

**P**ERFORMANCE OF DEVELOPMENT CONTROL  
DEPARTMENT: A PANACEA FOR SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT

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**ABSTRACT**

*The town and country planning system, notably the development control department, plays a key role in the government's strategy for supporting sustainable development. Land use and development objectives that are compatible with the goals of sustainable development are delivered through the development control department and activities. This study therefore seeks to assess the performance of development control department (DCD) in Gwagwalada. Primary data on three key areas of development control activities was gathered from the study area. The questionnaires were administered across six neighbourhoods in Gwagwalada: consisting of two low, medium, and high-density neighbourhood, respectively. The primary data were collected using a total of 366 questionnaires. The data collected were analysed using descriptive (mean)*

**Introduction:**

The state of the physical environment is a major cause of concern, particularly in developing country cities (Wang *et al.*, 2010). This is because man's activities (development) include a spatial component, and hence the environment is predominantly man-made (Ogundele *et al.*, 2011). In reality, many of the city's physical development challenges are the result of people's failure to effectively manage growth and development (Carlos, 2007). The poor state of urban housing in Nigeria has been observed in many studies (Egunjobi, 1987; Jelili *et al.*, 2006; Mabogunje, 1980; Olotuah, 2006; Yoade,

*and inferential (ANOVA) analytical tool. The study established that development control department had a performance index of 2.13 (poor) for building control works, 1.86 (poor) for management of development control, and 1.36 (very poor) for complaints treatment and procedure, while the overall performance index stands at 1.76 (Poor). The study also revealed that the performance of DCD in Gwagwalada is not significantly different from one residential density to the other. The study concludes that the performance of development control in respect to her statutory objectives is poor, this pattern can be observed in all residential densities. The study recommends that the capacity of DCD should be enhanced by improving the human resource base, logistics and funding of the institution.*

***Keywords:*** *Development, Control, Panacea, Sustainable, Development.*

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2012). According to certain studies, 75 percent of dwelling units in Nigerian cities are insufficient, and most of the residences are in slums. Despite the necessity of development control in physical development, it has become difficult to meet the rise in inadequate housing and urban development with development control activities.

The Federal Capital Territory's population rose from 378671 in 1991 to 1,405,201 in 2006. (National Park Service, 2006). Over the last two decades, the FCT's rapid urbanisation has resulted in a concentration of economic activities, investment, and population in both cities and satellite towns, including Gwagwalada. Population increase has put a huge strain on basic facilities, resulting in high housing demand in the FCT and satellite towns, particularly Gwagwalada (Owusu and Mensah, 2011). In response to the high demand for housing, Gwagwalada and other satellite towns have experienced sporadic urban development of dwellings of various sizes. Depending on the intended population, these development come in a variety of shapes, forms, and materials. Most of these houses are aimed at and built by low- and middle-income families. As a result, there is evidence

of use of inferior materials, the employment of temporary materials, and the densification of housing.

In advanced countries, development restrictions have been used with some effectiveness to maintain a harmonious geographical distribution of activity (Kingsley and Christopher, 2013). However, in developing countries like Nigeria, its implementation has proven difficult (Tang *et al.*, 2000; Wang *et al.*, 2010). In light of the above arguments, Ogundele et al. (2011) asserted that physical development in most developing-country does not always conform to expected objectives. As a result, despite the existence of planning regulations to monitor and limit development, the built environment in many third-world towns is fast degrading (Boamah *et al.*, 2012). Most development control actions take place within municipal boundaries, leaving the urban perimeter and satellite towns to grow organically. As a result, the proliferation of buildings and development that does not conform with the planning laws and standard. One of the key goals of development control is to achieve high-quality home development. Most development control studies focused on issues including compliance, impediments to effective development control, and the effectiveness of development control mechanisms (Abu, 2015; Avogo, 2015; Olufemi et al., 2018). Little or no attention is given to the evaluation of the performance of the development control departments particularly in Satellite towns like Gwagwalada. The performance of development control department is germane to the achievement of the city goals and objectives. This study therefore seeks to assess the performance of development control department in Gwagwalada with a view to suggesting ways of improving the performance of development control department.

## Literature Review

### Development Control in Nigeria: Historical Perspective

The origins of development control may be traced back to the country's land tenure system, which is used in both the north and south (Cherry, 2015). The Emirs, Obi, and Oba were given land to use as they saw fit, and stipulations were made for its acquisition. The emergence of many diseases

and the necessity for appropriate treatment. Town and country planning requires the creation of legislation addressing health, land use, environmental preservation, and highways, as well as the classification of towns. In 1924, a planning scheme approval committee was established, and of 1928, the Lagos Executive Development Board (L.E.D.B) was founded for planning and development in Lagos, and it became operational in 1929. With the promulgation of Nigerian Town and Country Ordinance No. (4 of 1946), town and country planning gained significance with the implementation of new planning schemes and planning authorities (Aluko, 2011).

With the establishment of a Town Planning Division to improve planning and the establishment of a planning authority and development unit in the old Mid-Western State with Edict No. 3 of 1969, the National Development Plan, which ran from 1920 to 1980, was born (Adzi-Tay, 2012). Planning of urban centres, designing and planning of new settlements, and urban renewal schemes are all important policies. To make town and country planning more relevant and effective, the power to function was placed in the local government area, and planning bodies were established to manage planning concerns with the introduction of new local government areas in 1976. The promulgation of the Land Use Decree of 1978 addressed a variety of land-related issues (Aluko, 2011).

The goal of this campaign was to make land available to Nigerians and to gain control over land. Most growth control techniques have been found to be disregarded since the predicted benefits are not always readily apparent (Adzi-Tay, 2012). As a result, people are frequently hesitant to follow such instructions. Some consumers, for example, did not believe it was necessary to obtain an approved building plan before beginning construction. Developers will not be receptive unless there is a problem with developments that violates existing development laws (Thomas, 2013). This attitude stems from earlier experiences in which obtaining approval was difficult or unattainable. Officers are frequently accused of abusing their authority to the public's detriment. Stakeholders have expressed their displeasure with this development. With the current

devotion of concerned officials, agents, and bodies accountable, a significant achievement has been achieved (Qian, 2010).

Around 1958, the preparations for the visit of Queen Elizabeth of England advanced one of the planning ideas that revitalised a section of Lagos, which the residents recognised (Aluko, 2011). Areas where order and traces of planning can be seen, particularly in districts, neighbourhoods, housing estates, and some parts of settlements, are not always difficult to manage and less expensive to renew. Examples can be found in Oyo State, Bayelsa State, and some Eastern states, where a World Bank-assisted fund was made available for projects (Adzi-Tay, 2012). Because the government does not provide the required support, development control measures have failed in some states of the federation. Uncertainty and anxieties are associated with the practise, even though the benefits exceed the drawbacks.

### **Objectives of Development Control**

The practise of development control serves a function. Development control, according to Thomas (2013), is part of the larger goal of town and country planning, and eventually environmental planning. The highest level of generalisation for development control is claimed to be to ensure efficient and effective land use planning that serves the public interest. Qian (2010) also feels that traditional land development control, such as zoning, is widely regarded by planners as an important strategy for mitigating market flaws such as negative externalities and social cost, as well as the supply of public goods.

Thomas (2013) believes that one of the motivations for restricting development in the nineteenth century was to manage sickness and enhance health. Furthermore, proactive plans were being developed in the twentieth century to control land use activities in accordance with a strategy, rather than only to regulate constructions. As a result, development regulation became a development-promoting activity. It was also used to settle disputes between rival land interests. The goal of development control is to ensure that operations on the ground and

construction projects do not jeopardise acceptable practises. As a result, misuses or abuses are avoided (Ogundele *et al.*, 2011).

The goals of development control, according to James (2007), can be summed up into six categories. The initial goal of development control is to ensure that land uses are harmoniously positioned; this is accomplished by arranging the various land uses in such a way that they are correctly positioned in relation to one another, in terms of spatial and environmental needs, as well as their impacts. To avoid the pollutants being blown into residential areas, operations that produce gaseous pollutants, for example, should be positioned on the leeward side of residential areas. Development control also aims to protect the natural environment by prohibiting development in ecologically sensitive areas such as wetlands and watersheds.

Furthermore, development control aims to assure the physical efficiency and cleanliness of settlements, which is accomplished by organizing space in such a way as to promote the movement of people, commodities, and services at the lowest possible cost using efficient circulatory systems. It also guarantees that drainage systems are effective and that access to well-organized waste disposal systems is available. The goal of development control is to safeguard against Aesthetic Nuisance, which entails preventing the construction of structures and enterprises that are irritating to the sense of sight or beauty. However, there is a misunderstanding that one cannot zone for aesthetics alone (James, 2007).

### **Development Control Tools**

Development control tools are the elements utilised in carrying out the implementation parts of development control. They are not machines or equipment. Many tools are used to keep track of development. Land use zoning, planning standards, building and development permit application and approval, as well as monitoring and enforcement, which includes stop work warnings and punishments, are among the most widely used (Rangwala, 2002).



### **Land Use Zoning**

Zoning has been defined in a variety of ways by various academics. According to Rangwala (2002), zoning is “the restriction by legislation of the use of land and (or) structures, as well as the height and density of buildings in certain regions to ensure community convenience, health, safety, and general welfare.” Zoning frequently includes a number of restrictions that establish permitted and banned activities in certain regions, as well as minimum criteria for lot sizes, building heights, and setbacks from roads (Kushler,1983). Zoning, according to Rolleston (1987), is used to reduce negative externalities by separating conflicting land uses. Within the subject of "What" can be erected, most zoning restrictions address two concerns. This considers the height, bulk, and occasionally design of buildings (how big they are and how they appear) as well as the use of the land, the use of buildings, and the types of activities that will take place.

### **Planning Standards**

In Town Planning, planning standards are utilised as a recognised model for imitations. The prescriptive and regulatory standards are the two primary sections of the standards (Aluko, 2011). Prescriptive standards are the guidelines or specifications that are utilised in the dimensioning of a catastrophe risk reduction strategy or any other development plan (Aluko, 2011). Planning Standards, as defined by Ghana's Town and Country Planning Department (TCPD, 2011), also serve as a guidebook of criteria for establishing the location and site needs of various spatial development and facilities. Standards and guidelines for planning can have an impact on the distribution of limited land and financial resources, thus they should be used with caution.

As a result, some standards are required, while others are suggestions to help the developer. The mandatory standards, they continued, are minimal space needs or basic considerations that must be met. The discretionary criteria are advisory in nature and are influenced by a variety of circumstances (TCPD, 2011). The purpose of using planning standards is

to ensure that all development projects are safe to use while also preventing chaos in the built environment. This is served on anyone who violates the Town Planning Law by carrying out development without first obtaining planning authority (approval). It has to do with illicit construction, engineering, mining, and land use change, among other things. This notice may be served on her for the unapproved demolition of a structure or the restoration of a structure that has been altered (Ogundele *et al.*, 2011). Non-compliance with an enforcement order is a criminal offence, while a violation of planning legislation is not.

### Stop Work Order

The control department may issue a stop work order if it appears that: (a) an unauthorized development is taking place, or (b) a development does not comply with a development permit issued by the planning department (Aluko, 2011). This document is utilized while an enforcement notice is being served on the owner, occupier, or holder of the property. It has an immediate impact on the property's service. The time frame for such development is usually 21 days. It loses its power if the contravener is not issued with an enforcement notice within 21 days (Ogundele *et al.*, 2011). Permitting is the most fundamental mechanism for regulating urban dwelling construction.

### Research Methodology

This study adopts the descriptive cross-sectional approach to research. The study relied on quantitative data to provide answers to the research question. Data for the study were collected through survey using questionnaire. The data collected were synthesised, integrated, and analysed. Gwagwalada was divided into varying residential densities of low, medium, and high. Two neighbourhoods from the low, medium, and high densities area were randomly selected for sampling. Conversely, a total of three-hundred and sixty-six questionnaires were administered across the six neighbourhoods in Gwagwalada. The physical development control activities and performance in the study area was assessed using 23



indicators and categorized under three distinct headings. The three major areas of assessment are: Management of development control and compliance operation; procedures for complaint treatment; and building control works. The twenty-three indicators were adapted from Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works (2010) and Building Control Performance Standards Advisory Group. (2017). The indicators were weighted, and a performance index was evolved for each dimension. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and mean weighted value), while analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was used to determine the variation in performance of DCD in different residential densities.

## Study Area

### Geographical Location of the Study Area

Gwagwalada town of the FCT, Nigeria is the study area for this study. The distance between Gwagwalada and the Federal Capital City (FCC) is about 45km. The town is one the the six area council headquarters in the FCT. Gwagwalada is located at the downstream area of Usuma river. The town is located within longitudinal  $7^{\circ} 00'$  and  $7^{\circ} 05'E$  and latitude  $8^{\circ} 55'$  and  $9^{\circ} 00'N$  (Figure 1). The town has numerous socioeconomic and political advantage due to its centrality among other area councils.

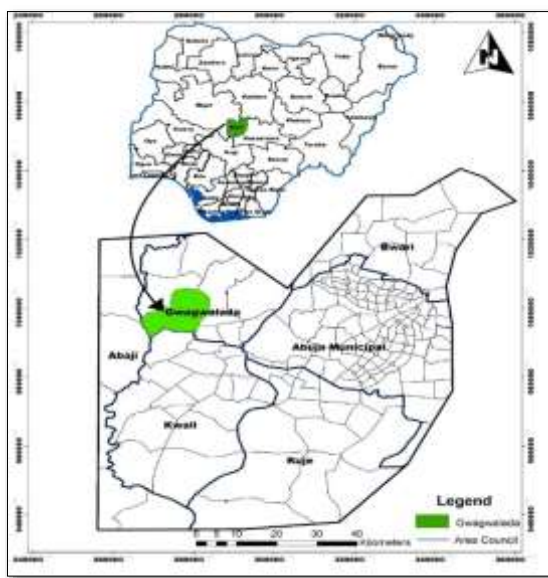


Figure 1: Gwagwalada in the Context of the FCT, Abuja, Nigeria  
Source: Digitized by the Author

## Results and Discussion

### Building Control Works

The performance of DCD in building control works is presented in Table 4.1. The study shows that DCD department performs fairly well in

enforcement of building control works (2.93), regulation and inspection of building works (2.82), Keeping data pertaining to construction and related approvals (2.89), removal of illegal and non-conforming buildings (3.05), and building plans are processed and scrutinised for approval (3.39). However, the performance of DCD is very poor relative to certification of construction at various levels (1.33), issuance of certificate of completion and fitness (1.15), public enlightenment on building control and regulation (1.23), providing advice in support of emergency service (1.31). The general assessment of DCD in Gwagwalada in respect to building control is poor having recorded a performance index of 2.13.

**Table 4.1: Building Control Works in Gwagwalada**

Building Control Works	Mean Weight	Remark
Enforcement of building control regulations	2.93	Moderate
Regulation and inspection of building works	2.82	Moderate
Certification of construction at various levels	1.33	Very Poor
Removal of illegal and non-conforming buildings	3.05	Moderate
Identification of distressed buildings	1.53	Poor
Issuance of certificate of completion and fitness for habitation	1.15	Very Poor
Building plans are processed and scrutinised for approval.	3.39	Moderate
Public enlightenment on building control and regulations	1.23	Very Poor
No Tolerance to illegal development and building collapse	2.49	Poor
Providing advice in support of emergency services	1.31	Very Poor
Keeping data pertaining to construction and related approvals	2.89	Moderate

Coordination with other statutory organisations to address their needs, such as highways, fire safety, and environmental concerns.	1.32	Very Poor
Aggregate	2.13	Poor

Note: 0.00-1.49= Very Poor (VP); 1.50-2.49=Poor (P); 2.50-3.49=Moderate; 3.50-4.49= Good; 4.50-5.00= Excellent

The variation in the level of performance of development control in building control works in the three residential densities is presented in Table 4.16. The result shows that an F-statistics of 1.0192 and a p-value of 0.3720 was recorded for the analysis of variance test. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, which is the significant level at 95% confidence level. This implies that there is no statistically significant variation in the performance of development control in building control works in the three residential densities studied.

**Table 4.2: Variation in the Performance of Development Control in Building Control Works**

Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F	Pr > F
Model	2	1.6506	0.8253	1.0192	0.3720
Error	33	26.7226	0.8098		
Corrected Total	35	28.3732			

### Complaints Treatment Procedure

The study assessed the performance of development control department in complaint treat and procedure. The study revealed that development control department had very poor performance (Table 4.3). Table 4.3 shows DCD in Gwagwalada perform had a performance index of 1.36. The performance of DCD across the seven indicators ranges from 1.14-1.57.

The study revealed that DCD had very poor performance in all areas of assessment for compliant treatment and procedures, except for “Response to client when dissatisfied with result”, which was rated as poor. The foregoing analysis shows that DCD in Gwagwalada performs poorly in all ramifications of complaint treatment and procedure. The department does not have time schedule for complaint treatment, and neither do they have a clear procedure for investigating complaints.

**Table 4.3: Complaint’s treatment Procedures in Gwagwalada**

Complaint’s treatment procedures	MWV	Remark
Time schedules for responding to a complaint	1.14	Very Poor
Provision of vital information about staff handling the complaint	1.44	Very Poor
Procedure for investigating complaints	1.19	Very Poor
Response to client when dissatisfied with result	1.57	Poor
Monitoring of progress of the complaint	1.35	Very Poor
Adequate record of complaint process and result	1.49	Very Poor
Reviewing complaints to improve procedures and prevent recurrence	1.33	Very Poor
Average	1.36	Very Poor

Note: 0.00-1.49= Very Poor (VP); 1.50-2.49= Poor (P); 2.50-3.49=Moderate; 3.50-4.49= Good; 4.50-5.00= Excellent

Table 4.4 shows the analysis of variance test for complaints treatment procedures among the three residential densities. The result recorded a degree of freedom (df) of 19, F-statistics of 0.3675 and a p-value of 0.5515. The p-value (0.5515) is greater 0.05, which implies that there is no significant difference in the performance of development control department in the three residential densities relative to complaints

treatment procedures. The performance of DCD in complaint treatment is not different across the study area and across the residential densities.

**Table 4.4: Variation in the Level of Performance in Complaints Treatment Procedure**

Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F	Pr > F
Model	1	0.0132	0.0132	0.3675	0.5515
Error	19	0.6828	0.0359		
Corrected Total	20	0.6960			

### 4.3 Management of Development Control

The DCD's performance in the management of development and control is presented in Table 4.5. The result shows that the development of client-oriented policies and regulation had a mean of 1.68, acting in line with codes and conduct (2.18), monitoring control within the legal framework DCD (1.81), and proper documentation of development activities (1.75). This implies that DCD's approach to the management of development control is poor. The average performance index for management of development control is 1.86 (Poor).

**Table 4.5: Management of Development Control**

Indicators	MWV	Remark
Client oriented policies and regulation	1.68	Poor
Acting in line with codes and conduct of the DCD	2.18	Poor
Monitoring control within the legal framework of the DCD	1.81	Poor
Proper documentation of development activities	1.75	Poor
Aggregate	1.86	Poor

Note: 0.00-1.49= Very Poor (VP); 1.50-2.49=Poor (P); 2.50-3.49=Moderate; 3.50-4.49= Good; 4.50-5.00= Excellent

Table 4.6 shows the variation in the level of performance of development control department in the management of development control and compliance operation in the three residential densities. The result recorded an F-statistic of 0.6363 and a p-value of 0.4436. Since, the p-value is greater than 0.05. This shows that there is no statistically significant variation in the level of performance of development control in the management of development control and compliance operation Gwagwalada. This shows that the performance of development control department in the management of development control in Gwagwalada is not significantly different from one residential density to the other. Hence, it is safe to say that the poor performance in management of development control and complaints is evident in all the residential densities.

**Table 4.6: Variation in the Level of Performance in the Management of DC**

Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F	Pr > F
<b>Model</b>	1	0.0595	0.0595	0.6363	0.4436
<b>Error</b>	10	0.9354	0.0935		
<b>Corrected Total</b>	11	0.9949			

The overall performance of Development Control Department in Gwagwalada area is presented in Table 4.7. The study revealed that DCD had very poor performance relative to complaint treat and procedure (1.36), while the performance of DCD is poor relative to building control works (2.13), and Management of development control (1.86). This shows that DCD is performing below expectation in Gwagwalada. The poor performance of DCD in Gwagwalada can therefore be attributed to the haphazard and sporadic nature of development without recourse to



planning laws and standard. Ensuring sustainable development and compatibility of land use is the sole responsibility of DCD. Therefore, if the objectives of development must be achieved, the development control department must wake up to its constitutional responsibility, and its activities must be carried out within the ambit of the law.

**Table 4.7: Performance of Development Control in Gwagwalada**

Performance Dimension	Gwagwalada	Remark
Building Control	2.13	Poor
Complain Treatment	1.36	Very Poor
Management of DC and Operation	1.86	Poor
Aggregate	1.78	Poor

Note: 0.00-1.49= Very Poor (VP); 1.50-2.49=Poor (P); 2.50-3.49=Moderate; 3.50-4.49= Good; 4.50-5.00= Excellent

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The performance of development control department in Gwagwalada was assessed using three core areas of development control activities. The study was able to highlight the performance of development control department, which include management of development control, complaints treatment and procedures, and building control works. The study shows that the performance of development control in Gwagwalada was poor irrespective of the residential density. Considering the performance of development control department in Gwagwalada, the study recommends that the capacity of DCD should be enhanced. Building the capacity of these institutions should be done through improving their human resource base, logistics and funding. Institutional capacity building is necessary because the success or failure of any interventions of an institution depends on how adequately it is equipped with the right number of personnel and logistics to manage its activities. The employees

of DCD should also be encouraged and incentivised to improve their performance to meet up with the development challenges in Gwagwalada.

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