

Power and Influence Analysis

An approach to assess governance gaps

Power and Influence Analysis: A Methodology to Identify and Assess Governance Gaps

1.1 Background

In recent times, the quest for accurate indicators and methodologies to assess governance gaps and corruption risks has generated many significant insights and novel approaches to the topic. While for some time the emphasis was placed on developing macro level indicators based on perceptions and formal assessments based on institutional frameworks associated with best practices, the growing consensus points to the need to develop new methodologies that can better capture context-specific elements and which may address observed gaps between formal rules and actual practice.

In light of this, and based on several years of academic field research, the Basel Institute on Governance has developed an analytical framework to assess governance risks that takes into account the social, economic and political factors that permeate local context. The ultimate goal is to contribute to the formulation of governance-strengthening strategies that appeal to the stakeholders involved in order to generate improvements that are sustainable in the long run.

1.2 Objectives and Methodology

The Power and Influence Analysis is based on the premise that observed governance shortcomings are often associated with the existence of strong informal rules and networks that can contradict, undermine or simply interfere with the operation of formal legal and regulatory frameworks. We believe that understanding the manner in which such informal elements impact the incentives and motivations of key stakeholders in the issue area or sector of interest is an indispensable prerequisite to identify those strategies that are better suited to achieve improved governance outcomes in a particular context.

With a focus on empirical applicability, this framework is flexible enough to be tailored to different sectors. The entry point for the assessment can be a pre-identified governance concern, for example stock outs of medicines in public health facilities, teacher absenteeism in public schools, budget leaks or non-transparent management of natural resources. The Power and Influence Analysis can also be employed to assess the feasibility of a proposed anti-corruption or governance strengthening intervention.

The methodological approach involves an iterative process of institutional/stakeholder mapping driven by targeted stakeholder interviews through which discrepancies between formal and informal authority relations, accountability lines and incentive structures may be identified¹.

¹ Detailed information on the methodology as applied to health systems is available as a Basel Institute on Governance Working Paper No.11 (<http://www.baselgovernance.org/publications/working-papers/>)

1.3 Past applications

The Power and Influence Analysis methodology has been successfully applied in a variety of contexts and geographic regions including Africa, Central Asia and Eastern Europe, and has proven to be a useful tool to inform governance strengthening and anti-corruption efforts. The findings of a study of the medicine supply chain in Uganda have been published by the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre.²

1.4 Contact us

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² (<http://www.u4.no/publications/using-power-and-influence-analysis-to-address-corruption-risks-the-case-of-the-ugandan-drug-supply-chain/>)