



GOVERNANCE & APRM PROGRAMME

A HOW-TO GUIDE

# **Monitoring Implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism:**

A Civil Society How-To Guide



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# Monitoring Implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism:

## A Civil Society How-To Guide



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INTRODUCTION .....	4
APRM MONITORING AND ADVOCACY TEMPLATE (AMAT) .....	6
STAGE ZERO: FORMING A COALITION .....	7
STAGE ONE: DESKTOP RESEARCH .....	9
STAGE TWO: INTERVIEWS .....	11
STAGE THREE: ANALYSIS .....	13
STAGE FOUR: IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES & MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS .....	16
STAGE FIVE: ACTION PLAN AND ADVOCACY .....	18
CONCLUSION .....	20
ENDNOTES .....	21

# INTRODUCTION

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## THE APRM IN BRIEF

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is based on the premise of ‘African solutions for African problems’.<sup>1</sup> It was established in 2003 to improve governance and drive development in Africa, as part of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development. Acceding states submit to a series of voluntary ‘peer reviews’, which examine the country’s governance across four thematic areas:

- democracy and political governance;
- economic governance and management,
- corporate governance; and
- socio-economic development.

The intention of these reviews is to stimulate reform processes; at the end of the review each country embarks on implementing its NPoA. The NPoA is informed by the country’s priorities and the recommendations made by the APR Panel of Eminent Persons, which are found in the final CRR. Ultimately, the NPoA is meant to define a programme of governance reform.<sup>2</sup> Thus far, 34 African states have signed up for the APRM, and 17 of them have undergone their first review and are implementing their NPoAs.

A familiar refrain among governance observers in many countries is that excellent policies and good legislation fail in their execution and, for this reason, do not achieve their intended goals. This has produced a growing recognition that it is imperative to keep a close eye on the manner in which policies are implemented after their formulation. This ensures that they remain on the national agenda, and that they are adjusted as their successes and failures become apparent. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a vital tool for effective governance, which should be as much a part of the inventory of civil society as of government.

This ‘how-to guide’ is intended to assist civil society organisations (CSOs) in plotting and executing a strategy to monitor the implementation of the National Programmes of Action (NPoAs) that emerge from the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in their countries.

Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the NPoA have been the biggest challenges for APRM member states. Where implementation reports were submitted, they often lacked detail, and did not provide concrete evidence and data showing the extent to which NPoA commitments were being honoured. Furthermore, while at the review stage the APRM tends to be a country-wide process, implementation, monitoring and reporting are solely the government’s responsibility. The operation of National Governing Councils (NGCs) tends to fall away after the Country Review Report (CRR) has been finalised. As a result, implementation reports tend not to reflect civil society voices. The continental APRM Secretariat has been developing standard procedures and guidelines for the M&E of NPoAs for some time, but they have not yet been implemented.

This guide intends to assist CSOs in performing their own, independent assessments of NPoA implementation and the overall status of the APRM in their respective countries. Apart from describing the five key stages in conducting this exercise, this guide includes tips and lessons learnt from the experience of the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA),

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together with the Africa Governance Monitoring and Advocacy Project (AfriMAP) and the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS), in co-ordinating civil society assessments of governance and the APRM in South Africa and Lesotho in 2010–2011. This exercise, known as the ‘APRM Monitoring Project’ (AMP), produced two independent reports assessing the status of the APRM and measuring the extent to which the NPoA had been implemented in these two countries.<sup>3</sup>

In so doing, it sought to provide an opportunity to civil society to voice its perspectives on the manner in which the APRM implementation progressed after the initial review.

AMP was inspired by the work of the Uganda Governance Monitoring Platform, which monitored progress in fulfilling the APRM governance commitments in that country. The South African and Lesotho reports that the AMP produced proved to be a success, generating significant media attention and prompting policymakers to engage on their findings. AMP was carried out using the APRM Monitoring and Advocacy Template (AMAT), which the research team had specially designed for this purpose. The experiences from South Africa and Lesotho were built on, and AMAT has been revised and updated for this ‘how-to guide’ to enable CSOs across the continent to monitor APRM implementation in their own countries.

The AMP reports published by SAIIA, AfriMAP and CPS were meant to be both independent analyses of the governance situation and complementary to governments’ own reporting processes. The rationale behind the creation of AMAT was not to duplicate the work of the different national APRM agencies, but to provide civil society with the instruments to compile an independent governance assessment, which could complement and expand upon the government’s own monitoring, reporting and evaluation (MR&E) process.

The civil society reports examined not only the progress of NPoA-related activities but also the overall status of the APRM in a country. Thus, they served to deepen and complement the official governmental APRM Implementation Reports by providing additional perspectives and detail.

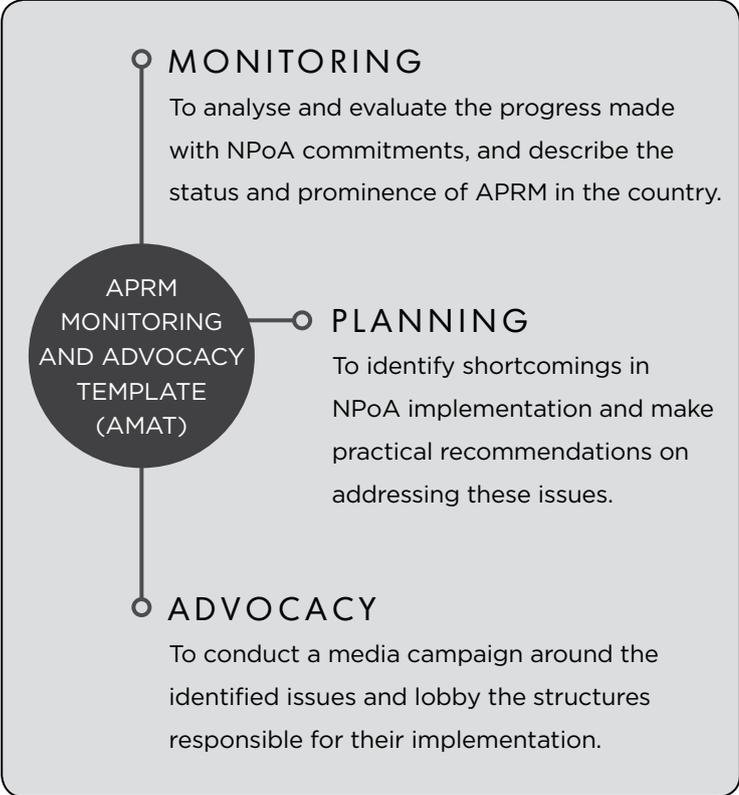
The AMP project aimed to publish a report that, in contrast to the official CRRs, would be digestible and media-friendly. The South African report, entitled *Implementing the APRM: Views from Civil Society; South Africa Report September 2011*,<sup>4</sup> assessed the progress made on key issues identified in the country’s NPoA. It did not focus on all the issues identified in the official 378-page CRR, but concentrated on the most pressing ones. To generate further interest in the results, the ‘Traffic Light Rating System’ was used to measure progress.

# APRM MONITORING AND ADVOCACY TEMPLATE (AMAT)

The APRM Monitoring and Advocacy Template (AMAT) is a multi-faceted tool, encompassing three elements:

- monitoring,
- planning and
- advocacy.<sup>5</sup>

In order to achieve this, a five-stage process<sup>6</sup> was employed in South Africa and Lesotho. This proved successful in giving civil society a voice in the implementation of the NPoA. Based on the experience in these two countries, this process has been developed into a broad template for civil society engagement. This is presented below.





## STAGE ZERO FORMING A COALITION

At the outset, it is important to recognise that the broad mandate of the APRM means that any attempt to engage with it is likely to require the skills of a diverse range of experts. For this reason, before embarking on monitoring and assessing APRM NPoA implementation, it is necessary to form a coalition of interested organisations and individuals who are willing to provide written input for the report. While it is not necessary to cover every single item covered by the NPoA (or even all four thematic areas), an effort should be made to examine as many key issues as the knowledge base of the coalition allows.

It is not necessary to include only those who are versed in the APRM. As long as an organisation or an individual is an expert in the subject matter covered in the NPoA, he or she could be approached. The APRM remains a work in progress; some concerned interest groups would not have participated in it had they lacked awareness of its potential. For example, someone could provide invaluable insight into progress made with fighting HIV/AIDS in the country, without being aware of what the APRM CRR says about the issue. The focus should be on governance experts, rather than APRM experts. It is also important to bear in mind that not everyone will be able to contribute to the project equally. While it would be ideal for all project members to attend meetings, participate in discussions, carry out research and provide written input, it would not be possible for everyone to do so. However, even having experts on board who could be contacted for comment telephonically or via email would substantially improve the final product.

The coalition may also need to work together to raise funds for the report-writing process, by developing proposals or bringing in resources of their own from their existing projects.



### TIPS FOR SUCCESS FROM AMP

#### ESTABLISHING A PLATFORM

In one-and-a-half years AMP succeeded in reinvigorating the APRM in South Africa and Lesotho through mobilising civil society and attracting extensive media coverage of its reports. Workshops on compiling the reports held in Johannesburg and Maseru on 25 January and 8 March 2011 respectively attracted interest from prominent CSOs working on governance issues, including some that had little prior awareness of the APRM. Many participants were willing to work for very little or no remuneration, write input for the reports, provide information and be interviewed. Many CSOs evidenced a high level of commitment to the project, and engaged from its inception to the launches of the final reports on 28 June 2011 in South Africa and 13 September 2011 in Lesotho respectively. Initial discussions with project participants in both Lesotho and South Africa

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



## TIPS FOR SUCCESS FROM AMP

### ESTABLISHING A PLATFORM

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

suggested the willingness of most to continue meeting on an annual basis to discuss progress, issues and the way forward for the APRM in those countries.

It is important to bear in mind that the project was largely a voluntary and participatory initiative that relied on the commitment of the participants. Some partner organisations initially expressed commitment and promised to submit written input and participate actively but their enthusiasm waned considerably as the project progressed. This may have been due to their work pressures and the minimal honoraria offered. Not everyone will be able to contribute equally and in a timely manner. It is thus important to ensure that more than one individual is working on the same governance issue. If all deliver, it will result in more substantive information and alternative views being provided. If, however, one individual or organisation fails to deliver, the issue will still be covered by someone else.



## LESSONS LEARNT FROM AMP

### A BROAD RANGE OF ISSUES SHOULD BE COVERED

Given that most of the project members were experts on political governance and democracy, an effort was made to expand the coverage of issues by inviting representatives of CSOs that dealt with socio-economic issues, health in particular, to the workshop when the platform was formed. This ensured that the project covered a broader range of issues than would have been possible without inviting these experts.



## STAGE ONE DESKTOP RESEARCH

### OBJECTIVE

To document the overall status of the APRM process in the country concerned in order to define the progress made with the implementation of the APRM NPoA.

### SOURCES

The country's CRR, NPoA and Implementation reports (if available) will be the primary sources of information. These documents should be supplemented by, but not limited to, the following: national and international reports on governance and socio-economic development progress in the country; academic papers; media articles; relevant statistics; and civil society analysis concerned with governance issues contained in the country's APRM NPoA.

### APPROACH

The approach<sup>7</sup> is as follows:

- To broadly assess the state of the APRM in the country, with an emphasis on progress made in implementing the NPoA.
- To identify key national priority issues from the NPoA, on the basis of their national significance, and specific interests and expertise of the CSOs in the coalition. The investigation would not be comprehensive and try to address every single item of the NPoA, but would seek depth, focus and detail.

Apart from the NPoA, research should also examine cross-cutting issues (CCIs), as identified in the APRM CRR. APRM reports typically use CCIs to highlight the most important and endemic issues in the country. These issues often cut across more than one thematic area (sometimes all four) and thus have a holistic impact on governance issues in that country; for example, corruption. Solutions to CCIs thus need to be wide-reaching, to ensure that these issues are addressed in all spheres of governance. CCIs are a good place to start when deciding on what issues the civil society coalition will cover. CCIs provide a broad framework of the main challenges in the country. They



### TIPS FOR SUCCESS FROM AMP

#### APPOINTING A PROJECT MANAGER

- ✓ The success of the project depends on co-operation between different organisations, sharing of knowledge and information, and working as a team.
- ✓ It is not always easy to work with different partners, due to different levels of commitment to the project and different expectations of quality.
- ✓ There may well also be different ideological and political perspectives among the partners. A project manager is therefore advisable.
- ✓ He or she will collect all material and submissions, send out reminders about tardiness of promised documents, edit and collate received materials, and provide oversight for the entire project.
- ✓ Both in terms of research and advocacy, considerable time and energy thus need to be put into the management of the project.



## LESSONS LEARNT FROM AMP

### EXPERT INPUT IS NEEDED

During the South African round of AMP, South Africa's 2007 CRR and two subsequent NPoA implementation reports were studied in detail, particularly with regard to issues the project team decided it would cover. In order to determine the extent to which the APRM informs policy in South Africa, State of the Nation addresses, as well as Medium-Term Expenditure Framework and Budget speeches since 2007 were examined. The project also collected a wide range of government reports, independent research and newspaper articles on topics chosen. Writers identified to compile the various sections were selected based on availability (members of the coalition volunteered themselves) and on the degree of expertise they were able to offer. Their expert input allowed the project to look at a broader range of issues and made the final report stronger.

are high-yielding issues for policymakers, and many could be interrogated further, or broken up into sub-components.

At the completion of the desktop research, a brief 'Issues Report' should be prepared. This report should highlight the overall state of the APRM in the country, indicate the progress made with the implementation of the NPoA, and identify key priorities that need attention and further or deeper investigation. This deeper investigation would be continued in Stage Two.



## QUESTIONS THAT SHOULD BE ASKED TO GUIDE DESKTOP RESEARCH<sup>8</sup>

### APRM PROFILE

- **In the media:** How often does the APRM get mentioned in the main newspapers, and on radio and television?
- **In policy and planning:** To what extent and how does the APRM inform policy in your country? Do policy statements make reference to the APRM and its recommendations? How often do the head of state, government, ministers and top officials mention the APRM in their speeches? How does the APRM relate to other national plans? Is it subjected to them or are they subjected to it? What is the budget of the APRM in your country? To what extent is it being utilised?
- **In Parliament:** Are APRM-related issues raised (and labelled as such)? If so, by whom, how often and for what purpose?

### APRM IMPLEMENTATION

- Does the country have a champion who is responsible for promoting the APRM and ensuring that NPoA commitments are being met? How active is this person in promoting the APRM?
- What organisations are responsible for the implementation of the APRM in the country?
- How and to what extent are the action items in the APRM NPoA being implemented?
- How thorough is the official monitoring and reporting of the APRM NPoA in the country?
- Has the APRM brought about any real and measurable change in the country? Support your argument with concrete examples.



## STAGE TWO INTERVIEWS

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### OBJECTIVE

To complement desktop research from primary and secondary sources by speaking to people who are either directly or indirectly involved in the issues selected for the project. This will be aimed at providing the details of progress, processes employed and other systems involved in the implementation of the NPoA; giving voice to those involved in the process; and assessing reasons for successes and failure.

### SOURCES

Government officials, members of CSOs, academics and donors who are directly or indirectly involved in, or have sufficient knowledge of, the APRM.

### APPROACH

The list of interviewees should include a wide spectrum of stakeholders. These actors should ideally be aware of the APRM, but for the purposes of this research it is not a prerequisite. Specific interviewees, who might not know much about the APRM but have knowledge of the issues mentioned in the NPoA, should also be targeted. This needs to be done in order to find out whether there are APRM-related programmes and activities, information about which is not available to the general public and thus was not found through the desktop research process.

All of the possible questions used for desktop research (mentioned above) should also be used for interviews. The purpose of this is to complement and ensure the validity of the desktop research.



### TIPS FOR SUCCESS FROM AMP

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#### KEEPING A RECORD

To keep an accurate record of interviewees' comments, very good notes should be taken during the interviews. Ideally, a voice recorder should be used. This way, questions about what exactly was said during the interview will not arise at a later stage. Apart from that, if the interviewee is not happy about the way in which the information was presented, the notes or the recording can be used as proof that the material is accurate.



## LESSONS LEARNT FROM AMP

### A BALANCED VIEW SHOULD BE OBTAINED

To get the official view, the project team approached the APRM Focal Point in South Africa, located in the Department of Public Service and Administration. The interview with the Focal Point was included in the final report. Apart from that, numerous government and civil society representatives were interviewed to determine the extent of the influence of the APRM on policymaking in South Africa. This ensured that the final report included perspectives from both civil society and government.



## QUESTIONS THAT SHOULD BE ASKED TO GUIDE INTERVIEWS

### APRM INSTITUTIONALISATION

- How actively have the APRM NGC, Secretariat and Focal Point been following the completion of the review?
- Does the NGC still meet?
- Have NGC members been retained or changed?
- What is the mandate of the NGC in the post-review phase?
- What staff and resources have been allocated to the APRM following the completion of the review?

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- How active is the government in promoting the APRM to citizens and involving non-state actors in the process?
- Does civil society play a role in the post-review process?

### APRM NPOA IMPLEMENTATION

- To what extent has the APRM NPoA been adopted and integrated into the country's planning?
- What governance progress can be attributed to the APRM review and the resulting NPoA?

It is important to view these questions as broad guidelines for conducting the interviews. They can be amended as necessary, depending on who is being interviewed and their knowledge of the APRM. Questions from Stage One could also be utilised at this stage.



## STAGE THREE ANALYSIS

### OBJECTIVE

To develop an assessment of both the overall status of the APRM in the country and the progress made with the NPoA or CCIs.

This is arguably the most difficult part of AMAT. Often no measurable progress is made; progress made with the NPoA may be achieved through programmes that are not specifically linked to the APRM; and progress may be achieved indirectly as a result of the APRM, with no clear link to the APRM process.

### APPROACH

Despite difficulties with the assessment of the APRM process, an attempt should be made to provide a broad evaluation of implementation. This can be achieved through a simple rating. Awarding a rating to each issue should be a group process, among as many project participants as possible. Although this can, at times, be a lengthy and contentious exercise, it is important to debate progress made with each governance issue that will be covered in the report. Particular attention should be paid to the different points of view of the experts on the issue who are part of the discussion. Thorough debate and the exchange of views can only enhance the quality of the report.

The assessment should take into account both the progress made in achieving the NPoA items and the overall APRM process in the country. Each chosen NPoA item will be assessed individually on progress made. The key (see page 14) provides an explanation of these ratings. Following the assessment of all the NPoA items, the ratings need to be counted and tallied. The ratings that were awarded most frequently will form the final assessment and the report will reflect an aggregate rating.



### TIPS FOR SUCCESS FROM AMP

#### FOCUS ON MEDIA

One of the main reasons why the APRM has failed to capture the imagination of African policymakers and citizens alike in its first decade of existence is the lack of public awareness of the process. In large part, this reflects the generally poor degree of media attention it has attracted. Yet beyond its technical jargon, many abbreviations, complex process stages, numerous oversight bodies and lengthy reports, at its core the APRM is about improving governance issues that affect everyone in a country.

The innovative and easy-to-understand Traffic Light Rating System resulted in extensive media coverage of the AMP reports. Following the publication of the South African report, over 40 media and web articles were published locally and internationally, and project members participated in more than 20 television and radio interviews, contributing

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## TIPS FOR SUCCESS FROM AMP

### FOCUS ON MEDIA

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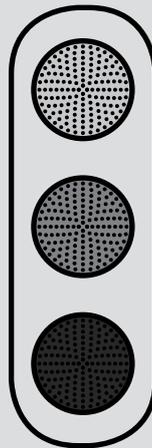
to the re-invigoration of the APRM profile in the country and highlighting the interest of the public in the discussion of governance matters through the prism of the APRM.

Every effort was made to facilitate informed reporting on the project and its outcomes. This included distribution of a press release; an 'APRM 101' booklet, which explained the basics of the mechanism; and an executive summary of the report to media houses and journalists who attended the launch. While this resulted in extensive coverage of the report, it did not prevent misreporting and attempts to sensationalise findings. Some reporters confused the report with the official APRM CRR. Others tried to misrepresent the views in the report to gain more publicity. For example, although the South African AMP report was balanced in its assessment, giving the country 1 green, 14 orange and 7 red ratings, a well-known online publication's headline stated: 'South Africa gets the worst possible ratings'.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

### RATINGS KEY

Assessment of the NPoA item progress is measured according to the Traffic Light Rating System, which functions as follows.



#### GREEN LIGHT

**Much progress has been made in addressing the issue/The issue has been addressed and completed.**

#### ORANGE LIGHT

**Some progress has been made with the issue/Work on the issue has started and the government seems to be on track to finalise it within a reasonable deadline.**

#### RED LIGHT

**No progress has been made with the issue/Very little progress has been made and the government does not seem to be on track to complete it in the near future.**

For example, if out of 40 NPoA items, 20 have received a green light, 10 yellow and 10 red, this would mean that very good progress has been made with most of the NPoA items.

### ASSESSMENT OF LINKAGE TO THE APRM

The final report should include a narrative assessment of the extent to which the APRM has been popularised and integrated into the country's planning processes.



## LESSONS LEARNT FROM AMP

### RATINGS COULD BE MORE NUANCED

A key observation was made during the pilot phase of AMP in South Africa and Lesotho: when there is disagreement among the evaluators on progress made, an orange light represents a compromise rating. It was important, when this situation arose, to provide an explanation of the rating and an overview of the conflicting views; for example, the project team chose to award 'orange', meaning mixed progress, to the issue of 'health care in South Africa'. The rating includes an explanation, stating that:<sup>10</sup>

the evaluating group acknowledged [the] South African government's commendable change in HIV/AIDS policy, and some argued for a green rating. However, others felt that this rating could not be justified, given the extent of the pandemic in the country. The compromise was thus an orange rating.

Going forward, SAIIA suggests that the discussions and subsequent ratings should be made more nuanced. So, even if progress is mixed (orange rating), does it find itself closer to the green or red field? A more nuanced, five-scale rating that may involve a combination of the two colours is therefore recommended to ensure greater flexibility and texture in the rating and analysis. This, for example, may be expressed through 'red-orange' or 'green-orange' ratings.



## TIPS FOR SUCCESS FROM AMP

### FOCUS ON MEDIA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

there is no way to avoid a few journalists sensationalising findings. Few journalists would specialise in writing about the APRM. Ultimately, this means that the project has to accept that certain things, such as media coverage of the report, are beyond its control. However, every effort should still be made to minimise incidents of misreporting, through publishing a press release ahead of the report launch and holding a press conference afterwards.



## STAGE FOUR IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES AND MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS



### TIPS FOR SUCCESS FROM AMP

#### INVOLVE EXPERTS

As the reports were finalised in South Africa and Lesotho, the project team organised workshops to discuss findings and chart the way forward. An effort was made to include experts on topics covered who were not part of the project. This added neutrality and made the discussions more balanced. It was also crucial in coming up with recommendations on how the situation should be improved.

#### OBJECTIVE

To identify priority areas that need to be focused on in order to improve the implementation of the NPoA, as well as the overall APRM process in the country. This would fall into three broad areas:

- important issues that need to be addressed;
- areas where there are identified bottlenecks impeding progress; and
- areas where there has been some success, but that need to be strengthened further.

Following the identification of priority areas, targeted recommendations on how implementation could be improved need to be made.

#### APPROACH

Research questions listed in Stage One, as well as the traffic light ratings from Stage Three, should serve as a guide for identifying priorities. Questions that received negative answers, as well as red or orange lights, need to be examined to determine exactly what the shortcomings are. It would also be useful to compare both the organisation of the APRM process and the implementation of the NPoA to experiences in other countries.

It could also be helpful to compare the initial recommendations made by the APR Panel of Eminent Persons in the CRR (which were either rejected or accepted by the government) with those to which the government has committed itself in the NPoA. This could indicate whether there are any outstanding issues that were initially pointed out by the panel but did not subsequently make it into the NPoA. After this, an assessment of the actual implementation of the NPoA should be made, taking into account factors such as the number of institutions responsible for the implementation;

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quality of reporting; branding of initiatives completed as a result of the APRM; number of initiatives completed; and quality of outcomes achieved.

Based on three broad categories<sup>11</sup> of priorities, namely (i) no action, (ii) unsatisfactory progress and (iii) success stories, a list of recommendations should be compiled. The recommendations need to be realistic; they should set targets that are achievable and not become a long 'wish list'. Critics of the APRM point out that at times it fails because it spreads itself too thinly. The researcher making the recommendations should not fall into the same trap. Instead, he or she should

focus on strengthening and improving existing initiatives instead of trying to add a myriad of new ones. The second part of making recommendations entails the CSO or a coalition of CSOs responsible for the assessment coming up with a strategy on how best to utilise these recommendations. As mentioned earlier, dissemination of findings in the media would be crucial for the success of the project.



## LESSONS LEARNT FROM AMP

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### MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS IS CRUCIAL

Using the earlier example of 'health care' as an issue in the report, the project team made a total of five recommendations on the way forward:

- ✓ Further strengthen primary health care to assist with the early diagnosis of preventable diseases, and to provide better treatment and care to the poor and those living in rural parts of the country.
- ✓ Increase equity in the healthcare system between the rural and urban sectors of the population, and between public and private health care.
- ✓ Create a broader, transparent debate on the proposed National Health Insurance, which includes an in-depth examination of human resource requirements and other implementation issues.
- ✓ Link the system outcomes so that performance can be monitored and expenditure justified.
- ✓ The Department of Health should determine priorities from legislation and policy initiatives, and concentrate its efforts on implementing the priority areas. Such implementation should be measurable so that progress can be tracked.<sup>12</sup>

The project team felt that these were practical yet concise recommendations that could assist South Africa's policymakers with improving the state of health care in the country.



## STAGE FIVE ACTION PLAN AND ADVOCACY



### TIPS FOR SUCCESS FROM AMP

#### THE FINAL PACKAGE

The idea is to create a product that is easily digestible by a wide variety of stakeholders – government, donors, academia, civil society, the media and citizenry. The end result of AMAT thus has to be accessible, without compromising its integrity or thoroughness. The final report has to be concise – it must describe the main issues, without going into too much detail or full case studies.

Yet this is often easier said than done. For example, even though the South African and Lesotho reports did not cover all the issues identified in the APRM reports and attention was paid to being as succinct as possible, the reports ended up being 92 and 59 pages respectively. It is recommended that any other AMAT reports do not exceed 100 pages. In addition to the longer reports, shorter, pithier products could also be considered.

Although the reports focus on issues through the prism of the

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#### OBJECTIVE

To plot an advocacy campaign around the most pressing issues, to ensure that the government or other target institutions, such as businesses and universities, address them.

#### APPROACH

Once the AMAT process has been completed and the report published, project members need to decide, based on the political environment of their country, on the way forward. At the very least, apart from making the AMAT report publicly available, a strategy is needed on how to maximise media interest around it. Media coverage is needed to bring attention to the APRM, the commitments made in the NPoA, their current status and how they could help the country improve its governance. The findings of AMAT should also help CSOs to establish a dialogue with government and other influential institutions on the status of the APRM and the NPoA. The institutions responsible for the APRM should be approached, in order to discuss the findings of AMAT, and present suggestions and recommendations made. Finally, the CSOs can attempt to bring their recommendations to life by approaching the government, fundraising, and involving donors and the community to address the identified shortcomings. The recommendations could also be used as a tool for advocacy, in conjunction with the government and donors, to try to find the necessary funding and start work on the identified projects.



## LESSONS LEARNT FROM AMP

### ENGAGING WITH GOVERNMENT

The AMP reports attracted the attention of government and official APRM structures. In South Africa AMP was launched by the then APRM Focal Point and Minister of Public Service and Administration, Richard Baloyi.<sup>13</sup> Both the Public Protector, Thuli Madonsela, and the Executive Mayor of Tshwane, Kgosisentso Ramagkopa, spoke at the launch of the report. The content of the report was then noted by government, particularly the South African Minister of Police, Nathi Mthethwa, and Baloyi, both of whom publicly disagreed with the findings. SAIIA and AfriMAP met Baloyi to discuss the concerns raised.<sup>14</sup> While it was difficult to achieve consensus and agreement with the ministry on the outcomes of the report, this high-level engagement served to underline yet again the value and importance attached by civil society to the APRM. Baloyi subsequently promised to include SAIIA and AfriMAP in provincial and national conferences leading up to the publication of South Africa's Third APRM NPoA Implementation Report.

In Lesotho the launch<sup>15</sup> of the report was attended by Sekara Mafisa, former Ombudsman and Chairperson of the Independent Electoral Commission, who was the keynote speaker, and Seabata Motsamai, country director of ActionAid Lesotho, who was the respondent. Ambassador Masuhla Leteka, who is the Focal Point for the APRM in Lesotho, also spoke at the event. During his speech, Leteka stated that although he did not necessarily agree with everything in the report, he welcomed the initiative and believed that it was a worthwhile exercise for civil society.

In both instances, the publication of the AMP report created an important platform for discussion and debate between civil society and government on the APRM and the governance concerns it sought to address.



## TIPS FOR SUCCESS FROM AMP

### THE FINAL PACKAGE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

APRM, they provide a holistic overview of governance progress in the country and are thus useful for CSOs, the media, academics, policymakers and advocacy groups – and not just APRM practitioners. For example, it would be worthwhile to produce short booklets containing an executive summary and a table of ratings. This would ensure that an overview of the findings and key highlights are easily accessible.

## CONCLUSION

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The APRM is an important instrument for improving governance in Africa. However, throughout its 11 years of existence, there has been a consistent trend across most member states: a solid, comprehensive and frank review, followed by steadily waning enthusiasm. Unfortunately, most member states, with a few notable exceptions such as Ghana, do not focus on the way forward after the review. This has been the main reason why in some countries APRM NGCs were disbanded, the media stopped reporting on it and the NPoA reporting has been poor.

In order for the NPoA to become a living document, it needs to be incorporated into the country's central planning and budgeting processes. Civil society can play a major role here, by generating debate and media attention around governance issues identified during the review process. If these issues remain in the public view, an important step has already been taken. The next step, however, is to lobby the government to ensure that it honours its NPoA commitments and includes non-state actors in the implementation, monitoring and reporting.

Although the mechanism can be highly specialised and technical, ultimately it is about governance issues that affect everyone in the country concerned. Unpacking these issues from the lengthy CRR on a regular basis, reporting on progress made and charting the way forward are challenges that no one has yet been able to overcome fully. Monitoring NPoA implementation therefore needs to be a continual process, with civil society constantly bringing attention to the governance issues identified in the CRRs and lobbying for these issues to be addressed.

## ENDNOTES

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- 1 Petlane T & S Gruzd (eds), *African Solutions: Best Practices from the African Peer Review Mechanism*. Johannesburg: Fanele/Jacana and SAIIA, 2011, p. 10.
- 2 Herbert R & S Gruzd, *The African Peer Review Mechanism: Lessons from the Pioneers*. Johannesburg: SAIIA, February 2008, [http://www.saiia.org.za/images/stories/pubs/books/aprm\\_pioneers\\_fullbook\\_20090227.pdf](http://www.saiia.org.za/images/stories/pubs/books/aprm_pioneers_fullbook_20090227.pdf).
- 3 SAIIA (South African Institute of International Affairs), CPS (Centre for Policy Studies) & AfriMAP (Africa Governance Monitoring and Advocacy Project), *Implementing the APRM: Views from Civil Society; South Africa Report September 2011*. Johannesburg: SAIIA, [http://www.saiia.org.za/images/stories/pubs/books/aprm\\_amp\\_report\\_sa\\_20110628.pdf](http://www.saiia.org.za/images/stories/pubs/books/aprm_amp_report_sa_20110628.pdf); SAIIA, CPS & AfriMAP, *Implementing the APRM: Views from Civil Society; The Lesotho Report September 2011*. Johannesburg: SAIIA, [http://www.saiia.org.za/images/stories/research/aprm/aprm\\_lesotho\\_amp\\_report\\_sept\\_2011.pdf](http://www.saiia.org.za/images/stories/research/aprm/aprm_lesotho_amp_report_sept_2011.pdf).
- 4 SAIIA, CPS & AfriMAP, *Implementing the APRM: Views from Civil Society; South Africa Report September 2011*, *op. cit.*
- 5 SAIIA, CPS & AfriMAP, *African Peer Review Monitoring Project: APRM Monitoring and Advocacy Template (Draft)*. Johannesburg: SAIIA, 14 December p. 3, [http://www.saiia.org.za/images/stories/research/aprm/amp\\_toolkit/ampt\\_circulation\\_draft\\_20101214.pdf](http://www.saiia.org.za/images/stories/research/aprm/amp_toolkit/ampt_circulation_draft_20101214.pdf), accessed 7 July 2014.
- 6 *Ibid.* p. 4.
- 7 *Ibid.* p. 3.
- 8 *Ibid.* pp. 4-5.
- 9 SAPA, 'SA gets worst possible ratings: Report', *News24*, 28 June 2011, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/Politics/SA-gets-worst-possible-ratings-report-20110628>, accessed 28 July 2014.
- 10 SAIIA, CPS & AfriMAP, *Implementing the APRM: View from Civil Society; South Africa Report September 2011*, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
- 11 SAIIA, CPS and AfriMAP, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 64.
- 13 Baloyi gave the keynote address at the launch of the project on 12 October 2010 at SAIIA's Johannesburg office.
- 14 At the meeting, Baloyi requested more information about the report and expressed government's concern that this civil society report had been confused by the media and the public with South Africa's official APRM implementation report.
- 15 The launch of the Lesotho report took place at the Maseru Sun Hotel in Lesotho on 13 September 2011. The launch was attended by representatives of government, media and civil society.

## ABOUT THE GOVERNANCE AND APRM PROGRAMME

Since 2002, SAIIA's Governance and APRM Programme has promoted public debate and scholarship about critical governance and development questions in Africa and beyond. The programme seeks to improve public policymaking by linking governments, citizens and researchers through a variety of publications, training workshops and research fellowships. The project has worked on the African Peer Review Mechanism and governance in over 20 African countries.

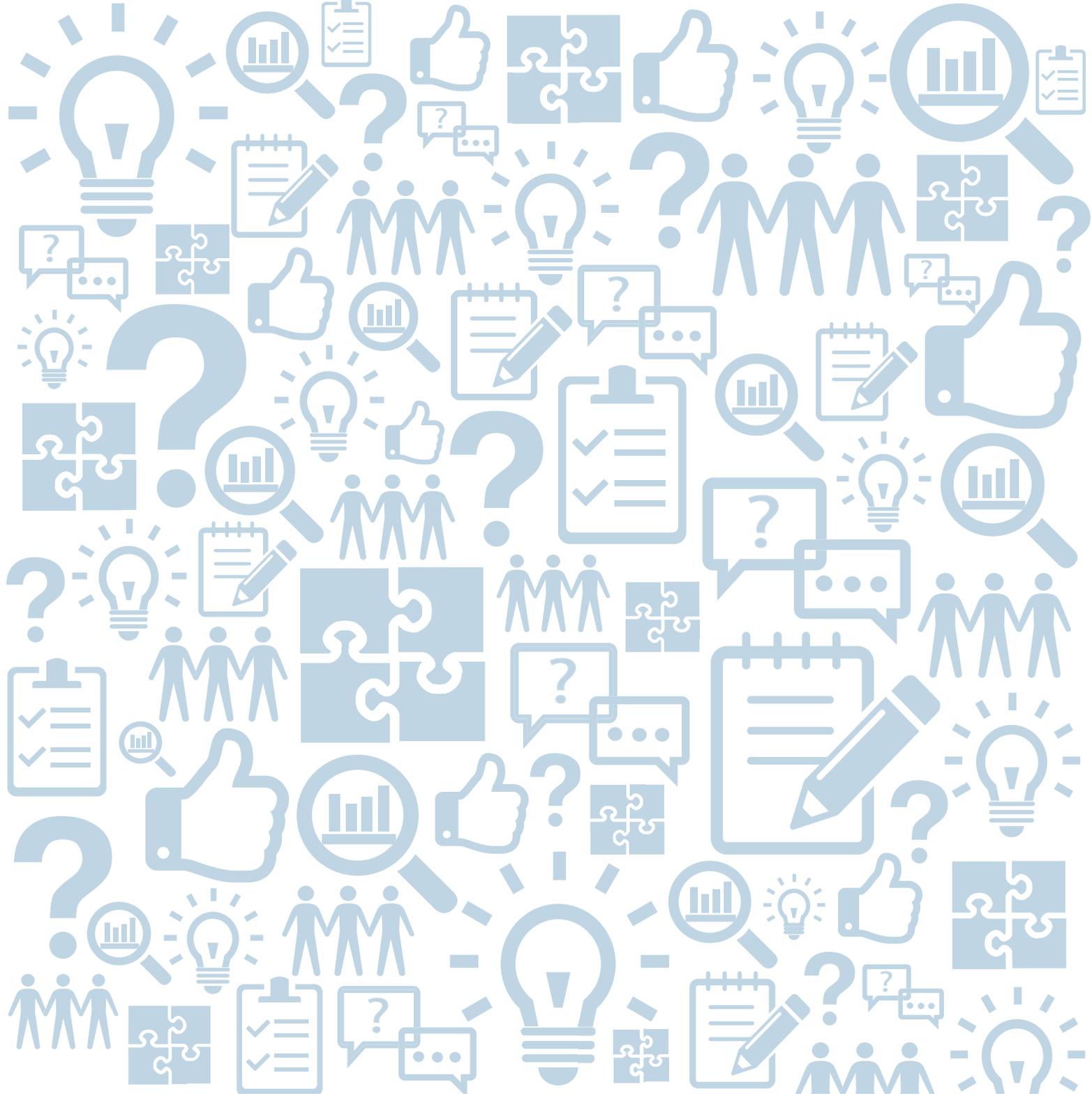
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## ABOUT SAIIA

The South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) has a long and proud record as South Africa's premier research institute on international issues. It is an independent, non-government think tank whose key strategic objectives are to make effective input into public policy, and to encourage wider and more informed debate on international affairs with particular emphasis on African issues and concerns. It is both a centre for research excellence and a home for stimulating public engagement. SAIIA's occasional papers present topical, incisive analyses, offering a variety of perspectives on key policy issues in Africa and beyond. Core public policy research themes covered by SAIIA include good governance and democracy; economic policymaking; international security and peace; and new global challenges such as food security, global governance reform and the environment.

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