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Governance Assessments in Practice – Case Studies

1B GUYANA

Theme: Joint assessments – emerging lessons

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Context/Purpose

1. In 2004, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), with financial support from the Spanish General Cooperation Fund and DFID, completed two instruments to help assess the complex issues of governance and institutional change, as well as their application and usefulness: Democratic and Institutional Governance Assessments (DGIA) and DataGob (www.iadb.org/datagob).
2. The DGIA's are studies based on an innovative and rigorous methodology designed to assess, in a systematic and participatory manner, the institutional and governance constraints in a given country, as well as the causes of these limitations, and future governance scenarios.
3. DataGob is an interactive, internet-based database that contains almost all the publicly available indicators on governance and related issues. DataGob is unique in terms of its reach, accessibility, user friendliness and functionality. Both instruments are proving to contribute valuable information for the Bank, the governance sector, academia and civil society and are assisting the work of the donor community in this complex field. DataGob provides a large part of the empirical information necessary to carry out the DGIA's.
4. Prior to the initiation of the Guyana DGIA, the IADB had tested this methodology in four countries: Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Peru. DFID provided financial support to carry out the DGIA's for Colombia and Ecuador and financial and technical assistance to carry out the DGIA for Peru.
5. The Guyana Democratic and Institutional Governance Assessment (DGIA) was initiated as part of the regular IDB's programming exercise with the Government of Guyana (GGY), which takes place every four years, coinciding with the change of Administration. Bank regulations require that such analysis take place prior to the preparation of the Country Strategy. The Bank approved a US\$75,000 grant to undertake the study.
6. The Bank has a strong and active presence in Guyana. The Donor community in Guyana is very close and well organized. The Bank, a strong supporter of donor coordination and harmonization, approached the donor community to explore whether or not they would be interested in doing the work together. The Bank provided a detailed presentation on the Bank's governance assessment methodology (DGIA) and past experience.
7. Other Donors saw the IDB's initiative as an opportunity to join forces to tackle perhaps the most salient issue in Guyana's development. As the CIDA representative in Georgetown, voicing the feelings of all donors, said "Governance issues are always the most delicate to deal with. A common/joint approach has many advantages including the creation of a critical mass --a joint donor assessment allows for considerable "gravitas" as opposed to an isolated operation by a single donor, the ability to have policy focus and the ability to send a common message." The purposes behind the decision of initiating the DGIA were many. First, the donor community desired to engage in a policy/political dialogue with the GGY on governance issues to bring them to the top of the agenda. All donors agree that governance issues in Guyana are crucial to Guyana's future. Second, donors wished to define, in conjunction with GGY, a specific governance enhancement plan. Third, all donors believed that international assistance in this field could be more effective if all donors and GGY agreed to a common action plan, based on a systematic, objective and profound understanding of the root causes of existing governance problems. Fourth, all donors believed that the best possible plan could only come out after engaging all stakeholders and the government and after having analyzed policy options for each problem identified.
8. The IDB's methodology provided the guaranties to do all this. The DGIA methodology is very detailed and contains very specific terms of reference. The DGIA methodology

requires both static and dynamic analyses of governance issues for five main areas: Political System, Legal System (Rule of Law), Administrative System, Decentralization and Market Institutions. For the static analysis, each of these areas is analyzed in accordance with a specific taxonomy of its dimensions and sub-dimensions that follows a previously defined conceptual framework. The dynamic analysis, using a previous designed and tested political economy analysis tool, attempts to understand the remote causes of existing problems (i.e., social, ethnic, economic, geographic, power, and other variables). Furthermore, it provides specific guidelines about how to analyze each of the dimensions and sub-dimensions, how to measure them and about how the arguments need to be constructed to ensure objectivity and measure in the consequent argumentation. DGIA's methodology calls for a wide and deep consultation and validation with stakeholders, national experts and governments. Finally, it also favors an emphasis in jointly exploring policy options for each of the identified problems over prescribing preconceived solutions.

Implementing the Guyana DGIA

9. The DGIA was carried out by a group of external consultants co financed by the donor community, following the IDB's DGIA methodology.
10. All donors (e.g., CIDA, DFID, UNDP, WB, IMF, EU) were extensively briefed and consulted before the analysis took place, even though only five of them co financed and co directed the study and supervised and assisted the work of the consultants (i.e., CIDA, DFID, EU, UNDP, and IDB). Donors assigned staff to review the draft DGIA and provide comments as well as assisted the consultants in organizing meetings and accessing key stakeholders from government, the opposition, academia and civil society participated. Civil society, the private sector, academia, political parties, unions and other non-state actors were extensively consulted during the analysis and revision process. Also, the final version of the document is currently being validated in a series of validation workshops with state and non-state actors.
11. The GOY was included in the process from the beginning. The initiation of the study had the approval of the GGY's Cabinet Secretary, Dr. Roger Luncheon. His office helped identify the names of people that needed to be interviewed and of experts that helped review the draft DGIA. Also, it provided specific comments to the different DGIA's drafts and will participate during the validation workshops.
12. The coordination among donors worked fine. The major problem was to synchronize the agendas of a variety of experts from different organizations. However, this was done very smoothly. Videoconference, teleconference and e-mail were widely used to coordinate and supervise the work. At times the team was dispersed over five continents, but it managed to use videoconferencing effectively. Coordination with government was a bit more problematic. The GGY assigned two high level officials to supervise the task. Meeting with them and obtaining their input run into delays.
13. The major obstacle in implementing the DGIA appeared when we submitted the draft presented to the GGY. Since it was an unpolished work in progress, it contained conclusions not sufficiently backed with evidence. This situation created some tensions with GGY. The GGY presented its comments in writing and agreed to have one on one discussions to agree in a language that, while being respectful of political sensitivities would not compromise the objectivity of the analysis.
14. Another important challenge was a proclivity on the part of many stakeholders to ignore the existence of important obstacles in the governance arena despite of the evidence presented to them (e.g., excessive concentration of power in the presidency).
15. The governance assessment will be finished by mid March. The findings will be disseminated and widely discussed. In particular, the DGIA will be published and

launched during a public seminar were all major stakeholders and the press will be invited (this will take place during March).

16. On the basis of the DGIA, the Donors have agreed with GGY to work together to develop a specific governance enhancement plan. Donors have committed more resources to develop, finalize and implement such plan.

Harmonization

17. The implementation of the DGIA is setting the basis for coordinating donor positions on how to approach governance issues. All donors are expecting to use the DGIA as a substitute for other governance assessment tools. Furthermore, the DGIA will allow developing a common action plan with GGY's full endorsement..