

PROPOSAL FOR COLLABORATIVE WORK ON AN EVALUATION OF CITIZENS' VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Citizens' voice and accountability are important for developing more effective and responsive states and for enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of aid, particularly in the context of country-led approaches. The Paris Declaration includes specific commitments on these issues by development partners¹.

Strengthening citizens voice and accountability is pursued through a wide range of approaches. Examples include civic education, media strengthening, national and local policy and planning processes (including decentralisation), participatory budgeting and expenditure monitoring, social auditing and civil society advocacy programmes.

The UK has been making initial preparations for an evaluation of different approaches to developing voice and accountability, and is seeking interest from network members in collaboration on this work.

Initial aims of an evaluation of voice and accountability:

The initial aims would be:

1. To document different approaches by development partners to enhancing voice and accountability in a variety of developing country contexts; and to learn lessons on which approaches work best, where and why; and
2. To assess effects of enhanced voice and accountability on governance and on aid effectiveness, specifically on empowerment of citizens, budget allocations, public expenditure, service delivery and poverty reduction, and whether these effects are sustainable.

Proposed approach

The approach we propose would be:

- Identification of the types of intervention to be evaluated

¹ Principally sections on Ownership (14 & 15) through which partner countries commit to develop national development strategies through broad consultative processes and donors commit to respect partner country leadership and strengthen capacity to exercise it; Section 48 on Mutual Accountability, through which partner countries commit to strengthen parliamentary role in national development strategies and/or budgets and to reinforce participatory approaches by systematically involving a broad range of development partners when formulating and assessing progress in implementation of national development strategies; and Section 38 on Fragile states, in which partner countries commit to encourage broad participation of a range of national actors in setting development priorities.

- Classification of interventions typically applied in different governance contexts (eg: post-conflict environments, better performers)
- Development and testing of a theory-based framework for evaluation of different interventions and their effects on governance and aid effectiveness. It may be possible for this framework to “nest” partly within the framework for evaluation of the Paris Declaration
- A series of country case studies, reflective of different governance contexts and providing examples of a variety of approaches to voice and accountability
- A synthesis of country findings comparing effectiveness of different approaches

Outputs

The main outputs from the evaluation would be lessons on ‘what works and what doesn’t in what context’, to inform the development of future interventions to enhance citizens voice and accountability in different contexts. The outputs may also contribute to the evaluation of the Paris Declaration if based on a suitable theoretical model.

Proposals for collaboration

Depending on interest from other network members, we would like to adopt a flexible, devolved approach to a joint evaluation of these issues, similar to that followed for the recent evaluation of support to Internally Displaced Persons. We would propose:

- A small group to take the lead in developing and piloting a framework over the next 12 months;
- A number of partners (including country partners) would take forward individual studies in smaller groups, beginning mid 2007, over a period of 4-6 months
- UK would co-ordinate a synthesis report to report back at the end of 2007

Next Steps

Members to indicate their interest in collaboration in a) the development and piloting of the framework; b) individual country studies;

Identification of a steering group for development and piloting of a framework, followed by an initial meeting of this group on a date to be agreed.