Participation in Country Economic and Sector Work

Dan R. Aronson

June 1995
# Environment Department Papers
## Participation Series

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Participation in Country Economic and Sector Work

Dan R. Aronson

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>CEM</td>
<td>Country Economic Memorandum</td>
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<tr>
<td>CESW</td>
<td>Country Economic and Sector Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>LTFS</td>
<td>Long-Term Perspective Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEAP</td>
<td>National Environmental Action Plan</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Nongovernmental Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>OD</td>
<td>Operational Directive</td>
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<tr>
<td>P-CESW</td>
<td>Participatory Country Economic and Sector Work</td>
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<td>TM</td>
<td>Task Manager</td>
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<td>WID</td>
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This is one of a series of papers written as inputs to the World Bank’s Participation Sourcebook.

The papers were themselves produced in a participatory way. Topics were selected by a technical committee chaired by Bhuvan Bhatnagar and this paper was produced by a steering committee, convened by Dan Aronson and consisting of participation practitioners with a knowledge of country economic and sector work.

This series builds on the work of a participation learning group which was led over three years by David Beckman and Aubrey Williams. It has benefitted from financial support from the World Bank’s Vice Presidencies for Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) and Human Resources Development & Operations Policy (HRO), and from support from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and the German Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ).

The author wishes to thank the World Bank task managers who have conducted participatory country economic and sector work (P-CESW) and who have generously conveyed their experiences through interviews. Their names can be found in the Annex at the end of this volume. Appreciation is also due to the advisory committee which met several times over drafts of this document and offered many leads to new information and sound advice on communicating the results. The committee included S. Gandhi, C. Jones-Carroll, P. Landell-Mills, H. Saxenian, J.M. Silverman, S. Stout, and M. Tovo. Additional readers were B. Bhatnagar, G. Davis, S. Jacobs, C. Parel, and T. Solo. Ellen Tynan was the principal researcher, carrying out the interviews on P-CESW experiences and analyzing CESW across the Bank. Ted Howard provided editorial assistance.
Executive Summary

Using a participatory approach in the Bank’s country economic and sector work may involve extra costs, as well as some loss of control over timing and quality of the work. Experience suggests, however, that these costs are more than offset by substantial benefits, which include improvements in the Bank-borrower relationship, speedier acceptance of recommendations both by the Bank and the borrower, and increased in-country capacity for policy research and analysis.

The Bank’s country economic and sector work (CESW), analyzes the situation and prospects of borrowing countries and provides the framework for its lending programs and policy advice. Traditionally, CESW has been under the exclusive control and ownership of the Bank. While well regarded for its technical standards, this work has also been criticized for failing to take sufficient account of social and political realities, and for sometimes presenting borrowers with policy recommendations which they do not understand fully or cannot implement.

Addressing such concerns, agreement is emerging that CESW, like projects, should be undertaken with the full collaboration and ownership of the governments involved. Often, contributions have also been sought from experts and organizations outside government; and, in some cases, CESW has attempted to involve other stakeholder groups in the review process.

Making CESW participatory depends not just on the range of stakeholders consulted, but on the depth of their involvement at various stages in the process. In practice, no process can be fully participatory; nevertheless, Bank practitioners have found ways to share information and open the development dialogue with useful results both for members and for the Bank.

Costs and Risks

It is important to be aware of the costs of doing CESW in a participatory way. Often, but not always, more time and money are required, including additional management work up front, to establish a participatory process. At the same time, changing the role of the Bank, by adding other goals to that of technical excellence, risks diluting the Bank’s agenda and involves some loss of control over the schedule, methodology and quality of the work.

Benefits

Although the number of participatory country economic and sector work (P-CESW) exercises is still small, experience has demonstrated that participation can produce important benefits which more than compensate for the additional costs.

Improving the Bank/Borrower Relationship

As a result of collaboration in CESW, communication between the Bank and the government can be improved and a sense of partnership can be developed with borrowers. The Bank gains better knowledge of and sensitivity to the client’s circumstances. At the same time, greater transparency of Bank work increases the Bank’s credibility within countries and among stakeholders.
Participation in Country Economic and Sector Work

Improving the Validity of Recommendations

The substance of the work itself benefits from wider and deeper local knowledge. The resulting recommendations are likely to be more valid when analysis benefits from fuller information. They are also more likely to be implementable. Country economic and sector policy always involves a compromise between the best assessments of experts and the social and political interests operating in the sector. When CESW is done in partnership, political and social questions can be raised, confronted, and integrated from the outset.

Increasing the Acceptability of Recommendations

A given piece of CESW is successful only when its recommendations are adopted, or at least incorporated into the debate on policy. By building ownership and consensus for policy formation and implementation in the course of the work itself, P-CESW leads to speedier acceptance of recommendations by Bank and borrower. Participation not only yields richer diagnoses of problems but also inspires and mobilizes the actors to follow through on what has been agreed.

Capacity Building

P-CESW increases in-country capacity for subsequent analysis in the same or new areas of concern. It treats CESW not just as a preparation for policy formulation and investment decisions, but as a development activity itself, improving the capacity within member countries to take over the production of technically informed policies for themselves.

Conditions for Success

P-CESW requires policymaking environments that are open to participation. In P-CESW stakeholders collaborate to define the issues for analysis, gather data, review results, and decide strategy and priorities. Task managers—most of whom agree that the process is risky, messy and potentially conflictful—have been creative in addressing each of these steps in a participatory way, adapting methods and style of participation to circumstances.

Building the Case for Participation

In some cases, participation in CESW has been in response to local conditions rather than a proactive choice of the Bank. In other cases, however, Bank staff have sought wider participation than the government partner expects. In these cases, building the case for participation depends on the experience of task managers in a given country, and on their persistence in developing good contacts within and outside the government.

Identifying Relevant Stakeholders

The search for relevant stakeholders must begin early in the P-CESW exercise. Community based organizations, professional groups, religious leaders, and individuals critical to the sector can all be partners in the Bank's work; and omitting contact with them can reduce their willingness to cooperate.

Although identifying stakeholders is typically a fairly informal process, more deliberate procedures can ensure that a broad range of perspectives is covered, and that participants are truly representative of the sectors or groups for which they speak. Successful methods have included field visits to help communities create committees of local villagers; open public meetings, often in several different cities, and advertised in the newspaper; translation of draft documents and meeting proceedings into local languages; and the inclusion of "opposition" NGOs, making work less comfortable in the early stages but creating the environment for further collaboration.

Task managers stress that the Bank itself has an important role to play as a participant, rather than a neutral party. The Bank team needs to argue its own positions as a stakeholder, but
from a posture of humility. Professional, or at least neutral, facilitators should chair workshops and roundtables so that the Bank team can play its stakeholder role and inject issues that it thinks important.

**Eliciting Stakeholders' Contributions**
Consultation should begin early and broadly, before the issues paper fixes the work program for the CESW exercise. Papers commissioned from the local research community, issues workshops, study panels and open meetings can all point to themes which might otherwise not have appeared, and highlight cultural and political points not normally raised in Bank discussions. In most countries, local consultants can make an important contribution. Partners in setting the CESW agenda have also included development assistance organizations, NGOs, labor unions, and private business people.

Several strategies have been used to expand the stakeholder presence in data gathering and analysis: for example, establishing a task force of local experts; convening a general roundtable followed by a succession of retreats and workshops; contracting local consultants or university researchers, backed up by consultation with policy organizations, NGOs, unions and trade associations; and, in some cases, setting up community committees and carrying out field interviews.

**Avoiding Bias**
Involving nontraditional colleagues in sector work puts extra emphasis on having clear and tight terms of reference for studies. P-CESW teams must also avoid coopting local interest groups and maintain safeguards to ensure that potential sources of bias are recognized. For example, researchers can usually be counted on to emphasize the value of more detailed research, while NGOs stress greater reliance on their participation. Expert bias—the tendency for policymakers and the public to believe technical experts over stakeholders who are less articulate—is a recurrent problem. The role of local team members is crucial in ensuring that diverse opinions are fairly represented and in preventing a dialogue from being hijacked by powerful or vocal parties.

**The Role of the Bank**
In the end, all policy choices are the responsibility of the borrower. The Bank’s own Country Assistance Strategy, and its choice to support, or not to support, a borrower decision, remain of course the Bank’s own prerogative to decide. As borrowing members gain experience and confidence in initiating and resolving their own policy debates, the Bank’s comparative advantage will lie in providing a global frame of reference on a multitude of questions, including what works in building the capacity for transparent, participatory analysis.
1. Introduction to Participatory Country Economic and Sector Work

Background

Country economic and sector work (CESW) provides the matrix of knowledge and the communications channels that are vital to the World Bank's business operations. In recent years, 15 to 20 percent of the Bank's administrative budget has been devoted to CESW. The range and diversity of analysis has expanded considerably, and now includes not only the standard periodic country studies, economic memoranda, and major sector updates, but also cross sectoral studies in poverty and gender, environmental plans, intensive reviews of subsectors, and many other types of inquiry.

CESW is prepared for a variety of audiences and purposes: as responses to government requests for topical analysis; in preparation for the Bank's policy dialogue with its members; and as the background for sectoral investment decisions. According to the Bank's Operational Directive (OD 2.00, March 1989), country economic work has the principal objective of "inform[ing] the Bank and member countries of the situation, prospects, and credit worthiness of borrowing countries," while country sector work "provides the framework for the Bank's lending program and for policy advice in the sector." Even the Bank's sharpest critics recognize the influence of Bank CESW, and it contributes to the reputation of the Bank worldwide.

Who decides what appears in any given piece of CESW, what issues are addressed, what research is done to underpin it, and what recommendations ensue? The traditional answer to these questions is that the Bank decides, although initiating memoranda and interim conclusions usually are shared with a limited circle of government policymakers. Many would argue that the Bank's advantage is that it can, and therefore should, offer the very best analysis possible for whatever issue is in question, after which country or sectoral stakeholders can choose policy and strategy. Yet the Bank's friends and its critics both complain that Bank technicians and managers often imply that their study results indicate the only correct position. This leads clients without alternative analytical capabilities to accept choices they do not understand fully and cannot implement, and it encourages borrowers to accept options they dislike because they fear losing the Bank's support.

Perhaps the most extraordinary incident of this type occurred when the Organization of African Unity considered adopting a resolution to censure the Bank for the tone and substance of the 1981 report on Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Agenda for Action (the so-called Berg Report). Ramgopal Agarwala, writing recently of this episode, notes that "although the draft resolution was quietly dropped..., the Africans' resentment continued to charge the atmosphere in their dealings with the Bank" (Agarwala, 1993). Although this case was extreme, most Bank staff are familiar with the sort of criticism cited. Participatory CESW aims to avert the possibility that the Bank develops far reaching policy recommendations in isolation from stakeholders at every level who will have to adopt policy and deal with its consequences.
Participatory CESW

CESW is participatory when it includes the voices of and gives due regard to the arguments of a broad array of stakeholders. The stakeholder mix varies by the task, but may include key government decisionmakers, government employees in a given sector, private sector operators (from informal sector taxmen to industrialists), research and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working on key social issues, and the public at large. Substantial value is added to CESW when it is done with the active participation of such stakeholders.

It is vital to note at the start that participatory CESW (P-CESW) is, in the most positive form, another label for the democratic evolution of national or sectoral development strategy. It involves a transparent process of decisionmaking about priorities and strategies, a process informed by technical information that itself is generated in an open environment of information and research. The more participatory CESW is, the more everyone with a real interest in the subject will have been involved. None of the Bank’s members, developed economies or not, has perfectly participatory CESW. Nonetheless, Bank practitioners have found ways to share information and open the development dialogue with useful results both for members and for the Bank. Many of the results are not fully participatory, yet they expand the dialogue and increase transparency beyond earlier practice. A review of Bank experience in P-CESW shows that there have been differing aims in the P-CESW carried out to date, and that a different situations may require different types and intensities of participatory work. Yet there is always more to do, and the current best practices can inform new efforts to open the policy arenas to greater participation.

A fundamental theme in participatory CESW is the appropriate balance between the production of technical knowledge and the breadth of involvement in the decisionmaking that precedes and follows it. In discussions of CESW, the issue of the Bank’s knowledge and analytical capability versus the borrower’s freedom to choose between technocratic “best options” and political realities arises again and again.

P-CESW, when it is done well, entails active communication, negotiation, and compromise among competing interests in the sector or even the national economy. These can include compromises between the Bank and the borrower, between the government and its supporters in the society, and between supporters and opponents of current or contemplated policies. It looks beyond the preparation of the report itself to the adoption and utilization of its results by the borrower. Contemplating the entire process, it accepts the likelihood of higher costs at the outset, but it recoups much of that cost through the efficiency and effectiveness of actions taken following completion of the report. P-CESW moves to the forefront the questions of ownership, the control of knowledge, and the development of capacity within member countries to take over the production of technically informed policies. It treats CESW not just as a preparation for development, but as a development issue itself, as an activity that all member countries must undertake by and for themselves.

Participatory CESW is rare in the world of development assistance, either inside or outside the Bank. The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) has had a policy of “rolling planning” of its country strategies, with target group consultations among the populations likely to be affected by projects, but the overall strategies themselves have not been widely participatory in design. The Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) articulated a new set of principles committing the agency to a fully participatory strategy that will involve “people in defining development priorities and approaches,” not just in project level organizations (Statement of Principles on
Participatory Development, USAID, Nov. 16, 1993, p. 1). However, it remains to be seen how these principles will contribute to the actual setting of priorities.

Capacity for in-country work has been increasing markedly. The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Ottawa, Canada, for example, has made an extraordinary effort to build research networks in developing countries and thus to expand the comparative knowledge of planners in many sectors. This is also the mandate of the recently established Africa Capacity-Building Foundation, supported by the Bank and other donors.

The number of Bank participatory country economic and sector studies is still small, but the climate for participatory work clearly is changing. For example, the FY93 Blue Book on CESW for Africa states that CESW must become more action oriented. If CESW is to achieve its objective of "providing decision-makers with the understanding of, the stake in and the tools for implementation," then "preparation and discussion of CESW thus requires as much attention as the work itself," and it must "include the participation of nationals in the work in question and the organization of workshops and seminars to plan the work, review the preliminary findings and final results, and discuss the actions required of everyone." The FY93 Blue Book for East Asia and the Pacific also seeks "stronger involvement of local development experts" and pledges a better "foundation for greater participation by the development community." South Asia's Blue Book urges "a greater, albeit selective, effort [at] collaboration ... with national research/policy analysts and institutes .... to add both substantive and 'ownership' value."

The Costs and Benefits of Participatory CESW

P-CESW has costs as well as benefits. However, while the costs are easy to imagine, the benefits of P-CESW are not always appreciated fully. In the end, of course, it is the trade-offs that need to be taken into account.

Skeptics of participation are quick to express misgivings about adding participatory elements to CESW. This attitude is not completely unwarranted: as the review of experience will show, there are many costs to be expected in P-CESW. They include:

- a changed role for the Bank, adding other goals to that of technical excellence;
- some loss of control of the production of the report, including its methodology;
- a possible diminishing of the quality of the work;
- a dilution of the Bank's agenda; and
- often, but not always, increased time and money expenditures for CESW tasks.

It is necessary to be well aware of these possible costs. However, P-CESW can generate substantial benefits including:

- a client orientation and a sense of partnership with borrowers from the point of identification onward;
- an increase in the Bank's credibility within countries and among stakeholders in the sector, resulting from the greater transparency in Bank work;
- a wider and deeper use of local knowledge, thus improving the substance of the work itself;
- a much increased sense of ownership of the product, which in turn facilitates the adoption of recommendations;
- speedier action on report results, in both policy and project work, often offsetting
any increased time that has been put into producing the report;

- expedited Bank review of the work because of acceptance by the borrower; and

- increased in-country capacity for subsequent analysis in the same or new areas of concern.

Participatory CESW includes more than compiling the report itself. The production of the report is just the beginning. It has significance only if the borrower understands its arguments, can apply its conclusions, and is persuaded that borrower objectives can be met by adopting and owning the report. A given piece of CESW is successful only when its recommendations are adopted, or at least integrated fully into the debate on policy. This is accelerated where CESW is participatory.
2. Types of Participatory CESW

The P-CESW exercises of recent years (some of which are still underway) represent three broad approaches aiming at different participation goals and using successively broader measures to achieve them.

Consultation and Joint Ownership with Government

The first type of P-CESW is already a major step beyond much of the traditional CESW in drafting the pre-issues or the issues paper and in developing and managing contracts.

Box 1
Brazil: Creating Government Ownership

The Environment and Agriculture Division of the Bank’s Brazil Department recently completed a major new study of management issues in agriculture, rural development, and natural resources. The division and the TM were committed from the outset to doing a report that was rich in content and broad in its impact, both on the Bank’s lending program and on policy discussions in Brazil.

Following formal issues meetings within the Bank, the issues paper was drafted in Brazil. Two sets of Brazilian inputs were crucial. First, senior Brazilian agricultural economists were members of the ESW team. Second, a broad based panel of experts drawn from politics, government departments, foundations, and universities across the country met in a two-day workshop to finalize the issues paper, supplied more than thirty technical background papers, and then met again over a rough draft of the report. Government technical review followed.

Before the Green Cover discussion in the Bank, the ESW team had the report translated into Portuguese and requested that the Ministry of Planning set up a cross ministerial discussion of the draft. More than fifty officials attended, representing all the ministries involved. The workshop lasted three full days (with a half day devoted to each chapter). Most of the discussions and arguments around the table were between ministries, rather than with the Bank. While the Ministries of Finance and Planning usually defended the Bank’s recommendations against criticisms from the sectoral ministries, overall there was much more agreement than disagreement. By the end of the meeting, the Executive Secretary of the Ministry of Planning decided that he would try to adopt the same format for all ESW discussions. The intensity of the interaction, the fact that the Bank team was able to act only as a resource group, and the expressed pleasure with the format all indicate a high level of ownership of the results throughout the government.

After government clearance, the ESW team disseminated the report’s findings at two research seminars outside government and published parts of it in a major Brazilian economics journal. Further seminars with farm groups, NGOs, and agroindustry representatives were to be held later.
Participation in Country Economic and Sector Work
data gathering, and the analyses that follow. It also ensures that frequent consultations with a wider government group take place, with the local team members reporting back in the interim.

There are a number of cases of this type of consultation: a recent agricultural sector study in Brazil (Box 1) in which P-CESW worked with the highest levels in ministries, governments, and even regions; the Africa Long-Term Perspective Study (LTTPS) described in Box 4; the two retreats with the cabinets of Senegal (Box 5) and Mali; and the finance sector work in Botswana.

Consulting with and Involving Intermediate Organizations and Stakeholders

Many current examples of P-CESW are of a second type in which the TM and government seek wider consultations with and contributions from knowledgeable parties outside the group of government decisionmakers. Direct methods for improving the product include networking with representative organizations, commissioning papers from an array of consultants or research organizations, holding NGO or other expert conferences, and establishing advisory groups of experts for the review process. These participatory strategies ensure that the outcome is understood by and is congruent with the views of a broader array of stakeholders in the borrowing country. The Venezuela Health Sector Review, the Women’s Reproductive Health study in Brazil, the paper on Strengthening the Role of NGOs in Health and Welfare in India, the Chile Social Sector review, and the Morocco Women in Development strategy paper (Box 2) are examples of this second type.

Box 2
Morocco: Expanding Stakeholder Dialogue

The Morocco Women in Development (WID) strategy paper has not yet been completed, but initial work on it already provides some important lessons. From the earliest stages of this sector study, the TM thought it extremely important to gather and utilize women’s opinions. During the course of the study, the TM heard three broad arguments against pursuing a participatory approach: ESW was very different from project work and did not lend itself to participation; starting a dialogue in Morocco beyond the level of the government itself was rare; and participation would take longer and be more costly than traditional ESW. Nonetheless, the TM pursued her goal.

The TM’s desire to use Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) as a technique for dialogue in the countryside inspired a workshop to introduce the concept. Through the Moroccan Ministry for Women in Development, the TM’s first mission included meetings with an array of women. About sixty people from bilateral donor agencies, NGOs, various ministries, and women’s organizations attended. A very broad agenda was set to gather information on women’s issues from the attending stakeholder groups prior to launching wider research across population groups.

One theme of the workshop was that patient work was vital to obtain full government commitment to the participatory method. It took more than a year to be confident enough of this commitment to organize a second workshop run by participants. NGO and government representatives, previously quite wary of one another, worked together to choose representatives to PRA teams that would do research for the paper. This collaboration was itself a strong endorsement of the process, and as a result other ministries began discussing using PRA techniques for consultative work in their own sectors. Although it is too early to tell how well the fieldwork itself will go, the participatory WID strategy has already had a wide impact.
Seeking Systematic Involvement of a Wider Range of Key Stakeholders

A third type of P-CESW attempts to involve all stakeholders in the review process. For example, the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) process requires public review. But TMs in other fields have sought wider participation by sponsoring broad fieldwork or by canvassing the countryside themselves, reaching out to locally influential people who are not usually asked to contribute to policymaking. Such measures, by ensuring that and clients are included, help increase understanding of client demands. These types of participatory processes have been used in the Benin Transport Sector Strategy (Box 3), the community analyses for the Eritrea country economic memorandum (CEM), NEAPs in Sri Lanka and elsewhere, and the Guinea health sector review. As these processes become more widespread, expertise in democratic policymaking may need to be solicited for analysis of how conflicting visions of strategy can best be reconciled.

Box 3
Participation in Preparing a Sector Study

Both the Bank and the government of Benin supported a participatory process to prepare the country's first comprehensive transport sector strategy. Given the strength of the private sector in transportation, government ministries saw the wisdom of using participation to build commitment to the strategy. For the Bank, the goal was to build a strong foundation for future projects.

After initial preparation, a national workshop was held, attended by more than 120 people. Every ministry in the sector participated (Finance, Planning, Transport, Housing, and Public Works), as did various representatives of public enterprises and the National Assembly. The drivers union, the truckers syndicate, and the union from the freight handling company also were included. Theme-focused working groups met on their own and with expert consultants, at which time participants began to enunciate their positions concerning possible regulatory revisions. The consultants were able to help establish areas of consensus and conflict even before beginning their own special studies.

Next, separate subsectoral study consultancy teams (each composed of international and local members) began their work. To ensure that their divergent findings would be aired fully rather than resolved within a single consultant's offices the teams were led by consultants from different sources. Good coordination was needed to ensure the compatibility of findings as contradictions emerged.

After most of the studies had been completed, the Ministry of Public Works organized a second seminar to discuss the main conclusions. This time the range of participants was even broader, including other donors and groups of stakeholders which had been identified during the studies. Three days of intense and open discussion took place from 8 a.m. until 10 p.m. Study conclusions concerning privatization and price regulation were modified in what was by this time a well informed policy debate. One local consultant helped work toward consensus; meanwhile, a foreign consultant worked to synthesize the debate and produce the final strategy.

After the government issued its draft strategy paper, a donor roundtable was held for a final debate involving eight ministers, members of the National Assembly, donors, and consultants. The participatory process led to recommendations that were genuinely distinct from those the Bank and the government would have produced. Yet the strength of the consensus in Benin has provided such momentum that the strategy conclusions have remained intact through the entire Bank review process.
3. P-CESW: The Experience of the Bank

Procedures for carrying out any form of CESW are defined by OD 2.00. The OD requires a pre-mission issues paper, described as a blueprint for the work, which includes justification for the task, key issues to be raised, the commitment of the government to the effort, the analytic framework and methodology to be used, a time schedule, and a statement of resources to be deployed. A draft outline and the format for key tables may be attached. The OD specifies how decisions at the issues paper review meeting are approved and integrated, and indicates that "shortly after its return, the mission should present its key findings...." The OD does not provide guidance on what happens between departure and return from mission. The draft Green Cover report is later submitted to and discussed with the government and revisions may be made accordingly.

The OD, in other words, leaves maximum creativity in the hands of TMs for deciding how to do CESW. TMs who have carried out P-CESW have therefore been able to be creative and collaborative, incorporating experiences from project work or other policy and research environments in which they have worked in a style of open inquiry and collegiality. The following sections track this experience through all the steps the TMs take to do their work. What follows is a composite portrait of the P-CESW record to date. No single piece of CESW has been participatory at every stage and because P-CESW is a recent phenomenon, the various forms it has taken are described here in some detail.

Steps to P-CESW

Steps involved in P-CESW parallel steps in all CESW. They may be characterized as working with the broadest appropriate range of stakeholders to:

- establish participatory environments in which to do the work;
- define the issues and set the questions for analysis;
- gather data and do the analysis;
- review results; and
- decide strategy and priorities.

Clearly, earlier and more consistent participation will have an impact on the agenda, the results, and the policy choices which follow. Effective CESW, as two TMs make clear in a recent note, not only "correctly diagnoses problems, but ... inspires and mobilizes local actors to act accordingly" (Mazurelle and Razzaz). Participation is the key to that effectiveness.

Establishing a Participatory Environment

Borrower enthusiasm makes it easier

In some cases, participation has been more of a response to local conditions than a proactive choice of the Bank. For example, work has been done in highly decentralized environments in
which the authorities recognize the limits of their own control and encourage the CESW exercise to gather materials broadly. Perhaps the most noteworthy of these experiences has been in the recent CEM for Eritrea, where a new state is seeking self knowledge through committed consultation with local communities that helped to create it during a long secession struggle. In a different way, after a decade of nonparticipatory Bank reports, Africans demanded participation in the Africa LTPS (Agarwala, 1993). A third case is from Indonesia, where the decentralized district roads program requires disclosure and community consultation under broader guidelines for regional development. Sector analysis of rural roads was inserted into this existing format and the participatory elements deepened the emphasis on training people in consultative methods.

Box 4
Participation in the Long-Term Perspective Study for Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth, A Long-Term Perspective Study (1989) was the last in a series of five reports on Africa published by the World Bank in the 1980s. What distinguished this report from the earlier ones was not only its broad scope and time horizon but also the participatory process by which it was organized. More than 300 people were consulted, of whom about two-thirds were Africans, including government officials, academics, development professionals, and representatives of the private sector and NGOs.

The Bank's LTPS team made visits to fourteen African countries during a six-month period. During the trips, a group of LTPS African Resident Advisors was identified from among former high-level officials, academics, and development professionals. These were the major sources of background papers, country perspectives, inputs to the LTPS themes, reactions to the LTPS draft, and success stories. Through the World Bank office for liaison with the NGO community, the draft LTPS was circulated to a large number of NGO representatives. Drafts were also discussed at conferences and meetings of NGOs held outside of Africa.

A five-day Workshop on Regional Integration and Cooperation was held at the Bank, bringing together more than three dozen participants from wide-ranging backgrounds including history, political science, economics, law, journalism, banking, business, and public service. The LTPS chapter on regional integration and cooperation drew heavily on the issues and themes discussed at this workshop. A few months later, in December 1988, the Arusha Conference brought together African contributors to the LTPS with donors and others to obtain input on whether the draft report was on the “right track,” its analysis valid and its vision consistent with the Africans' long-term perspective for Africa. Following the conference, the LTPS team revised the draft report to reflect both the consensus and disagreement expressed by participants.

As a result of the participatory process, and particularly the visits made to Africa by the LTPS team, the final report reflected some significant departures from traditional World Bank views. This was particularly true concerning the efficacy of adjustment lending in Africa. As participants in the process shared their views and experiences, the authors of the LTPS came to a new realization of the basic problems of African societies, the depth of the crisis, and the possibility of an alternative explanation to problems the continents faces. In short, what the LTPS team heard and saw in Africa through the participatory process led it away from the adjustment “optimism” of the mid-1980s and toward a look beyond adjustment. The final report's content and messages reflected the new perspective gained through the process.

As a result, the LTPS study elicited strong support from the Africans, donor and NGO communities, and UN and African regional organizations (Ramgopal Agarwala 1993).
Overcoming Borrower Skepticism

More frequently, Bank staff have sought wider participation than the government partner expects. In Guinea, officials in the Health Ministry were startled that the TM wished to consult broadly in the countryside to develop a strategy for the sector. Consultations with "illiterate villagers" were at first viewed as a complete waste of time. Similarly, for the Morocco WID analysis, government leaders were quite unused to feedback from below. They thought that working with NGOs was undesirable and that participatory rural appraisal involving women in the countryside would be impossible. In both countries, persistent TMs supported by influential local contacts, were able to build the case for participation. In each of these two countries, ministers were pleasantly surprised and eventually came to applaud the benefits of participatory methods.

As experience among TMs grows in a given country, they make substantial contacts beyond the government. Consequently, their knowledge of government effectiveness in the sector increases due to discussions with national staff at headquarters and in local resident missions, their acquaintance with local experts in their own fields, and their field work outside the office. Armed with this knowledge, TMs can formulate their justifications to government of the need to hear, and to analyze formally, the voices of people outside the ministries. The worldwide movement toward democratization, the extension of civil society, and the opening of communication and criticism also foster P-CESW. All this ferment provides circumstances that TMs can leverage to help persuade reluctant counterparts that participatory work will put them in the forefront of positive developments in their countries.

Which Stakeholders Become Involved?

Once there is government commitment to carrying out CESW in a participatory manner, the first order of business is to determine which stakeholders to invite into the dialogue. Typically, identifying stakeholders is a fairly informal process. The Uganda participatory poverty assessment, the Morocco WID study, and others began with some obviously interested parties; then the number of individuals and groups that were included snowballed. For the Africa LIPS, names of Africans across the continent who might be consulted were provided by the Bank's resident representatives, the senior advisors that the TMs recruited, other development organizations, and long-term Bank partners. Sometimes the informal process has pitfalls. For the Togo study on the informal sector, efforts to identify a wide range of stakeholders led the team to the Chamber of Commerce and to the Conseil des Métiers, the latter said to be a representative of informal sector groupings. Neither proved to be significantly representative of the sectors for which it was believed to speak. To remedy this deficiency, a number of different individual trade groups were invited to participate.

Toward Systematic Involvement of Relevant Stakeholders

Better practice involves more deliberate networking. For the 1985 Guinea Health study, the TM and four ministry department heads went into the field to help communities create committees of local villagers, including women, to reflect upon previous work of the Bank (in part because there were few NGOs at the time). Alternatively, the Sri Lanka NEAP team networked widely at a later stage once a draft was available. The team convened an open public meeting, as is standard under environmental procedures. The TM and the specialists working on the NEAP task forces developed a list of relevant NGOs and other stakeholders, but they also advertised the meeting in the newspaper. Translations of the draft NEAP summary in both local languages, and the availability of translators at the meeting, increased the accessibility of the occasion to small NGOs and community groups as well as to the better known organizations.
In the Brazil Women’s Reproductive Health subsector analysis, the TM used typical networking strategies but made sure that a broad range of perspectives was covered. The inclusion of an “opposition” NGO made the work potentially less comfortable, but in the end barriers were broken down on both sides and an environment was created for further collaboration. The Benin Transport Sector Strategy provides the clearest case of trying to incorporate all the interests in the sector. Representatives of public and private segments of the different transport modes, the unions, and the government and the National Assembly, were invited into the debate. However, unorganized users were omitted. There is no sure way, perhaps no way at all, to ensure that voices representative of all positions in a sector (and in proportional strength) will be heard. But there is a vast terrain open for the careful selection of appropriate interlocutors, chosen not by the Bank but by local experts and influential people, before the question of full participation is tested to its limits.

As can be seen from these brief examples, TMs for regional and subsectoral analyses, transport and health sectors, CEMs and the newest kinds of studies in the Bank, all have found ways to build participatory environments within which their work was carried out.

Identifying the Questions

Ongoing Versus New Forms of CESW

Agendas for CESW are set in a number of ways. Ongoing CESW is conducted without much fanfare, in intermittent collaboration with acknowledged partners in the borrower country. An increasing amount of CESW, however, is new, either because a special area of the economy or a subsector is examined for the first time (for example, irrigated agriculture, the metals industry, or housing reform), or because the entire CESW exercise is of a new type, such as poverty, gender, or environment reviews. It is always appropriate to consult early, and broadly, before the issues paper fixes the work program for the CESW exercise. It is especially advantageous to do so for innovative analyses when significant changes occur in the political economy, or when new types of questions (such as privatization, agricultural research orientations, or educational reform) are being asked of existing sectors of the economy.

Consultation for Agenda Building

Early and broad consultation to set the agenda can take a variety of forms. For example, in the Brazil agriculture study, first rate agricultural economists were recruited for the study team and a further panel of Brazilian experts was convened for a two-day issues workshop (and then again for a discussion of the first draft). For the Africa LTPS, consultation with African development specialists began when there was only an outline for the proposed report. The report team then commissioned more than fifty papers from specialists and scholars (mostly from Africa) as it was itself developing a “sub-zero draft” of the study. The draft was discussed in a score of workshops in fourteen countries before it proceeded to later stages. All this consultation resulted in a number of central themes highlighted in the report that otherwise might not have appeared at all. A key example was that the consultative process elicited issues about the role of the state and the nature of the governing elites. Working by itself, the Bank often avoids such issues, referring to the requirement for nonpartisanship in its Articles of Agreement. But in workshops and open meetings, political questions are likely to be raised very early, and the Bank can attune itself to the tenor of the ensuing debate. Raising such delicate issues, and discovering new and unanticipated ones, is a major improvement offered by participatory approaches to CESW.

The journées de réflexion in Senegal and Mali took the question of agenda setting even further “upstream” by giving expression to frustration in the Bank/borrower relationship. The need to write a new country development
Participation in Country Economic and Sector Work

Box 5
Days of Reflection in Senegal

During an April 1991 visit to Senegal, in response to expressions of frustration about the state of the Bank/Senegal partnership, Katherine Marshall, then Director of the Sahel Department, initiated a process of listening and learning between Bank staff and representatives of the Government of Senegal. The resulting meeting became known as the *journées de réflexion*, or days of reflection. The following is drawn from a report she wrote about the meeting.

I suggested a retreat-style, intimate, brainstorming meeting, to try to refocus the dialogue and program on medium and long term development issues. Immediate issues, conditionality and, above all, the scheduling of financial flows from the Bank, were to be banned from the discussion; and I committed the Bank to listen and try to understand the Senegalese perspectives better. It was clearly understood that there was an element of artificiality here and we would necessarily come back to a negotiating mode, but the idea of a retreat nonetheless found virtually instant favor. The President enthusiastically agreed to the proposal and directed the Prime Minister to follow through.

Two things soon became clear, as we started planning for the event. First, the Senegalese and the Bank had radically different images of what the meeting should be: the Senegalese tended toward a structured "show", while we sought informality in a small and intimate but high level group. Second, the Senegalese distrusted virtually any suggestion that came from the Bank. Wisely, the Bank team followed the rules of the game, leaving decisions on organization squarely in the hands of the Senegalese. I note that this is not a habitual situation for us as Bank staff, and it was not one we found comfortable or comforting, not least because we simply did not know what was happening.

The meeting started with a staged opening ceremony, television cameras and all. And, incredibly, the Prime Minister and every minister with a development related portfolio attended throughout three long days, including one meeting stretching to 3.00 am. For all our promises to listen, we had not really expected to sit in formal meetings for a total of some 32 hours without saying a peep. After all, it was billed as a Bank/government seminar, and we had a large team present, full of knowledge and ideas. As a pattern of long speeches and successive ministerial interventions emerged, our team became restive, bursting with ideas, rejoinders, facts. We heard much that we did not like, much that scared us, and much that was patently wrong in our terms. Nonetheless, we listened.

The listening mode entailed two parts in each session: first, quite rapt attention, note taking and corridor engagement of debate; this was followed by summaries, with me as spokesman, at the end of each session, distilling what we had heard, noting issues we saw, and raising questions. This is the classic technique which shows that a message has been heard and, in a tense dialogue, it has vital importance. It requires great patience, imagination to recast messages, and some luck. Here, it worked well.

The outcome was unexpected, rather extraordinary, and very educational for the Bank team. After two and a half days of listening, we earned a right to be heard and listened to. Our team's interventions, when at last they came, generated spontaneous applause, appeals for more, enthusiastic suggestions for follow-up dialogue, and even indignant questions as to why we had said so little before. We emerged with a better understanding of the government's real views and of the varying views within Senegal. The tone as the meeting concluded was positive, with doors of communication open, and energy and excitement mobilized around themes of what could be done, rather than the pervasive theme of what could not that we had heard before.
strategy paper provided the opportunity to redefine the partnership between Bank and borrower. In each country, virtually the entire cabinet of the government, along with almost all of the country management team from the Bank, retreated from their offices to a quieter setting for several days of discussion. In Senegal, a joint team set the agenda, but the Bank staff declined the lead role. What emerged was a Senegalese “show,” but one that reflected many of the Bank’s key concerns. In Mali there was an early draft paper on policy options from the Bank, but essentially the dialogue started from scratch. In both cases the deliberations touched on cultural and political points not normally raised in Bank discussions. While there was (in Katherine Marshall’s word), more need to “de-Satanize” the Bank in Senegal than in Mali, clearing the air was a vital outcome of each session. One observer of the Senegalese journées suggests that the “frankness mixed with the enthusiasm” led to “a kind of emotional catharsis” that may have been more important than any progress made on specific issues (Klitgaard, 1992).

Expanding the Consultations

A frequently used method for broadening the agenda is to involve systematically the borrower country’s research community. Some countries, like Colombia and Mexico, long ago persuaded the Bank to use only local consultants for Bank work. Using local consultants from the professional community, however, does not constitute a participatory approach. Engaging an array of stakeholders in a sector, and immersing the Bank’s inquiry in the pool of national debate over the issues in question, does constitute participation.

The Chile Social Sector study began with the conviction that CESW in a relatively complex society required drawing on the huge pool of national expertise. An initial pre-issues paper was drafted, after which consultation with government and other stakeholders sought out a wide array of social sector researchers, fifteen of whom were commissioned to write issues papers. The papers informed the writing of the sector review, and at least four other outcomes also followed. The Bank raised its profile as an honest broker in a difficult time (during the Pinochet government); further research to clarify small issues was added to prior work with a minimum of delay; the national research environment opened up as Chilean researchers shared data sets with one another that were previously available only to government; and a much wider network of the primary researchers’ colleagues and contacts was drawn upon in a natural and efficient way. Similarly, the Venezuela Health Sector Review also was defined jointly with government, and of fifteen consultants contracted to contribute papers, eleven were paid with the government’s own funds.

In other cases, the agenda is built with stakeholders such as development assistance organizations or NGOs. For the NGOs in the health and welfare subsector review in India, the network of active stakeholders was not readily apparent at the outset. In order to identify the range of NGOs to invite to a workshop and the issues to be presented, the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare solicited preliminary problem statements from NGOs. For the CEM for Eritrea, it was agreed that the agenda would incorporate separate Bank and government objectives, with the national team preparing their own final product so that it could respond to the team’s particular needs. The Bank’s study did not reflect its own agenda only, however, as more than sixty donors and NGOs cooperated financially and operationally to do a common report. Labor unions, social service NGOs, private business people, and others also have been consultative partners as the agenda for particular CESW is developed.

Must Issues Be Lost?

Broadening the agenda setting can lead to the loss of some important areas for analysis even as it identifies areas not previously considered by the Bank. Reflecting on her experience in
Senegal, Katherine Marshall has written that she "was struck that issues of poverty alleviation, environment and the role of women emerged rarely and quite marginally. They did not appear to be central to the program goals..." Among the more than 300 workshop participants and consultants for the Africa LTPS, less than 10 percent were women. In some cases more visceral or broad ranging issues may be raised by stakeholders, while detailed economic analysis may have to be done by the Bank or its consultants. In any case, the Bank remains a stakeholder in the work and often injects issues that it thinks important.

**Acknowledging Diversity**

"Unsafe" as well as "safe" stakeholders should be consulted. The Brazil Women's Reproductive Health study brought in, at a later stage, NGOs known to be skeptical of the Bank to debate a white cover report, and convinced them that the debate was a worthwhile one in which they should remain as players. For the health and family welfare study in India, a plan of action was prepared and then mailed to NGOs in preparation for a single workshop. On the first day, the NGOs collectively rejected the plan of action and threatened noncooperation. A respected facilitator saved the day by suggesting that the goal of the first stage of the workshop should be the evolution of an acceptable plan.

As P-CESW is done more often, it is obvious that conflicting views will be brought to the table at each step in the process. In fact, the more stakeholder diversity is ensured, the more differences of view must be included. Issues on which parties diverge may add to the number of items on which analysis is carried out, and then the potentially conflicting results may all be presented for subsequent reflection. The ensuing debate may be informed better on all sides than if the alternatives had not been raised at the earlier stages. Such has been the experience of the Bank in consulting widely with NGOs in recent years in the preparation of both of the forest and the water policy papers.

As a result, a tighter collaboration has developed between NGOs and the Bank for future work, even when there was tangible skepticism on both sides at the outset.

**Participatory Data Gathering and Analysis**

In practice, as the agenda is set, so are the strategies about data gathering. The intellectual, organizational, or methodological biases of researchers, NGOs, and planning departments will be reflected in the CESW contributions they are making. Task managers in the Bank should be aware of these biases, and should articulate a strategy to take advantage of the strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches they will encounter. Researchers and NGOs, to take two examples, nearly always can be counted on to emphasize the value of more detailed research or greater reliance on NGO participation.

**Participatory Data Gathering**

There have been several kinds of data gathering strategies to increase the diversity of stakeholder voices. A task force of local experts is one mechanism that has been used to expand the stakeholder presence in CESW debates. For example, a task force of experts, mostly Sri Lankan but with some resident foreigners, was convened for the Sri Lanka NEAP and a parallel group was put together for the Brazil Women's Reproductive Health review.

A second strategy is to convene a series of retreats and workshops. Sometimes there is just one general roundtable which treats a draft prepared in advance. However, workshops at several stages of the work program encourage participants to feel that their contributions matter (even if successive workshops are with different sets of people or organizations) and they are each likely to give greater focus to their work. Again the Africa LTPS is the most substantial (and expensive) example, with more than twenty workshops in North America, Europe, and Africa. On a smaller scale, the Morocco WID exercise has held two
Experience of the Bank

workshops: the first, involving sixty people representing various stakeholders, focused on agenda setting; a large second workshop was run largely by the participants, who set the themes for a broad scale social survey.

A third approach, contracting different types of local consultants to write chapters or issues papers, has been used successfully in a number of cases, notably in the Chile Social Sector review and the Brazil Women's Reproductive Health study. While, in the abstract, consultants should have no stake in the outcomes of their technical work, in practice, local consultants are likely to be involved heavily as stakeholders in the sector in question. In Brazil, the experts included researchers and representatives of NGOs; in Chile, university researchers wrote papers, but representatives of policy organizations, NGOs, unions, and trade associations also were consulted. Subdividing the work program and apportioning it to different stakeholders ensures that their contributions will be more thorough than if they simply were to interview subjects or attendees of conferences. The dozens of papers for the Africa LTPS, and the many papers subcontracted as lump sum products for the two primary contractors of the Venezuelan Health Sector Review, were just such strategic choices. They also helped spread the risk of non-performance on any given assignment. Some current poverty assessments are using the same techniques.

In a few cases, more intensive procedures have been adopted by TMs to sound out the contributions of people across a wider range of the society. For the Guinea health sector review, the TM and Health Ministry officials set up numerous community committees, explaining to local administrators that they wanted to cross check the findings of the World Bank report. The team set criteria for committee composition. There was some hesitation about including one woman on each committee, but local leaders acceded to the demand that they do so. Following visits to rural areas, the team verified the robustness of the committees selected. Committee representatives and others were then invited to a two-day workshop to discuss the report findings. There, participants agreed that more information was necessary on some topics, and that others had been neglected. A team of consultants integrated these observations into an additional work program for the review.

The Morocco WID study has carried out extensive field interviewing of women based on an interview guide developed by the participatory team. The Eritrea CEM, has used participatory poverty assessment techniques in 90 communities to gather data relevant to the description of the rural economy. Education sector reviews in Madagascar and elsewhere also have used fieldwork. In an increasing number of countries, longitudinal sector research done at sentinel sites or by sector observatories is, or will be, available for routine use in CESW. For this fieldwork, the range of tools described in other papers in this series is useful. The choice of tools depends on the sector and the depth of the study.

Reviewing Results and Deciding Sector Strategy

Deciding Who Is Right

How can evidence gained by participatory methods be weighed? In almost all CESW, at least some information will be highly technical and thus developed by experts even if the agenda for their work is set by consensus. The more technical the material, the more difficult it is to subject it to consultative review. Generally, the TM and the in-country team must judge the acceptability and relevance of the results generated. As in any public debate, technicians should be urged to present their conclusions and recommendations in formats that lay people can understand. Alternatives that have been rejected should be set out, with the full reasons for doing so, so that stakeholders retain confidence in the exercise.

Recognizing the Potential for Bias

Expert bias and public pressure are two recurring problems in participatory work. On the
Participation in Country Economic and Sector Work

Box 6
Participation in Developed Countries

The balance between expert knowledge, public participation, and "ownership" of the results may be seen in the work of Royal Commissions in Canada or the United Kingdom, or in National Commissions in the United States. Usually these commissions are established for one legislative issue, such as social violence, new reproductive technologies, or incomes and wages. They entail many of the methods reviewed in this chapter: workshops to set commission agendas; the contracting of extensive studies; consultation with a broad array of organizational, individual, political and intellectual stakeholders at several stages in the process and, often, public hearings. The openness of the process encourages all parties to establish high degrees of consensus on the issues in question, but the diversity of stakeholder opinions may be represented in the published documents.

Commission recommendations emerge from this process of open consultation as refined by technical members of the commission staff and by members of the commission who are themselves usually representative of diverse stakeholders. These recommendations usually are not binding. Different stakeholders may implement different recommendations, and key policy issues may still be subjected to legislative debate.

Cases of participatory CESW in the Bank share many of the characteristics of this extended process.

One hand, the gravity with which experts present their conclusions, the technical nature of their work, and the language they use often lead policymakers and the public to believe them over stakeholders who are less articulate. On the other hand, expressions of heavy moral indignation, or the appearance of crowds of people affected by a given policy, can sway judgment in the direction of superficial solutions to structural problems in a sector, the economy or the whole society. At the end of the day, if the team convened for the task is broadly representative, it has the best chance of reaching a consensus that will sway the borrower and the Bank. The India health and family welfare study on strengthening the role of NGOs in these social sectors achieved this consensus by having the NGO forum it convened debate until agreement was reached. Clearly, all policy choices, whether presented as agreed upon in the study or made afterward, must be the responsibility of the borrower if the Bank is not to serve as a scapegoat for what befalls the stakeholders in the sector or the nation.

Other biases can also creep in. In the Benin Poverty Assessment, for example, the TM enthusiastically consulted local NGOs at the outset and in the data gathering stage. Recognizing in advance, however, that the NGOs were likely to reject parts of the draft strategy that did not expand the roles for NGOs, she limited the NGOs' role in formulating the conclusions of the report. This dilemma is not uncommon where the principal nongovernmental participants in the debate are NGOs that are over represented in the debate, and thus may exert too much weight in the final stages. A more direct way out of this dilemma is to prepare multiple levels of involvement to ensure more broadly representative conclusions. The draft consultant's report to the Brazil Women's Reproductive Health subsector study was sent to a diverse, eight-member advisory committee and then to government ministries for additional comments. This method of review also addressed Bank concerns for confidentiality of the provisional final drafts.

Dissemination Strategies

Broad dissemination is the next crucial step in P-CESW. Translation into the national language is warranted in nearly every case. In the Brazil agriculture sector study, translation into
Portuguese facilitated understanding and ownership across many ministries. There may be some cases where it is important to translate the report into several languages. This could be appropriate, for example, where a subsector is located in a particular region of a multilingual country, or where the main stakeholders in a sector do not speak the national language. It may be wise to hold regional seminars, or to do other forms of outreach to inform stakeholders about the conclusions of the study, especially where they are not likely to acquire or read a written document. As the Benin Transport Sector study shows, developing a consensus through P-CESW also is likely to facilitate acceptance of the report by the Bank and others in the donor community. In the Brazil agriculture sector study, the CESW team is taking the report’s findings to research seminars and to meetings with agricultural sector stakeholders in an effort to continue consensus building on the basic parameters of the sector.

The Bank’s Responsibility

For large sectors and in rapidly growing economies, the Bank’s relative role as a lender is diminishing. Borrowers are gaining stronger ability and confidence in initiating and informing their own policy debates. In these circumstances, the Bank’s comparative advantage still lies in providing a global frame of reference on a multitude of questions. In this evolution, the Bank now has a special role to play based on its worldwide experience of what works in building the will and the capacity for transparent, participatory analysis. By extending its own commitment to P-CESW, the Bank can continue to lead the way toward the kinds of policymaking processes that will serve its borrowers best by being developed in an atmosphere of open communication and debate.
4. Do's and Don'ts for Task Managers

A number of lessons can be gleaned from the experiences of Bank staff in conducting P-CESW. Some relate to how the Bank needs to change to enhance the participatory process. This section focuses on lessons relevant to task managers within the current culture of the Bank.

Do's

* Prepare for extra management work up front. Whether it is done by the Bank or by borrowers, devolving more of the substantive work requires added administrative and logistical energy up front. Bringing country analysts to Washington to begin collaboration at the inception of the CESW process can add burdens of settling newcomers into work and living routines with all that implies (from acquiring office space to ensuring peace of mind). Collaborating with borrowers can slow down the contracting process. In the Venezuela Health Sector Review, most of the local

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It is impossible to estimate with any accuracy the added net costs and gains of doing P-CESW. Any given piece of work runs into various delays, and every strategy looks less expensive at the outset than it turns out to be. Some types of CESW are new and cost averages are not established for them easily. A few task managers have been able to express some rough estimates of how the participatory process affected their time and budgets:

- The Eritrea CEM is the first for the country, so it would have taken longer in any case than subsequent ones probably will. Both the TM's input of time and the duration of the study may have been about 30 percent longer because of the participatory process.

- The study of the role of NGOs in India's health and welfare program was subject to a delay of about a year because of a contracting problem with the prime agency. The TM's total time input probably was not increased.

- The Chile Social Sector review took about 25 percent less time to complete than the average sector study, primarily because local consultants were able to work more quickly than if foreign consultants had made periodic visits. The TM's own time input was about average for a sector report.

- The TM for the Brazil Women's Reproductive Health study also agrees that the process was made quicker by using local consultants. On the other hand, the contracts of local Venezuelan consultants were delayed by the government for four to eight months. Overall, the duration of the study was "typical."

- The Benin Transport Sector Strategy took a year longer than other, nonparticipatory sector studies. Extra time inputs from the TM were also required.
consultants being contracted by the government finished their work but withheld it pending payment on their contracts. Spreading the risks of not getting competent work by using multiple subcontractors may be wise, but it increases the transaction costs. Refraining from being too directive means that the reports submitted may use formats and language that hinder marketing the ideas in the Bank; rewriting takes additional time. Adding partners of whatever sort increases the complexities of review. Task managers interviewed stress that such complex processes result in a better product, but they agree that there are also added costs.

**Develop the support of your manager.** This may not be easy, but it is absolutely vital. Calculating the costs and the gains in advance, and demonstrating the feasibility of doing P-CESW by using other successful examples, will help.

**Share your experience.** Write up your own experiences along the way so that others can use them. Too often, a paragraph in the introduction to a CESW report acknowledging consultation and collaboration masks a rich experience that should be shared with your peers.

**Listen.** Go in with an open mind. Be humble. It is not easy for Bank staff to take a back seat in discussions, especially if “wrong” paths seem to be looming or uninformed criticism arises. Nonetheless, without an open mind you will not be able to really hear and incorporate what is being said. Don’t assume, and don’t let your colleagues from the Bank assume, that their answers are the correct ones. They may be elegant constructions built on what the Bank knows, but much more knowledge will come your way if you don’t impede its flow. This caveat extends especially to workshop strategy. Professional, or at least neutral, facilitators should always chair workshops and roundtables so that the Bank team can play its stakeholder role.

**Fit the style of participation to the country.** Working with local consultants yielded excellent results in Chile, but in the Benin Transport Sector Strategy it was important to team foreign consultants with local ones to enhance technical capability. The TM for Eritrea doubted that a nonparticipatory approach would have worked, since Eritrea is a country where, so far, power is flowing from the bottom upward.

**Identify stakeholders and resources for P-CESW early on.** The search for relevant stakeholders must begin early in the P-CESW exercise. Community based organizations, professional groups, religious leaders, and individuals who are sometimes the linchpins of whole sectors (at least in smaller countries) are all infrequent partners of the Bank’s work. Yet omitting contact with some may sour their willingness to be consulted after others are already at the table. Similarly, smooth work schedules for P-CESW depend on identifying researchers, facilitators, and participation specialists early in the effort, lest they be unfamiliar with the work when they are needed, or worse, simply unavailable.

**Be aware of cultural, political, and linguistic knowledge, interests, and sensitivities.** In Brazil, consultation and collaboration masks a rich experience that should be shared with your advisory board for the Women’s Reproductive Health study was instrumental in creating an accurate picture of the sector. Sri Lanka’s NEAP task force members helped avoid problems at the public conference by identifying powerful NGOs with political agendas beforehand. As a result, the TM was able to encourage smaller, apolitical NGOs to play a fuller role than they otherwise might have. Beninois members of the transport sector review team were able to advise on cultural issues of particular concern to the review, such as the importance of consensus and of suggesting solutions whenever offering criticism. Local team members are vital to every element of the process of getting the CESW completed in order to ensure fair representation of diverse opinions, to keep a dialogue from being hijacked by powerful or vocal parties, and to contextualize the discussion in current realities.

**Use existing structures of participation and systems of communication.** The Kabupaten
roads program, now entering its fifth phase, has tapped into existing Indonesian methods of local community consultation, and has, in fact, enhanced them. To the contrary, in Togo, coordinators were hired to facilitate communication within the education sector, but only short circuited the existing communications channels between the relevant ministerial offices and the field staff by appearing to go around them. In Chile, a judicious selection of local consultants for the review of the social sectors had multiplier effects, as communications networks among researchers were mobilized to contribute to the work. In urban sector work in South Africa, the effort to reach out to local civic associations has tapped a rich vein of existing experience, but it has also required patient "translating" between the immediate action orientations of the local workers and the need for generalizing for the sector analysis.

Be prepared for some degree of failure. When CESW is being done in a participatory manner, the result may not be as clean as TMs would like. On most issues today, the Bank's view is no longer (if it ever was) the only view of the situation. In the Venezuela WID review, it was agreed that the survey instrument was not very elegant and the results were therefore messy. Nonetheless, the participatory process, the TM argues, allowed for more institution building, created more ownership, and resulted in a more sustainable process than might otherwise have occurred if the Bank had stepped in to perfect the process. In the journées de réflexion, some issues were not raised at all, and others that were very important got short shrift, but the process revitalized the partnership between the Bank and its borrower anyway.

Remember that you are a participant, too. The Bank has a number of roles to play in each piece of CESW. An important one is as a self-conscious participant. Ideas of ownership and contribution apply to the Bank, as does the notion that the Bank is not a neutral party, given the history of its own involvement in whatever issue or sector is under review. The Bank team certainly needs to argue its own positions, but from a posture of humility, recognizing that it is not a stakeholder superior to all the others.

Stay open to continually learning lessons and incorporate them into your work. For example:

- Translate the work into local languages where necessary;
- Be sure that ethnic minorities, women, the landless, and other normally voiceless people are represented, and that silent-but-powerful stakeholders are brought fully into the discussion so that their interests can be given due account;
- Pay local consultants for their time, even if they are only reviewing a draft of a study. Remember, while it is an honor to be included, it takes time to do a good job;
- Be flexible in every way, except in the commitment to extend the range of feedback that clients give to the Bank.

Don’ts

Don’t make assumptions on who might or might not make legitimate contributions to policy or strategy matters. It is easy to assume that rural community dwellers or urban service workers cannot make policy, that NGOs are too parochial in their concerns, or that senior officials in a ministry see things more clearly than junior ones. Just as "Groupware" focus group technology within the Bank is separating the ideas presented from their authors by putting their points onto a common screen, so it is wise to weigh the policy idea and not its source. People who have widely varying stakes in a given sector (intellectual analysts, consumers, repairmen, the families of primary workers) all might have hard won views of sector issues or impacts for which policy makers have very little insight.

Don’t panic. Most TMs agree that using participation in developing sector or country strategy is risky and sometimes frightening. They call it
Do's and Don'ts for Task Managers

"messy" and "full of conflict," and warn colleagues to expect the Bank to be criticized roundly. Without a good facilitator, the India health and family welfare workshop might have failed, but with the Bank holding back and not taking the chair, participants worked through their opposition and arrived at a stronger product. Katherine Marshall's lessons from Senegal are important to remember in P-CESW: "Lesson Number 1: Murphy's Law need not always apply. Lesson Number 2: Opening up debate, even in a large and unwieldy forum, is an option and can succeed. Lesson Number 3: Things can work out even with the Bank in the far back of the bus."

Don't let down your guard. Participation certainly does not mean relaxing standards or safeguards. Involving a variety of nontraditional colleagues in sector work puts extra emphasis on having clear and tight terms of reference for studies. Laxness in enforcing them, and inferior product delivery, only will persuade Bank skeptics that the effort at participation is not worthwhile. Similarly, P-CESW teams and TMs must beware of coopting local interest groups. If independent stakeholders in a sector merely tell the Bank what it wants to hear, both the CESW and the local partners are compromised, immediately and for the future.

Conclusion

Participatory CESW is in its infancy at the Bank. The social sectors, especially health and poverty assessments but also education, have made deeper forays into participatory CESW than other types of work. Rather surprisingly, however, participatory efforts have been made as well in country strategy work, transport analyses, and a major regional study. There is no neat set of boundaries to this work, and no one set of tools or one set of categories that will fit all the types of P-CESW that will take place. There is not a coherent set of activities like social forestry or slum upgrading. The lessons drawn from the Bank's experience to date will need to be revised as cases accumulate.

The main message of this paper is that P-CESW is both feasible and valuable. It is not only fully consistent with the Bank's growing posture of transparent operations and increased disclosure, but it can enhance the Bank's status on these issues rapidly because CESW itself is such a crucial part of the Bank's comparative advantage as an analytical institution. Thus, good P-CESW will have a multiplier effect that far outweighs the small additional costs of doing CESW this way.
Annex: Key World Bank Contact Persons for Reports Cited

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Maurizia Tovo, AF4PH

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Bernard Peccoud, AF4IN

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Malcolm Bale, LA1NR
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