Ideas to Assist in Improving the APRM Questionnaire

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Summary

With five countries having completed the APRM process there is a growing body of experience in using the APRM Questionnaire and in formulating approaches to conducting APRM research. Several factors contribute to a perceived need to examine the Questionnaire. Although the APRM process was originally envisioned as taking six to nine months from launch until heads of state review, countries have found that the phases for preparation and organisation, research, report writing and POA formulation have consumed significantly more time than planned. Research and consultation in particular have been more difficult than envisioned. Participants have noted certain operational challenges that flow from the structure of the Questionnaire and some sectors of society have found the approach to certain sections challenging.

As a result, this document seeks to set out a proposed methodology for revising the Questionnaire that would help guide the revision process. The aim is to present a logical framework that would wherever possible preserve the intent of the original while attempting to make it more user friendly, easier for ordinary citizens and help guide the research and consultation process so that it is more efficient in terms of time and human resources.

The first section of this document sets out some of the main principles and observations that put forward by APRM participants and conference reviews that could help improve the Questionnaire. The second section offers a set of phases that might be useful in guiding a revision process by breaking it into discrete steps.

Ideas and Principles for Revision

The following principles are the basic guides for reformulating the Questionnaire. They are based on an analysis of the Questionnaire as it currently exists, as well as on conversations with participants, research institutions involved in peer review processes and on conferences that have interrogated the process (such as the Sixth African Governance Forum in Kigali in 2006, and a conference conducted by GTZ and the Ghanaian Governing Council, "Africa's Bold March to Capture the 21st Century – the Role of the APRM", in 2007).

Preservation

All of the objectives and the ideas behind the questions should be preserved wherever possible. Any changes introduced should preserve the intent of the original while improving the ease of use and efficiency of the research project. In some cases – such as requests for basic data on economic statistics and laws, which ordinary users of the Questionnaire might not have ready access to – it may make sense to place this material in a separate technical subsection or other device that improves efficiency. However, the ideas, objectives and questions should be preserved and the final revised Questionnaire should make clear the linkages between old and the new version so participants can see that material was not arbitrarily removed.

Improvements to enhance researchability

The Questionnaire is about facilitating research: establishing accurate facts, conducting high-quality analysis and measuring opinions about the issues facing a given country. Countries often rely on the Questionnaire's basic structure in the creation of working groups for investigating aspects of their country's governance and in drafting text. Consideration thus should be given to how the guidance, order of questions, their structure and level of detail could be modified so as to make the research task more efficient and thus make reviews take less time. Several ideas come under this broad heading:

Consolidate cross-cutting issues in one location

The Questionnaire currently contains a number of issues that are repeated across the various sections and questions. This is particularly the case in respect of gender, decentralisation and corruption. While the intention is of the cross cutting issues is to ensure that certain issues are considered throughout the analysis, the unintended consequence could be that these are treated less as "overarching" issues than as "orphan" issues. At present information relating to these issues is scattered throughout the research. Because countries tend to assign research institutes to each of the four thematic areas, this tends to produce separate and redundant analyses of the same cross-cutting issues. It would be easier for researchers and for ordinary citizens to be able to deal with groups of questions dedicated to these issues. In some cases there is a lot of similarity or overlap between sections – such as those related to an efficient civil service and those related to corruption. Putting such related questions next to each other would assist in assigning that section to relevant researchers and interest groups.

Institutional versus thematic treatment

Many questions in the current Questionnaire are oriented around a theme but in some cases the quality of analysis and problem-solving would be improved if the questions were framed around diagnosing the strengths and weaknesses of the particular institutions. For example, in the socio-economic thematic area respondents are asked how various themes are handled across a wide variety of sectors. In practice. Those who know about the management or availability of health care will not necessarily know the issues that pertain to land, water, ICT or other sectors. In order to answer such thematic questions, one has to assign it to many different experts then reassemble all of their answers back into the answer to the thematic question. The present structure tends to invite superficial generalisations. It would be easier to make a list of the key questions to be asked about each social sector and then ask participants to prepare an analysis of each named sector using those questions. This approach would make it easier to assign the relevant section to those who know about health, ICT, energy, etc. This thematic vs institutional focus also affects the corruption questions. In governments responsibility for oversight and corruption rests with the police, ministry of justice, auditor general, anti-corruption authority, fraud and money laundering investigative units, tender boards and more broadly with parliament. It is not really possible to generalise about all of these. To answer the question effectively one must look at each institution in turn and identify its strengths and weaknesses, such as appropriate legal powers, independence, staff, resources, technical skills, etc. Transforming this question to an institutionally focused question would thus make it easier for researchers to analyse and it would be easier for ordinary citizens to structure their inputs.

Create specialist background sections

The current Questionnaire requires respondents to describe in some considerable detail the state of the country's laws, the structure of its economy and numerous other details. For example, Question 1 of the Corporate Governance section reads "What are the main categories of commercial enterprise and what is their role in the economy?" The indicators that follow read

> 1) Please describe the main categories of commercial enterprise with reference to: The different types of enterprise, their ownership structures and their role in the economy including but not limited to public listed corporations, private listed companies, state owned enterprises, cooperative societies, family owned enterprises, informal sector, etc.; (and) The development history, current size and performance of the country's stock markets (if any).
>
> 2) Outline the key financial institutions that support businesses in the country including but not limited to banks, building societies, government agencies, investment schemes, international finance, microfinancing etc
>
> 3) Please provide an inventory of the domestic investment industry including but not limited to pension funds, mutual funds, banks and insurance corporations foreign investors and the extent of their equity holdings and involvement in the equity market.
>
> 4) Enumerate the key professional and business organisations, e.g. chambers of industry, manufacturers' associations, institute of directors, institute of chartered accountants etc.

This sort of detail and complexity could discourage ordinary citizens from participating. The focus should be on requesting assessment of areas needing improvement rather than basic data. The factual information is of course important, but it could be gathered by a contracted agency, or provided by specialist participants. Where possible, the Questionnaire should be stripped of these requests for detail if they are not directly concerned with evaluating the state of governance. If such information is needed by the country review team it could be placed in a dedicated "technical background" section that would be requested of government.

Another approach would be to split the Questionnaire into an extended "expert" Questionnaire focused on technical data and documenting specifics of law and regulation. Separating such technical questions would leave the remainder of the Questionnaire easier to answer for ordinary citizens.

Build the Programme of Action into the Questionnaire from the start

Countries have tended to leave the POA until the end and have not always approached its creation in the same structured way as the Questionnaire provides for analysis of problems. To help focus participants on solving problems from the start, questions should be worded to request both descriptions of problems and recommendations to fix them. In addition, the Questionnaire should add a section offering guidance on how to prepare a POA by listing alternative solutions, evaluating their impact and difficulty and offering standard questions to help countries identify the challenges to implementing solutions, which will contribute to formulating more sound and realistic POA action items. Where there is no obvious or compelling solution to a given problem, respondents should be able to recommend additional research. (See also discussion of the need for standard question formats below.)

Proposed guidance for formulating an effective POA

The POA is the set of commitments that a country makes to address the problems identified in the APRM process. Using a structured process is important to ensure that the POA complements and enhances rather than merely repeats promises made in other planning processes. A structured process also will ensure that action items are well planned, have the resources they need and take account of the difficulties faced in previous reform efforts. The following steps and questions represent an attempt by the authors to define such a structured POA process. This approach is aimed principally at the self-assessment phase, when the POA is first drafted. But the same ideas apply later when the country receives the final APRM report, which makes additional recommendations that the country is expected to incorporate into its POA.

Establish working groups: Good policy-making requires input from interested parties and the experts and officials familiar with particular institutions and sectors. The size and focus of such working groups can determine their effectiveness. Including too broad a list of topics in one workshop will require many participants and more time. A workshop that is too small can provoke complaints that the policy-making was not inclusive. The four thematic areas are too broad to use as a basis for organizing POA events. The list of expertise needed for desk research can provide a useful starting point.

List policy alternatives: For each identified problem list possible alternative solutions. These should include ideas put forward through the APRM consultations, those put forward by experts and those in the self-assessment or final APRM reports. Note the source of each recommendation so that at the end of the process, parties can be notified of the decisions taken on their suggestions.

List problems that lack clear solutions: Make a separate list of problems for which there were no solutions immediately apparent or for which solutions would require additional study and discussion. Just because a problem does not have an immediately obvious solution does not mean it should be left out of the POA and forgotten. This is particularly true of larger social problems that may have many contributing causes and need many related interventions. Crime, unemployment, and gender bias are examples. For each such problem, formulate an action item that would define a research and policy development process to produce alternative solutions. This may entail a commitment to fund research, engage legal experts in proposing alternatives or consultations with experts or constituencies concerned with the issue.

Assess each alternative: Hold a working group meeting with each responsible ministry or unit to assess the management implications of all of the proposed actions and what phasing in of solutions would be required, if any. Assess each alternative solution in light of the following questions. The answers should be arranged in a project management document that outlines each solution and provides the detail needed to manage and monitor implementation. All of the project management documents should form part of the POA report.

- What constituencies within government, parliament or society should be consulted to build consensus around the planned action/reform and what form should that consultation take?
- What key staff, managers or technical experts will be required to manage the action effectively?
- What likely social or technical obstacles need particular attention to ensure the successful implementation of the idea?
- Which department or entity of government will have overall responsibility and what mechanisms or instructions will be given to ensure that the needed cooperation from other units is given in a timely way?
- What physical inputs must be acquired before startup, such as office space, computers, reference materials?
- What funds will be required, with separate allocations for capital costs (equipment, furniture) and recurring costs (office space, staff, expenses, legal drafting)?
- What is a reasonable time to complete startup activities such as hiring staff, securing funding and assets?
- What is a reasonable time by which the action item should be completed or in the case of ongoing items should be fully operational?
- What aspects or indicators should be examined to determine whether the proposed action was successful in solving the identified governance problem? For more subtle or complex problems, such as improving the quality of education or the effectiveness of an organisation, describe what type of formal evaluation is planned in future, how long such an evaluation would take and what it would reasonably cost (where necessary, add such costs of evaluation to the overall cost analysis of the action item).
- For proposed new laws, regulations or constitutional amendments, are there any aspects that could conflict with human or political rights or cause problems with the separation of powers or principles of transparency and accountability? And

what steps are planned to subject the rules to public and legal scrutiny to ensure that the new rules conform to good governance principles and constitutional imperatives?

- If new regulations, constitutional amendments or laws are required, how long would it reasonably take to draft the bill? How long to reach political agreement within parliament? And how long to get the new laws on the parliamentary agenda and pass the item into law? Are there any actions that might accelerate these processes?
- For existing institutions or programmes that need strengthening, list what additional legal powers, management or specialist staff, or funding would be required to raise performance or speed to the desired level.

Select needed solutions: Where alternatives exist to solving a given problem, consider whether one approach alone is sufficient or if multiple steps are needed to affect a comprehensive solution.

List reasons for rejection: Where proposed actions are deemed inappropriate or unrealistic, add to its project management sheet a note outlining the reasons for rejection. This will add transparency and trust to the process by making clear the obstacles to certain proposed solutions. Providing explanations will also address the expectations of the public and institutions who put these ideas forward that their suggestions would be fully considered.

Group solutions by responsible agency/ministry: Organise the potential solutions in groups according to which arm of government would have the lead in implementing the proposed solution.

Prepare an implementation schedule: Based on the answers to the questions in item 4, assess whether the responsible organisation has the necessary capacity and management to embark on all the proposed actions at once and, if not, in what order reforms should be prioritised or phased in, placing greater emphasis on high-impact, low-cost actions. Where high-impact ideas would require additional financing, add them to a separate list of items requiring funding. For each responsible agency, prepare a set of notes reflecting the discussions on priorities and phasing in action items.

Number and bind recommendations: Assign each proposed action a reference number to appear on the top of the project description sheet. All such sheets should be organised in a bound volume with a summary sheet at the front. The summary sheet should follow the existing POA tabular format, which lists each APRM objective, action, method of measuring implementation, responsible agencies, timeline, budget and other particulars. A final column could list the cross-reference or page number directing the reader to the full project description for each POA action item. Organising such an appendix of project management summaries according to the implementing agency will assist in making clear who is responsible for what actions. Providing such detail will be valuable in both implementation and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the POA.

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Prepare an explanatory summary: For each objective in the Questionnaire, write an explanation of why the particular action items were chosen and why certain suggestions were not included.

Hold public validation exercises: Once the proposed POA has been drafted using the steps above, it should be presented to the public through validation workshops, to parliament through public hearings and to senior civil servants.

Build consensus: Reaching political agreement on the need for reform is as important as the details of the POA. Once the POA has been examined and validated, separate measures should be taken to ensure that the government, parliament, particular ministries and agencies and interested parties support it. Because of the breadth of the subject matter it would not be effective to try to present the entire POA at one hearing, so different pieces and recommendations should be presented and debated in different for a, such as parliamentary hearings, chambers of commerce, inter-ministerial briefings and in cabinet.

Speeding up research by breaking it into more manageable pieces

In all the early APRM countries, research institutions were assigned to manage the Questionnaire's thematic areas. However, the four themes are very broad and require many forms of expertise. This tendency to assign research to four think tanks has led to operational bottlenecks as African research institutes rarely have sufficient expertise and manpower to handle all of the types of specialist questions asked by the APRM. Asking one institution to handle all of the socio-economic work, for example, can mean that that body can do nothing else for several months, which then is damaging to its financial position.

As a result of the APRM workload participants face difficult choices to cut corners. It would make the process much more manageable if the Questionnaire were broken down into smaller pieces than the four themes. These pieces or issue clusters could be more focused and could be assigned to a larger number of specialists, which would allow the work to move more quickly and allow for more specialised public consultations. This is particularly true of the cross-cutting issues. If all of the questions related to gender were grouped together it would be easier to assign these to relevant groups.

The physical and electronic document could be split up into the various cluster subsections, each one beginning on a new page. This physical division of the questions would make it easier to email the relevant portions and make it easier for people to complete those sections electronically, which assists in capturing their views.

In an attempt to develop this idea, the Questionnaire was broken down into its logical groupings based on what forms of expertise it demands. These clusters of expertise offer an alternative to the four themes and would, because they are more focused, help produce better quality analysis faster. Doing so would require that the Governing Council contract with more research institutes or in some cases individual researchers to lead the analysis of a piece. For example, very few people know about how monetary policy is set or about ICT pricing and service delivery policy. Better answers would be obtained by tasking a specialist researcher to write a background paper on those areas first, then build public consultations and surveys and focus groups around enhancing that background paper, which would be focused on one or two focused questions.

The socio-economic sector would particularly benefit from this because it could allow a working group to separately consider each sector and would not force one research body to try to deal with subjects that it does not know well. The following page includes a short suggested approach to desk research with a list of forms of expertise. Some of them could be combined or sub-divided further, but the approach is suggestive of the kind of guidance that would help research institutes and governing councils better understand their task and allow them to enlist more outside help to make the task move faster.

A solid foundation for desk research

Because the APRM Questionnaire is divided into four sections, countries often manage research by handing each section to a different research institution. However, the range of subjects and the degree of specialisation in the questions means that research institutions rarely have the breadth of expertise required. To make the research effort faster and help assign the desk research to experts in the relevant fields, it can be helpful to divide the Questionnaire into clusters of related issues that would be suitable to assign to particular experts. For example, it can be more effective to hand all of the gender related questions to an expert who knows the legal and cultural issues and is familiar with the main assessments that exist in the area. If the desk research were handed to a social scientist who was unfamiliar with the field, they would spend much more time catching up and finding sources. Similarly issues such as trade, economic management, parliamentary powers, and human rights, among others, benefit by allowing specialists in those fields prepare the desk research. Dividing the desk research into smaller, more manageable parts also will allow the process to bring more expertise to bear and thus complete the work more quickly than if it were only divided into the four thematic areas of the Questionnaire. In analysing the Questionnaire with the Lesotho Governing Council in November 2006, participants broke the Questionnaire into 25 issue clusters. The Lesotho process is not complete and some issues may be grouped together for simplicity and cost purposes, but the exercise offers a valuable starting point in identifying what forms of expertise and desk research are needed.

Democracy and Political Governance

1. Managing conflict
2. Constitution/rule of law
3. Electoral systems and practices
4. Parliament
5. Judiciary and criminal justice (including crime, police, prosecution and detention services)
6. Human and political rights (including media freedoms and rights of children and vulnerable groups)
7. Gender (rights, fairness, socio-economic dimensions)
8. Media freedoms
9. Decentralisation (including questions in the economic and socio-economic sections. Also could include issues of traditional rule, service delivery, land and environmental issues)

Corporate Governance

10. Business environment
11. Corporate behaviour
12. Corporate accountability

Economic Governance and Management

13. Economic and development strategy (to include questions on sustainable development from socio-economic section)
14. Sound administration, oversight, corruption and money laundering (including corruption questions from political section)
15. Regional integration and trade

Socio-Economic Development

16. Self-reliance
17. Environment
18. Education
19. Health (including HIV)
20. Water and sanitation
21. Housing/shelter
22. Land
23. Agriculture (including access to markets, inputs, supports, food security)
24. Finance (including micro-finance)
25. Transport
26. Energy
27. ICT

In order to begin building the national report and give participants in workshops something to which to respond, it would be helpful to commission an expert writer in each of those issue clusters. Each writer would have six tasks:

1. Identify the relevant existing reports.
2. Prepare a bibliography of key reports and sources.
3. Prepare a list of key issues mentioned in those existing reports.
4. Under each issue, provide a list of supporting evidence from those reports, using footnotes to make it easy to find the relevant portions in future.
5. Extract from the existing reports a list of their recommendations and propose others that are suggested by the evidence.
6. Each specialist researcher would also be responsible for translating his or her sections into local languages.

Once these commissioned desk research papers are complete, Technical Research Institutes can flesh them out through public meetings, survey findings and discussions with government experts.

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One idea per question/objective

At present some questions and objectives contain multiple ideas: for instance, the questions on balance of powers talk about both the legislature and judiciary (Democracy and Political Governance Objective 4, Question 1: "What are the constitutional and legislative provisions establishing the separation and balance of powers among the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary branches of government?"). In practice it is easier if the question is split because those who would be knowledgeable about parliament may not be the same people able to deal with the judiciary: the provisions for separation of powers may not be the same as it relates to each branch of government. Thus it is easier to answer the question and to write the report if the two distinct aspects of the question are split into separate questions. This would simplify the process of research by making it possible to assign a whole question to the relevant expert group. The present structure requires that compound questions be split, assigned to different experts and their answers be assembled into the final answer. The hope would be that respondents would find them easier to answer.

In the socio-economic section objective 4 is about "ensuring affordable access to water, sanitation, energy, finance (including micro-finance), markets, ICT, shelter and land to all citizens." The question asks "What policies and strategies has the government put in place to ensure that all citizens, in particular the rural and urban poor, have affordable access to basic needs?" This question effectively asks for the steps taken in 9 sectors and because the urban and rural sectors have different approaches, the answer could have 18 parts. The research effort would be much easier to plan and manage if the socio-economic section asked for reviews of the key sectors using a standard set of questions. It is important to note that governments have not often read the Questionnaire in detail in making their APRM plans and budgets. They tend to assume that they can appoint one research institute to each theme without having a clear picture of what the research really entails. This point ties into the idea of grouping the Questionnaire into its natural clusters. The guidance could thus advise countries that although there are four thematic areas, they will likely have to involve people with the following forms of expertise. (See also discussion of issue clusters and expertise.)

Remove/Revise indicators

The current tiered arrangements (objectives, questions, and indicators) should be revisited. In addition to the awkwardness it imposes on the numbering and referencing of questions, it creates other problems in researching and report writing.

The three-tiered structure suggests that the various categories carry different degrees of importance, which participants have found confusing and which makes report writing more difficult. It is not clear to what extent the indicators are to be treated as mandatory and to what extent they are suggestive. There has been a tendency for participants to write the report using the questions to give structure to the report but ignore the indicators in varying degrees.

In some instances there are gaps between the questions and indicators or manifestly different approaches to the subject. If a participant ignores the indicator they can miss a big part of the inquiry. Some participants have viewed the indicators as the lowest – and therefore most dispensable – elements of a hierarchy. However, some indicators pose especially important questions, and need to be addressed.

For example the political and democratic section objective 2, question 2 asks "What weight do provisions establishing the rule of law and the supremacy of the constitution carry in practice?" But the indicators ask for lists: "(i) Identify the relevant legal provisions that establish the rule of law and affirm the supremacy of the constitution and describe the procedures for amending your country's constitution; (ii) List institutions tasked with enforcing these provisions and assess the effectiveness of these institutions, through recent cases/reports." If the respondent dealt with only the question or alternatively assumed that an answer to the indicators constituted the kind of answer desired, they would miss important parts of the inquiry.

In the case of the example cited above, respondents might spend a great deal of time researching the legal provisions and the institutions responsible without dealing with the question itself. Indeed, a respondent could believe that in responding to the indicators, he/she would be doing all that is required to answer the question, when this is not necessarily the case.

Socio-Economic Section objective 3, Question 1 reads: “What measures has government taken to strengthen policy, delivery mechanisms and monitor outcomes in order to make progress towards the social development targets?” The associated indicator (iv) reads: “Outline the challenges faced and efforts to address constraints”. Both the question and indicator are important, but if the indicator is ignored (on the basis that it is merely suggestive or less important than the broad question), a very important perspective would be lost.

It would clarify the status of indicators if those that are mandatory were elevated to full questions and those that are meant to suggest the kinds of factors to be considered would be transformed into explanatory guidance attached to each question. Those that are elevated to questions could be built into the numbering scheme in such a way that they are clearly a subordinate part of the main question. So for example a question could be labelled as 3.3a, 3.3b or 3.3.1 and 3.3.2.

Provisions to improve consensus, remove causes of dispute

Build in equal treatment for accomplishments and problems

There is an important fairness problem built into this aspect of the question/indicator debate. Governments can feel that the Questionnaire does not give space for their accomplishments or attempts at reform. They can be concerned that the whole report can read like a long list of problems. However, civil society is most concerned with getting into the report the most important items needing change. This clash in perspectives is not accommodated in the structure of the Questionnaire and leads to conflicts in editing the report with government tending to see the total number of pages dedicated to negative things as an indictment.

At present some questions are framed to ask for the positive steps taken by government with others more neutrally asking for assessment of a field of governance. All questions should be built around a kind of standard prototype that asks the participant to assess a particular aspect of governance, noting best practices where possible, reforms that have recently begun, the status and obstacles, if any, to those reforms and any outstanding issues or problems. Where possible participants should offer recommendations. This kind of approach would provide scope for the positive but also give clear direction and space for articulation of problems.

Urge self-assessments to reflect all voices and cite sources

Related to the problem of fairness above, is an issue of how to handle attributions in writing self-assessment reports. Participants have expressed uncertainty about how to write the self-assessment in terms of whether it should explicitly say who asserted what view or just assert a single and unified consensus view. Disagreements about the state of the facts or the need for reforms are a reality and different voices will be submitted to the process. But when countries feel that the self-assessment is supposed to provide one unified national voice, there is a tendency and temptation to remove dissenting voices. This then fosters disputes and accusations that someone edited out critical things or the report is less than honest. This damages the process and the ability to forge consensus. The self-assessment would be less prone to dispute and would be a more honest reflection of the evidence if guidance instructed countries explicitly to reflect the different views expressed in consultations – including those of government and other groups. It seems more fair to say government asserted that it has launched reforms but some key organizations said those measures needed additional work. If the self-assessment does not reflect this difference of view, it will not be accurately reflecting the discussion and the country review team will miss needed information.

Neutral phraseology should be adopted

At times, the Questionnaire makes assumptions that a particular course of action will be beneficial, or phrases questions in a manner that assumes that progress has been made. Respondents may not agree and should be able to voice their opinions.

For example, in the Democracy and Political Governance Section, one of the indicators attached to question 4 (dealing with decentralisation) reads: "Provide evidence of improved broad participation of people at the grass root levels due to decentralisation". Not all respondents may agree that decentralisation is an appropriate policy choice, and it does not necessarily result in improved participation although the question implies that it does. Another indicator, also in the Democracy and Political Governance section, objective 3, question 2, which deals with access to justice, asks the respondent: **"**Give details of measures taken to sustain progress (training, monitoring, evaluation, adjustment)". The wording used assumes that progress has been made, and that particular measures are in place to facilitate it. This may not be the case, or respondents may feel that no progress has been made and the measures have had no effect.

It would be better to encourage analysis and critical thinking about issues facing countries, and to ask respondents to suggest possible solutions for these. Thus a standard approach to all questions should ask the participant to evaluate the challenges in that particular area, noting successes and best practices where appropriate and offering recommendations to any identified problems.

Ease of use for ordinary citizens

The Questionnaire needs to ensure that as many barriers as possible to participation are removed: particularly for ordinary citizens. The more complex the task of responding to the Questionnaire, the more intimidated ordinary citizens may feel, and consequently, the less likely they will be to attempt to answer it. The following are suggested as considerations for reform.

Use straight-forward, non-technical language

The Questionnaire should be accessible to ordinary citizens as well as experts. Wherever possible the questions should be phrased in plain language to avoid technical terminology, if more straightforward terms are available. This is especially important for ordinary citizens wishing to participate in the process.

Objective 1, question 4 of the Economic section asks "What has your country done to increase domestic resource mobilisation including public and private savings, capital formation and reduce capital flight?" The first indicator asks about steps taken to "deepen financial intermediation." These ideas are clear to economists but not students, ordinary citizens and even many MPs who are not from an economics background. Where possible simpler terminology should be used and where technical terms must be used, they should be followed by an appositive phrase defining them. In addition, even when an idea is so defined, people may not know what kinds of steps would be implied by "financial intermediation" so it would be very helpful to have a paragraph of guidance that explains some elements of best practice or how some countries have sought to accomplish this and ways in which others have unintentionally worked against this goal.

The Questionnaire uses the phrase "opportunity for choice" when "multi-party democracy" is the idea as expressed in the governance standards.

Terms such as accountability and ownership need to be explained simply through a guidance paragraph that gives examples of how such concepts would be translated into law and institutional design.

The socio-economic section asks about "self-reliance" but does not define this well. The questions/guidance should ask more explicitly what steps the country has taken to reduce its dependence on debt financing, to secure debt relief, to improve its revenue base and compensate for losses in customs revenue (which are falling across as a result of trade liberalisation and regional integration.)

The concepts embedded in the discussion of human rights, separation of powers and the rule of law should be spelled out more clearly in guidance paragraphs that ideally draw in the definitions. Some of the terms needing clarification include free speech, freedom of the media, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion or worship, freedom to join or form political parties, due process, equal access to justice, separation of powers, independence of the judiciary, the rule of law and constitutional rule should be defined with examples in guidance paragraphs. This guidance should also give a sense of how such rights can be undermined at times. Addition of a glossary of terms could also be helpful.

Implement a unified numbering system

The present structure renumbers objectives in each section and within each objective questions are numbered. Within questions the indicators are renumbered. This makes reference to the relevant question and indicator rather cumbersome because one must reference the objective, question and then indicator. It would be simpler to number all of the objectives from top to bottom from one to 25. A decimal system could be used so if one said question 3.2 it would be clear that you were referring to objective 3, question two. Such a numbering system would make the creation of issue clusters simpler too.

Improved guidance

Insert guidance paragraphs for each question

There are instances where the relationship between questions and indicators do not match each other precisely. For example, Question 2 under the second Democracy and Political Governance Objective reads: “What weight do provisions establishing the rule of law and the supremacy of the Constitution carry in practice?” The question seems quite clear, asking for an assessment of the practical application of the legal and constitutional provisions. The indicators say: “(i) Identify the relevant legal provisions that establish the rule of law and affirm the supremacy of the Constitution and describe the procedures for amending your country’s Constitution” and “(ii) List institutions tasked with enforcing these provisions and assess the effectiveness of these institutions, through recent cases/reports.” The indicators therefore require the respondent to list legal provisions, describe relevant institutions and assess these institutions. The indicators do not lead the respondent in exactly the same direction as the thrust of the question.

This can create confusion and result in important issues not being covered. The suggestion is to create a single list of questions, in the hope that respondents will deal with each in turn. The emphasis should be on ease of use, capturing best practice examples and generally making the questions more helpful. For this purpose, some respondents may need some assistance or clarity in answering questions. This is to be provided by guidance paragraphs linked to questions. Such assistance is not intended to be prescriptive, but suggestive: respondents are to be provided with possible considerations for approaching the questions, such as statistics that they may wish to provide and analyse and specific items germane to the overall question that might provide useful insights. It must be made very clear that these guidance paragraphs are not intended to be mandatory, and are not comprehensive in respect of what respondents may wish to deal with. Rather they will exist to provide general advice to respondents to help them complete the Questionnaire in the best and most efficient manner possible. Respondents who feel that they would rather deal with a question in a manner not suggested by the guidance material should be free to do so. Some of these guidance paragraphs will be drawn from the indicators that exist already (which are, in a sense, already performing this role), while others will need to be written from scratch. The guidance paragraphs could also include some annotation specifying what type of respondent would be in a position to answer the particular question.

Incorporate the key findings of standards and codes into guidance

Since the APRM is based on an extensive body of standards (codes and agreements that specify the behaviour of states), it is necessary for them to be incorporated more fully into the Questionnaire. While the Questionnaire introduces each thematic area with a list of relevant standards and codes, and asks respondents to indicate their countries' status in respect of signing them, this is of limited value to ordinary participants who may not be aware of all the stipulations in the standards. All countries so far have struggled to answer the questions that ask about the extent to which the standards and treaties have been operationalised in national law and practice. This is because countries do not know what the key operational provisions are. To assist, the guidance sections should include specific references to the substance of the standards. This may, for example be done by quoting the relevant portion of a standard alongside the relevant question. Ordinary citizens would in this way have a clearer idea of what they should be able to expect from their governments.

Ideally, the Questionnaire should provide specific internet links to the various codes, to enable interested participants to investigate the standards more fully for themselves.

Provide instructions for managing the process

At various fora, countries have noted that they are not provided with sufficient guidance about how to conduct APRM. The various documents that outline this do not always agree with each other.

For example, the "Guidelines for Countries to prepare for and to participate in the African Peer Review Mechanism" says: "21. **Stage One** involves the preparatory process both at the level of the APR Secretariat, and at the national level. Stage one may be summarised as follows:(i) Under the direction of the APR Panel, the APR Secretariat will send to countries to be reviewed a Questionnaire on the four areas of the APRM, namely, Democracy and Political Governance, Economic Governance and Management, Corporate Governance, and Socio-Economic Development (Box 1 of the Chart); (ii) The country will develop a self-assessment on the basis of the Questionnaire, and with the assistance, if necessary, of the APR Secretariat and/or relevant Partner Institutions (Box 2C1). (iii) Having completed the self-assessment, the country will formulate a *preliminary* Programme of Action building on existing policies, programmes and projects (Box 2C2)."[1] In this document the course of action recommended for undertaking peer review is very vague.

In contrast, the undated "APR Questionnaire General Guidance" posits the Focal Point as a committee: "It is expected that the APR Focal point in each Participating Country would draw up a list of the stakeholders that would participate in responding to the Questionnaire. It would them distribute the entire Questionnaire to all stakeholders through their representatives in the Focal Point. The APR Focal point would provide the APR Secretariat with a list of the recipients of the Questionnaire. All stakeholders would be invited to concentrate on a chapter in the Questionnaire corresponding to their sector, mandate or mission, but to feel free to respond to any question in the other chapters. All stakeholders would be required to provide available documentation and specific references for the responses that they provide so that the documentation of the sources of the country's self-assessment can be as complete as possible… The Technical Committee of the APR Focal Point would then collate the responses and compile a consensus response to submit to the APR Focal Point for consideration. It would also use the responses and the available assessment reports to compile the country's Self-assessment Report, based on the Questionnaire responses and other research."[2]

This reference to the Focal Point's Technical Committee is not mentioned anywhere else, and this description of the Focal Point's responsibilities has created confusion as to whether it is the Focal Point or the Governing Council that leads the process. In addition, the definition of the focal point contradicts the view outlined at the heads of state meeting in Kigali in 2005, which states that "the APRM National Focal point should be at Ministerial level or a High-level Official reporting directly to the Head of State or Government and with access to all national stakeholders."[3]

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[1] APRM Secretariat, 'Guidelines for countries to prepare for and to participate in the African Peer Review Mechanism', 2003, p.5.

[2] APRM Secretariat, 'APR Questionnaire General Guidance,' Midrand, South Africa, undated, p.4.

[3] Communiqué issued at the end of the First Summit of the Committee of Participating Heads of State and Government in the African Peer Review Mechanism (APR Forum), Kigali, Rwanda, 13 February 2004, p. 6.

The clearest assignment of roles has come in the latest document, "The Supplementary Document to APRM Guidelines for Country Review." But this document is not publicly available. The Questionnaire is the most widely distributed document and people rely directly on it to provide the explanation of the APRM process. However, the guidance on process in the Questionnaire is insufficient in its detail (particularly lacking an overview of research methods) and contradicts other official documents.

It would improve the Questionnaire and the overall process if all guidance on the APRM process were combined into one new version of process guidance that is built into the opening of the Questionnaire. Ideally this guidance should be built upon the latest and most clear guidance that came out in the form of the Supplementary Document. It is important to note that this latter document does contradict some of the earlier guidance (particularly regarding the role of the focal point, the governing council and the research institutes) so it is important that there is a clear message that the revision would supersede all previous documents.[4].

An important part of the research process relates to the desk research that should be conducted. The present guidelines underscore the importance of the APRM POA bringing together the recommendations of other planning exercises and being linked up to existing budgeting and priority-setting systems. However, this has not happened very effectively in the early countries. Most have put off the POA until the end and this is the stage at which those other plans should come under consideration. However, due to time pressures they have frequently not been able to do so. Thus guidance on how to conduct desk research to incorporate these other documents would improve the overall quality of the APRM and help ensure that it is not seen as an extra process bolted onto other activities. This guidance should urge countries to begin the process by bringing together all of the recommendations made in the national strategy documents, PRSPs, MDG reports and others. These recommendations should be organised under the APRM Questionnaire structure and would provide a valuable starting document that says here is what we have agreed so far. Clear footnotes or other tags could make clear where each idea came from and the extent to which it had already been implemented or the reasons why implementation had stalled. (See also discussion of desk research and POA guidance above.)

[4] APRM Secretariat, 'Supplementary Document to APRM Guidelines for Country Review – The APRM National Structure,' undated [2007], p.2.

Possible Phases for Revising the Questionnaire

In approaching this task, analysis was broken down into 8 phases. Some could be conducted simultaneously and in a few instances there could be a degree of overlap, but there is value in setting out a clear framework for review.

The first phase should gather information and observations about the Questionnaire from participants in the pioneer countries and from various APRM review conferences and formulate a draft set of ideas or principles to guide revisions to the Questionnaire. This document is a first attempt at completing phase one. (The list of ideas/principles follows in the next section.) Among the most important principles was to keep all of the objectives and the essential ideas of the questions and indicators.

The second phase would examine the Questionnaire to determine what issues were covered by it. This involved looking at all the various requirements for information on the objectives, questions and indicators. This phase involved appending comments and analysis next to each indicator in the present Questionnaire format.

The third phase involves an assessment of the indicators. In some cases indicators are not quite indicators of governance under a particular question but seemed important enough to stand as questions in their own right. Other indicators appeared to be more in the nature of suggestive guidance but would not be applicable in all cases. One of the key suggestions from participants was that it would be helpful to have a paragraph of guidance for each question. In this phase the list of indicators is arranged to show suggestions for upgrading some to questions or changing others into guidance. Participants noted that having to answer both questions and indicators made report writing more difficult and participants were not clear whether indicators were mandatory or suggestive. This phase makes suggestions about where such clarity is needed.

The fourth phase deals with the so-called cross-cutting issues, which have been identified as a source of redundancy in the Questionnaire that led to countries doing somewhat repetitive analysis of the same points under different thematic sections. The goal was to set out some of the operational challenges of the present treatment of these issues and methods that could remove some of the redundancy and make report writing and research more efficient.

The fifth phase involves investigating what elements were missing from the original Questionnaire whose inclusion might strengthen it. This phase involves a reading of other governance assessment systems as well as the main APRM review conference reports. Sources where the Questionnaire had been discussed would be consulted, along with Questionnaires from other reviews. If any important issues had been excluded or had not been adequately interrogated, suggestions were made for including new material.

The sixth phase involves taking the conclusions of the first four phases and putting them into the form of a suggested revised Questionnaire for discussion. To show how each part of the revised format relates to the original, all of the material is fully footnoted.

The seventh phase deals with the guidance that is included in the Questionnaire. Participants have requested that there be more detailed guidance on the APRM process, establishment of governing councils, surveys and other research processes. Because the Questionnaire is the most widely distributed document and the one that citizens are more likely to come in contact with, it would seem advisable to update the explanatory material in the Questionnaire. This could incorporate some of the material from the Supplementary Guidelines document and new material.

The eighth phase pertains to the Programme of Action. Participants have noted that there is much more guidance available on the self-assessment phase and much less for the POA. They note that the existence of a structured Questionnaire is a great help in producing a self-assessment report. Providing a similarly structured approach to assembling a POA could greatly assist countries in improving the quality of their POA efforts. This portion attempted to formulate guidance on POA research and documentation using a Questionnaire format.

Appendix A: Comments from APRM Review Conferences

GTZ and the Ghanaian Governing Council, Accra, May 2007

The following extracts have been taken verbatim from the report on the workshop 'Africa's Bold March to Capture the 21st Century – The Role of the APRM', held by the German aid group GTZ and the Ghanaian Governing Council.

EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

Challenges

- Although the APRM guiding documents provide a lot of information and the APR Panel and the Secretariat undertake Country Support Missions each country has to evolve its own structures, processes, communication etc. based on its history and uniqueness.

- Since the APRM Questionnaire is a guiding document, countries need to adapt the questionnaire to suit their own peculiarities in a way, which does not compromise the overall objective of the APRM and the quality of the assessment.

- The APRM Self-Assessment process needs to be seen as a complex project and to carry it out effectively and efficiently accordingly requires a sound project plan to be approved by all stakeholders, and, in terms of the budget, in particular by the government, potential contributors and development partners.

- A speedy and at the same time efficient implementation of the APRM requires a flexible and innovative utilization of instruments and institutional arrangements, which need to be constantly adjusted, strengthened and simplified according to country specificities.

- Sufficiently capacitated and competent national actors rendering support to the process (government institutions, Technical Research Partners) are required.

- Government departments and individual office holders need to accept the principal political decision to embark on the APRM and to respond to the requests of the national APRM structures in a supportive way.

- The questionnaire should be of three fold, firstly the generic questionnaire that captures good governance comparable standards, the second that relates specifically to countries emerging from conflicts and thirdly a questionnaire that takes into consideration countries that have enjoyed relatively long standing stability.

Experiences

- The APR Secretariat does not provide advice and best practices with regards to the customization of the questionnaire, the development of business plans (Master plan) and other related processes.

- The APRM questionnaire is difficult to use and considerable effort is necessary to customize it.

- Some key concepts are not addressed yet (such as freedom of media) other areas require more specific and improved questions (i.e gender, local governance), some repetition could be avoided.

- The questionnaire does not distinguish between areas which require expert work and those which should be addressed by civil society or the general public.

- APRM Focal Points often do not have the appropriate capacity and experiences to draft a project plan without being assisted by strategic partners or donor agencies.

- Government institutions and agencies are often weakly capacitated or over-stretched because of other tasks and are not easy to motivate to additional requests for work on the APRM.

Recommendations

- The APR Panel and Secretariat should provide specifically trained staff to effectively provide leadership and technical advice to the countries.

- The APR Secretariat shall provide at least a master business plan, a prototype research design and guidance on which instruments and procedures have proved to be useful in self-assessments so far.

- Based on experiences from the first reviews the APRM Questionnaire should be revised in terms of content, practicability, ways for customization and with regard to its applicability in broad participatory process with the general public.

- Together with the political decision for the APRM the government should commit to provide support to the process. It is advised that in this context the work on the APRM and the work of the domestic development agenda institutions shall be strongly linked.

- The standardization of country self-assessments should be avoided while there are common and internationally accepted benchmarks that should remain standard frames of reference for guiding country actions and to facilitate comparability of experiences as well as monitoring and evaluation.

- Needs for capacity development shall be identified as early as possible and to be addressed by appropriate measures.

Summarized conclusions

• APRM national structures need to effectively plan the self-assessment project by addressing all requirements for the operations including resources (human, financial, technical, and informational) and necessary measures for capacity development.

• The APRM continental structures, in particular the APRM Secretariat, can contribute to a more efficient implementation by providing guidance, templates and prototypes for the process management and the methodology including the research design and the revision of the questionnaire in the light of experiences.

• A successful self-assessment depends on the support of the stakeholders and development partners but even more on the commitment and preparedness by government institutions which shall be motivated by the political leadership and constantly monitored.

PUBLIC AWARENESS, STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

Recommendations

- To make broader communication easier the questionnaire shall be rewritten by using language that can be understood by the general public and should also be translated into vernaculars languages.

AGF Kigali May 2006

The report of the African Governance Forum in Kigali in 2006 ('Implementing the African Peer Review Mechanism: Challenges and Opportunities, Report of the Sixth Africa Governance Forum (AGF-VI)') made the following observations relevant to questionnaire reform.

4.2.2.2 Challenges related to the APRM Process

2. Need for flexibility and accommodating country innovation

Some participants saw the need for the APRM process to be made flexible and able accommodate country-level innovations and specificities. In this respect, more local input in the design of the APR Questionnaire and the self-assessment Guidelines was suggested. It was maintained that the capturing (during the APRM self-assessment process) of the sensitivities related to special interest groups such as the women, youth, children, the aged, ethnic minorities, and physically handicapped persons was important. Similarly, it was argued that the linkage between APRM objectives and countries' domestic development agenda could easily be addressed through the suggested flexibility in the Mechanism's process. This implied the need for a re-examination of the balance between perceived external orientation of APRM and internal focus. This issue was further taken up during Group discussions.

4.3 Main Recommendations

7. To the extent that Country Ownership of the APRM processes has been acknowledged, all participating countries must be involved in the preparation of future questionnaire development because civil society will not participate in a committed way in the self-assessment mechanism unless it understands what is at stake and that the process has adequate mechanisms to make its voice heard.

6.2.2 Questionnaire

With respect to the issue of Questionnaire that is used for country assessment, a number of issues were tabled. They included the following:

a) Is the questionnaire unwieldy?

b) Can it be adopted to fit specific contexts?

c) Is it missing important aspects that should have been included?

d) Are there any protocols or international commitments which could compromise the questionnaire?

e) Is it justified to focus the Questionnaire exclusively on governments and remain silent on civil society?

A number of challenges and opportunities regarding the Questionnaire were recognized during the discussions. The following are worth noting:

a) The questionnaire appears to be repetitive especially on cross-cutting issues, thus, making the Country Self-assessment Review tedious and difficult to follow and digest. This has implications for the Country Review Team (CRT) Report as well as the final Panel Report.

b) A number of important aspects are missing in the Questionnaire, e.g., international humanitarian law; child soldiers; human rights; maternal mortality; press freedom; etc.

c) There is also need to determine how the evaluation of governance in civil society can be done (including associated indicators and benchmarks) so that this important stakeholder is also included in the Questionnaire.

In the light of the above, a number of recommendations were tabled during AGF-VI. They included the following:

a) The Questionnaire should be reviewed and subsequently revised, taking into account the missing issues that are generic to the governance question in Africa. The APRM Secretariat should assume leadership in the provision of guidance on the adoption of country specificities, drawing on the experiences of Rwanda and Ghana that have reached an advanced stage in the APRM process.

b) Civil society should also be assessed. Thus, indicators and benchmarks targeted at this category of actors should be included in the Questionnaire.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

The AGF-VI Meeting in Kigali arrived at a number of conclusions and recommendations. The main ones are summarized below.

8.1 Main Conclusions

9. The country self-assessment questionnaire has left out a number of important aspects such as international humanitarian law; child soldiers; human rights; maternal mortality; press freedom. It also does not provide information that would assist in the evaluation of civil society behavior and yet this is an important aspect of good governance at the country level.

8.2 Recommendations

8.2.2 Other main recommendations

12. To the extent that country ownership of the APRM processes has been acknowledged, countries must be involved in the development of future instruments for self-assessment, including the questionnaires.

13. The country self-assessment questionnaire should be reviewed and subsequently revised, taking into account the missing issues that are generic to the governance question in Africa.

Appendix B: List of Sources Useful in Comparing Questions Styles and Guidance

The point is frequently made that APRM is the most ambitious form of peer review ever undertaken, covering the range of issues that it does. A number of other institutions conduct reviews or evaluations of governance and both the issues they explore and the methodologies that they employ may be instructive for improving the APRM. It is important to note that each of these review processes is conducted according to its own set of rules, and compiles its information in its own manner. As such, there are strengths and weaknesses to each, and the conclusions reached are not infrequently disputed. It is not suggested that APRM should imitate any one, but they may suggest new approaches. This section outlines, in brief, some of these programmes and the lessons that may fruitfully be drawn from them.

GTZ Conference

The German aid group GTZ and the Ghanaian National Governing Council held a conference in Accra that brought together the lessons learned from other conferences and early country experiences with the APRM. The conference report, entitled ‘Africa’s Bold March to Capture the 21st Century – The Role of the APRM’ contains a critique of the Questionnaire, some suggestions for modifying it, and observations about difficulties with the APRM research process.

African Governance Forum

The African Governance Forum in Kigali (in May 2006) discussed the difficulties in the APRM Questionnaire and research processes. The conference report offers valuable insight from participants, who identified a number of issues missing from the current Questionnaire: international humanitarian law; child soldiers; human rights; maternal mortality; press freedom. It further considered how an evaluation of governance in civil society could be undertaken.

Mo Ibrahim Index

This is a new system for measuring African governments. It is based on ranking five different aspects of governance (safety and security, rule of law, transparency and corruption, participation and human rights, sustainable economic development, human development). It provides useful explanations of why different factors are important to governance that could be utilized in writing guidance for individual APRM questions or guidance sections. It also has links to other governance measurement tools.

Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC)

Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) conducts peer reviews of its members with a view to measuring progress on economic liberalization. This review is geared towards measuring countries’ progress towards implementing a specific set of goals, and is consequently rather more focused and specific than the APRM. A questionnaire is developed for each review, but an “Issues Checklist” (containing 17 broad categories) is used to direct the compilation of the questionnaire. The APRM could consider integrating some of the ideas that are used in the ‘Individual Action Plan’ (IAP) reviews for its own evaluation, particularly insofar as APRM explores regional integration and the application of international standards. For example, the IAP review examines dispute settlement with other economies and the mobility of businesspeople, which issues with resonance to Africa in the context of economic integration.

Global Integrity Index

Global Integrity is an NGO that produces a Public Integrity Index. As its name implies it is meant to assess integrity in government, which broadly involves the justice system, anti-corruption agencies, tendering, transparency and other arrangements that contribute to effective fiscal management and proper management of funds. To do this, it integrates an extensive list of broad categories and some

292 indicators that are aimed at what they see as the most essential aspects of institutional design and practice. Responses to these are then consolidated in a country scorecard. It is important to recognize that Global Integrity tries to assess both the situation in law and in practice. It is also interesting that it tries to raise specifically an extremely wide spectrum of concerns together to try to establish as comprehensive a picture as possible. This material could be useful in the sections of the Questionnaire dealing with corruption.

OECD Policy Framework for Investment

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has numerous systems of review. Relevant to the corporate governance section of the ARPM is the OECD Policy Framework for Investment, which provides a list of questions that help define an effective investment climate and useful guidance explaining the reasoning behind those questions. It can be a useful model in the interplay between questions and guidance in corporate governance. It interrogates such issues as investment policy, trade policy and human resource development.

World Bank Cost of Doing Business

This is a global research and survey project that attempts to identify and quantify the key costs and time delays that business has identified as impediments to investment. It provides discussion of what is important in various areas that would concern the corporate governance thematic area.

World Bank Institute governance indicators

The World Governance Indicators of the World Bank Institute are compiled on the basis of a very extensive research effort. This culminates in producing governance measurement across six dimensions: Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law, and Control of Corruption. The Institute has produced a number of useful papers explaining how it conducts these measurements. It is furthermore a useful resource as the sources consulted in its research – referenced in its publications – offer excellent thinking about measuring governance.

United Nations Human Rights Council

The United Nations Human Rights Council is to conduct Universal Periodic Reviews of countries' human rights situations. Although a fledgling programme, it will be instructive to watch it unfold, as the UN system is similar in many respects to the AU, encompassing a wide range of countries at diverse levels of development and with very different political systems. These reviews will be useful for consideration in the Democracy and Political Governance Section.

United Nations Development Programme

The Human Development indicators of the UNDP are a compilation of socio-economic statistics and governance indicators. This is a very useful tool to consult as it is particularly well-known, and enables countries to rank themselves alongside others. This would be a very useful document to consult, especially for expert participants in the process considering how they could integrate this into an analysis of their countries.

Nepad Plans

The APRM Questionnaire does not provide detailed guidance about how to analyse the key social sectors, where the issues are often less about governance structures as they are about management approaches and dealing with social issues, costs and capacity. In this regard the Nepad sectoral plans do offer some guidance about particular social sectors that are vital to African development success. For example, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme could be useful in writing indicators for the agriculture and rural development sectors.

UNECA African Governance Report

The African Governance Report is a survey of African countries, covering a fairly wide spectrum of governance-related issues. While many of the indicators used in these studies are included in the APRM, they provide some useful thoughts about methodology: in particular, the use of surveys of experts and ordinary households. Similar approaches have been taken in some of the pioneer countries, and there is value in considering using them in others.

United Nations Agencies

Agencies such as the Food and Agricultural Agency (FOA) and the World Health Organisation conduct studies of the areas within their fields of responsibility. These tend to be quite technical in nature, but highlight issues pertinent to particular sectors. This material could be consulted to ensure that the Questionnaire investigates, where necessary, important technical problems confronting particular social sectors. It should also be noted that UN agencies have worked closely with African institutions to produce some of Africa’s own programmes, such as the FOA’s assistance in producing the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme.