The Role of Civil Society in Assessing Public Sector Performance in Ghana

Proceedings of a Workshop
The Role of Civil Society in Assessing Public Sector Performance in Ghana

Proceedings of a Workshop

Keith Mackay
Sulley Gariba
Editors
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations and Acronyms</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS AND PARTICIPANT EXPECTATIONS</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting the Context of Civil Society Engagement</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Harrold</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Expectations</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools and Good Practices for Assessing Performance</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keith Mackay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences and Challenges in South Africa</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alta Folscher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing a Foundation—ISODEC in Ghana</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Abugre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Views of GAPVOD</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augustine Quarshigah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3. **Outcome of Group Sessions**

| Views of Group 1 | 15 |
| Views of Group 2 | 16 |
| Views of Group 3 | 17 |
| Synthesis and Analysis of Group Views | 18 |
| Open Dialogue: Wrap-up Session | 19 |
| Summary of Next Steps | 21 |

### 4. **Conclusions—Implications of the Workshop**

**Annexes**

| Annex A: List of Participants | 27 |
| Annex B: Summary of Participant Assessments of the Workshop | 31 |
| Annex C: Ghana—Monitoring and Evaluation Capacities | 35 |
| Annex D: Resource Material | 41 |

**Endnotes**

45
Foreword

At the DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation Workshop on Poverty Reduction, organized by the Department for International Development (DFID) and held in Edinburgh, Scotland, on October 11-13, 1999, a paper commissioned by DFID reviewed international experiences in evaluation. It noted that evaluation capacity development was so far limited to the development of the capacities of the public sector without the involvement of civil society. This gap had already been identified by the Operations Evaluation Department (OED) of the World Bank; the workshop whose proceedings are reported in this publication took place just the following week, on October 18, in Accra, Ghana.

As part of OED's program for evaluation capacity development, managed by its Partnerships and Knowledge Programs Group (OEDPK), a diagnosis of monitoring and evaluation capacities in Ghana was undertaken in June 1999 (see Annex C). One of the options identified in that report was support for civil society involvement in performance assessment through a series of measures, including a workshop such as the one reported in these proceedings.

OED acknowledges the valuable advice provided by the Bank's NGO Unit, particularly from Michael Edwards (who at the time was working with the Unit and who provided excellent suggestions), William Reuben, and Najma Siddiqi. We also thank George Greene and Ted Jackson for their timely advice. The enthusiastic and efficient support of the World Bank's team in Ghana greatly facilitated the successful implementation of the workshop; we are therefore very grateful to Peter Harrold and his team, especially Guenter Heidenhof, Camille Lampart, and Kofi Marrah. Finally, it should be noted that, in addition to the editors, the following colleagues in OEDPK's Outreach and Dissemination Unit contributed to the production of this volume: Elizabeth Campbell-Pag6 (task team leader), Caroline McEuen (editor), Kathy Strauss and Aichin Jones (graphics and layout), and Juicy Qureishi-Huq (administrative assistant).

Osvaldo Feinstein
Group Manager
Partnerships and Knowledge, OEDPK
Executive Summary

Development actors and strategies in Ghana are gradually converging, as the government, private sector, civil society, and international development agencies seek more effective ways to cooperate. In the Country Assistance Strategy and the Government of Ghana’s approach to the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF), civil society is recognized as an important participant. The CDF has a strong focus on monitoring and measuring development outcomes, and the World Bank and other donors are very interested in promoting the involvement of civil society in this function.

The ongoing CDF discussions have built on the SAPRI (Structural Adjustment Participatory Review Initiative) dialogue that started in Ghana in 1997. The CDF discussions provide an additional opportunity to involve civil society in the assessment of government and broader public sector performance on issues such as the amount, quality, and cost of services provided by government (information on this performance is provided by budget documents, performance indicators, and the findings of evaluations and reviews) and in the wider debates about national and sectoral priorities and progress in achieving development goals. Indeed, at a presentation on the CDF in July 1999, several nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) expressed considerable interest in extending their roles and activities in these areas.

As part of this deepening collaboration, the Operations Evaluation Department of the World Bank, with support from the Bank’s Ghana team, hosted a day-long consultative workshop on October 18, 1999, to deliberate on the actual and potential role of Ghanaian civil society in assessing
public sector performance. Participants included representatives of NGOs and think tanks, parliamentarians, others from civil society, and donors. The workshop examined good-practice examples from Ghana and other countries of civil society involvement in assessing public sector performance. The key parts of the workshop were the brainstorming group sessions, in which participants identified the role that civil society wants to play in assessing public sector performance, the main impediments to playing this role, and priority steps for strengthening civil society engagement in this area.

This report presents a synthesis of the deliberations and conclusions reached in the workshop. Suggested initiatives are outlined for increased civil society participation in policy dialogues, monitoring national progress in achieving development objectives, and assessing public sector performance. Options are also presented for supporting stronger engagement of civil society in monitoring public sector performance.

Main Outcomes of the Workshop
The workshop resulted in three main outcomes:

- NGOs and other civil society representatives had an opportunity to focus on their role and the performance of the public sector. Often NGOs and civil society organizations (CSOs) feel besieged by calls for accountability, yet clear demands for accountability of the public sector are rare. Participants at the workshop felt that discussing the role of civil society in assessing public sector performance has introduced a new dimension in the evolving dialogue about civil society participation in the CDF in Ghana.
- Civil society groups had a glimpse of the range and depth of initiatives by various citizens' groups to influence public sector performance in Ghana, other countries in Africa, and other regions of the world. By reviewing some of these tools, civil society groups began to have a sense of new directions for engagement.
- Civil society groups identified limitations in their own capacities as a primary impediment to their exercising an effective role in assessing public sector performance in Ghana.

Some Remaining Concerns
CSOs were critical of themselves and of the process of, constraints to, and prospects for engagement in assessing the performance of the public sector. Participants raised the following issues about the organizational basis of civil society in Ghana’s emerging democratic system:

- The preoccupation of most NGOs with their own delivery of services may reduce their role as “watchdogs” of public sector performance.
• Lack of a credible organizational basis, and a corresponding lack of strategic vision, may limit NGOs' role as effective participants in assessing public sector performance. Divergence of opinion on what to monitor and what tools to use may be related to the perspectives and orientation of development goals of each CSO.

**Options for Civil Society Engagement**

Workshop participants challenged themselves to establish a core group of civil society representatives with an ongoing interest in assessing public sector performance. As a first step, the report of this workshop is to be presented to representatives of civil society, both those who attended the workshop and others who did not.

**Enhancing Opportunities for Utilization of Civil Society Skills**

Where professionals and leaders of civil society have the skills to engage in monitoring and evaluation of public sector performance, there have been few opportunities to apply them, except on project-by-project evaluation activities. Ongoing discussions with government leading to the development of a more systematic approach for monitoring and evaluation could provide another opportunity for suggesting the active involvement of civil society in sector review activities. Key sectors with the potential to provide these opportunities include health, agriculture, and water and sanitation decentralization (District Assembly support initiatives).

**Training and Capacity Building**

Workshop participants identified two important areas for building civil society's skills and capacities, and asked for help from donors in both areas.

The first area encompasses monitoring, evaluation, sector review techniques, and policy and budget analysis. Participants wished to better understand the uses, strengths, and weaknesses of these techniques for assessing public sector performance. A representative from IDASA, a South African NGO, discussed the breadth and depth of its work and demonstrated the value of sustained and systematic research, information, and policy advocacy in assessing public sector performance in that country. IDASA support of Ghanaian civil society in training and skills development was also explored, and some useful links were established.

The second area in which capacity-building needs were identified included basic competencies for CSOs. Deficits in those areas were seen as important impediments to their overall operations and effectiveness. These basic capacities include communication and networking, fundraising, citizen action research, policy advocacy, and the building of alliances.

The suggestion was made at the workshop that training might be provided through a training and research fund to which candidates from CSOs could apply, or through a more structured series of training courses
organized by such Ghanaian training institutions as the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) through the World Bank Institute and other donors. Training could also be delivered by direct provision of courses to NGOs, CSOs, and other civil society representatives. One medium for training would be GIMPA's planned Distance Learning Center, which could involve the World Bank Institute.

Civil society representatives at the workshop also emphasized the role the World Bank and other donors could play in legitimizing the activities of civil society in Ghana in commenting on public sector performance and advocating policy issues. They believed that a gulf exists between civil society and government. This is seen at the level of individual civil servants who, it was felt, often react dismissively to requests for information from civil society.

A Forum for Exchange of Ideas
There is presently no regular opportunity in Ghana for civil society and government to exchange ideas, skills, and best practices on public sector performance. One option to remedy this is an annual forum involving representatives of government and civil society. These events would bring to the table best practices on performance assessment during the course of the year, including joint performance assessment activities undertaken on a sectoral or cross-sectoral basis. This approach could complement—and perhaps be part of—ongoing CDF discussions.
Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACHD – African Centre for Human Development
APL – Adaptable Program Loan
BIS – Budget Information System
CAS – Country Assistance Strategy
CBO – Community-based organization
CDF – Comprehensive Development Framework
DAC – Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
DFID – Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
CSO – Civil society organizations
GAPVOD – Ghana Association of Private Voluntary Organizations in Development
GIMPA – Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration
GROOTS – Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood
IDEG – Institute for Democratic Governance
ISODEC – Integrated Social Development Center
M&E – Monitoring and evaluation
MDA – Ministries, departments, and agencies
MTEF – Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
NGO – Nongovernmental organization
OED – Operations Evaluation Department (World Bank)
OEDPK – OED Partnerships and Knowledge Programs Group
PPMED – Policy, Planning, and M&E Departments
PRONET – Professional Network Association
PSM – Public sector management
SAPRI – Structural Adjustment Participatory Review Initiative
This report describes the proceedings of a one-day consultative workshop hosted by the World Bank, entitled Assessing Public Sector Performance: A Role for Ghanaian Civil Society. The objective of the workshop was to deliberate on the actual and potential role of Ghanaian civil society in assessing public sector performance. Participants included representatives of NGOs and think tanks, parliamentarians, others from civil society, and donors. The workshop examined good practice examples from Ghana and other countries of civil society involvement in assessing public sector performance. The key parts of the workshop were the brainstorming group sessions in which participants identified the role that civil society wants to play in assessing public sector performance, the main impediments to playing this role, and priority steps for achieving deepened civil society engagement in this area.

This volume presents a synthesis of the deliberations and outcomes of the workshop. The report outlines suggested initiatives for increasing civil society participation in public sector performance assessment and presents options for supporting stronger engagement of civil society in monitoring public sector performance.

Workshop Activities
The first part of the workshop consisted of presentations to give a sense of the challenges in public sector management in Ghana. These presentations included a focus on good practice approaches in Ghana and other countries to the assessment of public sector performance and
reports from several nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other civil society organizations (CSOs) on their areas of operation.

The next, and main, session involved brainstorming to identify the role that civil society wants to play in assessing public sector performance. Groups were set up to generate ideas on three critical questions:

1. What role does Ghanaian civil society want to play in assessing public sector performance?
2. What could be the main impediments to civil society playing this role?
3. What are the priority, practical steps to address these impediments?

The final session of the workshop was a plenary presentation of group reports to develop a common understanding of the issues raised.

**Participants**
The workshop was attended by 32 participants, comprising representatives of advocacy NGOs and think tanks, parliamentarians, and staff of the World Bank and other donors. The level of senior participation demonstrated the importance of the topic.

The following civil society organizations were represented at the workshop:

- GAPVOD (the Ghana Association of Private Voluntary Organizations in Development)
- Friends of the Earth—Ghana
- 31st December Women’s Movement
- GROOTS (Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood)
- ACHD (African Centre for Human Development)
- ACTIONAID
- PRONET (Professional Network Association)
- VORANGO
- IDEG (Institute for Democratic Governance)
- Technoserve, Inc.
- National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
- Abantu for Development
- Christian Council of Ghana
- National Democratic Institute
- Centre for Community Studies Action and Development
- ISODEC (Integrated Social Development Center)

A full list of participants is presented in Annex A.
Workshop Presentations and Participant Expectations

Setting the Context of Civil Society Engagement

Peter Harrold

The welcome address was delivered by Mr. Peter Harrold, the World Bank’s country director in Ghana. Mr. Harrold described the unique developments in Ghana, focusing on the growing relationship between the government and civil society. In his view, the consultation process has involved civil society in discussion of the Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for Ghana, and more recently in the preparation of a Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) for Ghana. In both these initiatives, Ghana is becoming a first in trying to bridge the gap between government and civil society. It is in this context that this workshop consultation on the role of civil society in assessing public sector performance is both important and innovative.

Mr. Harrold emphasized at least two main benefits of a greater involvement of civil society in assessing public sector performance:

- Generation of feedback from civil society to help the public sector—especially the government—improve its performance
- Improvement in accountability of the government to Parliament and to civil society.

This section of the report provides an overview of the initial presentations at the workshop.
Mr. Harrold also noted that assessments of public sector performance could be initiated by civil society in its own capacity, or conducted jointly with government. He argued that civil society should have the capacities to assess public service delivery/performance as a basis for helping government agencies and also for helping civil society organizations use the findings to assess their own activities.

Mr. Harrold expressed the World Bank’s expectations of the workshop as the following:

- Focus on best practices in Ghana and in other countries.
- Compare what works or does not work in public sector performance assessment.
- Discuss these issues to provide timely feedback on what is to be done or should be done.
- Provide inputs for consultation with government and future engagement with civil society.

**Participant Expectations**

Following Mr. Harrold’s brief presentation, workshop participants introduced themselves and grouped themselves in randomly assigned pairs to outline their expectations of the workshop. They then shared these expectations with the plenary group. The following represent both broad and specific expectations as expressed by the participants:

- Share insights into civil society’s involvement in matters of public sector performance assessment.
- Understand what NGOs perceive as the role of civil society in the assessment of public service performance.
- Learn what monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is about and incorporate the lessons in our activities.
- Know how civil society will be involved in public sector assessment.
- Find out about M&E effectiveness and the role to be played by civil society.
- Build bridges between government and civil society groups.
- Clarify how civil society can effectively link with public sector activities.
- Renew awareness of the roles of M&E in Ghana.
- Assess needs for further training and evaluation in Ghana.
- Find opportunities for civil society to have more voice and a higher role through evaluation.

These expectations demonstrate the importance participants attached to the workshop. Many participants expressed the hope that the findings of the workshop would not simply be filed away without follow-up.
Mr. Mackay gave an overview of some state-of-the-art tools that are currently used by civil society groups in a number of countries to assess the performance of the public sector.

He began by describing the Bank’s work with the Government of Ghana to develop M&E capacities. This work is intended to support the ambitious program of public sector reforms now underway in Ghana: significant downsizing of the public sector, an ongoing review of its structures and functions, a medium-term budget framework, performance plans for ministries, performance agreements for senior civil servants, and extensive beneficiary surveys. (An overview of this work is in Annex C.)

Mr. Mackay outlined several key uses of M&E information on government performance: to help guide the government when planning and making its annual decisions on spending priorities in the annual budget; to help government managers better oversee their activities by learning from experience; and to ensure that government is accountable for its performance.

He went on to identify ways in which civil society has been involved in assessing public sector performance in other countries and regions of the world. These good practice examples provide a basis for discussing the prospects of Ghanaian civil society developing similar approaches. An example of citizen feedback surveys from Bangalore in India was presented in detail (see below), and the following examples were described in a “toolkit” of workshop handouts.

- Uganda—surveys to track what happened to government spending and whether it reached the communities for which it was intended.
- Malaysia—the Sustainable Penang Initiative to gather community views on desirable objectives for the state government and on its actual performance.
- Ghana—the community water and sanitation sector case study, a community review of sector performance.

These case studies examine various approaches to generating opinions from civil society about the desirable priorities and objectives of the public sector, and their perceptions of its actual performance. A brief discussion of each of these case studies follows.
Bangalore—Citizen Feedback Surveys

In Bangalore, India, an NGO has conducted citizen surveys on its own initiative since 1993. The surveys focus on the services provided by the municipal government, such as water and electricity, garbage collection, and hospitals. Ordinary citizens are asked whether they are satisfied with these public services, which aspects are most or least satisfactory, whether government staff are helpful, and whether bribes have to be paid to officials to obtain these services.

The NGO has conducted these surveys for several reasons. One is to generate citizen feedback on public services and give each municipal agency an overall grade on its performance. A second reason is to identify which specific services are delivered well, or poorly. A third is to identify the breadth and depth of corruption, which is endemic in Bangalore. The fourth reason is to catalyze citizens to be more proactive. The fifth is to provide a diagnostic tool for the municipal departments so that their senior management can better understand their agencies' performance and identify aspects of the services where performance can be improved. Finally, the surveys are intended to both encourage and prod public agencies to be more client-oriented and transparent.

The Bangalore surveys have ranked all municipal government agencies on the basis of the level of citizen satisfaction with their delivery of services. Hospitals and banks received high ratings; the city development authority—with the highest levels of reported corruption—received the lowest rating.

The results of the surveys have been widely published, with lively press coverage. Workshops have been held to provide the findings to citizen groups and other NGOs. Although the findings were not news to them, they provided hard evidence and allowed specific problem areas to be pinpointed. The findings have also stimulated citizen participation and the formation of residents' groups.

The NGO that conducted the surveys gave detailed reports to the heads of all government service agencies. Most agency heads and senior officials were lukewarm to the findings, but some responded well, such as the head of the city development authority, who subsequently initiated a partnership approach with citizen groups and NGOs. This led to innovations in service delivery and a new system for airing client grievances. With the NGO's help, training programs for officials and a partnership group to disseminate information and act as a watchdog were set up.

Similar surveys have now been conducted for other cities in India, including Madras, Mumbai, Calcutta, and Pune. This has enabled comparisons for a number of cities to be published.

The genesis of these surveys was concern over the apparent “leakage” of budget funds in decentralized sectors such as primary schools and health
clinics. Between 1991 and 1995, for example, spending on primary schools tripled, but school enrollment stagnated. In response, the World Bank, with the support of the Government of Uganda, the University of Makerere, and a consulting firm, designed a survey to track what was happening to government funds.

A field survey was conducted in 1996 in half of Uganda’s 39 districts. The survey covered 250 schools and 100 health clinics. It included interviews and focus group meetings with head teachers, parent-teacher associations, nurses, and district officials. Official records were investigated in central ministries, district administration offices, schools, and health clinics. Most official data were of poor quality.

The study found that only 30 percent of non-salary government funds and compulsory parent tuition fees actually reached primary schools. District authorities kept the rest. Salary funds successfully reached schools because teachers were vigilant to ensure they were fully paid. The study also found that most medical supplies did reach health clinics, but up to 70 percent of supplies and drugs were appropriated and sold by clinic staff, who had very low salaries.

The Government of Uganda reacted positively to the findings. Monthly transfers of government funds to districts are now reported in the press and on radio. Fund transfers to schools are now displayed on public notice boards in schools and district government centers, and the government monitors compliance with this public reporting.

With donor support, the government is now improving public accounting systems for education, including at the district level. However, there has been no improvement for the health sector.

There are several lessons from the Ugandan approach. One is that an in-depth survey can provide information and evidence where official data are weak. Another is that, again, “hard data” are much more persuasive than anecdotal claims. Finally, the quality and availability of government data differ substantially among different sectors.

**Malaysia—Sustainable Penang Initiative**

In late 1997, the Malaysian state of Penang initiated the Sustainable Penang Initiative with support from the Canadian International Development Agency, the UNDP, and the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. The initiative is a long-term pilot response to community concerns about the costs of Penang’s rapid development: the sustainability of growth; its environmental impact and the consequences for health; the distribution of gains from development; the impact of growth on Penang’s values, traditions, and heritage; and the extent to which citizens feel they have a voice in the changes affecting their neighborhoods.

The initiative was designed as a pilot project for community indicators. State assembly members, state government officials, business representa-
tives, NGOs, community-based organizations, academics, and concerned individuals organized into five roundtable groups of 50 people each. The groups focused respectively on the economy, environment, social justice, culture, and popular participation.

In one- and two-day facilitated discussions, each group prepared vision statements and listed key performance indicators for its topic. The groups chose indicators based on their rigor, relevance, and availability. In community health care, for example, indicators included cancer rates, infant mortality, quality of health care, levels of patient satisfaction, and the ratio of health care facilities and professionals to the population. The groups used data to identify trends and implications for the sustainability of development and their relationship to other indicators or issues.

Later in 1999, the roundtable findings were published in the first People’s Report on Penang and reviewed by the state assembly. The intention is that the roundtable groups will reconvene each year to review improvements and identify problem areas.

The Penang Initiative appears to have been successful in generating stakeholder ownership of the monitoring of development indicators. It also proves the potential for achieving a collaborative partnership approach among diverse groups and interests. Three NGO networks—on transport, the disabled, and water and conservation—were set up in response to the initiative.

Ghana—Community Water and Sanitation Strategy

The Ghana water sector strategy development and implementation process emerged from a deep concern in government and among donors about the near collapse of the rural water sector as a result of two decades of centralized management that marginalized rural sectors of the population. Rural water supply was donor-driven and project-oriented, with centralized decisions made by the Ghana Water and Sanitation Corporation, with little consultation.

The Works and Housing Ministry, which was seen as impartial, convened four national strategy workshops for stakeholders over 18 months for line ministries and corporations, local government, the private sector, and civil society (including 30 NGOs). The workshops were successful in exposing the government corporation to community views and priorities. The corporation eventually realized that a centrally-driven approach was not viable and probably could not maintain all 30,000 pumps spread throughout Ghana.

The workshops gradually evolved into policy for, and fundamental institutional reforms of, the public institutions responsible for the delivery and management of rural water supply.

The following key principles and changed modus operandi emerged:
Ownership through participation—Communities are responsible for planning, operating, and maintaining their water systems.

Collaboration among government, the private sector, and civil society—The public sector plays a facilitating role, providing technical assistance to districts and private sector participants. As legal owners of their systems, communities contract operations, maintenance, and revenue collection to NGOs, a private company, or the government. Integration with the private sector was also enhanced by procurement procedures designed to help the private sector provide goods and services for the communities.

Cross-sectoral linkages recognized and addressed—Health benefits are enhanced by integrating water, sanitation, and hygiene education interventions.

Long-term view with an emphasis on results—Long-term objectives were established, such as providing water facilities to meet total potential demand until 2009 to serve 80 percent of the rural population. During the national strategy workshops, participants agreed on the need for clear indicators to measure achievement of the objectives of the national strategy.

The Ghana experience yielded the following lessons:

- Including a broad range of stakeholders made it difficult for the government corporation to dominate the deliberations and overall process.
- The line ministry played an invaluable role as an “honest broker.”
- Joint ownership of the process fostered joint accountability for performance and emphasized learning from the past to improve the future.
- Community representatives emphasized measurable development objectives—results.
- Stakeholders placed importance on actual performance and real improvements in operations.
- “Up-front” engagement with civil society is invaluable.

**Group Discussion**

**Question:** With the lukewarm attitude of some agency heads to the findings of citizen surveys in Bangalore, did the surveys have any impact on performance of the public sector agencies whose services were assessed?

**Response:** The answer to this question was both yes and no. On the positive side, the very fact that the process was initiated made an impact on civil society groups, in alerting them and the wider society to the responsibilities that civil society could create for itself in assessing the performance of the public sector. The process built and strengthened civil society’s capacities and ensured they had a say about public sector performance. Further, in some cases there were reactions from the government agencies, including...
an invitation to civil society to form partnerships in developing citizen engagement to review processes for service delivery.

On the negative side, the reaction of some public officials was indeed lukewarm, and the tendency to change may not be immediately recognizable. However, the fact that the surveys triggered other surveys, both in Bangalore and other cities, suggests that the dynamic will continue and that the outcomes of these surveys will be taken more seriously.

**Experiences and Challenges in South Africa**

*Alta Folscher*

IDASA is an independent, non-profit public interest organization based in South Africa that promotes democracy. Through its Budget Information Service (BIS), IDASA presents succinct analyses of the allocation and use of public sector resources to understand the impacts of budgets on poor and vulnerable groups throughout South Africa.

Ms. Folscher described the experiences and challenges of a sustained program of public sector performance assessment. IDASA uses a mixture of approaches in its assessments, including action research, participatory workshops, training, and interactive learning.

IDASA’s Budget Information Centre is organized in seven units, or programs:

- The Children's Program, which analyzes impacts of budget allocations on children
- The Women’s Program, which assesses the impact of the budget on women
- The Provincial Fiscal Analysis Project, which examines the spatial allocation of budgets among South Africa’s provinces
- The Impumelelo7 Innovations Award Programme, which rewards innovative public and public/civil society initiatives that improve social service delivery, and thus help eradicate poverty
- The Public Sector Reform Project
- The Legislation Monitoring Program
- Private sector performance management.

There follows a brief description of highlights of Ms. Folscher’s presentation on IDASA’s monitoring and evaluation activities.

**IDASA M&E Activities**

IDASA tracks national and provincial resource allocations annually by looking at the system/process that produces the budget. IDASA focuses on three main approaches:
1. Adding information not previously available on the budget process
2. Independently checking existing official government information
3. Carrying out micro research on how much is spent on such key social sectors as health, and for what objectives.

**Building Capacity for Evaluation**
IDASA has established the following means of capacity building for evaluation, both in the public sector and among citizen groups and CSOs:

- Focused training programs on evaluation techniques and processes
- Dissemination of methodologies for research findings to ensure their substantive impact on galvanizing public opinion and citizen actions
- Training of trainers in the use of these methodologies
- Workshops to sensitise a broad range of actors, including legislators
- Building research capacity in public sector and civil society organizations.

**Effectiveness of IDASA’s Program**
- A strong partnership with the legislature
- A strong partnership with civil society on public spending programs
- Fluency in the sometimes complex and arcane language of the budget.

**Weaknesses in the South African Environment**
- Limited information available
- Lack of substantive opportunities for civil society to influence budget processes
- Inadequate research capacity in civil society
- The difficulty of focusing on the needs of and key issues facing so many different regions, languages, and ethnic groups.

**Group Discussion**

*Question:* Does IDASA have legal backing to access and give out information, including information that might be considered sensitive for the government?

*Answer:* Not explicitly, but this is possible through building a partnership with the legislature, and because of widespread reference to, and backing of, the transparency clause in the South African constitution.

During ensuing discussions, workshop participants characterized the situation in Ghana as somewhat less permissive than in South Africa. Official information on Ghanaian administrative and legislative processes is often shrouded in secrecy, and access is often restricted. Both public sector and civil society actors are cynical and mutually suspicious about the issue of access to information. Some participants felt, however, that building partnerships between civil society groups and key institutions and decisionmakers is central
to developing a more permissive atmosphere for accessing and using official information to assess public sector performance. In this context, the following presentation illuminated a way forward.

Establishing a Foundation—ISODEC in Ghana

Charles Abugre

Speaker Charles Abugre began by suggesting that the theme “Assessment of Public Sector Performance” was too broad. He argued that the notion needs to be narrowed down to specific dimensions of public sector assessment that are currently relegated to the domain of civil society. The first challenge for him was whether or not civil society was party to the definition of “rules of the game” in determining:

- What is to be assessed?
- Under whose rules?
- With what conceptual underpinnings and philosophical orientations?

Answering these larger questions, important as they may be, will divert the workshop from its main objectives, according to Mr. Abugre, who therefore launched into a brief description of ISODEC’s mandate.

Activities of ISODEC

The Integrated Social Development Center (ISODEC) is a leading protagonist and practitioner of social policy analysis and public sector assessment in Ghana. ISODEC initiatives range from practical engagement in the design and management of development programs to the establishment of training programs for community development and advocacy skills. In the specific area of assessing public sector performance, ISODEC’s major initiatives include the following:

- SAPRI (Structural Adjustment Participatory Review Initiative)
- The Coalition around Ghana National Education
- Decentralized poverty monitoring
- Advocacy training.

Challenges for Ghanaian Civil Society

Mr. Abugre outlined the following challenges for Ghanaian civil society:

1. Setting a vision and mission—Ghanaians have a lot to do to identify who they are, what they are setting themselves to do, and what is their motivation.
2. Building coalitions—An NGO on its own has a narrow focus and limited strength. Coalitions have proved to be effective in channeling collective energy into action.

3. Legal basis—Who gives an NGO legal rights to assess, for example, the budget? Do we belong to a “think tank”?

Options for addressing these challenges include:

- Organizing and establishing small, highly focused groups to conduct evaluations.
- Building a coalition with collective goals to share experiences.

**The Views of GAPVOD**

*Augustine Quarshigah*

Representing the Ghana Association of Private Voluntary Organizations in Development (GAPVOD), Augustine Quarshigah made a succinct presentation of GAPVOD’s review of the World Bank/OED document “A Preliminary Diagnosis of Monitoring and Evaluation Capacities in Ghana.”

Following a brainstorming session on this report, GAPVOD reached the following conclusions/recommendations:

- Any committees established for the evaluation of public sector performance, including evaluation proposed in a paper by a “champion” institution, should involve NGOs.
- NGO committees should not be used for political gains.
- NGO committees should produce periodic information on progress.
- There should be an M&E champion within the government.
- NGOs should be fully involved in M&E at all levels.
The main session of the workshop involved brainstorming to identify the role that civil society wants to play in assessing public sector performance. Participants were randomly divided into three working groups, each of which was asked its views on the following questions:

1. What role does Ghanaian civil society want to play in assessing public sector performance?
2. What could be the main impediments to civil society playing this role?
3. What are the priority, practical steps to be taken to address these impediments?

**Views of Group 1**
In assessing public sector performance, civil society wants to play the following roles:

- Act as watchdogs of public policy processes.
- Engage with policymakers to develop and refine policies.
- Provide information to policymakers on the status of citizen conditions, social welfare needs, and opportunities for action by government.
- Be involved in policy processing from formulation to implementation.
- Do research to generate relevant information.

The main impediments to civil society playing these roles are the following:

(i) *Civil Society Impediments*
- General lack of recognition of NGOs as players in the area of perfor-
The Role of Civil Society in Assessing Public Sector Performance in Ghana

- Lack of awareness in civil society of mechanisms to access information on the public sector and of their right to such information
- Lack of a strong activist tradition
- General lack of capacity (skills and knowledge)
- Lack of access to resources (information, funds, and the like)
- Lack of accountability and transparency.

(ii) Public Sector Impediments
- Possibility of legislation (regulating mechanisms) to stifle NGOs
- (Exclusive? Lack of?) access to public information
- (Lack of?) access to the processes of policymaking that will enable civil societies to make entry points at all levels.

Group 1 outlined the following priority steps to address these impediments:

- Create space for engaging with policies.
- Strengthen the capacities of CBOs and NGOs.
- Form partnerships with CBOs, both as sources and recipients of information.
- Build a strong coalition around key issues.
- Form partnerships with persons/institutions that matter and are concerned with local, national, and international institutions.
- Develop skills in communication, training, research, and policy advocacy, as well as analysis from a gender perspective.
- Develop skills in mobilizing resources, such as fundraising and information.
- Practice team/consensus building.
- Build alliances with the media.
- Survey existing information to identify gaps and develop a system of monitoring and evaluation.

Views of Group 2

Group 2 considered that CSOs needed a definition of their shared vision, values, and identity in order to play a role in monitoring public sector performance. In principle, the group felt, CBOs’ role has to be one that can make an impact on societal conditions, effecting changes in the well-being of citizens.

The roles of civil society could include the following:

- Participating in defining the parameters and values of public performance
- Critiquing performance when public performance/accountability is clear (this is already happening)
• Educating and advocating when public accountability issues are unclear.

Group 2 identified the following impediments to civil society playing these roles:

• The general perception of CSOs (especially NGOs) is that they are service and welfare providers, not “watchdogs” or advocates of public sector performance.
• The prevailing perception is that public goods and services are provided by benevolent government, and civil society does not have a right to criticize its performance, and/or CSOs’ fear punishment for complaining.
• There is an absence of direct benefits from participating in public sector processes. Civil society often pays a heavy price in project delays or lack of completion as a result of slow and inefficient service delivery. Where participation has been a condition for obtaining resources, an inordinate amount of time has been demanded from the “beneficiaries,” sometimes with no pay-off.
• There is a culture of control of information in public institutions and in the Official Secrecy Act in Ghana, which prevents easy access to public sector information.

The group felt that civil society organizations should take the following priority steps to improve their involvement in assessing public sector performance:

• CSOs should organize to define their values and beliefs (sectoral or, in smaller groupings, regional or cross-regional); for example, by building alliances among NGOs and other CSOs and public institutions with a mandate for public accountability (parliament, the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice [CHRAJ], the judiciary, and the media).
• Civil society should work to build public awareness of citizens’ rights and engagement, and examine ways to stimulate this engagement.
• Civil society should campaign for a more transparent public information disclosure and access policy, especially on public finance and budget allocation trends and tendencies. Of particular concern to the group were budget allocation through the District Common Fund and issues of decentralization and poverty alleviation.
• The language and presentation of the public budget and financial statements should be simplified.

Views of Group 3
This group defined the following role for civil society, impediments to realizing this role, and priority steps for CSOs:
1. Role for civil society: Advocacy.
   - Lobbying and awareness creation (access to information)
   - Full participation
   - The role of watchdog
   - Ensuring the implementation of recommendations and decisions.

2. Impediment to realizing this role: Lack of adequate information and transparency.
   - Lack of skills of CSOs
   - Poor recognition of CSOs
   - Government perception of CSOs as a threat (lack of trust)
   - Lack of awareness of rights and responsibilities
   - Poor financial base of CSOs
   - Lack of effective structures for guidance and procedures.

3. Priority step: Training of CSOs in lobbying and advocacy.
   - Networking and coalition building for group strength
   - Education and raising awareness on rights and responsibilities
   - Creation of effective relationships with the media.

**Synthesis and Analysis of Group Views**

Participants pointed out that NGOs and CSOs were regarded merely as welfare providers, with uncertain legitimacy in any role of querying or advocating changes in government policy. They also concluded that people are afraid to query the government because of the perception that it is a benevolent provider of goods and services. These perceptions and fears can dissuade civil society even from asking government ministries and other organizations for information on their activities, a disinclination that is reinforced by a climate of secrecy in government organizations.

All three groups strongly endorsed a role for civil society as a watchdog of government policies and performance. They argued for public disclosure of information on budget processes and other government activities, as well as for simple language and presentation in such government documents as budget statements. They noted that citizen groups are often unaware of their rights to speak out and ask for more efficient government services, which points to a need for a series of initiatives to improve civil education on citizen rights and responsibilities.

The discussion groups also identified the need to strengthen their skills in and understanding of tools and techniques for assessing public sector performance (monitoring and evaluation, budget and sector analysis, and reviews).

They stressed how important it was that NGOs and CSOs form partnerships—with each other and with the media, parliament, and others in civil society—to provide mutual support for a watchdog role. One important
impediment to such a role, however, is inadequate skills in areas such as communication, policy advocacy and lobbying, fundraising, and information dissemination.

**Open Dialogue: Wrap-up Session**
Following the presentation of group discussion outcomes, participants engaged in open dialogue to synthesize and wrap up the workshop. Below is a summary of the issues discussed.

*We need accountability as an incentive to learn.* This conclusion emerged from an animated debate about who is accountable to whom. The Ghanaian experience over the last five years has been competition for donor resources between the public sector and the NGOs. This competition has nurtured a tendency, noted by the NGOs, for government to seek to control the voluntary sector through its policies. Civil society's demand for accountability has been seen by government as representing the politicization of NGO and CSO work, insofar as commenting on policy and performance are not seen as the mandate of these organizations. The conclusion and consensus was that civil society learns by seeking information and governments seek rational allocation of resources across sectors and regions by making policies to regulate NGO work.

This environment presents several opportunities for strengthening the role of civil society. One, pursued by CDF processes, is ensuring that civil society plays an important part in contributing to debates on development objectives and performance. Another is presented by the growing role of civil society in service delivery. A third is in civil society assessment of public sector performance to help identify what is working, what is not, and why.

*The multiple roles of civil society are a thorny issue for further discussion.* Many participants referred to a chronic situation in Ghana of NGOs and civil society groups emerging as unfocused “catch-all” groups. While some NGOs initiate, plan, implement, and deliver social services themselves, often on behalf of public sector agencies and projects, they may be involved in public sector performance assessment. This dual role sometimes confuses them, and the public sector as well. Should a line be drawn between service delivery and assessing performance? Should NGOs and civil society groups specialize in one or the other? No consensus was reached on these questions.

*Creating an enabling environment for partnerships—that is, co-producing goods and services—should be considered as an important middle ground.* Given Ghana’s experience in the cohabitation of NGOs and the public sector in the delivery of goods and services, the challenge was to develop mechanisms for cooperation between the state and civil society in the production of value systems, criteria, and indicators for collective monitoring and evaluation of all services and the performance
of all sectors, not just the public sector. The emphasis here is not so much on accountability—the watchdog function—as on the need to monitor and evaluate service delivery to provide lessons that can support better management and help provide better services in the future.

The actual roles that civil society will play are central. These roles will depend on several factors. One is the extent to which the government is prepared to encourage and support civil society in these roles. Another is the extent to which multilateral and bilateral donors, and international NGOs, are able and prepared to provide resources, training, and advocacy to government for their enhanced roles. A third, and perhaps the most important, factor is the extent to which CSOs are themselves prepared to take the lead, both individually and collectively, in enhancing their own roles.

Recognition of the value of civil society is double-edged. This point generated a great deal of argument, but also broad agreement. On the one hand, seeking recognition from the public sector requires first and foremost a strong manifestation of the value of civil society's contribution. On the other hand, giving recognition to CSOs may well motivate them to perform a collaborative role in assessing and improving sector performance. The effectiveness of the policy advocacy role of civil society can be enhanced by a solid appreciation of the performance of different parts of the public sector and the services they provide, as well as the availability of solid evidence of public sector performance through monitoring information and the findings of evaluations and reviews.

Below are some of the ideas generated at the workshop.

- NGOs should come together to act as a force.
- NGOs should market their products for people to appreciate, and thereby gain recognition.
- Because of deep-seated suspicion between government and NGOs in Ghana, examples of government recognition in developed nations, such as the Canadian experience of annual consultation between government and all NGOs, should be publicized.
- The media can be used as a publicity tool for CSOs.

One particularly challenging issue emerged from the discussions. How would CSOs react if the government were to request, or be prepared to support, mutual accountability and assessment? What would be the parameters, conditions, or ground rules? Why would government want to assess NGOs?

The Australian government’s assessment and evaluation of the work of NGOs was cited. It was emphasized, however, that in countries where NGOs are publicly assessed, they are often funded substantially through
public sector finance. By contrast, public funds are not routinely allocated and disbursed through NGOs in Ghana.

Coalition, alliances, and partnerships are highly recommended. Given the relatively small size of most NGOs and civil society groups in Ghana, it was agreed that coalition building could enhance the collective strength of the sector.

Participation requires a process, not just a framework. It was noted that improvements in civil society involvement in public sector assessment are imminent in Ghana. Negotiations are underway between government and NGOs in connection with the formulation of a national NGO policy. Workshop participants agreed, however, that a framework for participation will not be enough without the initiation and strengthening of a whole process of mutual capacity building between civil society and the public sector.

Summary of Next Steps
In concluding the workshop, participants listed a number of points to explore as next steps:

- Opportunities for capacity building, including training programs for NGOs
- Beginning training programs for trainers soon and clarifying training needs beforehand to ensure that training is not wasted
- Ongoing and sustained NGO participation in sector reviews
- NGO initiation of follow-up to this brainstorming workshop in order to be influential
- Formation of a task group to pursue the recommendations
- Solicitation of commitments (time, resources) from agencies to which the final report of the workshop is submitted
- Determination of the extent to which donors are prepared to advocate to government a stronger and more explicit role for civil society (as a partner in development and as a valuable player in assessing public sector performance).
Conclusions—Implications of the Workshop

Government-donor collaboration is growing through the CDF, with civil society as a key partner. The main theme of this collaboration is enhancing development effectiveness—achieving Ghana's development goals. Monitoring and evaluating development effectiveness, and assessing the contribution of the government and other development partners to that effectiveness, is an important aspect of this work.

The Government of Ghana is undertaking an ambitious program of public sector reforms to enhance its own effectiveness. One component of this program is performance assessment through monitoring and evaluation to help strengthen the quality of governance.

This public sector reform environment has the potential to:

- Generate demand for the participation of NGOs, think tanks, and other organizations in sector reviews and other performance assessments.
- Provide a basis for mutual sharing of information between the public sector and civil society.
- Enhance the credibility of civil society leaders and their organizations in the eyes of the public sector as they interact more frequently.

What remains at issue, and what emerged strongly from the workshop, is that Ghanaian civil society organizations consider their own capabilities to be inadequate. This is an important impediment to their engaging more fully with government and making a more substantive contribution to the analysis of public policy, public expenditures, and sector performance from the perspective of citizen needs and expectations.
The brainstorming diagnosis and debate at the workshop led to the articulation of the following two strategic objectives:

- To facilitate the establishment of an organizational basis for civil society to participate actively, as partners, in assessing public sector performance.
- To enhance the capacity of Ghanaian civil society—particularly core NGOs, CSOs, and think tanks—to undertake and participate in assessing public sector performance.

The question of the identity, credibility, and consistency of organizational representation of civil society emerged frequently during the workshop. Participants felt that, while Ghanaian civil society is being gradually integrated in policy dialogue with government, most of initiatives to assess public sector performance do not yet involve civil society substantially. Key questions confronting attempts to increase this involvement include:

- Are the institutions, organizations, and coalitions that presently orchestrate civil society participation in such policy and strategic dialogue as the SAPRI and the CAS appropriate to represent civil society’s voice in assessing public sector performance?
- Is there scope for a more formal approach, such as a formal coalition or working group, to enhance the involvement of civil society?
- What role might new coalitions in various sectors and thematic areas such as water, environment, education, and gender play in assessing public sector performance?

The evolving and growing role of civil society brings to the fore issues and concerns about its current capabilities. Training in such basic skills as communication and networking, fundraising, citizen action research, policy advocacy, and alliance building would address core capacity deficits. So would awareness-raising and training in methods of assessing public sector performance, such as monitoring, evaluation, and sector reviews. Of course, training in itself is a supply-side approach. For training to be useful, there has to be a demand for the skills and capabilities that training provides.

How can training be managed? One way is for donors to design and deliver new training courses for civil society organizations and to offer places to civil society representatives in courses already offered. The World Bank is investigating opportunities for providing such support, and other multilateral and bilateral donors, as well as international NGOs, are encouraged to do this.

Another approach would be for civil society organizations to take the lead in identifying needed training and capacity building. This workshop made a useful contribution to such a dialogue, but it should not end there.
A third and possibly related approach would be to create a capacity building fund for civil society. Such a fund could support a variety of flexible capacity building initiatives including training to build both organizational and individual capacity for members of Ghanaian civil society. This training could encompass assessment of public sector performance, among other capacities. Such funds might be used for the following activities:

- Sponsoring candidates to participate in short courses on monitoring, evaluation, and sector review
- Funding organizations that wish to design, plan, and implement in-house training programs on evaluation (using Ghanaian, and possibly international, resource persons)
- Supporting the fledgling Ghanaian Evaluation Association, which could act as a focal point for development of evaluation skills and expertise in Ghana
- Initiating citizen-based research to elicit views of civil society on a variety of public sector services and performance (similar to the efforts in Bangalore, Penang, and Uganda described in the workshop)
- Establishing a coherent program, such as the IDASA initiatives in South Africa, for researching, analyzing, and assessing budget spending and priorities.

The CDF discussions, in which the views of government, civil society, and other donors are canvassed, are one vehicle for pursuing these options. Civil society organizations need to be proactive in ensuring their views are heard in this process.

No regular opportunity now exists for civil society and government to exchange ideas, skills, and best practices on public sector performance. This could be remedied by establishing an annual forum for representatives of government and civil society to bring to the table best practices on performance monitoring in the course of the year, including joint performance monitoring on a sectoral or cross-sectoral basis. This approach could complement—and perhaps be part of—ongoing CDF discussions.
List of Participants

Annex A

C. Abugre  
ISODEC, Box 19452  
Accra-North  
tel./fax: 306069  
abugre@ghana.com

Frimpon Addo  
National Democratic Institute  
tel./fax: 761920  
frimpong@ndi.org

Juliana Adu-Gyamfi  
ACTIONAID  
tel./fax: 764931/32  
 juliana@actionaid.ghanag.gh

George Ahadzi  
GAPVOD  
tel./fax: 232762  
gapvod@ghana.com

Lucy Aklaku  
Centre for Community Studies Action and Development  
tel./fax: 233637

Dr. E.O. Akwetey  
Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG)  
Box CT5767, Cantonment  
tel./fax: 762631, 775703  
ideg@africaonline.com.gh
Godson Amekuedi
LHL/GAPVOD
tel./fax: 304782, 773421
tcheli@yahoo.com

Michael. A. Ansa
Christian Council of Ghana
Box 919, Accra
tel./fax: 776678, 773429
ccghana@africaonline.express.com

C.K. Asante
M.P., Parliament of Ghana
(Finance Committee)
tel./fax: 022-401943

Dr. Elizabeth Barcikowski
Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Project (USAID/QUIPS)
tel./fax: 776013, 027-568196
ebarcikowski@ighmail.com

Abigail Burgesson
National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
tel./fax: 772851, 761920
abi@ndi.org

Osvaldo Feinstein
Operations Evaluation Department
World Bank, Washington, D.C.
tel./fax: (202) 458-0505
ofeinstein@worldbank.org

Sulley Gariba
Moderator
tel./fax: 777582
gariba@africaonline.com.gh

Kofi Gbedemah
VORANGO, P.O. Box MA-2279, Ho
tel./fax: 091-585, 091-8370 (messages only)
tenasu@nexus.africanonline.com.gh

Ato Ghartey
UNDP, Harare, Zimbabwe
tel./fax: (263)4–792681
ato.ghartey@undp.org
Annex A: List of Participants

Peter Harold
World Bank, Ghana
tel./fax: 229681

Guenter Heidenhof
World Bank Ghana Office
tel./fax: 229681
gheidenhof@worldbank.org

Victoria Kuma-Mintah
31st December Women’s Movement
tel./fax: 228711 ext. 155

Smile Kwawukume
GTZ/PRA
tel./fax: 231403
gtzmlgrd@ncs.com.gh

Camille Lampart
World Bank, Ghana Office
tel./fax: 229681
clampart@worldbank.org

Keith Mackay
Operations Evaluation Department
World Bank, Washington, D.C.
tel./fax: (202) 473-7178
kmckay@worldbank.org

Kofi Marrah
World Bank, Ghana
tel./fax: 229681
kmarrah@worldbank.org

J.H. Mensah
Minority Leader, Parliament of Ghana
tel./fax: 663399

Rose Mensah-Kumi
Abantu for Development
tel./fax: 246495
abantu@africanonline.com.gh

Mark Mostovac
CIDA, Accra
tel./fax: 288555
mark.mostovac@dfat-maeci.gc.ca
Charles T. Nornoo
TechnoServe Inc.
Box 135, Accra
tel./fax: 763675
charels.nornoo@ensgh.org

Augustine Quarshigah
GROOTS
tel./fax: 772838, 776712
gnce@ncs.comm.gh

Vera Quaye
Centre for Community Studies Action and Development
tel./fax: 233637

Claude Salem
World Bank, Washington, D.C.
tel./fax: (202) 458-1318
csalem@worldbank.org

Jojo Thompson
African Centre for Human Development (ACHD)
tel./fax: 223031

Judith Thompson
PRONET
tel./fax: 228206, 223218
PRONET@GH.COM

Noble Wadzah
Friends of the Earth-Ghana
P.M.B. G.P.O. Accra
tel./fax: 225963
foeghana@africa-on-line.com.gh

Marie-Alice Wood
World Bank, Washington, D.C.
tel./fax: (202) 473-3877
mwood2@worldbank.org
Participants were asked to complete a short evaluation questionnaire on the workshop at its conclusion (box A.1). The questionnaire asked for ratings of sessions, positive and negative comments, and suggestions for future action.

**Positive Aspects of the Workshop**

- Ideas on how assessment of government performance came out clearly.
- The sessions were focused and not too long.
- The plenary and experiences from South Africa were valuable.
- Emerging roles of CSOs were clearly established.
- Strengthening capacity building of NGOs will help us to assess our performance.
- The participatory method was effective.
- The workshop opened a doorway for further broad-based participation in public sector development.
- The discussion touched on many issues and addressed most, stressing the need for civil society to be strengthened and for capacity building. Monitoring and evaluation are necessary ingredients for proper development and NGOs must be equipped to undertake this role.
- The World Bank at least saw CSOs first, which gave them insight into the need to press development forward.
- There was an opportunity to share NGOs’ thoughts on policy issues and commitment of civil society organizations.
The workshop created the opportunity to at least deliberate on issues facing civil society in playing an active role in the public sector.

The workshop provided a stimulus to be proactive in exercising civic responsibility to urge government to be accountable.

Participants had an opportunity to connect with IDASA experience and resources and to get CSOs to recognize their public interest advocacy role.

Participants had a chance to share ideas and prioritize needs.

**Negative Aspects of the Workshop**

- CSO representation was a little narrow.
- Participants received too short notice.
- There was not enough time to deliberate on issues and future steps.
- There was not enough time for exercise (5 minutes).
- More than a day should have been scheduled to allow in-depth contributions.
- Follow-up should have been organized at short intervals.
- Workshop documents should have been circulated earlier.
- Government personnel should have been included.
- There was a tendency to present the natural framework as given by some World Bank officials and a limited focus on gender issues.
- It was unclear in the introduction of participants whether civil society was adequately represented.
• The workshop was organized externally, with minimal or ineffective local input and limited time for participants to digest and knock ideas into shape.
• Sessions on “What next?” did not answer clearly enough what activity will follow this one, who will initiate it, and what the World Bank’s role will be after this.

Suggestions/Comments
• Reports should be circulated to all participants.
• The World Bank should continue creating the space for civil societies to play their roles.
• Training should be provided for participating NGOs to move the process forward.
• GAPVOD should not be asked to lead any follow-up process, as they are not representatives of NGOs or CSOs.
• There should be a platform for public and civil society sectors to interact in order to bridge gaps that have been identified.
• There should be a comprehensive workshop on capacity building in monitoring and evaluation.
• A group should be formed of participants to critically examine the way forward and bring out specific strategies.
• More such workshops should be organized.
• Reading materials should have been sent in advance.
• The decisions made at this gathering should be quickly synthesized and circulated to the organizations involved for comment before they are adopted.
• Training should be organized to build NGO capacities to actualize these deliberations.
• The World Bank should encourage civil society organizations to do more advocacy work to affect policies at all levels through workshops and seminars.
• There are many more practical steps to be taken in the area of training of evaluators from this group, and good follow-up is essential.
• A two-day meeting may have been more useful.
• There is a need to find out the extent of NGO engagement with policy as a basis for further discussion and action.
• Donors should support strong coalitions of NGOs.
• Local initiatives for a two-day intensive workshop on citizens’ roles and opportunities for public sector management, as well as public budget initiatives, should be supported.
The following note is the executive summary of a draft World Bank report, A Preliminary Diagnosis of Monitoring and Evaluation Capacities in Ghana, which is currently being discussed with the government. Also attached is a section of the report on options for involving civil society.

A World Bank mission to Ghana was undertaken in June 1999 as part of a diagnosis of M&E capacities and development options. The mission responded to a request from the Government of Ghana for assistance in strengthening its M&E functions. The government has an ambitious program of reform to improve public sector management. Reforms planned or underway include a significant downsizing of the public sector; an ongoing review of its functions and structures; a medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF); performance plans for ministries, departments, and agencies; performance agreements for senior civil servants; and extensive beneficiary surveys. These reforms are being supported by, inter alia, a PSM loan (APL) recently agreed by the Bank's Board.

Work to build capacities for performance measurement (broadly defined M&E) has the potential to provide powerful support to these reforms. The Bank's country department is actively supporting these reform efforts, including the development of M&E capacities.

An important feature of the Ghanaian context is its role as a pilot country for the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF). One of the pillars of the CDF is results and accountability—pilot countries are strongly encouraged to embrace a results-based management framework and dialogue with civil society. The development of M&E capacities is a key vehicle to help ensure governments can measure and report on development effectiveness, and more fully engage civil society and NGOs. Such national capacity building also provides a counterpart to the M&E
capacities of donors that have been the focal point for results orientation in the past.

A preliminary diagnosis of the Ghanaian government’s M&E resulted in the identification of nine options to help build national capacities. Such capacity-building would not constitute a new or additional public sector reform initiative, but rather a deepening and strengthening of reforms already underway.

The purpose of this paper is to continue a dialogue with GOG and other donors—it is not intended to present the options in a prescriptive manner. Discussion and debate of the pros and cons of each option are important to be consistent with CDF principles. Nevertheless, the experience of the Bank and other donors shows that some options (and combinations of options) will be particularly important for the sustainable development of M&E capacities.

The nine options, which overlap to some extent, are briefly outlined below.

1. GOG policy statement on M&E/performance measurement, ideally issued by a senior minister such as the Vice-President to ensure credibility and high profile.

2. Development of an effective M&E framework within GOG to set out clear responsibilities for different government actors (who is expected to do what, why, when, and how). Such a framework would encompass the planning, conduct, quality, uses, and reporting of M&E findings at national, sectoral, and regional/district levels.

3. Identification of M&E champion(s) within GOG, for example, a ministry or high-level committee that could be a national leader and supporter of M&E capacity development.

4. Deepening of the performance orientation within the medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF), particularly by ensuring that training provided to ministries in support of the MTEF focuses on government objectives, measures of success, and the strengths and weaknesses of different M&E tools.

5. Review of the structure, functions, resources, and practices of selected ministries’ Policy, Planning, M&E Departments (PPMEDs), which are meant to play a key role in M&E and have the potential to do so, despite their apparent lack of capacity and engagement in some redundant activities.

6. “Ministry mentoring,” intensive long-term donor support for selected ministries’ M&E activities to establish and demonstrate to others a range of good-practice approaches to M&E.
7. Donor support for establishing an M&E training fund, which would rely on an action-learning approach and need to be tightly targeted.

8. Support for establishing a Ghanaian evaluation forum/network to help evaluators within and outside GOG share insights into common problems and good practice approaches.

9. Clarification of options to involve civil society (NGOs, parliament, and the media) more effectively in overseeing development progress and the performance of GOG. This would build on the SAPRI (Structural Adjustment Participatory Review Initiative) dialogue initiated in Ghana in 1997, as well as on the CDF dialogue underway with civil society and NGOs in Ghana.

The above options are not presented as an overall action plan for Ghana, although GOG could pursue them as a totality if it chose. Pursuing these options simultaneously would involve a tradeoff between the synergies to be gained and the effort to be expended. Decisions would have to be made on the relation, clustering, and optimal sequencing of issues.

One useful strategy would be to develop good practice examples by targeting support for M&E capacity development to several ministries/agencies with good prospects for early success. This approach would be particularly effective in cases where senior management of the ministries strongly believes in the benefits of M&E. Such a strategy could be pursued by combining several options (such as 1 and 3 in the short-term, followed soon after by 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9) as the first phase of a longer-term approach entailing general application of the options (including option 2) across GOG ministries. The wider application of these options would definitely benefit from the strong support of a central ministry or committee as a GOG-wide champion. Indeed, this would be necessary if GOG wants to move forward decisively with M&E capacity building.

A cut-down version of this overall approach encompassing selected “champion” line ministries together with option 1 in the short-term, followed soon after by options 4, 5, and 9, would also be sustainable.

It will be important to gauge the views of GOG on these options, as well as the extent of GOG buy-in (demand) for them. The extent to which donors are prepared to support the various options will also need to be clarified. Based on the highly complementary reforms that donors are currently supporting, plus some informal discussions, a fairly high level of donor support could be expected.

It will also be important to explore modalities for supporting the involvement of civil society in performance measurement. The CDF dialogue now underway provides an excellent forum for such exploration.
The following detailed discussion of option 9 is taken from pages 22–24 of *A Preliminary Diagnosis of Monitoring and Evaluation Capacities in Ghana.*

**Option 9. Support for civil society involvement in performance measurement**

Civil society, broadly defined, includes stakeholders such as ordinary citizens, NGOs, the media, and parliament. Citizens are the beneficiaries of government activities, either through direct consumption of government-provided goods and services, or more indirectly through government regulation and other activities. The importance placed on the views of citizens is illustrated by the beneficiary assessments being conducted as part of the CSPIP initiative. Parliament, NGOs, and the media also have an enduring interest in government performance.

The CDF discussions provide an additional opportunity to involve civil society in the assessment of government performance, and more widely in discussions about national and sectoral priorities and progress in achieving development goals. Such interaction between civil society and government (and donors) means that civil society is also an important potential user of information on the performance of government—i.e., on performance indicators and the findings of evaluations and reviews. The involvement of civil society would help to put pressure on GOG and on civil servants to better manage inefficient or ineffective government activities and thus achieve higher levels of performance. Civil society can also be instrumental in putting pressure on any government agencies which are suffering from corruption.

This raises issues concerning the degree of familiarity and understanding of M&E concepts and tools which these groups need in order to make full use of the M&E information available to them. It is necessary for users of such information to understand its strengths, limitations, and weaknesses.

Civil society can reasonably be expected to be involved with such information as more than users or observers of information provided by others. These stakeholders have a potential role to play in inputting their views and opinions into evaluations and reviews of government activities—particularly in the case of ordinary citizens as consumers of government goods and services. Civil society also has a role to play in influencing the evaluation agenda—identifying particular government activities whose performance needs to be evaluated or assessed.

The World Bank and other donors are accumulating a growing body of experience in interacting with civil society, particularly at the grassroots level, but also increasingly at national and regional (i.e., sub-national) levels. In Uganda, for example, NGOs have provided inputs into the country assistance strategy and have helped identify steps to address the leakage of government funding for social services. A key element in encouraging such participation is the extent of government support for civil society to become more fully engaged in debates of government performance and policy priorities.
Assistance to encourage civil society’s involvement in policy dialogue and in overseeing government performance could be provided in a number of ways. These include the following:

- Support for the creation of structures/frameworks to encourage the participation of NGOs in policy dialogue and advocacy.
- Provision of awareness-raising training and other NGO capacity-building support.
- Greater involvement of civil society in sector reviews (as per the health sector).
- Support for the publication and dissemination of M&E information on government performance.
- A public awareness and education campaign.

Parliament and the media can also play an important role in these dialogues. Their support might include the following:

- Raising awareness on such issues as the concept of performance and the uses of performance measurement (i.e., for management, for resource allocation, and for accountability purposes).
- Capacity-building support for the parliamentary service.

In addition, NGOs could work directly with parliament in helping it understand and digest available information on the performance of ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs). South Africa provides an example of this type of interaction.

There are a number of possible options to support the development of the capabilities of civil society in making full use of M&E information and tools. A full and open discussion of these options would help to identify the pros and cons of each. This discussion could be achieved in various ways, such as a workshop involving civil society representatives. A workshop could also include a focus on good practice examples of civil society participation in Ghana and other countries.
One of the unique features of this workshop was the pulling together of a wide variety of resource material relevant to development of civil society’s monitoring and evaluation capacities for the purpose of assessing public sector performance. A synopsis of some of these materials follows.

**Relevant Websites (listed in workshop handouts)**

http://www.pacindia.org/
Public Affairs Center (Bangalore, India). This NGO awards “report cards” on the basis of citizen surveys of municipal government services and the extent of bribery and corruption. The NGO widely disseminates the results, helps other cities conduct similar surveys, assists government agencies in addressing performance problems, and conducts surveys of small and medium-size businesses.

http://www.transparency.de/
Transparency International. This website mainly covers anti-corruption, transparency, government accountability, and “voice” issues.

Socio-economic and Environmental Research Institute, Penang, Malaysia. This site provides more details on the Sustainable Penang Initiative described in this report.

World Bank. The Bank’s NGO and civil society website discusses the Bank’s work, presents toolkits, and covers international developments,
capacity building, sector issues, country assistance strategies, SAPRI, human rights, NGO legal issues, donor-NGO collaboration, contract lists, an interactive dialogue space, and other relevant perspectives.

http://www.idasa.org.za/bis/
IDASA. This South African NGO provides training for civil society, budget briefings for parliamentarians and others on a fee-for-service basis, budget system handbooks and other resource materials including budget newsletters, an advocacy support program, a poverty information network, and an innovations award program.

This World Bank website presents a number of papers about the experience of the Bank in helping countries to develop their capacities for monitoring and evaluation. Several of the papers relate specifically to African experience and issues. Two particularly relevant papers are: Evaluation Capacity Development — Sub-Saharan Africa: Lessons from Experience in Supporting Sound Governance, by Mark Schacter, and Evaluation Capacity Development in Africa: Selected Proceedings from a Seminar in Abidjan, published jointly by the African Development Bank and the World Bank.

World Bank's Africa Region. This site contains the Bank's regional strategy, reports, news, statistics, and the like, as well as materials specifically relating to Ghana.

http://www.internationalbudget.org
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP; U.S.-based). The Center analyzes U.S. budget priorities and the incidence of benefits and taxes across various demographic groups, provides capacity building advice to other NGOs on building an effective budget analysis organization, and provides links to NGOs working on similar issues in developed and developing countries.

Secondary Resources
The field of public sector assessment, and the role of civil society in such assessment, is new but rapidly evolving. In the context of Ghana, a number of secondary resources have been assembled to assist readers of
this report in conceptualizing and concretizing directions for civil society capacity building in assessing public sector performance.

*Civil Society and Local Government in Twenty Districts in Ghana: Surprises, Problems, and Opportunities.* This report was prepared by Dr. Stephen Snook, Prof. Joseph Ayee, Dr. Kwame Boafo-Arthur, and Dr. Ernest Aryeetey as part of a USAID-funded project in Ghana. The report examines the conceptual framework for the designation of a notion of Ghanaian civil society, especially at the local level where citizen actions are diverse, informal, and latent. The study conducted in-depth surveys of opinions, knowledge, attitudes, and practices of civil society groups, concluding that they are active and vibrant at the local level, but integration of their activities into local government initiatives and service delivery depends on their skill and confidence.

*Foreign Aid, Democratization, and Civil Society in Africa: A Study of South Africa, Ghana, and Uganda,* by Julie Hearn, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Discussion Paper No. 368, March 1999. This comparative assessment of the space called “civil society” in three countries in Africa examines the range of actors and impact of the assistance efforts of donor groups. The groups are categorized in relation to their orientation toward the notion of civil society. The study concludes that while the size of USAID and German donor support has been significant for CSOs, assistance from the “like-minded group” of donors, including Denmark, Canada, and others, has greatly enhanced the building of democratic institutions, improvement in equitable economic management, and broadening of the space for civic action.

*Confrontation, Cooperation, or Co-optation: NGOs and the Ghanaian State during Structural Adjustment,* by Ian Gary, in the *Review of African Political Economy* (68:149–68). This paper starts from the premise that the evolution and increasing prominence of NGOs and civil society groups is related in part to the increased prominence of economic reform initiatives in many African states. Using Ghana as a case study, the paper develops a perspective that underscores the complex relationships NGOs have entered into in their relations with the state. On the one hand, they are used to deliver services; on the other, they see themselves as the guardians of citizen interests. The paper discusses some of the inherent contradictions in this duality and recent struggles in Ghana between NGOs and the government.

*The Alms Bazaar: Altruism under Fire—Non-profit Organizations and International Development,* by Ian Smillie, International Development Research Center. This paper uses a Ghana case study to depict typologies and salient characteristics of NGOs. Smillie argues that the “humanistic service orientation” in Ghana led to the emergence of several community-based groups offering a range of services. The consolidation and institutionalization of this “humanistic ethic” has been manifested in the development of highly focused and specialized organizations such as ISODEC and CEDEP, who support the wide range of CSOs and CBOs in the country.
Endnotes

1. A summary of participant assessments of the workshop, the extent to which it met its objectives, its positive and negative aspects, and suggestions and other comments is presented in Annex A.


3. A local think-tank advised the NGO on technical aspects of citizen surveys, using market research techniques such as questionnaire design, sample methods, focus group approaches, and preparation of case studies and documentation.


5. This case study was prepared by Thomas J. Cook and Lawrence Cooley. The information source for SPI is the Socio-Economic & Environmental Research Institute, 10A Persiaran Bukit Jambul (International College Grounds), 11900 Bayan Lepas, Penang, Malaysia. E-mail: serigp@tm.net.my. SPI website: http://www.geocities.com/RainForestVines/7288/spi/index.htm

6. This case study was prepared by Christopher Mausolff.

7. This is a Xhosa word referring to a breakthrough made possible by many people working together to overcome obstacles.