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Research Protocol and Methodology to Guide the Conduct of the Legislative Strengthening Impact Study

Legislative Strengthening Impact Study Research Protocol

27 September 2002

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Draft Legislative Strengthening Impact Study Research Protocol

Dated: September 27, 2002

I. Purpose of Study

In his book, *Aiding Democracy Abroad*¹, Thomas Carothers states that legislative assistance is the area of democracy assistance that most often falls short of its goals and that the record of legislative assistance is riddled with disappointment and failure. This criticism raises questions as to the effectiveness and impact of USAID-funded legislative strengthening programs.

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 assistance.

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 programs.

¹ Thomas Carothers. *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve*. Carnegie Endowment for Peace, Washington, D.C., 1999.

II. Background.

A major premise of USAID legislative strengthening programs is that well designed and implemented assistance activities can contribute to enhanced democratic performance by a legislature--which in turn can lead to positive political change within a country--through assistance activities designed to increase the legislature's transparency, pluralism, public participation, representation, accountability, and effectiveness in lawmaking.

Since the mid-1970s, USAID has provided varied forms of assistance to legislatures in countries emerging from authoritarian rules or engaging in political transitions. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, USAID efforts to strengthen legislatures increased greatly in response to a wave of democratization around the world. Presently, USAID currently sponsors, or has recently sponsored, legislative strengthening activities in approximately 45 countries.

With legislative strengthening programs increasing in number, scope and mandate over the past decade, there is now a significant pool of completed and on-going programs in different areas of the world. With the advent of a results management approach to program evaluation, and the use of strategic objectives, intermediate results, and indicators to measure progress and performance toward those results and objectives, sufficient information and experience exists with respect to legislative strengthening to provide the necessary qualitative and quantitative research for a long-term impact assessment and evaluation.

The accomplishment of the primary objectives noted above will inform USAID and its implementing partners on ways to improve the design, methodology, and implementation of legislative strengthening assistance. By developing a methodology for measuring the effectiveness and impact of assistance activities on the democratic performance of legislative institutions, it is hoped that USAID can better understand what types of assistance activities work in different situations and under what kinds of circumstances.

On July 25th, 2002, the Democracy and Governance Office convened a working group of legislative strengthening practitioners, representatives of implementing partners, and research methodologists to help guide and design the legislative strengthening assistance impact evaluation study. This session consisted of a facilitated discussion of a series of questions and issues dealing with legislative strengthening and evaluation methodology. The working group was assisted by a secretariat consisting of Robert Nakamura, Gerald Reed, Jim Ketterer and Keith Schulz. The secretariat was charged with reviewing the working group's meeting records and developing a draft evaluation framework based on the discussions to that point. This document represents the Secretariat draft evaluation framework in fulfillment of primary objective number three.

It is the Secretariat's synthesis of the working group's discussions and is designed to serve as the basis for discussion and further specification by the working group.

III. Methodology of Study

Overview

To be useful and credible, the study must be based on sound research conducted on accepted principles of analysis and focused on variables that can be controlled. The methodology for this study will consist of some form of the case study approach, using the country as the unit of analysis, and some combination of qualitative and quantitative measures.² The preference for case studies rested on a sense that the main alternative—larger scale, cross-national comparisons using comparable indicators—is not feasible within existing constraints.

The advantage of case studies has been in the scope of things they could consider and in the flexibility they offer for appreciating how variables operate in the context of actual circumstances. The weakness of the approach also lies in its capacity to appreciate the unique. Since the only evidence for conclusions is drawn from the case or cases studied, the applicability of their conclusions can be challenged for relying on too narrow a base of evidence. So, generalizations from case studies always require a rationale explaining why they can be applied more widely. In addition, there are numerous approaches to conducting case studies and their variety makes it difficult to compare results and to aggregate experiences. However, despite their known problems, country case studies have been the basis of generalizations in the past.³ For now, at least, some variation of the case study approach is accepted as the best technology available for the purpose of drawing practical lessons about legislative development and democratization.

Methodological Approaches

Comparative Case Study and Field Network Methods: As the above examples indicate, generalizations from a base of several case studies have achieved de facto acceptance in the democracy evaluation area. It is, however, possible to press the case study method further and provide a firmer foundation for drawing conclusions with more confidence.

The most important methodological problem posed by case studies is uncertainty about the extent to which generalizations based on them can be applied more broadly.

² The reasons cited included: Places have become a shorthand for understanding approaches, legislative developments have to be understood in the context of the nation in which they are occurring, quantitative measures must be understood in context, much of the strategic environment of legislative action shaped by country context (constitutional architecture, political culture, state of party politics, central cleavages etc.)

³ See for example CDIE efforts to classify programs based on extensive reviews of cases.

One frequent form of this objection is the question of “compared to what?” One finding, in one place is interesting but usually not very convincing. Another aspect of the problem is encountered as cases are combined for analytic purposes and the diversity of their methods and concerns becomes apparent. We will address both these issues next.

Two related approaches can be combined in the present study: (1) A research design based on a comparative case approach to answer the “compared to what” question; (2) Incorporation of a field network method for this and subsequent studies to provide a broader and firmer basis over time for generalizations.

1. Comparative Case Method. We want to gather data to draw lessons about what has worked and under what circumstances. This approach has been employed explicitly in the evaluation of American environmental programs⁴ and implicitly in the assessment of democratization efforts in Central America.⁵

How does this approach work? Assume that the universe of cases consists of countries in which USAID is trying to achieve legislative and democratic functionality using a relatively small number of different strategies/approaches. Our first problem is to identify the sets of countries and approaches we are most interested in learning about. Second, we have to identify specific countries that are most representative of type and exemplary implementations of approaches.

The countries thus selected are treated as if they were sets of “natural experiments” in which important determinants were varied by circumstances to produce different results. So the rationale for generalizing from them is similar to that presented by laboratory experiments in which variation in treatment results from experimenter choice rather than the world.⁶

We will illustrate the approach with an example. Suppose we are interested in assessing the development of oversight capacity in different systems. The state of oversight is to be the dependent variable (operationalized using measures like questioning, delaying, stopping, or changing executive decisions, etc.). Since many scholars have identified constitutional form to be an important variable in shaping the exercise of oversight, we decide to focus on mixed and presidential-congressional systems because of the frequency. Another important dimension is the level of economic development. After selecting the dimensions of interest, we select examples for detailed study.

	Mixed (Strong Pres.-	Presidential Congressional
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⁴ This approach has been used in the evaluation of Superfund and other environmental programs. See Church and Nakamura, *Cleaning Up the Mess* (Washington: Brookings, 1993).

⁵ See Thomas Carothers article on Reagan administration efforts (inside and outside strategies) in Central America.

⁶ See Donald Campbell, “Causal Inference in Non-Experimental Research,” and “Reforms as Experiments.”

	Parliament)	
Developed	France	US
Developing	Uganda	Bolivia

This arrangement makes it possible to compare the development of oversight between different systems in the same/similar development context, or similar systems in different contexts. The power of our generalizations depends on the quality of our general categories and specific choices: how important they are as defining characteristics and how representative are the specific countries of the larger sets. In a subsequent section, we will enumerate some possible categories of approaches for possible comparison.

2. Field Network Method: The second issue is that of building a base of case studies that are consistent enough in approach and method to support aggregation. In the short run, if the same investigator or team conducts the initial set of studies, consistency is less of a concern though an explicit master design should be used and adapted to circumstances. In the long run, however, a more explicit plan for building comparability should be implemented.

The field network approach has proven useful as a means for creating a large base of case studies that can be usefully compared and serve as the basis for persuasive generalizations. The technique has been used for over a decade in the evaluation of changes in welfare policy whose circumstances have some important similarities with legislative development efforts: the same general goals apply to all cases, diverse implementation strategies have been employed, substantial variation in local circumstances is always present.⁷

One research center is currently coordinating welfare evaluation work in over 20 states and 50 specific sites using the field network approach.⁸ They are drawing on the work of associated scholars in the different states, working from an explicit set of topics for investigation. Coordination is achieved through careful monitoring by the institute's central team and frequent meetings and other forms of exchange.

While the welfare studies use the field network to capture what is happening in diverse places at the same time, many of its features can be incorporated into a means for carrying out studies of developments in many countries over a longer period of time. What is achieved through meetings and interaction among researchers, for example, could be provided by training, more explicit protocols, and a more conscious process of emersion in a developing body of case studies incrementally assembled by this technique. The organizational permanence of USAID could be an important asset in producing the basis for this enterprise.

⁷ This approach was originally devised by Richard Nathan as a means for understanding, in depth and with appreciation of local circumstances, in national programs implemented through a federal system.

⁸ See, for example, the literature on welfare reform following the adoption of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996. The Rockefeller Institute using a field network approach is running a large set of such studies encompassing 20 states and 50 local programs.

Selection Criteria

Factors for Consideration in Selection of Dimensions for Comparative Case Studies

This section is intended to supplement a number of practical decisions provisionally made about scope of considerations, number of studies, procedures, and steps to be taken in analysis.⁹ In addition, decisions should be made about the most important issues to be addressed through research: changes in legislative functionality (to include at least the capacities to represent, make laws, and exercise oversight) and democratization (including but limited to dispersion of power/greater participation, enhanced transparency).

The universe of cases would be legislative strengthening programs of at least four years duration, where a substantial number of activities were undertaken, and sufficient funding provided. After selection of four cases, a common set of steps would be involved in each study moving from an analysis of the situation before USAID involvement, the establishment of baseline measures, review of program assistance, attribution of results, identification of impact on legislative functionality, and contribution of USAID efforts to extent of change in society.

The working group agreed that legislative functionality could be usefully understood as including increasing the capacity of the institution to represent, to make laws, and to exercise oversight.¹⁰ A more specific capacity, playing a larger role in the exercising the "power of the purse"-- raising and spending of money-- was also singled out for special attention. There was less agreement on the attributes of democratization though most participants agreed that greater dispersion of power and transparency were important signs of movement in the right direction.¹¹ (This assumption could be strengthened by the selection of cases from a set that started with a diagnosis that over concentration of power in the executive was an impediment to democracy in those countries.)

So, for now, we are faced with the problem of how to pick from a large set of programs, a set of four cases through which to investigate the impact of programs on developing legislative functionality and contributing to democracy.

⁹ Keith Schulz, STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF USAID LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES ON THE DEMOCRATIC PERFORMANCE OF LEGISLATIVE INSTITUTIONS: Proposed Research Design and Methodology, Draft April 2002

¹⁰ See Alan Rosenthal's article "The Good Legislature" in *State Legislatures*, July/August, 1999.

¹¹ The problem is that this direction may also lead to non-democratic outcomes like chaos as a prelude to repression. The transition to democracy model which had been presupposed in earlier USAID (see CDIE report) and other work (Huntington, Third Wave) is currently under challenge. See Carothers.

This section will lay out some of the most important types of program variation in democracy programs mentioned by working group, or emphasized by USAID, or found in the literature. The purpose is to lay out a menu of choices for consideration in selecting the dimensions for a comparative case study.

Before proceeding, we should note that all of the approaches described below are plausible on their face. Often advocacy for one approach over another rests on principles and theories. In the absence of systematic collected evidence, the choices are more likely to be driven by theoretical and personal preferences/organizational self interest than they are by knowledge about what works, when, and how. The purpose of this research is to provide some of that evidence.

Here is an example of approaches in which we might contrast the “targeted population” (top down emphasizing political elites/institution, bottom up emphasizing citizens/non-governmental organizations), and programming stressing technical assistance or issue politics.

	Technical assistance	Issue Based Politics
Top down	Frost Task Force	Focused study tours, national conferences, policy briefings
Bottom up	Philippines (Reyes)	National issues conferences

1. Top down, technical assistance. The Frost Task Force is an example of a top down, technical assistance model in which the same general model was applied and adopted to a number of different countries (primarily the former Soviet bloc but including Egypt). In structure and assumptions it is quite similar to the state legislative strengthening approaches successfully applied in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s.¹² This set provides a natural experiment in which the same general treatment is applied to a number of different countries with varying results.
2. Bottom up, technical assistance. A contrasting model based on a demand side view of democratization informed by citizen roots of democratic effectiveness.¹³ Examples of this approach included USAID efforts in the Philippines supporting women’s advocacy groups in their efforts to be more influential in their Congress. So support has been in the form training in policy research and budgetary analysis, as well as advocacy. On a very different note, USAID assisted trade associations in Bulgaria in their efforts to organize the lobbying of legislators as a means for increasing their ties to society and improving the quality of information available in policymaking.

¹² See Citizens Conference for Effective State Legislatures, Sometimes Governments. See also description of legislative strengthening in California in Lou Cannon, Ronnie and Jesse.

¹³ See Robert Putnam

3. Bottom up, issue based politics. These are efforts at creating a national dialog on issues of importance drawing in both citizens and representatives. An example of this model is found in the numerous efforts of donors to increase the political visibility of issues of concerned to marginalized groups (particularly women). Examples include issues/policy-centered efforts, supported by external donors, and involving NGOs and legislators in Zimbabwe (tobacco farming, land reform), Ethiopia (election reform), Mozambique (reform of liquor laws) and many other nations on the decentralization of government issues and Aids.
4. Top Down, issue based. Examples of this approach include focused efforts to assist legislators, executives, and bureaucrats to grapple with significant national issues.

There are, in addition, other possible candidates for pairs of comparative cases. These include:

5. Outside vs. inside strategies to improving budgetary analysis (controlling for region, i.e. Latin America, Africa). USAID assisted the Bolivian Congress in developing its budgetary office inside the legislature. Similar efforts are underway in Uganda and Kenya. USAID followed a contrasting strategy in Chile where it helped to develop analytic capacity in an independent think tank. The latter approach has also been taken the EU in Bulgaria and other places. Conceptualized in another way, the Philippine example above could also be fitted into this framework.

	Inside	Outside
Latin America	Bolivia	Chile
Africa	Uganda, Kenya	?

6. Incremental vs. Comprehensive Approaches (Controlling for region). Here the important variables are the approaches to democratic development management. There has been a shift in approach over time that could be used to create the conditions for a natural experiment. USAID in an earlier period followed an incremental model toward democratic development in the sense that it responded to targets of opportunity with specific programs, often employing different contractors, and these efforts sometimes aggregated into a long-term program of legislative assistance. More recently, USAID has sought to rationalize the process with a more comprehensive initial assessment, an integrated program explicitly designed to build democratic functionality, and locating overall responsibility in a single contractor. These different approaches are stilling being utilized by different donors, while USAID tries to follow the comprehensive model (as in Uganda), more piecemeal approaches have been employed by other donors in other places (Ethiopia, Bulgaria). The incremental system has the advantage of flexibility

while the comprehensive model promises better focus. It would be useful to find out how these different approaches have fared in practice.

	Incremental	Comprehensive
Africa	Ethiopia	Uganda
Latin America	Examples from early programs in Central America; Mexico (?)	Bolivia (later stages)

7. While the “control” variables used above are region (in 5 and 6 above), other important features could be substituted including: constitutional form of government (strong pres-parliament and presidential-constitutional are common examples in the developing world); other regions could be used (for example Asia, Eastern Europe); or development-partner features (such as the existence of a parliamentary development committee or a more ad hoc system of managing the effort).

IV. Analysis of Data

Using the research methodology described above, one can now focus on an analysis of the data that has been collected as a result of this process. As initially noted in the Purpose section, our primary objectives seek to understand both the effectiveness of specific types of legislative assistance activities and strategies as well as to understand the overall impact of the legislative assistance efforts on the broader context of democratization. These objectives suggest operationalizing the analysis of the data in a manner that encompasses both the institutional and country level questions the study hopes to answer.

Overview of Analysis at the Institutional Level

As noted in the previous section, the analysis of legislative strengthening projects at the institutional level will be guided by Rosenthal’s definition that a good legislature is one that can effectively perform the following basic functions: (1) oversight of the executive authority, (2) represent constituents, and (3) make laws. While many definitions of an effective legislature can be suggested, there is a general consensus among both the academic community and legislative strengthening practitioners that these three functions are operable across the broad range of USAID projects and can be effectively used as the primary lens through which to analysis the impact (the dependent variable) of the legislative strengthening projects.

The overall analysis will primarily be qualitative in character. However, to the fullest extent possible, the analysis will be supplemented by quantitative data that are also targeted at providing information to evaluate the three primary legislative functions noted

above. This will allow USAID to begin to develop a base of quantitative data that can be used for future analysis and research.

Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research customarily does not have a distinct separation between the data collection and analysis stages. Indeed, data collected in the field through interviews and other avenues is often tentatively coded or classified and partially analyzed while the field research is in progress. This often leads to new insights and understandings that suggest adjustments that will improve subsequent data collection activities.

Qualitative researchers are also typically confronted with a voluminous amount of data and it is anticipated that evaluations of legislative strengthening projects will often encounter a similar difficulty. An important aspect of the analysis process is thus to reduce the unstructured volume of data collected into patterns, categories and themes that can then be used to build an interpretation of the information or data that has been collected in a holistic fashion.

The analysis of legislative strengthening projects will focus on identifying problems, strategies, and activities that can be used to gauge the impact of the project on the legislative body.

Analytical Process

The analysis will include the following steps:

- 1) Classify and code (strong, average, weak) baseline information regarding the legislature at the project's beginning in terms of the three basic functions (oversight, representing constituents, and making laws) as well as political will for modernizing the institution. The information for this initial baseline characterization will be derived from a variety of sources that includes, for example, needs assessments, initial project RFPs and other mission documents, reputational surveys, and academic literature that focused on the specific legislature being evaluated. The information to make the initial baseline assessment will vary widely as projects were initiated under a variety of conditions and influences. Coding the legislature's initial status in this fashion will achieve two goals: (a) keeping evaluations focused on the most basic and important functions, and (b) provide AID with a uniform starting point for data base development.
- 2) Identify and discuss the contextual issues (independent variables) that either supported or limited the project's success. Although important in any evaluation, this step will be potentially very useful for controlling independent variables in evaluations of more than one legislative strengthening project within a common geographic region, with common cultural influences, or similar prior political systems. For example, evaluations of projects in Africa sharing a Francophone heritage, or in Central America sharing a common Latin heritage, would help to control for the external influences that might also

affect impact. Examples of contextual issues that might be identified and discussed include:

- Constitutional powers,
- Party politics,
- Relationship between authority of executive and legislative branches,
- Political systems,
- Economic resources,
- Human resources,
- Cultural and historical patterns,
- Electoral system,
- Institutional framework,
- Political values, and
- Military influence.

3) Identify and code the specific problems the USAID funded intervention intended to address in terms of the three fundamental functional areas (balancing power, representation; and lawmaking).

4) Identify and code the type of strategy for the project.

Strategy A: Functional strategy - a strategy primarily intended to strengthen one or more of the three basic functional areas in a legislature that is already operational. This would include activities that would improve the procedural capacity, develop the analytic capacity, develop the human resource capacity, or mobilizing political support for reform.

Strategy B: Sustainability strategy - a strategy primarily intended to enhance the legislature's ability to sustain its functions into the future in a legislature that is newly created or re-instituted

Strategy C: Political will strategy - a strategy primarily intended to strengthen the political will of members to modernize the legislature.

Strategy D: Passage of legislation strategy - a strategy primarily intended to support the passage of a particular law or package of laws.

It is recognized that projects may have a mix of the strategies identified above or there may be other strategies that were developed. However, for the purposes of the evaluation, it is important to identify a single strategy that was the primary motivator for the legislative strengthening project.

5) Code the project's activities and determine if the goals, funding levels, duration, and prospects for sustainability supported the strategy.

- 6) Evaluate and code an external variable(s) if it was too strong and undermined project success.
- 7) Identify and code any other USAID or other donor supported projects that contributed to legislative strengthening either directly or indirectly.
- 8) Prepare the written analysis reflecting the results of steps 1-6 above. Having broken down the information into manageable pieces reflecting the problem, strategy, and activities, the written analysis should then rebuild the information into a comprehensive description of the legislative strengthening project that provides insights as to successes and failures at the institutional level as well as at the activity level. The analysis should address key questions such as:
 - 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 are useful tools for determining the progress towards goals being analyzed in an evaluation. The following questions are suggestive of the types of questions one needs to ask in relation to the three basic functional areas being analyzed. While by no means all encompassing, they are consistent with a deeper qualitative approach as they move beyond, for example, counting committee meetings, to asking questions that address core legislative responsibilities.

(1) Oversight:

- Does the legislature have formal and effective authority in the budgetary process?
- Does the legislature have and effectively exercise authority to approve executive appointments?
- Does the legislature have and effectively exercise authority to censure unconstitutional executive actions?
- Does the legislature have the capacity to use its constitutional powers?
- Does the legislature provide a forum for opposition forces?

- Is the legislature viewed as a legitimate democratic institution?
- Does the legislature have control over its own budget?

(2) Representing constituents:

- Does the legislature conduct truly open hearings?
- Is there a successful flow of information between the legislature and civil society?
- Does the legislature have the ability and attempt to stimulate dialogue within society?
- Are public hearings held on important policy issues?

(3) Making laws:

- What is the quality of the deliberations? For example, how much time is spent in committees v. in plenary sessions?
- Has the legislature passed laws with a significant, substantive impact?
- How many proposals originate in the legislative branch?
- Is there evidence of serious amendments to executive branch proposals?
- Is there involvement of the legislature in the development of executive policies?
- Does the legislature show evidence of developing an analytical capacity?
- Is there evidence of a diversity of views, negotiation, and compromise in the lawmaking process?

Overview of Analysis at the Country Level

An analysis of the contribution of a legislature to the country's democratic movement is even more complex and challenging than analysis at the institutional level. Indeed, one school of thought is that, at this level, the contribution should be taken as a given for any legislative project. For example, in the efforts to strengthen state legislatures in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, no one seriously questioned the value of the state level efforts in modernizing and strengthening these democratic institutions.

Others recognize the desirability, for both accountability purposes and as a contribution to democracy building theory, of identifying progress made in a country's democracy by a legislative strengthening project. However, unlike at the institutional level, there is not an agreed upon consensus on either the methodology for evaluation or the indications of progress at the country level. Thus, we are left with an effort that is valuable to the extent it can be achieved but that is by its nature an even more subjective interpretation of the accounts, stories, and information collected as a part of an evaluation process than the analysis at the institutional level.

Analytical Process

The analysis at the country level will include the following steps.

- 1) Determine the state of democracy in the country at the initiation of the project and at the time of the evaluation using recognized indicators such as Freedom House.
- 2) Identify and code the contextual variables that either support or limit the legislature's ability to contribute to democracy. While there may be some overlap with the identification of contextual variables noted at the institutional level of analysis, these variables should also be considered at the country level of analysis as well.
- 3) Identify and code specific indications of the legislature contribution of the democratic order and how that might have been influenced by or the result of the legislative strengthening project. Examples of legislative contributions to democracy generally might include:
 - Passage of legislation deemed to strengthen democracy. For example, the dispersion of power is often considered an indicator of democracy. The legislative project might have promoted the passage of decentralization of government from the national to the local level.
 - Preservation or consolidation of the constitutional order. For example, the legislature might have conducted oversight activities (as a result of a project's balancing of power activities) of the military that helped prevent the military's exercising unconstitutional powers.
 - Supported increased interaction with the country's civil society. For example, the legislature might have initiated open committee hearings or passed sunshine legislation as a result of legislative project strengthening activities.

The coding should follow the same categorizations as analysis at the institutional level: oversight, representation, and making laws. The distinction is that the activity is also viewed as having somehow strengthened democracy. For example, passage of a substantive and important piece of legislation might be viewed as an indication that a legislature's lawmaking capacity has improved from an institutional level of analysis. In contrast, passage of electoral legislation that improved the representativeness of the body as a reflection of the society as a whole after the next election cycle might be viewed as an indication that the legislature has contributed to the country's democracy.

- 4) Evaluate and code an external variable(s) if it was too strong and undermined the legislature's ability to perform its constitutional role as a basic democratic institution.
- 5) Prepare the written analysis reflecting the results of steps 1-4 above. Having broken down the information into manageable pieces, the written analysis should then rebuild the information into a comprehensive description of the legislative strengthening project that provides insights as to successes and failures related to the legislature and its role in the country's democratic order.

V. Data Collection

Use a Mix of Indicators and Data Sources

The working group agreed that a mix of indicators and data sources should be employed in the case studies, and to the extent possible quantitative measures should be used where available and developed as feasible. To the extent possible, the numerical indicators should be interpreted in the context of the circumstances in which they were generated to minimize misinterpretation.

The following were suggested by the working group as possible sources of information that would be valid within the design for this study:

- 1) **Published Academic Literature.** Although published research on legislative development *per se* is relatively scarce, the research on legislatives is rich with insights that may be relevant to the study.
- 2) **Documentary Research.** USAID as well as other donors have archival documents from current and prior legislative strengthening projects. Examples include needs assessments, project evaluations and their related indicators, and specific activity reports. Despite their project oriented nature, many of the teams producing these documents were composed of respected academics and professional legislative practitioners and offer a base line of information a chronological perspective on how donor understanding and approaches have evolved.
- 3) **Interviews with Stakeholders.** Judgmentally or purposively selected, potential stakeholders include: (a) selected representatives of the legislatures' current and former members and staff, (b) representatives of the executive and judicial branches, (c) academics, members of the press, civic organizations and others who have interacted with and/or observed the legislature over the time period being studied, and (d) staff of USAID and other U.S. Government officials as well as contractees that were involved in the legislative projects.
- 4) **Personal Observations.** Observation of a legislature's plenary sessions, committee meetings, hearings, or other activities as well as the legislature's physical infrastructure may offer insights on current practices and organization development.
- 5) **Legislative Work Documents.** The examination of the documents and materials produced as part of the legislature's operational process such as committee reports, calendars, and research may suggest additional perspectives.
- 6) **Surveys, Focus Groups and Other Techniques.** Survey or questionnaire research being conducted to, for example, gauge citizen attitudes towards the country's legislature may provide valuable information.

The validity of the evaluation framework methodology will be addressed by several factors. First, the methodology will have been developed with the benefit of the legislative strengthening working group, which is composed of both current and past

legislative development implementers as well as distinguished academics with expertise in the appropriate fields of inquiry. Second, the variety of methods used and different actors involved in the data collection will be used to confirm or triangulate information collected as a part of the research process. This will help to ensure, to the extent possible in a qualitative approach, the accuracy and validity of the information used during analysis. Third, to the extent the evaluation framework is applied consistently across the cases studied, validity will be enhanced by the uniformity and shared focus of the efforts.

Finally, any research whose focus is an institution of the highest constitutional and socio-political standing in a country must be sensitive to the ethical issues that are involved. USAID has always attempted to carry out its legislative strengthening projects in full cooperation with the host country legislature's leadership and with a sensitivity to all the various political, interest, and societal groups that interact in the legislative process. This study will adhere to this tradition by taking the appropriate actions to safeguard that the highest possible ethical research standards are met.