

NG-CARES AND THIRD-PARTY MONITORING FOR ONDO, OSUN AND EKITI STATES

INTRODUCTION

The Nigeria COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus (NG-CARES) programme is a comprehensive initiative introduced by the Nigerian government and the World Bank in response to the socioeconomic challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This programme, launched in collaboration with international development partners and stakeholders, aimed to mitigate the adverse effects of the pandemic on various sectors of the economy and provide targeted support to vulnerable populations.

The Third-Party Monitoring (TPM) exercise conducted in Ondo, Osun and Ekiti State respectively State is part of the NG-CARES programme aimed at expanding access to livelihood support and food security services, as well as grants for poor and vulnerable households, to foster economic recovery and cushion the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NG-CARES programme in Ondo State focused on implementing various interventions to address the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic on vulnerable populations.

As part of the NG-CARES programme, AYGf carried out third-party monitoring in the States. The aim was to assess the implementation and impact of the programme's interventions. It aimed to provide an independent evaluation of the programme's performance, identify challenges, and make recommendations for improvement. The TPM exercise involved a comprehensive assessment of the programme's activities, advocacy to the state actors, Desk review on project document, beneficiary verification processes, beneficiary interviews, implementation of specific Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs), data collection, data analysis and reporting and feedback mechanisms. The TPM exercise is in two phases and its being implemented in the three states of impact, Ondo, Osun, and Ekiti States. The first phase has been implemented and reports have been produced and submitted. The date the TPM exercise was concluded in **September 2023**.

The key areas of focus within the NG-CARES programme in the States include:

- a) **Healthcare strengthening:** The pandemic exposed weaknesses in healthcare systems. NG-CARES was dedicated to enhancing the healthcare infrastructure, ensuring that communities have access to quality medical services, and strengthening the state's capacity to respond to health emergencies.
- b) **Economic recovery:** The pandemic had a significant impact on the state's economy, affecting businesses, employment, and livelihoods. The NG-CARES programme included measures to revive economic activities, provide support to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and create job opportunities for residents.
- c) **Education and social protection:** With schools forced to close during the pandemic, education suffered disruptions. The NG-CARES programme was investing in the education sector to ensure that children could access quality learning, even in challenging circumstances. Additionally, social protection measures were being implemented to provide a safety net for the most vulnerable individuals and families.
- d) **Infrastructure development:** The NG-CARES programme recognised the importance of infrastructure for sustainable development. It includes initiatives to improve road networks, energy supply, and other critical infrastructure components in communities.
- e) **Community engagement and resilience:** The programme places a strong emphasis on community engagement and building resilience at the grassroots level. By involving communities in decision-making processes and strengthening their capacity to respond to future crises, NG-CARES aimed to create lasting positive impacts.

The NG-CARES program represents a collaborative effort among government agencies, civil society organizations, development partners, and local communities. It is a testament to the commitment of all stakeholders to address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and promote sustainable development and resilience in the state.

Through targeted interventions, innovative strategies, and a focus on inclusivity, the NG-CARES programme sought to usher in a period of recovery and growth, ensuring that the people of the state could rebuild their lives and livelihoods in the post-pandemic era.

Objectives of the Third-party Monitoring

AYGF TPM project's overall objective is to address accountability concerns of stakeholders, equip public sector managers with information on progress toward achieving stated targets and goals, provide substantial evidence as the basis for any necessary mid-course corrections and monitor the implementation progress and the adherence to the agreed operational processes by the State Delivery Platforms. In this regard, AYGf ensured:

1. The Programme is implemented in accordance with its overall objective to expand access to livelihoods support and food security services, and grants for poor and vulnerable households and firms.
2. The Programme activities are implemented in accordance with the approved Operational Manual for each of the States.
3. Results are being achieved in accordance with the approved results-framework.
4. Transparency and compliance with principles of selecting beneficiaries.
5. Cross-cutting issues such as safeguards, gender mainstreaming and inclusiveness, the environment and people with special needs have been considered in the course programme implementation.
6. The States adhere to the provisions of the Programme Action Plan (PAP).

Key Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs)

Result Area 1: Increased social transfers, basic services, and livelihood support to poor and vulnerable households.

DLI 1.1: State Cash Transfer Unit (SCTU)

DLI 1.2: Labour Intensive Public Workforce (LIPW)

DLI 1.3: Livelihood Grant

DLI 1.4: Basic Service Delivery

Result Area 2: Increasing Food Security and Safe Functioning of Food Supply Chain

DLI 2.1: Agricultural Inputs and Services

DLI 2.2: Labour Intensive Agricultural Infrastructure

DLI 2.3: Agricultural Assets for Production and Mitigating Food Lost and Waste

DLI 2.4: Upgrading Wet Markets to function safely.

Result Area 3: Facilitating recovery and enhancing capabilities of MSEs.

DLI 3.1: Credit Grant for MSE

DLI 3.2: Operational Grant

DLI 3.3: IT Enhancement Grant