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Mapping Political Context

A Toolkit for Civil Society
Organisations

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Mapping Political Context:
A Toolkit for Civil Society Organisations

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Executive Summary

This toolkit describes a range of tools that CSOs might use to understand and map political context, in order to engage more effectively in policy processes.

Policy is the result of interactions among different organisations about what course of action should be taken. The sum of these interactions constitutes the policy process. And the policy process – the interactions among organisations – is part of a wider environment, or context.

Political context includes aspects such as the distribution of power, the range of organisations involved and their interests, and the formal and informal rules that govern the interactions among different players. Political context shapes the ways in which policy processes work. If CSOs can better understand the contexts for their actions, then they will be in a better position to devise more effective strategies, which may allow them to have more influence on policy.

This guide introduces a series of tools that have been designed to map various dimensions of political context. The tools have been selected because they cover a wide variety of political dimensions. As such, they provide a menu of different approaches to mapping political context; CSOs and others can select from this menu and make use of the tools according to their own needs.

Tools for mapping political context: dimensions considered

- **Civil Society Index (CIVICUS):** Civil society's structure, impact, environment and values
- **Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (World Bank):** Governance institutions, policies, economic management
- **Democracy and Governance Assessment (USAID):** Players, interests, resources, objectives, rules, institutional arenas
- **Drivers of Change (DFID):** Structure, agents, institutions
- **Governance Questionnaire (GTZ):** State-society relations, political system, political culture, politics and gender, economic policy and political framework of markets, international integration
- **Governance Matters (World Bank Institute):** Voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, control of corruption
- **Power Analysis (Sida):** Power and its distribution
- **Stakeholder Analysis:** Stakeholder interests and resources
- **World Governance Assessment:** Participation, decency, fairness, accountability, transparency, efficiency

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Some of the tools take the nation-state as the unit of analysis; others can be applied at any scale. Some tools focus on the mapping of power, others on the mapping of institutions, organisations and stakeholders. Some tools focus on formal institutions; others look to map informal institutions too. The tools selected also cover a great deal of ground in terms of the approach they take. Some of the tools are clearly normative, others strive for objectivity. Some work with qualitative data, others with quantitative. Some of the tools can be used quickly and inexpensively, others require large inputs of time and resources. Some are designed with a very specific purpose in mind, others are not. Some enable cross-country comparisons, others do not. In deciding which tool(s) to use, CSOs need to think carefully about the sort of mapping they are interested in. For instance, do they want to produce comparable maps of different contexts, or will a detailed map of one context be adequate for their purposes?

Each tool is presented as follows. First, each tool is described. Secondly, a brief outline is provided of how the tool works. Thirdly, an attempt is made to identify those elements of the tool that might be of particular interest to CSOs. This third section is structured in terms of three aspects for each tool: the conceptual approach and indicators; the methods employed for sourcing and collecting data; and the ways in which the tool works in terms of analysing data, presenting results, and recommending action.

Political context matters. By making selective use of the tools presented here, CSOs will be able to understand political context better, and engage more effectively in policy processes.

Introduction

Policy is the result of interactions among different organisations – with particular interests and ideas – about what course of action should be taken. The sum of these interactions constitutes the policy process. And the policy process – the interactions among organisations – is part of a wider environment, or context. Understanding context is vital to understanding and engaging more effectively in policy processes.

Political context shapes the ways in which policy processes work. To engage effectively in policy processes, civil society organisations (CSOs) and others need to understand political context. In some contexts, policymakers are keen to receive evidence and ideas from CSOs: there are established channels through which CSOs can make their inputs. In other contexts, CSOs are excluded from formal policy processes. To be effective, CSOs need to take different approaches in different contexts.

This guide describes a range of tools for understanding and mapping political context, for those hoping to engage more effectively in policy processes. The first part of the guide addresses two questions: 'what is political context and why does it matter?' and 'how can political context be mapped?', before introducing some tools for mapping political context. The second section of the guide provides information about a number of tools that can be used to map political context.

Most of the tools have been produced for a specific purpose. This guide does not suggest that CSOs use these tools strictly in the way their designers intended; in most cases this would not be sensible or practical. Rather, this guide highlights those elements of the tools that might be of interest to CSOs seeking to understand better the contexts in which they are working, and to act more effectively.

What is political context and why does it matter?

Context refers to those aspects of the world that are relevant to action: context is the arena for action. Context matters for policy for a range of interrelated reasons. First, context shapes the likelihood of change – a policy reform, for instance – taking place. Secondly, context shapes the positions and perspectives of those organisations with an interest in the policy reform. And thirdly, context shapes the effectiveness or appropriateness of different actions. In some contexts, it will be more effective to act in a certain way; in other contexts, acting in the same way would be ineffective.

Political context refers to the political aspects of the environment that are relevant to action. This includes aspects such as the distribution of power, the range of organisations involved and their interests, and the formal and informal rules that govern the interactions among different players. For development actors seeking to influence policy, political context matters because it determines the feasibility, appropriateness and effectiveness of their actions.

For CSOs seeking to influence policy and practice, context shapes the effectiveness of particular strategies. As RAPID's work has shown, the influence of CSOs on policy has been limited.[1] If CSOs can better understand the contexts for their actions, then they will be in a better position to devise more effective strategies, which may allow them to have more influence on policy (see Box 1).

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[1] Court, J., E. Mendizabal, D. Osborne and J. Young (2006) *Policy Engagement: How Civil Society Can Be More Effective*, London: ODI.

Box 1: Bridging research and policy: the importance of political context

ODI's Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) programme aims to improve the use of research and evidence in development policy and practice through research, advice and debate.

As part of this programme of work, RAPID has sought to understand better the interface between research and policy. One of the key findings has been that the crucial factor in shaping this interface – that is, shaping the extent to which research-based evidence feeds into policy processes – is political context.

RAPID's interest in political context is practical, and is based on the view that by understanding political context better – and then responding appropriately – it is possible to maximise the chances of policy influence.[2] For RAPID, political context and its impact on the research-policy interface can be understood in terms of five clusters of factors. These are:

- The macro-political context: governance and civil and political freedoms
- The specific context of policy formulation and the nature of specific policy processes
- Implementation and the institutional context within bureaucracies
- Decisive moments in the policy process
- The way policymakers think

How can political context be mapped?

The challenge of mapping political context

Mapping context is mapping that which matters. Mapping political context in order to engage more effectively in policy processes involves identifying and describing those elements of the political world – power, organisations and rules – that shape the way in which policy processes work.

The challenge is that context is highly complex and multi-dimensional. In any one place – whether that place is a country, a region, a neighbourhood or a household – there are political, social, economic and other dimensions of context. The range of dimensions that are relevant depends very much on what it is that one is trying to achieve (**purpose**), and what one's existing situation is (**position**).

In terms of **purpose,** for a CSO seeking to prevent the construction of a dam, environmental regulations may be the most important dimension of context. On the other hand, for a CSO attempting to increase media freedom, the power dynamics and personalities preventing this change may be the most important dimension.

In terms of **position,** it might be useful for an external organisation to conduct a general mapping of context that reveals the extent of institutional conflict over a proposal to construct a dam. But for a local CSO, which understands already the positions held by various stakeholders in relation to the proposed dam, such a general mapping might not be a priority.

It is clear that efforts to map context – and to select and use many of the tools included in this toolkit – must always begin with clear statements of position and purpose.

The possibility of mapping political context

The fact that context is multi-dimensional, and that the relevant dimensions of context depend very much on the purpose of action, and the position of the actor, might seem to present an intractable problem for context mapping. It is certainly a challenge, and one which may, in some circumstances, make it sensible to employ very simple and flexible tools for mapping political context (see Box 2).

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[2] Court, J. with L. Cotterrell (2006) *What Political and Institutional Context Issues Matter for Bridging Research and Policy? A Literature Review and Discussion of Data Collection Approaches*, ODI Working Paper 269, London: ODI.

Box 2: A flexible approach to mapping political context

Merilee Grindle, Professor of International Development at Harvard University, has her students carry out an exercise in developing strategy for promoting policy reform. Mapping political context is an important element of the approach.

The starting point is to produce a clear statement of the policy reform being pursued.

A second component is to produce a 'political interests map', which addresses the following issues: i) actors in policy area; ii) priority of policy area for actor; iii) actors' reasons for exerting influence in policy area; iv) actors' resources for influencing policy outcomes in policy area; v) degree of influence in policy area; vi) actual and potential alliances among actors.

A third component is to produce a circle of influence graphic which shows the position (opposition, support or undecided) of various players in relation to the proposed reform, and their capacity to influence.

A fourth component is to conduct a systematic analysis of the institutional contexts for policy reform, considering for each relevant organisational or inter-organisational arena: i) what actors have access to this arena or forum for policy discussion?; ii) what 'rules of the game' within the arena are particularly relevant to the intended policy reform; iii) what resources of power/influence are relevant in this arena?; iv) how important is this arena to the outcome of your policy reform?

A fifth component is to complete a policy process matrix to assess, for each stage of the policy process, what needs to be done to ensure the survival of the proposal for policy reform. NB: Steps four and five are about developing an influencing strategy that builds on the mapping of political context, rather than mapping political context.

In addition to these five context mapping components, Professor Grindle asks her students to develop a communications strategy, thinking carefully about the goal of such a strategy, its audience, and its key messages.

Source: Professor Merilee Grindle, personal communication.

However, many organisations have developed tools for mapping political context. In addition, the fact that these tools, designed often for a particular purpose, embody a range of approaches to mapping different dimensions of context, makes existing tools a good source of ideas and inspiration.

Maps, in their everyday usage, provide a useful analogy. For any one country, the UK for instance, there is a range of maps, which vary in scale and coverage according to the purpose for which they were designed. There are maps that cover a very small area and are suitable for navigation on foot, as well as maps that cover a larger area and provide information about, for example, the location of petrol stations. This does not make particular maps, or the practise of mapping, any less useful. It simply means that when selecting a map, or a tool for making a map, it is vital to be clear about what it is that you are intending to do.

Tools for mapping political context

With the challenges of mapping political context in mind, this guide introduces a series of tools designed to map various dimensions of political context. The tools have been selected because they cover a wide variety of political dimensions (see Box 3). As such, they provide a menu of different approaches to mapping political context; CSOs and others can select from this menu and make use of the tools according to their own needs.[3]

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[3] The World Bank's Tools for Institutional Political and Social Analysis provides a complementary source of information on tools for mapping context and policy processes. See www.worldbank.org/tips.

Box 3: Tools for mapping political context: dimensions considered

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Political context matters. Having clarified what they want to achieve, CSOs will – by making selective use of the tools presented here – be able to understand political context better, and engage more effectively in policy processes.

1. Civil Society Index (CIVICUS)

A tool for assessing and comparing civil societies, in order to strengthen them

What is the Civil Society Index?

The Civil Society Index (CSI) was developed by CIVICUS, an alliance of civil society organisations with members in over 100 countries. The goals of the CSI are to enhance the strength and sustainability of civil society and to strengthen civil society's contribution to positive social change. The strategy for contributing towards these goals is one of generating and sharing knowledge about the state of national civil societies. The index uses a standard framework to assess the health and vitality of national civil societies, and then employs a graphical device – the 'civil society diamond' – to present this information.

Figure 1: The CIVICUS Civil Society Diamond
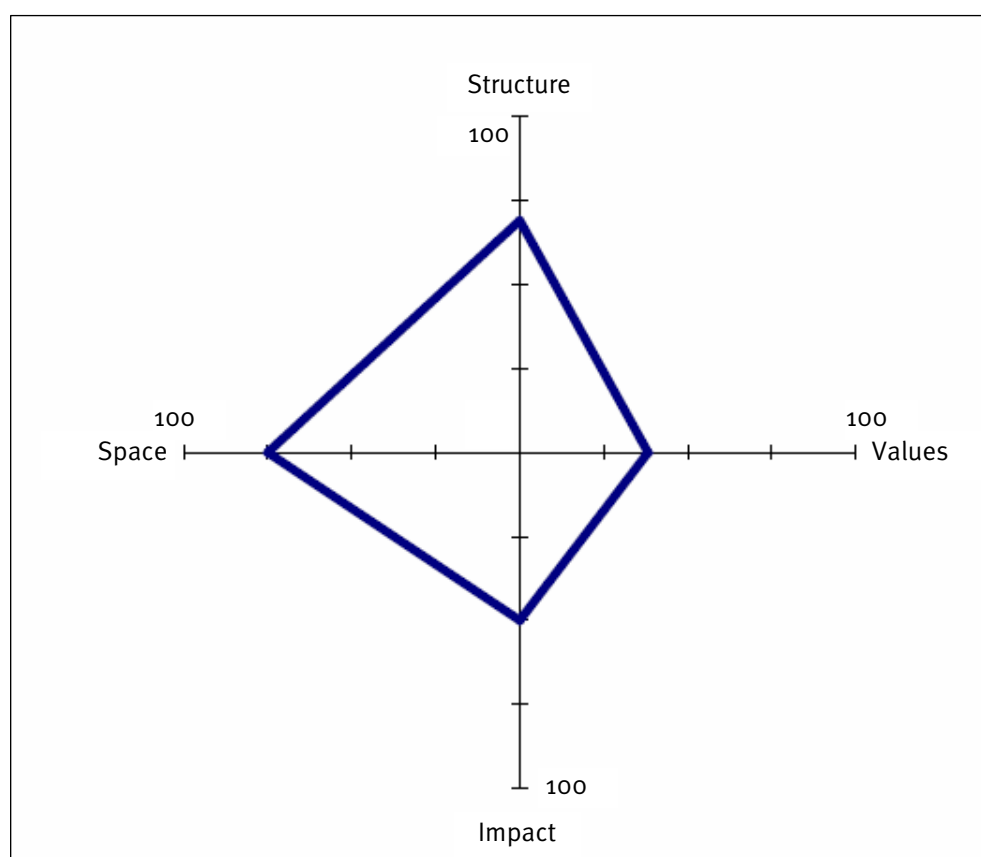
How does the Civil Society Index work?

The CSI defines civil society as 'the arena, outside of the family, the state and the market where people associate to advance common interests' (Heinrich, 2004: 13). The CSI is a tool for mapping various dimensions of this arena. By beginning with a broad definition of civil society, the CSI encourages local researchers to decide for themselves what exactly is, and is not, included within their own definition of civil society. The CSI also recognises that civil society extends beyond NGOs and that it is composed of negative and violent forces that may obstruct social progress as well as positive and peaceful forces (Heinrich, 2002).

A CSI assessment collects data on four dimensions of civil society, identified as important by CIVICUS. These dimensions are:

- **Structure:** What is the internal make-up of civil society? How large, vibrant and representative is civil society? What are the key relationships? What resources do they command?
- **Space/environment:**[4] What is the political, socioeconomic, cultural and legal environment in which civil society exists? Are these factors enabling or disabling to civil society?
- **Values:** What are the values that civil society practises and promotes?
- **Impact:** What is the impact of civil society? Is it effective in resolving social, economic and political problems, and in serving the common good?

Each dimension has a range of individual indicators scored from 0 to 3. The scores are aggregated and can be graphically represented in the form of the civil society diamond, although this process of aggregation necessarily means that some of the richness of the qualitative information is lost.

The aim is for the CSI country reports to give as rich an account as possible, without the constraint of having to quantify or score it. The CSI's designers therefore suggest a citizen jury approach to the scoring. Assessments have been led by prominent civil society organisations, which have coordinated input from a range of stakeholders – including government, business, international agencies, media and academia. The approach emphasises the importance of moving back and forth between research and analysis, and involving a range of stakeholders at all stages of the process. The CSI approach has been implemented in more than 50 countries.

Elements of the Civil Society Index

Conceptual approach and indicators

- With its focus very much on civil society, and its aim of providing both a framework for analysis and a process for building civil society, the CSI will be of considerable interest to CSOs.
- The approach taken by the CSI is to map civil society according to how close it is to being a 'healthy civil society', characterised by tolerance, human rights, gender equity, sustainable development, social justice, democracy and transparency. This approach, while open to criticism, does have the benefit of making explicit the normative stance taken.
- CSOs may find the dimensions and sub-dimensions of civil society considered by the CSI index of use in their own efforts to map context. Starting from a clear statement of purpose, CSOs could put together their own mapping tool making use of a perhaps smaller number of sub-dimensions.

Box 4: Dimensions and sub-dimensions assessed by the CSI approach

Structure: breadth and depth of citizen participation; diversity within civil society; level of organisation; inter-relations; resources.

Space/environment: political context; basic freedoms and rights; socioeconomic context; socio-cultural context; legal environment; state-civil society relations; private sector-civil society relations.

Values (of civil society): democracy; transparency; tolerance; non-violence; gender equity; poverty eradication; environmental sustainability.

Impact: influencing public policy; holding state and private corporations accountable; responding to social interests; empowering citizens; meeting societal needs.

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[4] In some applications of the CSI, 'environment' is used instead of 'space'.

Data

- The CSI approach suggests the following data sources: media reviews; stakeholder consultations; and community surveys. Such data sources may be of use to CSOs seeking to map contexts for their own purposes.

- The CSI approach is designed to be very interactive, so that the capacity of civil society is built in the process of producing a map of civil society. This provides an additional benefit of CSO involvement in CSI processes.

- The CSI approach is designed to be flexible and to encourage in-country adaptations, with an evaluation of the approach describing it as a 'contextually flexible and uniquely participatory tool' (Batliwala, 2003: 1). The loosely structured approach to mapping civil society provides a good balance between valuing country comparability and acknowledging country specificity.

Analysis, presentation and recommendations

- The careful positioning of the CSI approach is carried over into the analysis and presentation of results. On the on hand, the civil society diamond provides a useful graphic device for comparative purposes. On the other, the country reports provide country-specific detail. This is a useful way of producing outputs that are useful for different audiences.

- At a country level, the information provided by a CSI assessment can help CSOs to think more strategically about their future activities and contributions to strengthening civil society. At an international level, the CSI can enable CSOs and others to make quick comparisons among countries, identifying countries where there might be particular lessons to be learnt about how to strengthen civil society, or where engagement to strengthen civil society might be particularly effective.

Key references

The CSI tool itself can be found at:
http://www.civicus.org/new/media/improving_understanding_and_strength_of_CS.pdf.

With further details at:
http://www.civicus.org/new/media/CSI_Methodology_and_conceptual_framework.pdf.

Discussions of the CSI include:
Batliwala, S. (2003) 'Main Findings and Recommendations of Evaluation of the Pilot Phase of the CIVICUS Index on Civil Society project' (Executive Summary), online at http://www.civicus.org – CSI, Documents and Publications section.

Bežovan, G., S. Zrinšcak and M. Vugec (2005) *Civil Society in Croatia, Gaining Trust and Establishing Partnerships with the State and Other Stakeholders,* Zagreb: Centre for Development of Non-Profit Organizations (CERANEO).

Heinrich, V. F. (2002) 'Managing Trade-offs: Challenges Faced in Designing the Implementation Approach of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index', paper presented at the ISTR Conference, Cape Town, 6-10 July, online at http://www.istr.org/conferences/capetown/volume/heinrich.pdf.

Heinrich, V. F. (2004) 'Assessing and Strengthening Civil Society Worldwide. A Project Description of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index: A Participatory Needs Assessment and Action-planning Tool for Society', online at http://www.civicus.org – CSI, Documents and Publications section.

2. Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (WB)

A framework for assessing countries' ability to use aid effectively

What is a Country Policy and Institutional Assessment?

Country Policy and Institutional Assessments (CPIA) are carried out annually by the World Bank to measure and rank the ability of countries to make effective use of aid. CPIA ratings are used by the Bank to calculate country performance ratings, and play an important role in determining the Bank's allocation of aid. CPIA ratings have been conducted since 1977.

How does a CPIA work?

The CPIA is a centrally coordinated process carried out under tight guidelines and supervision. The assessment consists of a set of 16 criteria in four groups (listed in Figure 2 below). Each of these is rated on a scale from 1 (very weak) to 6 (very strong). The ratings rely on the judgments of technical analysts, who assess how well a country's policy and institutional framework fosters poverty reduction, sustainable growth and effective use of aid.

Figure 2: Criteria for CPIAs

A. Economic management 1. Macroeconomic management 2. Fiscal policy 3. Debt policy	C. Policies for social inclusion/equity 7. Gender equality 8. Equity of public resource use 9. Building human resources 10. Social protection and labour 11. Policies and institutions for environmental sustainability
B. Structural policies 4. Trade 5. Financial sector 6 Business regulatory environment	D. Public sector management and institutions 12. Property rights and rule-based governance 13. Quality of budgetary and financial management 14. Efficiency of revenue mobilisation 15. Quality of public administration 16. Transparency, accountability, and corruption in the public sector

Until recently, the detailed results and the precise way in which they have been reached have been confidential. However, the World Bank has recently fulfilled its promise to make more information about CPIA scores available (see 'How IDA resources are allocated' under www.worldbank.org/ida).

The CPIA process is conducted in-house by Bank economists, sector specialists and other members of country teams. In the first stage of the process, 'benchmark' countries from each of the World Bank's six regions undergo intensive assessment to ensure consistency across regions. In the second phase, each region assesses the remaining countries using the regional benchmark as a reference. Submissions for all the countries in the region are reviewed. The final phase sees rounds of review between the Bank's regional and central units. The process takes three to four months and total costs are estimated at over US$1 million per annum.

Figure 3: Ghana's average CPIA ratings for 2005, compared with all IDA countries
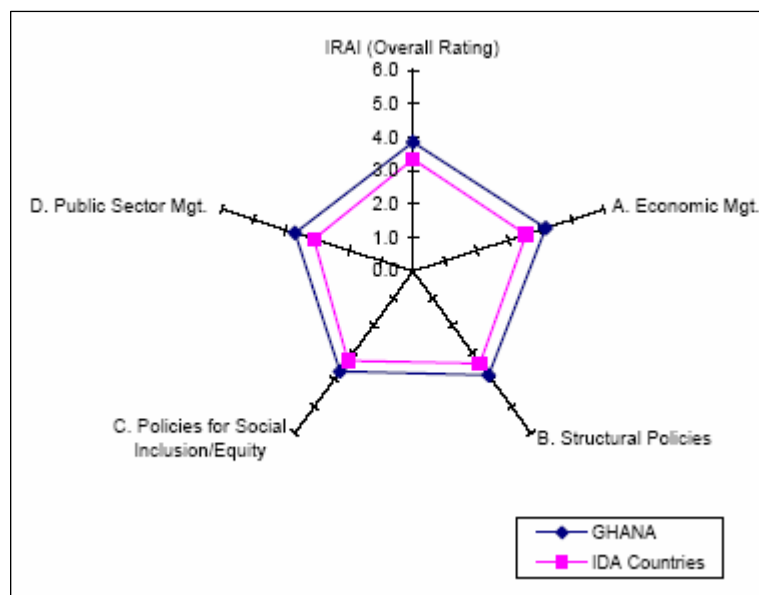
Source: World Bank.

Elements of the CPIA

Conceptual approach and indicators

- CPIA ratings are conducted by the World Bank for a specific purpose: making a judgment about how effectively a country can use aid. This is a clear reminder to CSOs and others that context mapping perhaps works best when it is conducted with a clear purpose in mind.

- Seeking to map or assess multiple dimensions of context, the CPIA may provide CSOs with ideas about what dimensions of context they might want to map. The CPIA questionnaire itself (see below, in 'Data') provides a detailed description of the indicators that have been used to assess different criteria or dimensions of context.

Data

- As with many of the other tools for mapping context, the CPIA relies ultimately on the judgments of experts. The ways in which the CPIA process makes use of expert views and seeks to quantify them to enable comparison among countries may provide CSOs and others with food for thought.

- In particular, a preliminary stage in CPIA analysis involves setting regional benchmarks to ensure cross-country comparability. Any CSO context mapping project that seeks to produce results that can be compared between countries would be well advised to think about the use of regional benchmarks.

- The CPIA questionnaire provides suggestions CSOs might themselves use to gather information about various dimensions of context. This could be of great value to CSOs seeking guidance on possible data sources.

- The most recent version of the questionnaire is the 'Country Policy and Institutional Assessments – 2005 Assessment Questionnaire', Operations Policy and Country Services, online at http://siteresources.worldbank.org/IDA/Resources/CPIA2005questionnaire.pdf.

Analysis, presentation and recommendations

- The CPIA guidelines stress that the meaning of seemingly objective information depends on the particular country case/context. This raises issues regarding the trade-off between country comparability and the importance of recognising country specificity, a trade-off with which many context mapping exercises will need to grapple.

- The CPIA, its analysis, and the recommendations for action – how much aid to provide – which it drives raise another set of important issues as regards context mapping. That is, attempts to map context objectively perhaps inevitably embody normative and inherently political assumptions. Critics of the CPIA have argued that it has a pro-growth, pro-liberalisation bias (Powell, 2004), and that it gives too much weight to a particular conception of 'good governance' which revolves around minimal regulation and strong property rights. It is perhaps more honest for exercises in context mapping to be explicit about their assumptions, rather than to pretend to be totally objective.

- The CPIA assessments (see 'How IDA resources are allocated' under www.worldbank.org/ida) provide CSOs and others with valuable information about the policy and institutional context in the countries assessed.

Key references

Gelb, A., B. Ngo and X. Ye (2004) *Implementing Performance-Based Aid in Africa: The Country Policy and Institutional Assessment*, Africa Region, Working Paper Series No. 77, Washington, DC: World Bank, online at http://www.worldbank.org/afr/wps/wp77.pdf.

Powell, J. (2004) 'The World Bank Policy Scorecard: The New Conditionality?', Bretton Woods Update, Bretton Woods Project, November, online at http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/doc/knowledge/cpia.PDF.

3. Democracy and Governance Assessment (USAID)

A framework for assessing democracy and governance, to design effective approaches to promote democracy and improve governance

What is the Democracy and Governance Assessment?

The Democracy and Governance Assessment is a framework designed by USAID for assessing the state of democracy and governance in a country, and the prospects for their improvement. The framework 'guides a political analysis of the country, leads program choices, and incorporates what researchers and practitioners have learned from comparative experience' (USAID, 2000: 1). The framework aims to identify certain comparable elements of countries' political economy and institutions and use those to inform a strategic analysis of how best to promote democracy and good governance. The assessment focuses on the aspects of context USAID considers relevant to encouraging or enabling countries to develop liberal democratic government: 'order, liberty, open competition, the rule of law, and respect for pluralism and minority rights' (ibid).

This technique is less intellectually ambitious than some of the other approaches. It does address some comparable aspects of context, but the map produced is more selective in the features it chooses to explore. It is designed to provide an entry-point analytical overview for those considering actions to promote democracy in a given country. As USAID's Democracy and Governance Assessment for Tanzania states: 'The methodology is not intended to produce an exhaustive description of recent political history, but rather to enable small field teams to provide a political-economic "snapshot", intended to surface principal structural dilemmas, political dynamics and, to the extent possible, identify trends' (ARD and USAID, 2003: 1).

How does the Democracy and Governance Assessment work?

USAID missions are responsible for submitting strategic plans for their use of programme funds. They are expected to use the framework to inform this process as they see fit. The framework is not prescriptive. The assessment framework is divided into four steps:

- An **analysis of the kind of political 'game'** that characterises the country and of the problems relating to the transition to or consolidation of democracy.
- A more specific analysis of actors, interests, resources, and strategies leading to an understanding of **how the political 'game' is actually being played** in the country.
- An **analysis of the institutional arenas** (legal, governmental and civil society) in which the 'game' is played.
- The **interests and resources of the donors**, including USAID.

The first three steps are aimed at generating a range of possible strategies for support or intervention. The fourth step is concerned to understand the feasibility of putting these possible strategies in place. In effect, Steps 1 to 3 provide a map of possible routes; Step 4 assesses the routes that might realistically be taken.

The methods of data collection and analysis are primarily a combination of desk research and interviews or focus group sessions with key country stakeholders. The amount of time and resources required varies but research for each of the three studies included in the Key References was coordinated by a team of three people (USAID staff and consultants) over a period of approximately one month.

Elements of the Democracy and Governance Assessment

Conceptual approach and indicators

- USAID's characterisation of context as a political game – involving players, interests, resources, objectives, rules, arenas, and ways of playing – may provide CSOs with a useful metaphor for understanding their own contexts. The questions suggested by USAID to explore the dimensions of the political 'game' (see Box 5) may also be of use.

Box 5: Dimensions of the political game

- **Consensus:** To what extent is there consensus on the fundamental rules of the game, and to what extent is the political contest played according to those rules?
- **Competition:** To what extent does meaningful competition take place in the political system and in other arenas of society? To what extent are there elections, a competition of ideas, a free media, and a vibrant civil society? Are meaningful checks and balances present in government? Is competition allowed and institutionalised? Are competitive arenas accessible? Is the competition fair? Is the political contest formalised, routine, and regulated by publicly accepted rules and norms?
- **Inclusion:** Are there problems of inclusion and exclusion? Are parts of the population formally excluded and disenfranchised from meaningful political, social, or economic participation? Are there formal guarantees of inclusion?
- **Rule of law:** Is there ordered liberty? Is politics, indeed are life, liberty, and property, bound by a rule of law?
- **Governance:** To what extent do social institutions (both in the public and private sectors), demonstrate a capacity to make and meet commitments, deliver reliably a minimum of social services and be held accountable for their performance?

- USAID's approach to looking at incentives, rules and institutions is likely to be of great interest to CSOs seeking to map their own contexts (see USAID, 2000: 83-5).
- CSOs should bear in mind that USAID's approach to mapping context is benchmarked against the template of an idealised Western democratic model. As such, although elements of it may be useful, it does embody certain normative assumptions.

Data

- USAID stresses the importance of a preparatory phase reviewing what material/information is available prior to embarking on mapping context. CSOs would be well advised to follow this approach. They might also find the range of ways to collecting data which are outlined in the USAID approach – meetings with key representatives of society, including politicians, activists, researchers, NGOs and donors – to be of use.
- USAID stresses that along with desk research, mapping country context requires extensive consultation with people with an intimate knowledge of the context. For local CSOs, this should not be a problem, but international CSOs seeking to understand contexts other than their own should take heed.

Analysis, presentation and recommendations

- USAID's overall approach – that of seeking to understand how the system works and to identify opportunities to make it work differently to produce better outcomes – is one that CSOs might find very productive.
- CSOs seeking to understand context in countries characterised by neo-patrimonialism might find USAID's analytical approach and suggested questions for diagnosing patronage of great help. For example, see ARD and USAID (2003: 55-62), on Tanzania.
- The USAID reports themselves can be useful to a broader range of users. They can provide 'outsiders' with a good working knowledge of history and opinions on the political context in a

country, and on the actors within that context. For CSOs, the reports' exploration of factors such as open political competition, pluralism and respect for the rights of minorities will likely be very relevant for CSOs and others who want to influence policy.

- The Tanzania report provides a good example of how the framework has been used, with the recommendations section showing how the analysis of the system can lead to recommendations for action.

Key references

The assessment tool itself can be found at:
USAID (2000) 'Conducting a DG assessment: a Framework for Strategy Development', Centre for Democracy and Governance, USAID, Washington, DC, online at http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/ democracy_and_governance/publications/pdfs/pnach305.pdf.

Examples of application of the tool:
Crosby, B., J. Michele Guttmann and B. Kay (2004) 'Paraguay Democracy and Governance Assessment', Management Systems International, Washington, DC.

Kay Smith, Z., T. Longman, J. P. Kimonyo and T. Rutagengwa (2002) 'Rwanda Democracy and Governance Assessment', Management Systems International, Washington, DC.

ARD and USAID (2003) 'Democracy and Governance Assessment of Tanzania – Transitions from the Single-Party State', ARD, Burlington, Vermont, submitted to USAID, online at http://pdf.dec.org/pdf_docs/Pdacd437.pdf.

4. Drivers of Change (DFID)

An approach for understanding the forces that bring about change and the key policy and institutional 'drivers' for poverty reduction

What is the Drivers of Change approach?

Drivers of Change (DoC) is an approach developed by DFID to address the lack of linkages between a country's political framework and the operations of development agencies. The approach focuses on 'the interplay of economic, social and political factors that support or impede' poverty reduction (OECD DAC, 2005). The evolution of this approach has gone hand-in-hand with an approach to development that emphasises that: i) the way development happens, or does not happen, is shaped by political context; and ii) to be effective, donors' country strategies must be based on a sound understanding of historical and political context. More specifically, DoC is rooted in a concern to better understand *how* to make change happen in specific country contexts:

> Usually, we have a good idea about what needs to be done to achieve poverty reduction, but are much less clear about why it's not happening. All too often, we attribute slow or no progress to lack of political will … It's this black box of lack of political will that DOC analysis unpacks. This should result in this phrase disappearing from the risk column of a Country Assistance Plan or Regional Assistance Plan (Suma Chakrabati, DFID Permanent Secretary, quoted in Thornton and Cox, 2005: 2).

How does the Drivers of Change approach work?

DoC analyses are initiated and carried out by DFID country offices, usually by selecting expert consultants (international and local) to coordinate the process and write the reports. Practical and methodological support to the country teams carrying out the studies has been provided by a DoC Team in DFID headquarters. Over 20 such analyses have been carried out so far.

DoC is not a highly standardised approach. The framework sets out broad guidelines, but it is designed to be led at the country level. There is enormous variation in the scope of the studies and reports, and the resources and time allocated for their completion. The duration of the studies ranges from 15 days to over two years. Costs have varied from GBP4000 for Georgia to GBP2.1 million for Nigeria (Thornton and Cox, 2005).

Each DoC report identifies specific drivers. Certain themes recur frequently in the reports. These include corruption and elite capture, the role of civil society, the role of the media, and the importance of political opposition and the middle classes.

Elements of the Drivers of Change approach

Conceptual approach and indicators

- The approach focuses on power relationships and the institutional and structural factors affecting the lack of political will. It is based around a three-part conceptual model of structures, individual agents, and mediating institutions, and is coupled with an emphasis on how to effect change. As a result, this tool is better suited than many others to capturing the importance of informal institutions and relationships. The approach – of identifying structures, agents and institutions – is one which CSOs could readily employ.

Figure 4: The Drivers of Change conceptual model
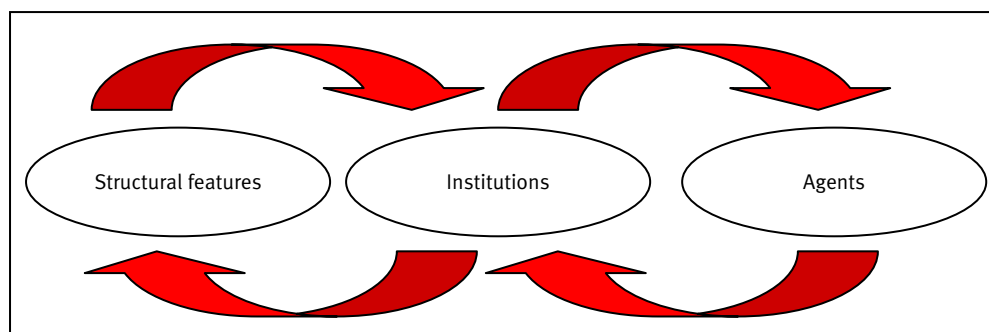
Source: Warrener (2004).

- Guidelines for analysis are provided, as a broad template. These include six types of question: basic country analysis; medium term dynamics; role of external forces; links between changes and poverty reduction; operational implications; and DFID incentives (Warrener, 2004). For example, they recommend using the framework for basic country analysis as seen in Box 6.

Box 6: Framework for basic country analysis

Foundational factors

- Is there a political community?
- Does government control the territory?
- How have the history of state formation, political geography, geo-strategic position, embedded social and economic structures shaped the basic characteristics of the political system?
- Is government dependent on taxpayers?

More medium term, institutional factors

- How 'institutionalised' are the bureaucracy, policy mechanisms, political parties, civil society organisations?
- How embedded is the constitution?
- What is the basis of political competition, and the composition of the political elite?
- How important is ethnicity?
- How is power shared between the political executive, the military, the legislature, the judiciary, other levels of government, the private sector, religious organisations?

Short-term factors

- What is government's bureaucratic and financial capacity?
- Key mechanisms for vertical and horizontal accountability?
- Political resources (including point in the electoral cycle)?

Source: Moore (2001).

- Although the approach is rooted in a conceptual framework conceived with donor requirements in mind, other actors may find this approach useful in understanding how their own priorities and resources are related to those of others with the potential to drive or block change.

Data

- The methods of data collection and the type of evidence used have consisted of desk studies of secondary evidence and interviews or consultations in the field. It is essential that teams conducting DoC analyses include people with good country knowledge.

Analysis, presentation and recommendations

- The type of information produced is of a qualitative nature. This, combined with the considerable flexibility of the approach, hinders cross-country comparison. CSOs need to be aware of the trade-off that all approaches to context mapping make between allowing flexibility and enabling systematic comparison.

- Many of the Drivers of Change studies have not been made publicly available. A good place to find those which are available is http://www.gsdrc.org/go/topic-guides/drivers-of-change.

- As an approach to mapping context, the uses of DoC are numerous. A recent DFID briefing (DFID, 2005b) reports that country offices have found a variety of uses for the process of undertaking a DoC study and for the findings produced. These have included:
  - o Informing the planning process;
  - o Improving the quality of engagement and influence with partner governments;
  - o Analysing the risk of interventions and suggesting ways of mitigating these;
  - o Strengthening harmonisation processes with other donors.

Key references

DFID (2005a) 'Lessons Learned: Planning and Undertaking a Drivers of Change Study', How To Note, DFID, London, online at http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/DOC84.pdf.

DFID (2005b) 'Using Drivers of Change to Improve Aid Effectiveness', Briefing Note, DFID, London, online at http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/DOC83.pdf.

OECD DAC (2005) 'Lessons Learned on the Use of Power and Drivers of Change Analyses in Development Cooperation', DAC Network on Governance (GovNet), OECD, Paris, online at http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/DOC82.pdf.

Moore, M. (2001) 'Types of Political Systems', a practical framework for DFID staff.

Thornton, N. and M. Cox (2005) 'Review of the Uptake of the Drivers of Change Approach', Agulhas Development Consultants, London.

Warrener, D. (2004) 'The Drivers of Change Approach', Synthesis Paper, ODI, London, online at http://www.odi.org.uk/RAPID/Projects/R0219/docs/Synthesis_3_final.pdf.

5. Governance Matters/Country Diagnostics (WBI)

Governance Matters and Country Diagnostics are two components of the World Bank Institute's approach to understanding and improving governance. The former aggregates existing data to come up with governance assessments. The latter enable more detailed country-specific analysis of governance.

What are Governance Matters and Country Diagnostics?

The Governance Matters framework and Country Diagnostics have been developed by the World Bank Institute (WBI). Governance Matters is a project that aggregates existing measures of governance to produce a dataset that enables cross-country comparisons. Country Diagnostics represent a separate component of the World Bank Institute's approach to understanding and improving governance. It is a set of tools – surveys – that can be used to throw light on the specific governance challenges faced by individual countries. Both approaches are based on the view that better governance leads to more development (and vice-versa), that governance ought to be improved, and that measuring governance is a useful first step in identifying strategies for its enhancement.

How do Governance Matters and Country Diagnostics work?

Governance Matters

Governance matters measures governance using cross-country perceptions data. The approach covers six dimensions of governance, 209 countries or territories, and runs from 1996-2004. The measures of governance are made by aggregating existing measures of governance produced by a wide range of different organisations. In the latest version of the project, 37 separate data sources are used, constructed by 31 different organisations. The philosophy of Governance Matters is that all these various measures of governance provide useful information, and that by aggregating them, and weighting them according to how reliable they are, even better measures of governance can be made.

Governance Matters presents its use of subjective perceptions data – asking people what they think – as a strength. The argument is that such measures are more precise than objective measures because they include elements of informal rules, and because people act on the basis of perceptions.

Country Diagnostics

Country Diagnostics are conducted using a set of three surveys: of households which use public services; of enterprises; and of public officials. These follow a prescribed format and collect both qualitative and quantitative information. The analysis aims to address questions such as the following. What is the cost and consequences of mis-governance to firms, users, and public finances? How does mis-governance affect poor users and small firms? What effect does mis-governance have in public service delivery? What are the causes of institutional vulnerability? What are the fundamental issues on which a reform programme designed to improve governance and reduce mismanagement should focus?

Elements of Governance Matters and Country Diagnostics

Conceptual approach and indicators

- CSOs and others making use of Governance Matters and Country Diagnostics datasets and approaches should be aware that they are based on the view that there is a two-way causal relationship between governance and development; better governance leads to more development and vice-versa. It is also important to note that the World Bank Institute's view of what constitutes good governance is not value-free; for instance, its regulatory burden indicator clearly shows a preference for markets.

- The Governance Matters approach does not provide an off-the-shelf methodology that can be utilised in full. It does, however, provide indicators for six dimensions of governance, which might be of interest to CSOs:
  - o Voice and accountability: political, civil and human rights;
  - o Political instability and violence: likelihood of violent threats to, or changes in, government, including terrorism;
  - o Government effectiveness: competence of the bureaucracy and the quality of public service delivery;
  - o Regulatory burden: the incidence of market-unfriendly policies;
  - o Rule of law: quality of contract enforcement, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence;
  - o Control of corruption: the exercise of public power for private gain, including both petty and grand corruption and state capture.

- The indicators are further explained in http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance/pubs/govmatters4.html.

- Answers to frequently asked questions about the World Bank's governance indicators can be found at http://info.worldbank.org/governance/kkz2004/qanda.htm.

Data

- In contrast with most approaches to mapping context, Governance Matters relies on a statistical procedure to aggregate existing measures of governance. In a field where most mapping exercises start by collecting new data, this is an interesting approach. Prior to collecting their own data, CSOs ought to explore whether there are existing datasets – including those collated by Governance Matters – which might be useful.

- The data produced under the Governance Matters framework and the Country Diagnostics themselves are a rich data source. All relevant data sources, including methodology papers, interactive charts and world maps, are available at http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance/data.html.

- The interactive tools on the World Bank's website at http://info.worldbank.org/governance provide a simple and accessible way to use the data collected to assess quickly the basic aspects of governance of relevance to particular situations. They can generate charts and maps to show governance characteristics in individual countries (see Figure 5) and to enable cross-country comparisons in relation to a particular dimension of governance (see Figure 6).

Figure 5: Governance in Sudan – top bars – compared with countries at the same income level
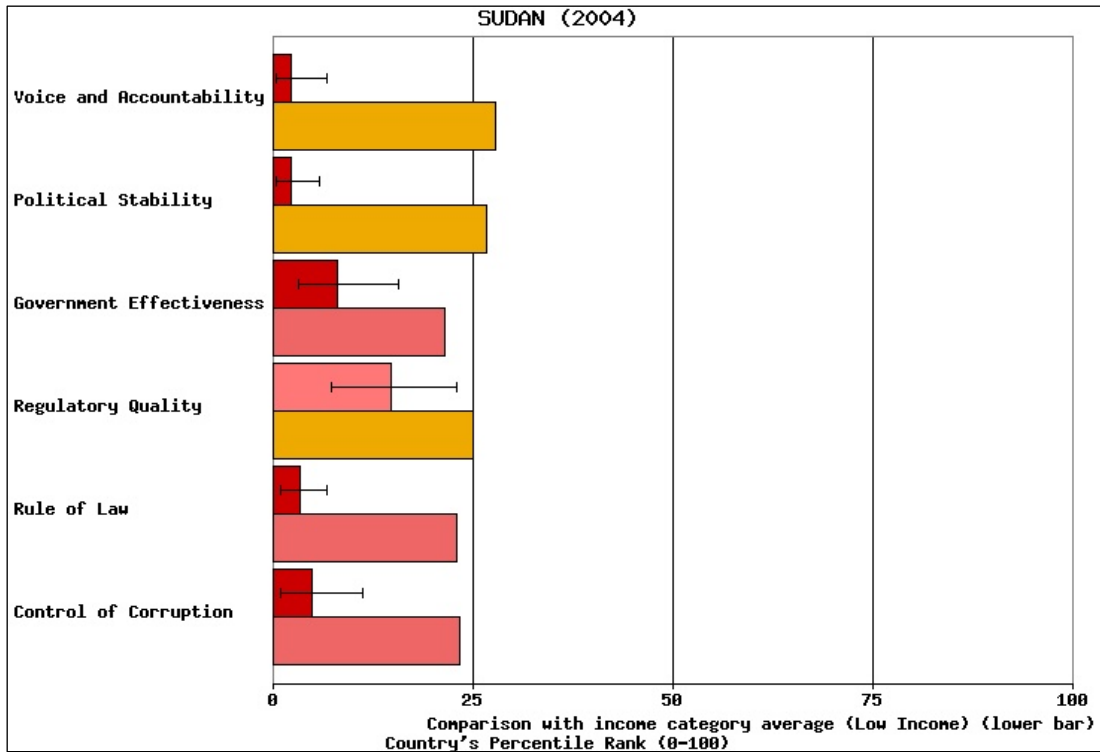
Figure 6: Voice and accountability in the most populous countries in sub-Saharan Africa
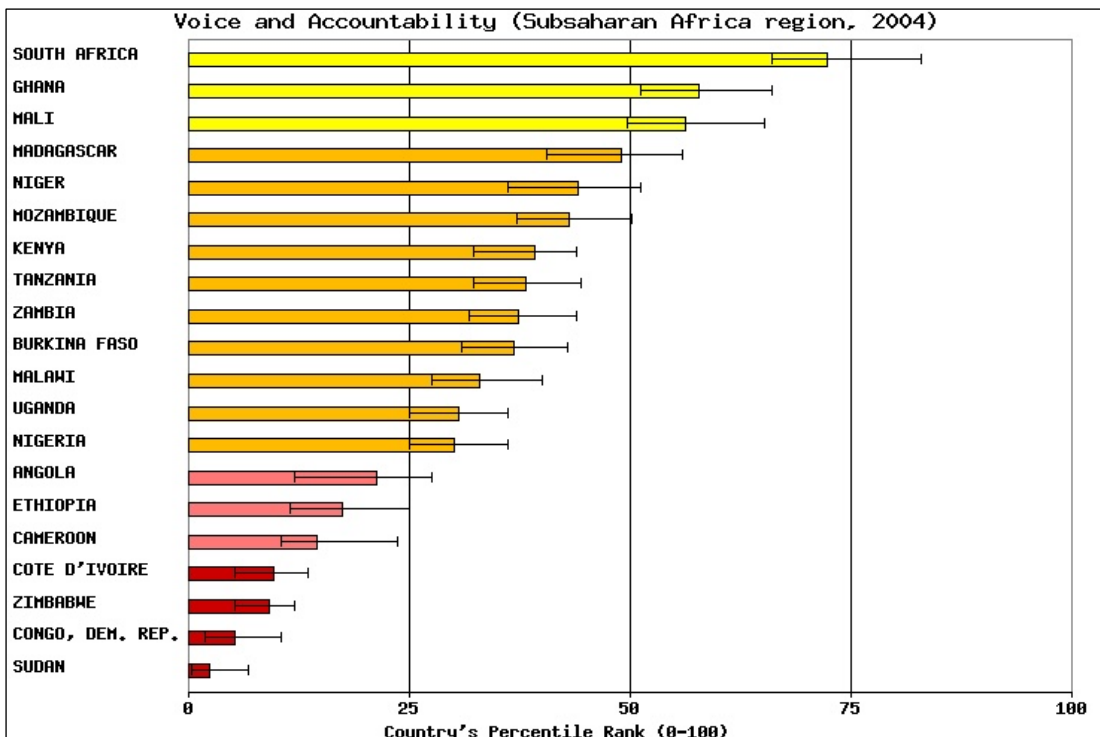
- Country Diagnostics provides a set of very suggestive surveys of which CSOs and others might make use to map their own contexts. In particular, they include a 'scenario' element, which asks the respondent to rate a particular course of action – paying a bribe to a policeman in the event of a traffic offence, or paying a bribe to gain access to education – in terms of its likelihood of occurrence. The surveys can be found at http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance/ capacitybuild/diagnostics.html.

Analysis, presentation and recommendations

- The Governance Matters datasets provide a useful set of results – the aggregated governance measurements from a range of other surveys – which can be used for tracking governance over time in specific countries, or for comparing governance across a range of countries.

- Country Diagnostics provide more specific information about the governance challenges in specific countries. They could be useful to CSOs seeking to think strategically about which institutions they might target for reform. They provide useful data about the perceptions of different groups of people. And – in providing information about how different groups perceive particular institutions – they might form a good basis for stakeholder analyses.

Key references

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Kaufmann, D., A. Kraay and M. Mastruzzi (2005b) 'Measuring Governance Using Cross-Country Perceptions Data', World Bank Institute, Washington, DC, online at http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/ governance/pdf/MeasuringGovernancewithPerceptionsData.pdf.

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WBI, Governance and Anti-corruption Homepage: http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance.

6. Governance Questionnaire (GTZ)

A questionnaire to enable the analysis of institutions, actors and relationships, and to inform reform strategies

What is the Governance Questionnaire?

The Governance Questionnaire was designed by GTZ as a tool to analyse the political and institutional frameworks, actors and relationships in a country. The aim is to help development practitioners to produce better informed and more effective strategies for policy reform (DFID/World Bank, 2005; Faust and Gutiérrez, 2004).

The approach varies significantly from other tools as it takes the view that political reform processes are strongly influenced by informal values, norms, customs and processes, rather than following formal rules (DFID/World Bank, 2005). This is thought to apply particularly in new democracies or weakly institutionalised political systems (Faust and Gutiérrez, 2004). It also explicitly sets out to employ a multi-disciplinary approach, combining political science, law, economics, legal anthropology and empirical social research.

The Governance Questionnaire does not aim to provide a comprehensive assessment, but rather to highlight important issues, facilitate debate and stimulate further enquiry to inform decisions about how to support reform (OECD DAC, 2005).

How does the Governance Questionnaire work?

The Governance Questionnaire is still in the early stages of implementation and the pilot studies are not yet complete. The questionnaire is split into specific sets of questions, organised by arenas and sub-arenas designed to be used in any combination the user requires. The six political arenas are:
- Relationship between state and society;
- Political system;
- Political culture, change agents and development paradigms;
- Politics and gender;
- Economic policy and the political framework of markets;
- International integration.

The methodology for using the Governance Questionnaire includes a number of distinct steps, but it is recognised that steps may themselves be altered or omitted as needed. Respondents are asked to assess the six political arenas in society. Qualified respondents – decision makers and practitioners from representative groups of society – are selected to give their assessments in response to the questionnaire.

10 to 15 people are recommended per study. This is a fairly small sample, but a workable and realistic figure. The questionnaire can be completed in written form or used as a guide for structured but open-ended interviews. Similarly, the questions can be answered simply (yes; partly; no), or can be expanded using additional 'filter' questions, multiple answers, or by providing reasons for answers. As such, variations on the Governance Questionnaire can be used to map context at different levels of detail.

Elements of the Governance Questionnaire

Conceptual approach and indicators

- The Governance Questionnaire highlights the importance of understanding power relationships and structures between state and society and, in so doing, takes into account trends and barriers to political and institutional reform. It provides a full list of the six political arenas, their sub-arenas, and questions designed to provide information on the individual components of those sub-arenas. For example, for the first political arena, 'relationship between state and society', the following sub-arenas and components are listed in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7: State and society arena: sub-arenas and components

Sub-arena 1: Enforcement capacity of the state
1.1 Sectoral scope of state enforcement capacity
1.2 Territorial scope of legitimate monopoly of power
1.3 Mode of enforcement of monopoly of power
1.4 Homogeneity of monopoly of power
1.5 Competition between various regulatory systems

Sub-arena 2: Acceptance of the state
1.6 Relationship between citizens and state
1.7 Recognition of state institutions
1.8 Assumption of commitments
1.9 Provision of physical safety

Sub-arena 3: Society's expectations of the state
1.10 Opportunities for citizens to express opinions
1.11 Opportunities for citizens to participate
1.12 Responsiveness to citizens' demands
1.13 Identification of public needs
1.14 Intrastate conflict management

Data

- The questionnaire, or elements of it, could be employed by CSOs seeking to gain a better understanding of political context. The fact that the questionnaire can be conducted using a small sample of people, and at varying levels of detail, might make it particularly appealing to those CSOs that are short of time and money.

Analysis, presentation and recommendations

- The Questionnaire provides guidance on the importance of each arena. In the example of the arena that looks at 'the relationship between state and society', it is explained that this relates to the various elements of a functioning state, and that these are presupposed by concepts of 'good governance'. This approach also provides a basis for users to choose the arenas, or the aspects cutting across arenas, that are most important in understanding political context for their purposes and from their position.
- The Governance Questionnaire can be used in a number of ways:
  o In its entirety, to give an overview of the political and institutional context for policy.

- o   To study the characteristics and relationships that define a particular political arena within a country, such as gender and politics or the role of economic policy.

- o   To assess a narrower range of issues across several political arenas by selecting appropriate questions. A user might, for example, look at the perceptions of the rule of law throughout a country's political arenas (Faust and Gutiérrez, 2004: 12).

- For an international or 'outsider' analyst, using the Governance Questionnaire can provide a good overview of the relationships and structures defining the political context for policy reform. For a domestic or 'insider' analyst, the Governance Questionnaire might provide new insights into some arenas to complement prior knowledge.

Key references

Faust, J. and M. Gutiérrez (2004) 'Governance Questionnaire: An Instrument for Analysing Political Environments', State and Democracy Division, GTZ.

Key discussions/reviews
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7. Power Analysis (Sida)

An approach to understanding context which focuses on the nature and distribution of power

What is Power Analysis?

The Power Analysis approach has been developed by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida). It is based on the understanding that issues of power asymmetries, access to resources and influence over politics must be addressed if poverty is to be reduced. Power analysis seeks to map the informal political landscape, including its rules and structures. It seeks to understand how development cooperation and donor activities are influenced by this landscape, and how the landscape of power shapes their activities (DFID/World Bank, 2005; Hyden, 2005). The Power Analysis approach is informed by a commitment to working towards 'justice, equity, and organised redistribution of access to the welfare among the world's people' (Sida, 2005: 30).

How does Power Analysis work?

This is an approach based on understanding power. It does not work to a fixed definition of power: each power analysis study works with its own understanding of the concept. In a power analysis of Tanzania, the focus was on three questions (Hyden, 2005). First, who sets the policy agenda; whose ideas and values dominate policy? Secondly, who gets what, when and how, and how do formal institutions shape the distribution of costs and benefits. Thirdly, who knows whom, why and where; how do informal social networks shape the policy process? In a power analysis of Ethiopia, knowledge as power was the central organising theme (Vaughan and Tronvoll, 2003). In short, there is much scope for the user to adapt power analysis to his/her own purposes.

Power analysis studies are initiated by country offices and carried out by country experts. There is much scope for the analysts to adapt the approach and define the areas of focus. The analysis is centred on desk reviews and secondary research, but it is often complemented by interviews and questionnaires. The level of resources and time required varies, but with an emphasis on desk research, interviews and qualitative analysis, the costs are limited largely to person-time.

A recent review of power analysis in its experimental phase suggested that the abstract nature of the concepts concerned and the broad scope for consultants to interpret the Terms of Reference for each analysis may produce results that are hard to compare and not necessarily as distinctive as had been hoped (Moore, in Sida, 2005). This may be problematic, but it is important to recognise the utility of country-specific knowledge, which is of great value even if not easily comparable between countries.

Elements of Power Analysis

Conceptual approach and indicators

- Conceptualising power as being central to poverty reduction is an obvious but nevertheless important insight that CSOs might take away from Power Analysis. However, if they are tempted to employ the concept of power, they should ensure that they think carefully about what it means, and how they intend to map it. Otherwise, putting power at the centre of analysis may be problematic (see Moore, in Sida, 2005).
- The emphasis of Power Analysis on understanding the formal and informal political landscape is a useful corrective to approaches that focus largely on formal political rules and institutions. Its acknowledgement of aspects of context, such as culture, convention, and systems of shared belief, might also be taken up by CSOs seeking to map their own contexts (Vaughan and Tronvoll, 2003).

Data

- Power Analysis provides little guidance in terms of data collection, sources and methods. Analysts can make use of existing data sources, or collect their own data.

- Ways of collecting data about power – its constitution, distribution, exercise and control – might include panels of independent experts, surveys of well informed people, public opinion polls, and focus group discussions.

Analysis, presentation and recommendations

- The information produced by a Power Analysis is largely of a qualitative nature. It does not lend itself to cross-country comparison, but rather to comparison over time in a single country (Hyden, 2005).

- Power Analysis is able to generate deep and wide-ranging knowledge; as such, it is a good complement to other approaches to mapping context, like measures of governance.

- Power Analysis can map various levels or dimensions of context, as well as providing a framework for understanding how history has shaped the present-day distribution of power. Depending on how and where it is employed, a power analysis can inform actions at a macro level (country strategy), or at a micro level (whether a project is likely to be successful).

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8. Stakeholder Analysis

A range of techniques for understanding how stakeholders relate to a particular issue, policy decision or action

What is Stakeholder Analysis?

Stakeholder Analysis refers to a range of techniques for mapping and understanding the power, positions, and perspectives of the players (stakeholders) who have an interest in, and/or are likely to be affected by, a particular policy reform (Buse et al, 2005). Stakeholder analysis can be of use in understanding the prospects for reform, and the ways in which particular organisations might influence the outcome of the policy process. Stakeholder analysis is very useful for understanding the prospects of policy change but, as all stakeholder analyses are focused on particular policy reforms, they provide information that is useful only for understanding that particular reform; this is a tool which provides a highly specific mapping of political context.

There are many variations on stakeholder analysis; in general, the approach is a pragmatic one, rooted in managerial or programmatic decision making and in the search for the efficient use of resources. What the approach can reveal, and exactly how it can influence action, depends on the specific instance in which it is used.

How does Stakeholder Analysis work?[5]

The first step in a stakeholder analysis is to clarify the research or policy change objective being discussed, and to outline the consequences that will flow from the policy reform. The second step is to identify all the stakeholders or interest groups associated with this objective, project, problem or issue. This can be done by brainstorming in groups or talking to individuals who are close to the issue at hand. Stakeholders can be organisations, groups, departments, structures, networks or individuals.

A third step is to classify the various stakeholders in terms of their power in relation to the issue, and in terms of their interest in relation to the issue. 'Interest' measures to what degree they are likely to be affected by the research project or policy change, and what degree of interest or concern they have in or about it. 'Power' measures the influence they have over the project or policy, and to what degree they can help achieve, or block, the desired change.

Stakeholders with high power, and interests aligned with the project, are the people or organisations it is important to engage with fully and to bring on board. If trying to create policy change, these people are the targets of any campaign. At the very top of the 'power' list will be the 'decision makers', usually members of the government. Beneath these are people whose opinion matters – the 'opinion leaders'. This creates a pyramid sometimes known as an Influence Map.

Stakeholders with high interest but low power need to be kept informed; if organised, they may form the basis of an interest group or coalition that can lobby for change. Those with high power but low interest should be kept satisfied and ideally brought around as patrons or supporters for the proposed policy change.

If time and resources permit, further analysis can be carried out that explores in more detail i) the nature of the power and its position and ii) the interests that give it that position. This helps the project to better understand why people take certain stands and how they can be bought around.

Stakeholder analysis is a tool that maps a single aspect of context (stakeholders). However, the methodology can be tailored to focus on almost any level of analysis, from world leaders and industry heads, to MPs and civil servants, to tribal elders and local farmers. Its flexibility and relative simplicity

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[5] This section draws heavily on Start and Hovland (2004).

means that it can easily be adapted to the user's purpose and position. It is especially valuable in situations where conflicting or entrenched interests are apparent.

Stakeholder analysis is very flexible. The selection of the stakeholders and the characteristics mapped can be tailored to any situation. DFID suggest that it can be undertaken at any stage of an 'activity cycle', and that it *should* be undertaken at the identification, design and appraisal stages of activities.

Elements of stakeholder analysis

Conceptual approach and indicators

- A stakeholder analysis is concerned with effects and interests in relation to a particular policy reform rather than with understanding underlying political dynamics. As such, it is very different from approaches such as Power Analysis or Drivers of Change, which aim to provide a broad picture of the context for reform rather than a detailed analysis of how different groups might view and respond to a particular course of action.

Data

- The process and data requirements depend on the type of analysis chosen. There are, however, three phases to most stakeholder analyses. These are:
  - Phase 1: Define the policy change, and outline the likely consequences of such a change.
  - Phase 2: Identify, map, profile, and communicate with stakeholders. This is a data gathering phase.
  - Phase 3: Identify the power, position and perspectives of stakeholders. This is the analytical phase, in which stakeholders will be prioritised and analysed, using, for instance, a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis (Bianchi and Kossoudji, 2001; see Start and Hovland, 2004, for a simple guide to SWOT analysis).

- Stakeholder analysis can include a range of forms of analysis, from the very simple to the more sophisticated:
  - A very simple stakeholder analysis technique is the Readiness/Power Matrix. This assesses, on an incremental scale from zero to high, how ready different stakeholders are to participate in an activity and how much power they have to influence its success. This is simple and easy to use, but will also produce only simple and limited knowledge about context (DFID, 2002).
  - A Stakeholder Table can be combined with an Importance/Influence Matrix. The Table is used to set out the primary and secondary stakeholders, detail the interests of each and assign a value to the priorities of these interests (relative to the aims/priorities of the action being contemplated), and to assess the likely impact of any activity on them. The matrix takes the stakeholders and, using the data from the table, situates them in a two-by-two grid where one axis ranges from low to high importance, and the other from low to high influence. This can help inform strategies and priorities for engaging with various stakeholders (DFID, 2002).
  - Rather than relying on qualitative assessments of stakeholder preferences, the World Bank's Expected Utility Stakeholder Model aims to provide a 'consistent, systematic "modelled" framework for analysis of stakeholder perceptions and potential policy outcomes'. One claimed use is to determine 'how a change in a stakeholder's initial policy position might affect either the likelihood of reform or the level of consensus going forward'. This is essentially a game-theoretic analysis, designed to add analytical rigour to traditional stakeholder approaches to analysing political incentives. Using expected utility forecasting techniques to simulate negotiations, it nevertheless obtains most of its data on perceptions from country expert interviews (World Bank, 2004).

- Iteration is a key feature of stakeholder analysis. In keeping with this fact, stakeholder analysis is itself likely to form one part of a wider process of context mapping. Its flexibility and relative simplicity means that it can easily be adapted to the user's purpose and position. It will often be

used subsequent to other tools, to aid further planning stages once a preliminary choice of action has been made.

Analysis, presentation and recommendations

- Stakeholder Analysis can be useful in identifying: interests; conflicts and risks; opportunities and potentially productive (or obstructive) relationships; appropriate participants; and groups likely to be impacted by a change in policy and practice. By providing information about how stakeholders relate to a particular issue or policy decision, stakeholder analysis can lead to better choices being made about how to engage with different stakeholders in order to deliver change.

Key references

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9. World Governance Assessment

An approach which measures governance by collecting expert views on six key principles of governance

What is the World Governance Assessment?

The World Governance Assessment (WGA) was initiated in 1999 by a team led by Julius Court of ODI, with three main objectives:

- To generate systematic data to enhance understanding of the relationship between governance and development at a country level;
- To provide policymakers and NGOs with insights into how governance can be improved; and
- To help develop the capacity to undertake governance assessment in countries.

The WGA was developed to address certain deficiencies in existing understandings of, and indicators for, governance. The designers argued that the dominant role of international development agencies in the field of governance has brought a preoccupation with 'getting politics right', and that most approaches to mapping political context and governance reflect the programmatic priorities of the agencies that designed the frameworks for assessment or mapping – usually based upon what works in Western democracies. The field has been hampered by repeated attempts to find 'catch-all' definitions of governance. The WGA hopes to bring a new perspective to governance assessment by avoiding such pitfalls.

How does the World Governance Assessment work?

The WGA conceives of six arenas of governance. These are: civil society; political society; government; bureaucracy; economic society; and the judiciary. The assessment is based on a survey of Well Informed Persons (WIPs) in each country, which collects views on 36 indicators spread equally across six 'principles' of governance. These principles are:

- **Participation:** The degree of involvement and ownership of affected stakeholders.
- **Decency:** The degree to which the formation and stewardship of rules are undertaken without humiliation or harm of the people.
- **Fairness:** The degree to which rules apply equally to every one in society regardless of status.
- **Accountability:** The degree to which public officials, elected as well as appointed, are responsible for their actions and responsive to public demands.
- **Transparency:** The degree to which decisions made by public officials are clear and open to scrutiny by citizens or their representatives.
- **Efficiency:** The degree to which rules facilitate speedy and timely decision making.

The WGA uses a specific indicator for each point on a matrix (see Figure 8) linking the two sets of dimensions: the principles of governance and the arenas of governance.

A (locally resident) country coordinator is selected to implement the survey in each country. Respondents are selected by these coordinators with the aim of achieving a full cross-section of persons representing different perspectives on governance. Respondents should also have significant experience of public life. It is recommended that at least 100 respondents are consulted, with 10 from each of the following groups: parliamentarians, civil servants, government officials, business persons, academics, NGOs, media, legal/judicial, religious and international organisations.

Figure 8: Principles and arenas of the World Governance Assessment

Principle/arena	Participation	Fairness	Decency	Accountability	Transparency	Efficiency
Civil society	Freedom of association	Society free from discrimination	Freedom of expression	Respect for governing rules	Freedom of the media	Input in policymaking
Political society	Legislature representative of society	Policy reflective of public preferences	Peaceful competition for political power	Legislators accountable to public	Transparency of political Parties	Legislative function affecting policy
Government	Intra-governmental consultation	Adequate standard of living for citizens	Personal security of citizens	Security forces subordinated to civilian government	Government provides accurate information	Best use of available resources
Bureaucracy	Higher civil servants part of policymaking	Equal access to public services	Civil servants respectful towards citizens	Civil servants accountable for their actions	Clear decision making process	Merit-based system for recruitment
Economic society	Consultation with the private sector	Regulations equally applied to all firms	Governments' respect for property rights	Regulating private sector in the public interest	Transparency in formulating economic policy	Obtaining licenses free from corruption
Judiciary	Non-formal processes of conflict resolution	Equal access to justice for all citizens	International human rights incorporated in national legal practice	Judicial officers held accountable	Clarity in administering justice	Efficiency of the judicial system

Source: Hyden et al (2003a).

The WGA publishes a dataset showing the full breakdown of scores by indicator for each country as well as the aggregate ratings (see Figure 9 for the average ratings for all 16 countries in 1996 and 2000). The country reports incorporate additional comments and qualitative data in order to provide a richer assessment of the country context. After the pilot phase of the project (which included 16 countries), a second phase was initiated in 2005 with a refined survey and a more rigorous approach, this time covering 10 countries, but with around 100 respondents per country.

Figure 9: WGA Governance Scores in 1996 and 2000
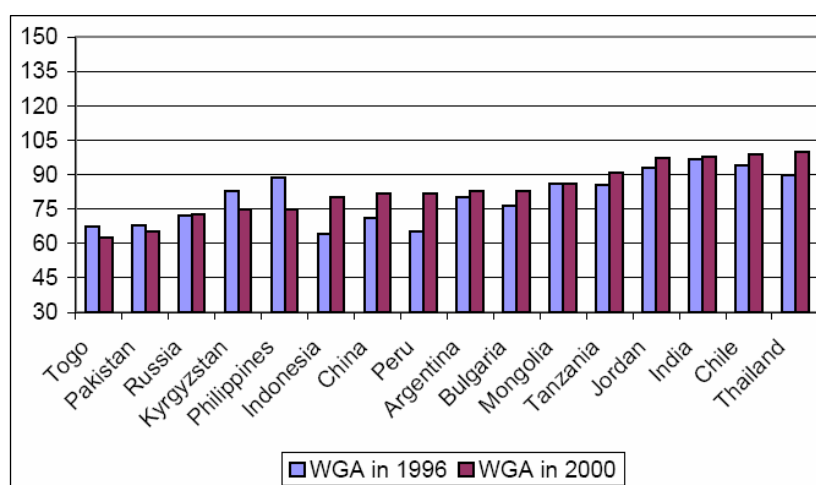
Source: Court et al (2002).

The findings from completed country assessments are useful for those who want to understand institutional contexts but seek to avoid comparing one country against the ideals privileged by others. There are several countries that achieved a high score in the pilot assessment, but which are not liberal democracies in the Western mould (e.g. Jordan). This lends credence to the claim that WGA is an approach to assessing governance which is less skewed by Western perspectives on what constitutes good governance.

Elements of the World Governance Assessment

Conceptual approach and indicators

- The WGA – and in particular its identification of six arenas and principles of governance – is an extremely useful and robust framework for the analysis of governance. CSOs seeking to map political context in their own arenas, could proceed by making assessments in terms of the WGA's six principles.

Data

- The readily accessible datasets and country reports produced by the WGA project can be of use to CSOs seeking to understand their own political contexts. Easy and comprehensive access to the data and the low cost of conducting surveys makes this a comparatively accessible tool.
- By collecting data on 36 indicators, the WGA provides a more detailed picture than many alternative approaches.

Analysis, presentation and recommendations

- The type of information provided by the WGA allows assessment of the relative strengths and weaknesses of governance in individual countries. It also enables cross-country comparison.
- The WGA attempts to use governance as an analytical tool, not as a device for programming specific 'governance interventions'. The information is detailed enough to be useful in guiding more specific investigations or steps in programme development, but the deliberate avoidance of any explicit programmatic focus means direct recommendations are not given.
- The WGA might help local or regional CSOs to situate their actions in the context of wider constraints and opportunities at the national level. It might also help organisations to find institutional parallels in other countries from which to learn lessons.

Key references

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Hyden, G., J. Court and K. Mease (2003b) *Assessing Governance in 16 Countries: The Aggregate Picture*, World Governance Survey Discussion Paper 3, Tokyo: UNU.

Hyden, G., J. Court and K. Mease (2003c) *Conclusions from Phase I*, World Governance Survey Discussion Paper 10, Tokyo: UNU.

Online resources

The tool can be found at: World Governance Assessment, 'About WGA', online at http://www.odi.org.uk/WGA_Governance/About_WGA.html.

All country reports, publications (including the references detailed above) and datasets are available from the WGA website at http://www.odi.org.uk/WGA_governance.

rapid

Research and Policy
in Development

The Overseas Development Institute's Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) programme undertakes research, advisory and public affairs work on the interface between research and policy to promote more evidence-based development policy and practice. This toolkit describes a range of tools that CSOs might use to understand and map political context, in order to engage more effectively in policy processes. The tools have been selected because they cover a wide variety of political dimensions. As such, they provide a menu of different approaches to mapping political context; CSOs and others can select from this menu and make use of the tools according to their own needs.