



The Public Finance Management Enhancement Project (PFMEP) continues to gain momentum irrespective of the disruptive effects of Covid 19. The project team remains resolute in project activities implementation despite the restrictions of the Covid 19 Pandemic lockdown. The Government of Zimbabwe on the other side has not found it ease to further relax any imposed restrictions as the devastating effects of the global pandemic still linger over all facets of life in the country. For instance, the number of infections continue to soar while there has also been an increase in the death toll from the Pandemic. Resultantly, most civil service work remain curtailed.

However, there has been some commendable progress mostly in project activities of a virtual nature. System based project activities have become more lively with increased access to remote connectivity to Users and service providers. The Government of Zimbabwe and its Development partners have commendably provided required resources (VPN Lines, Sim Cards and Data) to realize remote connectivity. Project activities that require virtual interaction between project team members and service providers have similarly benefited immensely from availed virtual communication platforms and tools. The Ministry of ICT team's efforts have been sterling and outstanding in this regard.

Logistical glitches still exist in project activities that require physical interventions. The delivery of outstanding hardware equipment for outstanding project activities is most notable in this regard. For instance, there have been some delays in the delivery of solar equipment for all kiosks as well as computers and printers for phase 2 and 3 of kiosk implementations. While these project challenges are worrisome and require detailed attention, it is also worthwhile and satisfactory to note that relevant authorities are doing everything possible to have them resolved. December 31 2020 remains the project closure date for the entire project. There is evidence of the eagerness of the project team to deliver on activities before this date. The commonality of purpose between all concerned MoFED departments and service providers in the recent completion of the ZIMRA Interface tell a pleasant story of a project team geared only for success.

It is worthwhile to note the following key activities that the project has been working on in the period under review:

- Facilitation of remote connectivity to the PFMS system to Users. This mainly included the securing of NetOne VPN lines, NetOne Sim Cards and data to access the system to support home based work.
- Creation and operationalization of virtual communication platforms and tools. Virtual meetings have mainly been successful because of the continuous and rigorous testing of these platforms.
- Implementation work on the RBZ/PFMS Interface. This involves building an information exchange platform between RBZ and the PFMS system.



- Finalization of the Business Planning & Consolidation Module configuration as well as the Business Intelligence Module and the Web Portal.
- Procurement of a virtual meetings and related services platform called TruConf. Finalisation of this platform will be in September 2020.
- The installation of Air Conditioning Units at all 67 Kiosks and Training Centres. This activity is now complete.
- Operational Acceptance for all Kiosks under Phase 1. This activity is now complete.

Despite the noted setbacks for the project and the delays in key project activities by the global Covid 19 pandemic, it is imperative to note the success stories of the project in the period under review. The notable accomplishments for the project include the following:

- The availing of PFMS system remote connectivity to system users. Users and service providers are now able to access the PFMS system from home
- The successful completion of the ZIMRA Interface. **This is indeed a big score for the project.**
- Commendable progress on the critical interface between the PFMS system and the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ).
- Commendable progress in the Business Planning and Consolidation Module, Business Intelligence and Web Portal
- The installation of Air Conditioning (AC) units at all 63 kiosks and training centres as agreed in the contract.
- The completion of Operational Acceptance for all fifteen (15) Kiosks under Phase 1 of the project.
- The successful delivery of outstanding project equipment (UPSs and desks, chairs, switches and routers) for Phase 2 and 3 kiosks.

Conclusion

In Conclusion, it is imperative to note that the project has endured a bleak operating environment but has certainly not been deterred. The project team has been extremely defiant in the wake of the global Covid 19 pandemic. Commendable progress has been made especially in activities of a virtual nature. It must be noted that project sponsorship of required access resources by the Government of Zimbabwe and its Donor partners has kept the project alive. The PFMEP project has scored key successes against the backdrop of a daunting environment. This encouraging precedent can only open the floodgates for the accomplishment of more activities. The project team also continues to grow in confidence and cohesion. The team is certainly geared to bring the project home by the 31st of December 2020. It is also critical to



keep an indelible eye on the outstanding activities to avoid any spoils of champagne popping on 31 December 2020.