



BACKGROUND PAPER 4

Role of Non-State Actors in Monitoring and Review for Effective Implementation of the Post-2015 Agenda:

A Case Study Analysis

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IRF2015 is a collaboration of 11 leading research institutes from across the globe that responds to the need for independent, rigorous and timely analysis to inform the evolution of the post-2015 development agenda and the concurrent intergovernmental process on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed to at Rio+20. IRF2015 partners envision a post-2015 development agenda that is universal in scope, takes an integrated approach to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of global development challenges, and can lead to more sustainable and equitable development outcomes for all.

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Brief Overview

The bulk of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will take place at national level. The fulfillment of the ambition and the breadth of 17 SDGs and 169 Targets drafted by the Open Working Group on SDGs will require enhanced capacities of member countries in many arenas, particularly in the mechanisms to track, monitor, review and improve policy strategies and planning for sustainable development. Robust monitoring and review frameworks that are embedded in national and sub-national planning processes are therefore essential. Such frameworks will benefit from being built upon internal processes and potential within countries, including capacities of stakeholders other than the government. Documenting examples of the support that non-state actors can provide can help to inform the development and strengthening of monitoring and review processes – especially with respect to harnessing civil society’s strengths for oversight, social inclusion/audits, capacity building and supporting local and sub-national implementation.

This paper, with the support of case examples, highlights the role that non-state actors – especially civil society organisations – can play in developing monitoring and review mechanisms for the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. The paper approaches monitoring and review from the perspective of promoting mutual learning and exchange of lessons to help national and sub-national actors identify promising strategies for shifting development towards sustainable pathways.

With the support of relevant case studies, the paper identifies three primary functions that non-state actors can perform to enhance monitoring and review mechanisms. First, they can **increase transparency** in the system through collaborative planning and implementation of a development policy or initiative. Second, they can further act as a **connection between the government and citizens**. Third, they can **communicate information** from government in the language and format that is relevant for citizens and also communicate feedback from citizens to their government for advocating policy change. The paper analyses these functions of non-state actors in supporting the monitoring and review of development process and examines possibilities of expanding such collaborations between the state and the non-state actors.

Introduction

The SDGs are expected to provide a guiding framework and targets and indicators that member states can adopt or apply in their national development agendas to move toward more sustainable development pathways. This presents a huge opportunity as well as a great responsibility to national governments. Member states have the opportunity to utilize the goals and targets for aligning and tracking their country’s progress with sustainable development. But what comes along is a responsibility to judiciously prioritize and adapt the goals and targets in accordance with local challenges and the capacities and resources available. Every nation has its own priorities and planning processes. Aligning their national interests with the global interests of sustainable development requires knowledge, capacities and institutional mechanisms to inculcate principles and targets of SDGs in development processes. The process will be intensive and requires not only capacities to conduct reviews, but also systems that can evaluate the functioning of these mechanisms and constantly provide feedback on progress. Such a system is critical in order to establish a strong, stable and rigorous process of identification, planning and implementation of SDGs, keeping in mind the inter-linkages between goals and targets. The role of non-state actors will be vital.

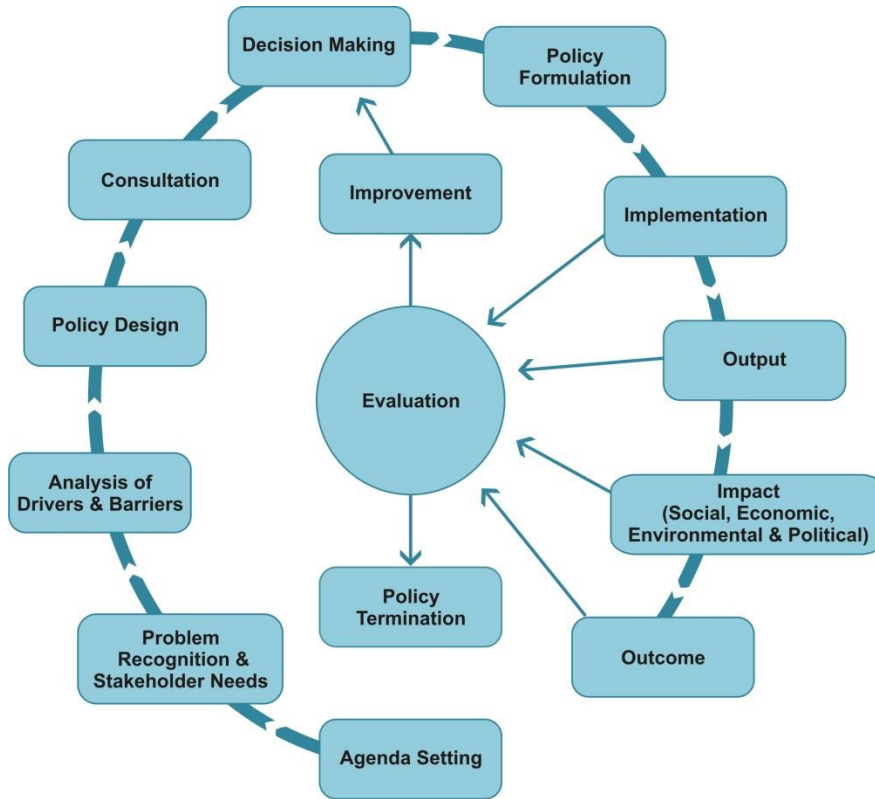


Figure 1: Policy Making Structure¹

Non-state actors are non-sovereign entities that exercise significant economic, political and social roles in development at sub-national, national, and in some cases international levels² without any direct, obligatory directions from a state. In this paper, we interpret non-state actors as covering private businesses, civil society organisations, and interest organisations such as trade unions, confederations of employers and businesses, and farmers’ associations. The paper focuses primarily on the role that civil society organizations can play in the process, but also offers general lessons applicable to other non-state actors.

These non-state actors can potentially play different roles in monitoring and review processes. As illustrated in Figure 1, there are numerous entry points for non-state actors to participate in policy making and implementation. Several of these possibilities are explored with relevant case studies to understand the key lessons and challenges faced by non-state actors during monitoring and review of a development policy or initiative.

¹Adapted from athenainfonomics.in and public administration the one as cited in Niazi and Reen, 2014, [Principles of Policy Making](#)

² <https://nonstateactorsafrica.wikispaces.com/Operational+Definitions>

Role of Non-State Actors in Monitoring and Review

Monitoring and evaluation is an integral part of the policy making process. It enhances accountability and transparency of the system, reviews progress, and provides relevant feedback for improvements in planning and policy execution (Figure 1). Such mechanisms will be crucial for integrated assessment and to address the many inter-linkages among SDG goals and targets. Non-state actors have shown the potential to support national and sub-national governments in research, analysis, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of various development initiatives. The involvement of non-state actors at different stages of development planning and implementation can potentially monitor and evaluate the progress of an initiative with two primary motives.

First, they can increase people's participation and ownership of the development process, thereby increasing transparency and accountability in the system. Non-state actors act as a link between the government and the people: they generate awareness by disseminating information from the government to the public, and also communicating the response of the public back to the government, allowing them to understand the successes and shortcomings of the policy or initiative in question, and thus provide relevant feedback for review.

Second, non-state actors can review policy planning and implementation by directly engaging at different stages of the policy cycle. With their capacities and knowledge in policy planning as well as implementation, they can support the process and thus provide opportunity for mutual review themselves in formulating and implementing development agenda.

These roles are elaborated in the following sections, looking at mutual benefits for the government and non-state actors and the monitoring and review processes, as well as challenges that such initiatives may face.

Research and Analysis for Aligning National Planning with SDGs (Case examples A and B)

Non-state actors, with their diverse sets of knowledge along with their capacities to conduct intensive research and planning, can support governments in their development processes. The participation of non-state actors in policy formulation not only makes the process more inclusive, but also raises issues and concerns of various stakeholders at the preliminary stage of policy making itself. Further, civil society organizations can embed a scientific and logical rationale within a policy plan, and thus strengthen the planning.

Involvement of non-state actors at the policy formulation stage results in collaborative planning and review of plans, thereby increasing transparency. Transparent planning processes, along with mutual review of state and non-state actors, increases accountability within the system. By incorporating greater transparency and accountability in inclusive planning processes, the Barbados Social Partnership (Case Study A) is a fine example of involving non-state actors in policy decision making.

The example of GRIHA, TERI (Case Study B) shows that strong research and analytical expertise in a given area can form a base for collaboration with government. While at the same time, a well-represented multi-stakeholder partnership like the Barbados Social is also useful in gaining support and partnerships with government for policy planning.

A The Barbados Social Partnership for national macroeconomic policy-making and planning

The Barbados Social Partnership is a tripartite association of government, business and labor movement. Partners sign agreements (Protocols) with objectives to address key socio-economic issues such as increasing national productivity and efficiency; increasing employment opportunities; environmental matters and disaster management; occupational health and safety; green and knowledge-based approaches to economic development.

It is widely recognised by all actors that the Social Partnership played a significant role refocusing and re-invigorating the Barbados economy and achieving social stability over the past two decades, particularly in its early years. It is credited for an increased level of trust, information sharing and cooperation within Barbadian society. Social partnership has been institutionalised as a permanent feature of the country's governance landscape.

The significance of the Barbados social partnership is in demonstrating the potential for a consultative and negotiating mechanism for national macroeconomic policy-making, planning and monitoring and review. By identifying a set of common objectives, social partners commit themselves to cooperating in finding ways to solve problems and advance development. This type of meaningful engagement of non-state actors in national processes for consultation and information gathering, consensus-based decision-making and collaboration in implementation is a key approach for meeting ambitious post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

Source:

Codrington, H., 2012. *Social Partnerships in Economic Development: Lessons from the Barbados Experience*. In: Codrington, H. and R. Craigwell (Editors), 2002. *Facing Globalisation: Impact and Challenges for Barbados and the Caribbean*. Bridgetown: Central Bank of Barbados. pp. 137-157.

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B. Green Building Rating System (GRIHA), TERI



With an overall objective to reduce resource consumption, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance the use of renewable and recycled resources by the building sector, TERI has developed GRIHA (Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment). TERI's green building rating evaluates the environmental performance of a building holistically over its entire life cycle, thereby providing a definitive standard for what constitutes a 'green building'.

On a broader scale, this system, along with the process of developing it, will benefit the community at large with the improvement in the environment by TERI-GRIHA reducing GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions, improving energy security, and reducing the stress on natural resources. The GRIHA tool has been adopted by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy in 2007 for the national rating system for green buildings. So far, GRIHA has 600 registered projects with a total GRIHA Footprint of about 21 million square meters. Thus, through an innovative tool like GRIHA a review for green buildings was developed that can support the policy processes. As GRIHA provides established performance criteria, indicators, metrics, and benchmarks/standards, such an approach can also be useful in monitoring and review of SDGs.

Source: <http://grihaindia.org>

Mutual Accountability for Implementation of SDGs (Case example C)

Non-state actors can be seen to support the government in implementation of its programmes by designing systems and tools for implementation or themselves becoming an instrument of implementation.

Many civil society organisations are well-known for their ability to reach and effectively engage with local communities – in particular far flung marginalized communities – and thus their ability to partner with government in an implementation role in reaching out to the grassroots. This involvement of civil society also brings wider reach and increased transparency to the implementation of a programme due to involvement of multiple stakeholders. Such transparency helps in wider review and mutual accountability between state and the non-state actors. One of the key drivers of such collaborations between the state and non-state actors is that the grassroots presence of the civil society organisations. Their capacities, if utilized by government, can be an economical, efficient and effective model for delivering development initiatives.

A strong base for systems and tools that can support government in implementing their development agenda is also very useful, as we see in the example of collaboration between Development Alternatives and the National Resource Cell for Decentralised District Planning. Accountability for work is also instrumental. A precise target for implementation given to non-state actors and compliance-based reporting on the implementation of the project aids the development of mutual trust and alignment of interest.

C. National Resource Cell for Decentralized District Planning and Development Alternatives



The National Resource Cell for Decentralized District Planning (NRCDDP) acts like a professional support centre for district planning interventions and institutions. India's 12th Five Year Plan called for making programmes demand-driven, bottom-up and accountable. NRCDDP is an instrument to strengthen institutional systems and develop capacities for decentralised planning, implementation and monitoring at sub-district, district and State levels. The NRCDDP was launched in 2012 as a part of the Government of India-United Nations Joint Programme on Convergence (GoI-UNJPC). Development Alternatives partnered with Government of India for technical support to 7 states.

Apart from operating as a knowledge repository, NRCDDP also builds training capacities of identified training institutes in States and evaluates district plans and their execution. Capacity and knowledge support provided by Development Alternatives in NRCDDP not only brings comprehensiveness to the plan, but it also increases the transparency and evaluation of planning at every step. Such systems of collaborative planning can potentially support review of government processes for implementation of SDGs.

Source: <http://www.nrcddp.org/>

Stakeholder Review of Progress in SDG Implementation (Case examples D, E, F, G)

Non-state actors, through different tools such as campaigns, dialogues or workshops, can raise public awareness about government priorities, policies and programmes. They can also conduct a qualitative or quantitative assessment of a government programme and provide reports on its progress or lack thereof. These reports and awareness-generating activities mobilise people and lays the foundation for advocacy to implement or change relevant policies.

Non-state actors enable public monitoring and review of government's action/ inaction. Such review mechanisms not only support implementation by providing feedback for further policy improvements, but also lead the way for a demand-driven policy framework. The role that non-state actors like Pratham play in developing reports on education status of India is a prominent example of reporting without incurring heavy costs of conducting surveys and studies. It supports the government initiative with effective review of the progress and success and thus improves the programme.

Although non-state actors are reputed for their last mile-connect, such engagement faces financial and human resource constraints, and maintaining independence in the long run is not without challenges. For a fruitful long term system of feedback, developing a network with like-minded non-state actors is helpful in ensuring sustainability ,as seen in the case of Wada Na Todo Abhiyan (Don't Break the Promise Campaign) below.



D. Wada Na Todo Abhiyan

Wada Na Todo Abhiyan (WNTA) is an ongoing national campaign to hold the government accountable for its promise to end Poverty, Social Exclusion & Discrimination. WNTA consists of a wide range of grassroots organizations, people's movements, advocacy and resource organizations.

This national campaign involves developing civil society and citizen reports on issues like measuring India's progress on the MDGs, review of various flagship government programmes like the National Common Minimum Programme. Through these reports, WNTA hold governments accountable on their promises. Such actions prevent top-down approaches to policy-planning, generate awareness and put a check on substandard implementation and corruption.

The campaign's objective is seen at two levels. On one hand it aims to spread awareness and engage with different regions, constituencies and thematic issues, and to varied civil society organisations, networks and anchors. On the other end, it looks for consolidation and engagement with the Planning Commission in Delhi.

The WNTA team also launched Action 2015 in India, a movement that aims to influence the next development framework with aspirations of people and children from around the world. This is a living example of a strong civil movement on monitoring and review and can be well streamlined with goals and ambitions of SDGs.

Source: <http://wadanatodo.net/>



E. Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), Pratham

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) is an annual survey that aims to provide reliable estimates of children's schooling status and basic learning levels for each state and rural district in India. ASER uses an assessment tool to mark the learning and understanding of children of age 5-16 years in India.

By the year 2004, enrollment levels in primary school in India were already more than 90%, but no information was available at scale about the outcomes of primary education. The ASER Centre conducts an annual household-based (rather than school-based) survey which enables all children to be included: those who have never been to school or have dropped out, as well as those who are in government schools, private schools, religious schools or elsewhere. In each rural district, 30 villages are sampled. In each village, 20 randomly selected households are surveyed. Approximately 600,000 children in the age group 3-16 who are residents of these households are surveyed.

The ASER Centre of Pratham came out with its tenth report in 2014. ASER is the largest citizen-led survey in India. It is the only annual source of information on children's learning outcomes available in India today. The model began in India in 2005 and has been adapted for use in Pakistan (since 2008), Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda (2009), Mali (2011) and recently Senegal (2012). Pilots are currently ongoing in Mexico. Together, these initiatives reached more than a million children in 2013. The ASER Report was also cited by UNESCO's Education for A report to note the disparity across states in learning outcomes.

Source: <http://www.asercentre.org/>

F. Citizens' Report, Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)

The Citizen's Reports developed by CSE, through surveys and primary and secondary studies, are a tool to convey public opinion to policy makers and to provide feedback on development policies. CSE researches, lobbies for, and communicates the urgency of development that is both sustainable and equitable. The aim is to raise these concerns, participate in seeking and pushing for answers, and transforming these into policy and practice by the way of knowledge-based activism. In 1982, this took the shape of the first Citizens' Report on the State of India's Environment (SOE), addressing the urgent need to create environmental consciousness. Other areas of citizen's reports have been on pollution, waste generation, floods, environmental myths, water harvesting systems and other such environmental issues, events, policies and practices.

Source: www.cseindia.org

G. EIA practices with CSOs in Myanmar, EcoDev

EcoDev conducts CSO training for community-led Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), and has invited CSOs from all over Myanmar to participate to ensure that even those who are only indirectly affected by the project will be trained. Training includes presentations by the project proponent on plans for the project and corporate social responsibility activities, Participatory Action Research (PAR) tools for field-based data collection and input solicitation, and practical group exercises. The company has also started an environmental laboratory and is providing training to local CSOs and local communities so they can assist with monitoring. The advantages of this participatory model include increased objectivity, less manipulation and bias and enhanced public-private partnership.

Source: AECEN 2014. "Summary Report". *Environmental Impact Assessment Policy and Practice in the Mekong Region: Safeguarding Sustainable Development*. Regional Workshop, InterContinental Hotel, Bangkok 1-3 December 2014

H. Strengthening the role of Non State Actors in Climate Change Policy Formulation in South Asia and Enhancing their Capacities to Influence Global Climate Change Negotiations

This project was launched to enhance the capacities of NSAs in Bangladesh, Nepal and at SAARC level to engage in national, regional and global decision-making processes and to influence policies in relation to climate change. It aims to facilitate adaptation at the grassroots level by empowering the likely victims of climate change and facilitating knowledge enhancement and capacity building of non-state actors. The project has been implemented in Bangladesh by Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL), in Nepal by Climate Change Network Nepal (CCNN) and at SAARC level (primarily in India and Pakistan) by Climate Action Network South Asia (CANSAs).

The project successfully enhanced community awareness, provided critical information for community level adaptation (and mitigation), gave impetus for local and regional NSAs in South Asia to engage in advocacy and campaigns on climate change issues, and work closely with government counterparts towards promoting pro-poor policy making for pro-poor adaptation throughout the South Asia.

In achieving the objectives, the project organized (and convened) a large number of activities and events, which enabled the proponents to work closely with people at the grassroots level (climate victims including women and marginalized primary producers), educators and students, journalists, local government officer bearers, local-level administrators and service providers, national-level parliamentarians and top policy-makers, government recognized official delegation members to UNFCCC negotiations, and with regional and global NSAs. Such network building and collaborations for capacity building are crucial for enhancing capacities of non-state actors for support, monitoring and review of the development processes.

Shortfalls and Way Forward

There are some common shortfalls in establishing collaborative partnerships between state and non-state actors at different stages of the policy cycle. A usual case of non-translation of dialogues, research and analysis into desired policy is one of them. While the research done by non-state actors may be acknowledged, the effective policy change often does not result. Reasons for this vary: it may be a lack of political or social will, or lack of trust in the non-state actor in question. To prevent such friction between planning and implementation, it is important to mobilise multiple stakeholders to influence the government and to actively participate in the policy planning process.

Questions of the integrity and independence of data and implementation of a programme by non-state actors are regularly raised. It is essential for non-state actors to be able to prove their reliability and credibility of data by ensuring systems of verification. A possible solution that can apply in such a scenario is to collect data using improved technology that it can be easily verified. This can be strengthened by government-created partnerships with non-state actors and government-provided guidelines to regulate quality of data collected. Such mutual accountability can be useful in reviewing policies or specific development initiatives.

Relationship-building with governments and gaining trust are the most critical and difficult parts of non-state actors' engagement. Experiences of non-state actors highlight the slow process of attaining such trust. Factors that speed the relationship-building process include: grassroots presence with wide public recognition, a strong base of research and analysis, and a wide range of tools for governments to use in implementation or review.

Non-state actors can be slowed in their engagement by financial or human resource constraints in the long run. A strong network amongst non-state actors (Case Study H, above) can build supportive relationships amongst each other continued intervention and support for monitoring and review of development processes.

Conclusion

Looking ahead to national implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, integrated, multi-stakeholder partnerships for development planning, implementation and monitoring will be needed to ensure a transparent system that is accountable to people and the planet. Robust and inclusive monitoring and review mechanisms and processes – as illustrated through the various case studies – will not only enhance transparency, but also can mobilise support and provide 'on-the-ground' feedback to improve the functioning of government policies and programs. These approaches can be adapted to various national and local contexts around the world in the development of review and monitoring processes for SDGs, and thus promote achievement of the post-2015 development agenda.

A partnership between governments and non-state actors can raise awareness, support governments in implementation and policy making, and promote an accountable and inclusive system of development planning and implementation. However, this involves dedicated relationship- and trust-building from both sides. SDG implementation process must promote such relationships, utilizing them for monitoring and review to ensure accountability and further national learning.

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