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GLOBAL PROGRAMME AGAINST CORRUPTION

CONFERENCES

Involving the Public in Curbing Corruption:
The Use of Surveys to Empower Citizens
to Monitor State Performance

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Involving the Public in curbing Corruption:
The use of surveys to empower citizens to monitor state performance *⁻ᐟ

Abstract

The paper focuses on the use of survey instruments, in particular Service Delivery Surveys as an important monitoring mechanism of state performance. The SDS aims at increasing both the accountability and result orientation of the civil service as well as providing the information necessary to implement reform. It can also be used as a tool to promote greater participation among service users in the service delivery process.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The new *Comprehensive Development Framework* (CDF) launched by World Bank President Wolfensohn in October 1998 serves a testament of the donor community's giant step towards a holistic and integrated approach to development. Important values and principles addressed in this new approach are:

- Partnership with key stakeholders in client countries
- Increased focus on development impact rather than input
- Increased use of measurable indicators to assess the impact of programs
- Increased donor coordination
- Increased transparency both in the interface between the donors and the government, and also between the government/donors and the public
- Increased accountability between the state and the public, and also between the government and donor community

Of the many challenges facing the donor community in implementing this new development framework, this paper will focus on the use of survey instruments highlighting the Service Delivery Survey (SDS) which may be used to facilitate: (i) public education as a first step to raising awareness regarding its consumer rights; (ii) increased accountability through increased public oversight and empowerment of the civil society; and (iii) the use of surveys as a management tool. The assumption is that a results oriented management information system based on periodic consumer surveys will prevent corruption.

II. ACTION LEARNING APPROACH

Realizing that no "blueprint" for curbing corruption currently exists, it can be argued that there is a need for an action learning process to guide the implementation of the CDF. Ideally this process should cover at least two countries across the five regions devising an approach and tools to help countries curb corruption. Since 1994, donors[1] used this type of approach in Uganda, Tanzania, Mauritius, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Lebanon, Hungary and Ukraine. One tool which has been designed to address both public oversight and the need for measurable impact indicators is the so-called service delivery survey (SDS) which has been implemented in Nicaragua, Bolivia, Uganda, Mauritius, Ukraine, Tanzania and West Bank-Gaza.

The most representative and recent example of the application of this tool was the 1998 National Integrity Survey conducted in Uganda by the international non-governmental organization, CIETinternational (CIET).[2] This Ugandan Survey, with its sample size of 19,350 households, 1,500 service providers and 350 focus groups, was the biggest corruption survey ever done in Africa. It was commissioned by a serious client, the Ugandan Inspector General of Government (IGG), who felt that the only way he could perform his job and report to Parliament about his success in curbing corruption was to establish a baseline of information with measurable impact indicators across Uganda's 46 districts. By having district-specific data he hoped not only to identify best and worst practice, but also to increase the accountability of the district administration through the monitoring of comparative data across districts.

There is currently a debate in the donor community whether the sample size was too big and/or whether the questions asked were sufficient in detail. Others challenge the utility of asking a broad sample of households questions about corruption. Still others are critical of the

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[1] *UNDP, World Bank, ODCCP*

[2] [2] *CIET International,* Service Delivery Survey: Corruption in the Police, Judiciary, Revenue and Lands Services, *Washington: Economic Development Institute of the World Bank, 1996.*

types of questions being asked without clarification of the reasons they are being asked in the first place.

During a time when the donor community is attempting to implement a comprehensive development framework in which the terms "partnership," "impact orientation," "local ownership" and "increased transparency" are used, the criticism mentioned above seems peculiar. If the new development framework is to be taken seriously, the assessment of this and other projects should be based on impact indicators. Because the survey was completed in August 1998, any conclusions reached regarding the impact of the instrument are premature. In continuing the search for an approach that will curb corruption, comments from the donor community stating that the survey is too big or too costly appear to be less useful unless they have cost out a successful approach that can be benchmarked against new approaches with the same objectives.]

It is not uncommon for the donor community to collect data strictly for its own research purposes. However, this should not preclude the need for a client country to design a survey instrument with the objective of obtaining data for its own practical purposes including:

- the provision of baseline data against which the impact (or lack of impact) of the anti-corruption program can be measured
- the empowerment of the civil society by documenting its perceptions and also by disclosing the findings
- the provision of assistance to the government in devising an effective anti-corruption action plan
- the delegation of accountability to fight corruption and to deliver services to sub-national units

III. DIFFERENT SURVEY APPROACHES

Assessing the utility of a survey method it is critical in defining the purpose of the survey before comparing the scope, sample size and cost. What follows is an examination of two different survey methods with different scope, objectives and audience.

IV. THE COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING APPROACH

The surveys used as part of a community-based planning approach are typically:

- Requested by a client who specifies why the survey is being conducted (the IGG in Uganda pointed to his job description and said "I need such a survey to do my job"). In other words the survey is requested and fully owned by the client, and the instrument is developed in close collaboration with local stakeholders.[3]
- A reiterative series of surveys conducted at regular intervals.
- Only 10% of a larger job that will involve the analysis of data to gain a better understanding of the causes of the problem and the organization of broad-based action planning workshops resulting in action plans how to improve service delivery to the public.

The integrity of the survey is a key concern and therefore it is critical that these surveys are conducted by credible partner with high levels of integrity. WBI collaborated with CIET, an international NGO of highly charged medical doctors who spend 200-300 days per year conducting these types of surveys worldwide, as its partner. In addition to conducting surveys, this organization works to build a sustainable local NGO that can be responsible for organize the second and the third survey cycles. CIET maintains very tight supervision with

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[3] Langseth, Petter, 1999, *Update on Uganda Staying the Course*, World Bank PREM –News June 1999. Published as part of "Rent Seeking Riles, World Bank Survey Corruption in Uganda by Alice Storch, June 1999

checks and balances so that the chances of some interviewers filling in the surveys in their hotel room is minimal. And yet, even they have had some incidents of fraud which they have addressed.
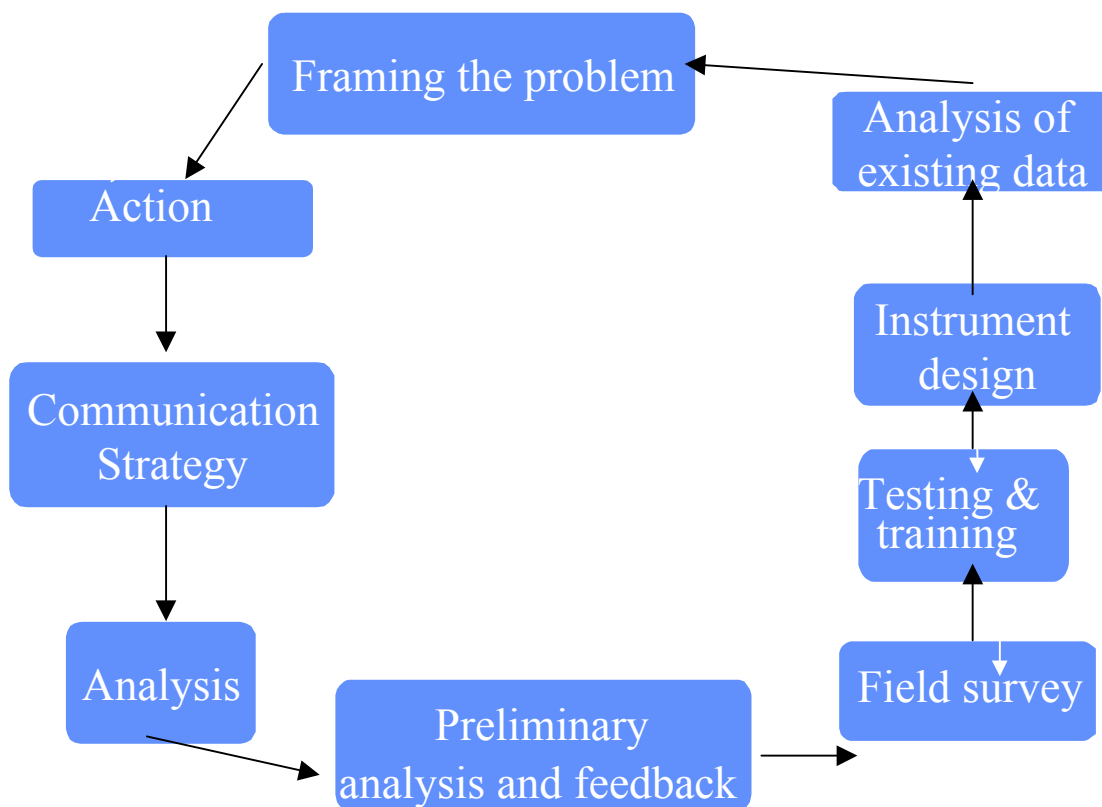
The SDS cycle

Figure 1; CIET's Project Cycle[4]

Other key features of the community-based survey methodology are:

(a) <u>Conducting large surveys</u> (in Uganda, for example, 18,000 households or 90,000 people were surveyed) and get sufficient information to make statements about each district's levels of corruption for each topic area addressed by the survey (this is what increases the sample)

(b) <u>Use the Sentinel Community Surveillance method</u> of returning to the same household every two to three years to survey perceived progress against the baseline established in the first survey. This method: (i) is community based rather than service based; (ii) capture trends over time; cycle to cycle, same sites, (iii) combine quantitative and qualitative data; (iv) use results of measurement and risk analysis in planning; (v) establish common language between levels: impact, coverage, quality and cost; (vi) builds local measurement, analysis and communication skills

(c) <u>Data collection method used;</u> The cross design synthesis is based on: (i) analysis of existing data; (ii) household survey; (iii) institutional reviews of institutions providing

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[4] *CIETinternational. 1996. Service Delivery Survey: Corruption in the Police, Judiciary, Revenue and Lands Services, Washington, D.C.: EDI, World Bank.*

services; (iv) interviews with key informants; (v) local authorities meetings and focus groups

The focus groups were used to get an increased understanding of the reasons behind the survey findings in terms of pain and concerns (in the 1998 National Integrity Survey in Uganda, 350 focus groups were held with more than 5,000 people attending). In the focus groups people are also asked to identify what they perceive as the biggest problem and what possible solutions could address this problem (in Uganda, CIET collected one quote from each focus group which provided a unique insight into the real "pain level" caused by corruption at the village level).

(d) To supplement the household survey, the community-based planning approach presented by CIET also provides, as indicated above, for: meetings with local authorities, interviews with key informants, institutional reviews and a survey among service providers (in Uganda 1,500 civil servants were interviewed) to get their insight of the problem. Both in Tanzania and Uganda the service providers have stated problems similar to those identified by the citizens whereas in Bolivia, the service providers were less willing to admit to problems. But they also explain the reasons behind the existing behaviors and structures/systems. A common reason quoted by the service providers for the existing situation is that they are paid less than a living wage and that they have not been paid for the last six months.

(e) The final but not least important part of this survey methodology is to disseminate the findings from the three instruments above to a group of key stakeholders which represents opinion leaders and decision makers. This group will review the problem description with the prioritized causes of corruption and more importantly, assess the viability of the recommendations suggested by the citizens, the focus groups and the service providers, in other words getting a reality check on some of the recommendations.

This approach is based on the notion that: (i) the survey is the first of series, (ii) that the findings will be disseminated as widely and deeply as possible, and (iii) that the work to conduct the survey is only a small proportion of the larger job, the majority of work will be in starting processes and action to implement the action plan resulting from survey and/or action planning workshops conducted at the end of the survey process (in Uganda one national action plan workshop, and 15 district action planning workshops has been held. The proceedings of the district workshops were based on district-specific data presented to a broad-based group of 250 stakeholders and 30-40 sub-county action planning meetings with up 1,000 people attending).

The survey results are disseminated in English and the local language(s), presented in a summary version (2-3 pages), executive summary (15 pages) and a full version (50 pages). In Nicaragua, the government decided independently to send a summary laymen's version to those interviewees who were unfamiliar with percentages. They felt it made sense to give an instant feedback.

V. THE DIAGNOSTIC SURVEY APPROACH

Surveys assessing levels of corruption and establishing international comparison have been initiated and designed by among others Transparency International and the World Bank in Washington. These instruments tend to be much more complex, with many more questions (in some cases up to 200). The sample sizes are much smaller (between 200-500 interviews) and therefore less expensive. Local consultants are hired to conduct some of the interviews. The major use of this type of survey is to make a statement about the levels of corruption and to compare the level of corruption in one country with that in other countries in the same region. The survey results are disseminated at a national workshop and action plans have

been developed in some countries. With the increased number of questions, these surveys provide a great deal of interesting data about specific problems regarding regulatory issues and corrupt practices among different types of civil servants.

VI. SERVICE DELIVERY SURVEYS AS A MANAGEMENT TOOL

As a management tool, the SDS is useful in a number of ways. *First* it gives service providers (managers in the public sector) the information necessary to implement reform, and service users (the public) information to help promote reform. *Second*, SDS provides the public with a "voice" and allows it to exert pressure on service providers to deliver higher quality services. *Third*, concrete data about perceived quality, coverage, cost and timeliness of services are gathered in a relatively unambiguous way during the SDS process. *Finally*, SDS promotes greater participation among service users in the service delivery process. While these roles are important, this part of the paper will focus on the value of the SDS for service providers.

The method by which SDS serves as a management tool is delineated below in a series of steps. Some general points of how SDS relates to the reform process will be presented. This discussion will be followed by a model illustrating these points to clarify how service provision fits into a larger set of goals for the institution. A classification of services will then be presented to demonstrate the best applications of SDS to administrative services. Consequently, a typology of different measurement indicators is presented. Lastly, the outputs of the SDS are summarized.

A. Reform and Surveys

One of the main attributes of SDS is that it is a useful management tool which, if used properly by mangers in the public sector (at the national and municipal level), can increase both the accountability and the results orientation of the civil service. First, the SDS establishes a baseline for public service delivery regarding cost, coverage, quality and timeliness which can then be used to improve the design of a reform program. A service delivery survey can also have "knowledge spill-over" effects which help build capacity within the country to design and implement surveys, as well as to implement results-oriented management. The service delivery methodology can be used by the public sector to manage services contracted out to the private sector. Ultimately, the tool can be used internally by managers at all levels of the government and externally by governmental oversight agencies, politicians, the public, and international donors.

Typically, the ability of a reform program to meet its goals is difficult to establish without a baseline of information that describes the pre-reform state of services. Knowledge of the baseline can help a country set realistic goals for the key outcome of reform — improvement in service delivery to the public. The same indicators that determined the baseline could be monitored and periodically reported in order to measure the reform program's progress. In an environment where democratization is rapidly occurring, such information would be useful to all stakeholders. It can assist the government and donors in responding more effectively to the ultimate beneficiaries of government services — the public and particularly the most vulnerable groups. The indicators can also facilitate "results-oriented management," upon which governments and donors increasingly focus, and can contribute in the medium-term to the introduction of a performance appraisal system.

The effort to determine appropriate and useful indicators of service delivery quality further feeds into improving the design and implementation of reform programs. A well designed survey combined with other relevant information (hard data) can provide information about services by country, region, sector, and/or stakeholder. It can also be used to compare the effects of the program, or different programs, across time, sector, region or country. A survey

with an easy-to-read format provides policy makers with the most important information they need. Policymakers can, for example, be presented with the chosen indicators for the baseline and for subsequent periods. They can also receive a list of programs and the major events/activities that occurred in that year. In this way they can assess the outcomes of these programs, determine which reforms yield the highest net marginal benefits, and analyze the relation between inputs and outcomes.

The process of designing and implementing the survey can help build into the reform process a focus on greater attention to the public. Investigating the perceptions of customers implies valuing their opinions. This helps the movement towards a more customer-oriented government. Although some efforts have been made in the past to touch upon the issue of service delivery in ministerial analysis, SDS can be more comprehensive in scope to address service user experiences. The result is a study which attempts to measure reforms from both a "top-down" as well as "bottom-up" perspective. The study also has implications for other reforms as well. For example, regional indicators can yield information relevant to decentralization reforms.

The product of the early phases of SDS is usually a set of indicators that the government can use to measure a baseline of services and to measure the progress of reforms.

B. Conceptual Framework for Organizational Analysis

To evaluate the government's performance in delivering services, a model of service delivery must be considered. That is, services should be analyzed as linked with the rest of the organizational structure. The model, or conceptual framework, proposed below will help the policymaker not only to evaluate the performance of specific services, but also to evaluate more broadly the mix of services, to consider performance targets, and to assess the rationale underlying the match between services and institutions.

A simple, conceptual framework that characterizes a public institution in terms of its mission, functions, services and outcomes can be used to study SDS. The starting point of the framework can be a ministry of the central government (or any service providing body) viewed in the context in which it and other institutions operate. By including the sectors as well as the institution in the analysis, policy makers will be able to think more specifically about the <u>need for</u> and <u>type of</u> government intervention (or "dis-intervention") in the sector.

Specifically, focusing on the sector as well as the institution has four distinct advantages. *First,* the institution is understood not as an isolated actor, but as a member of the group of actors participating in the sector. *Second*, because the framework is less dependent on a particular institution, the framework is made more general and thus becomes more easily applied to other countries. *Third,* the level of analysis is deepened and enhanced thereby facilitating the identification of problems and difficulties and the tracking of public demand. *Fourth*, the framework allows comparisons to be made across institutional boundaries.

The framework consists of four organizational categories: mission, function, service, and outcome. The <u>mission</u> of an institution is understood to be its main purpose for existing and for a ministry it is the general statement of purpose. The mission has either previously been clearly established and commonly accepted, or is in need of definition, recognition and broad-based acceptance.

In some countries this concept has been taken a step further by introducing a Citizen Charter where the service delivery level and the performance indicators are communicated to the public. Consequences may occur if an established service delivery contract is not upheld. For example, the public does not have to pay if the train is late (UK) or if a request is not responded to within a certain time frame, the requested decision will automatically be given. The <u>functions</u>, on the other hand, are more specific statements of purpose. By undertaking certain functions and actions, the institution fulfills its mission. Similarly, in order to carry

out a function, an institution must deliver <u>services</u>, among other things. If the services are delivered well, then it can be said that the institution has fulfilled a given function. Finally, the institution must assess the <u>outcomes</u> of its service delivery and other core functions.

What are the net public and private benefits gained from the provision of services by the ministry? Services and other core functions delivered should be viewed not only in terms of satisfying the mission and the functions of the institution but also in terms of their social and economic impact. Indeed, the mission should be partly defined in these terms. The organizational model developed here (see Figure 1) should be applied to all the governmental institutions operating in a given sector. This methodology will yield results that are more easily comparable across sectors (and countries).
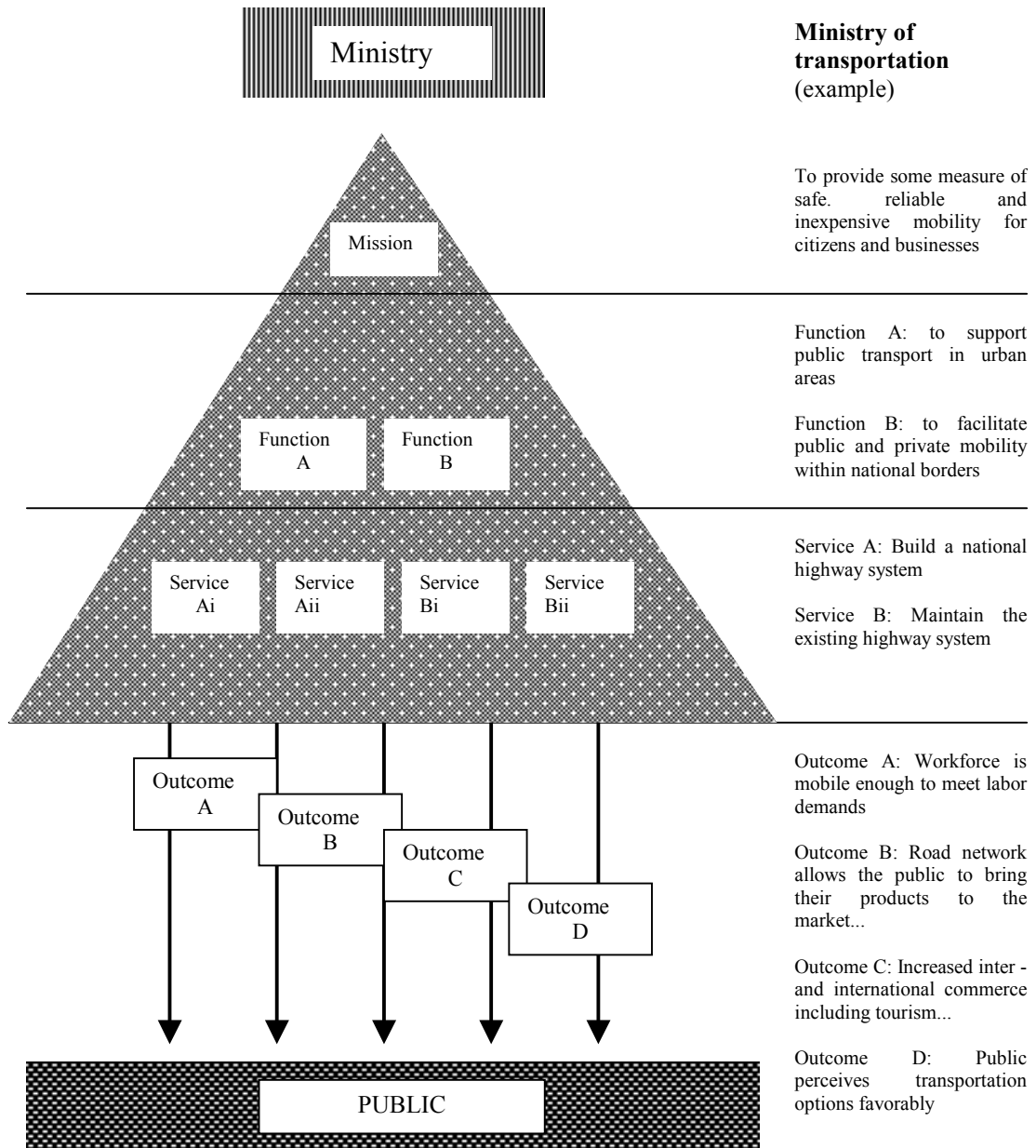
Ministry

Ministry of transportation (example)

Mission

To provide some measure of safe. reliable and inexpensive mobility for citizens and businesses

Function A

Function B

Function A: to support public transport in urban areas

Function B: to facilitate public and private mobility within national borders

Service Ai

Service Aii

Service Bi

Service Bii

Service A: Build a national highway system

Service B: Maintain the existing highway system

Outcome A

Outcome B

Outcome C

Outcome D

Outcome A: Workforce is mobile enough to meet labor demands

Outcome B: Road network allows the public to bring their products to the market...

Outcome C: Increased inter - and international commerce including tourism...

Outcome D: Public perceives transportation options favorably

PUBLIC

Figure 2: Example of Mission, Functions, Services, and Outcomes of a Ministry

VII. TYPOLOGY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES

A conceptual framework for delivering services in general involving the mission, functions, services, and outcomes of a ministry has been presented. However, it remains to be defined exactly what services are being discussed.

The following framework classifies the types of government services into three general categories: institutional, technical and administrative. This typology is adapted from Merilee S. Grindle [5] who identifies four types of "state capacity": institutional, technical, administrative and political.

- Institutionally-oriented services set and enforce the rules that govern economic and political interactions. Legislation on international trade and regulation of industry are examples of institutional services.
- Technical services are considered to be the management of micro (sectoral) and macroeconomic policy. Rate-setting for utilities and the imposition of import duties are examples of technical services.
- Administrative services are undertaken for three basic reasons: (i) correction of market failure, (ii) redistribution, and (iii) promotion of the common good. Market failures may be due to the existence of natural monopolies, public goods, information asymmetries, undefined property rights, or high transaction costs. For example, many governments choose to provide water and sewerage services due to the natural monopoly characteristics of the sector. Governments may provide services on the grounds of redistribution. Public education is an example of a redistribute service. Government may also provide a service on the grounds that such a service promotes the common good (libraries, for example). Overlap between the categories does exist in practice. (See Figure 2 for examples of ministries and service types).

Figure 3: Examples of Ministries and Service Types

	Ministry of Finance	**Ministry of Energy**	**Ministry of Agriculture**
Institutional	Promulgate regulations on foreign exchange use	Law regulating government owned utilities	Land reform legislation
Technical	Adjust interest rate	Set the tariff	Set rates for subsidized credit
Administrative	Issue paychecks	Generate and distribute reliable, affordable and accessible electricity	Provide extension services

SDS generally focuses on administrative services for two main reasons. First, these services are easier to measure than institutional and technical services. Second, the citizenry has more first-hand experience with these services, whereas the other services are experienced indirectly. Citizens should have strong opinions and accurate first-hand information regarding administrative services, because citizens are most effected by these types of services on a daily basis.

A. Types of Measurements

The methodology for the measurement of service delivery generally relies on two types of data: (i) quantitative indicators of administrative services, and (ii) perception indicators of administrative services. A third set of data, Economic and Sectoral Performance (ESP) indicators of institutional and technical services, can also be applied. However, as causality

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[5] *Merilee S. Grindle,* Challenging the State: Crisis and Innovation in Latin America and Africa*, Cambridge University Press, 1996*

and time lag issues affect these variables severely, they should only be seen as rough proxies for institutional service provision. These variables fit into the fiscal aspect of the policymaking framework and are often collected using the standard statistical mechanisms of national and international monitoring. They are measured by SDS only to the extent that they directly have an effect on the quantitative and perception indicators of administrative services.

This package of indicators is used for several reasons. First, the package measures (directly or indirectly) all three types of services that are being delivered by the government. Second, the package measures services at the national as well as the sectoral and district level. Third, the package provides objective as well as subjective measurements of service delivery. Information gained from one indicator will help the design and implementation of the others.

Quantitative Indicators of Administrative Services (QA Indicators) measure the government's ability to provide services.[6] QA Indicators include four types: inputs, outputs, outcomes, and efficiency ratios. The terms inputs, outputs, and outcomes roughly correspond to the concepts of inputs, processes, and impacts used in project evaluation and employed by the World Bank and many major donor agencies.

- Inputs refer to the amount of resources (financial and personnel) used. Measuring the inputs to service delivery can provide a rough standard for comparison over years and across countries. The data for input measurements can be drawn from government expenditures records. Budgets may also be used if the government has a good record of fund disbursements as dictated by the budget.

- Outputs refer to the units produced or services provided. For example, the number of children-days for a primary school is a measure of its output. The ratio of outputs to inputs can be used as a measurement of the efficiency of service delivery.

- Outcomes, on the other hand, are a measurement of the actual effect of the services on society. Outcome indicators report results, including quality, of a service. The ratio of outcomes to inputs can also be used as a measurement of the efficiency, or marginal social benefit (if applicable), of service production. An example of an input/outcome ratio would be the cost of raising the test score of an average student. The ratios of outputs and outcomes to inputs are considered efficiency ratios. Knowing these ratios for a number of services can help planners allocate resources efficiently.

- Finally, explanatory information may be included for some services. The purpose of the explanatory data are to help explain environmental variables that might influence service delivery. For example, a particularly bad rainy season will have a negative effect on the ability of the Ministry of Transportation to maintain the road system. Explanatory data should differentiate between variables that are outside the control of the agency in question (demographics, for example) and those that are within its power to affect (staffing patterns, for example). These data should also help the government to avoid blame for factors that are not under its control.

The quantitative indicators can be measured using existing data (if appropriate), client surveys, and observation studies that document actual service delivery to verify existing data or to fill the gaps in data. These quantitative indicators will measure service delivery across several parameters: access, reliability, cost, and effectiveness, in addition to efficiency, as mentioned above.[7]

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[6] *Much of this section is taken from Harry P. Hatry, James R. Fountain, Jr., Lorraine Kremer, and Jonathan M. Sullivan, eds., Service Efforts and Accomplishments Reporting: Its Time Has Come . Norwalk, CT: Governmental Accounting Standards Board, 1990, pp. 1-50.*

[7] *Harry P. Hatry, James R. Fountain, Jr., Lorraine Kremer, and Jonathan M. Sullivan, eds., Service Efforts and Accomplishments Reporting: Its Time Has Come . Norwalk, CT: Governmental Accounting Standards Board, 1990, pp. 1-50.*

- <u>Access</u> measures the number of service users who can contract for services, as well as those who are able to make use of them. Access can be limited by many factors including distance, cost, gender, and seasonally.
- <u>Reliability</u> refers to service provision on a consistent and timely basis. For example, services may not be reliable if clients are uncertain of operating hours or have to wait in long lines.
- <u>Cost</u> refers to unit costs and efficiency in the use of resources and the cost of the service relative to the client's budget constraints.
- <u>Effectiveness</u> refers to the expected impact of the service. These measures, when taken together, provide for a more complete description of a particular service. For instance, it is not sufficient to know that the cost per unit for having a telephone installed in the home is rather low. It is also beneficial to discover which segments of the population would be able to acquire and maintain telephone services, and also whether or not having a telephone was in fact undesirable because of unreliable service (constant breakdown of lines, high maintenance costs, expensive and difficult to find spare parts, and so on.).

The perception indicators, in turn, measure how the services are being experienced by the public. Surveys enable the customer to voice an opinion on the quality of service delivery, to make suggestions for improvements, and to indicate the relative importance of particular services. The measurement parameters of cost, reliability and access also form the core of questions regarding public perception of service delivery. By focusing on these same parameters, the government will be able to track demand and relevance of these services better.

VIII. INDICATOR SELECTION AND CONCLUSION

Indicators can be chosen for the national survey based on the missions of the selected ministries and the preferences of the government. The menu of indicators might well vary from country to country. However, a given country might wish to maintain the same list of indicators in the short term to facilitate comparisons of indicators over time.

It is important to report indicators for geographical areas and social sectors, because services may vary according to these variables. Particularly vulnerable areas and social sectors can be spot-checked for differences in service delivery in accordance with the priorities of the government. Other variables to consider include gender, minority group, age, and income.

Several factors will influence the selection of sectors to be surveyed. First, the government's priorities (based upon the needs expressed by its constituency or perceived "weaknesses") will heavily influence the selection. Second, guiding the selection will be a set of objective criteria that indicate the impact of the sector on the social and economic system. The criteria include: (i) economic and financial impact (share of GDP or exports in the sector); (ii) employment impact (share of labor force employed in sector, both public and private share of public sector employment in sector); and (iii) basic needs impact (degree to which sector satisfies basic needs, such as water and sanitation, education and health).

In conclusion, SDS generates a certain number of outputs and outcomes. Some of the outputs of SDS might include:

1. providing indicators for use in designing better reform programs and holding government accountable for service delivery to the public
2. providing valuable experiences for use in refining the SDS creation process
3. improving survey design and implementation capacity within a particular country.

Some outcomes of SDS might include:

1. changing the way decision makers make decisions (service delivery to the public begins and stays a priority),

2. mainstreaming the use of SDS into World Bank and other multilateral organizations' operations,
3. helping to improve design of reform programs,
4. improving service delivery to the public,
5. fostering dialogue between people and government incorporating donors into a system of accountability so that governments and donors are partners in the process of designing and implementing effective programs.

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