

# TAKING ACCOUNTABILITY TO SCALE: A DISCUSSION OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN GPSA-SUPPORTED PROJECTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY INSTITUTIONS\*

June 2015

Engagement between accountability institutions (AIs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) is an important dimension in the theory of change of the Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA). According to the GPSA's theory of change, AIs and CSOs, by working together, can benefit and strengthen each other and contribute to government accountability. But what does this approach look like in practice? What initiatives are being implemented under GPSA-supported projects and how? This note takes a look at the efforts being made by the CSOs implementing GPSA grants. It explores the strategies used and the challenges that have been encountered, with the aim of learning from ongoing experiences in this area.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The GPSA seeks to deepen knowledge and practice related to the benefits and impacts of engagement between CSOs and AIs in their efforts to advance social accountability initiatives. The GPSA Results Framework explicitly recognizes, in its Outcome 2 (see [here](#)), that CSOs and AIs can work together to strengthen government accountability and improve access to services through a broad spectrum of activities, from jointly gathering evidence to coordinating efforts and/ or applying pressure to bring about change.

But it also recognizes that CSOs, especially in systems where formal accountability is weak (which encompass both the other two branches of government and other state oversight agencies) can be stymied as they push for greater government accountability.

The theory of change assumes that AIs can benefit from CSOs' information on government performance, important for the oversight of public

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institutions, programs, and services. This outcome rests on the premise that the World Bank has a comparative advantage, rooted in its ongoing dialogue and technical assistance to AIs, such as supreme audit institutions (SAIs), anti-corruption offices, information commissions, ombudsman institutions (OIs), and the legislative and judicial branches of government. It is also acknowledged that the World Bank staff

(task team leader) responsible for supervising each GPSA grant —based on a political economy analysis of the opportunities and challenges specific to the local context, as well as the global knowledge generated by the GPSA— can thus facilitate such engagement. To this end, grantees must answer two specific questions in the biannual grant progress report.

*In the last 6 months...*

*Have you been able to obtain information from any of the horizontal accountability agencies/institutions that the project planned to target?*

choose one      additional comments

YES     NO      \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

*Have you been able to engage in dialogue or collaboration with any of the horizontal accountability agencies/institutions that the project planned to target?*

YES     NO      \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

As part of the support provided by the GPSA team, a specific session was held for the first two rounds of GPSA grantees during the 2014 GPSA grantees’ workshop. The topic was also addressed during sessions at the GPSA Global Partners Forum in May 2015.

At the 2014 workshop, GPSA grantees said they were interested in exploring opportunities for engaging with AIs to maximize the impact of social accountability initiatives. But moving toward greater engagement poses challenges. While many of the GPSA grantees surveyed during the workshop<sup>1</sup> believed that AIs are cautious about engaging in social accountability

initiatives, it also became clear that grantees’ knowledge of how AIs operate is incomplete (see the figure below on the interaction between GPSA grantees and the OIs in their respective countries).

Even when GPSA grantees have been working on transparency and accountability issues and are aware of the existence of relevant AIs, some have a hard time identifying possible opportunities for collaboration. Meanwhile, their limited capacity for political economy analysis (on the interests and incentives for such engagement from the perspective of the AIs) would prevent them from differentiating between captured AIs and weak AIs.

<sup>1</sup> Using Turning Point technology, workshop participants were prompted to answer multiple-choice questions, and the results were immediately generated as input for discussion.

**BOX 1**

The GPSA Global Partners Forum (May 2015) brought together AIs representatives and civil society organizations (CSOs) to discuss the possibilities of collaboration. Participants pointed out that when CSOs participate in the audit process, course corrections can be made along the way, mitigating delays of a year or longer for necessary SAI interventions. Some authorities from accountability institutions, meanwhile, expressed concerns that such participatory audits might be biased or skewed by political interests, and they discussed the need to establish means of verification. In response, one participant shared an experience of using a camera to determine whether the work agreed on as part of a development program had in fact been completed. The resulting photographs solved the challenge of verifying the results of participatory audits.

One year after the workshop, promising advances on CSO-AI engagement have been made by some GPSA-grants, but as indicated in the March 2015 program evaluation, progress has not been consistent across all projects. Similar findings resulted from an online survey sent to the grantees in February 2015, as well as in the exchanges made during the webinar *“How can citizens collaborate and engage with accountability institutions to improve government performance and access to fundamental rights?”* (see [here](#)) and the virtual forum on the GPSA Knowledge Platform *“Making accountability processes work: engagement between civil society and state accountability institutions”* (see [here](#)), which were held between March and April 2015.

Information was also gathered from a review of available progress reports submitted by GPSA grantees and the supervision reports by the WB staff responsible for supervising the grants. These efforts were supplemented by communication with grantees, the recently published Note 9 (see [here](#)), a series of blog posts (see [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)), and Brown Bag Lunches (see [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)) organized around the topic. The question, then, is, how have the projects advanced on a path of engagement with AIs?

### What is your experience with the Ombudsman of your country?



1. I'm only aware of its overall mission and mandate
2. I've used some reports that I found useful
3. I have filed complaints to the OI
4. I have worked collaboratively with the Ombudsman office

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***“The difference between weak and captured AIs matter for CSOs... Social accountability efforts should bolster the weak and challenge the captured.”***

- Jonathan Fox, 2015 GPSA Global Partners Forum.

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## II. EFFORTS TO PROMOTE COLLABORATION BETWEEN GPSA-SUPPORTED PROJECTS AND AIs

As discussed in GPSA Note 9, collaboration between AIs and CSOs could yield benefits for both parties, but it could also be hard to put in practice: it takes trust, capacities, resources, and a scenario that is conducive to collaboration, where prior knowledge among the actors or a shared history of working together play a key role, where the benefits outweigh the risks of collaboration, and where it is recognized that the State and civil society are not monolithic actors.

However the obstacles to promote engagement between AIs and CSOs could be overcome, as observed in the efforts made by GPSA-supported projects in various areas.

- In **Tajikistan**, Oxfam-Tajikistan is implementing a social accountability project on access to water and sanitation, known as TWISA (see [here](#)), and in the context of this initiative it invited the OI to participate in the working group for the GPSA-supported project to develop indicators for citizen monitoring of service delivery, which will then be shared with the regulatory agency for water. To this end, Oxfam shared, among other materials, a copy of the GPSA opt-in letter sent by the Government of Tajikistan to the World Bank indicating that it agreed that the GPSA Program operate in the country and provide grants to CSOs. Accordingly, the OI has supported the working group for the project, bringing a human rights' perspective to the water sector. And it has deepened the level of cooperation, too, disseminating information through the media to raise awareness among the general public about the right to water and access to safe drinking water in the country, thus guaranteeing effective service delivery.
- In **the Philippines**, *Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government* (CCAGG) is implementing a grant for community monitoring of the conditional cash transfer program (i-PANTAWID) run by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) of the Government of the Philippines, in order to improve the feedback mechanisms established under the program to achieve its objectives and evaluate beneficiary experiences in terms of health and education services in the northern region of Luzon (see [here](#)). In this framework, CCAGG signed a memorandum of understanding with the DSWD and also created a Steering Committee for the GPSA-supported project and invited the Commission on Audit (with which it had worked on other projects) and the OI to participate (see [here](#)), given the former's experience with citizen participatory audits and the latter's mandate to fight corruption. It is worth noting that CCAGG is one of the few GPSA grantees that has sought to collaborate with both AIs (SAI and OI) on a GPSA-supported project. However, both AIs have responded cautiously to the invitation and have preferred to remain observers. As part of this project, CCAGG organized workshops to discuss the findings from implementation of the government program, which were attended by officials from the Commission on Audit, other partner CSOs involved in the project, and the agencies responsible for implementing the program, such as the Department of Health and the Department of the Interior and Local Government. Regarding CCAGG-OI engagement, the latter recently invited the CCAGG to participate in roundtable discussions on public integrity as part of the institution's own work. CCAGG believes that this will eventually lay the groundwork for more fluid dialogue with the OI authorities to explore opportunities for more active involvement in the GPSA grant.

- In **Moldova**, *Expert-Grup* is implementing a grant to monitor recent reforms in the education sector and oversee services in 100 schools, by facilitating participation and dialogue between students and parents and the school authorities to allocate the budget for the schools (see [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). In that framework, the CSO invited the Advocate for Child Rights (along with the Deputy Minister of Education and the Chairman of the Parliamentary Commission on Education) to join the advisory council for the project on citizen empowerment to improve accountability in education reform, one of the priority items on the country's agenda. The advisory council is expected to meet twice a year to discuss project status, consult on the project evaluation reports, and provide strategic advice on the initiative at the national level to inform policy making in the sector, inasmuch as members of the Council are leaders in the education sector.
- In the **Kyrgyz Republic**, the Development Policy Institute (DPI) is implementing a grant to strengthen village health committees (VHCs) to enable them to better coordinate with local government officials on budgetary processes (see [here](#) and [here](#)). By enabling citizens to provide feedback through the VHCs, the project aims to gather information on rural health priorities for the Ministry of Health and other key decision makers to allocate funds and effectively supervise health determinants (safe drinking water, secure housing, sanitation, health and hygiene, epidemiological conditions, and protection against infections) in the public budget. The DPI has been collaborating with the Chamber of Accounts since 2010 through various projects financed by international donors. More specifically, it has invited experts from the Chamber of Accounts to participate in press conferences to explain to the media various matters related to its work and has taken part in several meetings with the SAI aimed at improving local budget audits.

In order to promote greater effectiveness in local budgets, the DPI is participating in a working group convened by the SAI to develop a methodology for auditing local budgets. In 2015, the DPI organized a series of talks with representatives from the SAI, the Ministry of Finance, and other experts to discuss future methodological guidelines for audits of local budgets and to adopt a social accountability perspective, developing proposals to enhance transparency and accountability for inclusion in the audit manuals for local governments. For example, the DPI has proposed that audits of local governments should look at whether public hearings are being held by the local authorities as required by law to ensure that communities have an opportunity to weigh in on budgetary processes. Dialogue to explore the possibility of collaboration between the two parties continued during the GPSA Global Partners Forum in May 2015, which was attended by the head of the SAI (who previously managed a community development project financed by the World Bank) and the GPSA grant manager from DPI.

- In **Mozambique**, *Concern Universal* (CU) is implementing a grant to strengthen the capacity of community organizations to monitor the quality of health services in the provinces of Niassa and Zambezia (see [here](#) and [here](#)), while also seeking to partner with the Ministry of Health and decision makers at the local, provincial, and national levels to address problems in health care delivery. Accordingly, the CSO has reached out to the Administrative Tribunal (SAI) and the Ombudsman Institution. In both cases, CU requested a meeting, an informal one with the former and a formal one with the latter to explain the initiative, as well as the concept of social accountability. So far, in the context of the GPSA grant, CU has made progress in its dialogue with the SAI, with which it had already established contact for previous projects.

Given the need to enhance the availability of information from the Administrative Tribunal and comply with the external communication standards and good practices set by the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), the GPSA grant offers a more concrete opportunity to explore collaboration with the SAI, also based on the prior work and participation by one of the members of the CU team in events with the African Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (AFROSAI).

- In **Indonesia**, *Wahana Visi Indonesia (WVI)* is implementing a grant to enable citizen engagement in 60 villages in three districts of East Nusa Tenggara province to monitor the MCH (maternal and child health) services at health facilities in villages through sub-district level (see [here](#) and [here](#)). The goal is to generate information that will help the Ministry of Health improve the Jampersal Program and institutionalize social accountability mechanisms to guarantee more effective services. In this context, WVI plans to invite the local Ombudsman from East Nusa Tenggara to join the interface meetings to facilitate dialogue between the community and government officials as part of the process for citizen monitoring of services (Citizen Voice and Action). As part of WVI CVA approach, the communities, with the support of facilitators from the villages, will share the results of citizen report cards and monitoring activities to local authorities, and then create an action plan to improve services. WVI will invite the Ombudsman to participate in future activities to train village facilitators, as well as to spread information on the role of the institution in improving the delivery of public services. With support from the World Bank, the GPSA grantee has initiated dialogue with the OI at the national level (see [here](#)), given the importance of ensuring that grant findings on service delivery at the local level are shared at the national level to shape the discussion on maternal health policy with the Ministry of Health.

- In **Uganda**, the *Africa Freedom of Information Centre (AFIC)* is implementing a grant to strengthen transparency and accountability around contracting and improved service delivery in education, health, and agriculture, through a set of tools to monitor contracts and facilitate access to information. Through this grant, AFIC is seeking to raise public awareness about the role of the country's accountability institutions—Office of the Auditor General (OAG) and the Inspectorate of Government (IG) (Ombudsman)—(see [here](#)). Upon reaching out to the OAG in 2014, AFIC identified several potential areas of collaboration in its meeting with the institution: raise public awareness about both the recommendations of the institution and parliamentary decisions in response, conduct follow up actions on recommendations, and collaborate on training activities with the OAG (see [here](#)). Although its previous experience with the IG, when it was under different leadership, was not very positive, the AFIC reached out again to the IG to explore cooperation in the framework of the GPSA grant and learned about the community monitoring training provided by the IG under the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) as well as the new IG strategy emphasizing prevention (as well as research and enforcement). This raised IG's interest in exploring the possibility of working together with the CSOs which raises hopes for collaboration to train communities on social accountability.

**BOX 2****Other collaborative efforts between CSOs and OIs in development programs supported by the World Bank . . .**

In **Ethiopia**, the Ethiopia Social Accountability Program 2 (see [here](#)) encourages citizens to provide feedback on public service delivery and participate in dialogues with service providers. The goal is to develop a joint action plan in which the government and citizens agree on the steps needed to improve the delivery of services. The ombudsman institution (OI) has been invited to take part and has stated that it could play a role in situations in which the action plans are not being implemented as agreed.

In **Pakistan**, civil society has been working together with the regional Ombudsman of **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa** to use social accountability tools to assess the delivery of 10 basic services (including education, health, sanitation, etc.). By conducting citizen report cards developed by the OI with the support of a university and the CSOs, citizens provide feedback on the quality of public services (see [here](#) and [here](#)).

### III. STRATEGIES ADOPTED: HOW HAVE GPSA GRANTEES ENGAGED WITH AIs?

Many of the GPSA grantees cite challenges to engaging AIs and establishing an atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust. Trust largely depends on the reputation and track record of the CSOs and AIs involved. When an AI is unfamiliar with a particular CSO, it tends to respond cautiously to invitations for collaboration. Underlying that caution are fears and prejudices that individual or collective interests may compromise the AI's autonomy.

CSOs that have worked extensively on the issues at stake, that use information produced by the AIs in their own work, and that have a solid track record are in the best position to identify areas for collaboration.

- In the **Philippines**, the CCAGG has worked with the Commission on Audit since the late 1980s on initiatives for community monitoring of public works and infrastructure projects, which have had a strong impact on the public due to the fraud that was detected, for which the entity was a key ally. In 2012, the partnership with the CSO was strengthened when the head of the Commission on Audit at the time, Gracia Pulido-Tan, implemented phase I of citizen participatory audits, specifically for the CAMANAVA Flood Control Project, together with two other CSOs, including ANSA-EAP, which collaborated with the Commission on Audit (see [here](#)).

**BOX 3**

The case of Fundar in **Mexico**, which has adopted a strategic approach for engagement with the SAI, is noteworthy. Fundar has a long tradition of engaging with the Federal Audit Office (ASF) that began when it approached the SAI to offer information on irregularities it had detected in how the federal government was executing funds in different sectors (health, farm subsidies, official advertising), which prompted the ASF to conduct targeted audits. In addition, Fundar documented the experience of ASF hotline mechanism for reporting irregularities (see [here](#)), for which it interviewed ASF officials. There are two ways in which the CSO supports the ASF, by offering information and by disseminating ASF work, and this requires a degree of knowledge about ASF work that eventually made it possible to conduct workshops for CSOs on how to use the ASF system to search for audit reports (see [here](#)).

- In **Uganda**, the AFIC requested meetings with the Inspectorate of Government (Ombudsman) in the framework of the GPSA grant (see [here](#)), during which it learned about a social accountability program that the institution ran in the northern part of the country, under which community members received training and some materials were developed. Inasmuch as the GPSA-supported program includes training and technical assistance components to help community monitors compile and analyze data from contracts and services, it was possible to identify potential entry points for engagement with the OI (see [here](#)). Consequently, the IG official advised the AFIC to formally request a meeting with the Inspector General of Government to move forward with a structured collaborative process.

In cases in which there is no history of prior collaboration, taking the first step and approaching an AI may require the support and involvement of third parties that are already working with the AI. An example was the GPSA grant in **Tajikistan**, where the Consumers Union—a local Oxfam partner—made the initial contact with the institution.

It takes a long time to build the trust needed for AIs and CSOs to enter into collaborative relationships, so it is important to manage expectations and become familiar with the day-to-day work of each party, making it clear from the start what the scope of the interaction will be. A strategic approach is key, such as the one Concern Universal adopted in **Mozambique** when it reached out to the SAI and the OI.

#### BOX 4

“Getting in touch with them was rather a long process and some trust has to be built to ensure we get anywhere. So far we have held meetings with them, explained the contours of our program, and committed to share with them information about social accountability and program documents and findings. We are still working inside their comfort zone. (. . .) The Tribunal Administrativo seemed more keen to engage with us. And they said: ‘We need to know more about social accountability, what is it? How can we engage? You mean, you want to be part of our audits?’ So, it is clear that, although with some limitations for engagement, the SAI is taking it to a more practical level and, at least, they want to find out what we can actually do together. So we agreed to schedule a small workshop with the SAI around social accountability, its relation to the PFM cycle with a focus on the engagement of the supply and demand side around the oversight function of the State.”

Aly Elias Lala, GPSA 2015 E-Forum (see [here](#)).

Once the first step has been taken, how does engagement between AIs and CSOs proceed?

A few GPSA grantees decided to formalize arrangements through a memorandum of understanding, which provides a solid incentive to reach an explicit agreement on the scope of actions and the roles of the parties as well as a mechanism for eventually institutionalizing the engagement practices into the AIs operations. The CCAGG in the Philippines, Expert-Grup in Moldova, and Oxfam-Tajikistan all took that step. In many cases, drafting an MoU reflects

the preference of AIs for formal processes, while enabling CSOs to establish formal relationships with the institution as a whole (or a particular division in it), instead of with specific individuals. In other cases, the engagement is based on an informal dialogue, with the CSOs opting to prioritize trust-building and agenda-matching activities until mutually agreed upon objectives are established, which can then be translated into a formal agreement with the AI. Concern Universal in Mozambique proceeded in this way.

## BOX 5

“Pursuing partnerships with accountability institutions must be deliberate and well thought out. In our case, before we started to engage the Commission on Audit we had to set targets and agree on goals. We also determined whether these were aligned with COA’s mandate. Once done, we sought out like-minded people from government for informal and exploratory meetings to gauge reactions and fine-tune action points. During the engagement itself, we operated with a certain level of flexibility to adapt to changing situations. But in all these, it was clear that we respected each institution’s non-negotiables/principles.”

Vivien Suerte-Cortez (ANSA-EAP), GPSA 2015 E-Forum (see [here](#)).

The subnational presence of these AIs is also important for GPSA grants, as in the case of OIs in Tajikistan, the Philippines, and Mozambique and the SAls in the Philippines, though it should also be noted the weak capacities of AIs at subnational level and therefore the need for assistance.

Moreover, for a few GPSA grants, including the ones in the Philippines (CCAGG), Moldova (Expert-Grup), and Tajikistan (Oxfam), engagement between CSOs and AIs has occurred in a multi-stakeholder environment (see [here](#)), for example through the creation of steering committees, working groups, and advisory councils, whereas in other cases, collaboration between CSOs and AIs has been of a bilateral nature.

## IV. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION BETWEEN GPSA GRANTEEES AND AIs

Although there has been some progress with efforts to link up GPSA-grants with AIs through an initial dialogue and embark on collaborative actions, there are still some overall challenges. First, these efforts vary considerably from one grant to the next, with small but promising advances being made by the first round of grants.

The 2015 evaluation of the GPSA Program recommends: (a) getting AIs involved from the start of a project; and (b) efforts by the grant supervisor (task team leader) and the GPSA

capacity-building advisor (Advisor) to conduct closer supervision, provide advisory services, and share practices by other GPSA grantees as well as from sources of global knowledge on the subject.

With respect to recommendation (a), it should be noted that a couple of grantees reported that this dimension was not considered from the start of the proposal, despite appearing to be a widespread practice across all grantees. And although at least one of them subsequently began to explore such engagement—demonstrating the flexibility to adjust project design midstream—this also points up the need to take a fresh look at the following questions: How could this dimension be better reflected in the grant application form during the GPSA calls for proposals? How should the matter be addressed at orientation sessions held by the GPSA team during calls for proposals? How does the committee of technical experts evaluate AI engagement (or its lack) when selecting proposals? Also, how can the GPSA Global Partners facilitate collaboration between grantees and appropriate AIs? For example, GPSA Global Partners that are not grantees themselves but work with such institutions could facilitate connections. They could also help identify areas of common interest between the grantees and the AIs based on their own experience.

It should be clarified that although we do not expect all GPSA grants to engage with AIs—each grantee should make that decision based

on an analysis of the pros and cons that takes into account the local context—it is important to specify the reason why engagement is not possible at the time. Some grantees indicated that they plan to explore opportunities at a later date because the respective institution is going through a transition process (for example, when the heads of the institutions have not been appointed), or during the second year of grant implementation. Others were more specific, noting the importance of consolidating the relationship with the executive branch in the framework of constructive engagement so that engagement with the AI could be explored at a later date, suggesting that the latter course of action would be a sensitive matter. In other cases, the countries do not have particular AIs or the AIs were regarded by the CSOs as weak or lacking sufficient autonomy.

In relation to the second recommendation in the evaluation of the GPSA Program, Outcome 2 in the GPSA Results Framework rests on the premise that the World Bank has a comparative advantage due to its dialogue with public institutions (including AIs), and accordingly, the WB official responsible for overseeing the grant, or the Country Office, could facilitate the contact between the AI and the grantee and thus contribute for CSO-AI engagement.

Despite the technical assistance that the World Bank has provided in the past to AIs in countries with GPSA grants (for example, the IDF grant to the Ombudsman in the Philippines and support for the Chamber of Accounts in the Dominican Republic and for the Inspectorate General of Government in Uganda, to name just a few), World Bank staff have thus far played a limited role in facilitating contacts between the two parties. With the exception of a handful of grants for which the World Bank has provided some qualitative support (for example, in Indonesia, where WVI was in contact with the Ombudsman at the district level and the World Bank facilitated the contact with the Ombudsman at the national level, or in the Kyrgyz Republic,

where the DPI had already been in contact with the Chamber of Accounts since 2010 through other projects financed by international donors and the World Bank facilitated dialogue with the head of that office, who had previously served as coordinator for a community development program supported by the World Bank), engagement between CSOs and AIs has largely been established without World Bank intermediation.

It should be noted here that historically, the World Bank has maintained dialogue with certain types of AIs, such as SAs, legislatures, and anti-corruption offices, and to a lesser extent with OIs and human rights commissions.

Moreover, that dialogue has been conducted more by the World Bank's financial management and governance specialists than by other sector specialists at the Bank (e.g. health and education specialists). This raises a question about the extent to which the capacity to facilitate engagement between CSOs and AIs is affected by the sector to which the World Bank TTL responsible for grant supervision pertains. Whereas the World Bank TTLs for GPSA grants in Mozambique, the Dominican Republic, and Uganda are mapped to the governance sector, the TTLs for grants in Indonesia and the Kyrgyz Republic are mapped to the health sector. And in this latter case (health), to what extent could coordination between the specialist from another sector (for example, health) and the governance specialist at the World Bank affect this intermediation capacity? To what extent is the potential for intermediation contingent on the Country Office's dialogue with the executive branch? It is too soon to assess whether the theory of change needs to be adjusted or whether the GPSA Results Framework should be modified, but these questions should be kept in mind as matters that will require clarification going forward.

There is also a need to build the capacity of CSOs, especially GPSA grantees, so they are able to assess opportunities and devise stra-

gies for engaging AIs as part of the political economy analysis and practice expected by the GPSA program. To do this, it is important to understand the incentives and interests of AIs (in other words, to see how things look through their eyes), which, in many cases, are contending with not only weak political support but also limited resources and capacity—especially at the local level.

Therefore, CSOs must make the effort to identify the constraints AIs face, as well as potential areas of support, the type of information or data that might be useful to them and how it would be used, entry points (formal and informal, and at what level of the AI), and how to promote coordination between AIs since one institution alone may not be effective in exacting full accountability.

*For GPSA grants that monitor government projects financed by the World Bank and are audited by the respective national SAI, how could the World Bank promote engagement between the GPSA grantee and the SAI?*

In some cases, lack of understanding or mistrust about what constitutes collaboration and the costs involved become barriers for engagement. In situations where the AIs are not held in high regard by the public and their effectiveness can be measured by the degree to which they are accountable to the citizenry, engagement with CSOs should be considered as an opportunity to strengthen these institutions and boost AIs legitimacy (“CSOs can activate and empower AIs”). This is particularly important when AIs do not publish information about their activities. One entry point for building linkages with

these institutions is to identify opportunities for CSOs to work with them to publicize information, including the media as third-party partners.

Efforts could also be made to identify AIs’ gaps that CSOs could help fill. For example, the GPSA- grant on monitoring a conditional cash transfer program and that is implemented by the Information and Resource Center for Development (CIRD) (see [here](#)) might offer an opportunity to engage with the Office of the Comptroller General in Paraguay, which has already established a citizen participation unit and developed a complaints mechanism and is, furthermore, a member of the Citizen Participation Commission of the Organization of Latin American and Caribbean Supreme Audit Institutions (OLACEFS). Likewise, the GPSA grant implemented by CARE Morocco (see [here](#)) to improve educational access and quality in Morocco by promoting collaboration between parents associations and education authorities could explore citizens’ awareness and use of the Ombudsman’s grievance mechanisms by the communities targeted by the grant as a first step towards working with the AI.

#### *Identifying entry points for engagement...*

- *What type of data and information would the actors (communities, project teams) collect and compile, and how could it be used by the accountability institution (AI) (incentives)?*
- *Has the ombudsman institution (OI) received complaints similar to the ones identified by the communities involved in the GPSA-supported project?*
- *Could the findings in the audit reports prepared by the supreme audit institution (SAI) supplement the data collected by the GPSA-supported project and/or by the OI investigations in order to strengthen reforms based on evidence?*

Another key challenge consists in showing AI officials the benefits and impacts of engagement practices, while conveying the message that the capacity to collaborate emerges over a long period of time as the relationship strengthens. Accordingly, the recommendation is to engage various actors in practical exercises (e.g. workshops) where they can learn about the benefits of engagement and the concrete results that social accountability initiatives can offer.

Another consideration is how the World Bank can support AIs in their relationships with CSOs—particularly in the context of the Bank’s efforts to mainstream the new citizen engagement strategy into its work. With few exceptions (one being the support provided to the IG in Uganda [see [here](#), p 46] to implement its citizen engagement framework), the focus of the World Bank’s support has been on building the technical capacities of AIs.

Meanwhile, the issue of cost is no small consideration. Sometimes, reluctance to engage has to do with the investment that the institutions would have to make, not only in terms of human resources but also, specifically, in terms of the financial cost. Yet, gradual progress can be made towards engagement without the need for heavy investment, since political will is the primordial ingredient for advancing citizen engagement, as well as consideration of the context in which such actions will unfold.

As Tom Pegram said, “perhaps we should calibrate our expectations and recognize that small achievements in certain environments can, actually, be very significant” (2015 GPSA E-Forum -see [here](#)).

*The World Bank provided support for two GPSA grantees by facilitating knowledge sharing on their CSO-AI experiences (specifically, between ANSA-EAP in the Philippines and DPI in the Kyrgyz Republic, with the former sharing its extensive experience working with the SAI in its country), and between a GPSA grantee and a Global Partner (World Vision Indonesia and CARE UK/Peru), with the latter sharing its experience working with a group of indigenous social monitors, and Health Forum, which collaborated with the Ombudsman at the subnational level in the Peruvian region of Puno.*

With this in mind, we think it is important to note the advances made by GPSA grants on CSOs-AIs engagement. This requires conducting monitoring and evaluation, devising measurements or basic indicators to capture the small—though no less significant for being so—achievements in a local context, and learning lessons to strengthen engagement and inform the GPSA strategy and efforts by other grants.

