

Workshop Findings

Lessons of a Decade of Public Sector Reform: Voices of African Client Stakeholders

This note summarizes the key messages and reports the action plan generated from the workshop *Lessons of a Decade of Public Sector Reform*, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on December 9–10, 2008. The workshop was jointly organized by the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG), the Africa Region Public Sector Reform and Capacity Building Unit (AFTPR) of the World Bank, the PREM Public Sector Governance Unit (PRMPS) of the Bank, and the World Bank Institute and was based on four IEG evaluations.¹

Based on the evaluation findings the workshop focused on two major issues:

- How to develop and implement public sector reform (PSR) strategies
- How to strengthen capacity in the public sector.

DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A STRATEGY FOR PSR

Objectives and Background

These observations are from a workshop session that sought to understand the demand, the key drivers, and the role of development partners in PSR. It also sought to understand the elements of effective ownership of PSR, the significance of political leadership in enhancing ownership, and the value of international experience.

Observation 1. Facilitate the development of a PSR strategy; do not formulate one for the country.

- Facilitation does not mean that donors should place conditions. Instead, they can facilitate the participa-

tory development of strategy. This expedites implementation.

- To this process the Bank should bring ideas. The money should follow ideas—not the other way around. Governments want transformative ideas in modernizing—the Bank must provide guidance in international best practice.
- The Bank should support integrated reform. Reforms targeted at specific sectors tend to ignore the entire

Workshop Agenda

December 10, 2009

9:00–12:30 Inauguration and Introduction

2:00–5:30 Understanding Developing and Implementing Public Sector Reform Strategies

December 11, 2009

9:00–12:30 Building Effective Capacity in the Public Sector

2:00–5:30 Lessons and Follow-Up

What Have We Learned? What Will We Do Differently?

Follow-Up and Closing

system. Sector-specific reform should be attempted when there are sector-specific issues. Otherwise, it is time to realize that reform cannot take place in sectoral silos. The general perception of participants was of the need for an integrated strategy (for instance, not one for health, another for education).

- Finally, participants stated that donors need to be coherent in their advice.

Observation 2. Support implementation of the PSR strategy.

- If the country has developed a strategy, donors should support it technically and financially (not impose conditions, but facilitate regular monitoring to adjust the course over time).
- If the country does not have a strategy or if there is a lack of political will, the Bank should still stay engaged. The Bank could identify reform drivers and bring them together, but it needs to be mindful that this can be a highly sensitive political process. The Bank should provide support for the basics, that is, develop and strengthen institutional accountability and transparency (public financial management and procurement systems, audit offices, internal audits, and human resources). With the basics in place, reform can then move forward more effectively.
- Donors should then carefully craft entry, hand-over, and exit points.

Observation 3. Recognize country ownership.

- Each country should undertake diagnosis and prepare its own strategy. It should then seek technical expertise to strengthen that strategy. Donors should buy into the country strategy rather than the countries buying into donors’ strategies.
- Donors should assess how the strategy was developed. Has the government taken a consultative approach? Has it consulted the political, executive, and civil society stakeholders and sought their participation in the formulation of a PSR strategy?
- Is the country willing to contribute resources? This is an important measure of country ownership.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Objectives and Background

These observations are from a session that sought to understand how to address capacity development (CD) challenges. Who are the key stakeholders that should be involved in CD processes? What are the roles of civil society and the private sector in CD? How should clients prior-

Participants

Name	Country/Organization
Mr. Makolo Jibikilay	Democratic Republic of Congo
Mr. Kafira G. Valerie	Democratic Republic of Congo
Mr. Misenga M. Godefroid	Democratic Republic of Congo
Mr. Stephane M. Mwansa	Democratic Republic of Congo
Mr. Mekonnen Manyazewal	Ethiopia
Mr. Worku Yehualashet	Ethiopia
Mr. Fikru Dessalegn	Ethiopia
Mr. Assefa Fisaha	Ethiopia
Mr. Aynalem Tsegaye	Ethiopia
Mr. Nebiyu Samuel	Ethiopia
Mr. Ahmed Mohammed	Ethiopia
Mr. Haile Michael Abera	Ethiopia
Mr. Binegrew Walle	Ethiopia
Mr. Debretsion Gebre	Ethiopia
Ms. Edmondine R. Rasoanjanahary	Madagascar
Mr. R. Henri Bernard	Madagascar
Mr. Randrianiaina J. Philippe	Madagascar
Dr. Ndem Ayara	Nigeria
Mr. Dominic Gambo Yahaya	Nigeria
Mr. Abdulkareem Olaoye	Nigeria
Mr. Sebagabo Barnabe	Rwanda
Mr. Fred Mujuni	Rwanda
Mr. Muragije Rogers	Rwanda
Mr. Niyigena Pascal	Rwanda
Mr. Rwisasira Eugene	Rwanda
Ms. Sonia Umu Karim	Sierra Leone
Mr. Bernard M. N’Javombo	Sierra Leone
Dr. Stephen Abraham	Sudan
Ms. Mathilda Eladio Ajdiru	Sudan
Mr. James Tippo Akol	Sudan

itize CD activities? How do donors and clients reduce fragmentation of CD activities?

Observation 4. Donors should support relevant, necessary, and holistic CD.

- Finances should not determine priorities for CD—this does not lead to effective CD, but to duplication and waste of resources.
- Instead, donors can help facilitate the formulation of CD priorities based on a needs assessment. This needs assessment should result in the country articulating a vision and a framework for CD. Effective tools include skills audits, function reviews, and so forth.

Name	Country/Organization
Ms. Lily A. M. Manyiel	Sudan
Mr. George Yambesi	Tanzania
Mr. Eric Francis Shitindi	Tanzania
Prof. Rwekaza Mukandala	Tanzania
Mr. Solanus Nyimbi	Tanzania
Mr. Athman Katanga	Tanzania
Mr. Jacobus W. de Visser	University of Western Cape, South Africa
Mr. Armin K. Nolting	Ethiopia
Mr. Shehu Salihu Muhammad	The African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD)
Mr. Chiara Bellini	European Union
Mr. Shawn Houlihan	Forum of Federations
Mr. Devinder Goyal	African Development Bank
Mr. Peter Mwanakwe	African Development Bank
Mr. Søren Davidsen	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark
Mr. Andreas Foerster	World Bank
Mr. Anand Rajaram	World Bank
Mr. Kai Kaiser	World Bank
Mr. Jean Mabi Mulumba	World Bank
Mr. Melvyn Blunt	World Bank
Mr. D. Randriamanampisoa	World Bank
Mr. George Addo Larbi	World Bank
Mr. Denis Maro Biseko	World Bank
Mr. Ali Khadr	World Bank
Ms. Gita Gopal	World Bank
Mr. Raoul Blindenbacher	World Bank
Mr. Eonseog Song	World Bank
Ms. Melanie Zipperer	World Bank
Mr. Mohammed Umer Teyim	World Bank

- Donors should take a holistic approach—efforts should focus primarily at an institutional level (as opposed to individual or organizational levels) and be holistic and multisectoral (for example, justice reform and reform of civil service and salaries are both critical for effective public sector capacity building).
- Donors should consider giving support to all relevant stakeholders according to government strategies such as the following:
 - Deepening reform to the subnational level
 - Strengthening governance with respect to local communities
 - Supporting emergence of the private sector and the involvement of civil society actors

- Using local consultants to build and sustain local capacity.

Observation 5. Political will/commitment/engagement is essential. The Bank should build political consensus.

- It is important to get reform-minded elements together as an entry point.
- Civil society will generate demand for reform (in Nigeria, for example, civil society demanded reform and the politicians responded).
- Reform objectives and messages will be communicated to reduce adverse impacts of government changes (for example, use public opinion surveys to inform and generate consensus within the country)
- There will be greater buy-in through some quick wins.

Observation 6. Do not ignore cultural challenges.

Focus on issues of sustainability in capacity development:

- Upstream issues include the need to strengthen universities to produce technically skilled workers for the public sector and to ensure on-the-job training (capacity cannot be built up in the public sector through support for individual education opportunities; the opposite view was also stated).
- Downstream issues include ensuring incentives for recruiting and retaining qualified human resources, keeping in mind fiscal constraints and the need to ensure a right size; providing relevant training of necessary skills; and establishing performance assessments and conditions for job progress as well as retirement packages.

Observation 7. Regular monitoring and evaluation must be undertaken, along with dissemination of results.

- Develop relevant indicators and assess against agreed target benchmarks.
- Regularly review to adjust strategy so it addresses sustainability. Monitors should be aware of the country context; otherwise, they monitor as if they are in Washington, DC, wasting client time.
- The Bank should support including the government in projects to integrate good monitoring systems—and provide guidance on how to link measurement to macroeconomic policies.
- Discourage duplicative and multiple forms of reporting. Development partners argue that clients have no capacity, but show no hesitation in taxing them when it comes to reporting.
- The Bank is a knowledge bank; it needs to disseminate its international knowledge on a variety of subjects, including evaluation and monitoring and public expenditure and finan-

cial accountability. The Bank has a lot of tools and technical capacity, and clients need to be exposed to them.

Observation 8. Reform World Bank procurement procedures and guidelines.

- The world has developed capacity and technology that make the existing Bank rules and procedures outdated. Recognize and reform these rules.
- The Bank should not *impose* new rules. Instead, it needs to show clients what will change if they accept the new procurement procedures.
- The Bank focuses on procurement reform, up to signing of a contract. Procurement *management* is an important issue as well.
- Improve and strengthen client systems and then shift to using country systems. A first step is to align the Bank threshold levels with the country levels.
- It is critical that development partners harmonize their financial management and procurement guidelines.

ACTION POINTS

Participants felt that fora such as this one in Addis Ababa are very helpful and are a valuable experience for participants. They should be encouraged in the future.

AFTPR

- **Action Point 1.** (i) Commit to follow up on how to make such fora more regular, with the idea that the responsibility for sustaining such collaboration and information sharing be handed over to an African partner. (ii) Start with at least one video conference session between Madagascar and Rwanda.
- **Action Point 2.** Actively support the implementation of the Paris–Ghana Agreement by taking these messages back to Regional management.

- **Action Point 3.** The Bank should enhance its role as a knowledge bank. AFTPR will discuss this point with the World Bank Institute and other colleagues and provide feedback on how AFTPR, the WBI, and the network can enhance knowledge development and management. This point shall be completed by March 10, 2009.

European Union

- **Action Point 4.** Reinvigorate the Sierra Leone Civil Service institution. The European Union will consider this request, and the Bank could determine a role for itself. The European Union will follow up during the December identification mission.

World Bank Management

- **Action Point 5.** Modernize Bank procurement guidelines. The Africa management team is already deliberating on these issues. AFTPR will reinforce the message from the workshop to the Africa management team.
- **Action Point 6.** Give more authority to country offices (no specific action required).
- **Action Point 7.** Rely on local consultants, thereby building local capacity.

FURTHER DETAILS

Further details on the evaluations are available at <http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/publicsector>.

NOTE

1. *Public Sector Reform: What Works and Why?* (2008); *Decentralization in Client Countries: An Evaluation of World Bank Support 1990–2007* (2008); *Capacity Building in Africa: An OED Evaluation of World Bank Support* (2005); and “Country Financial Accountability Assessments and Country Procurement Assessment Reports: How Effective Are World Bank Fiduciary Diagnostics?” Report No. 43395 (2008).

Table 1: Feedback on Quality of Workshop

No. of responses	Nature of respondent ^a	Relevance of workshop to current work	Extent to which acquired information is new	Extent to which content matched objectives	Overall usefulness of activity	Quality rating for discussion	Average
22	G	4.8	4.5	4.5	4.8	4.5	4.6
6	N	4.7	4.3	4.0	4.7	4.0	4.3
8	D	4.3	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9
5	NI	4.8	4.0	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.3
41	—	4.56	4.19	4.12	4.45	4.12	4.3

a. G = government; N = nongovernment; D = donor, NI: not indicated