



ABOUT THE Governance Indicators Project

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE GOVERNANCE INDICATORS PROJECT, CONTACT THE PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR, JOACHIM NAHEM, GOVERNANCE SPECIALIST AT JOACHIM.NAHEM@UNDP.ORG OR VISIT THE WEBSITE OF THE UNDP OSLO GOVERNANCE CENTRE AT WWW.UNDP.ORG/GOVERNANCE/

Scope and focus of the project

As part of UNDP's assistance to promoting democratic governance in the countries in which we work, the *Governance Indicators Project* provides support to nationally owned processes for assessing and monitoring democratic governance within those countries.

An increasing number of organisations are giving greater priority to the need to assess democracy, governance and human rights as part of their development assistance programmes. Assessment tools and frameworks build on a number of known and less known democracy and governance related global datasets which enable comparisons over time and across countries and regions. However, while this data is a rich source of information for a range of analysis, it does not necessarily point to particular institutions or institutional arrangements as the cause of governance challenges, nor does it help identify appropriate operational solutions and performance improvement processes. It can thus be of only limited help in policy-making processes.

Furthermore, such tools:

- » Often lack national ownership and engagement in the assessment process
- » Rarely include the necessary disaggregation to capture the impact, experiences and perceptions of marginalized groups in society, especially the poor and women
- » Do not address the capacity deficits that exist to ensure an effective monitoring system.

For UNDP, the value of a nationally owned governance indicator system is that it serves as a critical accountability mechanism for local stakeholders, especially the citizens of a country and non-state actors rather than donors. A nationally owned system provides upward internal rather than external pressure for reform. And through the transparency of information stemming from it, it also provides a catalyst for greater

citizen engagement in democracy processes and for demanding greater effectiveness of government.

The *Governance Indicators Project* supports a holistic approach to measuring governance, based on eight central features of an effective indicator system:

1. The democracy/governance assessment system is anchored in the national development plan or other political commitment such as the PRSP or, for example in the African continent, the African Peer Review Mechanism.
2. Indicators are selected and generated through a transparent, participatory and inclusive process.
3. There is an institutionalized procedure to collect data from a variety of sources (surveys, administrative data, national statistics, Civil Society) and an institutional base for storing this information and making it publicly accessible.
4. The data sources are politically acceptable to all key stakeholders.
5. The data sources enable disaggregation in terms of the poor, and also in terms of gender.
6. National institutions including academia are used to develop the system so that national capacity is strengthened.
7. There is a targeted approach to developing the capacities of national stakeholders including government policy makers, Civil Society, the media, parliament, political parties as well as the national statistics agency or office.
8. Resources are available to ensure the sustainability of the system through repetition of the assessment to enable monitoring of improvements in democratic governance

Activities

The *Governance Indicators Project* provides support to UNDP Country Offices to enable them to assist national partners in building an effective monitoring system for their national development plans. Assistance focuses on (i) developing the capacities of national stakeholder groups including government, CSOs, the media and of course Civil Society, in the use and development of governance indicators; (ii) facilitating processes for developing indicators around national development plans, and (iii) enhancing existing and new governance indicators through a greater focus on poverty and gender disaggregations.

These activities are carried out through:

- » *The development of guidance knowledge products* which our partners (both UNDP and non-UNDP) can draw on and use.
- » *Assessment missions and advice* that identify the issues, challenges and opportunities in developing an indicator system around the national development plan. The project helps to mobilize resources and connect in expertise to help build and design a national monitoring system. Countries in which the project has worked include: Mongolia, Philippines, Malawi and Afghanistan.
- » *Partnership building*: The project is strengthened by strategic partnerships such as with International IDEA, the OECD Metagora network, the University of Essex, DIAL and the capacity development institution InWEnt. This network of expertise can be drawn upon in countries that need the support of the project.