

# Social Accountability Assessment Framework

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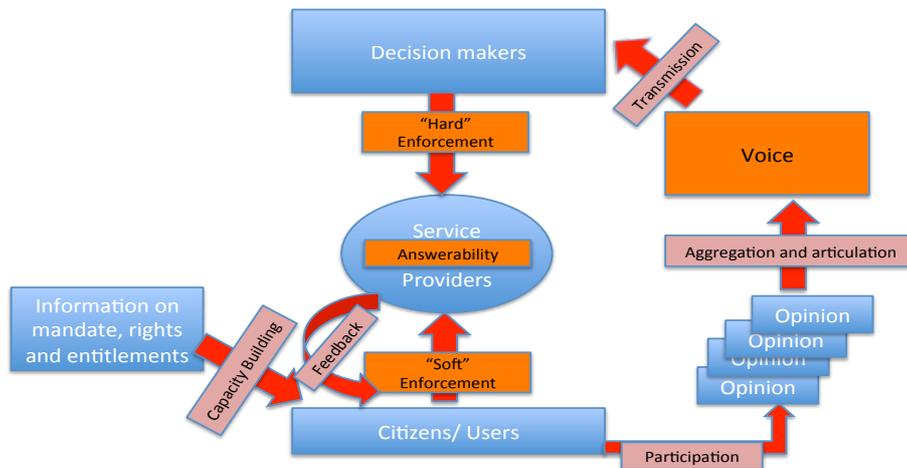
## 1.1 Background

Delivering essential services to the poorest and most vulnerable groups requires effective and responsive institutions at the local level. However, in many cases, it is precisely at this “grassroots” level where the state implementing and enforcement capabilities tend to be weakest. For this reason, the attractiveness of social accountability interventions as a means to advance the effect of development efforts has grown. With the objective of supporting such efforts to improve responsiveness and quality in public services, the Basel Institute on Governance has developed an analytical approach aimed at providing guidance on the basic project components and the contextual specificities to be considered in the design and implementation of social accountability interventions in order to maximize success.

## 1.2 Objectives and Methodology

The Basel Institute on Governance social accountability assessment methodology is comprised of two parts. First, a formal framework outlines the essential elements that are needed to enable citizen participation to translate into positive incentives for service providers. Departing from a conceptual understanding of accountability as a dynamic process, the analytical framework puts forward the notion that engaging citizens and generating “voice” is not enough to produce improved outcomes. As illustrated in the diagram below, of utmost importance are also the manner in which citizen inputs are aggregated, to whom and how they are transmitted, and the types of enforcement mechanisms available to generate change.

### Components and steps involved in effective social accountability initiatives



Secondly, the acknowledgement that there is no “one size fits all” solution applicable to all cases suggests the need to incorporate knowledge about local norms and customs into program design. For this reason, the second stage of the assessment brings in a contextual analysis based on social anthropology methods. The goal is to highlight local attributes (such as prevailing community

participatory mechanisms) that may be harnessed to optimize program effectiveness and to identify those actors (state and non-state) and resources (such as IT technologies and web-based platforms) that are locally available and capable of acting as successful transmission belts to maximise the impact of citizen participatory inputs.

### **1.3 Past applications**

The Social Accountability Assessment Framework has been successfully applied to social accountability initiatives in Mexico, Tanzania, Philippines, Serbia, Ghana and Papua New Guinea across a variety of sectors including health, agriculture and finance.

### **1.4 Contact us**

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