

# VEC audit fact sheet

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## 1. What is VEC?

VEC simply means **Visit Every Community**. It is an initiative of the Enugu state government to promote participatory governance and budgeting. It seeks to mobilise and sensitize citizens to actively participate in the policy, project and budget cycles of the government. In 2009, a visit to all 472 communities in Enugu state was conducted by the VEC directorate to gather and collate into a database, information about community development needs. The information gathered is used to inform the execution of projects that will benefit and bring development to the whole community.

## 2. What is the VEC audit?

The VEC audit is designed to validate the VEC visit, update the information in the database for situations where community's priority needs have changed, or conduct FGDs to generate community needs for communities whose needs were not captured initially. The last VEC audit was done in 2015. It is expected that going forward this audit will become a yearly activity.

## 3. Who should participate in the VEC audit?

Everyone. The process should be participatory, and include every member of the community, regardless of their socio-economic status. It should include men, women, boys, girls, and all people with disabilities. No one should be excluded from the process as community development should benefit everyone.

## 4. What happens with the information collated from the VEC process?

These community needs are collated and used to produce a database. This database informs part of the state's budget through the Ministry of Planning and budget office. It then informs the execution of community projects by both the LG and constituency representatives.

## 5. What is the benefit of engaging in the VEC process?

Community development will be driven by the actual needs of the people and it provides a platform for communities to identify and share their development challenges with the government. It is also an opportunity for communities to decide how their 10 million naira Enugu state government community development fund will be spent.

## 6. What are the dates for the VEC audit for 2017?

The 2017 audit began on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April, and will run till the 15<sup>th</sup> of May. A VEC audit calendar is available for communities to know when the team will be in their communities. It is the responsibility of the coordinating President-General (PG) in each LGA to inform all the communities in the LGA when the audit team will visit.

## 7. What are the challenges of the VEC process?

During a grand sharing of participatory governance approaches in the Southeast organized by the Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn (PERL) programme - of which the Voice to the People (V2P) project is a part of-, the VEC initiative among others was extensively discussed. The following challenges of the initiative were highlighted during the event:

- The participation of non-government actors was poor, both in planning and execution of the visits. The VEC team comprised of only government actors.

- The issue identification process in the communities was not inclusive. The peculiar needs of women and girls, and people with special needs did not come out clearly as the process did not provide for ideal participation of all groups.
- VEC visits in some cases were not carried out in a neutral venue that was accessible to different social groups. Visits often took place in the residence of traditional rulers or influential personalities in the communities.
- Some communities in the state claimed the VEC team did not visit their communities.

#### **8. How is V2P supporting a more inclusive and effective process?**

Through a coalition of CSOs known as APAGG, the Voice to the People (V2P) programme has been engaging with the VEC Directorate to strengthen the participatory component of the VEC process. As a result of this engagement, the directorate has committed to some changes in the audit process such as:

- the use of focus group discussions (FGDs) during the audit to ensure that the needs of different groups of people are captured
- the involvement of civil society in the VEC audit team
- the constitution and training of Community Project Management Committees (CPMC) who will manage and oversee the community projects after they are completed and commissioned by the VEC Directorate
- publish the terms of reference (TOR) for this CPMC in the next VEC manual to ensure clarity of roles.

#### **9. What role are CSOs playing in the audit process?**

Civil society are currently monitoring the process, supporting community mobilization where possible, and providing technical support for conducting FGDs. APAGG, through the V2P platform has been coordinating civil society participation in the audit from day 1, and have facilitated regular review meetings to tease out the weaknesses of the process and generate proposals on how to strengthen the next phases. The CS groups developed a checklist for monitoring of the process and agreed on a weekly review meeting with the VEC Directorate.

#### **10. What is the role of communities in ensuring the success of the process?**

Community roles are to ensure that a central and accessible venue is used for the VEC audit (not an individual's home or the Igwe's palace), to come out en masse to ensure that their voices are heard and to participate in the FGDs to articulate and prioritize their needs. Community members can also share on social media platforms their experiences with the process.

#### **11. What happens after the VEC audit?**

After the VEC audit, communities have responsibility to continue to engage, follow-up with the budget cycle to know which of their needs have been captured, and follow-up with execution of budget, as well as monitoring and management of community projects

*To find out more information about the process and when the audit team will be in your community, please follow @Enuguvec and @V2Pnaija on twitter and Visit Every Community Initiative by Enugu State Government on facebook*