Local Government Infrastructure Maintenance: The Case of Dar es Salaam Local Authorities

Mussa J Assad

Abstract

Infrastructure maintenance is a critical aspect of public assets management. If managed appropriately it has the potential of generating significant benefits to populations within municipalities. But if managed inappropriately it can equally have detrimental effects. This study intended to find out the quality of information being collected, as well as to assess the adequacy of the financial resources spent on maintenance within Dar es Salaam Local Government Authorities (LGAs). The principal objective was to gain a deep understanding of, and analyse, operations and maintenance expenditure, and assess their adequacy. The study established that all Dar es Salaam City municipalities did not maintain financial data on their infrastructure assets that was adequate for managerial decision making purposes. There was also a lack of adequate funding for infrastructure maintenance, and consequently, certain components of municipal infrastructure have been neglected, or at most
received only remedial treatments. The ideal capital maintenance ratios at aggregate levels are 1.5, but in the Dar es Salaam LGAs they
were extremely low (0.5), indicating that they were not spending appropriate levels on maintenance of infrastructure. Benchmarking of maintenance with depreciation charges is one sound tool in
estimating maintenance costs, and this needs to be done for all municipal councils and the city council separately, as well as at an aggregate level. This is an issue that will need to be addressed thoroughly otherwise municipal assets have little chance of reaching their predicted service life.

Keywords: infrastructure maintenance, local government, Tanzania.