Protocol for Encouragement Messages to Monitors
NRG Metaketa III

September 19, 2017

Preliminaries

This document describes the guidelines for sending encouragement messages to monitors as part of the Metaketa III Natural Resource Governance project. It is based on the premise that field conditions will make it impossible to fully harmonize all aspects of the encouragement strategy, but that each team should comply with common guidelines that allow comparisons across the experiments.

For reference, this protocol essentially expands on Section 5.3 of the pre-analysis plan, which states, “All teams will offer encouragements to the monitors on a schedule pre-defined in individual pre-analysis plans.”

1 Delivery Mechanism for Messages

The monitors will receive encouragement messages via SMS.

2 Frequency of Messages

Encouragement messages will be sent within 30 days after after each update from the monitors. For example, quarterly updates will result in quarterly encouragement messages.

3 Content of Messages

The goal of these messages is to increase monitor compliance and improve monitor performance. Past research has attempted to identify the types of messages that encourage community monitors serving in a voluntary or semi-voluntary role to improve community-level outcomes. Though vast, some pertinent highlights from this literature are compiled here.

Telling participants in a short-term labor market how their work was meaningful increased the quantity of their work (though did not have an effect on quality) (Chandler &
Similarly, serious contributors to wiki pages were motivated by the belief that the community benefitted from their work (Budhathoki & Haythornthwaite 2013). These contributors were also motivated by recognition from the community (Budhathoki & Haythornthwaite 2013). The researchers conclude, “In considering design for the serious [contributor], it would appear to be important to provide means for both knowing what is happening in the community and making oneself recognizable in the community (Budhathoki & Haythornthwaite 2013, p. 570). Providing human, individualized feedback on a contribution was found to increase the participation rate and number of responses by Ugandan citizens to the U-Report poll about development outcomes” (Blaschke, Carroll, Chaves, Findley, Gleave, Morello & Nielson 2013). This finding was corroborated by another experiment conducted in Uganda, which found that government responsiveness to solid waste monitors – in the form of “weekly, targeted announcements about how their reports were translated into official action plans and used to improve solid waste collection in Kampala” (p. 3) – increased monitor participation (Buntaine, Nielson & Skaggs 2017). Similarly, motivating citizens to report service delivery problems in Uganda with personalized messaging or encouragement by politicians increased participation rates (Grossman, Michelitch & Santamaria 2017).

With this brief literature review in mind, the content of the encouragement messages should have the following attributes:

- **Individualized** - Customize messages for each monitor / community
- **Outcomes-Focused** - Respond to specific content provided by the monitors and demonstrate how that specific content will translate into improvements in natural resources governance and sustainability
- **Community-Centric** - Remind the monitors of the importance of their work to the community, ideally varying the exact wording of this message over time so it does not seem automated
- **Recognition-Building** - Remind the monitors that the community will be (or already is) aware of their contribution and of any opportunities there will be for public recognition
References


