

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:
 - Voice and accountability: political, civil and human rights;
 - Political instability and violence: likelihood of violent threats to, or changes in, government, including terrorism;
 - Government effectiveness: competence of the bureaucracy and the quality of public service delivery;
 - Regulatory burden: the incidence of market-unfriendly policies;
 - Rule of law: quality of contract enforcement, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence;
 - 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

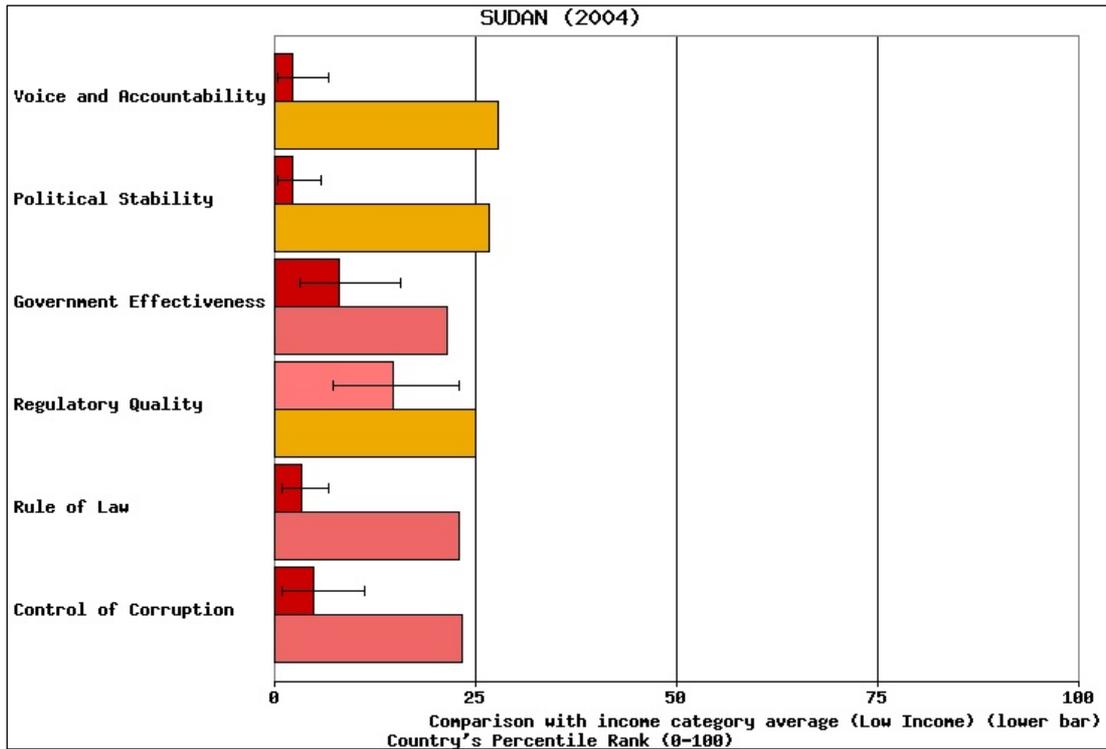
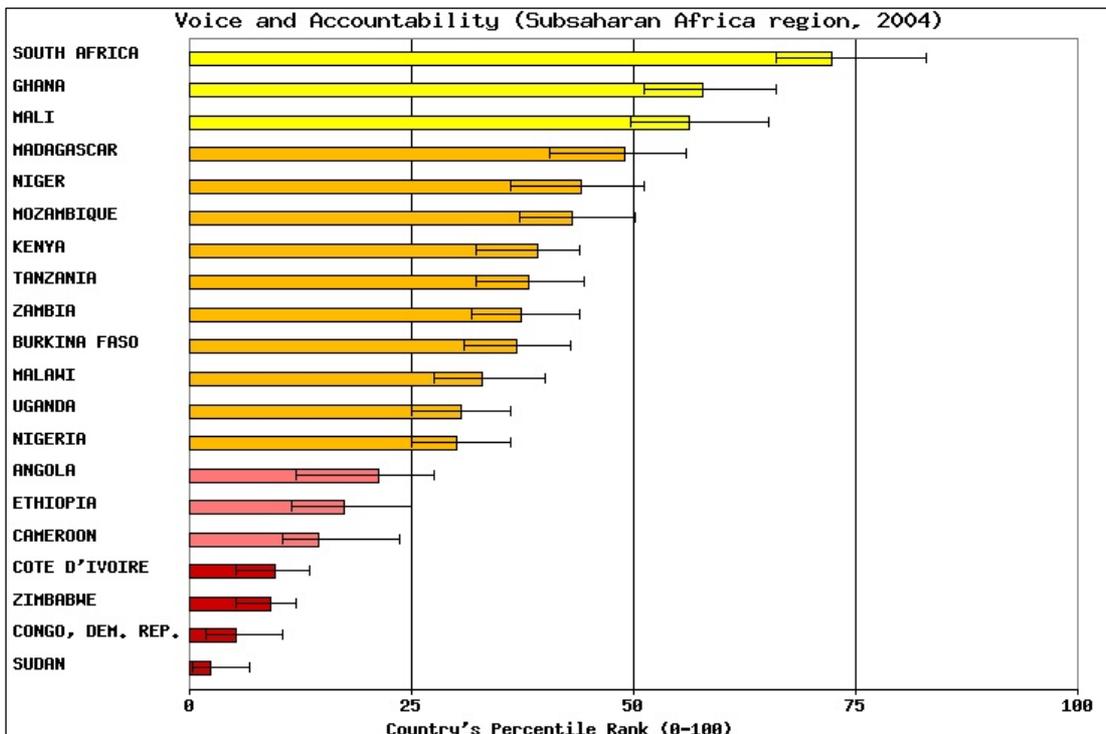


Figure 6: Voice and accountability in the most populous countries in sub-Saharan Africa



- 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

Kaufmann, D., A. Kraay and M. Mastruzzi (2005a) ‘Governance Matters IV: Governance Indicators for 1996-2004’, World Bank Institute, Washington, DC, online at <http://worldbank.org/wbi/governance/pubs/govmatters4.html>.

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