Traction on the Ground: From Better Data to Better Policy

Abstract

In 2010, the World Bank and the Department for International Development (DFID) funded and orchestrated an initiative to develop a tool to monitor corruption performance in Uganda on an ongoing basis. By basing operations in a local university-based research center and engaging the Inspectorate General of Government to manage the project, the tool is becoming the responsibility of national stakeholders, including the government. The local university research center is working with government to improve government collection of sectoral and functional anti-corruption data. In addition, evidence-based international corruption data has been incorporated into the public discussion on corruption. Donors continue to play an important role – funding the project launch, and providing ongoing guidance and support to engage executive agencies, Parliament, NGOs, and the media. The project has had some positive and unexpected results. While the project remains in early stages, there are signs that this gradual, data-driven approach is deepening the public dialogue on corruption and creating an important consensus for anti-corruption reform.
Corruption is a problem throughout Africa. Donors are concerned about corruption because it undermines the effectiveness of development assistance and constrains opportunities for growth and development in some of the poorest countries in the world.

Donors have put in place a host of activities to minimize corruption. Risk assessments, which identify fiduciary risks of corruption and poor governance, are routine procedures for many donor-funded initiatives. Country assistance plans and development project documents include governance components to ensure that donor investments will be well-managed and maintained. Donors also provide ad hoc technical assistance in order to gain a better understanding of the nature of corruption in a given country, develop an action plan for improvement, or implement specific anti-corruption reforms.

In spite of this extensive set of activities, corruption remains a constant concern for donors. Bilateral and multilateral organizations must be accountable for the uses of their public funds. They must ensure that their assistance is spent as intended, and is not siphoned off into the pockets of public or private interests. Making this assurance – with confidence – continues to be a challenge.

Within this context, donors in Uganda made a concerted effort to elevate the governance and anti-corruption agenda. They started by forming an Accountability Working Group (AWG) comprised of donors from over eight countries. Subsequently, they urged the Government of Uganda to establish a similar Accountability Sector Working Group (ASWG) consisting of public officials who played a major role in public accountability. The two organizations met individually and collectively, creating institutions and a process for improving dialogue and consensus about public accountability reform.

In 2009, the Accountability Working Group of donors conducted an evaluation of public accountability in Uganda. The results highlighted corruption as a notable contributor to the lack of accountability in the country. The study also indicated that there was no consensus amongst donors, the government, and other stakeholders about the nature of corruption in the country or strategies for combating the problem. The evaluation findings revealed a public dialogue focused on scandals and anecdotes – as opposed to objective evidence – and there was little agreement about the credibility and usefulness of data sources that reported on corruption in the country. In sum, the quality of the public dialogue on corruption was low, stakeholder views were fragmented, and data providing factual evidence about the state of corruption in the country was scarce. The evaluation called for anti-corruption action.

The donors had their own perspectives about anti-corruption efforts, most of which had been formed from over ten years of trial-and-error experimentation with governance and anti-corruption (GAC) efforts. While the first decade or more of GAC activity generated useful information about the sources and nature of corruption in given countries, few GAC efforts in Africa resulted in sustainable reforms that increased public accountability and transparency. By

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2 The Accountability Sector Working Group is comprised of a number of agencies from the Government of Uganda that deal with accountability and anti-corruption including the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development, the Ministry of Public Service, the Ministry of Local Government (Inspectorate directorates), the Directorate of Public Prosecutions, the Public Procurement Disposal of Assets Authority, the Inspectorate of Government, Office of the Auditor General, Directorate of Ethics and Integrity and the Criminal Investigations Department.
2010, Sub-Saharan Africa was still dominated by numerous entrenched leaders who benefitted personally from corruption, and thus allowed it to run rampant.

It was no surprise, therefore, that donors in Uganda were eager to try a different, more pragmatic, approach to anti-corruption efforts. They replaced the historical approach which emphasized the collection and maintenance of accurate data with a newer strategy that concentrated on reform-oriented uses of data which could be sustained and valued by stakeholders inside and outside of the executive branch of government.

The desire for a more practical, sustainable approach to anti-corruption became a key impetus for launching the Data Tracking Mechanism (DTM) Initiative, and for shaping its design.

**A Pragmatic Approach to Data and Indicators: The Link with Reform**

In order to give the public discussion about corruption an evidence basis for reform, the Accountability Working Group of donors embarked on an effort to create the DTM, a tool for generating an objective source of data to monitor corruption trends in Uganda on an ongoing basis.

Note to Author: I think the paper would benefit from adding some additional information here about the DTM in order to introduce the initiative to the reader, and explain its purpose and goals.

**The Obstacles – A Ugandan Perspective**

The DTM Initiative confronted an array of data-related challenges related to anti-corruption, including: (i) definitional challenges related to the definition of “corruption” and, hence, in defining the scope of corruption data; (ii) lack of consensus about critical elements of corruption amongst public officials, NGOs, and donors; (iii) complexity surrounding international corruption indices, which creates confusion about the data of this initiative; and (iv) skepticism around the international sponsorship of the data sources, which raised questions about the validity of priorities and perspectives underlying the data.

A brief discussion of each of these limitations follows.

**Definitional Challenges.** One obstacle that the DTM Initiative aimed to overcome was the definitional challenges associated with corruption. The abundance of definitions of “corruption” reflects the breadth and ambiguity inherent in corruption itself. Corruption takes many forms, including informal payments, selling government positions, absenteeism, bribes, procurement corruption, theft/misuse of property, fraud, and embezzlement, among others. Furthermore, corruption can exist in the private or public sector. If it involves public funds, those funds can be managed centrally or locally. Corruption can be sectoral in nature, surfacing in a local health clinic, in the Ministry of Education, or on the loading docks at a port of entry. Corruption can be “petty,” involving the exchange of a small amount of money solicited to pass on a road, or it can also be “grand,” supported by a complex set of laws and regulations which benefit one person, or a small group of actors, at the expense of the public at large. Lastly, parties to corruption can span a broad range, including ordinary citizens, low level public servants, businesses, Members of Parliament, Ministers of Government, and NGO representatives, to name a few.

The breadth of corruption activities creates challenges not only for defining the term, but also for defining indicators that can be used to monitor anti-corruption activities. This challenge
surfaced in the first DTM workshop in Uganda, which reflected the challenges in defining corruption and scoping the parameters of data to collect for tracking corruption performance. Numerous senior public officials believed corruption to be narrow in scope and, consequently, thought the DTM should focus on one particular function of the government. Others viewed corruption as broad in nature, and advocated for an initiative that would involve multiple sectors.

**Lack of Consensus about Corruption.** A second obstacle was the lack of consensus about the nature of corruption in Uganda. Substantial research emphasizes the importance of having a consensus in order to effect change. Of particular note is the importance of a consensus in the public sphere as represented by civil society. As noted by Sunil Khilnani, a noted civil society expert, the lack of a consensus limits the ability of civil society to play a meaningful role in holding public officials accountable for their actions. In Uganda, the lack of a collective view about corruption was evident in the disparate views which needed to be overcome in order to devise an effective reform strategy. A critical motivation behind the DTM was to create a factual base of evidence upon which individuals (of donor, governments, or NGO organizations) could form a public consensus about anti-corruption.

**Complexity Surrounding Corruption Indicators.** One does not need to look too far into the body of research on anti-corruption performance to discover debate and complexity related to corruption indices; the varying methodologies associated with the indices; and data. The result is a hodgepodge of indicators and data that are challenging to decipher – for international corruption experts as well as for Ugandan public officials, NGOs, in-country donors and other stakeholders.

Furthermore, the body of corruption indices includes dozens of international sources which have primarily been developed by and for donors and international businesses. Use of these data sources by country level actors is often times a secondary consideration; these sources may or may not reflect local priorities, and their findings may or may not be consistent. This aspect of corruption data creates an additional layer of complexity for country-level actors.

**Skepticism around International Data Sources.** A final and enormously important obstacle for the initiative pertains to the skepticism that surrounds international corruption data sources. This skepticism took various forms: some stemmed from anti-western sentiment and reflected concerns that westerners have a different sense of corruption than Ugandans. Others appeared to be technical in nature (for example, questioning the methodology of the Country Policy and Institutional Assessment).

Whatever the nature of the concern, Ugandans often believed that international data did not reflect national priorities as defined by Ugandans. Despite this skepticism, using existing data from international sources was the most efficient way to get the project launched quickly, as data from the government of Uganda was simply too limited to serve as a primary source of data for the initiative. Furthermore, new data collection was expensive and time-consuming.

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3 At an April 7, 2010 workshop of the Accountability Sector Working Group and the Accountability Working Group, in Kampala, Uganda, key officials, such as the Auditor General of Uganda, raised definitional questions.

4 Sunil Khilnani, “The development of civil society”, pp. 27-28 in Sudipta Kaviraj and Sunil Khilnani (eds), *Civil Society: History and Possibilities*. Cambridge University Press, 2001. Sunil Khilnani has noted that having a “shared conceptual map which describes a collectivity” is a critical condition for civil society.” As he notes, “where there are deeply divided beliefs about the point of politics, the possibility of civil society is endangered.”
In order to address this skepticism, project planners increasingly emphasized the importance of Ugandan data sources. In addition, they made significant efforts to explain and clarify international data sources, many of which utilized indigenous, country-based assessors. Mostly, project planners understood that building trust in the DTM data would take time, and would require transparency, ongoing communication, and major effort to secure better data on anti-corruption from the Government of Uganda.

The Development Dance: Engaging the Government

The DTM project was driven by an active group of donors that comprised an Accountability Working Group (AWG). Led by DFID and the World Bank, the group worked closely with government to improve accountability in Uganda. The leading donors of this group continue to provide an active source of funding and guidance for the project, and the AWG still plays a strong leadership role in supporting governance improvement in Uganda.

This group of donors was joined by an Accountability Sector Working Group (ASWG) of government officials. The AWSG continues to provide guidance on the development of the DTM and to secure government support for the DTM’s expansion.

Over time, the Accountability Sector Working Group has broadened its role to include increased government ownership in the project. The Inspectorate General of Government (IGG), a leading member of the working group, launched the First Annual Report on Corruption in Uganda in November 2010. Ongoing operations of the DTM are now managed jointly by the IGG and the Economic Policy Research Center (EPRC), a research center affiliated with Makerere University located in Kampala, Uganda. The World Bank, DFID, the IGG, and EPRC are now collaborating collectively to develop a Peer Review Group of NGOs. This group will comment on the annual report, and define strategies that involve Parliament and the media as sources and/or users of DTM data.

The Nuts and Bolts of the Monitoring Tool

The Data Tracking Mechanism (DTM) is a tool comprised of approximately 71 indicators that track corruption. Data is collected annually for all indicators, input into an Excel-based tool, and analyzed to summarize the state of corruption in the country. Using DTM data, the first annual report was published on November 15, 2010. Over time, as data becomes more available and additional sectoral data is identified, it is expected that the number of indicators will expand.

The selected indicators include both broad aggregated indicators, as well as “actionable” disaggregated indicators, with greater emphasis placed upon the latter. The term “actionable” is used to describe the disaggregated indicators because these indicators tend to focus on specific and narrowly-defined aspects of corruption (and governance) and, consequently, may

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provide guidance for reform. Actionable indicators tend to be more practical in nature, and are useful for monitoring government’s progress in implementing public sector reforms. They are often linked to a defined process of a specific actor. The aggregated indicators are useful for providing an indication of the overall condition of corruption in a country, while disaggregated indicators provide a more refined measure of corruption in a given process, sector, or thematic area. Their disadvantage is that they are less useful for understanding the broader corruption landscape of a country.

**Objectives and Criteria for Selecting Indicators.** While nine objectives guided the selection of indicators for the DTM, three objectives were of paramount importance. The first was the need to have a body of disaggregated, actionable indicators that would guide reform. Second, additional aggregated indicators were needed to inform stakeholders about broad corruption trends in the country. Lastly, the DTM required existing, available data that was reported on a consistent and frequent basis. Use of existing data and indices would allow the DTM to become operational quickly, without being burdened by the challenges associated with new data collection. These three objectives provided the basis for the selection of indicators.

Furthermore, other objectives fed into the selection process. These objectives tended to relate to the promotion of sustainability and country ownership and the emphasis on corruption as opposed to broader governance concerns.

The following is a complete list of all criteria used for indicator selection.

(i) use of “actionable” disaggregated indicators which embody adequate detail and specificity to design and monitor the implementation and impact of reforms, and to learn from experience,
(ii) to a limited extent, uses broad aggregated indicators which provide insight into anti-corruption trends and could “take the pulse” of corruption in the country,
(iii) has data for Uganda, and which is relevant to the Ugandan context, which is readily available and easily accessible,
(iv) has data which is accurate, consistent and reliable,
(v) has data which is collected frequently, ideally every 1 or 2 years,
(vi) contributes to a final set of indicators which reflects experiences and views from different stakeholders,
(vii) supports the sustainability of the DTM effort over time, as well as country ownership of the initiative;
(viii) includes local data collection efforts which focus on improved accountability and transparency, and
(ix) allows for the selection of certain “developing” data sources, mainly from the Government of Uganda, in order to improve country-based corruption data.

The complete set of criteria for the selection of DTM indicators were as follows: The full set of indicators is available from the author.

**Categorization of Indicators.** In order to promote specific reform efforts, the DTM design was based upon a multi-pronged approach of indicator categorization. The categorization system included: thematic areas of governance, functional corruption, sectoral corruption, and classes

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8 "[https://www.agidata.org/main/AboutAGI.ashx](https://www.agidata.org/main/AboutAGI.ashx)"
of intervention. Given the broad nature of corruption, these different methods of categorization were helpful for understanding the specific aspects of anti-corruption performance. The system of categorization also provided insight into data gaps that the DTM would need to address over time. A brief description of the areas of categorization follows.

**Thematic Areas of Governance.** Many governance projects that aim to improve public management also increase efficiency. Their successful implementation reduces the room for corrupt behaviour. The link between governance and corruption gives rise to another approach for classifying corruption indicators, which involves the use of thematic areas of governance. The DTM utilizes seven thematic governance areas in its approach for classifying corruption indicators: public sector management, formal oversight institutions and rules, citizens and firms, civil society and media, political governance, private sector interface (such as parastatals), and decentralization and local participation.

**Functional Corruption.** Corruption cuts across governmental sectors and functions. Functional data is useful for understanding the performance associated with specific government functions which can have a substantial effect on preventing or detecting corruption, or enforcing anti-corruption. Examples of these types of functions include auditing, budgeting, revenue collection, and others.

**Sectoral Corruption.** Sectoral data can be a rich source of information for understanding corruption in a given sector – including corruption that may be occurring centrally, corruption of a more decentralized nature, or “quiet corruption.” Sectoral corruption often has a direct impact on citizens and enterprises, for example, affecting the availability of drugs at a health clinic or the absence of a teacher in a classroom. In Uganda, the critical challenge is to promote the collection of relevant sectoral performance data on a consistent and frequent basis.

**Categories of Intervention.** Anti-corruption indicators may support one of three categories of intervention – prevention, detection, or enforcement. A successful anti-corruption strategy requires that all three of these categories of intervention are well-coordinated and effective. By classifying indicators according to their contribution to corruption prevention, detection, or anti-corruption enforcement, the DTM will be able to provide a useful snapshot of strengths and weaknesses in terms of interventions. This categorization can be useful in a country like Uganda where there is notable public perception that one particular area of intervention, such as enforcement, is weak.

**Balancing the Strengths and Weaknesses of Different Indicators.** There is enormous diversity within the realm of corruption indicators. There are aggregated and disaggregated indicators, indicators based on a country ranking approach, indicators assessing specific government functions, and indicators focusing on individual perceptions or experiences. Determining the proper mix of these indicators was a challenge for the project. In order to underscore, the complexity associated with developing a proper mix, below is a brief discussion related to each of these types of indicators.

The decision to use aggregated and/or disaggregated indicators is technical and complex. Two examples reveal the complexity. The World Governance Indicators embody six *aggregated*

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indicators, drawn from 33 data sources that assess perceptions of governance and corruption.\(^{10}\) Alternatively, the Global Integrity Index is comprised of six *aggregated* indicators that can be broken down into 23 sub-categories, 84 *disaggregated* indicators, and 325 sub-indicators that “serve as a road map for possible reforms.”\(^ {11}\) It is not hard to understand why country-level decision-makers quickly become confused by discussions about selecting aggregated or disaggregated indicators.

While disaggregated indicators may be useful measures of anti-corruption performance associated with a specific activity or process, they are often too specific to capture the breadth of overall activities and trends defining corruption in a country. The opposite tends to be true of aggregated indicators, as they tend to be helpful for understanding broad trends, yet less useful for guiding reform. While some indices have developed which utilize both types of indicators, many indices focus on one or the other, contributing to a raging debate in Washington about the value and uses of these types of indicators.\(^ {12}\) These distinctions are often lost at the country level, where one hardly hears the terms “aggregated” and “disaggregated.”

A second group of data sources uses a *country ranking approach*. Transparency International publishes the well-known Corruption Perceptions Index, ranking almost 200 countries based on perceived levels of corruption.\(^ {13}\) Alternatively, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation publishes a ranking of 53 African countries which “measures the delivery of public goods and services to citizens by government and non-state actors.”\(^ {14}\) The Open Budget Index provides a ranking of 94 countries, measuring budget transparency and accountability. Even within this group of data sources, there are different opportunities for using the data. Some indices may provide disaggregated data to guide for reform, while others seek to simplify measurement by providing a single numerical score for a country.

A third group of data sources involves functional assessments of selected countries, with no resulting country ranking or cross-country comparison. The Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) assessment, which sheds light upon public financial management aspects of corruption, is an example of a functionally-oriented index and data set.

A fourth group of data sources involves perception-based data. For these sources, the indicators reflect perceptions of citizens, as opposed to actual experiences. For example, World Governance Indicators include data from numerous surveys and other sources which assess the perceptions of citizens, businesses, or public officials. Alternatively, Afrobarometer includes data on actual experiences that citizens have with bribery. It is important to note that some indices are comprised of both perception and experience-based indicators. While perception-

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\(^{11}\) Global Integrity scores are based upon expert assessments.  

\(^{12}\) For information on the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index, which uses both aggregated and disaggregated indicators, see Agrast, M., Botero, J., Ponce, A. *WJP Rule of Law Index 2010*. Washington, D.C.: The World Justice Project.

\(^{13}\) The CPI ranking is determined by expert assessments and opinion surveys.  
http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi

\(^{14}\) The Mo Ibrahim Foundation uses indicators across four main categories as proxies for the quality of the processes and outcomes of governance. The four categories are: Safety and Rule of Law; Participation and Human Rights; Sustainable Economic Opportunity; and Human Development.  
http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/en/section/the-ibrahim-index
based data can be useful in understanding corruption in highly informal societies, it provides limited insight into actual experiences of citizens encountering corruption.\textsuperscript{15} It is common to find that citizens perceive a higher level of corruption than they actually experience.

In sum, the list of data, methodologies, and sources for understanding corruption (and governance) is extensive. For a small country like Uganda, there are over a dozen different data sources relevant to anti-corruption.\textsuperscript{16} Although much of this data is produced for donors for purposes of cross country research or operational support, it remains an obvious source of information for in-country stakeholders trying to reduce corruption at home. Recognizing this opportunity, donors launched the DTM Initiative to bring together this sizable body of corruption data to provide a factual basis for reform.

**Signs of Traction on the Ground**

The DTM Initiative has been underway for about two years, providing a reasonable timeframe to step back and assess. Have there been notable accomplishments? What evidence do we have that the initiative is taking hold? Do we have a better sense of the risks of failure, and a more realistic view of challenges to come?

In spite of some local pessimism, the initiative has made notable progress.

A corruption monitoring tool that utilizes objective data to track corruption in Uganda annually is now operational. The tool (“DTM”) is comprised of over 70 aggregated and disaggregated indicators, covering a wide range of government functions and sectors. A progress report was published in November 2010 and is anticipated to be published annually and disseminated to the public by the government.\textsuperscript{17}

Ugandan institutions and processes have been established to support ongoing monitoring of corruption in the country. The processes include the collection and management of corruption data, the dissemination of that data, new collection of governmental anti-corruption data, and promotion of open public discussions about corruption. Efforts have been made to promote the sustainability of this monitoring operation.

Government ownership of a process to track corruption trends in the country is a crucial goal of the project and has been a key consideration in project design, and there are notable signs of government ownership. The government publicly validated data collected from international, regional and national data sources during a public launch of the First Annual Report on Corruption in Uganda, held in November 2010. The event, which was chaired by the Inspectorate General of Government (IGG), received extensive media coverage.\textsuperscript{18} The IGG has committed to play a management role in the DTM project on an ongoing basis.

A consensus amongst donors and government about the credibility and objectivity of the DTM has emerged. Many critical members of the Accountability Working Group and the


\textsuperscript{16} Selected data sources and indicators are available from the author.


Accountability Sector Working Group recognize the DTM as the primary data source for tracking corruption in the country.

*Reform recommendations* developed from the first analysis of DTM data are being incorporated into policy dialogue between donors and the government under the Joint Budget Support Framework (JBSF). The donors are taking concrete steps to ensure that the DTM findings and recommendations remain central to the structured policy discussions, which are held with government.

**A Snapshot of Corruption Trends in Uganda**

A listing of the findings of the *First Annual Report on Corruption in Uganda* provides a useful snapshot of the breadth and depth of the DTM Initiative. These findings are as follows:

*A large implementation gap.* In a recent study of 114 countries, Uganda was found to have had the largest implementation gap, reflected by its 99% score on a very good legal framework but a 45% for its weak implementation record, resulting in an implementation gap of 54%.

*Weak performance related to enforcement of political financing disclosure.* Uganda rates as very weak in critical areas of political financing, including: (i) regulatory effectiveness related to political governance, and (ii) citizen access to information regarding the financing of political parties and individual candidates’ campaigns.

*Lack of safety for journalists reporting on corruption.* Uganda rated as weak and very weak on key elements related to censorship of corruption-related journalism. In addition, Uganda rated poorly for imprisonment of journalists reporting on corruption.

*Bribery continues to characterize citizen interactions with government officials.* DTM data from Afrobarometer addressed the extent to which households had to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favor in order to obtain permits, get water or sanitation services, or avoid problems with the police. The analysis revealed that bribery cuts across sectors and functions equally, affecting one out of four households in the country.

*Auditing can be improved, particularly as it relates to involving citizens.* While Uganda appears to be performing adequately in terms of certain basic auditing functions, there are some auditing functions that reflect poor or very poor performance, creating opportunities for corruption to take hold and continue. These areas of weakness include: actions related to the auditing of actual outcomes, maintaining formal mechanisms of communication with the public, reporting to the public on actions taken to address audit recommendations, releasing public audits of extra-budgetary funds, and public reporting related to tracking of executive actions to remedy audit recommendations. Uganda displays a notable weakness in the regularity and transparency of its communication with the public on audit matters.

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Need for improvement in quality of budget information provided to the public, and more citizen consultation in the budget process. DTM data from the Open Budget Index revealed the status of citizen access to public budget information in Uganda, the opportunities for public participation in the budget process, as well as the ability of key oversight institutions of the government to hold the executive accountable. The analysis revealed that there is substantial room for improvement for the government to make available high quality, user-friendly, relevant budget reports to the public, and to consult its citizens in the budget process.

Lack of available data to assess anti-corruption efforts in procurement. Uganda recently established a new system for collecting procurement performance data. The Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA) was asked to provide data related to two corruption-related procurement indicators: percentage of sampled contracts subject to open competition, and percentage of procurements with disclosed evaluation criteria actually applied. The data provided to the DTM was not adequate, highlighting the weak state of procurement data in the government. PPDA was targeted as a high priority focus for ongoing collaboration to improve DTM data related to procurement performance.

Budget monitoring data can be improved to assess corruption in roads and other public works projects. A review of Budget Monitoring and Analysis Unit (BMAU) Reports assessed two specific roads projects, revealing cost overruns and high per unit costs. The analysis resulted in discussions with BMAU to establish new indicators for systematic data collection associated with its infrastructure project evaluations (including roads, hospitals, and other public works).

Need for more data assessing corruption in key sectors such as agriculture, health, education, and transport. Sectoral data revealed notable problems with corruption in education, health, and business, as well as problems with corruption in sub-county and local council institutions. These findings resulted in recognition of sectoral corruption as a problem in Uganda, and efforts should be made to work with sectoral ministries to secure corruption performance data.

Public data related to reporting and enforcement of administrative corruption is weak and fragmented. Data on anti-corruption efforts revealed that the government lacks comprehensive and accurate data on reported cases, suspensions, dismissals, or convictions. The First Annual Report on Corruption in Uganda recommends that the government designate an appropriate entity to manage collection of this information across government institutions, so that DTM can track the performance of actual anti-corruption cases.

Inadequate information related to duration and outcomes of anti-corruption cases, partially due to weak coordination amongst anti-corruption entities. An analysis of government data revealed that multiple government agencies are involved in anti-corruption enforcement, and thus, are involved in the collection of corruption-related data. However, the efforts of these agencies are not well coordinated, limiting citizen’s abilities to understand the effectiveness of government anti-corruption efforts, particularly related to public sector corruption. Specific recommendations were made to improve the quality of data related to reporting anti-corruption enforcement.

23 International Budget Partnership, Excel Database of Answers to Open Budget Questionnaire http://internationalbudget.org/what-we-do/open-budget-survey/research-resources/data/. Sept 2011
24 Budget Monitoring and Analysis Unit of the Ugandan Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Budget Monitoring and Analysis Unit (BMAU) Reports. 2008/9 and 2009/10.
Streamline procedures and minimize discretion. Doing Business data surfaced major inefficiencies in government processes that create opportunities for corruption. The report recommends minimizing discretion of public officials and streamlining targeted procedures to minimize opportunities for bribery.25

The Risks Ahead

As with all development efforts, progress is also accompanied by a fuller understanding of the risks of project failure. After more than a year in operation, it is clear that DTM management needs strengthening. Staff changes and contracting complications have hindered seamless development of the initiative. In addition, while the government has publicly validated the data and launched the first report, it has been most comfortable providing technicians to support the effort, as opposed to senior level managers who can lead the effort. Lastly, technical capacity challenges exist. Building a robust data tool requires a certain level of IT and data-related capacity. While the tool is currently built in a basic form of Excel, a more robust and user friendly tool will likely require more sophisticated software skills and, most likely, a restructuring of the existing data. While the DTM operational team has done a good job to build the basic tool, ongoing growth and development of the DTM will require more precision and skill.

Using Indicators to Reduce Corruption: Take Aways from the Ugandan Initiative

The Ugandan initiative has included certain characteristics which are somewhat unique in nature, and may be helpful for other anti-corruption indicator efforts: (i) a strong emphasis on identifying, utilizing, and creating sources of corruption data, mainly from government agencies; (ii) compiling international data in a manner in which it can be incorporated into the public dialogue, (iii) an approach to sustainability that involves shifting roles and responsibilities; and (iv) a strong and vibrant donor consensus on accountability. A brief discussion of each follows.

Expand Government Collection of Corruption Performance Data. While early discussions about the DTM Initiative recognized the value of including government data, no one envisioned just how important the role of the government data would come to play. As the project progressed, it became increasingly evident to donors that utilizing data collected by the government (or even other Ugandan organizations) added credibility to the initiative. In fact, donors came to believe that a DTM which consisted of only international indicators may be unable to secure the consensus and stakeholder buy-in needed for long-term sustainability. In addition, the World Bank and DFID began to see the initiative as a useful way to encourage the government to collect better quality data related to corruption performance. These realizations caused the project to shift its emphasis from its original focus on international indicators to a focus on both international and governmental data and indicators.

Consequently, certain Ugandan data sources became high priority data sources, most notably, those associated with audit reports, as well as service delivery and household surveys.26 Major efforts were made to work with targeted parts of the government to establish a consistent and

26 The Ugandan Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) conducts consistent and frequent surveys for the government, and these surveys are of good quality. After a review of multiple governmental sources of corruption data, donors came to see UBOS as the best quality data source in the government. Consequently, the university research center which operates the DTM maintains routine communication with UBOS. (NOTE TO AUTHOR: what is the source for Ugandan Bureau of Statistics (UBOS)? Available here?)
frequent system of data collection related to anti-corruption performance. The Auditor General, the Inspectorate General of Government, and the Ministry of Finance’s Budget Monitoring and Analysis Unit were three public agencies that were targeted.

There were, and continue to be, notable challenges in assembling quality data from public agencies in Uganda. Much of the data collected by Ugandan public agencies is not in a form that is transferable to the DTM, mainly because it is not collected consistently or frequently. Government data tends to be inconsistent in quality and collected infrequently. However, because the DTM would benefit from improved corruption performance data collected by the government, the DTM took on the task of collaborating with public agencies to improve data quality. Over time, it is expected that corruption performance data collected by governmental agencies will expand substantially, both in depth and breadth, and will be a strong resource for the DTM, and the public at large.

Incorporate International Data into National Corruption Dialogue. While the DTM Initiative resulted in a reinforcement of government efforts to collect corruption data, it also resulted in a validation of international corruption data. This confirmation was important because international data sources were not a central part of the public dialogue on corruption prior to the initiative. As has been mentioned earlier, international sources were generally greeted with skepticism, minimizing their value in public decision-making and policy reform. The DTM Initiative brought this important set of data into the public dialogue.

Nowhere was this shift more evident than at the November 2010 launch of the annual report. Global Integrity’s central claim that Uganda has the largest “Implementation Gap” in the world (gap between the legal framework and implementation) became the framework for the analysis of the entire report and of the public launch. (Prior to the DTM Initiative, few stakeholders had heard of Global Integrity.) Open Budget Index and Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability data was discussed openly – providing NGOs, media and others with a keener understanding of the lack of citizen participation in the budgeting and auditing processes in the country. Critical Doing Business indicators, which reflected opportunities for bribery and corruption, revealed strong reform progress in neighboring Rwanda, while Uganda’s performance appeared comparably weak. Detailed Global Integrity data assessing the safety of journalists to report on corruption revealed that Uganda has a long way to go before it can claim to have a safe and open environment for media.

In sum, the DTM Initiative helped the country incorporate many of the international data sources into the public discussion on corruption. Many of these sources are rich in texture and are valuable assets to those fighting corruption in the country. A tool like the DTM can play an important role in increasing the use of performance data simply by exposing and validating credible international data which is already in the public domain.

Sustainability Model. Sustainability has been a critical element of the project since inception. The DTM Initiative has aimed to make the DTM data collection sustainable by engaging a growing number of stakeholders in the project. This process of expansion involved a shifting of project roles and processes, and created a sense of momentum for the project.

Phase one of the project focused on the establishment of a sustainable system for collecting corruption performance data from the government, and for ensuring that key public officials would recognize the validity of the DTM as the key source of corruption information. Emphasis was placed upon the participation and buy-in of key donors and public officials involved in accountability, notably key members of the Accountability Working Group and Accountability
Sector Working Group. Meetings and workshops were held to ensure that these stakeholders understood the purpose of the DTM and would support the initiative as a central source of monitoring corruption trends in Uganda. In addition, one-on-one meetings were held with targeted public officials to determine if their agency collected or would be willing to collect useful corruption performance data on a systematic basis. These conversations were the first in a set of ongoing discussions to promote more robust government data collection related to corruption performance.

In the second phase, the sustainability focus shifted and broadened to include the local manager of the DTM operations – the EPRC, the research center affiliated with Makerere University. Major effort was placed on ensuring that the research center had adequate financial and human resources to build the DTM, to analyze DTM data and publish a report annually, and to manage the ongoing development of the DTM’s corruption performance data. In-depth capacity building was offered to the research center and funding was provided for a multi-year period. The goal was to ensure that the research center would serve as a long-term, stable source of corruption performance data for Uganda.

In the third phase of the project, the sustainability focus shifted again, this time to the Inspectorate General of Government (IGG). It was determined that long-term effectiveness and sustainability of the project required government leadership and participation in the project. In particular, governmental validation of the data was critical for the credibility and legitimacy of the DTM. The IGG, which was the primary anti-corruption agency in the government, was the logical government partner. The IGG chaired the public launch of the First Annual Report on Corruption in Uganda, which was based upon data from the DTM, which was attended by NGOs, public officials, members of the media, and donors. The IGG committed to leading an effort to disseminate the results regionally, and to oversee the EPRC on an ongoing basis to ensure that Uganda had quality corruption performance data.

Donor Consensus

While many governance and anti-corruption projects involve donors, few involve active donors who share a consensus view on a project. The DTM project involved numerous active donors who held common perspectives about tackling corruption in the country. While the donors did not share identical views, they did share a strong passion for addressing corruption, a passion which provided the Accountability Working Group of donors a cohesiveness, as well as substantial leverage and momentum. It was this common purpose and commitment which gave rise to the DTM Initiative as part of the larger accountability and anti-corruption strategy.

Conclusion

Development projects require the test of time to be determined successful or unsuccessful, and the DTM Initiative is no exception. That being said, there are important lessons-learned that can be taken away at this stage of the project. The initiative indicates that the global body of corruption indicators and data may not be well-integrated into country-level dialogue and reform on corruption. In addition, little effort is made to make this body of data accessible and user-friendly for stakeholders who are committed to reducing corruption in a given country. The project highlights the lack of attention paid to the development of corruption performance data by governments. While some disregard government data due to its poorer quality, a strong

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argument can be made for building upon and using government data to establish credibility and make progress with anti-corruption reform.