Effective Institutions Platform

Indicators of the Strength of Public Management Systems (ISPMS)

Summary of the iChallenge

October 2014

SUMMARY NOTE

The iChallenge is a multi-stakeholder initiative to crowd source ideas for indicators to measure government capacity and performance. The iChallenge took place between April 14, 2014 and July 1, 2014, and received 92 ideas from around the globe. The Evaluation Body has assessed the merits of the ideas submitted and announced three finalists who will present these ideas at the iChallenge workshop where they will receive feedback, including discussion of strategies to pilot the indicators and/or bring them to scale. The hope is that these iChallenge indicators will make a significant contribution to the Indicators of the Strength of Public Management Systems (ISPMS) initiative and the work of the Effective Institutions Platform to identify "Indicators of Success". The ultimate goal of ISPMS is to build consensus around a comprehensive and comprehensible set of regularly collected cross-national indicators that can be used to provide a "health check" of a country's governance and public management systems and to prioritize and target reform efforts and track progress.

THE CONTEXT

The last decade has seen an explosion of empirical research aimed at measuring governance to monitor country progress and understand the causes and consequences of good governance for development. Much effort has been expended to gain data driven insights on this knotty and multi-faceted issue, but many areas of governance still remain opaque to existing large scale aggregate indicators.

In an attempt to provide greater clarity on the issue, Francis Fukuyama recently proposed an operational definition of governance that takes its starting point as "a government's ability to make and enforce rules, and to deliver services."[i] This definition provided a call to arms to focus the next generation of governance indicators on the execution of policies by public administrations, rather than the quality of those policies or the checks and balances that curb state power. At the same time, the international community appears poised to adopt a stand-alone post-2015 Sustainable Development Goal on Governance but how progress against this goal will be measured remains a critical question.

The iChallenge aims to contribute to this conversation by sourcing new ideas to create indicators that measure and compare how well governments' public management systems work. It is part of a wider attempt to get a firmer grasp on how to measure what the public sector actually does and thus provide a better understanding of how inputs, structure, and capacities combine for enhanced development outcomes.[ii]

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[i] Francis Fukuyama. 2013. "What Is Governance?", *Governance Journal,* March 2013.
[ii] These indicators would complement and expand upon the 100 indicators that are already being collected around the world to measure the strength of public management systems. These include indicators from datasets like Global Integrity, Open Budget, PEFA, Doing Business, and TADAT.
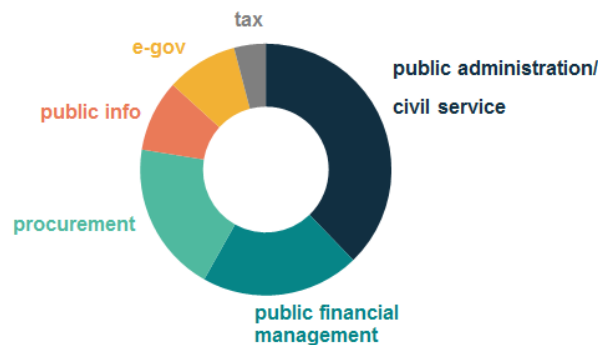
Find out more at: www.worldbank.org/ichallenge

SUMMARY NOTE

29-30 OCT
Paris, France

iChallenge Workshop

THE CRITERIA

In order to focus to participant's efforts, the iChallenge set out clear criteria for suitable indicator entries. The parameters of the challenge were outlined by asking participants to address the following public management systems: Public financial management, Procurement, Tax administration, Public administration and civil service, Public Information, with Transparency, Accountability, and Participation as cross-cutting themes. The suitability of each proposed indicator was assessed on whether it was action-worthy, actionable, behavioral, replicable and feasible.

THE CHALLENGE

The iChallenge was open between April 14, 2014 and July 1, 2014, and during this time 92 indicator ideas were submitted. They were provided by 30 individuals, 6 teams and 6 organizations from 26 countries. Many entrants submitted more than one indicator, and over 40% of entrants were from academia. Details on the indicators submitted different topics:

THE FINALISTS

Based on the above criteria, 11 indicators were submitted to an Evaluation Body of public sector experts. The Evaluation Body met at the end of August and identified the following top 3 ideas which they felt were worth refining further:

- Procurement: Average number of bids per procurement process in a year and/or the average number of firms submitting bids per procurement process in a year [submitted by Federico Ortega].

- The response time (days) to an official inquiry made online [submitted by Alexandru Roman].

- Budget Literacy Index (the extent to which budget documents are understandable to parliamentarians/ CSOs/citizens) [submitted by Babacar Sarr and Maria Elkdhari.].

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