

# JOINT EVALUATION OF CITIZENS' VOICE & ACCOUNTABILITY



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# **JOINT EVALUATION OF CITIZENS' VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

## **Synthesis Report**

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## **Preface**

The evaluation was commissioned jointly by the DAC Evaluation Group (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and UK), and managed on their behalf by the Evaluation Department of the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

Strategic guidance to the evaluation has been provided by an international Steering Group, comprising members of the DAC Evaluation Group and representatives from partner countries in the four case studies.

The final report was prepared by Alina Rocha Menocal and Bhavna Sharma. Thanks are due to key informants in the case studya countries for information provided and to members of the DAC agencies for the study who have contributed comments on earlier drafts and materials prepared.

This report represents the views of the authors and not necessarily the views of the Steering Group or its members.



# Executive Summary

## **Box 1 Key messages emerging from the synthesis report**

### **I. The Challenge:**

- Citizens' Voice and Accountability (CV&A) work has emerged as a priority in the international development agenda from the 1990s onwards.
- In their CV&A work, donors recognise the importance of context: it shapes their decisions about possible entry points, actors and activities to support in relation to that context. However, context awareness has not proven sufficient to enable donors to grapple with key challenges posed by the interaction between formal and informal institutions, the prevalence of the latter over the former in many instances, and underlying power relations and dynamics.
- Some examples of positive impact of CV&A interventions have emerged from the interventions analysed for this study. This is mostly at the level of positive changes in behaviour and practice, especially in terms of raising citizen awareness, empowering certain marginalised groups, and encouraging state officials.
- However, within the sample analysed, such impact/effects have remained limited and isolated, and have so far proven difficult to scale up.
- A critical factor leading to the observed limited nature of results is related to the fact that donor expectations as to what such work can achieve are too high, and are based on misguided assumptions around the nature of voice and accountability, and the linkages between the two.
- There is a tension between the long-term processes of transforming state-society relations and donors' needs/desires to produce quick results. Scaling up and sustainability are also issues not currently sufficiently addressed within intervention design and implementation.

### **II. Addressing the challenge: Core principles for improved donor engagement:**

- Building or sharpening 'political intelligence' in developing CV&A policies and undertaking CV&A interventions on the ground.
- Working with the institutions you have, and not the ones you wish you had.
- Focusing capacity building not only on technical skills but also on political skills.
- Placing greater focus on CV&A mechanisms that address both sides of the equation within the same intervention.
- Improving key design and implementation features of CV&A interventions and aid effectiveness.
- Diversifying channels and mechanisms of engagement and working more purposefully with actors outside donors' 'zone of comfort'.

## **1. Background: Why this CV&A evaluation is important, timely and relevant**

S1 Since the 1990s, the **quality of governance** has been recognised as one of the central factors affecting development prospects in poor countries. Governance goes beyond the formal institutional framework of the state, to encompass the interaction between formal and informal institutions, rules, processes and relationships. It is a process of bargaining between those who hold power and those who seek to influence it.

S2 **Citizens' Voice and Accountability (CV&A)** are important dimensions of governance: it is widely acknowledged that citizens as well as state institutions have a role to play in delivering governance that works for the poor and enhances democracy. In particular, citizens' capacity to express and exercise their views has the potential to influence government priorities or governance processes, including a stronger demand for transparency and accountability. However, citizens need effective 'voice' in order to convey their views; and governments or states that can be held accountable for their actions are more likely to respond to the needs and demands articulated by their population.

S3 Despite differences in the terminology used by different donors, the **core principles underpinning CV&A** (including participation, inclusion, accountability and transparency) have emerged as a priority in international development, with donors engaged in an expanding universe of CV&A interventions.

S4 CV&A interventions cover a broad spectrum of issues and areas. They range from working at the national level with governments on policy and reform processes, to working with community based organisations on civic education and rights awareness programmes.

S5 To date, however, there have been only **limited attempts to evaluate** the effectiveness of donor interventions in this area. This joint evaluation, commissioned between 2006 and 2008 by a core group of DAC partners<sup>1</sup> (Evaluation Core Group/ECG), has provided an opportunity to begin to bridge that gap.

S6 The **purpose of this evaluation** is to deepen understanding of what works and what does not work in donor support to CV&A interventions, and to uncover the reasons why. In the first phase of the evaluation, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) prepared a literature review, conducted an analysis of 90 CV&A donor interventions, developed an Evaluation Framework to assess CV&A interventions and piloted the Framework and its accompanying methodology in two countries, **Benin** and **Nicaragua**. In the second phase, ECG donors commissioned five country case studies in **Bangladesh**, the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, **Indonesia**, **Mozambique** and **Nepal**, from other independent organisations. This synthesis report pulls together the findings of all the outputs from this evaluation and seeks to identify common themes and lessons, core principles and key recommendations for improved donor practice, and areas worthy of further research.

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<sup>1</sup> Donor partners include the UK, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

## **2. Scope of the evaluation**

S7 The evaluation and this synthesis report are not intended to be an exhaustive assessment of donors' support for CV&A, and they do not purport to cover the whole CV&A 'universe'. The pilot and country case studies are based on a limited number of individual ECG donor-supported interventions, drawn from a longer list of ECG interventions that were not finally considered. In addition, interventions of other key bilateral and multi-lateral donors active in CV&A were not considered (except for a multi-donor fund that includes ECG members, in the case of Nicaragua).

S8 The small size and limitations of the sample on which this evaluation is based suggest that this evaluation can only provide a partial view of what is otherwise a very broad CV&A universe, and the discussion of findings, conclusions, and recommendations should be appreciated with this important caveat in mind.

S9 The findings in the synthesis report are underpinned by the Evaluation Framework prepared by ODI, which consists of five core components:

1. Opportunities, constraints and entry points for CV&A
2. Institutional, organisational and individual capacities
3. CV&A channels: actors and mechanisms
4. Changes in policy, practice, behaviour and power relations
5. Broader development outcomes

S10 Based on these five components of the Evaluation Framework, the evaluation has been guided by four main evaluation questions or areas of enquiry:

- Channels, mechanisms and processes for V&A
- Results and outcomes
- Pathways to broader development outcomes and impacts
- V&A and aid effectiveness

**Box 2 Roadmap of the synthesis report**

This synthesis report is organised around eight chapters:

- **Chapter 1** (Introduction) provides an overview of the evaluation's rationale, purpose and objectives.
- **Chapter 2** describes the evaluation's scope and methodology, and includes a thorough discussion of the sample on which this evaluation is based.
- **Chapter 3** covers donor perspectives on CV&A and the assumptions about changes these kinds of interventions are expected to bring about.
- **Chapter 4** provides an overview of what donors are doing in practice, highlighting what has worked well and less well in different interventions and settings.
- **Chapter 5** assesses the results and impact of CV&A interventions along three different dimensions: i) in terms of broader developmental outcomes such as poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); ii) in terms of changes at more intermediate levels, including changes in practice, behaviour, policy and power relations; and iii) in terms of the DAC evaluation criteria most relevant to this evaluation, namely *relevance*, *effectiveness* and *sustainability*; the criterion on impact is addressed in points i) and ii) above.
- **Chapter 6** seeks to uncover the reasons why the (positive) impact of CV&A interventions has so far remained limited.
- **Chapter 7** looks at how current CV&A interventions fit in with the aid effectiveness agenda.
- **Chapter 8** draws out the main conclusions from the study, and on that basis develops a series of core principles and recommendations for improved donor practice. It also outlines issues/areas that merit further investigation.

### 3. Donor perspectives on CV&A and assumptions about the changes they are intended to bring about

S11 For the ECG donors, the primary rationale for strengthening citizens' voice and public accountability comes from their **common mandate** around poverty reduction, sustainable development and attainment of the MDGs.

S12 This has produced a **broad consensus** about the potential contribution that strengthening citizens' voice and the accountability of state institutions can make to the reduction of poverty and other developmental outcomes.

S13 The **chain of causality**, whether implicit or explicit, is generally as follows: increasing citizens' voice will make public institutions more responsive to citizens' needs and demands and thereby more accountable for their actions. This combination of voice and accountability will in turn i) generate outcomes that will directly contribute to broad developmental outcomes, such as the MDGs; or ii) will have considerable influence on other (intermediate) factors believed to impact poverty reduction and other broad development objectives. The following provides a schematic depiction of these assumptions of change:

#### **Box 3 Direct effects**

**V → A → improved developmental outcomes** (e.g. poverty reduction; meeting other MDGs)

#### **Indirect effects**

**V → A → intermediate variables** (e.g. improved governance; stronger democracy) → **improved developmental outcomes**

S14 This report analyses how these **assumptions** for change that guide donor thinking and policy on CV&A, actually **bear out in practice**, and what **challenges and tensions** may emerge on the ground.

### 4. Conclusions emerging from findings

#### i) Context and the limitations it poses

S15 In general, donors clearly recognise the importance of **context**, and they tend to shape their choices and decisions about possible entry points, channels, actors and mechanisms in relation to that context.

S16 In the sample under analysis, it is largely in response to contextual factors, that there are more donor supported **voice interventions than accountability** ones. However, such a strategy may prove problematic in terms of increasing voice without a parallel effort to build the effectiveness and capacity of state institutions to address growing demands and expectations. It also skirts the issue of the need to engage with both government institutions and civil society organisations in order to create the channels for voice that can lead to greater accountability.

S17 Some of the main **entry points** that donors have used for their CV&A work have included existing formal institutional frameworks in countries where these are available, political junctures, decentralisation, sectors and overall poverty and exclusion.

S18 Levels of aid dependence have also been important in delineating the parameters of what donors can and cannot do.

S19 However, context awareness has not proved sufficient to enable donors to grapple with the **problems and obstacles related to the interaction between formal and informal institutions, and underlying power relations and dynamics.**

*ii) Effects of CV&A interventions have remained limited and isolated*

S20 Significantly, some **examples of positive effects resulting from CV&A interventions** have emerged from the interventions analysed.

S21 This is mostly the case at the level of **positive changes in behaviour and practice**, especially in terms of raising citizen awareness and of encouraging state officials (especially at the local/sub national level) to become more accountable. Participatory processes such as public hearings, multi-stakeholder forums, public audits and planning and budgeting processes, are good examples of this.

S22 When interventions have been **targeted explicitly towards marginalised, socially excluded and otherwise discriminated against groups**, such as women and ethnic minorities, there is some limited evidence to suggest that the interventions have been useful in empowering such groups. However, this focus has been the exception rather than the rule in the interventions included in this study.

S23 The same can be said of the work that donors have undertaken with **non-traditional civil society groups** like social movements and trades unions (again, exceptions rather than the rule in the considered interventions).

S24 Some instances of **effect at the level of policy change** were also identified, in which CV&A work contributed to the passing of certain legislation.

S25 The **media** in particular emerged as a positive mechanism for CV&A engagement in almost all of the countries studied – though clearly building up a regulatory framework and the passing of access to information laws are only a first, if very important, step in strengthening CV&A. Rules and regulations mean little if there is no capacity, power or will to enforce them.

S26 However, these **examples** of the kinds of changes that CV&A interventions have helped to bring about **remain limited and relatively isolated at the micro-level**, and it is not clear from the case studies whether and how they can be **scaled up**. The message that comes across more often than not, is that they cannot.

S27 Again, based on the limited evidence that this report draws upon, changes in power relations have proved much more difficult to identify or come by.

S28 The same holds for **broader developmental outcomes**. All case studies suggest that the effect on development of CV&A in particular, and democracy more generally, (in terms of leading to poverty alleviation and the achievement of other MDGs, for example) is neither direct nor obvious, and **no evidence can be found** within the sample, **of a direct contribution** of CV&A interventions to poverty alleviation or the meeting of the MDGs.

*iii) Understanding the limited effects of CV&A interventions: donor assumptions & power relations/informal institutions*

S29 An important part of the reason for the limited results that CV&A interventions have been able to achieve lies in the unrealistically high donor expectations of what such work can achieve, based largely on some **misguided assumptions**.

S30 Such donor assumptions include:

- An assumed automatic relationship between enhanced citizens' voice and improved government accountability.
- An assumption that citizens' voice represents the interests, needs and demands of a homogeneous "people".
- An assumption that more effective and efficient institutions will naturally be more transparent, responsive and ultimately accountable.
- A related assumption that CV&A interventions can be supported via a traditional focus on capacity building of formal institutions.
- An assumption that democracy leads to improved developmental outcomes (including poverty reduction).

S31 However, as the different case studies help to illustrate, all these relationships tend to be more complex and challenging on the ground.

S32 In particular, **power relations and informal institutions, processes and relations** (including social and cultural norms, clientelism, corruption etc.) fundamentally shape the way that formal institutions operate and may limit the outcomes and impact of CV&A interventions intended to transform formal institutions. Whilst lack of technical skills and capacity is a significant constraint, there are important political relationships and personal incentives that shape the behaviour of both state and non-state actors. Thus, for instance, laws may be passed to enhance women's participation or to decentralise power, but political deadlock and/or gatekeepers may block the implementation of such laws. While donors may be aware that informal institutions and power relations matter, they are often not well placed to engage with them.

S33 Additionally, **voice** is often **treated as an unproblematic concept**, and something that can be easily exercised by the poor and marginalised, without addressing the fundamental question of 'whose voice' is being heard. In reality, the voices of the poor (as well as those of other groups) are far from homogeneous – and these many voices may not necessarily be complementary, and may actually compete with one another. There are **differences in power** within civil society as well, and different organisations have different motivations, interests and capacities to engage.

S34 It is therefore essential to keep in mind that addressing the demands and needs that stem from the population (including the poor) is not necessarily a consensual and conflict-free process. In fact, a key characteristic of a democratic process is that multiple groups contend to exercise voice, and the state may respond and be accountable to some of these and not to others. In other words, **not all voices are equal or equally heard**. It remains unclear who is actually excluded by some of the spaces and mechanisms created to encourage ‘voice’ and ‘participation’, and the extent to which efforts to support or consolidate them are successful at reducing discrimination. It has proven particularly challenging for donors to reach the most marginalised and most remote, especially in rural areas.

*iv) Understanding the limited effects of CV&A interventions: donor design and implementation of CV&A interventions*

S35 There is a **tension between the long-term processes of transforming state-society relations, and donors' needs or desires to produce quick results**, and donors need to be more realistic about what can be achieved in the shorter term.

S36 In addition, there is an issue of the **sustainability of CV&A interventions** over time. Many of the organisations supported by donors, especially those aimed towards voice (including NGOs in particular) are highly aid dependent, and it is not clear how they are intended to become self-sufficient.

S37 **The ‘more with less’ approach** of donors means that large amounts of funding are going into interventions, in ways that are beyond the absorptive capacity of the implementing organisations. CSOs, in particular, are responding to donor objectives and agendas by transforming their organisations beyond their core competencies, and the quality and effectiveness of these organisations is being undermined. For example, many service delivery NGOs are increasingly doing more advocacy in order to secure donor funding, which takes them beyond their core mandate and away from their beneficiaries.

S38 Finally, in terms of **aid effectiveness**, the evidence shows that donor coordination efforts in CV&A interventions are limited. There is a lack of strategic thinking and of a coherent approach in the development and management of programmes, resulting in on-going duplication, gaps and competition.

## **5. Core principles and recommendations for improved donor practice**

S39 These core principles and recommendations build on the analysis provided in this report and are based on the sample of interventions that constitutes the main body of evidence for this project. Given the limitations and constraints of the sample, these recommendations may only be partial and may not fully reflect the range of activities that donors are already undertaking, which were beyond the scope of this evaluation.

**Core principle 1: Build or sharpen ‘political intelligence’ in developing CV&A policies and in undertaking CV&A interventions on the ground**

***Recommendations***

In order to work towards this, donors need to:

- Recognise more openly and explicitly that development cooperation is political and not simply technical in nature.
- Be more aware of the fact that “all good things” do not automatically go together. Undertake strategic political economy analyses of power and change in a particular country or setting, in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of the interaction between formal and informal institutions and of the incentives framework within which actors (both state and non-state as well as domestic and international) operate.
- On that basis, analyse what the operational implications for CV&A interventions may be. Some donors, notably DFID and Sida, are already involved in this kind of analytical work, but a key challenge for such studies remains how to translate the insights gained through the analysis into practice.
- Consider whether it is worth pursuing joint country political economy analyses.
- At a minimum, exchange/share lessons emerging from such work, so that donors may carry out their activities from a shared basis of understanding.
- View this kind of analysis not as a ‘one off’ but rather as an activity to be monitored and updated continuously, in order to inform on-going donor programming.
- Explore the possibility of undertaking political economy analyses by sector (e.g. justice, forestry, media, local governance etc.) and not simply in aggregate.

**Core principle 2: Work with the institutions you have, and not the ones you wish you had**

***Recommendations***

In order to work towards this, donors need to:

- Learn to live with the informal institutions and practices that continue to predominate, and often override, the formal ones in the country settings they work in.
- Engage with these informal systems more thoroughly and explicitly rather than ignore them or, worse, dismiss them as irrelevant or backward.
- Focus on how to best work ‘with the grain’ (i.e. what is already in-country) rather than to transplant formal institutional frameworks from the outside.

**Core Principle 3: Focus capacity building not only on technical but also on political skills**

***Recommendations***

In order to work towards this, donors need to:

- Continue to support technical capacity building of both civil society and state actors, particularly at the local level.

- Pay considerably more attention to the lack of substantial *political* capacity of both state and non-state actors, i.e. the capacity to forge alliances, evidence and build a case, contribute to the decision-making and policy-making process, and influence others to make change happen.
- In order to do this, take as the starting point the fact that such political capacity is likely to be shaped by the institutional and incentives frameworks within which actors operate.
  - State bodies still require improved skills for planning, budgeting and provision of service, local development planning and engaging with CSOs on an equal footing.
  - CSOs require support to understand and monitor policy processes, as well as communication skills to relay information to their beneficiaries and to build consensus on the ground.
  - Political parties need to improve their ability to work better together in parliament to exert greater influence over the policymaking process and thereby act as more effective representatives of their constituents.

**Core principle 4: Place greater focus on CV&A mechanisms that address both sides of the equation within the same intervention**

**Recommendations**

In order to work towards this, donors need to:

- Work on both voice and accountability more consistently and systematically, rather than assuming that one leads to the other.
- Seek out ways to connect increased voice with the corresponding and relevant actors in state institutions, such as directly linking empowerment of excluded and marginalised groups with interventions aiming to influence policy decisions and engage actively with the government on these issues.
- Strengthen **existing mechanisms** at the national level that can function to bring the state and the citizen together, such as parliaments, ombudsmen (e.g. human rights, anti-corruption and electoral commissions) and multi-stakeholder processes (e.g. participatory budgeting and local development processes).
- Strengthen **mechanisms at the local level**, such as local development committees and consultative councils, and do not rely simply on supporting the decentralisation process to bring the state closer to the citizen.
- Work on further developing the **media's role** to bring voice and accountability together, while being mindful of the **dangers of liberalising the media without professionalising it and holding it to certain standards**.
- Support **increased access to information** by supporting legislation and the right to information. However, a focus on this formal right is not enough. Access to information should also be supported by improving the capacity of interested actors and watchdog organisations to understand and utilise information correctly, and donors should work closely with domestic supporters of freedom of information laws to give them real teeth.

## **Core principle 5: Diversify channels and mechanisms of engagement and work more purposefully with actors outside donors' 'zone of comfort'**

### ***Recommendations***

In order to work towards this, donors need to:

- Pay attention to issues of integrity, quality and capacity when selecting **CSO partners** to engage with (so as to avoid supporting what in the case studies were identified as 'briefcase' NGOs and other CSOs lacking legitimacy). This can be monitored by setting rigorous selection criteria, carrying out capacity assessments, and observing the CSOs more closely in their implementation of programmes.
- Be more selective in choosing experienced partners that have ties to the grassroots and can reach otherwise marginalised and isolated groups (especially in the rural areas).
- Continue to work with or work more closely with non-traditional civil society organisations like religious organisations, trades unions and social movements.
- Ensure that CV&A interventions include relevant and specific actions to promote **access to voice and influence among excluded, marginalised and otherwise discriminated against groups** (such as women and ethnic minorities).
- Develop a much **clearer and targeted pro-poor approach that is informed by issues related to social exclusion and discrimination**.

## **Core principle 6: Improve key design and implementation features of CV&A interventions and aid effectiveness**

### ***Recommendations***

In order to work towards this, donors need to:

- Recruit **politically informed advisors** at both the headquarters and the field levels.
- At the field level, ensure that institutional memory is built so that country-specific knowledge is transferred even after staff have moved on.
- Establish **more realistic expectations for CV&A interventions**.
- Provide **longer term and more flexible support**, recognising that CV&A efforts, aimed as they are towards changing entrenched attitudes, reforming long-established structures, and altering power dynamics, can take a long time to bring about.
- Become more agile in responding to rapid changes in context that provide new opportunities for CV&A that are worth supporting.
- Be mindful to build in **sustainability features and exit strategy into the design of CV&A interventions**.
- Pay more attention to empowering partners to take over donor roles and work to build the sustainability of projects.
- Improve **donor coordination of CV&A initiatives** beyond the basics of information sharing and basket funding.

S40 A brief outline of **issues worthy of further investigation** is also provided following the recommendations in the main body of the synthesis report.



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## **Abbreviations**

BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Germany)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CV&A	Citizens' Voice and Accountability
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
Danida	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DGCD	Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (Belgium)
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECG	Evaluation Core Group
GBS	General Budget Support
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PARC	Performance Assessment Resource Centre
PD	Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Rationale, Purpose and Objectives

### *Rationale*

1.1 Since the 1990s, the quality of governance has been recognised as one of the central factors affecting development prospects in poor countries. Governance goes beyond the formal institutional framework of the state to encompass the interaction between formal and informal institutions, rules, processes and relationships (see Box 4). It is a process of bargaining between those who hold power and those who seek to influence it.

### **Box 4 Defining Institutions**

For the purposes of this report, formal institutions are understood to refer to clearly defined (written) laws, rules and regulations, stretching from the constitution down to simple procedures governing the work of minor bureaucrats and private employees.

The term informal institutions, on the other hand, refers to unwritten rules, social and cultural norms, expectations and processes. These institutions are understood locally, but as a general rule, they tend to be somewhat difficult for those not socially integrated into the country to apprehend (or work within).

(Source: M. Nelson, Guidelines for Drivers of Change Research, 2007)

1.2 Citizens' Voice and Accountability (CV&A) are important dimensions of governance. It is widely acknowledged that citizens as well as state institutions have a role to play in delivering governance that works for the poor and enhances democracy<sup>2</sup>. In particular, citizens' capacity to express and exercise their views has the potential to influence government priorities or governance processes, including a stronger demand for transparency and accountability. However, citizens need effective 'voice' in order to convey their views; and governments or states that can be held accountable for their actions are more likely to respond to the needs and demands articulated by their population.

1.3 This evaluation seems particularly timely and relevant. As a result of the evolving development agenda, strengthening CV&A has not only become an increasingly important part of donor activities, but the types of actors and interventions to which donors are providing support have also expanded. It is of vital importance for donors and recipients to take an informed view of how and under what circumstances

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<sup>2</sup> In accordance with the ToR we use the terms 'citizen' and 'state' as the two main dimensions of the V&A relationship. However, we recognise that it is important to consider individuals without formal/legal citizenship, in the context of voice and accountability, because it is these groups who are most likely to be marginalised and unable to express their voice or demand accountability for their entitlements. For the purpose of this report, we therefore interpret the term 'citizen' as 'individual'.

## ***Introduction***

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voice and accountability interventions are effective. Yet there is an identified lack of evidence and understanding of factors influencing CV&A. To date there have been few systematic attempts to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of these types of interventions.

### ***Purpose***

1.4 A core group of DAC partners<sup>3</sup> – the Evaluation Core Group (ECG) agreed in 2006 to collaborate on a joint evaluation of development aid for strengthening CV&A. The purpose of this evaluation is to deepen understanding of what works, what doesn't work and why, in the context of donor support to CV&A interventions. The evaluation seeks to highlight gaps, overlaps and duplication in donor provision with a view of informing donor practice so that it can become more effective and coherent.

### ***Objectives***

1.5 As set out in the Terms of Reference (see Annex 1), the main objectives for the whole CV&A evaluation include the following:

- To improve understanding of CV&A among development partners by mapping and documenting donor approaches and strategies for enhancing CV&A in a variety of developing country contexts.
- To learn lessons from CV&A interventions, identifying in particular what has worked well and less well, where and why.
- To assess the effect/impact of a range of donor CV&A interventions on governance and explore whether such effects are sustainable.
- To explore how CV&A interventions fit with the aid effectiveness agenda.

1.6 The specific objectives of the synthesis report include:

- Analysing and synthesising the findings of the country case studies in a manner that builds on and incorporates previous components and outputs of the initiative (e.g. the literature review, intervention analysis, pilot tests of the Evaluation Framework and Methodology, and country case studies).
- Providing a review of evolving donor policies on CV&A (including governance and social development) based on the existing evaluation material, the review of literature, and an update on current donor approaches.
- Identifying common themes or lessons that arise, which are applicable across a range of country contexts, and context specific lessons and issues.
- Drawing out some core principles and key recommendations for improved donor practice, and highlighting areas worthy of further research.

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<sup>3</sup> Donor partners include the UK, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

## 1.2 Roadmap

1.7 This Report is organised into eight chapters, including this brief **Introduction**. **Chapter 2** provides a thorough description of the evaluation's scope and methodology. In terms of scope, the chapter is intended to give the reader a sense of how the evaluation defines the term 'CV&A', what the evaluation is intended to cover, what its boundaries and parameters are, what the leading questions it seeks to address consist of, and how the DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance are incorporated. The discussion on methodology describes the three different phases that this evaluation has followed and the outputs that have been produced as a result. It also analyses the sample of individual CV&A interventions in the seven country case studies that this evaluation is based upon, noting limitations regarding its representativeness and the ability to extrapolate systematic findings and conclusions from it. **Chapter 3** explores the emergence of CV&A as a priority in international development, outlining the core principles underpinning CV&A interventions despite differences in the terminology used by different donors. In addition, the chapter looks at some of the basic assumptions underlying donor policy and practice on CV&A, and the kinds of changes/transformations donors believe such interventions can help to bring about. **Chapter 4** then turns to the findings emerging from the country case studies themselves. This chapter provides an overview of what donors are actually doing in practice, highlighting in particular what has worked well and less well in different interventions and settings. Taking context as the main point of departure, the chapter seeks to identify the main entry points that donors have identified for their CV&A work, as well as the key actors and institutions (understood in terms of channels and mechanisms) that they engage with.

1.8 Building on the discussion on Chapter 4, **Chapter 5** sets out to assess the results and impact of CV&A interventions. It does so along three different dimensions: i) in terms of broader developmental outcomes such as poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); ii) in terms of changes at more intermediate levels, including changes in practice, behaviour, policy, and power relations; and iii) in terms of the DAC evaluation criteria most relevant to this evaluation, namely relevance, effectiveness and sustainability (the criterion on impact is addressed in points i) and ii) above). The analysis in Chapters 4 and 5 suggests that CV&A interventions have been able to make some positive contributions, especially in terms of altering practice and behaviour, as measured by raised awareness about rights and obligations. Yet the success of CV&A interventions still remains quite isolated (mostly at the micro-level) and has proved difficult to scale up.

1.9 **Chapter 6** turns to the task of uncovering the reasons why the (positive) effects of CV&A interventions have so far remained limited. The chapter analyses the sets of assumptions underlying donor work in CV&A and draws out what these assumptions have implied in terms of hindering the design and implementation of CV&A interventions and, ultimately, limiting their effect or impact. The key message emerging is that while donors understand the context within which they work, they still need to develop more strategic skills, and sharpened or more refined political analysis. This would enable them to more adequately address the informal processes, mechanisms and power relations that shape the environment in which CV&A initiatives operate and to condition their effect and impact. **Chapter 7** looks at how current CV&A interventions fit in with the aid effectiveness agenda. It discusses CV&A interventions in terms of ownership, donor alignment, harmonisation and

mutual accountability. In the discussion on donor alignment, the chapter discusses the issue of general budget support (GBS), as this was a particular area of interest identified by DFID during the process of drafting this report. It is clear however that the agenda on donor alignment is not limited to GBS. **Chapter 8** draws out some of the main conclusions emerging from this study, and on that basis develops a series of core principles and recommendations for improved donor practice. The chapter ends by briefly outlining issues and areas that merit further investigation.

1.10 In addition to these eight chapters, the report also includes five annexes. **Annex 1** and **2** are the terms of reference for the whole evaluation exercise and the synthesis report. **Annex 3** is a table detailing the key features of all the interventions examined by the country and pilot case studies. There are 57 interventions in total, with information on the donors, actors, themes, timing and budgets of the interventions. The table also identifies if the intervention is primarily focused on supporting citizens' voice, accountability or both. **Annex 4** provides a broad comparative analysis of the country contexts, including the World Bank's Kaufman, Kraay and Mastruzzi indicators for voice and accountability. Finally, **Annex 5** details lessons learned on the application of the Evaluation Framework by the country case study teams that applied the framework in the field.

## **2. Citizens' Voice and Accountability Evaluation: Scope and Methodology**

### **2.1 Evaluation Scope**

*Defining the object of study: what the term 'CV&A' means for the purposes of this evaluation*

2.1 Defining **citizens' voice and accountability** has been a contentious issue throughout this evaluation, partly due to the fact that the terms are used in a number of disciplines (which all carry their own intellectual baggage); and partly due to the fact that most ECG donors do not use the term 'citizens' voice and accountability' together to describe much of the work they do in this sector. As discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3 on donor perspectives on CV&A, donors use a number of approaches, definitions and partners to work on CV&A. However, as detailed below, the Evaluation Framework was able to outline some boundaries for the country case studies and evaluation overall, and to begin to define the evaluation object. See Box 5 below for the definitions of CV&A that have been agreed upon by the ECG and used throughout the course of this evaluation project, based on findings from the literature review, interventions analysis and pilot case studies.

#### **Box 5 Operational Definitions of Citizens' Voice and Accountability**

As discussed in the literature review and other outputs of this evaluation project, for the purposes of this synthesis report, the term 'voice' is used to refer to the expression of preferences, opinions and views. Mechanisms for expressing voice are key to ensuring that different preferences, opinions and views can be expressed, heard and acted upon. Mechanisms for voice can be formal or informal. At the informal end of the spectrum, these can include a variety of citizen or civil society-led actions such as public demonstrations, protests, advocacy campaigns and public interest lawsuits. More formally, these can include working with the media, participating in policy-making and budget processes, tracking public expenditure, monitoring public service delivery, and taking part in public commissions and hearings. Voice can be directed at processes of decision-making, service delivery or policy implementation.

Accountability refers to the relationship between two parties, those who set or control the application and implementation of the rules, and those who are subject to the rules. The relationship which is of most interest in the context of the voice and accountability evaluations is that between the state (at national and local levels) and its people. This relationship can be based on both formal and informal rules and it can include forms of 'consensus building' which sometimes underpin the relationship between citizens and state. The key elements of this relationship are:

- (a) Transparency of decision-making, allowing the public and other agents of the state to oversee compliance with policies and rules. This includes use of written judgements, access to parliamentary committee sessions, invited participation in budgetary and policy processes, as well as media scrutiny.
- (b) Answerability, i.e. the legal and political obligation on the State to justify decisions to the general public or other state entities to ensure decisions remain within their administrative or constitutional mandate. Forms of answerability include written and/or verbal responses, and changes in personnel, policy and practice.

**continued**

(c) Enforceability and the ability to sanction state institutions for failure to provide adequate explanation for actions and decisions otherwise deemed contrary to legal and political mandates. This may include judicial sanctioning, or public naming and shaming.

There are three broad types of accountability relationships:

(i) Vertical accountability between citizens and their elected parliamentary/party-political representatives. Concrete mechanisms and donors' interventions include election monitoring, support to constituencies and leadership development.

(ii) Horizontal accountability between the legislative, executive and judicial arms of the state, on behalf of citizens. Concrete mechanisms and donors' interventions include: efforts to strengthen the capacity and procedures of parliaments and support for functioning of accountability mechanisms such as human rights, ombudsmen and anti-corruption commissions.

(iii) Hybrid accountability, where civil society itself takes on attributes of the state in supervising the performance of state agencies. Concrete mechanisms and donors' interventions include support to participatory budget monitoring, as well as to citizen report cards on public services - where formal accountability mechanisms lack credibility or resources.

Thus, citizens' voice and accountability are closely related. However, they are not the same and it does not follow that voice necessarily leads to accountability or vice versa.

The object of the evaluation is the dynamic relationship between the citizen and the state: how and under what circumstances an increase in voice can lead to an increase in state responsiveness and accountability. Clearly, accountability can be strengthened by other means than increased voice, and at times it is possible that voice is already (too) strong while state institutions may not be capable to respond adequately and effectively. Our point of departure is that, when looking at this dynamic relationship that focuses on both voice and accountability, '[l]inking "voice" and "accountability" can only be meaningful when citizens have the knowledge and power to make demands, and those in positions of power have the capacity and will to respond' (ODI 2007).

2.2 The primary **relationship** being examined is the vertical **one between the citizen and the state**, but it goes beyond simply the link between citizens and their elected representatives, to include other types of formal and informal relationships where those who govern (or otherwise exert influence) and set the rules interact with and impact on the lives of those they govern. Interactions between the citizen and the modern state are multiple, complex and take place on many levels. They include interactions at the local level with local government authorities and institutions, participatory budgeting and policy processes (at local and national levels) and interactions mediated by ombudsmen. Thus, this CV&A evaluation is asking who is able to strengthen their voice and demand accountability, what capacities they require to do so, and how donors can support them more effectively. The evaluation also asks how donors' support can strengthen state actors to become more responsive and accountable to their citizens.

2.3 An additional definitional note is worth adding here regarding the term **civil society**, which is a concept that is used throughout this report, especially in relation to voice interventions. For the purposes of our analysis, civil society is understood as "the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values ... [that is] distinct from ... the state, family and market (though in practice, the

boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated). Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power.”<sup>4</sup> **Civil society organisations (CSOs)** include such groups as registered charities, development **non-governmental organisations (NGOs)**, community groups, women’s organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, trades unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions, and advocacy groups. Thus, CSOs include a much broader set of organisations than NGOs alone. This report is very conscious about keeping that distinction clear, so when we use the term NGOs we do not mean CSOs and vice versa.

### ***Scope of the evaluation***

2.4 It is essential to emphasise from the outset that the report is not intended as an exhaustive assessment of donors’ support for CV&A, and it does not purport to cover the whole CV&A ‘universe’. As will be explained in greater detail in the methodology section of this chapter (see below), the pilot and country case studies only looked at a selection of ECG donor interventions. There are other ECG donor interventions in these countries that were not considered as well as interventions by non-ECG donors active in supporting CV&A (such as USAID and the Netherlands). In addition, while multi-lateral organisations like the World Bank and the UN are key supporters of CV&A initiatives, their efforts were not the focus of this evaluation, and these were examined in only a very few instances. As the evaluation uses interventions as the primary unit of analysis, aid modalities such as GBS were not a focus of the evaluation.

2.5 As will also be described in further detail in the section on Methodology, given that the 5 country case studies and 2 pilot studies were chosen for pragmatic reasons, given the compressed timeframe for the country case studies, and because of the relatively short time many of these interventions have been in place, the synthesis report seeks to identify broad trends; and it is therefore not a formal ‘evaluation’. These country case studies aim to provide a partial overview of CV&A assistance, with an emphasis on outlining current donor practice, gaps and recommendations for the future.

## **2.2 Evaluation Framework and Questions**

2.6 As will be further explained in the discussion on Methodology, one of the main outputs of the early stages of this evaluation project was the development of an Evaluation Framework<sup>5</sup>, with specific purposes including:

- (i) providing a common framework to be applied in different contexts;  
and
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<sup>4</sup> This is the definition used by the Centre for Civil Society at the LSE. See [http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what\\_is\\_civil\\_society.htm](http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what_is_civil_society.htm).

<sup>5</sup> See Foresti, M. O’Neil, T. and Sharma, B with Evans, A. (2007). Evaluation of Citizens’ Voice and Accountability: Evaluation Framework. London: ODI.

- (ii) identifying the main analytical dimensions for evaluating CV&A interventions, including indicative outcome areas, results chain, areas of change, criteria and indicators.

2.7 One of the key challenges of developing an Evaluation Framework for CV&A interventions was to define its 'boundaries', i.e. to identify which aspects or dimensions the framework should consider, given how broad, complex, dynamic and difficult to delineate the CV&A domain is. The main components of the Evaluation Framework have further determined its analytical base, by providing guidance about what the evaluation questions will be used to measure or assess. . The intervention analysis of donors' policies and interventions (also described in further detail in Chapter 2 on Methodology) revealed that donors' support for CV&A interventions seeks to influence or strengthen specific dimensions of CV&A, although their approach and focus within these dimensions may vary<sup>6</sup>. These dimensions are reflected in the framework's five core components<sup>7</sup>. These are:

1. Opportunities, constraints and entry points for CV&A
2. Institutional, organisational and individual capacities
3. CV&A channels: actors and mechanisms
4. Changes in policy, practice, behaviour and power relations
5. Broader development outcomes

2.8 Identification of **opportunities and constraints** for CV&A are derived from an analysis of the socio-political and economic country context, whilst the main **entry points** are based on an analysis of donors' overall strategies for CV&A interventions in the country and their relevance in relation to the CV&A context. **Institutional, organisational and individual capacities** describe the resources, skills and knowledge required for the exercise of CV&A. Broadly, capacity can be conceived of as having two constitutive elements: (i) competencies of individuals (e.g. their skills, abilities and behaviour) and (ii) capabilities of organisations (e.g. functional, technical, thematic, political and creative). **Channels** for CV&A are defined by a combination of **actors and mechanisms** through which individuals express their voice or demands and are able to hold the state to account; and states are responsive to citizens' voice and, ultimately, accountable to the public. All CV&A channels are defined by the function they perform (rather than their form) and can therefore include formal and informal organisations, modes of expression and public fora, legal mechanisms such as courts as well as informal processes for expressing complaints and seeking redress. These channels can be situated within either the state or society.

2.9 **Changes in behaviour, practice, policy and power relations** have been identified as the levels at which CV&A interventions can produce change. These can range from direct outputs of a specific intervention, which produce results at the very local level (e.g. the information provided to a particular community by a local rural radio), through to changes of policy and regulatory frameworks at the national level (e.g. approval of a new law or exposure of corrupt practices). **Broader development**

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<sup>6</sup> See O'Neill, T., Foresti, M. and Hudson, A. (2007). Evaluation of Citizens' Voice and Accountability: Review of the Literature and Donor Approaches. London: DFID.

<sup>7</sup> See Foresti, M. O'Neil, T. and Sharma, B with Evans, A. (2007). Evaluation of Citizens' Voice and Accountability: Evaluation Framework. London: ODI.

**outcomes** include meta-goals such as poverty reduction and human development, as well as more instrumental goals such as economic growth and good governance. CV&A interventions may not lead directly to, or be primarily responsible for, these broader outcomes. However, changes in power, policy and practice may play a role in the pathways leading to broader development goals in the long-term. In accordance with the evaluation questions, the main aim of the framework is to identify and describe these pathways leading to development outcomes, and to assess the extent to which individual interventions are likely to make a more or less direct contribution to these.

2.10 Based on these five components of the Evaluation Framework, the evaluation has been guided by four main evaluation questions<sup>8</sup>:

1. *Channels, mechanisms and processes for V&A.* What are the concrete channels, i.e. actors, spaces and mechanisms supported by donor-funded interventions for: (i) citizen's voice and empowerment; (ii) increased role of poor and excluded groups and of women, and their representatives, in governance processes; and (iii) accountability of governments to citizens. How do these channels work and how important are they to achieving V&A outcome?
2. *Results and outcomes.* To what extent have the different approaches and strategies adopted by donors contributed to enhanced V&A in partner countries? In particular, who have benefited from V&A outcomes as a result of donors' interventions? Who has not and why?
3. *Pathways to broader development outcomes and impacts.* In what ways are V&A interventions contributing to broader development goals, such as poverty reduction, economic growth and the MDGs? In particular, what are the main pathways leading from improved V&A to such broader development outcomes?
4. *V&A and aid effectiveness.* What can we learn from experience to date of donors' effectiveness in supporting V&A interventions, with particular reference to the principles enshrined in the Paris Declaration?

### ***Evaluation criteria***

2.11 The synthesis report team has used the DAC evaluation criteria<sup>9</sup> throughout this analysis. However, the criteria have been used implicitly to guide the analysis rather than explicitly to order the structure of the report or analysis. In particular, we have focused on issues of relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. We have also made an attempt to assess the effects or impact of CV&A interventions, although this has been more difficult, given the nature of the interventions. This includes the fact that most interventions are relatively new and therefore have not yielded many results to date, and the fact that the focus of the synthesis report is on the level above that of a

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<sup>8</sup> See Foresti, M. O'Neil, T. and Sharma, B. with Evans, A. (2007). *Evaluation of Citizens' Voice and Accountability: Evaluation Framework*. London: ODI.

<sup>9</sup> For a full list of the DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance, see [http://www.oecd.org/document/22/0,2340,en\\_2649\\_34435\\_2086550\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/22/0,2340,en_2649_34435_2086550_1_1_1,00.html).

single intervention, i.e. it is looking at interventions in the aggregate to see if they reveal particular patterns or issues about CV&A at that higher level. Issues related to the efficiency of interventions are not addressed, given that there is not sufficient data emerging from the case studies to allow us to draw any conclusions.

## **2.3 Evaluation Approach**

### ***Description of the approach followed for this evaluation***

2.12 This evaluation has involved three distinct phases of work. The first phase involved the development, piloting and finalisation of the Evaluation Framework and accompanying methodology by the ODI. The second phase consisted of the undertaking of five country case studies by five independent consultancies, with quality assurance provided by the Performance Assessment Resource Centre (PARC). The third and final phase is the production of this synthesis report by the ODI. This section will briefly outline the process for each of these phases. The discussion in the remainder of this chapter refers to aspects of the country case study methodology that have directly impacted the evaluation and synthesis report findings (e.g. selection of case study interventions).<sup>10</sup>

#### ***Phase 1***

2.13 In the first phase of the process, ODI prepared a literature review, carried out an intervention analysis consisting of 90 CV&A interventions, developed an Evaluation Framework to assess CV&A interventions, and piloted the framework and its accompanying methodology in two countries, **Benin** and **Nicaragua**. ODI then produced a Briefing Paper on the initial findings, based on the outputs from the first phase of the evaluation.

- Review of literature on Citizen's Voice and Accountability<sup>11</sup>  
The literature review focused on academic thinking as well as donor policy and approaches for enhancing CV&A. Part of the analysis included looking at the key knowledge gaps around agencies' effectiveness in supporting CV&A (either individually or collectively).
- Intervention review and analysis<sup>12</sup>  
In the intervention analysis we analysed 90 interventions in ten countries from the 7 ECG donors. We reviewed the approaches towards CV&A taken in different contexts, their key features and the key actors supported.

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<sup>10</sup> The Country Case Study methodology and all of the case studies are available in the accompanying CD-ROM.

<sup>11</sup> O'Neil, T., Foresti, M. and Hudson, A. (2007). Evaluation of Citizens' Voice and Accountability: Review of the Literature and Donor Approaches. London: DFID.

<sup>12</sup> See Foresti, M., Hudson, A., O'Neil, T. and Sharma, B. (2007). Evaluation of Citizens' Voice and Accountability: Intervention Analysis: Results and Implications for the Evaluation Framework. London: ODI.

- Development of Evaluation Framework<sup>13</sup> and methodology for country case studies<sup>14</sup>  
Based on the literature review and intervention analysis, we developed an Evaluation Framework that could be applied in a range of country contexts, but that was also sufficiently consistent to enable comparison across cases. We used a theory-based approach, allowing us to identify the anticipated sequence of linkages from inputs and activities to intended and unintended outcomes and impacts (the 'logic' or 'results chain').
- Pilot country case studies<sup>15</sup>  
The methodology and framework were piloted in **Benin** and **Nicaragua**. We drew upon both primary sources (such as interviews and focus groups with different stakeholders, key informants interviews and feedback workshops), and secondary sources (such as country-level policy documents and national statistics, including governance datasets) in order to analyse CV&A interventions. We also incorporated a range of stakeholders such as parliamentarians, the media, and other civil society organisations. Our understanding of context was developed by working closely with reputed and knowledgeable local consultants.<sup>16</sup>
- Finalisation of the Evaluation Framework and country case study methodology  
Throughout Phase 1 we adopted an iterative approach that linked the different elements and activities of the work plan. By doing so, we produced an Evaluation Framework based on the main findings emerging from the literature, the key lessons learned by donors in different contexts, as well as the actual experiences of the different stakeholders on the ground.
- Briefing Paper<sup>17</sup>  
A Briefing Paper outlining initial findings from the evaluation was produced by ODI in December 2007.

## ***Phase 2***

2.14 During this phase, five case studies were commissioned by individual ECG donors from independent consultancy organisations and/or individuals. The five countries that were selected include the following (all case studies are available in full in the CD-ROM accompanying this report):

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<sup>13</sup> See Foresti, M. O'Neil, T. and Sharma, B. with Evans, A. (2007). Evaluation of Citizens' Voice and Accountability: Evaluation Framework. London: ODI.

<sup>14</sup> See Foresti, M., Guijt, I., and Sharma, B. with Hudson, A. and Wells, A. (2007) Evaluation of Citizen's Voice and Accountability: Evaluation Framework: Methodological Guidance for Country Case Studies. London: ODI.

<sup>15</sup> See Foresti, M. (2007) Evaluation of Citizens' Voice and Accountability: Pilot Study report: Benin. London: ODI and Sharma, B., and Wells, A. (2007) Evaluation of Citizens' Voice and Accountability: Pilot Study report: Nicaragua. London: ODI.

<sup>16</sup> In Benin the local consultant was Adolphe Kpatchavi, and in Nicargua the local consultants were Myrna Moncada and Daysi Moncada.

<sup>17</sup> Foresti, M. and Sharma, B. with Evans, A. (2007) 'Voice for accountability: Citizens, the state and realistic governance'. ODI Briefing Paper 31. London: ODI. Available at [http://www.odi.org.uk/Publications/briefing/bp\\_dec07\\_voice\\_for\\_accountability.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/Publications/briefing/bp_dec07_voice_for_accountability.pdf).

- **Bangladesh** (commissioned by SDC and carried out by a team at Oxford Policy Management)
- **DRC** (commissioned by DGDC and Sida and carried out by a team led by DRIS)
- **Indonesia** (commissioned by BMZ and carried out by a team at Particip)
- **Mozambique** (commissioned by DFID and carried out by a team at Austral Cowi)
- **Nepal** (commissioned by Danida and carried out by a team at Intermedia NCG)

2.15 All country case study teams used the Evaluation Framework and methodological guidance to conduct the case studies. Drafts of each of the country case study reports were reviewed by the PARC and were revised on the basis of the feedback provided by the PARC.

2.16 Throughout Phase 2, ODI also maintained ongoing communication with country case study teams and ECG members. ODI worked closely with the country case study teams and PARC to ensure comparability of country case study reports. We provided input into how the country case study reports should be structured, as well as conducting a series of meetings with each country case study team prior to the finalisation of their reports, as well as making ourselves available for their queries and questions. We liaised closely with ECG members to ensure that the analysis of the evolving policies of CV&A was current and included any new or evolving policy elements.

### ***Phase 3***

2.17 As part of the third phase of the process, ODI has produced this synthesis report based on the findings and outputs from the first phase of the evaluation as well as the country case studies. The report makes recommendations for donors to consider. These are drawn from lessons about CV&A interventions emerging from the case studies and, importantly, are placed within the broader context of existing literature on the subject and extant policy approaches. As part of this effort, ODI interviewed key policy staff in the ECG donor agencies for an update of donor policy and practice in the 18-month period since the evaluation began<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> ODI interviewed the following people: BMZ: Bernhard Trautner (corruption prevention); DFID: Mark Robinson (governance), Susan Loughead (politics and the state), Emma Grant, (social development); Danida: Ander Baltzer Jorgensen (technical advisory services), Karin Nielsen (NGO cooperation), Maria Ana Petrera (policy); Norad: Eli Moen (peace, gender and democracy), Lornts Finanger (decentralisation), Jan-Petter Holtedahl (civil society), Rasmus Gedde-Dahl (NGO policy, MFA); Sida: Karin Fällman (NGOs), Stina Karlsson (human rights), Marja Ruohomaki (governance), Britta Olofsson (europe), Karin Höglund (development policy, MFA), Tomas Brundin (development policy, MFA); SDC: Catherine Favre and Barbara Affolter (human rights), Laurent Ruedin (empowerment), Anne Lougon-Moulin (economic and fiscal policy/anti-corruption), Chantal Nicod (decentralisation);

2.18 A first draft of the report was submitted to the PARC and to ECG donors in May 2008, and the ODI team also presented the report at a meeting with the ECG and the PARC in Oslo later that month. A revised version of the report has been produced, based on the comments and feedback provided by the ECG and the PARC, along with a response grid tabling all comments on the synthesis report and the corresponding response or action taken by the ODI.

***Analysis of the sample of interventions included in the country case studies***

2.19 In selecting both the two pilot case studies and the set of five country studies included in this evaluation, ECG donors followed a pragmatic approach based on their interests in specific partner countries, as well as the feasibility of the case studies within a desired timeframe, rather than a rigorous comparative methodology. In addition, it is important to highlight that, due to different constraints and limitations, all case studies were carried out within a relatively compressed timeframe, which limited the extent to which country teams could delve into the details and nuances of the interventions being analysed. As a result, the countries selected are quite diverse, and the findings emerging from them are not systematic (this point is analysed further in the section on sampling below).

2.20 Each of the country case studies (including the pilots) is based on a small number (between seven and eleven) of individual ECG donor CV&A interventions, ranging from the municipal to the provincial and up to the national level. Thus, as noted in the section on the scope of the evaluation earlier in this chapter, the primary unit of analysis is the intervention. This synthesis report explicitly relies on the findings emerging from both the country case studies and the pilot cases on an equal footing, so as to be able to rely on a greater number of interventions in drawing up our analysis. It is worth mentioning that the Evaluation Framework and Country Case Methodology were not significantly revised following the pilot studies, suggesting an adequacy of fit. Annex 3 provides a table of all these interventions by country, providing key information about the donors involved, the key actors/institutions being supported, the main themes of the intervention, the level at which the intervention is aimed, and where possible, timing and budget.

2.21 Country case study teams used various combinations of tools and techniques for data collection, based on the options available in the methodological guidance for the Evaluation Framework as well as contextual opportunities and limitations. Thus, no two country case studies used exactly the same combination of methods for data and information collection or initial choice of CV&A interventions. However, there are some similarities in the process which are worth highlighting, as they greatly impacted the nature and limitations of the evaluation findings for the synthesis report.

2.22 Firstly, all country case study teams devised a 'long list' of CV&A interventions, i.e. a list of all the possible CV&A interventions conducted by the ECG donors in the particular country. This list was then narrowed down to the 5 to 10 interventions that would be analysed for the purposes of the evaluation. A set of criteria was used to create a 'short list' of interventions that covered both state and non-state actors; demand and supply side; formal and informal mechanisms; different levels of interventions (local, regional and national levels); representation of different thematic areas; funding modalities; considerations of even representation of ECG-donor involvement; and duration of intervention to secure a critical mass of evidence (documentation, and access and availability of key stakeholders during field study

period) (see Annex 3). Pragmatism also played a considerable role in selecting interventions, which were also chosen on the basis of practical and logistical considerations, such as availability of project staff and their time, location of interventions and the feasibility of covering huge countries in a short timeframe.

2.23 Due to the focus on ECG member interventions, and practical considerations for the selection of country and final interventions, there are several limitations of the sample that must be highlighted, given that these are likely to have significant impact on the synthesis report findings. Firstly, as noted, the interventions represent only a selection of possible ECG donor supported interventions in a given country, drawn from a long list of ECG donor supported interventions that were not considered. Secondly, this evaluation focuses on the work of the ECG members, thus interventions of other key bilateral and multi-lateral donors active in CV&A were not considered. In some countries, such as **Nicaragua**, where there are a number of multi-donor funds that involve ECG members, some multi-lateral actors are present in the study, but this represents an exception rather than the rule (see also discussion above on the scope of the evaluation).

2.24 Thus the sample represents only a selection of ECG donor interventions. It does not represent the CV&A ‘universe’, given that this universe is extremely broad and varied and includes a multitude of donors and actors. Nor are these interventions necessarily examples of the general trends of interventions in a given country. For example, the **Indonesian** case study notes that: “The interventions by the ECG donors and especially those selected for this evaluation are not fully representative of the general pattern and approaches of major donor organisations in **Indonesia**. Bilateral programmes were mainly evaluated, while multi-donor programmes, such as UNDP human rights and democratisation work, were not included. Donors such as Australia, the United States or the Netherlands follow a more balanced approach towards CV&A, whereas the interventions in this evaluation have a stronger focus on either voice and civil society demand, or accountability.”

2.25 Thus, the findings and conclusions of this synthesis report tell us what some ECG donors are doing some of the time in some countries. The value of the findings is that they cover a range of country contexts and highlight some innovative approaches and modest successes, whilst detailing a number of key (and sometimes, crucially, wrong) assumptions that donors have made across the board, unconnected to country context, donor profile or available partners.

### 3. Donor Perspectives on CV&A

#### 3.1 Emergence of CV&A as a Priority in International Development

3.1 Issues related to CV&A have been an important component of development discourse and donor policy and programming since the 1990s. Three important trends in development and aid paradigms have been instrumental in placing concerns about citizens' voice and the accountability of public institutions at the centre of the international cooperation agenda in the new millennium:

3.2 *i. The new poverty agenda.* The international consensus around poverty reduction is based on a multi-dimensional understanding of poverty, which recognises that lack of power, voice and accountable and responsive public institutions is as much a part of the experience of poverty as the lack of material assets. The Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals provide a focal point for international action on poverty based on this agenda.

3.3 *ii. The good governance agenda.* Since the end of the 1990s, there has also been a growing recognition that an exclusive focus on the MDGs is insufficient to address complex development challenges. As the Commission for Africa emphasised in its 2005 report, the way states function and articulate their relations with society is increasingly seen as one of the most important factors affecting development in the poorest countries. Institutions are crucial to promoting development, and responsive, effective and accountable states are deemed to be a critical hinge in achieving the transformations necessary to achieve and sustain the MDGs. Thus, the quality of institutions within both state and society, and the relationship between them, is an important part of the debate about what makes aid and states effective – with voice and accountability as key components of improved governance as well as frequent indicators of its quality.

3.4 *iii. Efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of aid.* The principles of ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability emerged from donors' desire to make their assistance more effective and responsive to the needs and priorities of their country partners, and thereby increase its pro-poor impact. As reflected in the international consensus around poverty reduction strategy processes and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (PD), they have produced new commitments and ways of working. This includes an effort to shift away from project aid towards more programmatic assistance, through an increased reliance on aid modalities such as General Budget Support (GBS). GBS and other forms of programmatic assistance are intended to help strengthen domestic institutions rather than create independent parallel administrative systems that either compete with or undermine national ones. Chapter 6 on 'Aid Effectiveness' will further discuss these issues as they relate to donor experiences with CV&A interventions.

3.5 Importantly, donors, including the ECG, do not always use the ‘CV&A’ terminology and its usage has not been spread widely into donor vocabulary. In the case of ‘voice’ in particular, donors prefer to rely on other terms that they are more familiar with, such as ‘participation’ or ‘social accountability’.<sup>19</sup> However, despite differences in terminology, the principles that underpin the concepts of CV&A can be easily detected in different donor approaches and interventions.<sup>20</sup> For instance, as defined by the World Bank, ‘social accountability’ is an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement.<sup>21</sup> Social accountability mechanisms refer to a broad range of actions (beyond voting) that citizens, communities and civil society organisations can use to hold government officials and bureaucrats accountable, including citizen participation in public policy making, participatory budgeting, public expenditure tracking, citizen monitoring of public service delivery, citizen advisory boards, lobbying and advocacy campaigns.

3.6 Key CV&A concerns related to inclusion, participation, accountability, transparency, and equality also lie at the heart of rights-based approaches to development, which are based on these very same principles. Expressing voice and promoting accountability are central components of the ‘good governance’ agenda as well. Donor activities designated as community participation, support to civil society, empowerment etc. are implicitly or explicitly about voice and accountability. Thus, whether as a focal sector of intervention or as a theme integrated within other sectoral interventions, CV&A can be seen as a cross-cutting and underlying principle of donor strategies and support.

### **3.2 Donor Assumptions about How CV&A Interventions can Bring about Change**

3.7 From an updated analysis of donor policy that includes a review of donors’ most recent documents, as well as a review of practice, the two pilot case studies, and the subsequent five case studies that were commissioned for this synthesis report, ODI has been able to develop a picture of some of the basic assumptions underlying donor policy and practice on CV&A, and of the kinds of changes/transformations donors believe such interventions can help to bring about. The discussion below highlights some broad commonalities in donor thinking in this area. For a more detailed analysis on donor perspectives and variations in approaches, please consult the Literature Review prepared by ODI for this project.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> This came out very clearly in the interviews that Bhavna Sharma and Marta Foresti from ODI undertook with different individuals in the policy divisions of the ECG donors as part of the policy update they undertook for this synthesis report in January–March 2008.

<sup>20</sup> This point was also emphasised consistently by the donor representatives interviewed by ODI.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example,

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/EXTPCENG/0,,contentMDK:20509424~menuPK:1278120~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:410306,00.html>.

<sup>22</sup> See O’Neill, T., Foresti, M. and Hudson, A. (2007). Evaluation of Citizens’ Voice and Accountability: Review of the Literature and Donor Approaches. London: DFID.

3.8 For the ECG donors, the **primary rationale for strengthening citizens' voice and public accountability comes from their common mandate around poverty reduction, sustainable development and attainment of the MDGs.** This has produced a broad consensus about the perceived contribution that strengthening citizens' voice and the accountability of state institutions can make to the reduction of poverty and other developmental outcomes. In their policy statements, donors suggest that voice and accountability interventions can make both direct and indirect contributions to development. The chain of causality, whether implicitly or explicitly spelled out, seems to be as follows: increasing citizens' voice will make public institutions more responsive to citizen needs and demands and thereby more accountable for their actions. This combination of voice and accountability will in turn i) generate outcomes that will directly contribute to broad developmental outcomes like achieving the MDGs; or ii) will have considerable influence on other (intermediate) factors believed to impact poverty reduction and other broad development objectives.

3.9 **i. Direct contributions of CV&A to broad developmental outcomes:** Based on a multi-dimensional conceptualisation of poverty, donors argue that the absence of voice and accountability is integral to the experience of poverty and one of its root causes. As a result, increasing CV&A will inherently reduce poverty. This is particularly important in terms of supporting the empowerment, greater inclusion, and increased voice of traditionally marginalised groups, such as women and indigenous people, if they are to demand greater responsiveness and accountability from the state and have the opportunity to move out of poverty.

3.10 **ii. Indirect contributions of CV&A to poverty reduction:** Donors assume that CV&A will contribute indirectly to poverty reduction and to the achievement of broader development outcomes, by improving the quality of governance and by strengthening democratic institutions and the promotion of human rights. As elaborated below, increasing the voice of the people and making the government more responsive to the needs of citizens is perceived to lead to a more effective and better functioning state, that sets its priorities according to the people, and can thereby achieve (pro-poor) developmental results.

**(a) Improved governance and institutional performance.** As highlighted earlier in this section, donors have come to agree that the quality of governance is fundamental for development and poverty reduction because the state has primary responsibility for providing services, guaranteeing rights and creating an environment conducive to investment and growth. Rather than being spelt out, however, the significance of voice and accountability is usually implied through their relationship to the institutional characteristics that define 'good' governance. These are overwhelmingly drawn from the liberal democratic model, including democratic structures and processes such as free and fair elections and the peaceful exchange of power, respect for the rule of law and human rights, a clear separation of powers and checks and balances, an independent judiciary and media, functioning political parties and parliament, an effective, autonomous and rule-bound public sector, and space for a vibrant civil society. As discussed in Box 8 (see above) (page 37), decentralisation has also emerged as a leading component of the 'good governance' agenda. Citizens' voice and accountability are important components of these institutions and, as such, are indicators of the quality of their performance.

**(b) Promotion of democracy and human rights.** Donors assume that supporting CV&A will lead to a deepening of democracy – and that the strengthening of democratic processes will in turn lead to improved service delivery, a more equitable distribution of wealth, and poverty reduction<sup>23</sup>. Here again, decentralisation has emerged as an important process perceived as improving the quality of democracy, especially at the local level (Box 8). For some of the donors, democracy support is also an element of their core development and foreign policy mandates (e.g. Sida, Norad and SDC). Accountability, in particular political accountability, is integral to democracy, as is the idea of indirect representation (i.e. elected parliamentarians as channels for citizens' voice). In terms of the importance of voice and accountability to human rights, invariably the commitment to human rights involves supporting an environment in which individual agency can be exercised; in which all have equal opportunity to participate; and where states are able to fulfil their human rights obligations and can be held accountable for these. All of the ECG donors have some form of commitment to a rights-based approach or to the mainstreaming of human rights, although the strength of this commitment and its operationalisation varies.

3.11 There is therefore a **great deal of commonality in the way (ECG) donors articulate their support for strengthening citizens' voice and the accountability of state institutions in their policy statements.** There are variations in each donor's approach to development cooperation and the fulfilment of their mandates, however, with implications for the strategic place that citizens' voice and accountability interventions have in their overall programming. These differences are the result of the particular cultural and social values of each country, their own developmental paths and the institutional histories of their Ministries of Foreign Affairs and development agencies. On the other hand, it must be stressed that these differences exist along a continuum. All seven bilateral agencies included in this evaluation share a common conceptual and ideological framework broadly rooted in liberal democratic notions of the state and market economy, and any differences are ones of emphasis rather than absolutes.

3.12 The rest of this report will seek to analyse how these assumptions for change guiding donor thinking and policy on CV&A bear out in practice, and what challenges and tensions may emerge on the ground.

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<sup>23</sup> All ECG donors claim that there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between human rights, democracy, good governance and sustainable development/poverty reduction.

## 4. What Works and Doesn't Work in Current Donor Practice?

4.1 **CV&A interventions cover a broad spectrum of issues and areas.** They range from working at the national level with governments on policy and reform processes, to working with community based organisations on civic education and rights awareness programmes. This diversity reflects differing donor approaches to CV&A as well as donors' responses to the specific opportunities and entry points presented by the context. This chapter identifies some of the **common entry points, channels, mechanisms and activities that donors utilise for CV&A support** across the seven case studies, taking context as the starting point. In practice, donors strengthen CV&A by seeking to create or strengthen the pre-conditions for the exercise of CV&A and/or particular channels and mechanisms that underpin actions of CV&A relationships.

4.2 The analysis below seeks to highlight instances of progress and success in CV&A interventions, as well as some of the main obstacles that have been observed. While there are signs of (limited) improvement due to donor support, and considerable challenges remaining, it is difficult to state categorically and rigorously what works and does not work. As explained in Chapter 2, this is partly due to the nature of the sample of interventions on which this evaluation is based. As noted in that chapter, the sample consists of a relatively limited selection of an otherwise broad range of interventions supported by ECG donors in a set of countries that were chosen mostly for pragmatic reasons and therefore not on the basis of a rigorous methodology. Whilst an attempt was made to ensure a representative selection of interventions from within the ECG donor portfolio (and also examining a variety of sectors, actors and levels of intervention), practical and logistical considerations limited the breadth of interventions chosen. In addition, the country case study teams found that it was difficult to assess the (long-term) impact of the interventions given the short time-frame for the case studies. Finally, many interventions are relatively new, or CV&A has emerged as a relatively recent focus, which makes it difficult to see results in an area of work in which impact is meant to be more protracted.

4.3 In highlighting examples of “what works”, we have had to go down to the level of individual interventions. It has been difficult to find a number of interventions all demonstrating the same features, and which can therefore be used as an example of “what works”. Thus, this section highlights examples of what has worked according to individual interventions with specific channels and mechanisms in particular countries. Given the importance of context, it is not possible to say that what works in **Bangladesh** will work in the **DRC** or **Indonesia**, for example. We are simply highlighting positive trends and innovative ideas that seem to have the potential to “work”.

## 4.1 Taking Context into Account<sup>24</sup>

4.4 In general, as will be illustrated below, the case studies undertaken for this evaluation suggest that donors clearly recognise that context matters and that their interventions are aware of and responsive to the contexts within which they operate. As such, they shape their choices and decisions about possible entry points, channels, actors and mechanisms to engage with, and which activities are carried out, in relation to that context. In this respect, there is a high degree of relevance, which is one of the five DAC criteria to evaluate development effectiveness, in donor supported CV&A work.

### **Box 6 Why context matters**

As suggested by the literature review, the intervention analysis, and the evaluation framework prepared for this evaluation, context is an essential factor in seeking to understand why poor governance persists in certain settings, what incentives and constraints help to shape political will, what conditions, institutions and actors may favour or hinder transformation, and what entry points may be available for donor intervention/influence. Thus, one of the intuitions guiding this evaluation is that contextual factors will be important in shaping donor approaches to CV&A and their potential impact. Analysing the social, political and economic context was therefore the first step outlined in the Methodological Guidance for the country case studies, and all case studies include a section on Context. The aim of the context analysis was to provide information about the following factors for each country: i) the political and institutional framework and its actual operation; ii) a mapping of the key features and main actors relevant to issues related to CV&A; iii) the social and political landscape; and iv) events shaping the entry points, opportunities and risks for CV&A interventions.

4.5 On the other hand, as will also be discussed throughout this and subsequent chapters of this report, this awareness and responsiveness to country context also helps to highlight the limited space to manoeuvre that donors have within their CV&A interventions, especially when confronted with problems of a lack of political will or extreme state weakness. Among other things, context awareness as such does not provide donors with the political intelligence to engage with informal institutions and/or address underlying conditions that help to shape political will (which is an institutional rather than a personal quality) or that help to perpetuate pre-existing power relations.

4.6 This limitation is highlighted by the fact that, for the most part, donor work on CV&A remains focused on technical interventions and formal institutions. **Capacity building is the key activity**, whomever donors engage with. For civil society

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<sup>24</sup> Please refer to Annex 3 for a fuller discussion of the contextual similarities and differences of the seven country cases included in this study, as well as a brief overview of how each of these countries have rated over time in terms of the ‘Corruption’ and ‘Voice and Accountability’ indicators developed by Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi for the World Bank.

partners, capacity building involves strengthening technical skills such as proposal writing, managing budgets and communication, as well as some advocacy and networking skills development. For state partners capacity building includes technical assistance, as well as training, workshops and financial or material resources. Specifically, at the local level donor interventions focus on building the capacity of district and municipal governments to carry out their basic functions, particularly with regards to planning, budgeting and provision of public services as well as developing local development plans (e.g. **Indonesia** and **Benin**). However, there is less attention paid to making governments more open and responsive to citizens.

## **4.2 Identifying Entry Points for Donor Interventions**

4.7 While some of the countries included in this study have experienced sustained economic growth over a period of time (e.g. **Indonesia**, **Mozambique**, **Bangladesh**), **poverty remains a pressing problem** in all of them. In particular, inequality and social exclusion persist, and the rural-urban divide is becoming increasingly sharp. Many countries (e.g. **DRC**, **Nepal**, **Indonesia**) are considerably diverse in terms of ethnicity, religion, language and/or culture, and often such differences have been at the root of social, and at times violent, conflict (though in **Nicaragua** the differences have been more ideological).

4.8 One of the most striking features about all these countries is that they have **undergone, or are in the midst of, considerable political transition**. As such, they are in the process of redefining the nature of the relationship between state and society, and of reshaping the political settlement or social contract that binds them together. Of course, in some of these settings the nature of the transition is much more immediate and raw than in others. For example, both the **DRC** and **Nepal** are considered particularly fragile states that are only beginning to emerge from years of violent conflict and to lay the foundations for peace.<sup>25</sup> **Nicaragua** and **Mozambique** have also experienced severe civil wars, but since the 1990s both countries have made considerable progress in making a transition to peace and democracy, at least in principle. **Indonesia** and **Benin** have embarked on democratisation processes over the past decade as well, and the **Indonesian** state in particular continues to struggle to establish full control and authority over the whole of its territory and contends with pockets of conflict in different areas. In **Bangladesh**, for its part, a military caretaker government has been in place since the beginning of 2007, with elections due to take place in December 2008.

4.9 With the partial exception of **Bangladesh**, as part of these transitions all the countries included in this study are **struggling to establish or strengthen incipient democratic structures** as a new basis of legitimacy of those who govern. On paper, most of them make firm commitments to democratic governance, the separation of

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<sup>25</sup> There is no firm consensus within the international community on exactly what constitutes a 'fragile' state (see Picciotto *et al* (2007) *Global Development and Human Security*, Global Development Studies, No.3. King's College: London for a variety of donor definitions). However, there is general agreement on some key characteristics, including weak institutions and fundamental lack of state capacity and/or political will to fulfil basic functions, often as a result of conflict.

powers, and accountability mechanisms including checks and balances and oversight institutions. In practice, however, formal institutions do not often function as they are intended to, and informal institutions and understandings (including clientelistic networks, corruption, traditional chieftaincies etc.) remain deeply entrenched. The importance and relevance of this issue will become clear throughout the rest of this report.

4.10 Overall, such contextual factors provide a sense of the kinds of opportunities and constraints that donors face in their CV&A activities, and in general they have been very important in shaping or helping donors to identify entry points for their interventions. Poverty, inequality, and exclusion constitute a first point of entry and the fundamental rationale for donor involvement in all these countries. Sector work (e.g. the environment in Mozambique, forestry in Nepal etc.) has been another one.

4.11 A third and crucial entry point are (relatively) weak state institutions. However, while a fundamental weakness of the state (especially in its ability and/or willingness to respond to societal needs and demands and to be held accountable for its actions) is a hallmark characteristic of all of the seven countries included in this evaluation, it is important to keep in mind that such weaknesses are also a matter of degree (see Annex 4 on World Bank governance indicators). Not all of these states and their respective institutions are equally weak/incapable/ineffective, or weak along the same dimensions. There is a sea of difference, for instance, between the relatively well functioning and stable states in **Benin** and **Mozambique**, and even **Nicaragua**, and the failing, utterly ineffective and considerably unstable state in the **DRC**. In addition, such weaknesses or institutional deficiencies may also fluctuate within a given country over time. As suggested by the case studies, **Indonesia**, for example, has experienced remarkable improvement in issues related to CV&A from the 1990s to the present, which may be attributed to the transition to democracy the country has experienced; whilst **Nepal** has gone in the opposite direction, largely as a result of the enduring conflict between different factions.

4.12 Thus, in relatively more stable settings, donors have sought to build on the existing strengths of the political and institutional system, which offer the main entry points for CV&A work at the national and local level, involving either state or non-state actors. In these cases, donors also seek to address the various obstacles and challenges which prevent the effective implementation of the norms and policies which regulate CV&A mechanisms and processes.

4.13 In less favourable environments, where the basic rules of state functioning are not in place or not working, **political junctures** have been important in providing entry points. In the **DRC**, for instance, the signing of the Lusaka ceasefire and Global and Inclusive Agreement of Pretoria provided the international community with a crucial opportunity for engagement. In **Bangladesh**, which experienced a period of significant instability and turmoil in 2006-2007 despite the existence of a solid formal institutional framework, there is a widespread perception that the Caretaker government has been important in re-establishing order and the proper functioning of at least some government institutions, providing an interesting opportunity to give CV&A real meaning and substance.

4.14 **Decentralisation** efforts intended to ‘bring government closer to the people’ and to make it more accountable, have also been carried out in a majority of the countries in this study, including **Bangladesh, Benin, Indonesia, Mozambique, Nicaragua** and even **Nepal** – despite the lack of a functioning central state in the latter to begin with. Several of these make constitutional provisions for participation in decision-making processes at different levels of government, both national and sub-national (e.g. **Nicaragua** and the Ley de Participación Ciudadana, **Mozambique**, and **Bangladesh**’s 1972 Constitution). Not surprisingly, then, support to **decentralisation processes** in many of these settings has represented a significant point of entry for donors.

4.15 In some instances, decentralisation has provided an opportunity for meaningful donor engagement in CV&A interventions at the local level. In **Indonesia**, for example, the decentralisation process has created a number of opportunities for donor support, such as increased civil society participation (citizens and the private sector) as well as empowerment of local governance institutions to fulfill their functions (especially in planning, budgeting and provision of public services) and in implementing pro-poor development strategies and policies. In **Mozambique**, ongoing political and administrative decentralisation further provides opportunities for citizens, not least women, in municipalities and rural areas to actively voice their concern and interact with government. Yet, as attested by most of the case studies in this study (**Bangladesh, Nepal, Nicaragua**, and even **Indonesia** and **Mozambique**, where some interventions have seemed to be working), decentralisation efforts have often fallen far short of producing expected changes and transformations have become stalled. Successful decentralisation hinges on the convergence of many contextual factors – including an engaged political leadership, strong political parties committed to popular participation, and capacity at the local level – whose co-incidence may be difficult to achieve, especially in developing countries characterised by weak formal institutions and the predominance of more informal ones, such as clientelism.

4.16 In terms of entry points, it is also essential to recognise that **relations between donors and partner countries** also vary considerably depending on context, and this delineates many of the parameters of what donors can and cannot do. **Indonesia**, for instance, is not an aid dependent country. As such, it has been able to dictate the terms of its relationship with donors much more successfully than a majority of the countries included in this evaluation. The Government of **Indonesia** also exerts considerable ownership and leadership over national development processes and priorities. In highly aid dependent settings (e.g. **Mozambique, Benin, DRC**), on the other hand, donors themselves become key actors in policy making. Donors need to become fully aware of this because such active involvement can have both positive and negative ramifications. As illustrated by the case of **Mozambique**, for example, donor involvement in joint review mechanisms yields positive outcomes (more accountability and availability of information) but also unintended negative effects or impacts (e.g. erosion of formal/constitutional accountability and by-pass of citizens’ claims). As several of the case studies suggest, however, there is also a danger that donor leverage on domestic processes can substitute partner government’s accountability towards its own domestic constituency, as accountability easily becomes directed towards the donors and less towards domestic actors such as parliaments and civil society groups. **Nicaragua** represents an interesting test case of a highly aid dependent government that is trying to redefine its relationship with donors along its own priorities (but without necessarily becoming more accountable to its own population for it).

### 4.3 Main Channels and Mechanisms Engaged With

#### *Greater focus on voice than on accountability actors/interventions*

4.17 As evidence from the case studies suggests, context has also been important in determining the main channels and mechanisms that donors engage with. In many countries **donor focus has been much more on voice than on accountability**, for a variety of different, context-specific reasons. Table 1, which provides a breakdown of all donor interventions listed in Annex 3 by intended beneficiary (i.e. civil society, state or political institutions, or both), helps to illustrate this higher donor reliance on voice interventions than on accountability ones.<sup>26</sup>

4.18 One reason has to do with donor relations with the government in the recipient country. For example, in **Nepal**, during the period of conflict, donors have been unable or reluctant to work with government authorities (due to factors such as some government bodies lacking legitimacy, or authority or reach into remote areas where CSOs are able to implement projects and/or deliver services). This has led them to work much more closely with civil society on voice. In **Bangladesh**, the governments that preceded the caretaker regime were not very supportive of accountability projects, so in the face of such a lack of political will (and the fact that, as noted above, **Bangladesh** is not aid dependent), donors turned the focus of their interventions elsewhere. In **Indonesia**, incipient democratic structures require greater focus on accountability, but so far this has not been as feasible for donors as it has been to support voice-related interventions (again, as already mentioned, Indonesia's status as a middle income country helps to explain this to a considerable degree). In **DRC**, the inability of donors to rely on an almost non-existent state structure has led to increased reliance on civil society.

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<sup>26</sup> Again, it is important to keep in mind the limitations of the sample upon which this report is based, as well as the fact that, in practice, the focus of interventions on voice, accountability or their combination has to a certain extent been used as a selection criterion for interventions to be included in the evaluation. Yet, the point remains that country case study teams were looking for interventions with a strong CV&A focus, where possible, and that, in the absence of that combination, they sought to balance interventions exclusively based on voice with those based on accountability. In this respect, it is worth noting that whilst trying to find a balance, as Table 1 indicates, there were still 26 interviews with a focus on voice and only 7 with an exclusive focus on accountability, clearly reflecting a donor bias toward the former.

**Table 1. Breakdown of donor interventions by intended beneficiary**

	Interventions aimed at civil society (voice)	Interventions aimed at state or political institutions (accountability)	Interventions aimed at both Voice & Accountability	<b>TOTAL number of interventions</b>
<b>Bangladesh</b>	6	0	5	<b>11</b>
<b>Benin</b>	2	0	2	<b>4</b>
<b>DRC</b>	5	1	4	<b>10</b>
<b>Indonesia</b>	2	1	4	<b>7</b>
<b>Mozambique</b>	3	2	2	<b>7</b>
<b>Nepal</b>	4	0	5	<b>9</b>
<b>Nicaragua</b>	4	3	2	<b>9</b>
<b>Total number of interventions</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>57</b>

4.19 Another contextual factor worth highlighting in this respect is that, in all of these countries, there has been a **mushrooming of civil society organisations** and other forms of societal mobilisation over the past 15+ years – and therefore a proliferation of non-state actors that donors can (potentially) work with. One of the recurring issues that comes across in all country findings is that, if citizens' voices are to be heard<sup>27</sup>, there is a general need to strengthen the institutional, organisational and political capacity of civil society in its different forms (including NGOs, trades unions, social movements, religious groups etc). Of course, as was outlined in the case of state institutions, here too there is considerable variation among the different countries included in the study. Each of the countries exhibits different degrees of civil society strength, capacity and autonomy that are rooted in their particular history and context. In the **DRC**, for example, civil society organisations are stronger relative to the state, and have for a long time stepped in to fill the gap in the face of the state's abdication of critical responsibilities and duties. **Bangladesh** also has a long tradition of civil society organisation and mobilisation, but the relationship with state institutions can often be contentious. In **Mozambique**, civil society is considerably weaker. In **Nicaragua**, for its part, large segments of civil society have long been affiliated with the Sandinistas/FSLN, and, proclaiming that it is the legitimate representative of the people, the current Sandinista government has undertaken several steps to undermine the space in which autonomous civil society can operate.

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<sup>27</sup> Please refer to Chapter 3 on donor perspectives for an analysis problematising this issue.

4.20 Whilst understandable given the contextual conditions donors encounter in the different countries included in this study, this approach to emphasise voice over accountability has important limitations. For one, it cannot be easily assumed that strengthening voice on its own will somehow lead to improved accountability. In some instances, such an emphasis on voice without concomitant support to accountability, support can even prove destabilising, given that expectations may be raised yet state institutions are not effective, capable or willing enough to respond (e.g. **Nepal**, **Bangladesh**). Beyond this, there is also a concern that was expressed in many of the case studies about how credible and/or legitimate many groups within civil society are in reality. As highlighted in the **Mozambique** and **Nepal** reports, the proliferation of civil society organisations in itself cannot attest to its relative health and strength, as many such groups (especially NGOs) can be used as vehicles to guarantee funds from donors but are in actual fact little more than personal enterprises.

#### *Engagement with the ‘usual suspects’ within civil society*

4.21 **When working on voice, donors tend to engage primarily with civil society partners**, predominantly NGOs. Many donors, particularly the Scandinavian ones, channel funding to NGOs primarily through Northern International NGOs (such as Oxfam, Action Aid and Care International), which have links with both national and local level NGO partners, though they tend to be formal and urban based organisations. Donors face difficulties in engaging with local level and community based organisations directly, and as such often find it difficult to reach the most marginalised, especially in rural areas. Thus they have often favoured relying on NGOs as a promising intermediary to channel their CV&A assistance. Yet, as suggested by the case studies (e.g. **Benin**, **Indonesia**, **Mozambique**, **Nepal**), there are considerable limitations to such a strategy, because the evidence of NGOs producing results is mixed. There are problems associated with the legitimacy, representativeness, independence, credibility and sustainability of many such groups.

4.22 At the same time, the case studies also suggest that there are a number of actors or organisations within non-traditional CSOs that have proven to be effective and/or innovative partners for CV&A interventions.

#### *Engagement with non-traditional civil society groups*

4.23 **Non-traditional civil society groups**, such as trades unions, social movements and religious groups are not engaged with on a consistent and regular basis. There are, however, isolated examples of donor engagement with such organisations in the country case studies that suggest that they can be effective and/or innovative partners for CV&A interventions. In **Indonesia**, for example, one donor works with **Islamic mass-based organisations** as the affiliation with religious groups of this kind helps to open doors which are usually closed to “secular” CSOs. This approach has been regarded as innovative and has the potential to reach the grassroots, where religious organisations’ legitimacy and popularity tends to be higher than that of traditional NGOs. Donors in **Indonesia** have also been facilitating the networking and capacity building for local **watchdog organisations**. Because relations between CSOs and local governments are still often strained, this has been an important initiative aimed at strengthening the professional capacities of those organisations with regard to monitoring, communication, as well as understanding technical processes and policies in government procedures and facilitating constructive relationships with local government.

4.24 In **Bangladesh**, citizen engagement by a **social movement** (Samata), using entitlement to government land and water bodies, has created a more responsive state, with some property rights realised as a result. Samata has managed to maintain the ideology of a people's movement with its own robust internal dynamic. There is some concern that this intrinsic dynamic may be damaged by high levels of funding, although it is important to note that the reported rapid increase in land redistribution happened after donors started supporting the project. Also in **Bangladesh**, support to a **trade union** has proved it is possible to maintain and extend an active trade union movement without infiltration by partisan politics and corruption. The donor in **Bangladesh** side-stepped the risks by funding processes (dialogue, research) rather than the organisations involved in the trade union movement.

#### *The media*

4.25 The **media** is emerging as a key mechanism, primarily for voice but with potential to be a mechanism for accountability. Donor supported media interventions are varied and it is one of the few sectors that demonstrates innovation and flexibility, given that it can be supported in a variety of country and political contexts. The media is a particularly effective and efficient CV&A mechanism as it is popular, has extensive reach (particularly to rural areas) and is robust at managing a multiplicity of viewpoints and controversial issues. In terms of its voice function, the media provides an effective forum for the airing of the public's views, complaints and grievances. In terms of accountability, the media has been able to demand answers from authorities.

4.26 Media CV&A interventions have been supported in almost all of the country case studies with a modicum of success in a number of different ways. Strengthening the professionalism of the media has been a focus for many donor interventions, such as in **Nepal**, where Danida has been supporting the Centre for Professional Journalism Studies (an NGO) through its Media for Consolidation of Democracy intervention, aimed at civic education and awareness raising. The media have also been effective in advocating for and using the right to information, which has been supported by donors in **Nicaragua** (via supporting the government to implement a new access to information law) and **Bangladesh** (supporting civil society's demand for this right).

4.27 In **Benin**, donors have been working with the media for approximately 10 years and their programmes have evolved in line with the professionalisation and maturation of the sector. The **Benin** case highlights a number of key processes (supported by donors) that have led to the recognition of the media as a trusted and legitimate CV&A actor. Namely, the establishment of a regulatory framework ensuring media pluralism, the establishment of a national agency responsible for implementing and enforcing the regulatory framework, progressive liberalisation of media including increasing number of radio, print, TV and multimedia players and the enforcement of the right to information and freedom of expression.

4.28 This model is also being utilised in the **DRC**, where donors have supported the establishment of the Higher Media Authority (state regulatory body) and are supporting the establishment of a number of radio stations with the objective of providing balanced and accurate reporting whilst airing a range of voices and opinions. In addition, in the **DRC**, the case study suggests that support to civil society and radio stations has contributed to the high participation in the referendum and subsequent

elections, the relatively peaceful election process and the acceptance of the results. However, these successes are more likely to be isolated events rather than representative of a general increase in accountability. As one key informant to the **DRC** country case study summarised it, “citizens are allowed to say anything without going to jail but the state is still not listening”.

4.29 Donor focus on both voice and accountability in their work with the media seems to reflect an awareness (if not made explicit in any of the case studies) of the **dangers of liberalising the media without professionalising it and holding it to certain standards** – as became horrifically evident in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide, where political liberalisation produced a number of independent media channels that deepened the country’s social divisions. Beyond this, it is also important to recognise that building up a regulatory framework is only an additional step in an agenda to increase voice and accountability that is likely to be much more challenging. Rules and regulations mean little if there is no capacity, power and/or will to enforce them (as illustrated by the case of the access to information law passed in **Nicaragua**).

### ***Women and excluded groups***

4.30 The evidence from all seven case studies suggests that very few of the CV&A interventions included in this study focus explicitly on women, the poor or other marginalised groups. Yet there are a few examples of such engagement, and on the whole these targeted interventions appear to have contributed to giving a voice (or rather voices) to those who would otherwise remain voiceless. In **Bangladesh**, for example, donors fund the NGO Rupantar, which works specifically with **women** politicians, including candidates and elected women members of the Union Parishads (district level government offices). The establishment of networks of women at ward level through to sub-district level ensures visibility and mutual support, and that has helped to build the confidence of women politicians and to strengthen their electoral appeal. Thus, this type of external support has been instrumental in supporting women to become more active members of district government, to be invited to participate in other forums and to have successfully contested general district government seats.

4.31 In **Mozambique**, the case study shows that donor supported mechanisms like Institutions for Community Participation and Consultation at the local level, as well as training of parliamentarians at the national level, give women room for active participation, and enable them to voice their opinions and priorities. The **Nepalese** country case study examined two interventions specifically aimed at empowering **excluded groups** (*dalit* and *janajati*) using the mechanism of village or citizens’ committees to create awareness on rights and, critically, assisting people to exercise such rights. One of the most notable results in this regard was increased access by the *dalit* communities to citizenship, natural resources and basic services, as well as promotion of accountability of public officials. Also in **Nepal**, there has been some influence on government policy in relation to the rights of the *janajati* peoples – brought about through donor-supported projects. In a project focused on the empowerment of the *janajati* (indigenous) group, there have been positive results in

the form of the government's ratification of an ILO convention<sup>28</sup> and a 20 point agreement plan with the Nepalese Government. However, while the plan does set a precedent for agreements reached with government, it is not legally binding.

### ***Engagement with state actors***

4.32 Whilst, as noted above and depicted in Table 1, donors have tended to focus on voice and civil society partners in the CV&A interventions analysed as part of this study, they have also been working with state partners, particularly on the decentralisation process (e.g. **Indonesia**, **Benin**, **Mozambique** and **Nicaragua**). Thus, **local government** is increasingly becoming one of the most popular state partners for donors to engage with – while the challenges that have been encountered in decentralisation processes in all these countries remain an important limiting factor.

4.33 In terms of channels, donors are working with district and municipality heads and their staff to strengthen their capacity for planning, budgeting and provision of basic services (e.g. **Indonesia**) as well as their ability to implement local development plans with the participation of citizens. In **Benin**, donors support the decentralisation process as a mechanism for citizen engagement with the state. Specifically, at the local level donor interventions focus on building the capacity of district and municipal governments to carry out their basic functions, particularly with regards to planning, budgeting and provision of public services as well as developing local development plans (e.g. **Indonesia** and **Benin**). In **Indonesia**, whilst results have been few, donors recognise that it is fundamentally necessary to address this capacity gap in order to secure future results in CV&A at the local level.

4.34 In **Mozambique**, the intensification of auditing at the local level (via support to the Centre for Public Integrity and the Administrative Court) has increased the awareness of local public managers about the need to be more accountable, and the expectation is that this heightened awareness will lead to increased state responsiveness. However, in other case studies, local level participation and watchdog mechanisms were not engaged with, such as the District/Village Development Committees in **Nepal**.

4.35 Evidence from the seven countries in this evaluation suggests that **national government is less frequently engaged in donor supported CV&A interventions**. When engaging with national governments, donors tend to work with either specific ministries (e.g. Ministry of Forestry in **Indonesia** or Ministry of the Interior in **Nicaragua**) or with the Office of the President. There is less focus on state institutions such as the legislature or judiciary, or national state actors such as parliamentarians and ombudsmen. (Please refer to the Table at Annex C of Annex 1). A partial example is provided by the case of **Nicaragua**, where a multi-donor fund to support **political parties** has been established to support non-partisan dialogue and partnership amongst members from the different parties. Thus far, the fund has had some success in reaching out to the parties' youth members and encouraging in them a non-partisan approach to politics. The intervention to provide training for

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<sup>28</sup> ILO Convention 169 that describes indigenous people's rights over land, culture, language, education – and the right to self-determination.

parliamentarians in **Mozambique** offers another example. Yet, in the sample included in this study, such engagement with crucial elements of ‘political society’ (like political parties and parliamentarians) is the exception rather than the rule.

### ***Participatory processes***

4.36 Participatory processes constitute an important effort to engage both civil society and government actors (at different levels) in the same CV&A intervention. The ‘**public hearing**’ or ‘**public consultation**’ mechanism was found to be a major channel developed and applied by donors in **Indonesia**. Although they often have limited openness (official, written invitations are needed, only specific stakeholders or their representatives are invited, marginalized groups are hardly included), they generally have fostered the hearing of citizens’ voice. This mechanism has also been popular with Nepalese CSOs and media, featured in the Nepalese interventions chosen. Here again, the consultation process seems to be primarily a method of increasing voice, while the link to responsiveness and accountability is less clear.

4.37 **Multi-stakeholder forums** in **Indonesia** are also an instrument for citizens’ voice, and they tend to be more open and representative than the consultation processes above. Within the Multi-Forestry Programme, for example, different working groups consisting of civil society and government actors advised the local government on community based forest management.

4.38 **Public audits** (mass gatherings where the receivers and givers come together) have been highlighted in the **Nepal** country case study as a mechanism for voice and accountability, as communities are encouraged to participate fully, whilst encouraging transparency and accountability on the part of public officials. This is especially relevant in the management of community funds, as community members are able to review all financial transactions and community decisions, and to discuss their impact. In addition to building skills of community leaders to manage collective assets, public audits also encourage broader participation among women, the poor and the socially excluded, such as the *dalit* and *janajati*.

4.39 In the **DRC**, **participation in policy processes** such as the Participatory Poverty Analysis (PPA) within the context of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy Paper (PRGSP), supported by channels of information (such as radio), has facilitated greater citizen awareness and offers a more direct way of questioning policy-makers. However, it is still difficult to assess the real effects of these interventions in terms of long-lasting change in practices and behaviour. Indeed, while the importance of civil society (or community dynamics, to be more precise) is recognised in the documents, this still has to manifest itself in a concrete manner in the drafting of future policies.

4.40 Some donors are working with CSOs to develop their knowledge and understanding of policy and budgetary processes, allowing them to effectively monitor government activities and budgets, as well as participate in policy, decision-making and budgetary processes. For example, in **Indonesia**, there has been some success with an intervention using participatory **planning and budgeting processes**, on budget allocations within the districts they were used. The process became more transparent and government staff much more comfortable with involving other stakeholders. In

another **Indonesian** project involving participatory planning processes, anecdotal evidence suggests that village heads have been capacitated to take part in decision-making processes, with the result that decisions regarding how to spend the village budget are now being made in village assemblies rather than behind closed doors.



## 5. Assessing the Effects of CV&A Interventions

5.1 In assessing the question of what donors are achieving through their CV&A work, it is important to disaggregate potential effects or impact at different levels and/or areas of relevance, and to look at such impact in relation to what donors set out to accomplish through their interventions.

5.2 The Evaluation Framework elaborated as part of this project outlines two broad areas for change regarding CV&A interventions: i) changes in terms of broader development outcomes, including meta-goals such as poverty reduction, human development and the achievement of the MDGs more generally; and ii) changes at a more intermediate level involving changes in policy, practice, behaviours and power relations (see Box 7 below).

### **Box 7 Intermediate changes expected from CV&A interventions**

CV&A interventions can produce intermediate changes at different levels. These can range from direct outputs of a specific intervention which produce results at the very local level (e.g. the information provided to a particular community by a local rural radio) to changes of policy and regulatory frameworks at the national level (e.g. approval of a new law or exposure of corrupted practices). These types of changes have been identified as follows in the Evaluation Framework:

- Changes in policy include the legal and regulatory framework (e.g. the introduction or approval of new laws) and reform implementation (e.g. the implementation of decentralisation policies)
- Changes in practice include changes in the concrete provision of information, improved transparency, equal access to services, inclusion and consultation with marginalised groups, new/strengthened mechanisms to exercise accountability, etc.
- Changes in behaviour include changes at the individual or collective level signalling greater awareness of CV&A; more adequate and timely response of the authorities to citizens demands; more responsible actions at the community level to ensure greater participation of all citizens, etc.
- Changes in power relations refer to the ‘rules of the game’ and the extent to which CV&A interventions manage to redress unequal power relations between citizens and the state, among different groups of citizens, between state actors at the local and national level, between formal and informal institutions, progressive and traditional societal groups, etc.

5.3 These latter changes have been used by the Evaluation Framework to conceptualise the different levels of results and outcomes that CV&A interventions can hope to achieve, forming pathways to broader development goals. They help to arrive at assessing the impact of such interventions, which is an important criterion identified by the DAC to evaluate development effectiveness. Other DAC criteria that are useful to look at in terms of this CV&A evaluation include *relevance* (which has already been

mentioned in Chapter 4), *effectiveness* and *sustainability*.<sup>29</sup> These different ways of assessing results and outcomes are each addressed in turn in the remainder of this sub-section. In all cases, it must once again be borne in mind that the discussion below is based on the findings that emerge from the sample of interventions considered for this evaluation. As has been discussed, that sample has important limitations. Thus, the relatively limited results and impact of the interventions highlighted below may well be attributed to the problem of fully assessing effects based on the chosen methodology and the limited timeframe for the case studies.<sup>30</sup>

## 5.1 Broader Development Outcomes

5.4 As discussed in Chapter 3 on donor perspectives to CV&A, **most donors assume that broader development outcomes**, such as poverty reduction and the achievement of the MDGs, will result from strengthened CV&A and democratic governance more generally, either directly or indirectly.

5.5 However, the evidence emerging from all of the case studies suggests that the effect of CV&A in particular and democracy more generally on development (in terms of leading to poverty alleviation and the achievement of other MDGs, for example) is neither direct nor obvious. As Bardhan has warned<sup>31</sup>, democratic decision-making processes are not always ‘pretty’ from a developmental perspective. The fact that decision-making processes are intended to be more participatory and inclusive does not automatically make them developmentally more effective. Indeed, greater access to the state also means that the bureaucracy can be more easily politicised. As he puts it, ‘[n]ot all cases of public pressure that democracy facilitates help development... Democracies may be particularly susceptible to populist pressures ... and other particularistic demands that may hamper long-run investment [,] growth [and development more broadly]’.

5.6 Therefore, bearing in mind the limitations highlighted above about the sample, it is not surprising that all country case studies have been unable to establish a direct causal link between CV&A interventions and broader development outcomes.

5.7 Based on the evidence, it can be argued that donor assumptions or expectations of what CV&A interventions can achieve in terms of broad developmental outcomes are often too high. As the **Bangladesh** study points out, “The need to link intervention logic directly with **contribution to MDGs** for CV&A work can be tortuous and artificial... Donors are encouraging the practice of results-based management of projects but still place too much emphasis on counting participation and wanting evidence of contribution to MDGs. There needs to be more effort made to establish a middle ground of identifying attitude and behaviour indicators which are a direct outcome of CV&A activities.”

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<sup>29</sup> As noted in Chapter 2, issues of the efficiency of interventions are not addressed, given that there is not sufficient data emerging from the case studies to allow us to draw any conclusions.

<sup>30</sup> We are grateful to SDC and BMZ for very useful comments on this front.

<sup>31</sup> P. Bardhan (ND) ‘Democracy and Development: A Complex Relationship’. Berkeley, CA: University of California, Berkeley.

## **5.2 Changes at More Intermediate Levels**

5.8 The Evaluation Framework uses changes in practice, policy and power as the results and outcomes to be identified by the country case studies, given the complexities of reporting, attribution and timescale of the interventions being examined. CV&A interventions can produce changes at different levels and, as outlined in Box 4, these can range from direct outputs of a specific intervention which produce results at the very local level (e.g. the information provided to a particular community by a local rural radio) to changes of policy and regulatory frameworks at the national level (e.g. approval of a new law or exposure of corrupt practices).

5.9 Thus, while CV&A interventions on their own are unlikely to have a tangible effect on broader development outcomes, they can be seen to have contributed positively to aspects of the enabling environment or pathways to change. Broader development outcomes will depend on a more integrated and holistic development approach that not only includes CV&A but also involves complementary actors and mechanisms.

### ***Changes in behaviour and practice***

5.10 As illustrated by the variety of examples provided in Chapter 4 on what works and what does not work in current donor practice, **most changes associated with CV&A tend to have taken place in terms of behaviour and practice**. For example, in relation to **poverty reduction**, it can be suggested that certain types of CV&A interventions, particularly those which are directly aimed at improving revenue collection or recovery, and budget monitoring and allocation, might have the potential to contribute to reducing at least some dimension of poverty (e.g. access to basic services). In **Mozambique**, for instance, rural citizens' access to the 'Seven Million Meticais development fund' at district level is aimed at alleviating rural poverty, and thereby reducing poverty in the long-term.

5.11 Support to CV&A mechanisms can have an **impact on the institutions targeted, as well as on some of the other actors that interact with that institution**. Support to the Centre for Public Integrity and the Administrative Court in **Mozambique** mentioned in Chapter 4 provides an example. As noted for the case of **Indonesia** as well, there has been **some success with participatory planning and budgeting processes** at the district level.

5.12 On the other hand, it should not be too easily assumed that the awareness of local officials to become more accountable will automatically lead to improved state responsiveness. As another example from **Mozambique** helps to illustrate, support to the Poverty Observatories and Consultative Councils have not seen increased state responsiveness or improved public service delivery. This may be because the interventions focus more on strengthening the mechanism itself and less on the linkages between these institutions and other actors and institutions they seek to influence.

5.13 In addition, robust and systematic empirical findings on the **overall effectiveness of training and capacity building** are not readily available. In **Benin**, several CV&A interventions are trying to address this gap by establishing monitoring and evaluation systems which, it is hoped, will eventually contribute to greater availability of information and transparency.

5.14 CV&A interventions that support **essential rights and freedoms**, such as the right to information and freedom of expression, have led to the increased professionalisation and consolidation of the media, encouraging them to challenge authorities and campaign on the behalf of citizens. For instance, as discussed, the engagement of the **media** in both the **DRC** and **Nepal** for civic education, leading up to the (relatively peaceful) elections is suggested in the case studies as evidence of a link (though not necessarily direct) between CV&A interventions and democratisation processes.

### *Changes in policy*

5.15 The evidence from the case studies suggests that **policy influence and change is possible when this is the explicit objective of the intervention**. In **Indonesia**, as noted, there are a number of examples of changes in policy and legislation as a result of CV&A interventions (there is now a revised law on decentralisation, an Administrative Procedure Act and civil service reform in part as a result of donor support). In **Nepal**, whilst most interventions are unable to focus on policy changes given the uncomfortable relationship between the government and donors, as was highlighted in Chapter 4, the project focused on the empowerment of the *janajati* was important in contributing to the government's ratification of the ILO convention and the 20 point agreement plan with the Nepalese Government (though the plan is not legally binding). In **Nicaragua** and **Benin**, there are also **examples of specific pieces of legislation being produced as a result of donor support to CV&A**, such as the Access to Information Act in **Nicaragua** and a New Family Act in **Benin**, outlining the rights and obligations of the "legal" wife and family and those of other "wives" and their offspring.

### *Changes in power relations*

5.16 While the evidence from the different case studies suggests that some change in practice, behaviour and policy has been achieved through CV&A interventions, however limited, changes in power relations have been much more difficult to bring about. As highlighted in section 4.3, when CV&A interventions have been **targeted explicitly towards marginalised, socially excluded, and otherwise discriminated against groups**, such as women and ethnic minorities (a pattern that has been an exception rather than the rule in the interventions included in this study), the evidence suggests that the interventions have been useful in empowering such groups. The same can be said of the work that donors have undertaken with **non-traditional civil society groups** like social movements and trades unions (again, exceptions rather than the rule in the considered interventions). Yet the evidence on this remains extremely limited and there is little in the data to show that any meaningful ground has been won in terms of redrawing power relations in substantive and enduring ways. In addition, as noted above, there may be examples of new laws that have been passed in several countries to protect and empower certain groups. However, whether these laws are implemented in practice and succeed in altering the balance of power in favour of the poorest sectors of society is a whole different matter.

5.17 Indeed, one of the main challenges confronting all of these countries lies precisely in how to translate those commitments into actual practice, and how to make the formal institutions of democracy and 'good governance' more generally (including accountability mechanisms) work. From the perspective of the state, all of the case studies included in this evaluation highlight weak public institutions, limited

government capacity, and/or lack of political will at both the national and sub-national levels of government as considerable impediments to the proper exercise of voice and the provision of adequate accountability. In all of these settings, clientelism (e.g. **Indonesia**, **Mozambique** and **Bangladesh**), corruption (all), ‘strong-man’ or war lord tactics (e.g. **DRC**, **Nicaragua**), highly centralised authority (e.g. **Mozambique**’s party system) and other forms of informal power such as discrimination based on ethnicity or gender (e.g. **Nepal**) continue to play a considerable role in shaping state-society relations. In addition, political parties are often weakly institutionalised or rooted in society (e.g. **Benin**, **DRC**) or highly personalised (e.g. the FSLN in **Nicaragua** and the two main political parties in **Bangladesh**). They also tend to be ineffective as mechanisms of representation (e.g. **Nepal**, **Bangladesh**, **Nicaragua**). They do not enjoy high levels of trust among the population, and they are often more accountable to the party leadership than to the constituents that elected them to office (e.g. **Mozambique**, **Nicaragua**).

5.18 The **Nicaraguan** government’s reluctance to implement the new law on access to information has meant that the process has stalled. In **Benin**, for its part, local people severely question the ability of a law like the New Family Act to change the deep-seated attitudes and beliefs within society, especially given that no work has been done to engage chiefs and other informal structures that are powerful in influencing people’s attitudes and beliefs. The limited effects and impact that decentralisation reforms have achieved in the multiple case studies included in this study also provide an illustration of this (see Box 8).

#### **Box 8 Decentralisation**

Since the 1990s, decentralisation has been embraced as the new mantra of development among a wide variety of actors at different levels. It has gained considerable support among donors, policymakers, domestic leaders, and political activists alike on the assumption that strengthening local structures of government improves governance and the quality of democracy by promoting greater citizen voice/participation and increases accountability. If nothing else, by redistributing power away from the centre towards lower levels of government, decentralisation opens up political spaces for local societal actors to emerge and demand greater autonomy. In this sense, decentralisation reforms may help strengthen civil society and make democracy more responsive and participatory. However, as the findings emerging from the case studies in this synthesis report suggest, it is also important to keep in mind that decentralisation is by no means a linear process, and it should not be assumed that more local forms of government are automatically more democratic. Successful decentralisation hinges on the convergence of many contextual factors – including an engaged political leadership, strong political parties committed to popular participation, and capacity at the local level – whose co-incidence may be difficult to achieve, especially in developing countries characterised by weak formal institutions and the predominance of more informal ones, such as clientelism.

Source: A Rocha Menocal (2004) ‘Editorial’. *Development in Practice* 14(6)

5.19 Most interventions aimed at supporting decentralisation processes have assumed a direct relationship between enhanced citizens’ voice and improved governance. However, as the case studies illustrate, this link is currently weak, as the lack of broader support for institution building is likely to undermine this relationship, given that the focus rests on building individual or technical capacities at the local level rather than on

a more comprehensive effort to support public sector reform and to tackle the set of informal and formal institutions and power relations that shape the incentives, opportunities and constraints for change.

5.20 These examples show that a focus that is broader than changing the formal rules of the game is needed to bring about substantive change in the way state–society relations are shaped. The interplay between formal and informal institutions and power relations becomes critical in this respect – an area which, as has been discussed previously in this report and will be touched upon in greater detail in Chapter 6 – has proven considerably challenging for donors to grapple with.

### **5.3 Selected DAC Evaluation Criteria**

5.21 **Relevance** (i.e. the extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor).

5.22 As noted in Chapter 4, there is a high degree of relevance in donor supported CV&A interventions. Donors are aware of the country context, and they shape their choices and decisions about possible entry points, channels, actors and mechanisms to engage with and activities carried out in relation to that context. Donors are aware of the importance of informal processes and mechanisms in shaping the conditions in which CV&A operate – but they often lack the necessary tools to engage with and/or properly address them. Donors remain wary of recognising the deeply political nature of the kind of work that CV&A entails, and very often technical interventions are far easier to operationalise on the ground while having to address power structures head on is much more challenging, awkward and, in the eyes of many, highly problematic.

5.23 **Effectiveness** (i.e. the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives).

5.24 As discussed above, one of the difficulties in measuring effectiveness is related to the high levels of expectations that donors have for their CV&A interventions (i.e. that they will attain some broader development objectives as a result of the interventions). However, it is still possible to gauge whether the direction of travel is positive. A question that arises is whether outcomes being achieved thus far will contribute to the progressive development of an enabling environment characterised by increased voice and greater accountability. As has been suggested, the outcomes and impact of CV&A interventions have been rather limited, but there is a sense that some positive change has come about in some instances, even if these remain isolated and difficult to scale up. Additionally, donors are aware of some of the constraints on CV&A interventions, such as corruption and lack of capacity, and are working to identify ways to better address such obstacles – though as was highlighted during the course of ODI discussions with key policy staff in different donor agencies as part of the update on policy undertaken for this evaluation, this remains a rather challenging task.

5.25 **Sustainability** (i.e. whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn).

5.26 As noted in Chapter 4, there has been an explosion of civil society organisations and activism since the 1990s, especially in terms of NGOs. As suggested in the case studies, donors have undoubtedly played an important role in enabling such

growth. However, another point that comes very forcefully from the case studies is that it is not always clear how viable and sustainable interventions intended to support civil society, and NGOs in particular, are likely to prove in the long run, given that many of these organisations remain considerably dependent on donor support to ensure their existence (and at times their very *raison d'être*) (e.g. **Bangladesh, Benin, DRC, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua**). Thus, while donor assistance has succeeded in changing the organisational landscape of many countries, it is less clear whether CV&A assistance has succeeded in stimulating the emergence and further development of an active, vibrant, and autonomous home-grown civil society. Donors have much work to do in terms of strengthening domestic civil society organisations so that they can become sustainable and self-sufficient over time.

5.27 By the same token, donors should also be more sensitive to the fact that extensive reliance on INGOs (e.g. the Nordic country donors, who channel much of their assistance through NGOs based in their own countries, such as church organisations) may itself undermine the capacity and sustainability of domestic NGOs. This is not a conundrum that is likely to prove easy to address and rectify. Clearly, there are very compelling reasons why donors choose to work with INGOs, including the fact INGOs are likely to prove useful intermediaries in channelling the work of donors (especially in areas and among groups donors cannot reach directly), and that INGOs have a long history of engagement and familiarity with donors and can therefore more easily comply to donor requirements and modes of operation. Yet, by the same token, INGOs are usually better placed than domestic ones in terms of acquiring a voice and influencing policy processes, which may disadvantage home-grown civic organisations, and, as noted in several of the case studies (e.g. **DRC, Nepal**), there is a strong feeling that INGOs can displace the work and initiative of local organisations.



## **6. Understanding Why the Effects of CV&A Interventions have Remained Limited<sup>32</sup>**

6.1 As suggested in the discussion in Chapters 4 and 5, CV&A interventions have been able to bring about some positive changes, especially at the level of behaviour and practice in specific instances and settings. Yet the examples that have been identified do not point to a systematic pattern of (relative) success. Rather, these examples remain isolated and most of them have taken place at a micro-level, raising issues about whether and how they could be scaled up. As the **Nicaragua** case study put it, “the pathways by which the current V&A portfolio might translate localised or isolated successes into a broader governance reform are not clearly defined”.

6.2 In addition, real changes in the ability of increased voice to result in greater responsiveness and accountability of the state is limited, especially in terms of altering power relations in favour of those who have traditionally lacked access and influence because they are poor or otherwise marginalised on the basis of gender, ethnicity or other criteria. An important part of the reason for the limited results that CV&A interventions have been able to achieve lies in the unrealistically high donor expectations as to what such work can achieve, based on some key misguided assumptions. These assumptions have shaped the (mis)understandings about the nature of the CV&A relationship, which in turn have impacted the design and implementation of CV&A interventions, thus leading to the limited success of donor support. This section will outline the key assumptions made and demonstrate how they have served to hinder CV&A intervention design and implementation. It will also look at how, in turn, features of CV&A intervention design and operationalisation have contributed to the limited effects of CV&A work that have been observed. Issues of power relations and the interaction between formal and informal institutions are incorporated throughout this analysis.

### **6.1 Set of Assumptions that Imply “All Good Things Automatically Go Together”**

6.3 Donor approaches to CV&A tend to be based on a set of assumptions that imply that ‘all good things go together’ in linear and unproblematic ways. These include:

- An assumed automatic relationship between enhanced citizens’ voice and improved government accountability.
- An assumption that citizens’ voice represents the interests, needs and demands of “the people”.
- An assumption that more effective and efficient institutions will naturally be more transparent, responsive and, ultimately, accountable.

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<sup>32</sup> Again, the point of departure here is that this limited impact is a function of the sample and methodology used for this report, with all the limitations these imply.

- Therefore, an assumption that CV&A interventions can be supported via traditional programme design and implementation with a series of tangible outputs and outcomes based on key donor inputs and support.
- An assumption that democracy leads to improved developmental outcomes (including poverty reduction).<sup>33</sup>

6.4 However, as the different case studies help to illustrate, all these relationships tend to be more complex and challenging on the ground, and it cannot be assumed that all good things automatically go hand in hand and mutually reinforce one another.

#### ***Assumption 1: Voice leads to accountability***

6.5 A linear causal relationship, in which increased voice automatically results in greater accountability, is assumed, with a belief that an intervention supporting voice can have benefits for accountability, without an explicit focus on accountability channels or mechanisms. However, this assumption can be highly problematic. As the case of **Nepal** highlights explicitly, donors may in fact be acting irresponsibly when they put so much emphasis on support to the voice side of the equation, without being able to support effectively the accountability side, and without necessarily considering the destabilising effects of raising expectations that cannot be satisfied. The sub-text of the cases in **Bangladesh** and the **DRC** points to a similar preoccupation.

6.6 As the ODI Briefing Paper prepared as part of this evaluation argues,<sup>34</sup> ‘[l]inking “voice” and “accountability” can only be meaningful when citizens have the knowledge and power to make demands, and those in positions of power have the capacity and will to respond’ (ODI 2007). Thus, engagement with both government institutions and civil society organisations is crucial to create channels for voice that lead to greater accountability.

#### ***Implications for CV&A interventions***

6.7 However, in practice **donors tend to work on either voice or accountability separately and in isolation (though as has been noted more on the former than on the latter)**. As Table 1 in Chapter 4 illustrates, several of the interventions included in this study are in fact intended to target both civil society and government and/or political society actors. There are a few (but again, isolated) examples in the case studies of **mechanisms that can bring voice and accountability together**, including local level development and planning mechanisms (**Bangladesh**, **Mozambique**, **Nepal**); state institutions such as parliaments, ombudsmen and anti-corruption/human rights/electoral commissions (e.g. **Bangladesh**, **DRC**); and non-state mechanisms such as the media (e.g. **Benin**, **DRC**, **Nepal**), watchdog organisations, public consultations and multi-stakeholder processes (e.g. **Indonesia**)<sup>35</sup>. In general, however, based on the sample under analysis, such interventions are not consistent or systematic, constituting half or less than half of the total interventions (with the exceptions of **Nepal**, where it has been argued that

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<sup>33</sup> See Chapter 4 above for discussion.

<sup>34</sup> [http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/briefing/bp\\_dec07\\_voice\\_for\\_accountability.pdf](http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/briefing/bp_dec07_voice_for_accountability.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> See also Annex 3 for the table of country case study interventions.

donors do not trust the government much, so that when working on accountability interventions they naturally seek to include civil society actors; and **Indonesia**, where state institutions represent an important entry point for donors). Consequently, the interactive process linking state and society together is either difficult to trace or remains limited, and additional opportunities to engage with both voice and accountability simultaneously may be missed or not fully exploited. Instead, it may be too easily assumed that greater voice will naturally lead to increased accountability. Further research on how interventions that address both sides of the CV&A equation at once can be more effective, remains highly desirable.

***Assumption 2: Citizens' voice represents the demands and views of "the people"***

6.8 The concept of voice remains largely un-deconstructed, with few questions asked regarding the processes of creating consensus, managing conflict and counteracting discrimination. While an emphasis on the need to exercise voice seems essential in terms of enabling the poor to be heard, this in itself does not address the prior fundamental question of **whose voice is being heard**. The voices of the poor (as well as those of other groups) are far from homogeneous – and these many voices may not necessarily be complementary but may actually compete with one another. Different civil society organisations, even those focused on 'the poor', are driven by different interests, and motivations, and have differing capacities to engage (or not) with other actors, including state institutions, political parties and international donors. Power imbalances between groups and discrimination both serve to undermine and weaken the claims of particular marginalised and excluded groups (including the poor, women and ethnic minorities), which means that **not all voices are equal, or equally heard**. It remains unclear who is actually excluded by some of the spaces and mechanisms created to encourage 'voice' and participation' (e.g. PRSPs), and the extent to which efforts to support or consolidate them are successful at reducing discrimination.

***Implications for CV&A interventions***

6.9 This also leads to another important question about to whom the state is accountable, and why. In fact, a key characteristic of a democratic process is that multiple groups contend to exercise voice, and the state may respond and be accountable to some of these and not to others.<sup>36</sup>

6.10 Even when donors have stated an explicit desire to support the most vulnerable groups, there remains the issue of the **difficulty in reaching the most marginalised, most remote, and therefore most in need**. This concern has come across in most of the case studies, including **DRC**, **Indonesia**, **Mozambique**, and **Nepal**. Donors have often favoured using NGOs as a reasonable intermediary to reach such groups, given that NGOs have greater capacity to deal with the technical and financial aspects of working with donors, and can create the necessary networks to

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<sup>36</sup> As demonstrated by non-democratic countries such as South Korea through the 1980s and Vietnam and China more recently, it is also entirely possible for the state to be highly effective in some areas (e.g. promote economic development and improve key human development indices) without necessarily being accountable to certain segments of the population.

reach out to the grassroots. However, many of the case studies highlight a number of issues that suggest that NGOs may not be the most effective intermediary for reaching the most marginalised groups in society. These include:

- The **legitimacy** of NGOs is shaped by their perceived **representativeness and independence**. There are often socio-economic and cultural barriers between NGO staff and the grassroots beneficiaries that limit the former's ability to truly represent the interests of the latter. As the **Bangladesh** case study puts it: "The findings suggest that voice is primarily supported through NGO interventions which are relatively risk-free<sup>37</sup>, urban-centric and supportive of a somewhat common ideology". Additionally, due to a lack of time and resources, NGOs are often unable to build true consensus and simply advocate what they think is the best solution. Furthermore, there is the risk of being co-opted by the interests of institutional funders (e.g. government, INGOs, donors) with undue influence on objectives, as highlighted once again in the **Bangladesh** country case study. There is also the risk of patron-client relations permeating NGO structures and processes.
- The **need for transparency and accountability** applies as much to NGOs as it does to state institutions. NGOs (and other civil society organisations) must also be able to justify their decisions and actions, to funders but particularly to beneficiaries, through transparent and democratic decision-making processes.
- Difficulties associated with **identifying credible partners in the NGO community** which donors can work with. Given the mushrooming of NGOs in the last 20 years, there are questions regarding their quality and ability to perform, as well as their real motivations and integrity (e.g. **Bangladesh, Benin, DRC, Mozambique, Nepal**).

6.11 **Citizen participation in available (formal) fora can also be pro forma rather than substantive.** As noted in Chapter 4, public consultations and policy dialogue forums are becoming increasingly popular; however engagement with them should also reflect the current barriers to full and equal participation for civil society actors. One such example is the PRSP monitoring process in **Mozambique**. Another is provided in **Indonesia**, where "...the understanding of 'public hearing' or 'public consultation' ... is mostly a limited one. In general, these events rather resemble larger workshops in closed locations like meeting rooms of hotels." As has been noted, participation is often by invitation only, participants are pre-selected participants, and significant cultural and economic barriers to participation remain, especially in rural areas.

***Assumption 3: Capacity building of state institutions is key to making them more responsive and accountable to citizens***

6.12 A general assumption made by donors is that accountability can be supported and strengthened primarily by building the capacity of state institutions to become more responsive, transparent and accountable to citizens, i.e. that lack of capacity is the key constraint for accountability. Whilst lack of technical skills and capacity is a

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<sup>37</sup> As opposed to support for Trade Unions, social and political movements.

significant constraint, there are important political relationships and personal incentives that shape the behaviour of individual authorities and state institutions, including lack of political will for CV&A reform. Power relations and informal rules also crucially impact how formal institutions work. As the **Mozambique** case study succinctly put it: “There is no doubt that capacity building is highly relevant and important – but it is also evident that it must be followed up and be coherent with other activities. In the case of the Urban Environmental Project, capacity building of municipal council members yielded little result in terms of increased CV&A due to the political deadlock in relation to the District Administration. The capacity building of MPs through the AWEPA programme may run the risk of not having long-term impact if [it does] not also [include] other stakeholders, e.g. permanent staff.”

### *Implications for CV&A interventions*

6.13 Political factors include **the rules and incentives embedded in the electoral and party systems in many of these countries**, which often lead politicians to align their loyalty with the party leadership rather than their constituencies (e.g. **Mozambique**, **Indonesia** and **Nicaragua**). Politicians often have no connection to their constituencies (having never lived there and rarely visited) and their electoral fortunes and future political careers do not depend on voters but rather on the party leadership. In **Nicaragua**, for example, the leadership and authority of the party system is highly centralised, and politicians often would not risk their political career by going against the party. In **Mozambique**, the practice of blocked party lists where citizens vote for a party, not for a specific candidate, means that there is no direct accountability link between a MP and his/her constituency, and MPs feel more accountable to their party than to their constituencies.

6.14 Thus, personal incentives include not only career ambitions but also personal financial gains via **rent-seeking** and **corruption**, which serve to undermine efforts to increase the accountability of state institutions (e.g. **Bangladesh**, **Benin**, **Indonesia**, **Nicaragua**). Similarly, in many of the case study countries, public officials are used to enjoying certain levels of personal power and autonomy granted them by the **cultural norms of hierarchy** and official powers, where citizens see themselves as subject to their orders, rather than the other way round. Thus, there is significant lack of political will by some such authorities to have that power, autonomy and, perhaps, impunity questioned by citizens (e.g. **Indonesia**, **Mozambique**, **Nepal**).

6.15 **Power relations** within society, often exemplified by **social and cultural norms**, serve to discriminate against certain groups (particularly the poor and women) and refuse them the same rights as equal citizens. Thus, any focus on working with formal institutions and actors can overlook the role played by informal rules in shaping them. These social and cultural norms and their gatekeepers, typically traditional chiefs or religious groups or other informal structures, are currently not significantly addressed or involved in donor funded CV&A interventions. In **Benin**, for instance, the implementation of the new family law coding some rights of married women is considered challenging because the power relations that have served to deny women those very rights in the first place are not being addressed.

6.16 **Clientelism is also a significant power relationship shaping CV&A outcomes.** As the **Indonesia** case study emphasises: “... in more traditional rural areas strong patron-and-client relations still persist. In a relationship of mutual social

and economic dependency poor people have always relied on “their patrons” (be it village or sub-village officials, religious leaders, economically more well-off villagers etc.) to take decisions on their behalf.” Thus, **formal institutions and informal practices often interact to shape the way in which the formal institutions function.** The **Mozambique** case study highlights a case where the process of selecting local watchdog representatives undermines their ability to carry out their role: “...the District Administrator has the mandate to establish the [watchdog] Consultative Councils and he/she can also appoint the members. This gives room for co-opting the members of the councils, as they will probably not be in a position to hold the District Administrator accountable. Supporting these formal mechanisms without knowing the informal dynamics behind them can contribute to perpetuate voiceless and unaccountable channels.”

6.17 On a related point, as has already been argued in this report, it can be seen that decentralisation does not in itself automatically bring government closer to the people and make it more accountable, especially to the poor. **Issues of clientelism and weak capacity** may be as pervasive at the local level as they are at the national level, so (again) the benefits of decentralisation need to be analysed with greater nuance.

6.18 The **political dynamics and power structures between state institutions** is also a factor undermining CV&A support, i.e. not just between individual state officials. For example, in **Nicaragua**, the Executive is considerably concentrating power in its own hands and weakening other branches of government to benefit the ruling party and its allies. Within the state apparatus oversight mechanisms, such as parliaments and ombudsmen (for example, the human rights commissions) are often deliberately kept weak so as to maintain the authority and dominance of the Executive. The **Mozambique** country case study demonstrates how this can work in practice: “...the impact of the improvement in the capacity of the Administrative Court is hindered by the ambiguous dependence on the Executive to approve their budget. The President of the Administrative Court is appointed by the President of the Republic, who is also president of the ruling party. The same is applicable to the Legislative, which also has an oversight role, but at the same time its budget ceiling is defined by the Executive. In this context, the Executive still has some leverage over these actors and this can impact on the speed of change in power relations. In the short term, substantial changes in power relations do not depend mainly on the strength of these actors, but on the change of the balance of power inside the ruling nucleus (the Executive which is dominated by the ruling party), which still influences state and non-state actors heavily.”

***Assumption 4: Donors can support CV&A work via traditional intervention design and implementation***

6.19 The assumption is that CV&A support is essentially similar to other work that donors do, and that as a result they can employ traditional programme design and implementation tools. Civil society support is seen as mainly supporting participation and some capacity building, and the emphasis on technical capacity building of state institutions allows donors to assume that CV&A support is a non-political endeavour that can be supported with traditional projects. As has been argued above, however, CV&A support cannot ignore power relations and is, at its core, a political endeavour.

The case studies provide ample evidence that traditional intervention design and implementation is often not well suited to this kind of work. Most interventions utilise the same funding modalities, reporting requirements and 2-3 year timeframes as other programmes or projects. Issues of scaling up, sustainability and synergy of projects for greater impact and long-term change are not always addressed by donors.

### ***Implications for CV&A interventions***

**6.20 Donor funds and support can often be a negative influence on CV&A interventions, particularly NGOs.** The increased pressure to deliver quantifiable results means that the focus moves away from supporting behavioural change and power relations, to an increased focus on activities such as training and workshops (where numbers attending and numbers carried out can be measured). There is often reduced flexibility to respond to rapid changes (e.g. **Bangladesh, Nicaragua**) as interventions have a duty to deliver agreed objectives, whilst increased donor funding without careful planning can be extremely detrimental for organisations that lack the requisite absorptive capacity (e.g. **Benin, Mozambique, Nepal**).

**6.21 There is a tension between the long-term processes of transforming state-society relations and donors' needs or desires to produce quick results, and donors need to be more realistic about what can be accomplished in the shorter term.** These transformations take a long time and are not necessarily guaranteed. For example, evidence from **Bangladesh** demonstrates that despite efforts since the early 1990s to develop a positive mindset among district authorities to work with citizens, this is not yet embedded. However, most donor interventions have short life spans of between 3-5 years, thus limiting their potential for developing transformative change.

**6.22** As noted at the beginning of this section, CV&A interventions also tend to be difficult to **scale up**. The discussion above on power relations highlights the fact that issues related to how CV&A interventions can be scaled up and have broader impact become even more challenging if informal processes (such as clientelism and discrimination) are not engaged with (e.g. **Benin** and **Bangladesh**).

**6.23 There are issues of the sustainability of CV&A interventions over time.** As noted in the discussion on the DAC criteria in chapter 5, many of the organisations supported by donors, especially those aimed towards voice (including NGOs in particular) are highly aid dependent, and it is not clear how they are intended to become self-sufficient.

**6.24** In addition, there is a lack of **synergy and coordination** between parallel donor CV&A interventions, as well as between CV&A interventions and other donor goals. The case studies reveal a lack of strategic thinking in the development and management of programmes and a lack of a coordinated approach to CV&A (e.g. **Bangladesh**). Although there are a few examples of joint funding (e.g. **Mozambique, Nicaragua**), for the most part there is no coherent donor approach to CV&A work in the case studies analysed in this study, a situation that often leads to duplication, gaps and unnecessary competition among donors. Issues and challenges related to the aid effectiveness agenda are addressed in fuller detail in the following chapter (Chapter 7).

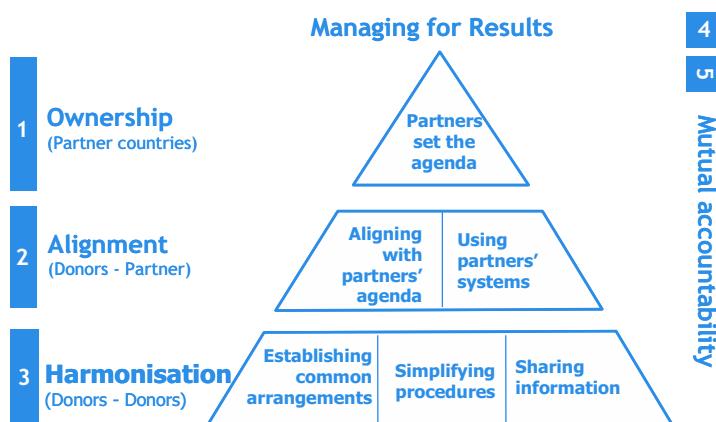


## 7. Aid Effectiveness

### 7.1 The Paris Declaration

7.1 The ‘Paris diagnosis’ underpinning the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (PD) represents an unprecedented effort to transform the way in which international assistance is delivered and managed (see Figure 1 below). Its objective is to rein in the fragmentation that characterises development aid today and to make the aid system better at supporting country-led development as well as at helping capable states to emerge. Signed in 2005, the PD embodies a new paradigm of ‘effective aid’ founded on a discourse of country-led partnership and co-responsibility. As such, it is a joint undertaking on the part of both the donor community and partner countries to make aid more effective; the commitments they each make are inter-dependent. In particular, signatories made a commitment to reform the way development assistance is currently delivered in three broad areas: recipient-country ‘ownership’ of the development agenda; donor alignment with the priorities and goals set by partner countries and increased reliance on national administration systems (including more programmatic assistance through the use of aid modalities such as GBS); and more coordinated, streamlined and harmonised actions among multiple donors. Mutual accountability and an emphasis on management for results are embraced as two cross-cutting principles.

**Figure 1. The Paris framework**



Source: OECD Working Party on Aid Effectiveness.

7.2 This section attempts to highlight the challenges and lessons that have emerged from the different case studies, in terms of donor experience to date in supporting CV&A interventions effectively on the basis of the principles enshrined in the PD.

7.3 **Ownership** (i.e. partner countries exercising effective leadership over their development policies and priorities, and coordinating donor actions around those priorities).

7.4 As highlighted in the discussion on context in Chapter 4 and Annex 4 of this report, some of the countries included in this project have been more successful than others in establishing development priorities, and in taking on a more proactive role in

determining how aid is allocated and targeted, as well as managed. This has been the case in particular of **Indonesia** and **Bangladesh**, which are not aid-dependent countries and therefore have felt better positioned to resist donor pressure or what they may perceive as undue donor intervention. **Nicaragua**, on the other hand, is an interesting example of a highly aid-dependent country that has recently begun espousing strong rhetoric against traditional OECD DAC donors<sup>38</sup>, while also developing a strong pro-poor discourse.

7.5 However, as many of the cases included here suggest (e.g. **Nepal**, **DRC**), **national ownership remains a considerable obstacle** in the context of weak institutions, inadequate capacity, resistance to reform, and/or lack of political will. This has been a challenge even in a country like **Mozambique**, which has been considered a donor ‘darling’ for a long time and where donors work in a fairly coordinated fashion.

7.6 In addition, though the Paris framework does not address this issue directly, it is fundamental to highlight that **the concept of ‘national ownership’ in its fullest sense goes beyond government ownership to include other societal actors**. One of the most critical challenges facing the aid effectiveness agenda is, in fact, how to turn the concept of genuine country ownership of the development agenda into a reality. In a way, with their emphasis on building participatory, inclusive and accountable political processes, CV&A interventions have sought to do precisely that, but as the findings of this project suggest, success in this area has been limited at best.

7.7 **Alignment** (i.e. donors aligning with/following partner country development priorities and relying on country systems).

7.8 Issues related to donor alignment have surfaced only to a very limited degree in the different case studies. From the discussion on ownership above, it can be inferred that, in countries like **Indonesia** and **Bangladesh**, where (government) ownership is relatively strong, it is easier for donors to align with the stated development priorities and to rely on existing country systems, than it is in countries like the **DRC**, where the most basic national systems need to be (re)built.

7.9 One important dimension of alignment, though by no means the only one, has included an effort to shift away from project aid towards more programmatic assistance through increased reliance on aid modalities such as GBS. GBS and other forms of programmatic assistance are intended to help strengthen domestic state institutions rather than to create independent parallel administrative systems that either compete with, or undermine, national ones.

7.10 Again, the question of GBS and how this type of support may relate to CV&A has not arisen in any meaningful way in most of the case studies, with the exception of **Mozambique**. As highlighted in Chapter 2 on the evaluation approach, this may be due in part to the fact that the CV&A interventions that were looked at in the field for the most part did not include GBS as a specific type of donor activity.

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<sup>38</sup> Although in reality, in discussions behind closed doors, the government takes donors’ views very seriously, given the high level of aid dependency.

7.11 The case of **Mozambique** suggests that the trend to focus on direct budget support and other sector-based programmatic approaches has tended to reinforce a government-to-government relationship between donors and recipient countries, and a sense that civil society actors (and CV&A interventions more generally) can be overlooked. More evidence would need to be analysed on this issue to be able to assess what the impact of GBS on civil society has been. But it is worth noting that the **DRC** case study seems to highlight an opposite problem: in the absence of a functioning state, donors have had to rely on civil society organisations to a considerable extent. As the authors of that case study suggest, this may be a reasonable strategy to pursue in order to be able to meet the basic needs of the population, especially in the short term, but it does not help address the crucial question of how state institutions can be supported over the long term.

7.12 **Donor harmonisation** (i.e. increased co-ordination and streamlining of activities of different aid agencies, with the aim of reducing the transaction costs to governments receiving aid).

7.13 As has been noted in Chapter 5 on results and on factors explaining the (limited) effects of CV&A interventions, donor harmonisation in this area has remained considerably limited. There are few examples of joint initiatives or co-funded interventions (with the exception of **Nicaragua** where there are three joint funds). Aside from some “Good Governance Groups”, very few institutionalised mechanisms are in place to coordinate donors’ support in this domain, or in governance more generally.

7.14 Even in the **Nicaraguan** case, little effort has been made to coordinate the objectives of the three funds, despite the fact that they all focus on CV&A related themes; namely, strengthening civil society, capacity building of political parties, and anti-corruption. Additionally, in this case, donor harmonisation has been understood as basket funding, and the processes to agree on the Terms of Reference (TORs) and objectives have been long and time-consuming. Thus, CV&A interventions have been characterised by a lack of donor coordination. Beyond the sharing and exchange of information (e.g. the database on donor activities that has been developed in **Mozambique**), there has been very little progress on attempts to define a workable division of labour, with an analysis of how each agency can focus on their comparative advantage, or to rationalise the aid system more broadly.

7.15 This **lack of coordination** has led to duplication of donor efforts on the ground, with a number of consequences for CV&A at the strategic as well as the operational level. At the strategic level, CV&A currently represents not only an area where collaboration is very limited, but one where there is relatively little (if any) mutual understanding or even agreement as to what constitutes an operational approach to CV&A. This evaluation can make a significant contribution to fill this gap, as it provides a unique opportunity for donors and other key stakeholders to engage in a dialogue leading towards a common understanding of these issues. Operationally, the main implication is that CV&A interventions require careful preparation to ensure ownership and follow up, as it cannot be assumed that country offices will commit to a joint exercise unless the potential benefits are clearly spelled out.

7.16 **Mutual Accountability** (i.e. making sure that aid relationships are embedded in accountability mechanisms that guarantee an adequate degree of monitoring of reciprocal commitments, in order to enhance aid effectiveness).

7.17 As understood in the PD, the concept of mutual accountability is meant to refer to a relationship between donors and partner governments where both hold each other to account for their respective actions. The weakness of existing domestic accountability mechanisms, and the relatively weak focus placed by most donors' interventions in this respect, suggest that donors' contribution to mutual accountability through CV&A interventions is currently not very significant. This is a considerable gap since in principle CV&A interventions are aimed at enhancing domestic accountability and, more generally, at nurturing a culture of accountability between the state and its citizens. (A natural way to tie issues of accountability not only horizontally, but also downward within the Paris framework, is GBS, since presumably budget funds will be managed more effectively and transparently if proper accountability mechanisms are in place to enable citizens to hold the government to account. This is the spirit behind some of the participatory budget projects that are included in some of the case studies in this evaluation, but again a direct link to GBS is not made in the case studies or in this synthesis report).

7.18 In addition, several of the case studies highlighted (at least) the perception that recipient governments tend to prioritise accountability to donors, rather than to their own populations (e.g. **DRC**, **Mozambique**). This considerably undermines the quality of the link between state and society, which is a significant problem, considering that it is the key area of concern of CV&A interventions.

## 8. Conclusions, Recommendations and Areas for Further Research

### 8.1 Conclusions

#### *Background*

8.1 Since the 1990s, the quality of **governance** has been recognised as one of the central factors affecting development prospects in poor countries. CV&A constitutes an important dimension of governance: it is widely acknowledged that citizens as well as state institutions have a role to play in delivering governance that works for the poor and enhances democracy.

8.2 Despite differences in the terminology used by different donors, the **core principles underpinning CV&A** (including participation, inclusion, accountability, and transparency) have emerged as a priority in international development, with donors engaged in an expanding universe of CV&A interventions.

8.3 CV&A interventions cover a broad spectrum of issues and areas. They range from working at the national level with governments on policy and reform processes, to working with community based organisations on civic education and rights awareness programmes.

8.4 For the ECG donors, the primary rationale for strengthening citizens' voice and public accountability comes from their common mandate around poverty reduction, sustainable development and attainment of the MDGs.

8.5 In their policy statements, donors suggest that voice and accountability interventions can make both **direct and indirect contributions to development**. Very schematically, the chain of causality, whether implicitly or explicitly spelled out, seems to be as follows:

#### **Box 9 Direct and Indirect Contributions to Development**

##### *Direct effects:*

**V → A → improved developmental outcomes** (e.g. poverty reduction and meeting other MDGs)

##### *Indirect effects:*

**V → A → intermediate variables** (e.g. improved governance; stronger democracy) → **improved developmental outcomes**

8.6 This report has sought to analyse how these assumptions for change guiding donor thinking and policy on CV&A bear out in practice, and what challenges and tensions emerge on the ground. Key conclusions from the study are outlined below.

*Conclusions emerging from findings*

**i) Context and the limitations it poses**

8.7 In general, donors clearly recognise the importance of **context**, and they tend to shape their choices and decisions about possible entry points, channels, actors and mechanisms with which to engage and activities to be carried out, in relation to that context.

8.8 It is in large part in response to contextual factors that, in the sample under analysis, donors tend to work more on voice interventions than on accountability ones. However, such a strategy may itself prove problematic in terms of increasing voice without a concomitant effort to build the effectiveness and capacity of state institutions to address growing demands and expectations. It also skirts the issue of the need to engage with both government institutions and civil society organisations in order to create channels for voice that can lead to greater accountability.

8.9 Some of the main **entry points** that donors have used for their CV&A work have included existing formal institutional frameworks in countries where these are available, political junctures, decentralisation, sectors and overall poverty and exclusion.

8.10 Levels of aid dependence have also been important in delineating the parameters of what donors can and cannot do.

8.11 However, context awareness has not proved sufficient to enable donors to grapple with **key problems or obstacles related to the interaction between formal and informal institutions, the prevalence of the latter over the former in many instances, and underlying power relations and dynamics**.

**ii) Effects of CV&A interventions have remained limited and isolated**

8.12 Significantly, some **examples of a positive effect of CV&A interventions** have emerged from the interventions analysed for this study.

8.13 This is mostly the case at the level of **positive changes in behaviour and practice**, especially in terms of raising citizen awareness and of encouraging state officials (especially at the local/sub-national level) to become more accountable. Participatory processes like public hearings, multi-stakeholder forums, public audits and planning and budgeting processes, are good example of this.

8.14 There is some limited evidence to suggest that when interventions have been **targeted explicitly towards marginalised, socially excluded and otherwise discriminated against groups**, such as women and ethnic minorities (a pattern that has been an exception rather than the rule in the interventions included in this study), the interventions have been useful in empowering such groups.

8.15 The same can be said of the work that donors have undertaken with **non-traditional civil society groups** like social movements and trades unions (again, exceptions rather than the rule in the considered interventions).

8.16 Instances of some **influence at the level of policy change** were also identified, in which CV&A work contributed to the passing of certain legislation, such as the access to information law in Nicaragua.

8.17 The **media** in particular emerged as a positive mechanism for CV&A engagement in almost all of the countries studied – though clearly building up a regulatory framework and passing access to information laws are only a first, if very important, step in strengthening CV&A. Rules and regulations mean little if there is no capacity, power and/or will to enforce them

8.18 However, these **examples** of the kinds of changes that CV&A interventions have helped to bring about **remain limited and relatively isolated at the micro-level**, and it is not clear from the case studies whether and how they can be **scaled up** (the message that comes across more often than not is that they cannot).

8.19 Again, based on the limited evidence that this report draws upon, changes in power relations have proved much more difficult to identify or come by.

8.20 The same holds for **broader developmental outcomes**. All case studies suggest that the effect on development of CV&A in particular, and democracy more generally (in terms of leading to poverty alleviation and the achievement of other MDGs, for example) is neither direct nor obvious. **No evidence can be found** in the sample **of a direct contribution** of CV&A interventions to poverty alleviation or the meeting of the MDGs<sup>39</sup>.

### **iii) Understanding the limited effects of CV&A interventions: donor assumptions & power relations/informal institutions**

8.21 An important part of the reason why there are limited results from CV&A interventions, lies in the unrealistically high donor expectations of what such work can achieve. These are based on some **misguided assumptions**.

8.22 Such donor assumptions include:

- An assumed automatic relationship between enhanced citizens' voice and improved government accountability.
- An assumption that citizens' voice represents the interests, needs and demands of "the people".
- An assumption that more effective and efficient institutions will naturally be more transparent, responsive and, ultimately, accountable.
- Therefore, an assumption that CV&A interventions can be supported via a traditional focus on capacity building and formal institutions.

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<sup>39</sup> Besides of the fact that voice interventions can be considered as an intrinsic contribution to poverty alleviation.

- An assumption that democracy leads to improved developmental outcomes (including poverty reduction).

8.23 However, as the different case studies help to illustrate, all these relationships tend to be more complex and challenging on the ground:

8.24 In particular, **power relations and informal institutions, processes and relations** (including social and cultural norms, clientelism, corruption etc.) fundamentally shape the way that formal institutions operate and may limit the effect of CV&A interventions intended to transform formal institutions. Whilst lack of technical skills and capacity is a significant constraint, there are important political relationships and personal incentives that shape the behaviour of both state and non-state actors. Thus, for instance, laws may be passed to enhance women's participation or to decentralise power, but political deadlock and/or gatekeepers may block the implementation of such laws. While donors may be aware that informal institutions and power relations matter, they are often not well placed to engage with them.

8.25 In addition, the voices of the poor are far from homogeneous, and in some instances they may in fact compete with one another. There are power differentials within civil society as well, and different organisations have different motivations, interests and capacities to engage. It is therefore essential to keep in mind that addressing the demands and needs that stem from the population (including the poor) is not necessarily a consensual and conflict-free process. In fact, a key characteristic of a democratic process is that multiple groups contend to exercise voice, and the state may respond and be accountable to some of these and not to others. In other words, **not all voices are equal or equally heard**. It has proved particularly challenging for donors to reach the most marginalised and most remote, especially in rural areas.

**iv) Understanding the limited effects of CV&A interventions: donor design and implementation of CV&A interventions**

8.26 There is a **tension between the long-term processes of transforming state-society relations and donors' needs or desires to produce quick results**, and donors need to be more realistic about what can be accomplished in the shorter term.

8.27 In addition, there is an issue related to the **sustainability of CV&A interventions** over time. Many of the organisations supported by donors, especially those aimed towards voice (and including NGOs in particular), are highly aid dependent, and it is not clear how they are intended to become self-sufficient.

8.28 **The 'more with less' approach** of donors means that large amounts of funding are going to interventions beyond the absorptive capacity of the intended organisations. CSOs, in particular, are responding to donor objectives and agendas by transforming their organisations beyond their core competencies, and thus quality and effectiveness of these organisations is being undermined. For example, many service delivery NGOs are increasingly doing more advocacy in order to secure donor funding, which takes them beyond their core mandate and away from their beneficiaries.

8.29 Finally, in terms of **aid effectiveness**, the evidence shows that donor coordination efforts in CV&A interventions are limited. There is a lack of strategic thinking and of a coherent approach in the development and management of programmes, resulting in on-going duplication, gaps and competition.

## **8.2 Core Principles & Recommendations for Improved International Engagement**

8.30 The core principles and recommendations we develop below build on the analysis we have undertaken throughout this report and are based on the sample of interventions that constitutes the main body of evidence for this project. Given the limitations and constraints that have been outlined in Chapter 2 regarding the sample, these recommendations may only be partial and may not reflect the full range of activities that donors are already undertaking, which were beyond the scope of this evaluation.

### **Core principle 1: Build or sharpen ‘political intelligence’ in developing CV&A policies and undertaking CV&A interventions on the ground**

#### ***Recommendations***

8.31 As a first step, this requires donors to recognize more openly and explicitly that development cooperation (in the particular case of CV&A but also more generally) is political and not simply technical in nature. It also calls for greater donor awareness that “all good things” do not automatically go together. Paths of change are not linear, and there may be embedded tensions in some of the assumptions that donors make about what brings about (positive) transformations.

8.32 Building on the above, donors should undertake strategic political economy analyses of power and change in the countries or settings in which they work. These need to move beyond the kind of ‘quick and dirty’ work that is already being done, in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of the interaction between formal and informal institutions, and of the incentives frameworks within which actors (both state and non-state as well as domestic and international) operate. They need to analyse on that basis what the operational implications for CV&A interventions may be (in terms of additional entry points, opportunities and threats, for example). Some donors, notably among the ECG group, DFID and Sida (through ‘Drivers of Change’ and ‘Power Analyses’), as well as the Dutch, are already involved in this kind of analytical work, but a key challenge for such studies remains how to translate the insights gained into actual practice.<sup>40</sup>

8.33 Since a growing number of donors either undertake political economy analysis or are aware of the need to do so, it is also important to consider whether it is worth pursuing joint country analyses, which so far have not been done. At a minimum,

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<sup>40</sup> See, among others, V. Fritz and A. Rocha Menocal (2007) “Developmental states in the new millennium: concepts and challenges for a new aid agenda” in Development Policy review 25(5):531-552

donors should make a concerted effort to exchange and share lessons emerging from such work, so that they can carry out their activities from a shared basis of understanding.

8.34 In addition, this kind of political economy analysis should not be viewed as a ‘one off’ or as work that can be undertaken every three to five years. Rather, contextual changes need to be monitored and updated continuously in order to inform on-going donor programming.

8.35 Another issue worth pursuing on this front is whether political economy analyses can be undertaken by sector (e.g. justice, forestry, media, local governance etc.) and not simply in aggregate. This would provide for an even finer and more nuanced understanding of a particular area of interest on the ground that could be used to tailor interventions in a much more targeted manner.

**Core principle 2: Work with the institutions you have, and not the ones you wish you had**

**Recommendations**

8.36 As has been emphasised throughout this report, despite the existence of sound formal institutional frameworks on paper in all of the countries included in this study, informal institutions and practices continue to predominate and often override the formal ones. Sound political economy analysis of the kind suggested above should help donors to identify what these institutions are and their prevalence. Beyond that, a considerable challenge for donors is to learn to live with these institutions and engage with them more thoroughly and explicitly, rather than ignore them or, worse, dismiss them as irrelevant or backward. Thus, what donors need to focus on is how to best work ‘with the grain’ (i.e. what is already in-country) rather than transplant formal institutional frameworks from the outside. Such an approach would enable donors to give greater attention to what can be grown from inside.

**Core principle 3: Focus capacity building not only on technical but also on political skills**

**Recommendations**

8.37 As this report has emphasized, there is still a great need for technical capacity building of both civil society and state actors, particularly at the local level. This should continue to be a donor focus, but a focus on technical capacity building is not enough.

8.38 Donors should pay attention to the lack of substantial *political* capacity of both state and non-state actors, i.e. the capacity to forge alliances, develop evidence and build a case, contribute to the decision-making and policy-making process, and to influence others to make change happen. Again, such political capacity is likely to be shaped by the institutional and incentives frameworks within which actors operate, and that needs to be taken as the starting point:

- State actors, particularly certain state institutions (including parliaments and the judiciary), lack the political capacity to strengthen their own role and autonomy vis-à-vis more powerful state institutions, most commonly the executive. Working with such actors is essential to strengthen horizontal accountability within the state.

- CSOs are being capacitated to understand and monitor technical policy and budgetary processes but are then unable to adequately exert influence to ensure that their views are incorporated and acted upon.
- Political parties need to improve their ability to work better together in parliament, to exert greater influence over the policymaking process and thereby act as more effective representatives of their constituents.

**Core principle 4: Place greater focus on CV&A mechanisms that address both sides of the equation within the same intervention**

***Recommendations***

8.39 As has been noted, the sample of interventions included in this study shows that, in practice, donors tend to work more on interventions that focus on either voice or accountability separately and in isolation (and especially on the former) rather than on interventions that focus on both simultaneously. Consequently, key mechanisms that can bring voice and accountability together are often missed.

8.40 Programmes should therefore be designed to work on both voice and accountability more consistently and systematically, rather than assuming that one leads to the other. Donors should:

- Seek out ways to connect increased voice with the corresponding and relevant actors in state institutions, such as directly linking empowerment of excluded and marginalised groups with interventions aiming to influence policy decisions and engage actively with the government on these issues.
- Strengthen **existing mechanisms** at the national level that can function to bring the state and the citizen together, such as parliaments, ombudsmen (e.g. human rights or anti-corruption and electoral commissions) and multi-stakeholder processes (e.g. participatory budgeting and local development processes). The key is to work not only on building the technical capacities of these institutions (which currently remains weak), but also on changing the perceptions of the actors themselves, so that they begin to view engagement with others as constructive, whilst developing the will to become more transparent and accountable, both to each other and to the beneficiaries they represent.
- Strengthen **mechanisms at the local level**, such as local development committees and consultative councils, and do not rely simply on supporting the decentralization process to bring the state closer to the citizen.
- Work on further developing the media's role to bring voice and accountability together. Donors should continue to work with **the media** by strengthening the regulatory environment, improving the professionalism of journalists and media bosses, and encouraging greater proliferation of the media (i.e. encourage new channels for multiple voices, especially in rural areas). Donors should be mindful of the **dangers of liberalising the media without professionalising it and holding it to certain standards** – as became horrifically evident in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide, where

political liberalisation produced a number of independent media that deepened the country's social divisions.

- Support **increased access to information** by supporting legislation and the right to information. However, a focus on this formal right is not enough. Access to information should also be supported by improving the capacity of interested actors and watchdog organisations to understand and utilise information correctly, and donors should work closely with domestic supporters of freedom of information laws to give them real teeth.

**Core principle 5: Diversify channels and mechanisms of engagement and work more purposefully with actors outside donors' 'zone of comfort'**

**Recommendations**

8.41 As we have argued, whose voice(s) is/are heard and the levels of inclusion in participatory processes, are fundamentally shaped by power and informal relations as well as by cultural norms and discrimination. These are difficult issues for donors to engage with. However, being aware of these issues, donors should:

- When selecting **CSO partners**, pay attention to issues of integrity, quality and capacity (so as to avoid supporting what in the case studies were identified as 'briefcase' NGOs and other CSOs lacking legitimacy). This can be monitored by setting rigorous selection criteria, carrying out capacity assessments, and observing the CSOs more closely in their implementation of programmes.
- Be more selective in choosing experienced partners that have ties to the grassroots and can reach otherwise marginalized and isolated groups (especially in the rural areas). This is important so as to ensure that **participatory processes** are more inclusive and representative.
- Evidence from the case studies has shown that, in the limited instances within the sample where donors have engaged with **non-traditional CSOs** (such as a social movement in Bangladesh and a religious organisation in **Indonesia**, as well as trades unions in both **Bangladesh** and the **DRC**), these have proven successful in empowering and strengthening the voice(s) of key groups among the poor. This suggests the need to work more closely with such non-traditional organisations.
- Evidence from the case studies also revealed that, while the majority of interventions analysed lacked an explicit and targeted focus on socially excluded groups (such as women and ethnic minorities), those that did, had raised awareness among those groups and helped them to exercise their voice(s) more effectively. Thus, donors should ensure that interventions include relevant and specific actions to promote **access to voice and influence among excluded, marginalised and otherwise discriminated against groups** (such as a focus on institutions targeting women's or indigenous people's conditions and poverty, female or ethnic political participation, gender or ethnic equality systems in recruitment for

government institutions, access to justice for women and indigenous groups, gender budget initiatives etc.).

- Building from the above, donors should develop a much **clearer and more targeted pro-poor approach that is informed by issues related to social exclusion and discrimination**. This should work to empower communities to strengthen their voice and provide an enabling policy environment to increase their access to services and decision-making at village level.

#### **Core principle 6: Improve key design and implementation features of CV&A interventions and aid effectiveness**

##### **Recommendations**

- Recruit **politically informed advisors** at both the headquarters and the field levels,; and, at the field level, ensure in particular that institutional memory is built so that country-specific knowledge is transferred even after staff have moved on.
- Establish **more realistic expectations for CV&A interventions**. Donors should review objectives and goals of CV&A interventions to take into account the significant challenges posed by the context, power relations and, often, lack of political will. Among other things, donors need to be patient and accept setbacks, recognising that it may be difficult to identify progress over the short-term. Similarly, donors should focus less on tangible and measurable results, and should introduce outcome-based monitoring and evaluation. This would be based, for example, on process indicators (such as observable changes in state institutions) or outcome indicators (such as improved quality and accessibility of services). CV&A interventions should focus on specific issues and target groups, rather than broad, undefined objectives.
- Provide **longer-term and more flexible support**. Donors should recognise that CV&A efforts, aimed as they are towards changing entrenched attitudes, reforming long-established structures, and altering power dynamics, require more long-term commitments than those usually made in project planning. Building relationships with key strategic actors (both state and non-state) over the long-term seems essential in order to ensure that the investment and commitment made by donors is given enough time to bear fruit. Donors should become more agile in responding to rapid changes in context that provide new opportunities for CV&A that are worth supporting.
- On the other hand, donors also need to be mindful to build **sustainability features and exit strategies into the design of CV&A interventions**. Donors should pay more attention to empowering partners to take over donor roles and to work to build the sustainability of projects. In particular the use of INGOs and other intermediaries should be approached with caution, as INGOs often inhibit capacity development of their partners, since local NGOs tend to rely heavily on them for funding and technical support. For the longer-term, the principle of working to strengthen local partner capacities to take on V&A issues (and thereby support ‘ownership’) should be a central part of donor support for V&A.

- Finally, there is a need for much **greater donor coordination of CV&A initiatives** – beyond the basics of information sharing and basket funding – with the aim of moving towards joint objectives, with activity streams focused on areas of donor comparative advantage. Improved coordination is highly desirable in order to maximise funding, reduce transaction costs, avoid duplication, allocate management roles and develop M&E systems.

### **8.3 Areas for Further Research**

8.42 As we have sought to make clear throughout this report, given the limitations of the scope of this evaluation, as well as other constraining factors related to resources, timeframes and data generated by the country case studies, there are many issues that this synthesis report could not explore in sufficient depth (if at all). Below, we outline a few themes and ideas that in our view merit attention for further investigation because of the potential contribution such research can make to improved donor practice.

- Further and more creative work and reflection on how to take informal institutions and power relations into account when designing and carrying out (CV&A) interventions.
- Research and analysis of the kind of work that non-ECG donors (especially multi-lateral organisations) are doing in CV&A, and to what effect.
- Better understanding of the risks of CV&A programming and unintended consequences.
- Greater focus on sector specific work (e.g. the role of CV&A within specific sectors such as health and education), based on sound political economy analysis.
- More research and evidence on the link between horizontal accountability mechanisms and their ability to strengthen vertical accountability relationships (i.e. a specific focus on the role of the judiciary and legislature to strengthen citizen's voice and accountability relationships).
- Improved understanding of the opportunities and challenges of scaling up and/or transferring successful interventions (both within a specific country and across countries/regions).
- More thorough analysis of ongoing donor work with non-traditional civil society organisations like social movements and trades unions, in order to get a better sense of when in fact engagement with such groups can contribute to positive change and some of the challenges this kind of work may entail.
- More research and evidence to support (or disprove) the proposition that interventions working on both sides of the V&A equation are likely to be more successful in terms of outcomes and impact, especially regarding the transformation of power relations.

- More thorough research/investigation of whether GBS helps or hinders CV&A interventions and whether it helps promote or undermine greater accountability of state institutions, both towards their populations and towards donors.
- An exploration as to whether and how regionalism/regional organisations like the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Union, and the Organisation of American States (OAS) can be used to promote cross fertilisation and sharing of ideas among actors like CSOs and political parties from different countries.



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# ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR EVALUATION DESIGN

## Evaluation of Citizens' Voice and Accountability: Evaluation Design and Framework Development

### Final Terms of Reference (October 2006)

1. A core group of DAC partners<sup>41</sup> (Evaluation Core Group/ECG) is collaborating on a joint evaluation of development aid for strengthening Citizens' Voice & Accountability. As the first stage of this evaluation, a common framework is to be developed, to be applied subsequently in a range of case studies. The services of a consultant are required to undertake initial analysis of donor approaches, and to develop and pilot the framework in two countries.

#### 2. Background

2.1 Quality of governance is recognised as a key factor correlated with poverty reduction and macroeconomic stability<sup>42</sup>. Good governance is concerned with how citizens, public institutions, and leaders relate to each other, and whether these relationships lead to outcomes that reduce poverty. A large body of research and experience has demonstrated that consultation and participation of citizens in the determination of policies and priorities ('voice') can improve the commitment of government to reduce poverty and enhance the quality of aid and outcomes. Similarly, it is increasingly recognised that 'accountability', or the ability of citizens and the private sector to scrutinise public institutions and governments and to hold them to account is an important facet of good governance. Failures of accountability can lead to pervasive corruption, poor and elite-biased decision making and unresponsive public actors<sup>43</sup>.

2.2 There are many forms of accountability relationship (for example formal and informal accountabilities; social, political, and electoral accountabilities, accountabilities between different public institutions). The ECG proposes to focus this evaluation on donors' support to the development of citizens voice and accountability, focusing on downward or vertical accountability *i.e.: that operating between the state<sup>44</sup> and citizens.*

<sup>41</sup> Currently comprising DANIDA, Sida, NORAD, BMZ, SDC, SES, and DFID.

<sup>42</sup> This association and the direction of causation is the subject of a significant body of research, for example many of the papers by Kaufmann & Kraay, and discussion of this subject in the Global Monitoring Report 2006 (pp. 121-2)

<sup>43</sup> In development debates a stronger focus on participation emerged during the 1980s, in relation to projects, and has since been taken into the consultation of poor people on development priorities for Poverty Reduction Strategies, with varying degrees of success (see for example McGee, Levene, J. & Hughes, A Assessing Participation in Poverty Reducution Strategy Papers, IDS research report 52; World Bank & IMF (2005) Review of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Approach). A range of information on the topic of Voice and Accountability will shortly be available from the Governance & Social Development Resource Centre website ([www.gsdrc.org](http://www.gsdrc.org))

<sup>44</sup> 'State' is understood to include both central government and local government / municipalities.

2.3 In recent years the range of donor interventions seeking to address citizens voice and accountability has expanded, drawing on the use of participatory planning and monitoring tools to go beyond more traditional support for civil society and into methods such as participatory planning and budgeting, public budget hearings and social audits, strengthening civil society advocacy and “watchdog” functions, and the use of citizen and community report cards. Donors work with a range of actors to develop mechanisms to enhance voice and accountability, including the media, NGOs and CBOs, trades unions, political foundations, parliamentarians, local governments and community groups. Donors also support actions to improve the transparency and openness of government processes and the availability of information for holding governments to account<sup>45</sup>.

2.4 It is important to recognise that donors are themselves political actors and part of the governance system in developing countries (wittingly or otherwise). One of the major criticisms of donor behaviour in recent years has been that by imposing conditionalities for the receipt of aid, and by harmonising their approaches in country, they have strengthened the accountability of developing country governments to donors and undermined domestic accountability processes<sup>46</sup>.

2.5 The Paris Declaration of 2005 on Aid Effectiveness also commits development partners to specific actions to enhance citizens voice and accountability as part of the overall commitment to supporting country led approaches. Sections 14 & 15 of the Declaration on Ownership commit partner countries to develop national development strategies through broad consultative processes and donors to respect partner country leadership and to strengthen capacity to exercise it. Section 38 on Fragile States commits partner countries to encourage broad participation of a range of national actors in setting development priorities. Section 48 on Mutual Accountability commits partner countries to strengthen the parliamentary role in national development strategies and/or budgets and to reinforce participatory approaches by systematically involving a broad range of development partners when formulating and assessing progress in implementation of national development strategies. While the principal responsibility for these processes rests with partner countries, donors need to support these efforts and ensure they do not undermine partner countries’ efforts.

2.6 All of the above means there is greater need to evaluate how effective donors have been to date in supporting voice and accountability, and there is now a significant body of experience from which to learn.

### **3. Evaluation Purpose. Scope & Process**

3.1 The **purpose** of the evaluation is twofold:

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<sup>45</sup> These are sometimes referred to as “supply side accountability” measures, while support of civil society actors is referred to as “demand side accountability”. This terminology is however contested by those who consider it implies a flawed and technocratic model of state-society relations, and insufficiently recognises both the right of citizens to participate and be heard in government processes, and the actual nature of power relationships underlying accountabilities (which may be informal as well as formal).

<sup>46</sup> This is discussed in the PRS review of 2005, and the recent OECD DAC Evaluation of General Budget Support indicated GBS had no effect on domestic accountability and empowerment of citizens.

a) To map and document approaches and strategies of development partners for enhancing voice and accountability in a variety of developing country contexts; and to learn lessons on which approaches have worked best, where and why;

b) To assess effects of a range of donor voice and accountability interventions on governance and on aid effectiveness, and whether these effects are sustainable.

3.2 Among the possible objectives of voice and accountability interventions are: empowerment of citizens; gender equality; budget allocations; public revenues and expenditures; service delivery; access to natural resources; conflict reduction; and poverty reduction. These objectives are at different levels and it is expected that during the framework phase causality will be addressed<sup>47</sup>. The framework phase will also be used to delimit the scope of the evaluation with respect to these different objectives. The complexities of attribution will also be addressed during the framework phase, particularly as it is known that this will be challenging especially at outcome and impact levels.

3.3 The **process** of the evaluation will be in three stages as follows:

3.3.1 In the first stage (October 2006 to June 2007), of which this consultancy is a component, a framework will be developed and piloted, under the guidance of the ECG. The development of a framework will be done through a review of relevant strategies of the ECG members, review of existing literature and theory, by desk review of a sample of interventions from ECG members in a sample of countries, then by field collection and analysis of application of the framework in two pilot countries.

3.3.2 During the second phase (July 2007 to December 2007), individual donors or groups of donors will conduct country case studies, using the common framework. It is anticipated that at a minimum 6 case studies will be conducted, but depending on response and the participation of a wider range of partners than the current ECG, this number could rise.

3.3.3 During the final phase (December 2007 to March 2008), the findings from country case studies will be synthesised into an overview evaluation report.

#### **4. Purpose and objectives of this consultancy**

4.1 The purpose of this consultancy is to develop and pilot a framework that can evaluate different types of voice and accountability interventions in different country contexts.

4.2 The objectives of the consultancy are:

- To review strategies and programming of the ECG on citizens voice and accountability; and to classify these according to different country contexts for voice and accountability;

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<sup>47</sup> It is recognised that causality may not be uni-directional or linear and the framework should seek to address the dynamic nature of change in this area.

- To develop and pilot the application in two countries of an indicative framework for evaluation;
- To recommend to the ECG a final common Evaluation Framework to be used for the evaluation.

## **5. Evaluation Questions**

5.1 The following are the core evaluation questions to guide the evaluation and to be used in development of the Evaluation Framework and methodology. It is expected that specific questions for evaluation will be developed through the framework phase.

➤ EQ1:

To what extent have the different approaches and strategies used by donors contributed to enhanced voice and accountability in partner countries, and to improvements in budget allocations, public revenues and expenditures, service delivery and poverty reduction?

➤ EQ2:

Which approaches and strategies have contributed to empowerment and increased the role of poor, excluded groups, and women or their representatives in governance processes, and the accountability of governments to poor citizens? [See Annex E for further guidance on this question]

➤ EQ3:

What can we learn from experience to date to improve donor effectiveness in support of voice and accountability in the context of the Paris Declaration?

5.2 During the Framework phase, specific sub-questions will be identified for follow up during the evaluation. Sub-questions may be identified through consultation with civil society groups, in-country donor groups, and governments in partner countries.

## **6. Scope of Work**

### **6.1 Review of Donor Approaches to Citizens Voice and Accountability**

The consultant will conduct a literature review of different donor approaches to supporting voice and accountability (primarily based on the documents listed at Annex A and others to be sourced by the consultant and supplemented by telephone interviews of key resource persons) to identify:

- i) common and divergent elements of donor policy and strategy in relation to voice and accountability, both overall and in different development contexts;
- ii) key knowledge gaps on agencies' effectiveness in supporting voice and accountability (either individually or collectively);
- iii) the broader theoretical case for strengthening voice and accountability and the expected outcomes of voice and accountability programming;

iv) key issues to consider in relation to measurement and evaluation of voice and accountability interventions<sup>48</sup>. This will include consideration of the complexities of attribution and of how to incorporate citizens perceptions of change / success into the Evaluation Framework.

## **6.2 Intervention review and analysis.**

Review documentation from a sample of interventions from different donors in ten countries displaying different voice and accountability contexts (up to a total of 120 interventions). Selected countries are listed at Annex B. On the basis of the sample, the consultant will develop a typology of contexts for voice and accountability work <sup>49</sup>, and will demonstrate:

- i) the approaches towards voice and accountability taken in different contexts;
- ii) key features of support to voice and accountability in the various contexts<sup>50</sup>;
- iii) key questions for evaluation in different contexts.

6.2.1 Within countries, interventions for the pre-study phase will be selected by the consultancy team drawing on information provided by individual members of the ECG based on the matrix of interventions at Annex C.

## **6.3 Development of Evaluation Framework and Method for Country Case Studies.**

6.3.1 Based on the review of donor approaches, intervention review and analysis, the consultant will develop an Evaluation Framework applicable to the different contexts, specifying indicative outcome areas, results chains and indicators for assessment of relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of interventions. The framework will need to combine sensitivity and flexibility for application in different contexts with sufficient consistency to enable comparison across a range of discrete interventions.

6.3.2 The consultant will develop a method for country case studies addressing the following methodological issues:

- i) identification and sampling of interventions within countries (including the role of ECG members and in-country partners);

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<sup>48</sup> The difficulties of measurement and aggregation of these concepts are widely known. See Casson (2002) for a discussion of broader governance indicators. Kaufmann and Kraay have developed a composite index of “Voice and Accountability” as a subset of governance indicators (see Governance Matters I-IV); the UNDP “Sources for Democratic Governance Indicators” includes 33 sets of indicators, some of which relate to Voice and Accountability; and the IDEA Handbook on Democracy Assessments provides a framework with indicators covering social, cultural and economic rights as well as civil and political rights.

<sup>49</sup> The typology could be that of Kaufmann Kraay, or another typology, such as the IDEA Democracy Assessment typology, depending on the results of the review of interventions. It is expected that this typology would be used in identification of case studies and analysis of case study material.

<sup>50</sup> Key features may include *inter alia* the aims, level and nature of interventions, duration of interventions, expected outcomes, partners, and availability of monitoring information.

- ii) mechanisms for in-country dialogue and management for the evaluation process (specifying for example processes for engagement with country governments, donor groups, and civil society organisations);
- iii) identification of sub-questions by in-country partners;
- iii) data collection methods.

#### **6.4 Pilot the Country Case Methodology and Framework**

The consultant will pilot the methodology and framework in the field in two countries (from among those covered in developing the framework). The field pilots will include piloting of local consultation and data collection methods (including evaluating specific interventions) and assessing the availability and quality of data for responding to evaluation questions. On the basis of the pilot exercises the consultant will make an assessment of the suitability of the proposed methodology and framework.

#### **6.5 Recommend a Framework and Country Case methodology to the ECG.**

### **7. Outputs**

#### 7.1 Inception Report (within 2 weeks of commencement of study).

The inception report should be a brief (no more than ten pages) paper specifying the consultants' understanding of the task, the methods to be employed in undertaking the task, use of inputs and timing, requirements from the ECG, and highlighting any points of clarification to the scope and nature of the task. On the basis of the inception report, the consultants and EVD will agree a schedule of deliverables and phased payments.

#### 7.2 First evaluation report (within 2 months of commencement of study).

The first evaluation report will be a working paper containing the outcomes of the literature review and the underlying evaluation theory; an evaluative review of donor approaches to these issues based on reviews of strategies and sampled interventions; the proposed Evaluation Framework and case study methodology.

#### 7.3 Reports from the pilot case studies (within 6 months of commencement of study).

These should be separate reports for each pilot, containing the evaluation findings together with observations on the use of the framework and methodology.

#### 7.4 Final report (within 8 months of commencement of study).

To contain the recommended final evaluation questions and sub-questions, Evaluation Framework, country case methodology, and guidelines for management of in-country consultation processes.

## **8. Timing & Deliverables**

8.1 All outputs to be delivered within 8 months of commencement of the consultancy. A schedule of specific deliverable dates and milestones will be agreed following the inception report, subject to approval by the ECG.

8.2 Consultants are expected to have in place documented internal quality assurance procedures. Outputs should be of a publishable standard and conform to EVD's style guide (to be supplied). Final outputs should take account of the comments of the Quality Assurance Panel (see Annex D).

## **9. Qualifications & Experience / Knowledge & Skills**

9.1 The work should be conducted by a small team of consultants, with the following knowledge and skills:

- Knowledge and experience in successful evaluation design, particularly of complex evaluations;
- Knowledge of voice and accountability issues, including the measurement and monitoring of participation and empowerment (qualitative and quantitative dimensions);
- Experience and knowledge of participatory approaches to evaluation, and of joint evaluation;
- Experience and knowledge of gender and development;
- Strong analytical and reasoning skills;
- Awareness of the political context of development interventions in this area.

## **10. Management & Reporting**

10.1 Overall management arrangements are as specified at Annex D.

10.2 The consultancy will be managed on behalf of the ECG by the Evaluation Department (EVD) of the Department for International Development (UK). The consultants will report to Jo Bosworth in EVD.

10.3 The consultants will be required to attend meetings of the ECG to discuss the inception report, after production of the first framework report, and a further meeting of the ECG after the production of the draft final report.

## **ANNEX A: DONOR POLICY AND STRATEGY DOCUMENTS**

### **DFID:**

Available at [www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk)

Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalisation Work for the Poor (white Paper 2000)

Eliminating World Poverty: Making Governance Work for the Poor (White Paper 2006)

Target Strategy Paper: Making Government Work for Poor People (2000)

Target Strategy Paper: Realising Human Rights for Poor People (2000)

Civil Society and Development (2006)

Why we need to work more effectively in Fragile States (2004)

With the Support of Multitudes: Using Strategic Communication to fight poverty through PRSPs (2004)

Helping Parliaments & Legislative Assemblies to work for the Poor (2004)

Elections and the Electoral Process – a guide to assistance (2003)

The media in Governance – a guide to assistance (2001)

Citizens, Accountability and Public Expenditure (Evaluation Working Paper 2005)

DFID Action Plan – Moving Forward with Country Led Approaches to Poverty Reduction (Development Committee paper, February 2005)

Other documents on Voice and Accountability will shortly be available from Governance and Social Development Resource Centre ([www.gsdrc.org](http://www.gsdrc.org))

### **Danida:**

Available at [www.amg.um.dk](http://www.amg.um.dk)

Denmark's Development Policy: Strategy (2000)

Denmark's Development Policy: Analysis (2000)

Working Paper 21: Human Rights, Democratisation, Good Governance and Public Participation (2000)

Strategy for Danish Support to Civil Society (2000)

Danida Support to Good Governance: Some issues and Challenges Regarding Analysis & Planning. Technical Advisory Services, October 2004

Evaluation of Danish Support to Promotion of Human Rights & Democratisation. Vols 1-9, Copenhagen, Evaluation Report 1999/11-1/9

Other documents available from [www.um.dk](http://www.um.dk) (individual partner countries); and [www.danida-networks.dk](http://www.danida-networks.dk) (Governance Network)

## **SDC**

Independent Evaluation of SDC Guidelines "Promoting Human Rights in Development Cooperation" and - SDC concept "The Rule of Law and its implication on Development Cooperation": see:

<http://www.deza.admin.ch/index.php?navID=21424&langID=1&userhash=884bb91550afcd7d76a129a0f06a5a79>

[Available from EVD]

Information and Governance: A guide

Integrating Human Rights and Poverty Reduction: Towards a human rights based approach for SDC (Working Paper)

Decentralisation and Development

SDC's Human Rights Policy: Towards a Life in Dignity: Realising Human Rights for Poor People

Empowerment Lessons Learnt

Creating the Prospect of Living a Life in Dignity: Principles Guiding the SDC in its commitment to fighting poverty

Decentralisation in SDC's bilateral cooperation: Relevance, Effectiveness, Comparative Advantage (Draft Approach Paper)

Independent Evaluation of SDC's Performance Towards Empowerment of Stakeholders from the Recipients' Perspective

## **SES (Special Evaluation Office of the Belgian Development Cooperation) [available from EVD]**

Evaluation du thème “Appui à la décentralisation et gouvernance locale”

Etape 3: Eléments de stratégie pour l'intervention de la Coopération belge en appui à la décentralisation et à la gouvernance locale

“Note Stratégique Consolidation de la Paix”, DCGI, Juillet 2002

## **Sida**

Shared Responsibility: Sweden's Policy for Global Development

<http://www.sweden.gov.se/content/1/c6/02/45/20/c4527821.pdf>,

the short version of the document:

<http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/574/a/20256>

Perspectives on poverty:

<http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp?f=Perspectives+on+poverty.pdf&a=1490>

## **Annexes**

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Goal, perspectives and central component elements:

[http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp?f=SIDA4640en\\_Goals+perspectives.pdf&a=3449](http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp?f=SIDA4640en_Goals+perspectives.pdf&a=3449)

Environmental policy:

[http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp?f=SIDA3512en\\_EvironManageSystem+web.pdf&a=3071](http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp?f=SIDA3512en_EvironManageSystem+web.pdf&a=3071)

Private sector development policy:

<http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp?f=SIDA4237en+web.pdf&a=3316>

Gender policy:

[http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp?f=SIDA4888en\\_Gender\\_Policy.pdf&a=3584](http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp?f=SIDA4888en_Gender_Policy.pdf&a=3584)

Promoting peace and security:

[http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp?f=SIDA4889sv\\_Promoting\\_Peace.pdf&a=3585](http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp?f=SIDA4889sv_Promoting_Peace.pdf&a=3585)

Justice and peace

<http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp?f=Part+1+JusticePeace97.pdf&a=2085>

and

<http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp?f=Part+2+JusticePeace97.pdf&a=2085>

Policy for Capacity Development:

[http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp?f=Sida+\\_Capacity\\_Dev.pdf&a=2464](http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp?f=Sida+_Capacity_Dev.pdf&a=2464)

Digging Deeper, Four Reports on Democratic Governance in International Development Cooperation Summary:

[http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp?f=SIDA2950en\\_webb.pdf&a=2880](http://www.sida.se/shared/jsp/download.jsp?f=SIDA2950en_webb.pdf&a=2880)

## **BMZ/GTZ**

Policy and concept papers are available from [www.bmz.de](http://www.bmz.de), including:

Poverty reduction – Program of Action 2015 (2001)

Every Person has a right to development (2004)

## **Norad**

Chapter 6 & 8 of “Fighting Poverty Together”

[http://odin.dep.no/ud/english/doc/white\\_paper/032181-040002/dok.bn.html](http://odin.dep.no/ud/english/doc/white_paper/032181-040002/dok.bn.html)

Guidelines for Support to Free Media in Developing Countries

<http://udintra/NR/rdonlyres/5FC1F142-E785-4891-9E94-55892480865D/1436/guidelinesword310105e2.doc>

"How to deal with Direct Support to Civil Society"

<http://Norad.no/items/2792/38/4371941298/directsupport.pdf> 2001

Norad's Good Governance and anti-corruption Action Plan 2000- 2001

<http://www.Norad.no/items/1022/38/5792693521/HandlingsplanKorrEngeksl.doc>

Other documents that might be of interest are:

Strategic framework: Angola 2003 -2005

<http://odin.dep.no/ud/english/topics/bilateral/032131-220007/dok.bn.html>

[Human Rights and democracy in Bangladesh](#) - a plan for Norwegian support 2002

<http://Norad.no/items/1025/38/8596743765/bangladesh.pdf>

Report on civil society in Uganda 1 and 2, 2003

<http://Norad.no/items/1029/38/2057014607/UGA%20civsociety%20report.doc>

<http://Norad.no/items/1052/38/9656047172/Uganda%20section%202.doc>

SWAPs and civil society, the roles of civil society in sector programmes. synthesis report (country studies: Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Uganda)

<http://Norad.no/items/1122/38/4485964499/012004.pdf>

Study of future civil society support in Mozambique 2002

<http://Norad.no/items/1137/38/1610437112/MOZcivilsociety%20final%20report.doc>

**ANNEX B: SELECTED COUNTRIES FOR FRAMEWORK PHASE**

(to be finalised prior to commencement of study)

Benin

Ghana

Indonesia

Uganda

DRC

Tanzania

Ethiopia

Bolivia

Nicaragua

Possibly Vietnam or Nepal

## ANNEX C: Matrix of Intervention Types

“SUPPLY SIDE” INTERVENTIONS	“DEMAND SIDE” INTERVENTIONS
Interventions linked to Budget support, principally initiatives to improve <i>transparency</i> of policy and budgeting processes; and to <i>open space</i> for citizens to participate and review policy, planning and budget processes	Capacity building interventions in the following areas:  NGO/civil society advocacy (national, sector, or local focus)
Interventions linked to Sector support, as above	NGO/civil society monitoring / “watchdog” (national, sector, or local focus)  Community Planning processes
Interventions linked to Decentralisation and local governance processes, as above	Trade union support  Media support  Local Government support  Participatory Poverty Assessments  Civic education
INTERVENTIONS ON BOTH SUPPLY & DEMAND SIDES	
Parliament support  Support to Parliamentary audit institutions  Political foundations  Human Rights Commissions / Ombudspersons outreach activities  Social Audits	

Since part of the evaluation purpose is to identify strategies and approaches the above list may not be exhaustive and partners should submit other types of intervention for consideration by the consultants. However, it has been agreed that **some types of intervention will not be considered<sup>51</sup>** in this evaluation, specifically:

Justice sector interventions, including Police and Judiciary support

Supreme audit institutions (except for the audit function of parliament)

Human Rights Commissions, Ombudspersons etc. (formal accountability institutions)  
[except for outreach activities with citizens as listed in the matrix]

National poverty monitoring systems (statistical systems)

NGO service delivery interventions

Formal election support [except civic or voter education processes as listed in the matrix]

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<sup>51</sup> The above are general principles, but there may be scope within specific countries depending on the nature of voice and accountability support undertaken.

## **Annex D: ARRANGEMENTS FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE EVALUATION OF CITIZENS VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

1. Arrangements for management of the evaluation will be based on four key functions:

a) overall strategic direction

Overall strategic direction will be the responsibility of the Evaluation Core Group (ECG).

b) day to day management;

Executive management will vary for the different stages of the evaluation: during the Framework and Synthesis phases this will be handled on behalf of the ECG by the Evaluation Department of the Department for International Development (DFID); individual DAC partners (or small groups of DAC partners) will be responsible for executive management of country case studies.

c) quality assurance;

While the ECG and executive managers will have final responsibility for quality assurance of evaluation products, they will be assisted in this by an independent Quality Assurance Panel to be established for the evaluation.

d) consultation.

The subject and nature of the evaluation demands consultation with a range of other stakeholders in participating DAC member states and in case study countries. Responsibilities for this will rest with individual DAC partners within member states. For country case studies, the method for this will be developed during the Framework and methodology phase (ToR 6.3.2 (ii)). Consideration will be given to holding a joint stakeholder meeting at the end of the Framework phase and a further one at the Synthesis phase.

## **2. EVALUATION CORE GROUP (ECG) TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**The Evaluation Core Group is a management group representing the core evaluation partners from among the DAC partners**

**The role of the group is:**

- *To direct the overall design and content of the evaluation in line with the evaluation purpose*
- *To facilitate the process of the evaluation through managing relationships within their own agency, providing information, and setting up case studies*
- *To manage individual case studies as necessary using the common Evaluation Framework and to DAC quality standards*
- *To comment in writing and through attendance at meetings on written outputs by specified dates*
- *The expected input from each member of the Management group is 3-4 days during the Framework phase. Inputs for the Case Study and Synthesis Phase to be determined*

2.1 The ECG role is overall strategic oversight of the design, content, and process of the evaluation, including such issues as approving the common framework; agreeing the number and selection of case studies; agreeing overall quality standards for case studies (DAC quality standards); and agreeing approaches to the involvement of stakeholders in DAC member states and partner countries.

2.2 The Core Group is composed of representatives of participating DAC partners only<sup>52</sup>. Membership may be expanded at a later stage of the evaluation should other DAC partners wish to participate.

2.3 Meetings of the Core Group will rotate among members. Each meeting will be Chaired by a representative of the host agency.

2.4 Meetings will be called at key moments of the evaluation process; specifically on production of the first framework report; draft framework report; at inception stage for country studies; and draft synthesis report stage.

2.5 ECG members will be required to provide written comments on outputs of the evaluation (inception report, first report, pilot case study reports, and draft framework phase report), to the dates specified.

2.6 In addition to their strategic oversight role, members of the ECG will be the key link persons with their respective agencies, and will facilitate the evaluation process, specifically by contributing documentation, liaising with in-country contacts, and taking the lead responsibility for arrangements for country case studies for the second phase.

### **3. Day to Day Management**

3.1 Day to day management will be with EVD for the Framework and Synthesis Phases; and with individual ECG members for case studies.

3.2 For the Framework and Synthesis phases, EVD will consult closely with members of the ECG on Terms of Reference and selection of consultants.

3.3 EVD is mandated by the ECG to take day-to-day decisions in respect of management of consultants, establishment of quality control and stakeholder consultation mechanisms, arranging country visits, and collating comments from ECG members on written outputs, for the Framework and Synthesis phases.

### **4. Quality Assurance Panel**

4.1 The Quality Assurance Panel will be a 2 or 3 member panel of experts.

4.2 The Quality assurance Panel will comment on outputs against the evaluation standards (DAC quality standards), specifically on the draft Framework and methods (Framework phase); on quality issues in the country case studies (Case study phase); and on the draft Synthesis report (Synthesis phase).

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<sup>52</sup> Currently DANIDA, NORAD, SDC, BMZ, Sida, Belgian Development Cooperation & DFID.

4.3 The Panel will facilitate a meeting of contractors for the country case studies at the inception of the second phase to discuss methodology issues and resolve any quality concerns.

**5. Consultation**

5.1 Individual ECG members will facilitate consultation with stakeholders in their own country.

5.2 Arrangements for consultation with in-country stakeholders will be determined during the course of the Framework phase. Contractors for the case studies will be required to follow the guidelines developed.

## **ANNEX E: GUIDANCE ON APPROACH TO SUB-QUESTION EQ2(a)**

The ECG is particularly concerned to ensure the evaluation of Voice and Accountability takes into account the views and perceptions of poor people about which approaches are successful, which have genuinely “empowered” poor people, and how this has affected well being. It is expected that this concern will be reflected in the evaluation methodology.

Three principal (and related) methodological issues should be considered:

- a) how to assess the empowerment effect of voice and accountability approaches (the quality, depth and sustainability of change);
- b) how to identify effects on different groups in society (the poorest, excluded groups) as opposed to generalised effects. This should specifically consideration of gender effects;
- c) how to reflect the views of poor people in the indicators used for evaluation and in the processes for assessment of interventions. For example, consultants may wish to consider the development of, or use of existing techniques (for example citizen report cards).

## ANNEX 2: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SYNTHESIS REPORT

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

#### CITIZENS' VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY EVALUATION

#### SYNTHESIS REPORT COMPILATION

#### **Introduction**

1. A core group of DAC partners (Evaluation Core Group/ECG<sup>53</sup>) agreed in 2006 to collaborate on a joint evaluation of development aid for strengthening Citizens' Voice and Accountability (CV&A). As an initial stage in this process, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) undertook development of an Evaluation Framework to assess CV&A interventions<sup>54</sup> and piloted the framework and methodology in two countries. The ECG is now using this framework and its accompanying methodology to evaluate interventions across a range of country types. At the end of this process, a **synthesis report** is to be produced which will make recommendations for donors to consider. These will draw on lessons about CV&A interventions from the case studies and, importantly, place them within the broader context of existing literature on the subject and extant policy approaches.<sup>55</sup>
2. The Country Case Studies (CCS) will be commissioned by donor partners individually and are scheduled to take place in the period October – December 2007 with final reports due on each by mid January 2008.<sup>56</sup> **It should be noted that although commissioned by a single donor each CCS will evaluate interventions across all ECG partners active in the country or region.** Additionally, in order to gain a holistic understanding of the scope of CV&A initiatives across the country, a minor mapping exercise to record other relevant donor and national interventions will be undertaken.
3. These TOR refer to the compilation of a synthesis report on Citizens' Voice and Accountability.

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<sup>53</sup> Donor partners from the UK, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Belgium, Norway, and Germany.

<sup>54</sup> It should be noted that donors are unable to work directly on voice (an action) or accountability (a relationship). In practice, donors strengthen CV&A by seeking to create or strengthen the preconditions for the exercise of CV&A and/or particular channels and mechanisms that underpin actions of CV&A relationships. In the context of this evaluation, such activities are referred to as 'CV&A interventions'.

<sup>55</sup> This includes a recent document commissioned by the ECG and written by ODI on "Review of Literature and Donor approaches". This is included in the zip file attached to these TOR.

<sup>56</sup> See CCS TOR attached in zip file.

## **Background and Rationale**

4. There is an increasing emphasis on governance in development fora as the key dimension to addressing poverty reduction and inequality and promoting economic stability and growth. This goes beyond the institutional framework of government to the interaction between formal and informal actors, processes, customs and rules. It is a process of bargaining between those who hold power and those who seek to influence it. But only those who can convey their views have a “voice” and only governments or states who are accountable, and can be held so, will respond.

5. Good governance thus requires a just and responsive relationship between citizen and state. Development actors have long recognised this and worked on programmes to enhance the ability of the most vulnerable in society to articulate their needs, and with partner governments to provide the mechanisms and capacity to respond. Despite these efforts, there is a lack of evidence and real understanding of the dynamic and complex nature of factors influencing voice and accountability and there is thus a need to more systematically examine and evaluate current interventions.

6. This donor initiative seeks to identify both what works and what does not and why, and to identify gaps, overlaps and duplication in donor provision. By becoming more effective and transparent in our delivery of assistance to this vital area of both governance and social development aid provision, it also, as espoused by the Paris Declaration, seeks to improve donor coherence and accountability to those with whom, and on whose behalf, we work.

7. The Synthesis Report will be disseminated widely both in hard copy and electronically and, as appropriate, seminars will be organised across Europe to publicise the findings of the study.

## **Purpose**

8. Individual case studies (CCS) will highlight issues and learn lessons from a specific country experience. However, it is important to synthesise the insights gained from the sum of those CCS in a more strategic manner building on previous components of the initiative (e.g. the literature review, intervention analysis, pilot tests of the Evaluation Framework and Methodology, and country case studies) and presenting them in the context of current, and in some cases, evolving donor policies on governance and social development. This will form the final evaluation synthesis report.

## **Objectives and Scope**

9. The consultancy commissioned to undertake the synthesis phase of the CV&A Evaluation will:

- Analyse the findings of the country case studies and extrapolate from them (citing examples from the CCS to illustrate points): any common themes or lessons that arise which are applicable across a range of country contexts; lessons and issues specific to context; and, areas worthy of further research;

- Review the evolution of development policy on CV&A (using the existing evaluation material and in particular the review of literature and donor approaches, as well as any significant new publications) and place the findings from the CCS in that context drawing out any inconsistencies or gaps in coverage;
- Review and make recommendations on extant policies for ECG donor review, consideration and follow up.

### **Tasks and outputs**

10. In line with the objectives outlined above the Synthesis Consultancy Team will:

- Attend meetings of the ECG over the period October 07 – April 08 (probably on 3 occasions with at least two in mainland Europe locations) to become aware of any issues of significance arising in the course of those meetings<sup>57</sup> and, as appropriate, present findings to the Group on major themes emerging from the CCS specifically and their work generally; the first meeting is scheduled for October 22-23 in Bonn and a member of the Synthesis Team is expected to attend;
- Consult key individuals within donor policy departments to obtain up to date information on current research on governance, social development, respective policies and other areas, if any, of relevance to the CV&A agenda; the update should build on the Review of literature and donor approaches;
- Review the CV&A policy positions of those bi-laterals and multi-laterals which play a significant role in the evolution of thinking and/or implementation of CV&A-related strategies and programmes; the review should build on the Review of literature and donor approaches;
- Summarise and assess the findings of the five CCS (which are due to be submitted by 15 January 2008);
- Produce an **Inception Report**, to be presented at the ECG meeting in October 2007; the inception report should elaborate on the intended methodology and outline of the Synthesis Report;
- Produce a draft synthesis study report (by 1 March 2008 or six weeks following delivery of the CCS reports) and be prepared to redraft the report to incorporate comments from the ECG and QA panel (see para 16);
- Produce a draft briefing paper (indicative length 4-6 pages and translated into Spanish, French and Portuguese) on the main findings of the Synthesis Report (in tandem with the draft synthesis study);

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<sup>57</sup> At least one, and probably two, of these meetings will have CCS Team members present.

- Produce the final draft of the **Synthesis Report** and **Briefing Paper**, reflecting comments received from the ECG (by 15 April 2008 or three weeks following receipt of ECG comments);
- Internally assure the quality of the Synthesis Report to ensure compliance with DAC Quality standards, prior to submission to the Commissioning Donor (DFID) for further distribution to the ECG;
- Be prepared to present (preliminary and then final) findings at meetings of the ECG in 2008; and,
- Be prepared to brief donor staff and constituencies at seminars on the findings outlined in the synthesis report on up to eight occasions; these seminars will be organised and financed by individual ECG donors and will be located in various capitals/cities across Europe; the Synthesis Consultancy Team's travel and subsistence costs will be covered by that donor but DFID will finance daily fees within the terms of the overall Synthesis Study contract.

## **Report Outline**

11. The **Synthesis Report** is expected to adhere to DAC reporting standards and convention. The following layout is suggested:<sup>58</sup>

- Executive Summary (5 pages)<sup>59</sup>;
- Part 1: Introduction: evaluation background and objectives (2 pages);
- Part 2: Subject and Methodology of the Synthesis Phase (2 pages): process undertaken to complete the assignment; challenges encountered and methods employed in analysing and synthesising the CCS Reports;
- Part 3: Review and Update of the Desk Phase (3 pages): current research, policy and debate on areas relevant for CV&A;
- Part 4 (MAIN): Synthesis of CCS Reports (20 pages): country contexts; interventions evaluated; comparative assessment against the Evaluation Framework (key questions and core components raised and criteria described);<sup>60</sup> use of specific interventions to illustrate key issues; synthesised conclusions;
- Part 5: Lessons Learned and General Recommendations (8 pages).

12. In compiling the report special attention should be paid to the impact of CV&A interventions on the lives of the poor and marginalised in society.

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<sup>58</sup> The consultancy team should refer to the DFID Style Guide (attached in the zip file) for general guidance. The Synthesis Report's indicative length is some 40 pages but annexes may be attached as required to cover, *inter alia*, TOR, interviews/meetings conducted, etc.

<sup>59</sup> The summary will form the basis of the **Briefing Paper**.

<sup>60</sup> This is included in the zip file attached to these TOR; 'key questions' refer to chapter 3, 'core components' to chapter 5 of the Evaluation Framework and 'criteria' to tables 1 and 2 in that document.

## **Team Composition, Contracting and Reporting Arrangements**

13. The work should be conducted by a small team of consultants and will include the following skill and experience:

- Knowledge of the subject area;
- Expertise in Governance, Social development and, conflict prevention issues;
- Experience of complex and joint evaluations;
- Strong analytical, reasoning and writing skills; and,
- Experience of working in sensitive environments

14. A consultancy company will be competitively appointed based on the skills demonstrated in the team composition, costs, availability and access to in-house expertise and reach back.

15. The working language is, and the Synthesis Report is to be written in, English. The briefing paper is also to be written in English but translated into Spanish, French and Portuguese. Costs associated with translation are to be included in the bid.

16. Consultancies submitting bids should be aware that both the draft Synthesis Report and briefing paper will be submitted to an independent QA panel for review. Its comments, in addition to those of the ECG, will also have to be incorporated into any refinement of the preliminary draft. Exception to this will only be by negotiation with the DFID Evaluation Theme Leader on behalf of the ECG.

17. The successful consultancy will report to the ECG through the DFID Evaluation Theme Leader or her nominated DFID representative.

18. The start date for this work will be 1 October 2007 and the concluding date no later than end April 2008.

19. A payment schedule will be agreed between DFID and the successful bidder pending award of contract.

20.. Evaluation Management: The various roles of the ECG, Evaluation Theme Leader, commissioning donor, QA Panel, are as outlined below:

- The Evaluation Core Group provides overall endorsement of, and direction to, the key components of this initiative e.g. Terms of Reference, timing, reports' publication and dissemination decisions etc. Chairmanship of the Group is shared, rotating as per the location of ECG meetings. ECG members are the key interlocutors between consultancy teams engaged in the work and donor colleagues in both capitals and country offices.
- The Evaluation Theme Leader: DFID provides the management and administrative support for this initiative through its nominated Evaluation Theme Leader.
- Commissioning donor is the donor which undertakes to commission, fund and manage a specific component of CV&A work.

- The CCS Team is the consultancy appointed by a commissioning donor to undertake a specific case study (see TOR attached in zip files).

The Quality Assurance Panel (see TOR attached in zip file) has been commissioned by DFID, on behalf of the ECG, to ensure that the DAC Evaluation Quality standards are adequately reflected in the final Evaluation Framework, Methodological Approach, Country Case Studies and Synthesis Report; and, that reporting standards are uniformly observed as per the TOR for CCS. It is an advisory role and it reports through the Evaluation Theme Leader.

## ANNEX 3: TABLE OF INTERVENTIONS FROM CASE STUDIES

The Table below provides a list all of the individual interventions that were analysed in all seven of the this evaluation project. The interventions are listed by country, and key characteristics including beneficiaries (actors), themes, level of the intervention (national, subnational etc.); where possible, timing Table was compiled by ODI from data provided in the individual case studies.

	Intervention	Country	Donors	Actors	Themes	Level
1	District Development Nampula (DIDENA )	<b>Mozambique</b>	SDC	Local community councils, farmers' associations, civil society and community based organisations	capacity building, community empowerment and participative district planning	Dis
2	Urban Environmental Management	<b>Mozambique</b>	Danida	Urban communities; CDS-ZU - Centro de Desenvolvimento Sustentável - Zonas Urbanas, a national institution under MICOA - Ministry of Environmental Coordination; Municipal Council at Ilha de Moçambique	development of mechanisms for participation	7 m (url)
3	Development Observatory (Poverty Observatory)	<b>Mozambique</b>	UNDP	UNDP, Ministry of Planning and Development, government, civil society and international partners	monitoring PRSP/ provincial development plans	Pro mu
4	Centre for Public Integrity (CIP)	<b>Mozambique</b>	SDC, DFID, Norad, Sida, Danida	Watchdog organisation	anti-corruption	Nat
5	Community Land Use Fund Project (CLUFP)	<b>Mozambique</b>	DFID, Royal Netherlands Embassy, SDC, Irish Aid, Sida, Danida	Smallholders and local communities	rights and access to land	Loc

*Annexes*

	Intervention	Country	Donors	Actors	Themes	Loc Lev
6	Training of Parliamentarians (AWEPA)	<b>Mozambique</b>	Sida	Parliamentarians, with special attention to new members and women members of Parliament Members of Selected Parliamentary Committees Parliamentary Staff Members	capacity building, training and improved functioning of state institutions and functionaries	Nat
7	Support to Administrative Court	<b>Mozambique</b>	Sida	Administrative Court, Swedish National Audit Office	capacity building, training and improved functioning of administrative court	Nat
8	Support to Radio Okapi	<b>DRC</b>	DFID	International NGO: Foundation Hirondelle, MONUC, Radio Okapi	media	Nat Pro Loc
9	Support for Institutions of the Transition	<b>DRC</b>	DFID, UNDP, GOI (Italy)	Independent Electoral Commission, Commission for Ethics and the Elimination of Corruption, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Higher Authority for the Media, National Human Rights Observatory	media, election support, capacity building for state institutions	Nat Pro Loc
10	EISA	<b>DRC</b>	DFID, Sida (and to a lesser extent Switzerland, BCDC & UNDP)	International NGO: EISA; Members of the Transition Parliament, the Independent Electoral Commission, the political parties and the OSC	elections: capacity building to actors involved in organisation of democratic, credible and transparent elections	Nat Pro Loc
11	Supporting Congo's Transition Towards Sustainable Peace – Search for Common Ground/Centre Lokolé	<b>DRC</b>	DFID, Sida	Radio stations and media professionals; Population where radio stations broadcast	conflict resolution and peace-building through media programmes and community development	Pro Loc

	Intervention	Country	Donors	Actors	Themes	Loc Lev
12	Initiative for joint work in the leadership and State cohesion (ILCCE)	<b>DRC</b>	DFID, EC, Canada, Sida, Norway, Netherlands	Leaders from political parties, civil society, media International NGO: WWICS (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars)	training initiatives for leaders to support conflict resolution, peace-building and build state capacity	Nat
13	Breaking the links between natural resource exploitation, conflict and corruption in the <b>DRC</b>	<b>DRC</b>	Sida	International NGO: Global Witness, general population	advocacy for transparency in extractive industries; support for national CSO	Nat
14	Supporting the National Council for NGOs Active in Development Sector (CNONGD)	<b>DRC</b>	DGCD	NGOs	support for civil society (through NGO umbrella organisation)	Nat Pro
15	Capacity building Programme for trade union	<b>DRC</b>	DGCD	National CSO : - Congolese Trade Union Confederation (CSC) and provincial arms	support for civil society (trades unions)	Nat Pro
16	Strengthening the rule of law and restoration of justice in the City of Kinshasa and the Provinces of Bas-Congo and Bandundu	<b>DRC</b>	DGCD/DFID	International NGO: RCN; legal professionals: judges, police judiciaire, lawyers etc. resource personnel (associations, regional chiefs, religious leaders etc).	justice	Nat Pro Loc
17	Support programme for development initiatives in the Communities of Kisenso and Kimbanseke (PAIDECO-Kin)	<b>DRC</b>	DGCD	The Belgian Technical Co-operation (BTC) The Ministry of Plan The Ministry of Internal Affairs The Governorate of Kinshasa The Communities of Kisenso and Kimbanseke	decentralisation, community development programme	Nat Pro Loc

*Annexes*

	Intervention	Country	Donors	Actors	Themes	Loc Lev
18	Coalition for Constituent Assembly Support (CoCAS)	<b>Nepal</b>	RDIF (DFID, SDC, AusAID, RNE)	CSOs: CeLRRD, FLWD, IGD, Pro-Public, TAF; General public	public awareness programme for new constitution	Na
19	Media for Consolidation of Democracy (MCD)	<b>Nepal</b>	Danida	CPJS (NGO); General public and district officials	using media for enhancing the voice of the rural poor	Na 31
20	Leaders, Listen to the Voice of the People! (LLVP)	<b>Nepal</b>	Norwegian Embassy, Kathmandu	Pro-Public (NGO); Politicians, community based groups, journalists	political leaders across a number of districts listen to people's voice	10
21	<b>Nepal</b> Good Governance Project (NGGP)	<b>Nepal</b>	SDC	Pro-Public (NGO); Good Governance Clubs, politicians, journalists	capacity building of civil society to advocate for a more inclusive democracy	Na dist
22	Decentralised Financing and Development Programme (DFDP)	<b>Nepal</b>	DFID/UNCDF	Ministry of Local Development (MoLD); DDC officials, rural poor and marginalised groups	providing community based, rural infrastructure and human resource opportunities	20 dist
23	Dalit/Janajati Empowerment Campaign (DJEC)	<b>Nepal</b>	Danida	SAMAGRA (NGO); Dalit and janajati excluded groups	capacity building for 'untouchable' castes and indigenous groups in relation to rights issues and advocacy	6 d
24	Janajati Empowerment Project (JEP)	<b>Nepal</b>	DFID	NEFIN (NGO); Indigenous people's organisations	capacity building for janajati organisations and advocacy targeted to officials	Cer sele dist
25	<b>Nepal</b> /Swiss Community Forestry Programme (NSCFP)	<b>Nepal</b>	SDC	Ministry of Local Development (MoLD); Forest user groups	technical support to forest user groups, related to planning and management of community development	3 d
26	Poverty Alleviation in Selected Rural areas (PASRA)	<b>Nepal</b>	BMZ	MoLD; Rural poor	employment opportunities for rural poor – and opening access to income-generating activities	8 W dist

	Intervention	Country	Donors	Actors	Themes	Loc Lev
27	Reaching Out of School Children (ROSC)	<b>Bangladesh</b>	World Bank, SDC	Centre Management Committees; Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) through its second Primary Education Development Program (PEDP II).	community mobilisation to select service providers and manage funds for non-formal education	Loc Lev
28	Rural Development Programmes of the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED)	<b>Bangladesh</b>	GTZ and DFID (with ADB/ KfW)	LGED (Local Government Engineering Department), Union Parishads Communities Road construction workers	participatory approaches to village level planning, community supervision, open contracting for local roads/ market development	Loc Lev
29	Financial Management Reform Project (FMRP)	<b>Bangladesh</b>	DFID/Royal Netherlands Embassy	HELM, Ministry of Finance (MOF), Poor women and men	improve efficiency and effectiveness of allocation of Government resources; to achieve more equitable and improved public service delivery	Nat
30	Mass-line Media Centre (MMC)	<b>Bangladesh</b>	Danida and DFID	MMC (local NGO)	professionalism in media, particularly journalism	21 cen dist
31	Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) Education Watch	<b>Bangladesh</b>	SDC Royal Netherlands Embassy	CAMPE (national coalition of NGOs)	independent, research-based monitoring mechanism for independent review of the state of primary and basic education	Nat

*Annexes*

	Intervention	Country	Donors	Actors	Themes	Loc Lev
32	Oxfam ‘We Can’	<b>Bangladesh</b>	Oxfam	12 main NGO partners as funding partners; “We Can” alliance office acts as secretariat 236 NGOs + thousands of alternative agencies as part of “We Can” network	violence against women campaign	Na
33	Rupantar	<b>Bangladesh</b>	SDC	Rupantar , a local NGO	socio-political empowerment of women by developing leadership skills, and participation in elections, local committees and Union Parishad standing committees	20 4 d
34	Transparency International <b>Bangladesh</b> (TIB)	<b>Bangladesh</b>	DFID (67.5%) Sida (15.9%) Norway (10.9%) Danida (5.7%)	Citizens (respected, role models) as members of CCCs Youths (15–30 years) National level guardianship organisations (Public Service Commission, Anti –Corruption Commission, Election Commission)	working as a catalyst of social movement against corruption	Na
35	Samata	<b>Bangladesh</b>	DFID, Sida, Norad	Samata (social movement); poor landless women and men	access to entitlements to land and water resources and services	Na
36	GTZ brokered dialogue within the Promotion of Social Environmental and Production Standards in the Ready Made Garment Sector (PROGRESS)	<b>Bangladesh</b>	GTZ	Ministry of Commerce, business associations, buyers, suppliers, workers organisations, NGOs and civil society groups	labour law compliance	Na

	Intervention	Country	Donors	Actors	Themes	Location Level
37	<b>Bangladesh</b> Sanjukta Sramic Federation (BSSF)	<b>Bangladesh</b>	World Solidarity Movement (WSM), Belgium	BSSF (registered national trade union federation without political party affiliation)	promote workers social, economic and political rights, capacity building and representation	National
38	Multistakeholder Forestry Programme (MFP)	<b>Indonesia</b>	DFID	Communities, local and central government	natural resource management livelihoods, empowerment policy advocacy, support to law formulation	District/national
39	Poverty Alleviation Support Local Governance in NTB and NTT (PROMIS)	<b>Indonesia</b>	BMZ	GOI Ministry of Home Affairs, Local government, communities	decentralisation, community empowerment, local governance reform participatory planning	District/Community (Rural/urban)
40	Support for Good Governance (SfGG)	<b>Indonesia</b>	BMZ	GOI Ministry of Administrative Reform, Local government, watchdog organisations, Indonesian Population	decentralisation, anti-corruption, public service delivery, civil society watchdogs, Ministry of Administrative Reform	District/national (Rural/urban)
41	Advisory Support Services to Decentralisation (ASSD)	<b>Indonesia</b>	BMZ	GOI Ministry of Home Affairs, general population, intermediary organisations	decentralisation, participatory process in policy making, law drafting	National
42	Civil Society Initiative Against Poverty (CSIAP)	<b>Indonesia</b>	DFID	Asia Foundation (INGO) (coordination) and local NGOs, poor segments of the population, street children, women	pro-poor budgeting, improved access to basic services for the poor	Community and government (Rural/urban)
43	Capacity building councillors and villages heads (CB KADES)	<b>Indonesia</b>	BMZ	Friedrich Naumann Foundation (INGO), Members of parliament, villages heads	democratization of local governance	District/village and community

	Intervention	Country	Donors	Actors	Themes	Loco Lev
44	Civic education for future <b>Indonesian</b> leaders (CEFIL)	<b>Indonesia</b>	BMZ	Civil Society Organisations	NGO capacity building, democratic leadership, civic education	Co dist (R)
45	ADECOI:	<b>Benin</b> (pilot study)	DCGD, implemented by UNDP	Local authorities, local communities	institutionalise participatory and decentralised planning system; citizens' initiative and their capacity to interact with local authorities	7 n
46	PGDP	<b>Benin</b> (pilot study)	Danida	CSOs, local communities	strengthening participation of stakeholders in decentralisation process; Strengthen women's rights and participation	Loc
47	PACOM	<b>Benin</b> (pilot study)	SDC	CSOs, mainly local development and grassroots organisations	strengthen media: pluralism and communication via radio in the communities	Nat
48	PDCC	<b>Benin</b> (pilot study)	BMZ	Public institutions, municipal governments and civil society	enable the population to participate in local development and provide public services at local level	Loc
49	Common Fund for Civil Society	<b>Nicaragua</b> (pilot study)	DFID, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Holland and SDC	NGOs, associations, networks and CBOs	fund civil society: participation of citizens in decision-making processes, human rights, specific rights in certain sectors or certain groups such as women or youth and projects aimed at the indigenous community	Nat and
50	Political Parties Fund	<b>Nicaragua</b> (pilot study)	DFID, Sida, Danida, Dutch and Spanish governments. Norad about to join		address the partisan nature of national politics and party culture	Nat

	Intervention	Country Donors		Actors	Themes	Loc Lev
51	Anti-Corruption Fund	<b>Nicaragua</b> (pilot study)	Norad, BMZ, Danida, DFID, SDC, Sida and the Netherlands		greater transparency and openness in government administration and decisions	Na
52	Proyecto de Apoyo al Sistema de Participación y Concertación (PASE)	<b>Nicaragua</b> (pilot study)	GTZ, DFID, UNDP, Danida, and SDC		deliver on the provisions of the Ley de Participación Ciudadana, the national PRSP (ERCERP) and the national strategy on decentralisation (PNDEL y ENDEL)	Loc
53	Procuraduría de la República	<b>Nicaragua</b> (pilot study)	Anti-Corruption Fund	National anti-corruption ombudsman	anti-corruption	Na
54	Coordinadora Civil	<b>Nicaragua</b> (pilot study)	Common Fund for Civil Society	CSO network of 620 NGOs, social movements, trades unions and citizen associations at national and local levels	budget monitoring, including expenditure on internal and external debt servicing	Loc
55	Red de Desarrollo Local	<b>Nicaragua</b> (pilot study)	Common Fund for Civil Society		advocacy and capacity building at the municipal level	Loc
56	Bufete Popular Boris Vega	<b>Nicaragua</b> (pilot study)	Common Fund for Civil Society	legal aid office	assist citizens in pushing for key legal reforms and promoting participation in Municipal Development Councils (CDM)	Loc
57	Municipal and Departmental Development Councils	<b>Nicaragua</b> (pilot study)	PASE	Local government and local communities	citizen participation in development planning and monitoring	Loc

## **ANNEX 4: COMPARATIVE COUNTRY CONTEXT ANALYSIS**

As discussed in Chapter 2 on the scope and methodology of this evaluation, **this synthesis report is based on an analysis of donor CV&A interventions in seven different countries**. These include **Benin** and **Nicaragua** as pilot studies to test and refine the Evaluation Framework, and **Bangladesh, DRC, Indonesia, Mozambique, and Nepal** as the subsequent case studies. It is important to keep in mind that, in selecting this sample of country studies, donors followed a pragmatic approach based on their interests in specific partner countries, as well as the feasibility of the case studies within a desired timeframe, rather than a rigorous comparative methodology. As a result, the countries selected are quite diverse. This is very positive in terms of enabling us to develop a sharper understanding of how different contextual factors may impact the nature of the relationship between voice and accountability and the effectiveness of CV&A efforts. However, it is still possible to identify key trends<sup>61</sup> and highlight some of the most significant characteristics of the countries in this study, including commonalities and differences. Each of the individual case studies contains a section on context. The discussion below is not intended to capture the details of such context but rather to provide a schematic comparative analysis of the different countries.

### ***Common trends ...***

While some of these countries have experienced sustained economic growth over a period of time (e.g. **Indonesia, Mozambique, Bangladesh**), **poverty remains a pressing problem** in all of them. In particular, inequality and social exclusion persist, and the rural-urban divide is becoming increasingly sharp. Many countries (e.g. **DRC, Nepal, Indonesia**) are considerably diverse in terms of ethnicity, religion, language and/or culture, and often such differences have been at the root of social, and at times violent, conflict (though in **Nicaragua** the differences have been more class-based).

One of the most striking features about all these countries is that they have **undergone or are in the midst of considerable political transitions**. As such, they are in the process of redefining the nature of the relationship between state and society and reshaping the political settlement or social contract that binds them together – while it is also clear that in some of these settings the nature of the transition is much more immediate and raw than in others. With the partial exception of **Bangladesh**, as part of these transitions, all the countries included in this study are also **struggling to establish or strengthen incipient democratic structures** as a new basis of legitimacy for those who govern over those who are ruled. On paper, most of them make firm commitments to democratic governance, the separation of powers, and accountability mechanisms including checks and balances and oversight

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<sup>61</sup> Though given the small size of the sample and its diversity it may be more difficult to draw out rigorous, systematic conclusions.

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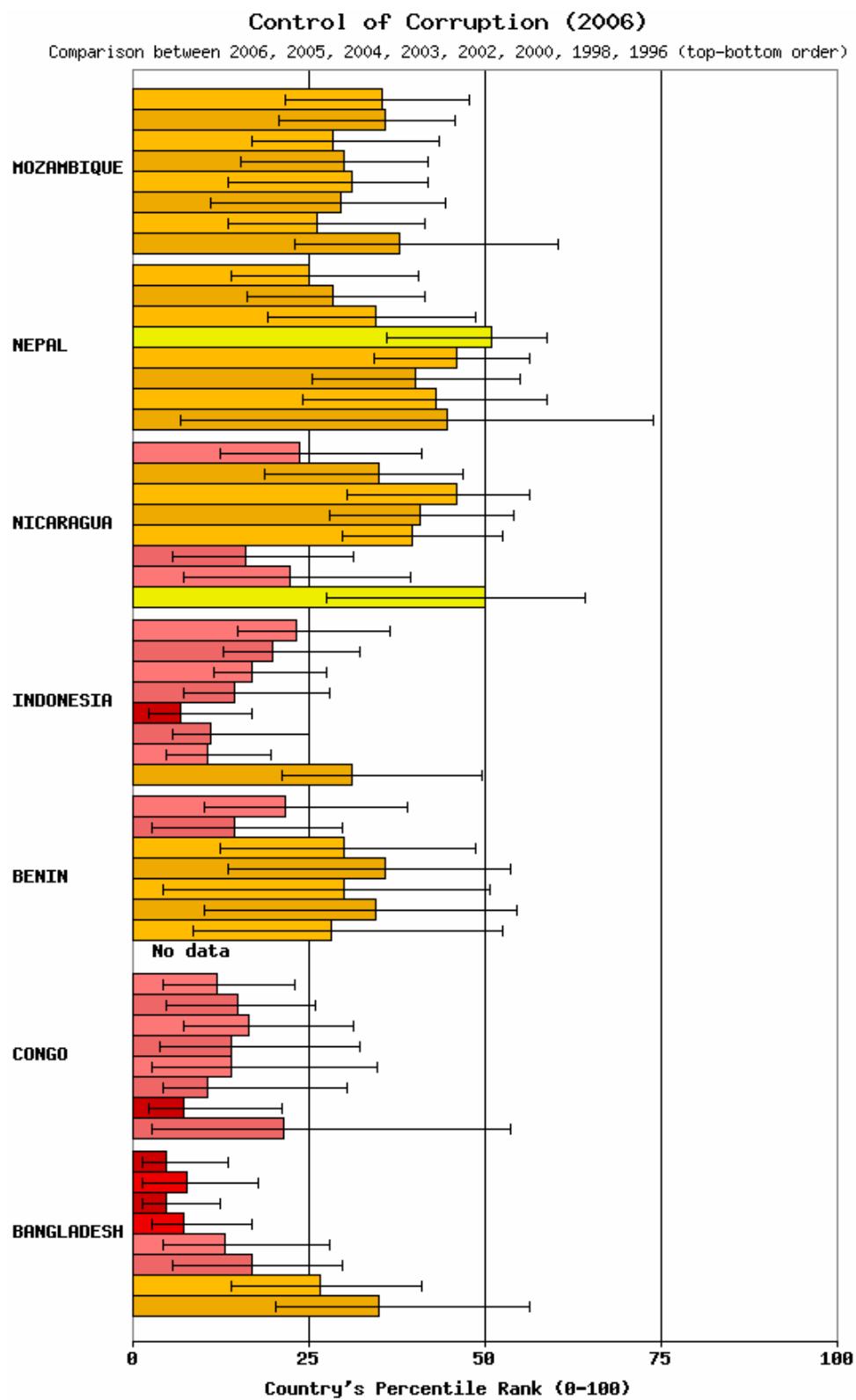
institutions. How to translate those commitments into actual practice and make the formal institutions of democracy and ‘good governance’ more generally (including accountability mechanisms) work is, of course, one of the main challenges confronting all of these countries.

*... with variations in degrees*

From the perspective of the state, all of the case studies included in this evaluation highlight weak public institutions, limited government capacity, and/or lack of political will at both the national and sub-national levels of government as considerable impediments to the proper exercise of voice and the provision of adequate accountability. But of course, it is important to keep in mind that such weaknesses are a matter of degree. As the **Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi governance indicators** developed for the World Bank<sup>62</sup> suggest, not all states included in this evaluation and their respective institutions are equally weak/incapable/ineffective, or weak along the same dimensions. There is a sea of difference, for instance, between the relatively well functioning and stable state in **Mozambique**, and the failing, utterly ineffective, and considerably unstable state in the **DRC**. In addition, such weaknesses or institutional deficiencies may also fluctuate within a given country over time. In terms of the indicators on corruption, for example, there a degree of variation between different countries (see Graph below). Interestingly, there is no one to one correlation between countries with better V&A indicators and better corruption indicators, suggesting (as is highlighted elsewhere in this report), that simple or linear assumptions about the impact that improved CV&A practices can have on other areas of governance, cannot be made. **Bangladesh** is perhaps the starker example of this, displaying comparatively average V&A indicators, but by far the poorest corruption ones.

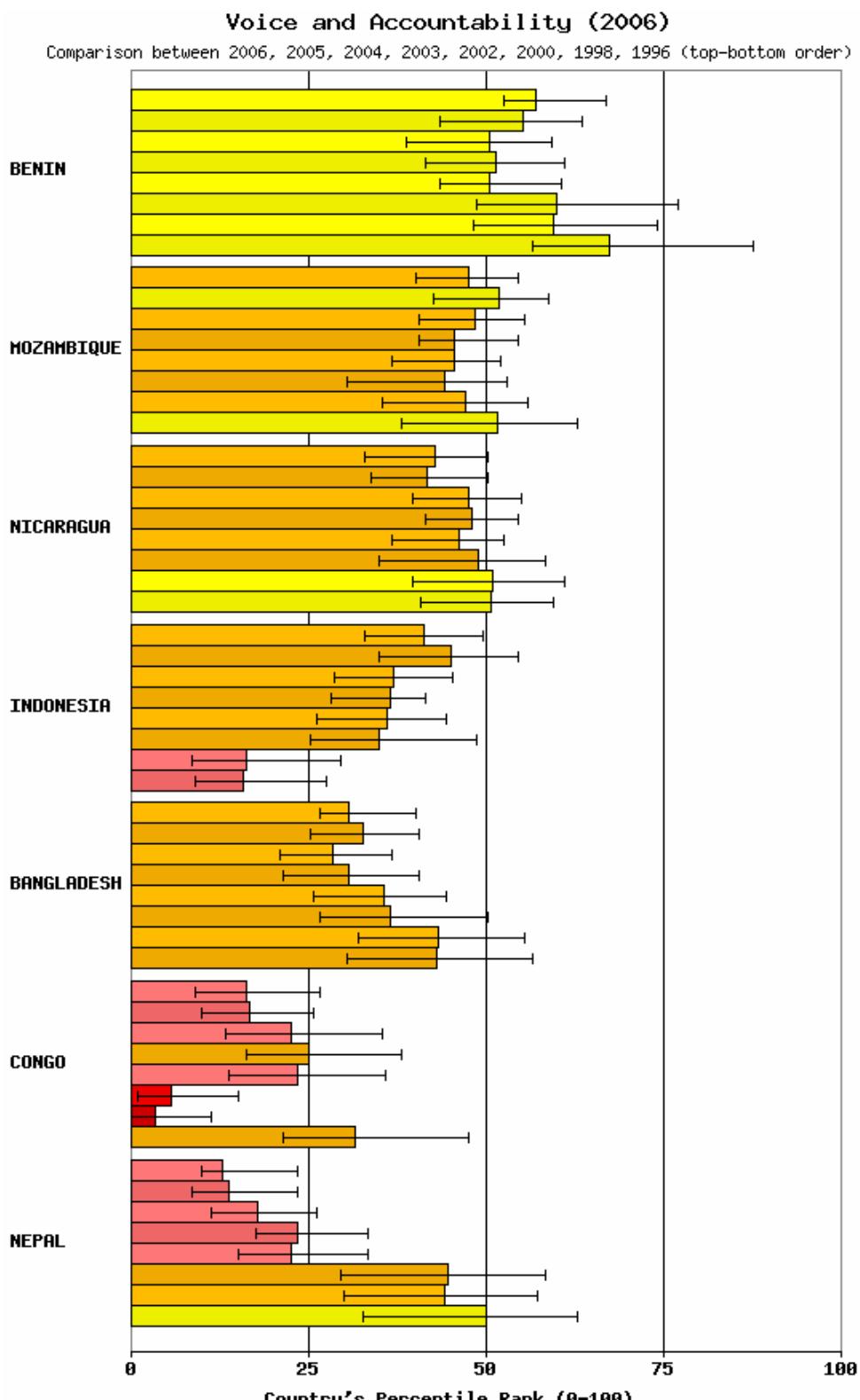
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<sup>62</sup> Please see [http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi2007/sc\\_country.asp](http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi2007/sc_country.asp) for more information on these indicators.



Source: Kaufmann D., A. Kraay, and M. Mastruzzi 2007: Governance Matters VI: Governance Indicators for 1996-2006

Note: The governance indicators presented here aggregate the views on the quality of governance provided by a large number of enterprise, citizen and expert survey respondents in industrial and developing countries. These data are gathered from a number of survey institutes, think tanks, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations. The aggregate indicators do not reflect the official views of the World Bank, its Executive Directors, or the countries they represent. Countries' relative positions on these indicators are subject to indicated margins of error that should be taken into consideration when making comparisons across countries and over time.



Source: Kaufmann D., A. Kraay, and M. Mastruzzi 2007: Governance Matters VI: Governance Indicators for 1996-2006

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The indicators on ‘Voice and Accountability’ also show some fluctuation (see Graph on ‘V&A above). As depicted in the graph, **Benin**, **Mozambique** and **Nicaragua** have performed relatively better over time than the other countries included in this analysis. **Indonesia**, for its part, has experienced remarkable improvement in this area from 1996 to the present, which may be attributed to the transition to democracy the country has experienced, while **Nepal** has gone in the opposite direction, largely as a result of the enduring conflict between different factions.

Looking at these countries from the other side of the state–society equation, a few points are worth highlighting as well. In all of these countries, there has been a **mushrooming of civil society organisations** and other forms of societal mobilisation over the past 15+ years. In general, however, there is a need to strengthen the institutional, organisational and representative capacity of civil society in its different forms (including NGOs, trades unions, social movements, religious groups etc.). Of course, as was outlined in the case of state institutions above, here too there is considerable variation among the different countries included in the study. Each of the countries exhibits different degrees of civil society strength, capacity and autonomy that are rooted in their particular history and context. In the **DRC**, for example, civil society organisations are stronger relative to the state, and have for a long time stepped in to fill in the gap in the face of the state’s abdication of critical responsibilities and duties. **Bangladesh** also has a long tradition of civil society organisation and mobilisation, but the relationship with state institutions can often be contentious. In **Mozambique**, civil society is considerably weaker. In **Nicaragua**, for its part, large segments of civil society have long been affiliated with the Sandinistas/FSLN, and, proclaiming that it is the legitimate representative of the people, the current Sandinista government has undertaken several steps to undermine the space in which autonomous civil society can operate. Beyond this, there is also a concern about how credible and/or legitimate many groups within civil society are in reality. As highlighted by many of the case studies (e.g. **Mozambique** and **Nepal**), the proliferation of civil society organisations in itself cannot attest to the relative health and strength of civil society, as many such groups (especially NGOs) can be used as vehicles to guarantee funds from donors but are in actual fact little more than personal enterprises.

## ANNEX 5: LESSONS ON THE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

### *Comments on the Evaluation Framework from country case study teams*

#### **Bangladesh**

The Evaluation Framework provided was extremely detailed and with its many components (framework components, evaluation questions and DAC criteria) quite complex. The methodological notes were unnecessarily prescriptive. If the TORs had described a preferred profile for the team (e.g. the team members must have competence in participatory forms of enquiry) then much of the method would have been redundant.

The DAC criteria were difficult to use in practice and we question their usefulness for an assessment of this kind which looks at a range of different interventions, many of which are only parts of larger projects and programmes and many of which are processes with intangible or unpredictable outcomes. Where case studies had not had recent impact evaluations/summative evaluations, or where the CVA intervention was only a part of a larger intervention, there was not enough information available to make judgements on relevance, efficiency and effectiveness even jointly with project implementers. Furthermore, we are concerned that the nature of the summary sheets implies to a reader that a full evaluation was done. These summary sheets failed to capture some of the material that was essential to the discussion on CVA interventions. We feel that a more organic case study approach would have been more helpful which would have enabled us to make important points that emerged from each of the case studies , which could then have been more easily referenced in the main body of the report. We felt that important detail on the case studies was lost simply because it did not fit into the summary sheet format.

The models of change were useful but we did not fully exploit their usefulness. We should have engaged more with project implementers and their donors to explore their perceptions using the models. Time constraints prevented this in most cases though where we did use them in this participatory way it was valuable. The methodological guidelines could have promoted this idea of joint analysis. As it was interpreted by us and other CCS teams (as discussed in Bern) the models of change became ‘add-ons’ and this was a missed opportunity.

The guidelines provided little advice on ensuring that the selection of case studies would be comparable across CCS. We decided to go for diversity and gathered much useful insight into ‘less usual’ cases (e.g. Trade Union, GTZ brokered dialogue, social movement) whereas other CCS chose to select those interventions representing the greatest investment.

In sum, the Evaluation Framework did demand some important rigour (e.g. requirement for very detailed context analysis which was extremely important) and we do appreciate the need for conformity across case studies but the nature of the framework inhibited the team pursuing some lines of analysis simply because it did not fit with the framework. The framework was ambitious given the time allocated to the study.

## **DRC**

The Evaluation Framework represents a very useful and unusually detailed means for analysing V&A interventions which is well grounded in a thorough analysis of both voice and accountability. It is well designed to guide the country case studies and allows the team to focus on a broad range of factors connected to CV&A.

At the same time, the framework is very complex and has more than one layer, i.e. the five components of the framework, the four evaluation questions and the DAC criteria. While the components and the evaluation questions represent an adequate guidance and useful means to analyse V&A intervention, the DAC criteria feel like an add-on to the framework. Moreover, given that this is not an evaluation of individual projects, the DAC criteria may not necessarily be the most appropriate means to evaluate the overall donor support to V&A in one country.

Given the complexity of the framework and the number of interventions (10 in the case of **DRC**) we struggled with the time available for the design mission (including the selection of interventions) and the actual field-work. In practice, this sometimes meant compromising on quality of data gathering; e.g. we would have liked to have spent more time on each intervention using the opportunity to work more carefully on sequencing of methods, using more diverse tools, and using the models of change to a larger extent during the data gathering rather than during the analysis. Moreover, the evaluation team felt that the Framework has been interpreted in various ways throughout the evaluation process and that this Framework could have placed greater importance on the selection criteria for the project interventions.

## **Indonesia**

Overall, the Evaluation Framework is considered useful by the **Indonesia** Evaluation Team:

- It focused the team on the issues that the evaluation considered important. This holds particularly true for the overall Framework and the five components, the first three of which interacted with the context.
- The Guidelines for Country Evaluations were of much less value, as they were too detailed and not country-specific. For instance the numerous steps were not logical and some overlap took place. Assigning the context to one expert, i.e. the local expert, is arbitrary, and in reality the team made use of all experts to make a comprehensive context analysis. Prescribing how workshops is less relevant as workshop format has to be country-specific.
- The Literature Review was useful for the team members to come to grips with the substantive part of the evaluation and for internal group discussions.

However, some overall weaknesses were identified:

- No good match between all the requirements of the Evaluation Framework and Country Guidelines and the time available for the Evaluation. The team had to make choices on where to put emphasis and where not. The initiation of team leaders to the Bonn meeting was very important to understand the priorities of the ECG members and the Synthesis Team. Which parts were seen

to be essential, and which parts were optional, i.e. the numerous data collection techniques that were included. What does flexibility mean? What are minimal standards? (these were developed along the way). Telephone discussions with the PARC and the ODI Synthesis Team helped to clarify specific issues (i.e. regarding requirements for details on selection of interventions and models of change).

- Whereas some parts of the framework were very specific (e.g. description of how workshops could be done, what should be the content of the context analysis), other parts were very vague and not well elaborated at all, for instance the kind of recommendations the evaluation was expected to generate.
- There was not a good match between the five components of the Evaluation Framework with the respective sub-questions on the one hand, and the DAC criteria on the other hand. Particularly, the Framework did not define results and outcomes in terms of the logical frameworks that underpin three of the five DAC criteria, i.e. efficiency, effectiveness and impact. An example is the use of results and outcomes that are used simultaneously. For the **Indonesia** Evaluation Team, (expected) results are directly derived from the outputs and are within the control and realm of the interventions, and therefore address effectiveness. Outcomes on the other hand, are contributions to wider overall and social objectives, benefits that accrue to a wider group and assume a number of conditionalities that are outside the full control of the project. Outcomes are referred to as impact.
- The Models of Change did not work as a real tool of analysis, as least not as meant by the Evaluation Framework. It was found too simplistic, therefore additions were made by the team (and approved by the Synthesis Team who had the models of change proposed). They were filled in by the Evaluation Team and were not developed in a joint exercise with major stakeholders of the respective interventions.
- The above shortcomings implied that the evaluation was much closer to a standard evaluation than the “theory-based evaluation” it claimed to be. Team members particularly felt that “there was not much theory in the methodology”.
  - There were no hypotheses to be tested.
  - There was not a prior categorisation of the five countries (ranking of context enabling CV&A) that could be tested in a comparative analysis.
  - The above may have contributed to the fact that the recommendations of the evaluation were considered by some stakeholders to be rather general and generic (although the authors acknowledge that most recommendations are not new, they are relevant, based on findings and lessons learned that may provide guidelines for those donors that wish to engage in successful future interventions in CV&A).

## **Mozambique**

The complexity of the comprehensive Evaluation Framework has been a challenge to counterbalance in relation to the time available for the evaluation. Much effort has been put into the elaboration of the Framework – and much effort is required to grasp the many details. The Evaluation Framework offers a detailed description of the approach to be followed. It has been resource demanding to operate with the cross-analysis comprising five main components and four core evaluation questions, as they are partially overlapping. When further adding the third layer of analytical lens with the DAC evaluation criteria, the cross-checking seems to be too heavy and leaves little room for independent interpretation according to the country-specific context. Especially taking the underlying principles of a flexible, comprehensive, theory, evidence based and out-come focused approach into account. The analytical framework could have been simplified and less overlapping, had it only comprised two dimensions with fewer repetitions.

The Evaluation Framework has offered a step-wise guidance to the implementation of the CCS which has been very helpful, but at times too detailed. For example, the orientation as to how workshops should be conducted turned out to be of little practical use, as the concrete context and the dynamic of the specific stakeholder composition must determine the way the workshops should be conducted.

There is an imbalance between the resources which have been invested in the elaboration of the Evaluation Framework and the time available for the CCS. The emphasis on conducting an evidence-based evaluation should ideally pay more respect to the time required for collection of valid empirical data. The process has been rushed through, and there is no doubt that the evaluation would have benefitted from more flexibility in terms of time and method to adapt to the specific local context of each CCS.

The interactive evaluation process with the group of ECG-donors, external consultants for QA and for writing of the synthesis report has a strong bias on the donor side. No local anchorage of the process has been established during the CCS, which is a serious draw-back, especially considering the very topic of the evaluation!

## **Nepal**

*Selection of interventions:* The Evaluation Framework and methodological guidelines were, in the main, detailed and therefore effective in relation to the data gathering process, the menu of analytical tools and the structure of the report. One shortcoming, however, was the lack of clarity concerning the selection of case study interventions – in relation to the selection criteria, the size of the sample, and whether the selection should be based solely on the ECG partners operating in the country. The team's decision to concentrate mainly on the CV&A interventions of the ECG partners might have led to a restrictive view of CV&A donor support in **Nepal**; also, it might have made comparisons difficult if other teams had taken a different decision.

*Application of DAC criteria in establishing a profile of interventions:* Given the time constraints – having on average only two days per intervention studied – it meant a rather superficial assessment of individual interventions. Therefore, it was important to

have access to, and to be able to rely on, previous M&E reports. In particular, given the shortness of time and the number of interventions to be covered, the team was severely constrained in its ability to make sound judgements about the ‘efficiency’ and ‘impact’ aspects of the interventions. It was much easier, of course, to assess ‘relevance’ in relation to the significance of the declared objectives, ‘effectiveness’ in terms of immediate results (or ‘effects’) and policy and capacity building aspects that would have a bearing on ‘sustainability’.

*Application of the Most Significant Change MSC technique:* In its full application, MSC depends on the participation of many intervention stakeholders – in terms of collecting ‘stories of change’, in deciding which to focus on, and in analysing the data. It should also be applied throughout the intervention cycle, in order to provide data on processes, outputs and impacts. But, given the scope and time constraint of the evaluation, in the Nepal CCS the team was able to apply it in a much more limited sense – by, in encounters with stakeholders, always being alert to potential ‘stories of change’, prompting fuller narratives, recording them and assessing their relevance to the study of CV&A. These accounts have been used to enrich the findings throughout the report, but particularly in the intervention ‘summary sheets’ of Annex D.



This synthesis report is the final step of a process started in 2006 when a group of DAC donor partners<sup>1</sup> commissioned ODI<sup>2</sup> to conduct a joint evaluation of “Citizens’ Voice and Accountability” programmes. The purpose of the evaluation was to deepen the understanding of what works and what does not work in donor support to “Citizens’ Voice and Accountability” interventions, and to uncover the reasons why.

This evaluation of Citizen’s Voice and Accountability comprised a series of linked activities and publications. In addition to this report, outputs of this project include:

1. an extensive literature review of the conceptual underpinnings of voice and accountability, as well as of donors’ policies and evaluation experience in this field;
2. an analysis of 90 CV&A donor interventions;
3. the development of an evaluation framework to assess CV&A interventions, which was piloted and tested in two countries (Benin and Nicaragua);
4. a briefing paper on the preliminary findings of the pilot phase and
5. five country case studies in Bangladesh, DRC, Indonesia, Mozambique and Nepal.

The findings of the synthesis report build on the evidence that emerged in all these phases of the evaluation process. A final briefing paper summarizing the synthesis report findings will be produced in December 2008.

- 1 BMZ, Danida, DFID, Norad, SDC, SEO (Belgium) and Sida.  
2 Overseas Development Institute, UK.



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