



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Legislative Strengthening Evaluation Framework

Instructions for Conducting a Legislative Strengthening Impact Study

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Instructions for Conducting a Legislative Strengthening Impact Study

These instructions are to be used in evaluating the impact of USAID legislative program in several countries during 2003. They:

- Provide background information on this project
- Describe the information we need you to collect
- Give specific suggestions for collecting information, and
- Provide a common reporting format

We need you to follow the methodology and reporting format below to enable us to compare your findings with those from other countries. The consistent format will also enable us to better use the findings from evaluations worldwide to improve the design and delivery of legislative programs. The format includes a final section where you can comment on the design, make suggestions for improvement, and include additional information you feel is important but does not fit in the reporting format.

I. BACKGROUND

(Keith – do you want to add something here about the Center’s overall effort to evaluate their programs?)

The following excerpt from the Draft Legislative Strengthening Impact Study Research Protocol describes the purpose and objectives of the Legislative Strengthening Impact Study, to which your specific country study will contribute.

As part of an overall effort to evaluate the impact of USAID Democracy and Governance programs generally, the Office of Democracy and Governance is conducting a study of the long-term impacts of USAID-funded legislative strengthening programs. The overall goal is to improve the effectiveness of USAID legislative strengthening assistance. The Democracy and Governance Office is seeking to identify, measure, and better understand the relationships between USAID legislative programs and the dynamics of change, reform efforts, and the performance of the legislatures or parliaments in the countries where we are providing

This study will have three primary objectives:

- 1. To evaluate the effectiveness of specific types of USAID legislative assistance activities and strategies including what types of programs, activities, and strategies have produced successful results and under what circumstances.*
- 2. To evaluate the overall impact of USAID (and other) legislative assistance programs on the democratic performance of legislative institutions and on the broader*

context of democratization or political change in a particular country.

3. To develop an evaluation framework that can be used by USAID and its implementing partners to better evaluate the impact of USAID-funded legislative assistance programs¹.

II. MAJOR QUESTIONS

Focusing especially on the period of time since the initiation of the USAID project, the country study should answer three basic questions:

- Whether and how legislative performance in representation, lawmaking, oversight, and political will for a stronger legislature has changed;
- What impact USAID or other donor interventions have had on these changes (if, indeed, such changes have taken place); and
- What impact USAID and other donors have had on broader democratic changes in the country (again, if there have been such changes).

How to collect the information:

Your research should be both quantitative and qualitative. More recent USAID legislative programs have instituted quantitative measures of program success, and you should find these reports at most Missions. In some cases, you will be able to find some quantitative measures available publicly (e.g., numbers of committee meetings held open to the public), but this will often not be the case.

You will draw qualitative and anecdotal information from interviews with legislators, staff, and knowledgeable observers such as reporters covering the legislature, political party officials, university professors, people who have been involved in the program, etc. Appendix A: Sample Legislative Needs and Priorities Assessment Questions in *USAID's Handbook on Legislative Strengthening* contains several questions that will help you get started in determining the status of the legislature. Chapter III, Assessing Development Opportunities and Priorities, provides additional useful information.² Examples of sample questions are also given below.

We will also need you to comment on the draft field network methodology you have received. We need to know (1) how well it will serve for regular, local follow-on studies to build on your work, and (2) whether you can recommend a local expert to carry out these follow-on studies.

¹ Draft Legislative Strengthening Impact Study Research Protocol. Keith Schulz et.al, USAID Democracy Center, September 27, 2002. Page 1

² USAID Handbook on Legislative Strengthening, Center for Democracy and Governance, February 2000.

III. REPORT FORMAT AND METHODOLOGY

Please write your evaluation according to the following format. The final page of this document presents the format in outline form.

Section I: INTRODUCTION

The introduction should provide a relatively brief overview of the study. You should include:

- A summary description of the state of democracy in the nation;
- A brief description of the legislature;
- A brief description of USAID activities with the legislature, and other relevant interventions as well, including local program efforts.

Section II: THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY, AND THE LEGISLATURE

This section should provide a more detailed description of (a) the state of democracy in the nation, and (b) a description of the legislature.

- **State of democracy in the nation**

Refer to the USAID has a handbook on conducting democracy assessments (cite?), and the latest Mission democracy assessment. Add to or amend the assessment information with your observations. From your readings and interviews you should discover if broad democratic changes are taking place in the country (e.g., has the role of civil society regarding governance changed? Is participation in democracy increasing/decreasing, how does society relate to the executive and to the legislature, changes taking place in the balance of power in the country, etc?). Describe these changes.

- **Description of the legislature**

Chapter III, in USAID's Handbook on Legislative Strengthening, *Assessing Development Opportunities and Priorities*³, lists several questions related to the legislature that should help you in gather the information you need to draft the description of the legislature. Write your description using the four variables we are looking at throughout this process (i.e., political will, representation, lawmaking, and oversight).

Section III: DETAILED DESCRIPTION - EVALUATION OF THE LEGISLATIVE PROJECT

- **Describe the legislative project in detail.**

What were its goals, what was spent, who was the service provider, etc? Include:

³ Ibid. pp. 13ff.

- A description of USAID and other programs
- The type of program
- The service provider
- Funding amounts
- Goals of the program
- Etc.
- **Evaluate the project**

We understand that a full evaluation of the project is beyond the scope of this impact study, but you should determine how well projects met their objectives, what they did well and did not do well, and why they did or did not succeed. Look for as many specific examples of success or failure as you can.

Consider the following questions:

- Did the strategy correctly reflect the problems that were identified?
- Did the activities "fit" the strategy?
- What were the failures and what were the accomplishments in addressing the problems?
- What indicators support the conclusions reached?
- Were initial accomplishments sustained over two or three legislative cycles?
- What contextual variables affected the project's successes or failures?
- How was the project integrated with, supported by, or undermined by other donor programs? What was the proportional level of financial support if other programs were operating simultaneously?
- How does the legislature currently compare (weak, average, strong) in terms of the three basic functional areas as well as political will?
- What is the prognosis for the legislature sustaining its achievements?
- In what areas does the evaluation suggest that donor support is still needed?
- Indicators of results, evaluations of the program

Section IV: ANSWERING THE THREE QUESTIONS

This is the most important section of the report, as it addresses the main questions all of our country studies must answer. The previous sections have laid the groundwork necessary for the reader to understand what you present in this section. You should focus on changes taking place since the initiation of USAID activity with the legislature.

QUESTION 1: Has there been a change in the legislature's desire to exercise its own will - independent of the executive and other political forces? Has its performance in representation, lawmaking, and oversight changed?

Begin by asking whether the legislatures **formal powers** have changed in the areas of political will, representation, lawmaking, and oversight. Has the constitution, have

legislative rules, etc. been changed to increase or decrease legislative powers? Following are examples of questions to ask in each area.

- **Political will:**
 - Has the legislature formally established a group responsible for developing the legislature?
 - If so, does it have significant powers?
 - Has the legislature allotted itself power to determine its own budget, control its own staff?

- **Representation**
 - Has the electoral system changed to make legislators more directly accountable to citizens?
 - Has the legislature opened itself to the public by instituting (by rule or regulation) such things as open committee meetings, public hearings, district offices, etc.?

- **Lawmaking and oversight**
 - Have committees been granted greater powers to introduce legislation, scrutinize executive activities.
 - Has the legislature been granted greater budget powers
 - Has the legislature been given power to set its own budget?

Next, determine whether actual **legislative practice** has changed, and how. Again, these are examples of questions you might ask.

- **Political Will**
 - What are legislative leaders doing to assert the independence and authority of their institution? (e.g., if a modernization group exists, does it meet, does it seek to strengthen the legislature, does it advance the powers and prerogatives of the legislature?)

- **Representation**
 - Are the formal changes being implemented (e.g. is the legislature really open, do citizens come to committee meetings, do members visit constituents in district offices, etc.)?

- **Lawmaking and oversight**
 - Are members and committees using their powers? Do they introduce legislation, do they amend executive initiatives, have they developed professional staff to help them utilize the powers they have, etc.

QUESTION 2: If there were changes, what impact, if any, have USAID or other donor efforts had on these changes?

Assuming that the legislature has changed its behavior in any of these areas (political will, representation, lawmaking, oversight), the second major question is how USAID or any other donor helped impact these changes – either positively or negatively. An example would be a USAID program helping to develop a legislative budget office that discovered that government funds had been used poorly. Perhaps the legislature then instituted legislative remedies to reduce the likelihood such misuse would occur again.

QUESTION 3: Did USAID or other donor interventions have an impact on broader democratic changes in the country?

Answers to this question will come primarily through interviews with the same knowledgeable individuals mentioned above. In all of these interviews, seek for specific examples as much as possible (example – USAID developed a civil society organization supporting the needs of women and children, trained the group to lobby the parliament and government in support of its interests, the CSO worked with a committee to amend legislation regarding child health, the parliament introduced passed the legislation and there is now a specific program in place in child welfare as a result of this).

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, tell us:

- What you now believe USAID and others did well,
- What they did poorly
- What might have been done differently, and why?
- Further programming suggestions for this country
- What lessons from this country's experience might be more broadly relevant.
- Comment on the field network methodology and suggest local experts able to conduct follow-on studies.

Again, be as specific as possible.

V. COMMENTS ON THE EVALUATION FORMAT

Please provide specific comments on how the evaluation criteria and program can be improved. Let us know any specific problems you have had with it.

**

Impact Evaluation Report Format

I. Introduction

- A summary description of the state of democracy in the nation;
- A brief description of the legislature;
- A brief description of USAID activities with the legislature, and other relevant interventions as well, including local program efforts.

II. State of Democracy, and the Legislature

- State of democracy in the nation
- Description of the legislature

III. Detailed description/evaluation of the legislative project

- Description of the project
- Evaluation of the project

IV. Answering the three Questions

QUESTION 1: Has there been a change in the legislature's desire to exercise its own will - independent of the executive and other political forces? Has its performance in representation, lawmaking, and oversight changed?

QUESTION 2: If there were changes, what impact, if any, have USAID or other donor efforts had on these changes?

QUESTION 3: Did USAID or other donor interventions have an impact on broader democratic changes in the country?

V. Conclusions and recommendations

VI. Comments on the evaluation format