



STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR MAINSTREAMING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN WORLD BANK GROUP OPERATIONS

The objective of this strategic framework is to mainstream citizen engagement in World Bank Group-supported policies, programs, projects, and advisory services and analytics to improve their development results and within the scope of these operations, contribute to building sustainable national systems for citizen engagement with governments and the private sector. Progress toward this objective will be assessed using indicators included in program, project, and corporate results frameworks.

*Engaging
with Citizens
for Improved
Results*



Executive Summary

The World Bank Group (WBG) has a long history of multi-stakeholder engagement in the operations it funds. Multi-stakeholder engagement began in the 1970s, was formalized in the 1980s, and deepened throughout the 1990s through participatory approaches in operations. Concepts of social inclusion, social accountability, and governance and anticorruption (GAC) emerged during the early 2000s. The landmark 2004 World Development Report *Making Services Work for Poor People* highlighted the benefits of listening to citizens to improve pro-poor targeting of service delivery. The 2007 GAC Strategy introduced engagement with demand-side actors, and its 2012 Update undertook to “support initiatives that enable greater openness in governments and closer interaction among citizens, the private sector and the state.” Also in 2012, the establishment of the Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA) provided a mechanism for capacity building for civil society organizations (CSOs) to implement social accountability programs in countries where governments have agreed to these approaches. In addition, the Bank, IFC, and MIGA all require engagement with project-affected people and communities as part of their safeguard policies or performance standards.

The purpose of this strategic framework for citizen engagement (CE) is to capture the diverse experiences, assess lessons learned, and outline methods and entry points to provide a more systematic and results-focused approach for the WBG. Its objective is to facilitate mainstreaming of CE in WBG-supported policies, programs, projects, and advisory services and analytics to improve their development results and, within the scope of these operations, to strengthen engagement processes between governments and the private sector and citizens at the national, regional, local, or sectoral level, as applicable.

The WBG Strategy incorporates CE, including beneficiary feedback, specifically in its treatment of inclusion, which entails empowering citizens to participate in the development process and integrating citizen voice in development programs as key accelerators to achieving results. In addition, under the right circumstances, CE can contribute to achieving development outcomes in support of the goals the WBG aims to support through all of the operations it funds: eradicating extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity in a sustainable manner. The WBG is therefore committed to mainstreaming CE in operations it supports where it can improve outcomes, and it has made a strong corporate commitment to incorporating CE in 100 percent of projects that have clearly identified beneficiaries (“beneficiary feedback”).

This framework builds on stocktaking and lessons learned from WBG-financed operations across regions and sectors. A key lesson is the importance of country context, government ownership, and clear objectives for CE. Certain regions, such as East and South Asia, have a long history of using participatory development processes, while others, including the Middle East and North Africa region have new opportunities to scale up CE as a result of recent political transitions. A stocktaking of World Bank-financed projects shows that the majority of projects with CE activities have been service delivery, natural resource management, and social inclusion projects. CE is less prevalent in public financial management and governance projects. There is an increasing effort to systematically track and report on results, and draw lessons learned from these activities.

Growing evidence confirms that under the right conditions, CE can help governments achieve improved development results. This framework includes a comprehensive review of impact literature, which has found positive links between CE and improved public service delivery, public financial management, governance, and social inclusion/empowerment. Evidence also shows, however, that the outcomes of CE are highly context-specific and sensitive to governments' and citizens' capacity and willingness to engage, as well as to social, political, economic, environmental, cultural, geographic, and other factors, such as gender dynamics.

The approach to mainstreaming CE in WBG-supported operations is guided by five principles: it is results-focused, it involves engaging throughout the operational cycle, it seeks to strengthen country systems, it is context-specific, and it is gradual. As CE is not without cost, opportunities for engaging citizens in WBG-supported operations should be sought where such engagement can contribute to improved development results. While the preparation of WBG-supported operations frequently involves stakeholder consultations, CE during program and project implementation can be enhanced to facilitate ongoing learning and feedback and to allow making adjustments as necessary. A gradual approach to mainstreaming is recommended to avoid the pitfalls of “box-ticking” and tokenistic approaches, build the capacity of governments and citizens to engage on a sustainable basis, including through adequate processes and systems, and continue to learn and make adjustments as necessary.

While mandatory consultations have been the main form of engagement to date, numerous context-specific entry points for CE exist across the World Bank Group product portfolio. Consultations are mandatory in the preparation of Systematic Country Diagnostics, Country Partnership Frameworks, Program-for-Results operations, and investment project financing (IPF) operations that trigger certain safeguards. In IPF, consultations and grievance redress mechanisms are largely motivated by safeguard requirements and are often focused on project preparation¹. CE during program and project implementation can be scaled up to facilitate ongoing feedback and learning and improved monitoring. There are additional context-specific entry points in Systematic Country Diagnostics, policy dialogue, advisory services and analytics, and IPFs. Much of the work to date on CE has taken place in IPFs—for example, in community-driven development or service delivery projects. Other opportunities include citizen-led monitoring of procurement and other approaches to build feedback into the project cycle. IFC and MIGA engage with stakeholders, including citizens, in the context of their Performance Standards on Social and Environmental Sustainability, which require consultations and grievance redress mechanisms if specific performance standards are triggered. In addition, IFC is piloting CE in public-private dialogues and results measurement approaches.

Scaling up CE across WBG-supported operations for improved results entails several elements. First, an analysis of the specific country, sector, or program/project context is required to identify the appropriate entry point(s) for CE. Second, the objectives of the engagement need to be clearly defined in the context of the operation's results chain, and clearly communicated. Third, a stakeholder mapping is needed to inform the design of the engagement mechanism through an understanding of the interests, incentives, and objectives of key stakeholders,

¹ “The draft Environmental and Social Framework proposes that the Borrower will develop and implement a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP). This SEP will describe the timing and methods of engagement with the project-affected communities and other stakeholders (See ESS10, para 14). This is a mandatory requirement. Additional details will be clarified in forthcoming procedures”.

ensuring inclusion and representation, including for women and marginal and vulnerable groups. Fourth, the engagement level and mechanism need to be tailored to the context, objectives, and willingness and capacity of governments and citizens to engage, and they should support existing national processes for CE as much as possible. Finally, the outcomes of mainstreaming CE activities in WBG operations need to be monitored and reported systematically and consistently.

The quality of mandatory consultations can be enhanced, and there is significant scope to scale up collaborative approaches. Consultations need to respect good practice principles, including providing adequate notice periods and closing the feedback loop more systematically. Grievance redress mechanisms are mandatory in IPFs that trigger certain safeguard policies, but they do not always function well during project implementation. In collaboration with client governments, teams can pursue opportunities to scale up collaborative approaches (such as participatory planning and budgeting, and citizen membership in decision-making bodies) and empowering mechanisms for citizen engagement (such as community management of resources) in WBG-supported operations, in the appropriate context and in areas where they can contribute to improved results.

Improved understanding and monitoring of the outcomes of CE in WBG-supported operations is an objective of this framework. Because such monitoring and reporting is not systematic, it is challenging to learn from and evaluate CE activities. To enhance measuring and reporting on CE going forward, therefore, the framework proposes a focus on clarifying results chains and citizen engagement indicators in five outcome areas (a) improved service delivery, (b) public financial management, (c) governance, (d) natural resource management, and (e) inclusion/empowerment. The results chains and indicators have been informed by impact studies and experience with CE within and outside the WBG.

Access to information is a necessary but not sufficient enabling condition for effective citizen engagement. Relevant information needs to be made available to citizens in a timely manner and in a format they can understand. At the same time, information does not automatically lead to engagement or participation, which depend on additional context factors. ICT has the potential to be leveraged for increased outreach and inclusivity at limited cost, but to yield results it needs to be integrated into the design of CE processes. Further work is required to isolate and study the contribution ICT can make to CE processes and outcomes.

Adequate capacity of governments and citizens to engage is an important prerequisite for scaling up CE in WBG-supported operations. Governments need to understand the benefits of engaging with citizens and to have the time and capacity to respond to their feedback. Capacity building of governments should prioritize strengthening existing institutions. Citizens/CSOs need to be able and willing to engage, and they need to acquire an understanding of relevant tools, processes, responsibilities, and constraints. Capacity building for CE initiatives in WBG-supported operations has been successfully integrated into program and project design and implementation, providing valuable lessons for future opportunities.

Scaling up CE in WBG-funded operations needs to be supported by comprehensive staff training and systematic knowledge management. Only a limited number of WBG staff have in-depth understanding of and practical experience with CE processes. Assessing staff capacity and developing staff training is planned as part of the implementation of this framework. In

addition, systematic and pooled knowledge management through a CE knowledge platform and structured knowledge exchange will be important.

Mainstreaming CE in the new WBG structure will require collaboration between the regions and the new Global Practices. As CE is specific to country contexts, the regions will continue to take the lead in identifying country-specific opportunities and demand for CE and, where relevant, will include them in Country Partnership Frameworks. Each of the new Global Practices will be responsible for integrating CE in the operations it manages, including scaling up the use of citizen engagement in IPF to reach the corporate target on beneficiary feedback, which will be monitored by the Presidential Delivery Unit as well as through the World Bank Corporate Scorecard and the IDA Results Measurement System. IFC will monitor progress through its Performance Standard Achievement Rating. An institutional coordination mechanism is envisioned to facilitate implementation of the agreed results-focused approach, monitor progress, and facilitate knowledge exchange and training across Global Practices and regions.

The implementation of a more systematic approach to CE, as laid out in this framework, will benefit from the continued guidance of an external Citizen Engagement Advisory Council, which includes representatives of government, academia, civil society, the private sector, and development partners. The Advisory Council has engaged with the Bank to inform the design of this framework, assist in assessing lessons of experience, and providing advice on implementation for the next two years. In addition, opportunities for exchange of experience with CSOs and other partners will be sought throughout the implementation of this framework.