

Governance Assessment

*Overview of governance assessment frameworks and
results from the 2006 World Governance Assessment*

Report from ODI Learning Workshop, 15 February 2007

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BEEPS	Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BTI	Bertelsmann's Transformation Index
CEO	Chief executive officer
CGA	Country Governance Assessments (DFID)
CPI	Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International)
DA	Democracy Assessment (IDEA/Human Rights Centre)
DHF	Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation
DFID	UK Department for International Development
EC	European Commission
GII	Global Integrity Index
GIP	Governance Indicators Project (UNDP)
ICRG	International Country Risk Guide
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IFC	International Finance Corporation
LSE	London School of Economics
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NL	Netherlands
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development
NSDS	National statistical development strategy
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSI	Open Society Institute
PRS Group	Political Risk Services Group
SGACA	Strategic Governance and Corruption Assessment (Netherlands)
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WEF	World Economic Forum
WGA	World Governance Assessment
WGI	Worldwide Governance Indicators
WIP	Well informed person

INTRODUCTION

Governance has become a central concern in development policy debates. It is widely recognised that without better governance development progress will not be possible in many countries. At the same time, governance is a broad term, comprising a range of capacities, 'rules of the game', policies and actual practices.

Donors have increasingly sought to assess the governance situation of countries to which they are providing aid, for several reasons. One regards the question of allocating aid. As the Sachs report and other research suggest, aid is likely to be better used and development is more likely to happen in well governed countries.¹ Another question of relevance to donors is how to 'tailor' their activities and support the specific situation of a country (what aid modalities? what kinds of activities?) Furthermore, recognising the importance of governance for developmental progress, donors have sought to support improvements in governance through specific activities, ranging from support for public administrations, to anti-corruption, to support for democratisation and the protection of human rights.

Governance assessments are a crucial input for these types of policies. There has been a recent proliferation of governance assessment tools and of governance-related indices. These use different approaches, but most are completely or largely external to the country for which the assessment is carried out.² Furthermore, many governance indices and assessments are closely tied to (particular) donor agencies; this can present problems of credibility and legitimacy. It is clear that governance is an area where the Paris Declaration demand for greater country ownership of the development agenda is challenging to realise.

The ODI Learning Workshop on Governance Assessments served two main purposes. First, it presented the findings of an independent and country-focused approach to assessing governance and enabled discussion on these with an expert audience (the World Governance Assessment, WGA). Second, it allowed discussion on a range of approaches to governance assessment in order to enhance understanding on the various methodologies that have been developed in recent years and the varying insights they generate.

The WGA is a survey of 'well informed persons' (WIPs) in a country, systematically covering a number of relevant groups and led by a local researcher. The survey captures a wide range of indicators/specific questions related to the overall concept of governance, covering key arenas and issues. The WGA survey has been carried out twice so far, in 2001 and in 2006.

This report summarises debates taking place in the workshop. It starts with an overview of assessment initiatives (Section 1). Section 2 covers the discussion dealing with the second round of the WGA. Country experiences of carrying out the WGA survey are reflected in Section 3. A separate report on the 2006 WGA results is currently under preparation and will be disseminated in June 2007. Section 4 captures key issues for consideration regarding the way forward. Information on the agenda and participants can be found in the annex.

The WGA team gratefully acknowledges funding support from Norad for the 2006 round of the survey and from DFID for the Learning Workshop.

¹ Sachs, Jeffrey (2005), *Investing in Development*. New York: UN Millennium Project.

² In-depth qualitative assessments may involve in-country work but are largely carried out by international consultants.

Section 1: COMPARING ASSESSMENT INITIATIVES

1. Overview of governance assessment initiatives

International initiatives aimed at assessing governance have been launched by a number of organisations: multilateral and bilateral donors, as well as independent research institutions (see Tables 1, 2 and 3).

The main initiatives promoted by multilateral organisations are the World Bank Institute's Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), UNDP's Governance Indicators Project (GIP), and OECD's Metagora project.³ Table 1 summarises their main characteristics. Of the three multilateral initiatives, the WGI is currently the most advanced, covering the widest range of countries and providing a systematic overview of six dimensions of governance. The three multilateral initiatives differ fundamentally in their approach. The WGI presents aggregated data which allow cross-country comparisons; the UNDP and OECD approaches are more focused on supporting the collection of governance data at country levels.

Table 1: Initiatives of multilateral organisations

	Where	What	How	Why	Who
WGI >	213 countries worldwide	6 dimensions: 1. voice & accountability, 2. pol stability, 3. govt effectiveness, 4. regulatory quality, 5. rule of law, 6. control of corruption	Rating based on secondary data Various sources (31 db, 21 org.)	International benchmark	WB Institute
UNDP GIP >	4 countries worldwide	Parliamentary development, electoral systems, human rights, justice, access to info, decentralisation and local govt, administrative reforms	Methodology varies by country; sample survey of citizens	Country analysis	UNDP offices in Mongolia, Philippines, Malawi and Afghanistan
Metagora >	Various; multi-country: 8 francophone Africa plus 5 Latin America	Corruption (perception, experience, distribution and trends); state of law (constitution, control, respect); business environment (free market effectiveness)	Quant and qual assessments; tailored to specific issues/situations; some multi-country work; sample survey of citizens	Define standards on indicators and provide inventory of local sources	OECD with support from Canada, EC, France, Sweden, Switzerland

Bilateral organisations have various initiatives, the most comprehensive of which are currently USAID's Democracy and Governance Assessment Framework, the Netherlands' Strategic Governance and Corruption Assessment (SGACA), and the UK/DFID's Country Governance Assessments (CGA). The assessment methodologies of the Netherlands and the UK are very recent, and application is only beginning this year (2007). The main details of the Netherlands and the UK frameworks are presented in Table 2. Generally, initiatives of bilateral donors are mostly qualitative rather than quantitative. They may draw on already existing sources (quantitative as well as qualitative, including the WGI and others).

³ WGI (<http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance/govdata/>); GIP (http://www.undp.org/oslocentre/flagship/governance_indicators_project.html); Metagora (<http://www.metagora.org>).

Table 2: Initiatives of bilateral organisations

	Where	What	How	Why	Who
DFID CGA >	Planned for all DFID partner countries	Capability (stability, regulation, trade/growth, effectiveness, security); accountability (transparency, free media, rule of law, elections); responsiveness (rights/liberties, pro-poor, equality, regulation, corruption)	Mainly based on existing data (secondary) Analysis by local + external experts	To inform country programmes	DFID UK in collaboration with World Bank, OECD ...
NL SGACA >	Planned for NL partner countries (35 countries)	Power and change analysis; focused on foundational factors (political stability); rules of the game/institutions, and key actors/current issues	Based on existing sources plus in-country analysis Analysis by external experts (with local assistance)	To inform country programmes	NL embassies with support from consultants

Research institutes have developed a range of independent initiatives.⁴ Key independent initiatives are: Freedom House's Freedom in the World (evaluating political and civil liberties), IDEA/Human Rights Centre's Democracy Assessment (DA), and the Polity IV Project (University of Maryland). Focused on corruption are Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) and the Global Integrity Index (GII). Broader governance assessments are the Bertelsmann's Transformation Index (BTI) and the Mo Ibrahim Foundation's African governance assessment (under development/to be published for the first time in 2007). The Open Society Institute (OSI) provides one of the few 'local government' assessment initiatives. The three initiatives that seem most relevant for comparison with the WGA are summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Initiatives of research institutes and independent initiatives

	Where	What	How	Why	Who
GII >	43 countries worldwide	Focus on anti-corruption; considering underlying dimensions (civil society, media, oversight, etc.)	One main author (local) and peer reviewer	International benchmark Country analysis	Global Integrity Institute Sponsored by various donors
IDEA DA >	8 pilot countries; plus 4 South Asia; further assessments planned; plus countries using methodology independently	General framework (rule of law, political economic social rights); institutions (elections, parties, govt effectiveness, civilian control, corruption); civil society (media, civic involvement, decentralisation); international influences and govt autonomy	Qualitative reports produced by local experts; collaboration on regional barometers	Country analysis; monitor and promote country-level change	IDEA with various other partners; independent users (e.g. OSI in BiH)
BTI >	119 countries worldwide	Democracy (stateness, partic. rule of law, stability, integration); market economy (development, competition, stability, property, welfare, performance, sustainability); management (capability, effic., consensus, cooperation)	Rating based on perception of local + external experts	International benchmark Country analysis	Bertelsmann Foundation

⁴ IDEA (<http://www.idea.int/democracy/index.cfm>); Polity IV (<http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/polity>); CPI (http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi); Transformation Index (<http://www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de/11.0.html?&L=1>); Mo Ibrahim Foundation's African Index (http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/mif_prize.html); OSI/Tocqueville Research Centre (<http://www.t-rc.org>).

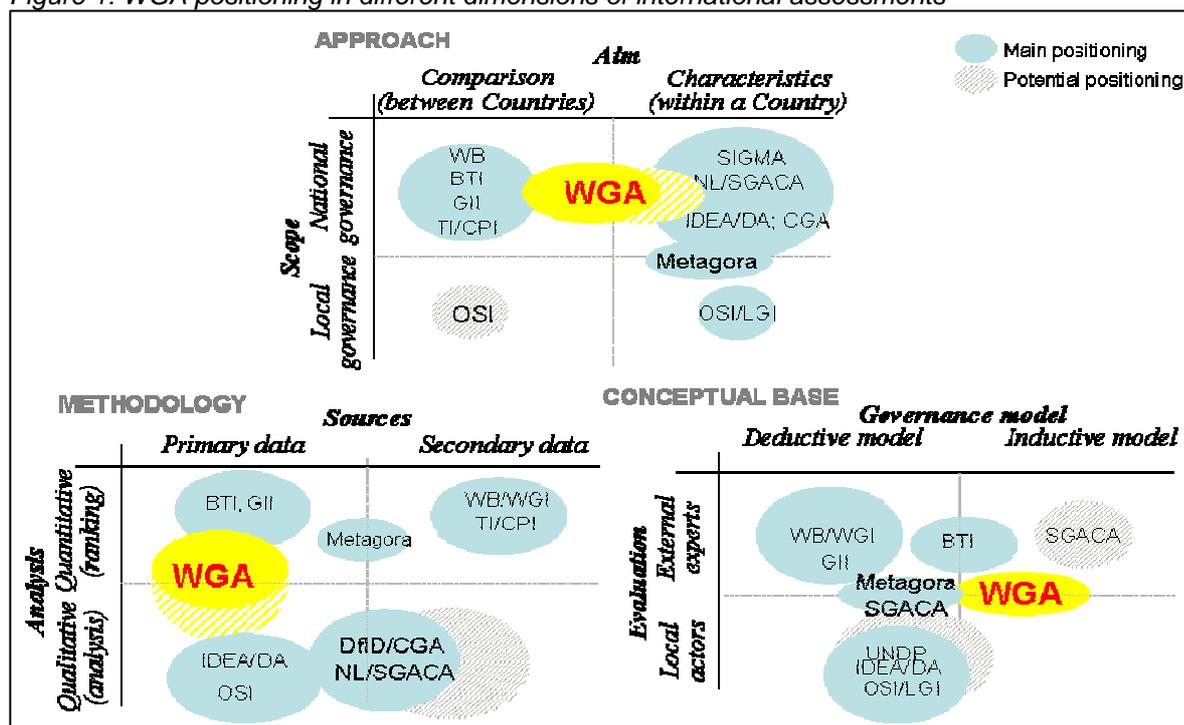
A further group are business and commercial initiatives.⁵ These range from the long-term examples of the PRS (Political Risk Services) Group's International Country Risk Guide (ICRG) assessing financial and political risks, to the more recent IFC's Business Environment Assessment and the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Governance Initiative.

2. The WGA compared with other initiatives

It is useful to 'cluster' the main international initiatives of governance assessment in order to map the 'complementary advantages' of the WGA (Figure 1).

Assessment by individual experts or a small group of experts is the most commonly adopted approach. Experts can be international or national (or a mix of both). Such an approach is used by the BTI, the ICRG, the GII, and Freedom House assessments. Sample citizen surveying is a methodology promoted by UNDP/GIP and Metagora as well as various 'barometer' initiatives (Afrobarometer, Latinobarometer, among others). Other assessments are based on secondary data, aggregating various sets from existing surveys to achieve wide country coverage. The WB/WGI and Transparency International's CPI are based on this approach. A third approach includes surveys of local experts/key stakeholders. Most initiatives adopting this approach are focused on business/commercial dimensions of governance and cover business-related groups (CEOs, lawyers, auditing firms, etc.) The WEF, the BEEPS (Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey) and the IFC's Doing Business adopt this approach. The WGA (described in the next section) is currently the only major initiative that combines interviewing key stakeholders with broad coverage of governance issues and accordingly includes a range of key stakeholders, from the judiciary to religious groups and from government ministers to NGO leaders.

Figure 1: WGA positioning in different dimensions of international assessments



This comparative mapping allows us to consider the position and 'complementary advantages' of the WGA in relation to other governance assessments. As reflected in Figure 1, the specific features and advantages of the WGA are: (i) it generates primary data; (ii) it focuses on primarily quantitative data while also capturing qualitative comments; and (iii) it provides considerable country-level detail and does so through a process which is country-based while at the same time as (iv) it allows cross-country comparisons.

⁵ PRS (<http://www.prsgroup.com>); IFC (<http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/economics.nsf/Content/ic-wbes>); WEF (<http://www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/globalgovernance/index.htm>).

Section 2: THE 2006 WGA

1. The approach

The WGA was originally developed as an approach to assessing governance in 1999/2000 and was first field tested in 2001.⁶ Based on the initial experience, changes were made for the second round, which was implemented in 2006. The assessments have been initiated as 'rounds', i.e. taking place in different countries during roughly the same time period. The approach is internationally guided by a team of researchers based at the University of Florida and at ODI in London, while implementation in each participating country is in the hands of country coordinators. These are generally based in independent research institutions or in policy and research-oriented NGOs.

The WGA has several distinctive features: (i) it is independent of programmatic agendas of particular organisations (e.g. particular donors); (ii) it is based on a well developed set of governance issues, covering the whole range of governance issues rather than just a particular part (such as democracy or good economic governance); (iii) data are collected by country coordinators from local respondents identified through a non-probability sampling method; and (iv) it includes contextual variables, which offers the opportunity to examine what drives perceptions of governance. Its field tested methodology generates data that are both reliable and valid.

The WGA treats governance as a political process, assuming that the extent to which rules-in-use are perceived as legitimate matters as a determinant of policymaking and regime stability. The WGA focuses on the perceptions of WIPs. This is different from assessing 'facts' (e.g. is anti-corruption legislation in place? Have international human rights been incorporated into national legislation?) The advantage of asking about perceptions is that this can capture how rules are *perceived to work*; this is influenced both by formal rules in place and by the actual (informal) practices of applying them. Furthermore, opinions of WIPs are valuable since they represent wide groups of agents who are crucial in shaping the governance of a country.

The key parameters in the WGA approach are:

- Six 'arenas of governments':
 - Civil society (the ways citizens rise and become aware of political issues)
 - Political society (the way interests in society are aggregated in the political process)
 - Government (stewardship of the system as a whole)
 - Bureaucracy (the way policies are implemented)
 - Economic society (the relationship between the state and the market)
 - Judiciary (the way disputes are settled)
- Six 'principles of good governance':
 - Participation (involvement and ownership by stakeholders)
 - Fairness (do rules apply equally to everyone in society)
 - Decency (rules are implemented without harming people)
 - Accountability (political actors are responsible for actions)
 - Transparency (clarity and openness of decision making)
 - Efficiency (use of limited resources for greatest outputs)

In the second round of the WGA, several changes were introduced. A key improvement was the doubling of the sample size of WIPs (to around 70 interviewed per country). An internet-based data-warehouse system has been developed in order to manage real-time information and communication with country coordinators. As a result, study management and the overall quality of

⁶ See also http://www.odi.org.uk/wga_governance/Index.html, and Goran Hyden, Julius Court, Kenneth Mease (2004), *Making Sense of Governance: Empirical Evidence from Sixteen Developing Countries*. London: Lynne Rienner.

the sample and data were greatly enhanced. An online training course on technical issues was developed, generating specific information and learning services for all members of country teams.

Detailed analysis of results will be provided in the 2006 WGA report (forthcoming), where the main aggregations are presented (on three levels: aggregate figures, data by arena, individual indicators) and analysed. This workshop report covers primarily the survey process.

2. Data collection and sample characteristics

An extra effort to include women in the sample has been a characteristic of this second round, with women representing 26% of WIPs selected.

28.6% of WIPs contacted completed the survey online, with high variance between regions and countries. To give an example, in Indonesia over 68% of the questionnaires were completed online, whereas Kyrgyzstan and Bulgaria saw the fewest (only 7% and 10% respectively).

For continuity with the previous round, a 70-30 ratio of 'regime guardians' (representatives of the 'demand side' for good governance) versus 'political incumbents' (government ministers, parliamentarians and high-ranking civil servants) was maintained.

Table 4: 2006 country samples

Country	Sample Size
Argentina	83
Bulgaria	70
Indonesia	74
Kyrgyzstan	74
Mongolia	75
Namibia	68
Palestine	76
Peru	68
Trinidad	64
Uganda	80

Table 5: 2006 WIP distribution

WIP Group	Sample Size	% of Sample
Academics	77	10.5
Business Leaders	78	10.6
Civil Servants	81	11.1
Government Ministers	63	8.6
International Orgs.	74	10.1
Judicial	70	9.6
Media	78	10.6
NGOs	76	10.4
Parliament	67	9.1
Religious	69	9.4

Three layers of results are possible in the WGA, ranging from a general aggregation of data to a specific level of detail (Figure 2). Layer 1 is an aggregate figure on governance for the country as a whole; Layer 2 is data aggregated by arena and/or by principle and/or by WIP group; and Layer 3 is individual data points: (the spread of) responses to specific questions. Figure 3 shows Layer 1 results for the 2006 round; Figure 4 shows an example of the data generated at Layer 2 (data by governance arena).

Figure 2: Layers of aggregation for analysis

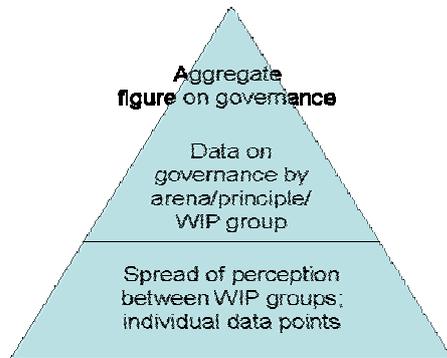


Figure 3: Overall country benchmarks

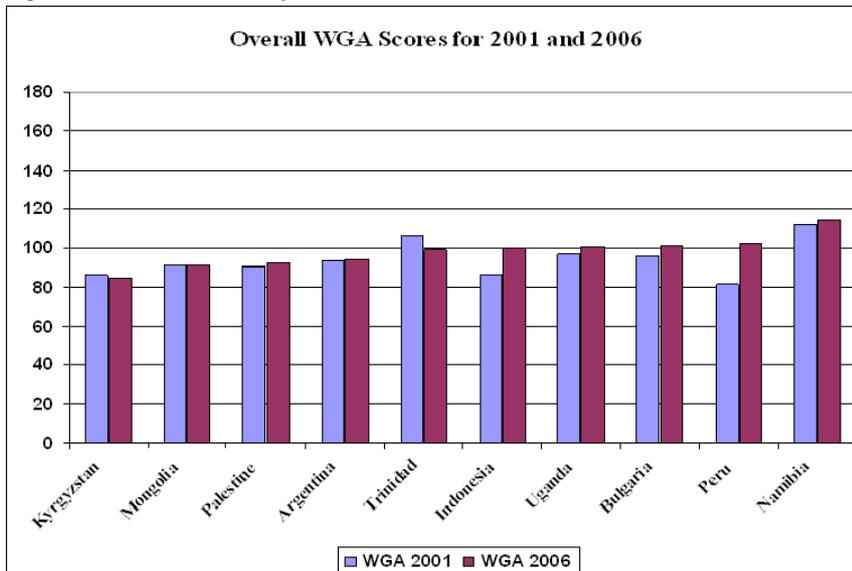
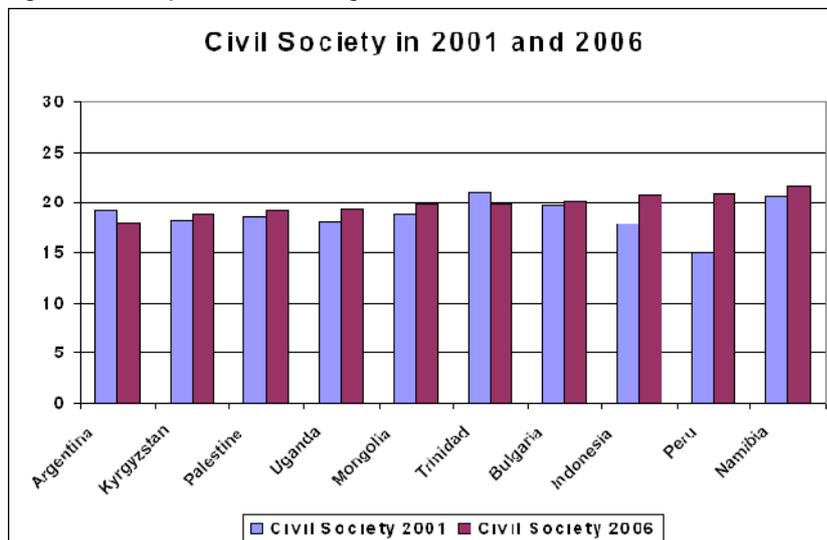


Figure 4: Sample arena changes in time



3. Exploring 'drivers' of governance perceptions

An addition to the 2006 round of the WGA was an exploration of relationships between views on various governance and governance-related issues. For example, a lack of separation of power comes across as a particularly critical concern in all countries and is generally associated with lower assessments of governance. Another factor that shows up as an explanatory variable of low governance scores is the perception that budget transparency is low. Rules guiding civil society enjoy high levels of legitimacy but civil society is nonetheless frequently perceived as being denied or not being well enough organised to have an input into public policy. Perceptions of high participation of women in politics are associated with better overall assessments of governance.

The lack of interest on the part of governments in promoting a good governance agenda in order to inform and educate the public is perceived as a weakness. A perceived failure to address the problems facing the poorest 20% of the population is also associated with worse assessments of the overall governance situation.

Some of the indicators offer potentially interesting insights into the relationship between governance and the MDGs. For example, Indicator #14 inquires about perceptions regarding whether the government promotes an adequate standard of living for all; Indicator #15 looks at whether the government is able to ensure personal safety of citizens. Also relevant is Indicator #8 (whether policy reflects public preferences) and Indicator #33 (whether human rights have been incorporated into national practice). A first analysis for this purpose is provided in the forthcoming 2006 WGA report.

DISCUSSION

Questions on results and next steps

Understanding emerging from the assessment

The assessment is based on peoples' (WIP) perceptions of governance. As perceptions can change from arena to arena and country to country, the existence of common perceptions in different arenas can be a signal of a 'real problem'. All perceptions reflect issues of power and power structures. The lack of separation of powers, for example, is perceived as a problem across most countries, despite the fact that most countries in the sample have undergone democratisation processes. Other drivers are explanatory only for some countries. For a further and more holistic analysis of the results, it would be useful to include additional more 'objective' dimensions of the context, such as socioeconomic indicators and availability and control of natural resources and other assets.

Usefulness and next steps

An interesting approach is to understand individual countries' characteristics rather than focus solely on country comparisons. The opinion of local WIPs rather than the judgements of external experts can be a real asset in this respect. The analysis could be improved in order to understand the issue of 'separation of powers'. Understanding the context has various implications for power, governance perceptions, and performance analysis. It would be useful and interesting to compare how perceptions vary among different groups in relation to different dimensions, including: government, horizontal accountability (parliamentarian and judiciary – controlling the executive), outside government (religions, business, society).

Significant improvements have been made since the first round of the WGA, in terms of methodology, people involved and group development. The main aspects to consider for future improvements are as follows:

- A focus on processes (key factor).

- A need for a distinction between intrinsic and instrumental values/indicators for governance.
- Some of the drivers are context-type issues whereas others are policy issues (transparency and ways that government communicates with society); the two can probably be correlated to enable deeper understanding/implications.
- More detail through a longer timeline.
- Greater emphasis on policy implications:
 - Budget, transparency, communications emerge as cross-country issues;
 - Other country-specific aspects must be explored (rather than staying at general level to promote international benchmarks).

Methodological questions

Rationale for the six adopted principles

Human rights are both a component of and a source for the principles. The WGA relies on the key principles underlying the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in order to be broadly general and not 'biased' towards specific ideas/approaches regarding what good governance should be. A key feature of the WGA is that it does not provide an overarching benchmark to assess 'good governance'. Rather, it relies on countries' own views in terms of 'good (enough) governance'.

Survey process and selection of the sample

To support the process of WIP selection, guidelines have been defined to help country coordinators. The WGA is mostly selecting people by reputation (those known for being active in the field). This process did not explicitly start with the notion of 'regimes/guardians' of power; this emerged as a relevant way of clustering respondents through the process.

Possible methodological improvements

The WGA approach could benefit from a number of methodological improvements, including a set of more solid and objectively defined contextual variables. Nonetheless, there is already a potentially large amount of information available in the dataset. Relatively homogeneous results can be explored further through additional regression analysis. Although the focus on perceptions is one of the key strengths of the WGA, additional indicators/quantitative-type surveys could be adopted to provide a more solid base for the analysis.

Section 3: COUNTRY EXPERIENCES WITH THE WGA

1. Namibia WGA

WIP contacting and data collection

WIPs were contacted on the basis of a wide range of selection characteristics such as ethnicity, gender and party affiliation. The overall response rate was 66.6%, with 70 WIPs completing the questionnaires. Owing to the high response rate, 67.6% of these were contacted only once. More than 85% responded within the first two months, with the highest response from judicial and religious representatives (both 87.5%) and the lowest from parliament representatives (50%).

Personal contact (57.5%) was the most common method, especially for the first interaction. Telephone (22.7%) and email (18.3%) were then frequently used for follow-up (sometimes even for second, third and fourth attempts). 77% of responders used the paper version of the questionnaire; only 23% used the online version. Possible explanations are to be found in the general lack of cheap/easy access to internet broadband in Namibia, as well as respondents' lack of experience in using the internet.

No WIP initially declined the invitation. However, given time for reflection regarding involvement, some members of the civil service decided not to participate. A number of contacts (especially religious, business and judicial) felt they were not knowledgeable enough to answer the questionnaires and agreed only after persuasion that it was their perception and not their knowledge that was relevant for participation. Many experts in international organisations could not be considered, as they had not been in Namibia since 2001 and therefore were unable to compare Namibian dynamics in perspective. Within the government 'arena', the easiest contacts to involve were deputy ministers.

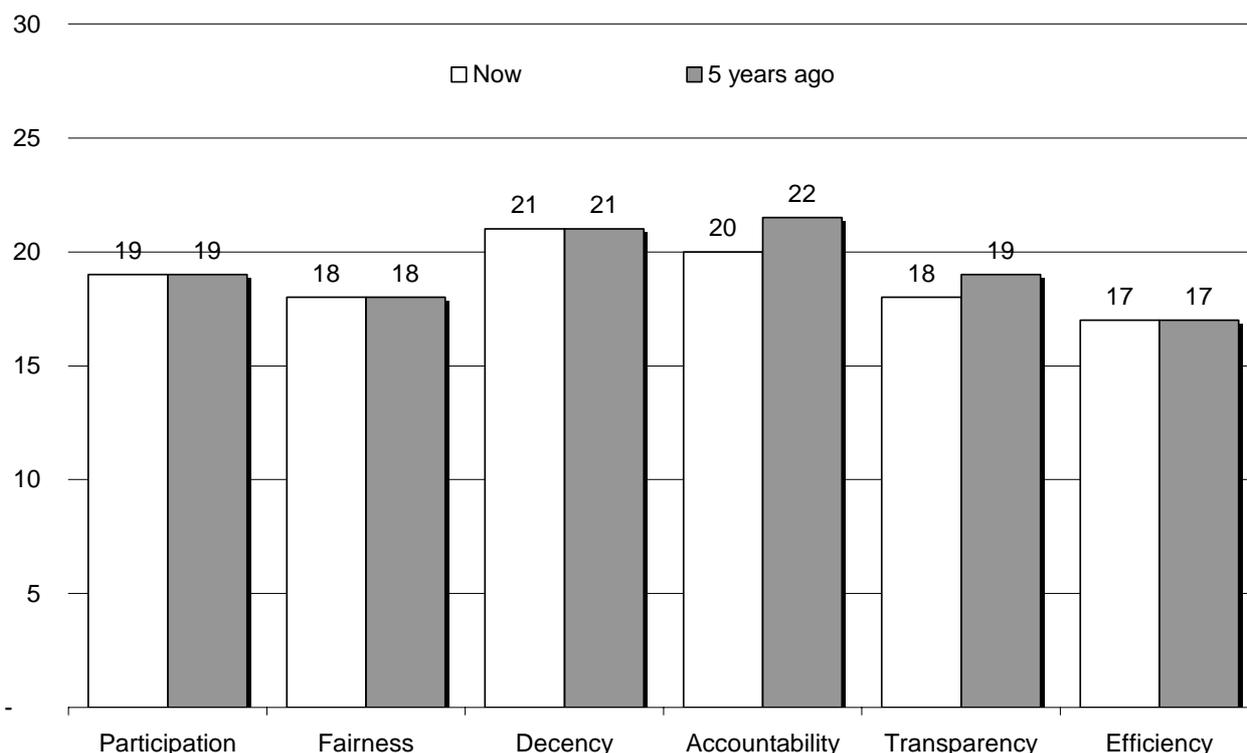
WGA assessment results in Namibia

WGA results in Namibia followed a moderate 'mid' line with mild tendencies to 'low' and 'high'. On average, no extreme ratings such as 'very low' or 'very high' were observed (Figure 5). Accountability saw scores above other principles, followed by decency; efficiency stands out as a more problematic governance principle.

Regarding accountability, experts agree that the security forces accept their subordination to a civilian government (highest scores), while criticising the lack of accountability among legislators to the public (lowest scores). A possible explanation for these judgments can be found in the incoherency between the Constitution's separation of powers, supposed to provide proper checks and balances, and the real power relations within and between institutions. With its three-quarters majority within the parliament, in fact, the ruling party (SWAPO) can override opposition criticism and adopt any policy it wishes through democratic vote.

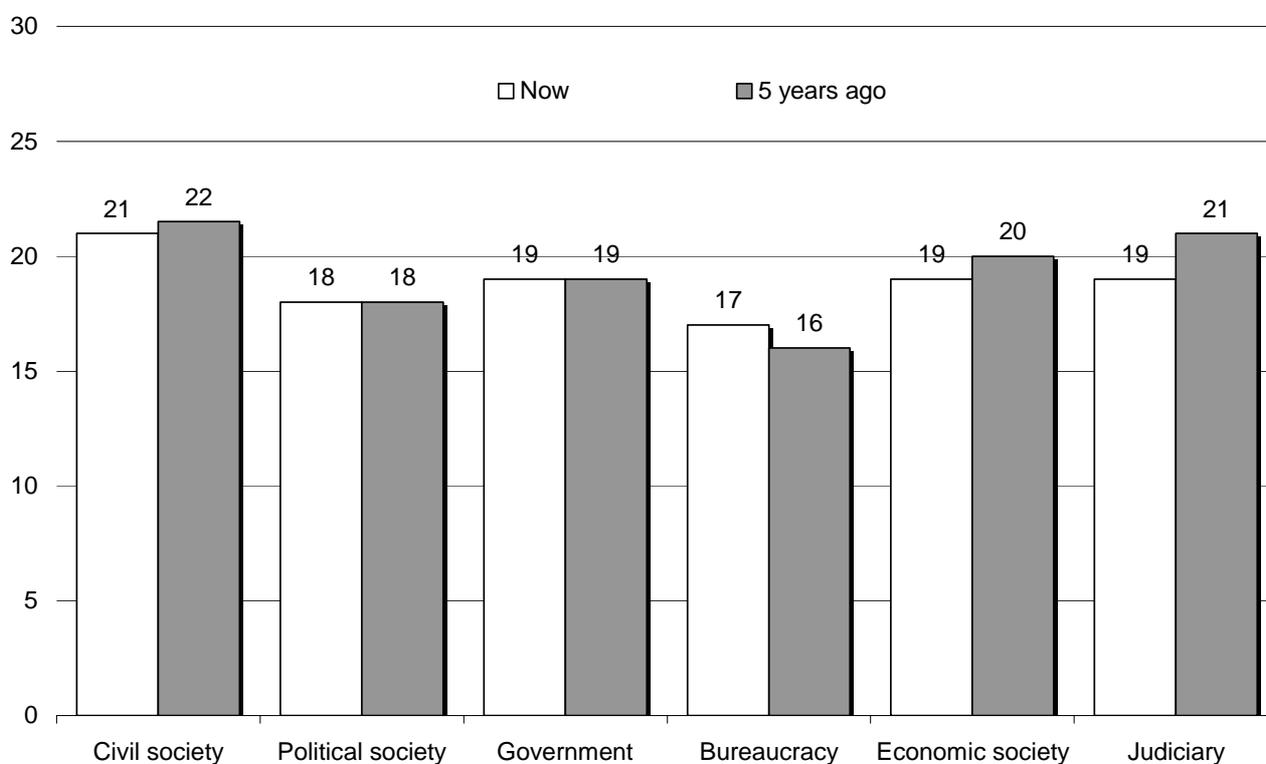
On the efficiency dimension, the ability of the judicial system to settle disputes saw the highest scores: Namibia's courts are perceived as truly independent. On the other hand, most experts argued that the system for recruitment and promotion in the civil service was not merit-based (lowest scores). Nepotism, favouritism and the tendency of politicians to influence bureaucrats' appointments are perceived as obstacles to the efficiency of the public service.

Figure 5: Total scores on the principles (median values 'five years ago' and 'now')



Moving now to the main differences between the roles and effectiveness of the various arenas of governance considered (Figure 6), civil society had the highest scores, while bureaucracy stood out as a more problematic arena.

Figure 6: Total scores on the arenas (median values 'five years ago' and 'now')



When asked to evaluate the role of civil society, most experts said that freedom of association was high. This possibly owes to the fact that since the mid-1990s the number of NGOs has grown considerably (particularly in the environmental field and the health sector). Experts are more critical

regarding the extent to which civil society groups have an input into policymaking (lowest scores). A rare example is the Legal Assistance Centre, which has played an important role in developing legislation on gender issues.

In the bureaucracy arena, the experts criticised the lack of a merit-based system for recruitment and promotion in the civil service (see above). A shared opinion regarded the lack of capacity of the government to properly target the needs of the poorest 20% of the population. Although the government is making serious efforts to develop policies and visions, a perception seems to persist of an existing gulf among goals, planning and implementation.

WGA assessment: overall consideration

An emerging characteristic of the in-country assessments is that satisfaction with governance relates to local conditions. Not only current political context but also historical context matters (young post-colonial/post-apartheid state). The most significant contextual variables are a meaningful separation of power and yet the presence of a dominant party state.

A limit in current performance seems to be the ethno/cultural make-up in the post-apartheid period and the limited response of the government to the needs of the poorest 20% of the population, which perpetrates existing inequalities.

A slight improvement is shown in accountability and transparency, and in the civil society, economic society and judiciary arenas. While there was a slight decline in the bureaucracy arena, political society and government remained the same.

The most significant explanatory variables in the Namibian WGA seem to be the distinction of a perception of 'regime guardians' and 'political incumbents', while other important potentially distinctive categories such as ethnicity, historically disadvantaged versus privileged citizens, and urban versus rural inhabitants have not yet been assessed and compared.

In terms of dissemination, once the final country report has been completed the findings should be made available to a wider Namibian audience. The Namibia Institute for Democracy, responsible for the WGA in Namibia, plans to publish the WGA survey analysis within the scope of its occasional paper series (Analyses & Views). The country report aims to share local expertise and knowledge on governance issues in Namibia and should contribute to the discussion on the governance situation as well as that on challenges and priorities regarding Namibia's long-term development plan (Vision 2030).

Box 1: Comparison of WGA and other international surveys for Namibia

WGA mean scores (2001/2006):

111.9 (2001) 114.4 (2006) (lowest 36 – highest 180)

Freedom House (2006):

Political Rights: 2,

Civil liberties: 2 (civil liberties rating improved from 3 to 2)

Status: free

Transparency International (2006):

Corruption Perception Index (CPI): 4.1

World Governance Indicators (2006):

57.6 (fourth in Africa behind Botswana, Mauritius and Cape Verde)

2. Mongolia WGA

WIP contacting and data collection

Initially 102 potential respondents were identified as prospective WIPs through criteria such as proven competency and/or leading position role in a related field; diversity in political orientation and party membership; representation of different arenas (public, private, independent institutions where possible); gender representation (where options for selection occurred).

A total of three consultations were held with religious, media, and business representatives. The contacting process started at the end of February 2006. Letters, telephone calls, emails and personal meetings were used as ways to approach respondents. A total of three interviewers worked in the field, chosen on the basis of their knowledge of arenas and people. Each interviewer had half a day of training, covering both the structure and the peculiarities of the questions (meaning, scoring, etc.) After a first letter was sent by the country coordinator, the interviewers contacted each respondent with call-backs on an interval basis of 10-14 days.

In the end, the overall number not answering or refusing was high (response rate of 40%) and, unexpectedly, even higher among businesspeople (only 10% completed the questionnaire). As a consequence, the country team decided to select 37 alternative respondents.

The main challenges experienced in the contacting process were that the process coincided with the overthrow of the previous government and that some of the prospective respondents were replaced owing to high turnover in the public sphere. It was therefore difficult to find accurate contact information. Most ministries refused to participate in the survey owing to concern about how the data would be used (e.g. for political criticism).

Figure 7: Sampling structure: gender

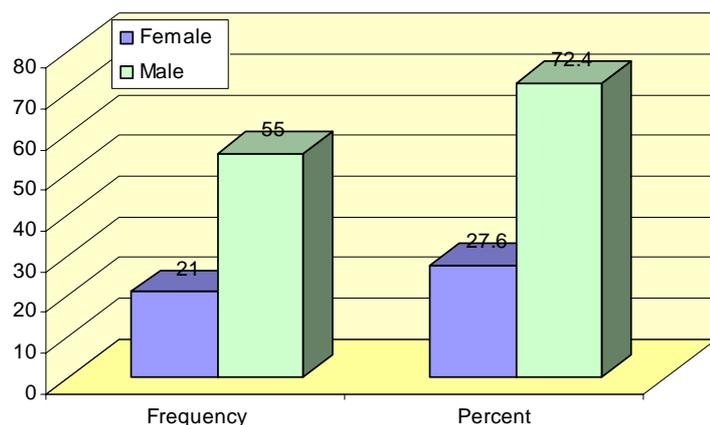
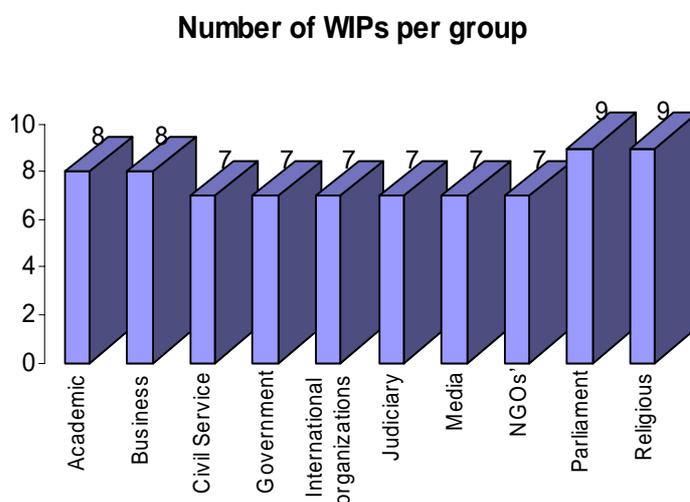


Figure 8: Distribution of WIPs



WIP contacting and data collection

Managing the survey in Palestine was challenging. The main office of the country team is located in the West Bank (Ramallah) and connections with other areas of Palestine are difficult. Moving from the West Bank to Gaza is difficult, which has important implications when implementing a 'national survey'. A further challenge was that the survey process started three weeks after the elections. Finally, a main issue for the WGA was embedded in its very idea: whose governance are we talking about? What is the regional boundary to consider? Can we consider Palestinian governance processes as 'fully independent' from broader regional dynamics?

The domain for the snowball sampling included WIPs from Gaza and the West Bank and a total response rate of 79% was achieved. This figure indicates the level of interest of Palestinians in the issue of governance. 5% of the WIPs contacted refused to participate; the most common reasons given for refusal were ideological/political (opposition to the Oslo process) and fear of possible negative influence of results on the behaviour of international donors.

The results of the process were possible owing to a beneficial collaboration with other initiatives which facilitated access to already established networks within the region. Informal processes were used as well in order to contact potential relevant WIPs during official presentations and meetings.

Distribution of the questionnaires presented additional difficulties, since there is no reliable postal system in Palestine, and not all potential WIPs could be contacted by fax. Distribution therefore relied on established networks and the internet. Telephone and email contact was then used for follow-up. Although English is commonly understood, the questionnaire was translated into Arabic to enable a precise understanding of the questions.

DISCUSSION

Discussion at the workshop focused on the way in which the WGA could further contribute to country-level processes, including the shaping of a country agenda for improving governance and links between the WGA and other processes. Issues to consider are:

- The extent to which and ways in which the WGA can capture informal institutions and power relationships.
- The design of the survey process so as to generate an impact among national stakeholders as well as donors.
- Links with other ongoing processes, such as the pursuit and monitoring of the MDGs (e.g. by highlighting relevant questions in the WGA).
- Developing more fully fledged country reports and including a discussion of key events in these (since major political events can impact on perceptions of governance in the short term).
- Further clarification and guidance on how to undertake the surveys in-country (e.g. distribution of questionnaires).
- Focusing on power as a main outcome from the survey. The main question in the assessment could be: how do people perceive themselves in relation to power? (In this sense, 'non-answers' may be answers as they may show reluctance to trust or express an opinion.)
- Insert 'why questions' (for qualitative comments) which can reveal governance priorities or perceptions of the most urgent area for change.
- Putting economic/governance correlations into perceptions: ask 'how do you think the country should develop?' Including extra dimensions on the agenda which can be understood through the analysis.

The role and determination of country coordinators emerged as an extremely relevant factor in all the three cases presented. Perseverance and passion of country coordinators reflect the potential to achieve valuable results, even in complex and adverse contexts such as Palestine.

Section 4: SUMMARY AND LOOKING AHEAD

1. Wrap-up

The wrap-up session served to summarise what had been learned from the overview of governance assessment approaches and the particular experience of the WGA. Key lessons are:

- It is important for users to be aware of the underlying approaches of governance assessments to enable a valid interpretation of the results.
- Developing policy implications is a step which is separate from and follows the initial generation of a governance assessment. This involves interpretation of results, including a comparison of results from different assessments.
- High-quality governance assessments are essential for enabling an evidence-based discussion on policy directions (e.g. donor support for governance reforms).
- There is currently still a lack of more country-based governance assessments which can reflect how local stakeholders view governance and the governance challenges faced by their societies and how these may be dealt with.
- The WGA offers a country-based approach focusing on a broad range of stakeholder groups and capturing their views. It generates primary data that is predominantly quantitative, but contains also qualitative comments, which are valuable for interpreting results. The methodology and the data collected generate insights into the governance situation of a country across a range of governance-related aspects, allowing a comparison of the views of different stakeholder groups. The methodology also allows cross-country comparisons but the number of countries covered has thus far been small.

The WGA could further develop in various directions. Some of the proposals included: (i) extending surveys within countries; (ii) focusing on particular groups of countries (such as fragile states or regional 'clusters'); (iii) undertaking the WGA on larger scale, including more countries. Key issues to be addressed included (i) legitimacy versus accountability; (ii) who/what for? (iii) formal/informal power; (iv) new/other categories. Additional open questions for the debate are: What is the room for coordination/partnerships among initiatives? What further changes might be made to the methodology? What are next steps?

Suggestions on which priorities can be pursued would be welcomed by the WGA team.

2. Debate

Deepening local ownership of the approach

- NSDS (national statistical development strategies) could be targets and/or potential partners in the next step. WGA information could complement other already available data, as governance assessments seem to be weak, if not absent, in NSDS activities. It would be possible to identify two or three collaborating countries as a starting point, with the aim of promoting the Paris Declaration, which calls for organisation and homogenisation of actions among donors.
- The WGA seems to provide an answer to the question of how to benchmark perceptions. It is an interesting tool for diagnosing local dynamics/problems and pointing towards locally owned solutions.

Developing (country-focused) dissemination

- A clear focus should be on use of results and on how the project team can help country coordinators in the dissemination of these results (marketing), generating and engaging in debates within and between countries.
- In the first round, not enough effort was put into communication and dissemination strategies (basically, data only appeared in papers and monographs). A further strength for WGA information would be in creating a time series for temporal benchmarking. Another issue for

focus is the improvement of the current WGA website: making it more interactive, possibly with local mirror websites which would allow local interaction and independence in information management. This approach seems feasible, as most of the country coordinators are related to institutions or think tanks and can benefit from this. In terms of aggregation, it appears that the information for this at the top of the pyramid (Figure 2) is not as interesting as the lower layers.

- Regarding the communication and dissemination process, the first round could be seen as a pilot (even though the process had broader consequences). Now, the communication phase can be started in a more structured manner, particularly as those contacted for data collection generally proved to be interested in the approach and in using the outcomes.

Maintain or further develop the current methodology

- The WGA introduces an interesting approach to governance. It also has a potential advantage in that it is 'independent' (as 'govern-ance' is not just 'govern-ment'). The questions now are: Why do people in the country want to use it and invest in it? How can the communication and dissemination process be connected with country-level policy processes?
- The WGA has a wide range of dimensions (depth, time, etc.) The first round focused on piloting the approach. Now a solid process has been established, with benefits in terms of low/reasonable costs, strong processes, interesting points of view, etc. An important next step is to analyse the information that has been generated, looking both at results within a country and at comparisons between countries, and to develop dissemination materials.
- An issue has been raised as to whether the WGA generates 'subjective' results rather than an 'objective' assessment of the governance situation. However, the difference between a survey-based assessment and one that is based on 'objective' assessment by external experts is less than it may seem. After all, external experts get much of their information from local contacts. In Namibia, the WGA can contribute to strengthening local debates and participation.
- The focus of the WGA on processes rather than performance is interesting: this is a measure of the legitimacy of the regime and of society's elites. If we agree on the fact that the strength of the approach is the fact that it is based on the concept of power, we should then focus on this rather than integrating/extending it to measure results or performance. Keep the focus on the originality of the approach to capture local perceptions.
- It is useful to understand dynamics between different factors within countries (economics, etc.), building a bigger framework for the WGA. How do we deal with this? It would be interesting to examine different levels of aggregation and benchmarks (such as local areas and sub/supranational regions).
- The WGA methodology is complex. It is important to avoid further changes, especially if we assume that it is relevant to have a time series. As such, we should resist the temptation to further change the methodology (as between the first and second round). Regarding dissemination and communication, a '1, 3, 35' approach can be useful (where no report should be longer than 35 pages, with a no more than three page summary and one page of policy recommendations).

Future implementation of the WGA

- The use depends on the strategy (multi-country comparison or single-country tailored studies). If someone is interested, how easy is the WGA to implement and what are the costs for a single country? Is the model 'scalable'? Fragile states can be a tricky field to target and a hard concept to deal with. Regional clusters may be a sound strategy, with progressive inclusion of further countries.
- Explore the application of the WGA in federal systems. India could be a pilot for analysis of governance perceptions from different regions.

3. Conclusions

Dissemination of results is the priority in terms of next steps. A clear perception of the value added of the methodology has emerged, in particular its focus on perceptions of key local stakeholders.

For further improvement, there is a common feeling to go local (and possibly sub-national within countries). At the same time, the comparative dimension should be maintained.

Governance is multidimensional and, therefore, a complex concept to manage. The WGA approach can provide unique information which can be combined with other indicators and assessments for a multidimensional analysis. The focus now is on how to maximise results achieved, such as the report, other materials to be produced, and the maintenance/expansion of local networks (country coordinators, WIPs).

Annex: Agenda and Participants**Independent Governance Assessment Learning Workshop**

ODI, 111 Westminster Bridge Rd
London

15 February 2006

9.00	Coffee/tea
9.15-9.45	Opening, welcome, introductions
9.45-11.15	<p>Presentation on the WGA Round 2 – approach, process and results <i>Goran Hyden, University of Florida</i> <i>Ken Mease, University of Florida</i></p> <p>Discussant (tbc)</p> <p>Discussion</p>
11.15-11.30	Coffee/tea break
11.30-12.30	<p>Country-level perspectives - ‘Doing’ the WGA (reactions from experts interviewed, etc.) - Impact of the WGA in-country <i>Country coordinators</i></p> <p>Discussion</p>
12.30-1.30	Lunch break
1.30-2.45	<p>Governance assessments – new developments, new initiatives, new insights? <i>Verena Fritz and Marta Foresti (ODI)</i></p> <p>Discussant (tbc)</p> <p>Discussion</p>
2.45-3.00	Coffee/tea break
3.00-4.15	<p>The future role of the W/IGA – Options and next steps <i>Verena Fritz (ODI)</i></p> <p>Discussion</p>
4.15-5.00	Summary and conclusion
7.00	Workshop dinner

Advisory Board Members

- **Thomas Wollnik**, Senior Project Manager, InWEnt, Germany
- **Julius Court**, Governance Adviser, Policy Division, DFID
- **Monica Blagescu**, One World Trust
- **Henning Melber**, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation

Donors

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- **Prisca Sandvik**, UNDP
- **Mikael Bostrom**, Director, Division for Democracy and Human Rights, SIDA
- **Jan Huesken**, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Peter Owen**, DFID
- **Max Everest-Philips**, DFID

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- **Lucas Wethering**, Argentina
- **Justine Hunter**, Namibia
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- **Marta Foresti**, ODI

ODI

- **Alison Evans**, Director of Programme, Poverty and Public Policy Group
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- **Henning Melber**

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