication of trust and transparency requires that proper attention be given to collaborative processes of the partnership arrangement. Communication is defined as the formal and informal sharing of reliable and meaningful information between partners (Goodman and Dion, 2001). In other words, the communication of transparency in partnership arrangements is as an integral part in sustaining transparency in the partnership.

### **Accountability of partners in the partnership working**

Transparency is argued to be a vital condition of accountability, but that it does not capture the whole process (Forrer *et al.*, 2010). According to Willems and Van Doreen (2012), accountability is linked to the internal responsibility of partners where it is an important part of the institutional checks and balances system. They argue that accountability can play a greater role than expressed by the idea of answerability, such that accountability is more than the actual fact of being held accountable. Accountability is argued to be dependent upon well-defined specification of goals, activities, roles and responsibilities and can be better achieved

in formal partnerships where these are clearly indicated (Buse and Walt, 2000). Hence, it is a continuous process of anticipation, identification, definition and responses to pressures, which eventually leads to certain actions. They further argue that partnership accountability involves how partners manage the diverse expectations generated within and outside the organisation.

While accountability in the public sector, involve administrative and political structures that are accountable to the citizens through the contestability of political power and private sector accountability is usually to the organisation's shareholders, Buse and Walt (2000) state that downward accountability is usually less straightforward and weak. Accountability in partnerships, therefore, is linked to the specific public reform efforts that emphasise high standards of collaborative arrangements. It requires the creation of appropriate procedures and decision rules which are embedded in the agreement safeguards to ensure that public services are not compromised for the sake of private profits. Forrer *et al.*, (2010), state that as partnerships are linked to the specific collaborative arrangements created and the obligations and requirements that are designed to tie both the government and the private sector, it becomes imperative that the partnerships is designed properly. The authors further argue that if partnerships are poorly designed, there is no reason to expect that the goals of the partnership will materialise, and these may leave the public no better or probably worse off than if the public sector had relied on its own resources to carry out the local regeneration initiative.

Accountability also requires that partners exercise their authority with integrity, in that they declare any conflicts of interest and behave honestly. These integrity conditions provide a platform for the partnership's legitimacy that is consistent with key elements of trusting capabilities. Individual partners also have a responsibility to demonstrate commitment, through their decisions and actions, to the purpose and objectives of the partnership (Bovens, 2010). This depicts that failure by partners to actively pursue the partnership's objectives is a disregard of the partnership's agreement that undermines accountability. Furthermore, the partnership should be answerable to the community in which they operate. This is sometimes referred to as downward accountability (Skelcher, 2005); answerability in partnerships implies that the public has a right to question, challenge and express their approval or disapproval of the processes, plans, decisions and actions of the partnership arrangement. This places emphasis on the need for partnerships to pay due attention to and be close as possible to those people who are most affected by their decisions. Lockwood (2010) states that partnerships are also subject to 'upward' accountability, this can be required by law or by contract, though direct reporting mechanisms to a higher-level authority, or indirectly through publicly available reports that specifically address the partnership performance.

### **3. Partnership Adoption and Implementation in Nigeria Local Regeneration**

The infrastructure challenge in Nigeria is considered huge, with Africa Infrastructure Country Diagnostic (AICD), country report 2011, suggested that in addressing Nigeria's infrastructure challenges a sustained expenditure of around US\$14.2 billion per year (about 12% of GDP) is required over the next decade, of which about \$10.5 billion is needed for federal infrastructure alone. Currently, US\$5.9 billion per year is being spent on federal infrastructure and this is equivalent to about 5% of the country's GDP. In comparison, China in the mid-2000s spent about 15% of GDP on infrastructure development (Foster and Nataliya, 2011). Consequently, the Nigeria government is being faced with demand from the citizens to increase the provision of public infrastructure and social services.

The increase in the country's population has led to an increase in demand for infrastructure across all sectors (Olaseni and Alade, 2012). Public sector provision of services and availability in Nigeria has been generally inadequate and unsustainable many citizens live without adequate access to basic amenities like potable water, transportation, sanitation systems and electricity (Idris, Kura and Bashir, 2013; Foster and Nataliya, 2011). This situation has been attributed to the inadequate financing system for infrastructure development and maintenance (Sanni and Hashim, 2014); the high cost of executing public utilities, mismanagement practices and the incessant corruption whereby considerable funds made available or revenues generated are embezzled by public officials have often lead to rise in project cost, abandoned, uncompleted projects and substandard infrastructure (Idris, Kura and Bashir, 2013; Olaseni and Alade, 2012).

Drawing on the practices and experiences of other developing as well as developed countries, the Nigerian government began to open its infrastructure markets to accommodate the private sector in the provision of key infrastructure and service delivery such as toll roads, power, waste management and water. Since the inauguration of the fourth democratic government in Nigeria in May 1999, there has been an active drive for commercialisation and privatisation programs to encourage private sector participation in the provision and delivery of quality infrastructure. The World Bank estimates that for every 1% of (government) funds invested in infrastructure lead to an equivalent 1% increase in GDP (Babatunde, Opawole and Akinsiku, 2012). Ogochukwu and Bahir, (2013, p.102) also opine that a "good economic reform should bring about national renewal and transformation through systematic and faithful implementation in the polity. It seeks to change the status quo that ought to be changed. It requires proper planning and implementation, if desired ends are to be attained". Furthermore, the functioning of socioeconomic infrastructure adds value to the comfort of citizens and it is also essential for a country's productive activities due to the enabling environment for sustainable development (Ozohu-Suleiman and Oladimeji, 2015).

Although, the Nigerian government has not had a long history of PPP implementation; however, there is the commitment of government to increase private sector participation, specifically in local regeneration projects. The provision of certain infrastructure in Nigeria, for instance roads has primarily been through budgetary allocations using traditional procurement arrangement by Federal, State and Local Governments, but in recent times PPP arrangements have been considered in this sector, as well as other sectors that cover airports, seaports, roads, rails, power and energy, markets complex development, university hostel development, housing and commercial offices, among others (Babatunde, Perera and Zhou, 2016).

The Nigeria's government recognises that it faces the challenge for increased capacity for social and physical infrastructure provision even more so as the country's population currently stands at over 173.6 million (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). In an address by the Minister for Budget and National Planning, Senator Udoma Udo Udoma on the 2016 budget and strategic implementation, the Minister made clear that the Federal Government would continue to support the use of Public Private Partnerships in the development of infrastructure and encouraged other Ministers to explore concession arrangements for airports, major roads and other infrastructure projects. He also stated that the Federal Government was working towards the establishment of an infrastructure fund, with the plan to raise about \$25 billion within the next three years as part of efforts to encourage private sector participation in infrastructure (Udoma, 2016). Ninety-nine PPP projects have been under Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC's) custody since 2005; with forty-seven of those currently at various stages of implementation and the other forty-six at various stages of procurement or

development (ICRC, 2014).

Although PPPs have enjoyed a global reach in popularity, there is still much to be known around the notion of partnerships, about what is new about partnerships in various empirical context, especially from the context of developing countries and what can be learned from these empirical contexts. From the discussion above, it can be argued that although considerable changes in reforms across various sectors are taking place in Nigeria, consequently, Nigeria provides a novel context for investigating the extent partner organisations in Nigerian local regeneration partnerships demonstrate accountable and transparent practices in their partnership working.

#### **4. Methodology**

Case studies are a common strategy for qualitative inquiry; they involve the use of qualitative data collection and of analytical methods that deal with meanings and quantitative methods that deals with numbers and measurements (Yin, 2009). They have been widely used as a qualitative research approach in various disciplines such as sociology, management, anthropology, history, political science, public administration, psychology and education. Qualitative case study is the chosen research strategy and it is appropriate in the areas of study where there is little understanding of how and why a phenomenon occurs or whether the phenomenon is dynamic and not yet developed (Grunbaum, 2007). Yin (2009, p.18) defines a qualitative case study has “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”.

#### **Research context, data collection and analysis**

The geographical location of the five local regeneration partnerships investigated are in two geographically areas in Nigeria, the South-western part and the central part of the country. The partnerships investigated are: a Bus Transport (BT) Partnership, a Rail Partnership, Kappa Housing Partnership, Gamma District Partnership and a Toll Road Partnership (See table 1 for details of each partnership). Forty-two semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants from both partnerships; the participants were from the public and private sectors; from different business units and from different managerial levels to ensure that diverse perspectives on the partnerships had been captured. Using semi-structured interviews provided the opportunity to investigate the activities and interactions that existed between the partners in both partnerships. The main selection criteria of participants were those involved in decision-making processes, contract negotiations, as well as those involved in the operations and coordination of the activities of the partnership arrangement. The interviews followed a flexible thematic guide (Yin, 2009) and they varied between 50 to 125 minutes.

## Case studies description

The five case studies are summarised in Table 1.

Partnership Details	Name of Partnership				
	Bus Transport Partnership	Rail Partnership	Kappa Housing Partnership	Gamma District Development Partnership	Toll Road Partnership
<b>Partnership Objective</b>	Alleviating the problems of high demand for transport services and the reduction in traffic congestion within the state	To offer an alternative safe, reliable and environmental friendly mode of transport	To help mitigate the country's housing deficit	To construct a comprehensive integrated civil infrastructure of one of the districts in the city	To expand and upgrade of 49.4km of existing road. To construct a further 20km coastal road
<b>Year of Award</b>	March, 2008	August, 2009	2001	October, 2010	2008
<b>Type of PPP</b>	Operate and Maintain (O&M)	Operate and Maintain (O&M)	Design, Finance, Build and Transfer (DFBT)	Design, Finance, Build and Transfer (DFBT)	Design, Finance, Build, Operate and Transfer (DFBOT)
<b>Concession Period</b>	5 years	25 years	2 years	5 years	30 years (Concession terminated after 7 years)
<b>Partners</b>	A state government, supported by World Bank and two private sector bus operators	A state government transport agency and a private sector consortium	A federal housing agency and a private sector infrastructure developer	A state housing agency, a private infrastructure company and a financial institution	A state government, a SPV and a consortium of banks
<b>Sector</b>	Roads, Transport	Rail, Transport	Housing	District Development, Lands and Works	Toll Road
<b>Type of Work</b>	Construction of 22km of road and 3.3m wide BRT lane; segregated bus ways, 28 bus shelters and lay byes at 26.  The construction of 3 bus terminals and	A 27km construction of the track and station infrastructure and operation of railway systems which includes trains, control	351 low and medium cost housing units in the Kappa Estate in Abuja, includes infrastructure and general services improvement	Construction of 64.49km of network of roads, 131.18km of storm water drainage, 90.55km water supply pipeline, 64.49km sewage, drainage, walkways,	Expansion and upgrade of 49.36 km of expressway from a four-lane dual carriageway to six lanes, the construction of

	bus depots; provision and maintenance of road infrastructure, traffic signs, road markings as well as other traffic management measures	systems, electric power signalling and fare collection equipment	necessary support infrastructure needed within the housing estate.	bridges, electrical lines and telecommunications distribution network and associated ducts	20 km of coastal road.  Provision of facilities (street lights, road signs, pedestrian bridges and drainages)
<b>Project Cost</b>	4.5 billion naira for the construction of bus lanes and 1 billion naira for acquisition of buses	US\$400 million for purchase of rolling stock	NA	61.19 billion naira (US\$386 million)	Estimated amount of 50 billion naira (US\$333 million)

**Table 1: Characteristics of the Local Regeneration Partnerships (Author, 2017)**

## 5. Discussion and Managerial Implications

### Accountability and Transparency practices in the Formation Stage of Nigerian Local Regeneration Partnerships

The general consensus among participants interviewed in the five partnerships investigated was that transparency in the open tendering process was an early signal of accountable activities and a way to enhance future partnership working. A participant asserted that transparency in the selection process signalled fairness in the partner selection:

*“If it is not transparent it is not likely that the project will attract the best investors who will want a transparent competitive bidding process that is very transparent to everybody.”*  
[Director, Regulatory Agency]

Another concern raised by participants is that funding institutions needed to have clear evidence of a transparent tendering and bidding process and the resultant selection of partners. These transparency concerns were also shared in the Rail Partnership, however, the partners involved were determined that there should be openness among partners as well as the unrestricted sharing of information to enhance partnership working. A participant from the partnership stated that such transparent practice meant that:

*“At least I know after we [transport agency] signed the contract agreement, this consortium [the private sector developers] is not going to mess us up, because I know they can deliver, I trust the people it's bringing into the job”.*  
[Deputy Director C, Transport Agency]

The research findings further indicated that there is usually hesitation to provide finance by funding institutions, especially international funding institutions when clarity is not evident in

the entire process and could sometimes withdraw their investment interests. One of the participants from a local funding institution stated that:

*“Now what we [the banking community] are trying to do is getting involved very, very early in the process to some extent we can try to spearhead it so that the project is watertight as much as possible”.* [Director, Transaction Advisory Services]

The participant however further emphasises that it is not possible to check every activity that has been done in the partnership, but that there is a system in place that allows for checks and balances of the partners’ activities. The author infers that perhaps that might be the reason, why in the Rail Partnership, it was important for the Transport Agency to select private sector partners that had a good understanding of the rail sector, in terms, of their experience and capability. The Private Sector Specialist, [Funding Institution A] stated that it was also important to consider from the onset what the performance determinants were in order to ensure transparency and accountability in the Rail Partnership.

For instance, in the Kappa Housing Partnership, a participant from one of the government’s Reforms Agency [Team Leader, Reforms Agency] acknowledged that there is a general perception among the public partners that the private sector partners are seen to enter into the partnerships with the aim to make loads of money. This the participant attributed to the way the agency had been structured and operated over the years, for instance frequent changes in management, poor accountability and corrupt practices. The Team Leader, Reforms Agency was also of the opinion that not having a clear structure right from the commencement of the partnership might be due to the way the contractual agreement had being negotiated. In addition, the participant believed more efforts needed to have been made to ensure that the partners were sufficiently informed about the goals of the partnership and the individual responsibilities and obligations of the partners. According to the participant, the private partners on the other hand also see the Housing Agency has been overbearing, especially in cases where the Housing Authority tries to influence the decision process of the partnership working.

In a bid to ensure better accountability and transparency, specifically in terms of equity and fairness in future activities of the Kappa Housing Authority, a restructuring of the Housing Authority has commenced. The new structure aims to change the nature of the ownership of Kappa Housing Authority and to help initiate better accountability and good governance procedures. The Reform Agency working alongside the Housing Authority has begun putting together a board of committee members to include external consultants and representatives from all relevant stakeholders who would bring on board their expertise. An audit committee would also be established and a PPP sub-committee at the board level. The Assistant Director B, Reforms Agency acknowledged that the Housing Authority already has some form of PPP structure, but the Reform Agency does not feel they meet international best practises. The Reform Agency has set out to restructure the Housing Authority to create an environment that would enable the government entity to be able to carry out PPP arrangement more effectively.

In essence, as part of the restructuring, new PPP procedures, guidelines and the evaluation criteria were being agreed at the time of the data collection. According to these participants, the new procedures and guidelines would see documents used during the pre-tendering stage, being sent to the inaugurated board of committee members for review and feedback and eventually for acceptance. These new procedures are to ensure that the entire process meets international best practices for PPP arrangements. It is envisaged that with the restructuring of the Housing Authority, the PPP contract agreements would be well spelt out so that partners

enter into the partnership with a clear picture of the objectives that need to be achieved. It would also address issues with regards to how risks should be mitigated and how the investment on return would be handled. In addressing the problems with accountability, an audit committee is to be established as well as a PPP sub-committee at the board level.

In the Gamma District Partnership, the Director, [Transaction Advisory Services] from the consultancy team stated that the situation between the public and private sector partners was a bit tense at the beginning of the partnership and that the partners were wary of each other. The private developer right from the commencement of the partnership had made it clear that they wanted full disclosure of information and decisions from the government and that the private housing developer claimed that they would also be willing to share information. According to the participant, providing necessary documentation or information in respect of the partners' activities prior to meetings was meant to indicate that the partners were committed to the success of the partnership. This is line with the argument proposed by Charlier, Glover and Robertson (2009) that with a basis of transparency, partners will be more willing to exercise the tolerance and perseverance necessary to see the partnership through difficult times. However, this was not the case during the course of the partnership working, conflict resulted in among the partners when the sub-contractors with the private developing company were reluctant to release the architecture drawings for the constructions, so that the Housing Authority could determine whether they were in accordance with what had been negotiated in the contract and also if they were up to the expected standards. The situation led to the suspicion of the Housing Authority thinking that the private contractors wanted to cut corners. The participant further stated:

*“...the private developers had not released the drawings because they were of the opinion that the Housing Authority was going to use it as a means to re-negotiate the contract.”*  
*[Director, Transaction Advisory Services]*

A legal consultant [CEO, Legal Advisory Services] to the private developer acknowledged that perhaps the Gamma District Development Authority should have made the private partners; specifically, the sub-contractors understand why they asked for the information and perhaps emphasised that it was aimed at enhancing the partnership working and not for it to be used against them.

### **Accountability and Transparency and Concerns in the Implementation Stage of Nigeria Local Regeneration Partnerships**

According to Forrer *et. al.*, (2010), public sector partners need to consider the mechanisms most appropriate to hold their private sector partners accountable, alongside how they would be accountable to their private sector partners. The Kappa Housing Authority provided an insightful case of the challenges faced with issues of accountability which had affected its capability to fully implement partnership arrangements. Despite the feasibility studies carried out to inform the decision of the appropriate location to construct the housing units and design models. A participant [Team Leader, Reforms Agency] from the Reform Agency stated that there had been situations when houses had been built in a particular location with no potential off-takers offering to purchase the houses usually because of the choice of locations. According to the participant:

*“Location matters as the decision that goes into this is such that there must be a guaranteed market for the houses in the location and the design meets local*

*preferences. Even middle class people, they still have those cultural issues, they would not buy certain type of houses, and those types of issues have to be taken into consideration”.*  
[Team Leader, Reforms Agency]

Some of these situations had resulted because of influence from top ranking government officials who exercise their administration powers and decide that the housing project be constructed in a particular locality within their jurisdiction and the directive is given for that to happen. In other words, sometimes state governors want the housing projects to be sited in the states they govern, to give the impression to the local electorate that the State Government is investing in infrastructure development.

A reason was given by participants about why there seemed to be the heavy influence of the government in the decision making in the partnerships. The first concern was that the private sector infrastructure developers usually did not want to get into the bad books of government. According to these participants, private sector access to large scale and highly financed projects in Nigeria is based on access to contacts and connections within the government, for instance, being politically connected, also locally termed ‘*who you know syndrome*’. According to a participant from the BT Partnership:

*“We are in a country where the private sector relies heavily on government patronage, so also the banks rely heavily on government patronage”.*  
[Deputy Director A, Transport Agency]

Suggested by participants is that the situation illustrated above may have led the private sector partners to become complacent to the actions and decisions of the institutions representing the government, in what is locally termed ‘*a wait and see attitude*’. The researcher infers that these situations which typically characterise the traditional procurement method of infrastructure development are evidently being seen to be seeping into partnership arrangements, thereby defeating the very purpose of partnership working.

To emphasise the above points, a participant commented that:

*“One of the important things is that you don’t want to have problems with sustainability, because when you sign up to something, it is about good governance, contract sanctity, ensuring that what is signed is done, if you do that you would have sustainability. So basically, it comes down to the contract and the governance environment that facilitates contract sanctity”.*  
[Director, Regulatory Agency]

The participant further attributed the issues of accountability and some corrupt practices to the extent of political interference in the operations of the agency to the constant changes in the leadership and management of the Housing Authority.

In the Bus Transport Partnership, while it is the aim of the government to improve the state’s transport infrastructure. It is also at the top of the agenda for the government to ensure that they safe guard the citizenry and the environment because the government is seen as the last resort and protector of the people from the profit-making motives of the private sector. However, a participant [Lead, Transaction Advisory Services] was of the opinion that in the Toll Road partnership, the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) which was set up might have ran more efficiently in delivering on the project if the state government had not interfered with its decisions. The participant is of the believe that this might have also led the state government to have an upper hand in the process of being able to buy out the private partners’ shares when the partnership was terminated.

## **Accountability and Transparency Concerns in the Delivery Stage of Nigeria Local Regeneration Partnerships**

Successful collaboration between partners is integral to the partnership working and is tasked with increasing accountability and transparency requiring partners to set continuous goals and provide evidence of their performance (Merminod and Rowe, 2012). As Slater *et. al.* (2007) suggested, that the reflective processes of monitoring and the commencement of evaluating the collaborative process are important in assessing the partnership's performance, but possibly are more important in understanding and developing the partnership working. Thus, if the reflective processes are acted upon, can give rise to partnership learning, both across the partnership and within partners' the individual organisations.

Participants recognised that the partners needed to meet their obligations as at when due, for PPPs to work in the country such that all the partners needed to understand that is could only be achieved when all the partners met their obligations. Participants also stated that carrying the citizens along is very important throughout the various stages of the partnership; however, there is no legislative procedure in the ICRC Act that gives an indication as to what needs to be done. A participant stated that:

*“The ICRC Act says nothing about it, most states government laws say nothing about it. If it is driven by legislation it would help, otherwise people just have to get more sense into it.”*  
*[CEO, Legal Advisory Services]*

Another participant further commented that:

*“It is not the responsibility of the private sector to deal with these citizens that is the work of the government”.*  
*[Managing Director, Funding Institution]*

In being accountable to the local community, it was important for the Transport Agency in the BT Partnership that the public were made aware of the necessary information about the BT Partnership activities. The feedback provided by the members of the public were acted on and communicated to private partners with the aim of improving bus transport services. According to participants in the partnership, it is a way of ensuring that the Transport Authority is accountable for what it has set out to achieve among partners. It was the opinion of the Deputy Director C, Transport Agency] that the government had a responsibility to ensure that the private sector actually delivered on the project. Another participant [Deputy Director A, Transport Agency] reckoned that the Lagos Government has done well in terms of transport infrastructure and in terms of protecting the populace.

Deputy Director B, from the Rail Partnership was of the opinion that the efforts been put into engaging, communicating and informing the populace is mainly because it is a World Bank partly sponsored project. There is an amount of the World Bank funds that is budgeted and allocated to funding this exercise because of the importance the World Bank's places on information, education and communication. The participant further stated that it is important that the community has a proper understanding of what the Transport Authority is trying to do, by educating the populace.

As part of the Transport Agency's communications strategy also involves external relations, such that offices from the public relations department hold surveys with members of various communities. Four television shows which are aired for half an hour every week sponsored by the Transport Authority where updates are given, live interviews are aired and live interaction with the members of the public are held to address going concerns. There are also social media updates of the on-going project on the Facebook. A participant further stated that:

*“They give us updates about their experiences, we also have a monthly meeting with the leaders, they tell us for instance, you don’t have enough traffic management protocols, in fact that is part of the environment safeguard issues.”*

*[Deputy Director B, Transport Agency]*

The participant stated that:

*“I think we would reserve judgement on that because we haven’t seen the full outcome. So there are problems with driving the process through, and it is very slow and there are many, to that extent I won’t say there is full confidence in the process just yet at the Federal level”.*

*[Managing Director, Funding Institution]*

In the delivery of the Gamma District Development, a participant was of the opinion that there were reservations about the implementation process due to delays and that at the Federal level there was limited confidence in the partnership.

In an effort to promote accountability in the partnership, a participant explained that:

*“... because of the bank funding that is involved, we are being monitored closely to ensure that the money is being used for what it is supposed to be used for.”*

*[Lead, Transaction Advisory Services]*

An independent engineer in November 2012 in line with the partnership agreement was integrated into the partnership to promote a transparent collaborative process, such that there were clear indications of the roles of the partners, clear procedures of their operations and decision making processes and that the resultant implications from those decisions were clearly observed (ICRC Annual Report, 2012). The monitoring was also deemed important in the event that there was an arbitration process or that the partners went to court for any litigation reasons.

Likewise, in the BT Partnership, various evaluation techniques were employed in the partnership working to promote accountability. The effects of the operations of the local regeneration project is taking into consideration in order to protect the citizenry, such as environmental degradation and the health and safety of the citizens such that they do not suffer the consequence of the infrastructure development. To help mitigate the occurrence of protests and to have close contact with the local community, some corporate social responsibility projects to benefit the residents along the bus route corridor were developed. One of the agreed actions from the contractual agreement extra services provided by private partners on the toll road has been to provide free toll services for vehicular break down on any stretch of the road; this is with a means to build close community relations.

In the Kappa Housing Partnerships, participants voiced that it would no longer be business as usual once the Housing Authority gets restructured. Consequently, in line with the new corporate governance changes that would include the mechanisms for assessing Housing Authority’s performance as well as holding them accountable. There would also be an inclusion of performance agreement within the memorandum of understanding. The evaluation of the entire partnership working would also be introduced at the end of the local regeneration projects and it would be accessed to determine if the partnership was able to deliver on the set objectives and in terms of the concession agreement. It would also involve the appointment of an Independent Estate Valuer to join the PPP team. In the Kappa Housing Partnership, when the housing units was handed over to the Housing Authority for servicing facilities management, operations and maintenance, a resident association was set up and involved in

the resident associations in the management of the Estates. According to the Deputy General Manager, [PPP Unit], one of the Housing Authority's statutory functions is to get the residents association involved in making decisions affecting the management of the entire Estate. In light of this meetings are held periodically, with members of the resident association and officers from the Housing Authority Estate Department.

One of the participants [Legal Adviser, Reforms Agency] indicated that the performance criteria of the Housing Authority in terms of partnership arrangements would be agreed among partners in accordance to a new structure proffered by the regulatory agency working with them to corporationalize the Housing Authority. The participant further stated that:

*“It is a process whereby we can put in place appropriate structures for the direction and management of the partnership in order to increase long-term shareholder value and enhancing corporate performance and accountability while taking into account the interest of the citizenry”*

In addition, an Assistant Director A, [Reforms Agency] commented that he was of the opinion that the bottom line was that when it comes to performance reporting, that at the end of the day, there must be indication of good governance, transparency, appropriate pricing, accountability in those documents.

## **6. Conclusion**

The extent of accountability and transparency practices in each of the local regeneration partnerships gives a strong sense that the basis of success is the contractual commitment of each partner organisation. The expectation is that partners execute what had been agreed upon in contractual agreements and are able to deliver on the agreed objectives. This argument has been put forward by Tomkins, (2001) that in some partnership arrangements, the contract plays a more crucial role in governing the relationship between the partners. In these contexts, contract acts as a governance tool as prescribed by law and it focuses on the technical and easily measurable aspects of the partnership (Laing and Lian, 2005). In other words, accountability and transparency would emerge as a consequence of partners' confidence in the 'sanctity of contracts' that ensures what has been agreed upon is implemented and sustained. Also, that there is an appropriate governance environment that facilitates 'sanctity of contracts' and that all partners carry out their roles.

The practicality of this, is for the private sector to keep to the time frame for the achievement of each milestone and to keep to budget and for public sector organisations to honour their regulatory obligations. Any deviation from these expectations, makes investment in local regeneration projects an unattractive proposition for investors and funding institutions given the huge costs involved. Taking for instance, the Kappa Federal Housing Partnership and the Gamma District Development Partnership where it is evident that there were uncertainties among the partners and challenges in the partnership operations, according to Huxham and Vangen (2005) and Das and Teng (1998) the partners must be able to form modest expectations about desired outcomes, the more modest the desired outcomes expected and the lower the level of risk, the greater the chance that expectations will be met. The author argues that creating accountable policies and practices could allow partners address these uncertainties by trying to learn more about individual organisation objectives for going into the partnerships as well as way of working. The aim therefore should be for public organisations to make a

commitment to ensure transparency in the selection and bidding process, as well as in the evaluation process of potential private partner organisations.

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