

# DevInfo in Action

## Tanzania: Using DevInfo for Evidence-based Decision-Making

*Editor's note: Over 130 countries and global regions have adapted DevInfo database technology for monitoring, evaluating and disseminating data. But among these, only one – Tanzania – has managed to successfully implement DevInfo across numerous government ministries, agencies and sub-sectors. This week's edition explores how Tanzania has become a global model of DevInfo institutionalization and data use to support evidence-based decision-making.*

### Overview of DevInfo institutionalization

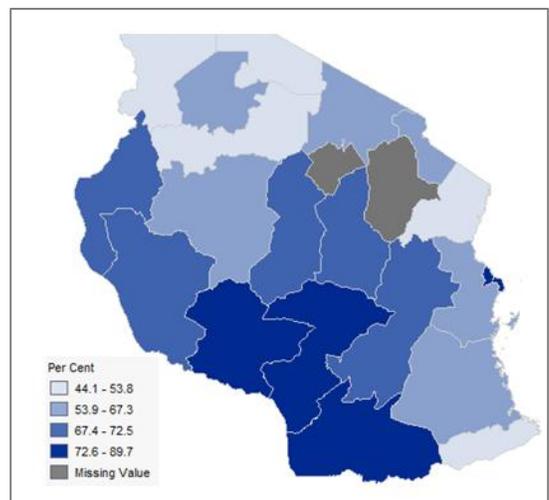
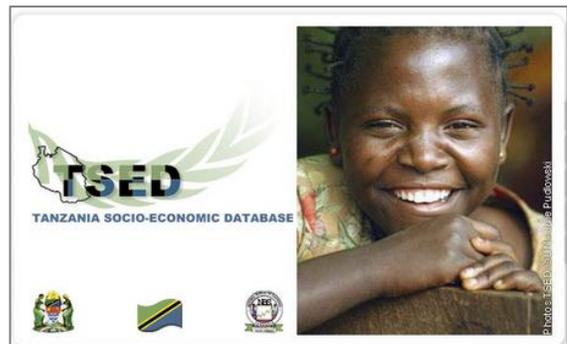
The DevInfo national adaptation - [Tanzania Socio Economic Database](#) (TSED) - serves as a repository for government sectoral data across the country, providing instant access to over 700 indicators disaggregated by sex, location, and sub-national administrative areas. At the government level, the National Bureau of Statistics, 25 ministries, and 18 government institutions all contribute to TSED. With widespread implementation of DevInfo at the sub-sector level, data at the national level is easily updated.

The breadth and depth of DevInfo use within the government of Tanzania obviously requires a strong system behind it - a system intentionally cultivated over a decade of implementation. As such, TSED represents not only a tool, but also a lesson in how countries and governments can effectively utilize technology through multi-stakeholder cooperation.

At the donor level, TSED receives significant support from UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, DANIDA and DFID. This support, coordinated by and divided among the various agencies, provides resources for sustained implementation, including project formulation, sectoral activities, equipment, training, and human resources.

An institutional framework consisting of a Steering Committee, Task force, and focal points in all partner institutions links activities between the government and donors.

TSED has been institutionalized within the country's Poverty Monitoring System (PMS) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), thereby providing a strong mandate for implementation.



Households within 15 minutes to water supply in dry seasons. Source: TSED

Today, over 200 individuals have been trained in the DevInfo User module, and over 80 have been trained in DevInfo database administration - representing strong national capacity to move ahead with country-led DevInfo activities.

### Data-driven decision-making

Within Tanzania, the need for a tool to support data-driven decision-making is clear. Though Tanzania has enjoyed average GDP growth rates between 5 and 7 percent since 2000, this growth has not translated into sustained poverty reduction.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, efficient allocation of resources and evidence-based decision-making is crucial for achieving development goals.



Msafiri Mbwana Mziray

Msafiri Mbwana Mziray, DevInfo consultant with over 37 years of experience working in Tanzania's transportation sector, champions the importance of DevInfo implementation to support data-driven decision-making. He explains, "DevInfo helps coordinate the budget and direct policy," as decision-makers need to rely upon up-to-date data that can be easily accessed.

According to Mziray, DevInfo has been used to analyze the life-cycle cost of projects such as roads and railways. In one case, he notes, the use of data contributed to a shift of 100 billion Tanzanian shillings to the Ministry of Transportation, as evidence clearly showed the benefits and long lifespan of railway infrastructure.

"Policy-makers actively demand data from sub-sector databases," explains Mziray. "They now understand the advantages of data transparency, and how it creates confidence between parties."

### Aid effectiveness

The important role that DevInfo plays in supporting decision-making efforts at the government level can apply to the donor community as well. Tanzania was the second-ranked aid recipient country in Africa in 2009, as official development assistance reached USD 2.9 billion,<sup>2</sup> representing 13.7 percent of GNI.<sup>3</sup> As such, the use of data to support aid decision-making and



Numerous sector and sub-sector databases feed into the main TSED database

<sup>1</sup> IDA at Work Tanzania: Sustaining and Sharing Economic Growth, p. 1, accessed at [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/IDA/Resources/73153-1302790208764/IDA\\_AT\\_WORK\\_Tanzania\\_2011.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/IDA/Resources/73153-1302790208764/IDA_AT_WORK_Tanzania_2011.pdf) on 19 October 2011.

<sup>2</sup> World Development Indicators 2010 Database, <http://data.worldbank.org/>.

increased transparency becomes all the more important. The institutionalization of TSED as a country-led and independent system meets key elements of this need.

For example, according to Mziray, an adaptation of TSED customized for the country's Transport sector is now being consulted during the Joint Transport Sector Reviews with respect to the agreed-upon Key Performance Indicators. With the support of this Transport sector database, stakeholders are able to review and exchange information on year-end performance targets, develop Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) based on discussion outcomes, and establish performance targets for the coming year. Furthermore, donors and government officials can compare financial data alongside socio-economic indicators when discussing topics ranging from airport runway projects to social programs.



Tanzania is particularly important for the UN community, as it is one of eight pilot countries implementing reforms to achieve better results by “Delivering as One”. Through this effort, the UN system in Tanzania hopes to further collaboration and coordination both internally among UN agencies as well as externally with government, civil society, private sector and development partner actors.<sup>4</sup> In this context, TSED is poised to play a critical role.

With DevInfo firmly entrenched in Tanzania, the nation is well positioned to rely upon data-driven decision-making as it forges ahead with human development for all its citizens.

*Data making a difference.*

For more information, please contact Msafiri Mbwana Mziray, DevInfo Consultant, at [mmmziray@gmail.com](mailto:mmmziray@gmail.com).

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<sup>3</sup> Global Development Finance 2010 Database, <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/global-development-finance/gdf-2010>.

<sup>4</sup> UNDP Tanzania website, accessed at [http://www.tz.undp.org/un\\_un\\_intro.html](http://www.tz.undp.org/un_un_intro.html) on 19 October 2011.