Overseas Development Institute

Evaluation of Citizens' Voice and Accountability

Evaluation Framework

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1. Introduction

A core group of DAC partners[1] (Evaluation Core Group/ECG) is collaborating on a joint evaluation of development aid for strengthening Citizens' Voice & Accountability. In the first phase of this evaluation a framework has been developed. A draft version of the framework was piloted in Benin and Nicaragua. The final version of this evaluation framework is presented in this paper, building on the lessons learnt from piloting the draft version.

This evaluation is very timely for a number of reasons, including:

- Quality of governance is recognised as a key factor correlated with poverty reduction and macroeconomic stability. Similarly, it is increasingly recognised that '*accountability'*, or the ability of citizens and the private sector to scrutinise public institutions and governments and to hold them to account, is an important facet of good governance.
- In recent years the range of donor interventions seeking to address citizens' voice and accountability has expanded, drawing on the use of participatory planning and monitoring tools to go beyond more traditional support for civil society.
- The Paris Declaration of 2005 on Aid Effectiveness also commits development partners to specific actions to enhance citizens' voice and accountability as part of the overall commitment to supporting country led approaches.
- There is greater need to evaluate how effective donors have been to date in supporting voice and accountability, and there is now a significant body of experience from which to learn.

In accordance with the ToR (paragraph 3.1), the overall purposes of the evaluation of citizens' voice and accountability (V&A) interventions are to:

- map and document approaches and strategies of development partners for enhancing V&A in a variety of developing country contexts, and to learn lessons on which approaches have worked best, where and why; and
- assess effects of a range of donor V&A interventions on governance and aid effectiveness, and whether these effects are sustainable.

Against this context, the specific purpose of the final evaluation framework is to: (i) provide an initial common framework to be applied in different contexts; and (ii) identify the main analytical dimensions for evaluating V&A interventions, including indicative outcome areas, results chain, areas of change, criteria and indicators (see ToR par. 6.3.1.). Crucially, the framework is also aimed at delimiting the scope of the evaluation (par. 3.2).

The final evaluation framework is based on the key findings of the first phase of the project, namely the literature review, the intervention analysis and the pilot case studies in Benin and Nicaragua In addition, the development of the framework benefited from the valuable comments of the ECG members throughout the first phase of the project.

This paper is structured as follows: first we summarise the key lessons learnt from the literature review, the intervention analysis and the pilot case studies. We then discuss a set of revised evaluation questions, based on the findings of the first phase of the project. Thirdly, we present the key principles underpinning the evaluation framework. Section 5 introduces the role of the socio, political and economic context and it outlines the key features of the evaluation framework. Section 6 examines in some detail the main components of the framework, including their key features and

[1] Currently comprising BMZ, DANIDA, DFID, DGCD, NORAD, SDC, and SIDA.

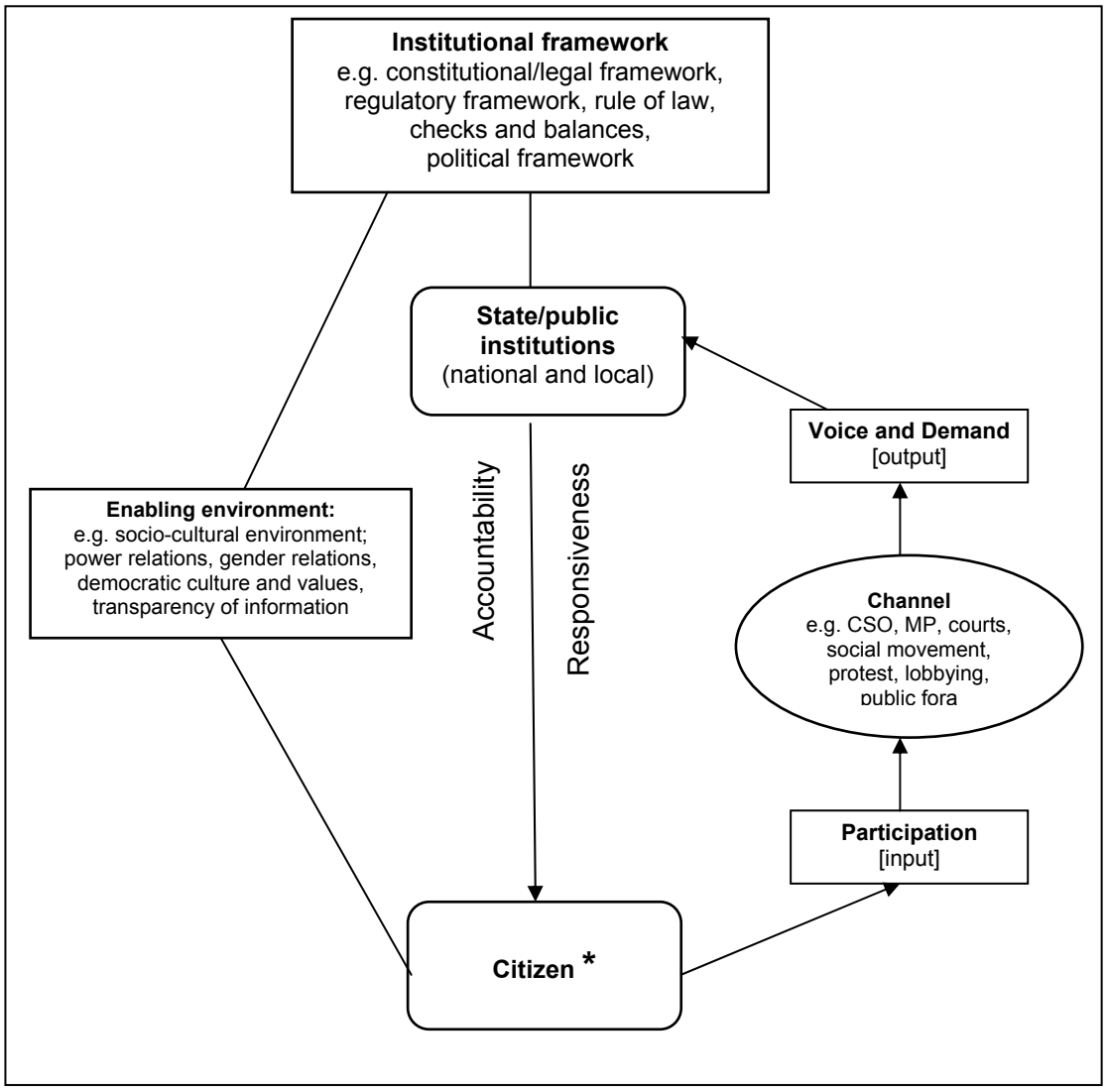
the relevant evaluation sub-questions. Section 7 explores the levels of results and some potential models of change that could emerge as a result of the application of the framework. The last section of the paper considers the applicability of the DAC evaluation criteria in the context of citizens' V&A.

2. Lessons learnt from the literature review, intervention analysis and pilot studies

One of the most significant findings of the literature review is that the complexities of V&A heavily influence the way donors can engage because they are unable to work directly on voice (an action) or accountability (a relationship). In practice, donors strengthen V&A by seeking to create or strengthen the preconditions for the exercise of V&A and/or particular channels and mechanisms that underpin actions of V&A relationships. Figure 1 outlines the key aspects of V&A that donors seek to influence according to their policies and strategies.[2] Figure 1 is not meant to represent the components of the evaluation framework. Rather it provides a representation of the 'V&A universe' emerging from donors' policy and strategy documents. As such, it informed the development of the evaluation framework (further described in Section 5 and 6) together with the results of the intervention analysis and the pilot case studies.

[2] Figure 1 is an elaboration of Figure 3 in the Literature Review. It takes into account some of the suggestions put forward by ECG members and other ODI team members

Figure 1: Enabling environment, channels and institutions: mechanisms through which donors work to strengthen voice and accountability



* NB: In accordance with the ToR we use here the terms 'citizen' and 'state' as the two main dimensions of the V&A relationship. However, we recognise that it is important to consider individuals without formal/legal citizenship, such as refugees or IDPs, in the context of voice and accountability because it is these groups who are most likely to be marginalised and unable to express their voice or demand accountability for their entitlements. For the purpose of this framework, **we therefore interpret the term 'citizen' as 'individual'**.

The intervention analysis (IA) considered nearly 90 V&A interventions funded by the ECG members in 10 countries.[3] In addition to some basic description of the interventions considered, the analysis focused on the themes of V&A interventions, the actors directly involved or targeted by the interventions and the funding mechanisms in place to support these interventions. The IA confirmed that donors' support for V&A interventions seek to influence/strengthen the various elements of the 'V&A system' which emerged from the analysis of donors' policies and strategies. The main findings of the IA are summarised in Box 1 below.

[3] Benin, Bolivia, DRC, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Tanzania and Uganda.

Box 1: V&A intervention analysis: main findings

- The V&A interventions vary considerably in terms of their size and thematic focus. The variation is less marked in relation to the actors involved, funding mechanisms and expected results.

- V&A is not always the main focus of the interventions: 40% have V&A as a **component** of a broader set of objectives and activities, such as local development or governance.

- Approximately 60% of all actors involved in V&A projects are **state actors**, mainly national and local government. The remaining 40% come from civil society, largely national NGOs and to a lesser degree local CSOs.

- Parliamentary committees, anti-corruption commissions, human rights bodies, the judiciary, ombudsmen, citizens' watchdogs and faith groups are all under represented[4]. The **media** is the only 'non traditional' actor significantly involved in V&A interventions.

- Strengthening the **capacities** of governments to become more accountable or of NGOs to become more influential and effective in holding institutions to account is the key aim of the interventions. Very few focus on concrete mechanisms to improve government accountability or enhance democratic spaces for citizens to express their voice and take action.

- **Single donors** fund two thirds of the interventions. The multi-donor interventions mostly involve multilaterals (EU, UN and World Bank), the Nordic bilaterals and, to a lesser extent, DFID.

- Most of the **funding** is either directed at national NGOs and national governments (50%) or channelled through international intermediaries (30%). A relatively smaller proportion reaches out to local organisations or less traditional channels.

- **Context** is a complex factor in the analysis and its role in determining donors' choices for V&A interventions remains unclear. There is some evidence linking the type of interventions with the country context and timing (e.g. elections in DRC) or the type of funding mechanism with the specific circumstances of a country (e.g. Ethiopia). However, the IA did not reveal a clear correspondence between intervention types and country profiles.

The **analysis of donors' policies and practice** has provided some useful pointers for the evaluation framework. These are further elaborated in the next sections. In addition, a number of questions have emerged which the framework will seek to address, such as the:

- extent to which the focus on formal institutions supports or hinders the achievement of broader V&A outcomes;
- reasons behind the limited engagement of non-traditional actors and the lack of focus on concrete mechanisms for citizens to monitor state accountability;
- balance of investment between the 'supply' and 'demand' sides of V&A;
- linkages between the different elements, i.e. in what ways the different dimensions of the enabling environment can actually contribute to enhanced V&A.

The literature review confirmed that the **context**, and particularly the political context, is relevant in the specification of overall objectives, the sequencing of activities and the types of actors involved. However, the intervention analysis did not reveal a clear

[4] Although this could be partially attributed to the selection criteria for the sample of interventions, see Annexe C of TOR.

correspondence between intervention types and generic country profiles or governance typologies. This makes it all the more important for the evaluation framework to analyse what is the **role of the political and socio-economic context** in determining donors' action in support of V&A as well as in sustaining or undermining V&A outcomes and results.

The findings from the literature review and the intervention analysis informed the development of a draft evaluation framework which was piloted in Benin and Nicaragua. The pilots confirmed the overall relevance and suitability of the evaluation questions and draft evaluation framework. The lessons learnt from the pilots provided some useful propositions to improve some components of the framework, which have been integrated into this final version which will be applied in a selection of Country Case Studies (CCS) on V&A.

One of the key lessons from the pilot phase relates to the need to better define V&A from an operational perspective and, in turn, to identify the specific object of the evaluation. The box below summarises some of the key operational definitions of the V&A 'universe'.

Box 2: Operational definitions of V&A

Voice refers to the expression of preferences, opinions and views. Mechanisms for expressing voice are key to ensure that different preferences, opinions and views can be expressed, heard and acted upon. Mechanisms for voice can be formal or informal: at the informal end of the spectrum, these can include a variety of citizen or civil society-led actions such as public demonstrations, protests, advocacy campaigns and public interest lawsuits. More formally, these can include working with the media, participating in policy-making and budget processes, tracking public expenditure, monitoring public service delivery, and taking part in public commissions and hearings. Voice can be directed at processes of decision-making, service delivery or policy implementation.

Accountability refers to the relationship between two parties, those who set or control the application/implementation of the rules, and those who are subject to the rules. The relationship which is of most interest in the context of the voice and accountability evaluations is that between the state (at national and local levels) and its people. This relationship can be based on both formal and informal rules and it can include forms of 'consensus building' which sometimes underpin the relationship between citizens and state. The key elements of this relationship are:

(a) ***Transparency of decision-making***, allowing the public and other agents of the state to oversee compliance with policies and rules. This includes use of written judgements, access to parliamentary committee sessions, invited participation in budgetary and policy processes, as well as media scrutiny.
(b) ***Answerability***, i.e. the legal and political obligation on the State to justify decisions to the general public or other state entities to ensure decisions remain within their administrative or constitutional mandate. Forms of answerability include written and/or verbal responses, and changes in personnel, policy and practice.
(c) ***The ability to sanction*** state institutions for failure to provide adequate explanation for actions and decisions otherwise deemed contrary to legal and political mandates. This may include judicial sanctioning, or public naming and shaming.

There are three broad types of accountability relationships:

(i) ***Vertical accountability*** between citizens and their elected parliamentary/party-political representatives. Concrete mechanisms and donors' interventions include: election monitoring, support to constituencies and leadership development.
(ii) ***Horizontal accountability*** between the legislative, executive and judicial arms of the state, on behalf of citizens. Concrete mechanisms and donors' interventions include: efforts to strengthen the capacity and procedures of parliaments and support for functioning of accountability mechanisms such as human rights, ombudsman and anti-corruption commissions.

Box 2 continued

(iv) ***Hybrid accountability***, where civil society itself takes on attributes of the state in supervising the performance of state agencies. Concrete mechanisms and donors' interventions include support to participatory budget monitoring, as well as to citizen report cards on public service - where formal accountability mechanisms lack credibility or resources.

Voice and accountability are closely related. However, they are not the same and it does not follow that voice necessarily leads to accountability or vice versa. How and if voice leads or contributes to accountability will differ with the political context. In some circumstances voice could undermine accountability, for example by strengthening the voices of particular groups or individuals and in so doing weakening accountability to broader sections of the population. Pilot studies suggest that the link between voice and accountability may be more apparent at local levels, e.g. where citizens are able to carry out an oversight or monitoring function of local government through social auditing and participatory budget processes.

3. Evaluation questions

The original evaluation questions have been refined on the basis of the findings of the literature review, intervention analysis and pilot studies, as suggested in the ToRs (paragraph 5.1). The main rationale behind the proposed changes included:

- a clearer distinction between questions concerned with direct outputs or intermediate outcomes of V&A and questions addressing issues of broader development outcomes such as poverty reduction or the MDGs;
- explicit reference to V&A channels and mechanisms as opposed to generic processes and approaches;
- a more intuitive sequencing of the questions.

The revised evaluation questions for the V&A framework are summarised in Box 3 below.

Box 3: Revised evaluation questions

- **Question 1: Channels, mechanisms and processes**
  What are the concrete channels, i.e. actors, spaces and mechanisms supported by donor-funded interventions for: (i) citizens' voice and empowerment; (ii) increased role of poor and excluded groups, and women or their representatives in governance processes; and (iii) accountability of governments to citizens?

  How do these channels work and how important are they to achieve V&A outcomes?

- **Question 2: Results and outcomes**
  To what extent have the different approaches and strategies adopted by donors contributed to enhanced V&A in partner countries? In particular, who has benefited from V&A outcomes as a result of donors' interventions? Who hasn't and why?

- **Question 3: Pathways to broader development outcomes**
  In what ways are V&A interventions contributing to broader development goals, such as poverty reduction, economic growth and the MDGs? In particular, what are the main pathways leading from improved V&A to such broader development outcomes?

- **Question 4: V&A and aid effectiveness**
  What can we learn from experience to date of donors' effectiveness in supporting V&A interventions with particular reference to the principles enshrined in the Paris Declaration?

In addition to the general evaluation questions, the findings of the literature review, intervention analysis and pilot studies provided a basis to develop more specific sub questions for each of the main evaluation questions. These are further explored in Section 6 in relation to the main components of the evaluation framework.

4. Principles underlying the evaluation framework

The evaluation framework has been developed taking into account the following principles:

- **Flexibility**: The framework is aimed at evaluating different types of V&A interventions in different country contexts (paragraph 4.1 of ToR). In addition, although the main object of the evaluation is one or more interventions, the overall scope of the framework goes beyond these interventions to assess the overall performance of donors in a given sector, sub-sector, region or country. Hence, the various components of the framework should be understood as flexible and should be adapted to the specific circumstances of a given context (e.g. the country, political landscape, level or type of intervention etc.).

- **Comprehensiveness**: In the development of the framework we maintained that it should have a broad and comprehensive focus. This will reduce the risk of overlooking important aspects of V&A and allow the framework to be given focus on the basis of the specific contexts and interventions included in the Country Case Studies (CCS).

- **Theory based**: In line with a theory-driven approach to evaluation, the components of the evaluation framework are framed to elicit the implicit programme logic of V&A interventions, with a view to better defining the assumptions, choices and theories held by those responsible for design and implementation. In turn, this will allow a more realistic assessment of results and outcomes, including the reasons why objectives are being met or not. Section 6 provides more details on using the framework components to derive possible 'models of change' underlying the interventions.

- **Outcome focused**: The different components of the framework are also used to define and assess outputs, direct and intermediate outcomes as well as pathways to impact and long term change. These are further explored in Section 5.

- **Evidence based**: The framework is based on the main findings of the literature review, intervention analysis and pilot studies, which provide an important evidence base as well as analytical pointers for guiding the evaluation framework.

- **Consistency with DAC evaluation criteria**: In accordance with international good practice, the framework takes into account the five DAC evaluation criteria (see Section 7).

5. Context analysis and overview of evaluation framework

5.1 The socio, economic and political context

The literature review and the intervention analysis both suggest that **context** is crucial for understanding and hence assessing V&A. Therefore, a thorough analysis of the socio, political and economic context is not only one of the key activities of the V&A evaluation, but it also represents an important benchmark for assessing the

relevance of V&A interventions in the specific context where they take place. The analysis of the socio, political and economic context is the first step of the country case studies (see Methodological Guidance in Annexe A, Step 1) and it underpins the main components of the evaluation framework (see Figure 1 below). The aim of the context analysis is to provide detailed information about: (i) the political and institutional framework and its actual operation; (ii) a mapping and key features of the main V&A actors within the country; (iii) the social and political landscape and (iv) main events of particular relevance for V&A. The main elements of the context analysis are summarised in Box 4 below. More details on how to carry out the context analysis, including the data and sources to be considered are provided in the Methodological Guidance in Annexe A, page 3.

BOX 4: Elements of the context analysis

(i) Political and institutional framework and actual operation

- An analysis of **legal rights** to information, participation, accountability
- An analysis of **public oversight mechanisms** spanning the executive, legislative, judicial and other constitutionally mandated institutions
- An analysis of the **distribution of powers** across divisions and levels of government, and opportunities/mechanisms for participation and public oversight within this
- An analysis of the **economic** structures and institutions, including dependency from natural resources, market regulations, how the economy is organised (e.g. is it predominantly agrarian, urbanisation processes) and affect on class structure

(ii) Mapping and key features of main actors

- An analysis of the **principal state and non-state actors**, spanning governments ministries, regulatory bodies, local administration, networks, social movements, NGOs, those aligned with government and those not, and the historical reasons for this
- An analysis of the **aid architecture**, including donors' presence, principal fora for strategic dialogue on poverty reduction and governance, the main instruments and modalities for aid delivery as well as mechanisms for civil society support

(iii) Social and political landscape

- An analysis of the **political landscape**, including the alliances and sources of power on which the current government depends, as well as the degree of political control over the different branches of government (including the key public oversight mechanisms)
- An analysis of **informal power structures** and institutions, including religious groups, traditional institutions, networks related to the informal economy, patronage and rent seeking arrangements, gender relations and culture.

(iv) Recent events that shape opportunities and risks for voice and accountability

5.2 Overview of the V&A evaluation framework

One of the key challenges of developing an evaluation framework for V&A interventions is to define its '**boundaries'**, i.e. which aspects will the framework consider. This is all the more critical in a domain such as V&A that is complex, dynamic and subsequently difficult to define, as confirmed by the literature review and intervention analysis. The main components of the evaluation framework described in this sub-section and further described in section 6 define these boundaries. They also determine the analytical base of the framework by providing

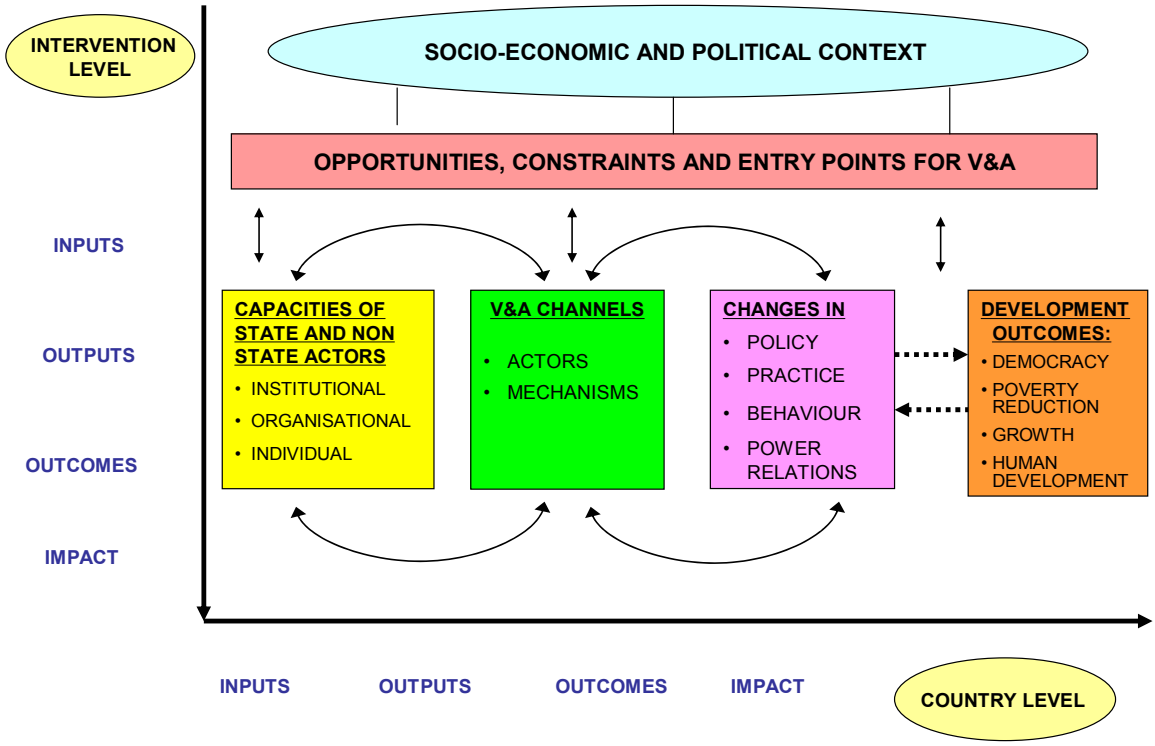
guidance about what the evaluation questions will be used to measure or assess V&A results and outcomes.

The analysis of donors' policies and interventions revealed that donors' support for V&A interventions seeks to influence or strengthen **specific dimensions** of citizens' V&A, although their approach and focus within these dimensions can vary (see Section 2 of literature review). These dimensions of donor support are reflected in the five core components of the framework. These are:

A. Opportunities, constraints and entry points for V&A;
B. Institutional, organisational and individual capacities;
C. V&A channels: actors and mechanisms;
D. Changes in policy, practice, behaviour and power relations
E. Broader development outcomes.

Figure 2 below is an attempt to represent the relationship between the socio, economic and political context, the different components of the V&A evaluation framework, and the different levels of results and outcomes, i.e. **a general results chain** for V&A interventions and for an overall assessment of donors performance on V&A at the country level. It is important to recognise that the diagram is not meant to suggest a universal fixed logic chain or model of change. Rather, it should be considered as one way of representing V&A change processes, recognising that these can vary according to time and length of interventions, the context in which they take place, the actors involved and donor priorities.

Figure 2: Context, framework components, levels of results and outcomes[5]



There are two main challenges to defining a theory based results chain for V&A interventions, even when grounded on the empirical analysis of donors' policies and interventions:

(i) distinguishing between direct outputs or outcomes of the interventions and more medium and longer-term changes, which the interventions seek to

[5] The level of results and models of change is further discussed in Section 6.

influence but over which they have little or no control. This is further reinforced by the well-known challenges of attribution, which are particularly complex in this case because several factors, actors and contextual elements are likely to contribute to longer-term changes; and

(ii) recognising that the different components and levels of results are interlinked and sometimes overlap. For example, what can be considered as '*changes in policy, practice and behaviour*' relating to project *A* at time *t* (e.g. a new law or policy being approved or implemented), could in turn be an element of the '*enabling environment*' for project *B* or for a different phase of project *A* at time *t+1.* In other words, it is important to recognise the dynamic and interlocking nature of V&A interventions, which should be reflected in the interpretation and application of the framework.

The five core components of the framework are explored in more detail in Section 6 below.

6. Main components of the V&A evaluation framework

In this section we describe in detail the main features of the five components of the evaluation framework:

A. Opportunities, constraints and entry points for V&A;
B. Institutional, organisational and individual capacities;
C. V&A channels: actors and mechanisms;
D. Changes in policy, practice, behaviour and power relations
E. Broader development outcomes

For each component we outline an introductory definition, a checklist of key features (or criteria) to guide the analysis and a set of evaluation sub-questions to be considered. The aim is to be comprehensive rather than selective, with a view to narrowing down the definitions of the key components on the basis of specific interventions and contexts.

It is important to recognise that, as described in section 5, these five components are interrelated and that the framework is dynamic, in that its aims not only to describe V&A interventions and assess results in relation to specific components (e.g. in terms of capacity, actors or policy change) but crucially it seeks to establish what are the linkages between these and how they influence V&A results at the intervention or country level.

A. Opportunities, constraints and entry points for V&A.

This component focuses on two main dimensions:

- The **key factors** – initial conditions, opportunities and constraints - that determine the type and extent of V&A exercised in a particular country context. These factors are derived from an analysis of the social, political, legal and economic context (see section 5 and Methodological Guidance, Step1) of particular relevance for V&A.
- The **main entry points** for donors' interventions on V&A. These are based on an analysis of donors' overall strategies for V&A interventions in the country and their relevance in relation to the V&A context

The analysis of these key factors and entry points is critical in defining the **scope for change** that is envisaged by V&A interventions. In this respect, donors' strategies

should be analysed in order to reveal the *assumptions about change* (or models of change) that underpin them. As further explained in section 7, the identification and testing of models of change helps to address the question which is central to the evaluation framework: *how do donors think change will happen as a result of their V&A interventions/strategies, and how will they know when it has happened?*

Key features to be considered by the analysis

(i) **Initial conditions and opportunities** for V&A interventions: these are directly derived from the context analysis and include:

- The *structural conditions* that govern power relations and forms of inclusion and exclusion (e.g. distribution of assets, economic relations or ethnic/religious composition);
- The *institutional frameworks*, the 'rules of the game', that determine the nature of the political system and provide the incentives that shape behaviour. These institutions are both formal (e.g. codified rules such as the constitution) and informal (e.g. implicit social norms such as those relating to patronage, kinship and hierarchy).
- *Formal and informal power structures*, including the role played by socio-cultural norms and actors. These are likely to influence or determine the relationship between different social groups such as: gender relations, kinship, ethnicity, etc.

(ii) **Constraints:** these refer to the main challenges and obstacles which prevent the effective implementation of the norms and policies that regulate V&A mechanisms and processes. Examples include:

- Corruption and lack of transparency
- Partisan politics and ideological divisions
- Poor socio-economic development
- Predominance of traditional socio-cultural norms, such as neo-patrimonial systems or informal systems which exclude certain groups, such as women or minorities

(iii) **Entry points** for donors' interventions could include:

- *Policy reform processes* (e.g. decentralisation) with the potential for strengthening V&A.
- Introduction of new *legislation* or changes to regulatory frameworks relevant for V&A
- *Elections* and other political processes
- *Collective action* initiatives (e.g. a campaign)
- *Donors' main policy priorities* (e.g. the good governance agenda)

(iv) Donors' overall **strategies for V&A**: each V&A intervention is likely to have its own set of specific purposes and objectives. However, it is important to understand how these fit in with an overall strategy or 'vision' held by donors supporting V&A interventions, for two main reasons: (i) to better interpret the underlying assumptions and the programme logic adopted by specific V&A interventions and (ii) to analyse the consistency/coherence/relevance of donors' views and strategies *vis a vis* those of other key stakeholders of V&A at the national level. Examples of donors' overall strategies for V&A might include:

- *Institution building/strengthening strategies,* focusing on the different dimensions of the public administration/state with a view to strengthen their administrative, technical and political functions
- *Transformative strategies,* mostly aimed at creating/transforming institutions, rules, procedures in support of V&A
- *Civil society support strategies* mostly concerned with supporting the 'demand' side of the V&A equation and primarily relying on CSOs being able to express their voice and demand accountability

- *Sectoral strategies,* i.e. using sectoral interventions/policies such as health, education etc. as a main entry point for tackling V&A

Component A: Evaluation sub questions

- How do donor interventions take the socio, economic and political context into account in the design and implementation of V&A interventions? To what extent are the entry points, opportunities and constraints for V&A interventions grounded in the analysis of the context and are relevant in the specific country context?
- How explicit/clear are donors' overall strategies for V&A at the country level? How far are these articulated in the interventions' aims and objectives?
- Are there areas of the socio, economic and political context that donors are not currently engaged with which could be important for strengthening V&A?

B. Institutional, organisational and individual capacities

Institutional, organisational and individual capacities describe the resources, skills and knowledge required for the exercise of V&A. Capacity can operate at different levels – institutional, organisational and individual. Broadly, capacity can be conceived of as having two constitutive elements: (i) competencies of individuals (their skills, abilities and behaviour) and (ii) capabilities of organisations (functional, technical, thematic, political and creative)[6].

Crucially, capacities can take different forms, relating not only to financial and technical capacity but also to the willingness and ability to use these, i.e. social and political capacity. These **political forms of capacity** are particularly important for V&A: issues like lack of political will, leadership and negotiating skills are often key constraints for V&A.

Capacities can have a direct impact on V&A and are linked closely to the other components of the framework. Examples of the relationship between capacities and other components of the framework can include:

- lack of political skills are among the key constraints for V&A;
- capacity development is a key element of most donors' V&A strategies and capacity building constitutes one of the most common entry points for donors' interventions;
- both technical and political capacities of individuals and organisations are key for V&A channels to be effective.

From this perspective, the framework considers increased capacity not only as an area of results in its own rights, but it questions the extent to which the support of capacity development contributes to broader V&A outcomes.

Key features to be considered in the analysis

Institutional, organisational and individual capacities for V&A can be analysed by assessing the extent to which the range of **capacity needs** of state and non state actors involved in V&A are addressed and improved through the contribution of **donors' sponsored interventions for capacity development**, which are often a key component of donors' strategies for supporting V&A.

Capacity needs of state actors: State actors**,** at both the local and national level, are largely responsible for formulating V&A policy and implementing programmes. Their skills requirements include not only technical management and financial competencies, but also the capacity to manage *reform processes* (e.g.

[6] For a detailed analysis of capacity, see Morgan, P. (2006) The Concept of Capacity, ECDPM.

decentralisation, including devolvement of decision-making responsibilities as well as technical functions), to improve *transparency* and the policy dialogue with civil society (including managing greater participation of civil society in decision-making processes). These forms of capacity needs are primarily of political rather than technical nature and often require leadership, vision and the capacity to think strategically.

Capacity needs of non-state actors: Non-state actors are not only key in the creation and exercise of voice, but also to ensure that voice leads to greater responsiveness and accountability of both state and state actors (see section below on the importance of accountability and legitimacy for all actors involved in V&A). The creation and exercise of voice and the capacity to hold to account consist of a number of steps, some of which may be sequential or overlap. They include access to information, participation, formation of networks and alliances, ability to control previously closed spaces or agendas and a substantial role in decision-making. Civil society organisations, the media, trade unions and other non-traditional non-state actors a such as political parties and professional associations are all involved in the creation of voice and its channelling to wider audiences.

In order to fulfil these roles non-state actors require a range of specific capacity needs of non-state actors including the following:

- *Advocacy and engagement*: This can depend on factors such as: (i) communication, networking and policy influencing skills; (ii) capacity to engage with community or informal organisations that represent the interests of poor or marginalised groups; (iii) the openness and capacity of public officials/institutions to engage, and on which issues; and (iv) the existence of formal or informal mechanisms for engagement.
- *Knowledge/awareness of regulations, rights and entitlements*: Awareness of formal rights and entitlements is a precondition for exercising them but this knowledge may be restricted to certain groups or awareness of particular type of entitlements may be more widespread than others. Citizens also need to be aware of what channels and mechanisms are available through which they can express their voice or demands.
- *Capacity to participate in political processes*: Individuals or organisations may be aware of their rights and entitlements and have sufficient resources and skills but lack the necessary political capacity or power to act upon these. This may be because the political environment is not conducive to the expression of V&A (e.g. it is repressive or horizontal accountability institutions are weak) or because formal rights/rules are in tension with dominant social-cultural norms (e.g. those based on relations of hierarchy/exclusion).

Donors' strategies for capacity development are a critical dimension of V&A programming, for two main reasons. The Intervention Analysis confirmed that capacity development is not only a considerable area of investment for donors' support of V&A, but improved capacities of both state and non state actors are often considered as a key area of results for V&A interventions. However, the experience form the pilots suggests that donors' strategies and approaches to capacity development are not sufficiently diversified and often fail to address the range of capacity needs of state and non state actors outlined above. In the case of civil society organisations for instance, donors tend to fund mainstreaming training and skills development initiatives which are not sufficiently tailored to the skills and capacities requirements of V&A, often focus on narrow set of skills (e.g. human rights training, advocacy skills) without tackling a wider range of capacity needs such as political engagement, leadership, legal training, etc.

Similarly donors' funded capacity development for state actors tend to focus on technical and financial skills (e.g. budget management, monitoring and evaluation,

project management) often assuming that those will be sufficient to tackle the more complex challenges of lack of political and strategic skills. Cleary those require a more integrated approach, as lack of political will and strategic thinking is not merely an issue of a 'capacity gap', but it is related to issues of incentives, corruption, rent seeking, sanctions, clientelism etc. It is therefore vital for the evaluation to critically assess the 'goodness of fit' between the range of capacity needs of state and non state actors and the relevance and adequacy of strategies adopted by donors to address them.

Component B: Evaluation sub questions:

- How relevant is donors' support for capacity development vis a vis the needs of different actors of V&A?
- How effective is donor support for capacity building and training initiatives of state and non-state agents involved in V&A interventions? What are the expected, unexpected, positive and negative results (outputs or outcomes) of these initiatives?
- How effective is donor support for advocacy and coalition building initiatives? What are the results (outputs or outcomes) of these initiatives? Are some individuals/groups more difficult to reach?
- How sustainable is donors' support to capacity development of CSOs?
- What factors militate against increased capacity being translated into action?

C. Voice and Accountability channels

Channels for V&A are defined by a combination of *actors and mechanisms* through which:

- individuals express their voice or demands and are able to hold the state to account
- states are responsive to citizens' voice and, ultimately, accountable to the public.

All V&A channels are defined by the **function** they perform (rather than their form) and can therefore include formal and informal organisations, modes of expression and public fora, legal mechanisms such as courts as well as informal processes for expressing complaints and seeking redress. These channels can be situated within either the state or society. Channels refer not only to the role played by actors and mechanisms but also to the actions resulting from them being in place.

Actors include all the different agents, individuals, organisations, collectives, movements, institutions, informal groups etc. which can play an active role in support of V&A, whether from within or outside the state sector.

Examples of V&A actors include:

- NGOs e.g. advocacy, service providers, citizen watchdog
- CBOs e.g. faith, labour, women, youth, burial societies, cooperatives
- Parliament
- National government structures
- Local govt structures e.g. village or area development committees, councils
- Media
- Political parties
- Traditional authorities
- Social movements
- Ombudsmen
- Businesses, professional organisations

Mechanisms refer to the concrete rules, processes and procedures (i.e the rules of the game') which allow (i) citizens to ensure that their voices are not just heard but 'recorded' and acted upon and (ii) states to exercise their accountability to citizens. Crucially these 'rules of the game' defining the concrete mechanisms for V&A can be both formal and informal. Formal mechanisms are explicit and concretised in written documents (e.g. constitutions, laws and regulations, commercial and civil service codes and procedures), physical structures (e.g. ministries, legislatures, courthouses) and public events (e.g. elections, council meetings). Informal mechanisms are implicit and based on unwritten understandings such as socio-cultural norms, routines and traditions[7]. These often constitute socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated, and enforced outside officially sanctioned channels. The enforceability of these 'informal rules of the game' can depend on the forms of social/informal sanctions that people who do not follow them may incur[8].

Examples of V&A mechanisms include:

- Elections
- Judicial/court system (state and non-state)
- Bilateral relationships e.g. with political representative such as councillor or MP (e.g. letter writing, 'surgeries', consultations)
- Social Audits
- Public Expenditure Tracking/Budget Monitoring
- Consultation processes
- Village/citizens' committees
- Protests or rallies
- Public Hearings
- Policy dialogue

V&A actors, formal and informal mechanisms for V&A, as well as the formal and informal rules for V&A which they are based upon may be in **tension**. This is because, whilst all expressions of voice are particularistic in that they are the preferences of individuals or groups, when these operate within the formal V&A system they do so on the basis on known/predictable/agreed rules that are universal in application (e.g. rule of law) and, in theory at least, citizens have the opportunity to influence, through elections if nothing else. In contrast, informal V&A rules are often (though not necessarily always) on the basis of particularistic and exclusionary rules that apply to different people differently depending on their social status and which those governed by the rules may not have the opportunity to change/influence. Formal V&A rules can be understood as a public good, but informal V&A rules will usually be a good enjoyed by a particular community. In practice this entails a careful assessment of donors' roles and choices in supporting different kinds of V&A actors as well as formal and informal mechanisms.

Key features to be considered by the analysis

Availability and type of channels: The scope and type of V&A channels, whether actors or mechanisms, available to promote citizen-state engagement will vary according to context, as will the relative capacity of these channels to effectively act to express organised interests, citizens' voice and demands or to exercise accountability.

[7] Brinkerhoff, D. and Goldsmith, A., 2002, 'Clientelism, Patrimonialism and Democratic Governance: An Overview and Framework for Assessment and Planning', Report to United States Agency of International Development (USAID), Washington

[8] Gretchen Helmke and Steven Levitsky (eds) (2007) Informal Institutions and Democracy: Lessons from Latin America. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press

Representiveness of channels: Organisations often claim to represent collective interests but their ability to reflect the actual priorities or views of their constituency is influenced by factors such as: (i) the membership or resource base of the organisation; (ii) having sufficient mechanisms in place to engage with and include stakeholders (e.g. inclusion on governing bodies, methods for canvassing views). Accessibility of spaces[9] (and control over this) is also crucial and the related patterns of inclusion and exclusion.

Accountability and legitimacy of channels: The quality of accountability and transparency within specific channels will vary according to factors such as their internal governance structures and membership and resource base. Some organisations may also operate outside formal structures or be in tension with the understanding of V&A embodied within these (e.g. may advocate particularistic or exclusionary forms of V&A).

Component C: Evaluation sub-questions

- How effective are donors at engaging/supporting different channels for citizens' voice? What is the balance between working to support different actors and to support concrete accountability mechanisms?
- What is the balance between state and non-state actors supported by donors and at what level (national/local)?
- What kind of non-state actors are supported by donors and how? How do donors decide which organisations to engage/support in their V&A interventions? In particular, what kind of CSOs are supported (or not) by donors?
- How effective are donors at engaging with 'non-traditional' channels, including those situated within political society (such as political parties or parliaments), organised interests groups (such as professional organisations) and community or faith-based groups. What factors facilitate or constrain engagement with these groups?
- To what extent are there synergies between the channels for voice and the mechanisms for accountability? What are the factors that improve such synergy? Are there tensions between efforts to support voice and those aiming to strengthen accountability?
- How effective are donors at engaging with informal channels, including those that may sit outside formal structures (such as traditional authorities) or those that are ad hoc (such as social movements and innovative spaces)?
- How do donors ensure that they are engaging with different groups (rural, women, children, minorities, refugees and the extremely poor), as well as reaching marginalised or excluded individuals within these groups?

D. Changes in policy, practice, behaviours and power relations

V&A interventions can produce changes at different levels and, as explained above, these can range from direct outputs of a specific intervention which produce results at the very local level (e.g. the information provided to a particular community by a local rural radio) to changes of policy and regulatory frameworks at the national level

[9] For a reflection on the notion of space, see See Gaventa, J. (2005) *Reflections on the Uses of the 'Power Cube' Approach for Analyzing the Spaces, Places and Dynamics Of Civil Society Participation and Engagement,* Brighton, IDS. Here, spaces are defined as: (i) Closed spaces: decisions are made by a set of actors (including bureaucrats and elected officials) without wider consultation; (ii) Invited spaces: actors (users, beneficiaries, citizens) are invited to participate by various authorities for one-off or ongoing consultation; and (iii) Claimed/created spaces: Less powerful actors claim spaces from power holders or autonomously create their own spaces outside of institutionalised policy arenas to discuss, debate and resist.

(e.g. approval of a new law or exposure of corrupted practices). However diversified, it is important to identify and assess these changes occurring as a result of V&A interventions as they signal that a meaningful improvement in V&A has occurred.

Depending on the level of the intervention, four types of changes for V&A interventions have been identified:

- Changes in *policy*: including the legal and regulatory framework (e.g. the introduction or approval of new laws) and reform implementation (e.g. the implementation of decentralisation policies)
- Changes in *practice*: these would include changes in the concrete provision of information, improved transparency, equal access to services, inclusion and consultation with marginalised groups, new/strengthened mechanisms to exercise accountability, etc.
- Changes in *behaviour*: at the individual or collective level, signalling greater awareness of V&A; more adequate and timely response of the authorities to citizens demands; more responsible actions at the community level to ensure greater participation of all citizens, etc.
- Changes in *power relations* (see Box 5): these refer to the 'rules of the game' and the extent to which V&A interventions manage to redress unequal power relations between citizens and the state, among different groups if citizens, between state actors at the local and national level, between formal and informal institutions, progressive and traditional societal groups, etc.

Box 5: Power structures and relations

An analysis of the different forms of power can be used to identify the types of changes that might occur as a result of V&A interventions:

- **'Power over'**: changes in power over resources and the ability to challenge constraints.
- **'Power to**': increased ability of citizens to organise and challenge existing hierarchies.
- **'Power with'**: increased ability of groups to network and take collective action.
- **'Power from within'**: increased ability of individuals to act as a result of improved confidence and awareness of rights.

Key features to be considered by the analysis

- **State responsiveness:** The ability and willingness of the state to respond and act on the demands of its citizens.
- **State accountability:** The ability and willingness of state institutions and actors to be accountable for their decisions and actions and for those decisions to be scrutinised by citizens.
- **Budget allocation and public finances:** Increased citizen voice and engagement with decision-making processes can result in citizens having greater influence on budget allocations, public revenues and expenditures. Citizen watchdog organisations can help to ensure that intended allocations are realised and policies implemented.
- **Power:** Changing the policy and practice of institutions and individuals requires a shift in the power balance between citizen and state as well as between different groups of citizens. Individual citizens or groups must engage with various forms of power in order to address power imbalances (see Box 5).
- **Equality:** Increased V&A can reduce inequality and discrimination. For instance, through the exercise of greater voice, traditionally marginalised groups, such as women and minorities, can gain greater access to resources and basic services.

Component D: Evaluation sub-questions

- To what extent are donor supported interventions directly contributing to changes in relation to (i) state responsiveness and improved accountability; (ii) actions taken on citizens' claims; (iii) equal access to basic services; (iv) budget allocations, public revenues and expenditures (v) power structures and relations?
- To what extent are donor funded interventions producing unexpected or unanticipated V&A outcomes? What are the reasons behind such unexpected outcomes?

E. Broader development outcomes

Broader development outcomes include meta-goals such as **poverty reduction, human development and social justice**, as well as more instrumental goals such as **economic growth and democracy**. V&A interventions may not lead directly to or be primarily responsible for these broader outcomes. However, changes in power, policy and practice may play a role in the pathways leading to broader development goals in the long term. In accordance with the evaluation questions, the main aim of the framework is to identify and describe these pathways leading to development outcomes, and to assess the extent to which individual interventions are likely to make a more or less direct contribution to these.

Key features to be considered by the analysis

V&A interventions are intended to make a positive contribution to long-term development outcomes. The nature of this relationship can be both direct and more indeterminate depending on the specific goals, for instance the pathways to better governance and democracy may be more direct than that of economic growth. This relationship will also be influenced by factors such as particular donor priorities or context but areas of attention might include democracy, human development, poverty reduction, growth and investment.

Examples of pathways from V&A to broader development goals might include:

- **Direct influence/contribution**: e.g. budget monitoring and exposure of corruption resulting in increase of revenues and, in turn, to poverty reduction. Similarly, interventions aimed at improving equal access to basic services through increased community involvement might result in human development outcomes (e.g. infant mortality, basic education etc.). In relation to governance, interventions with explicit institution building aims might directly contribute to strengthening state responsiveness and capacity at the national or local level.
- **Indirect contribution**: e.g. exposure of corrupted practices could be an initial step to create the conditions to develop concrete mechanisms to eradicate corruption and promote better governance. Similarly, greater transparency of budget information subject to citizens' monitoring may, in time, improve the efficiency of budget allocation and use of resources.
- **Sustainability of development outcomes**: better functioning state institutions, a more transparent and accountable administration and a more proactive contribution of civil society in monitoring public action and use of resources are all factors which can contribute to long tem development and sustained economic growth.

Component E: Evaluation sub-questions

- To what extent do donor interventions make explicit the link between V&A outcomes and broader development outcomes? What are the specific broader outcomes that V&A is expected to contribute to?
- Are there typologies of pathways leading from direct results (e.g. increased capacity of actors) to intermediate outcomes (e.g. changes in power, policy and

practice of institutions) to the broader development outcomes of poverty reduction, democracy and growth? Do they vary according to the end goals, context or other factors?

7. Levels of results and identifying models of change

7.1. V&A interventions and levels of results

The intervention analysis and the pilot studies revealed that most expected results are concerned with **direct outputs**, mostly related to capacity and to some elements of the enabling environment. However, outcomes relating to channels, particularly to (i) concrete mechanisms for state accountability and for taking action on citizens' voice and (ii) less traditional channels such as the media, political parties or the private sector (e.g. business, professional federations, cooperatives etc.) – what can be thought of as the 'missing middle' – were notable by their absence. Understanding the reasons why this is the case should therefore be an area of particular attention.

The degree to which **intermediate or indirect outcomes** are overtly envisaged is largely dependant on the type of intervention and its underlying theory or programme logic. Some interventions have a more explicit model for influencing medium-term changes (e.g. to introduce or amend a policy/law, to increase the number of women exercising their right to vote, to improve equal access to services for minorities, etc.) Other interventions assume changes at this level will result from direct outputs such as capacity building or the empowerment of citizens. Unpacking the different theories of change is therefore a necessary means to the key end of the evaluation framework, namely identifying and assessing the results and outcomes of V&A interventions.

The intervention analysis and pilot studies confirmed that **most interventions assume that broader development outcomes**, such as poverty reduction or human development, will result from strengthened V&A. It is generally acknowledged that V&A interventions cannot directly contribute to these wider objectives and it is therefore more useful to think in terms of the 'pathways of change' that might lead from V&A interventions to meta-goals.

The table below provides an overview of possible areas of change and indicators for each component of the evaluation framework. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list as it should be recognised that the criteria for change and indicators may vary according to the context and type of intervention hence it may not be neither possible nor desirable to firm up a fixed list of criteria and indicators for all V&A interventions. It is therefore meant as a guide to 'what to look for' when evaluating V&A interventions.

Table 1: Areas of change, criteria and indicators

Component	Areas of change	Criteria/indicators
Enabling environment	Opportunities and obstacles that determine the type/degree of V&A exercised by different individuals, groups and agencies Entry point for donors V&A interventions Donors strategies for V&A	• Availability , appropriateness and enforcement of policy and regulatory framework • Availability , transparency and accessibility of information • Clarity and purpose of donors' strategies • Identification of challenges and obstacles for V&A
Institutional, organisational and individual capacities	State institutions' capacity to respond to citizens' voice and to exercise accountability Technical skills to develop and maintain systems for accountability Capacity of CSOs to engage in advocacy and policy dialogue	• Changes to human resource management of civil service and incentives for accountable behaviour • Greater engagement of CSOs in policy processes (e.g. CSOs are more vocal, informed, inclusive) • Better coordinated and influential networks of non-state actors • More accessible and responsive public officials or institutions • Increased political and legal capacity of public officials to act according to formal rules
V&A channels	Involvement and support for agents, actors, CSOs Opening of democratic spaces and process for people to express their voice, engage in dialogue and claim rights Approaches, methods, tools for engagement and policy dialogue Concrete mechanisms to express voice and hold to account	• Introduction or improvement of formal and informal consultation mechanisms with citizens and civil society organisations, e.g. citizen report cards, citizen juries, structured consultations around policy processes. • Greater involvement of different actors and channels e.g. political parties, citizens' watchdogs, ombudsmen, legislative oversight mechanisms, professional associations • Direct involvement/consultation with vulnerable and otherwise excluded groups • Diverse and independent media • Availability and functioning of concrete mechanisms for exercising accountability • Increased accountability and legitimacy of V&A actors
Changes in policy, practice, behaviour and power relations	Responsiveness and accountability of state institutions Action on citizens' voices and claims Power relations and dynamics Equality and inclusion of vulnerable groups Regulatory and policy framework	• Increased government responsiveness to citizens demands • Complaints and legal redress mechanisms in place and enforced • More equitable and increased access to services • Increased transparency responsiveness of public sector budgets • Greater gender parity in state and no state institutions • More accessible and equitable justice mechanisms • Decrease in level of discrimination against women, ethic groups etc.
Broader development outcomes	Poverty Democracy Human development Growth	• Institutional changes, e.g. land reform, constitutional amendments • Improved governance e.g. separation of powers, transparency, corruption, compliance to human rights commitments etc. • Improvements in key human development indicators, e.g. education, health, etc. • Improvement in economic growth rates and sustainability

The challenge of attribution is a notoriously difficult one to address in relation to sectors such as V&A where not only different actors and processes contribute to processes of complex social and institutional change, but crucially where contextual factors play such an important role. Moreover, in line with the spirit of the Paris Declaration, that places such emphasis on donors' harmonisation and alignment, it would be more appropriate to consider what **contribution**[10] donors make to the corresponding efforts of the recipient countries. In the literature review we have identified the need for donors to move towards a modified notion of attribution, what the World Bank calls "most likely association", which would allow for a sound evaluative judgement based on the best evidence available while at the same time acknowledging that conditions are far from experimental and that data and knowledge gaps are widespread.

7.2. Identification and use of models of change for V&A interventions.

In line with a theory based approach to evaluation, one aim of the framework is to elicit and test the different **models of change** emerging from the analysis of individual interventions. The five components of the evaluation framework and their linkages in the results chain described in Section 5 can be used to define different models of change for V&A interventions, and to compare these models in different contexts and for different donors.

The aim of these models of change is twofold. Firstly, they help to understand the logic underpinning V&A interventions, with a particular focus on the implicit assumptions which are likely to affect the different stages of programme development. Secondly, a model of change identifies the steps which constitute the main elements of the causal chain, linking inputs and outputs to both expected and unexpected results.

As mentioned above, our understanding of the application of a theory based evaluation framework is one that does not 'give up' on results and assessing actual changes; rather we consider the development and testing of the models of change as a means to an end, namely to provide a meaningful assessment of expected versus actual results, an appreciation of the unexpected ones which may have occurred and crucially an analysis of the reasons explaining all these factors (i.e. addressing the 'why' questions).

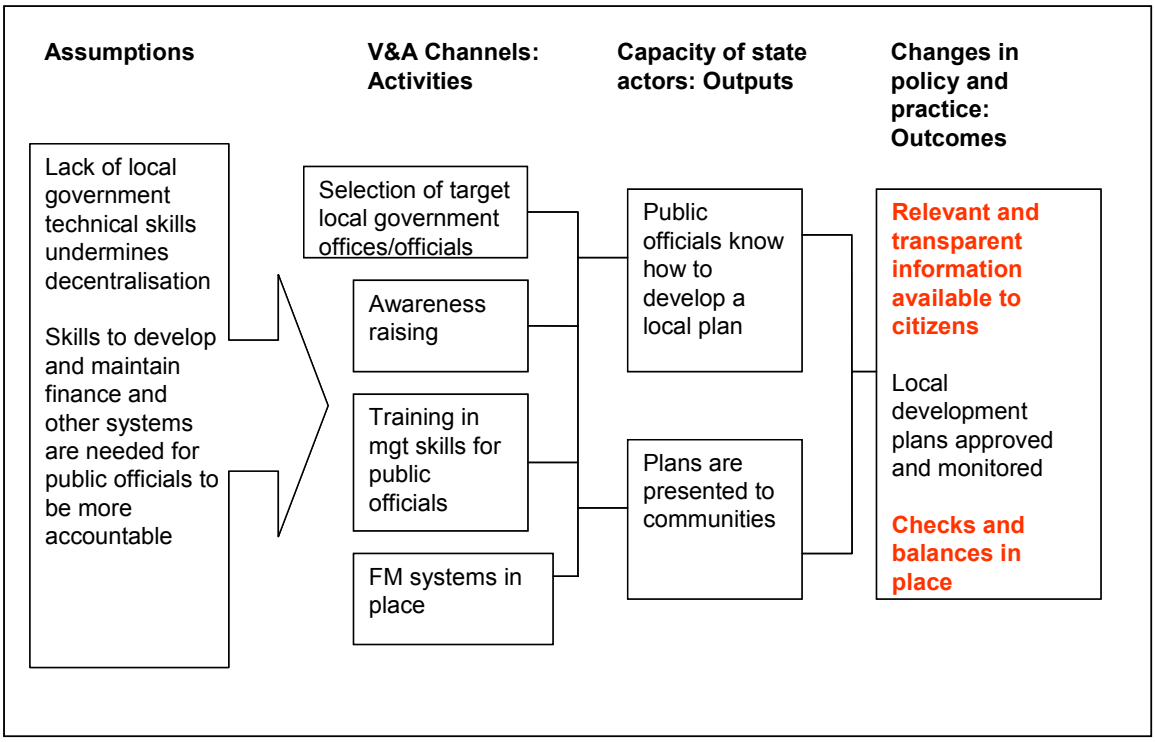
By 'theory based evaluation' we therefore refer to both *implementation theories* that specify the activities, outputs and some intermediate outcomes (as described in the result chain in figure 2) and the *programmatic theories* that specify the mechanisms of change either envisaged or implemented within a particular intervention.

During the pilot phase some examples of models of change related to specific interventions were identified and applied to explore the 'goodness of fit' between the vision, assumptions and logic underpinning the programme theory of the intervention and the observed results. Examples of these models of change are represented below. These are only meant as an illustration of possible representations of models of change, the five components of the framework and the linkages between them.

[10] BMZ is currently applying the criteria of Coordination, Complementarity and Coherence to its own evaluations

Example 1: Decentralisation and V&A: building the capacity of local state actors

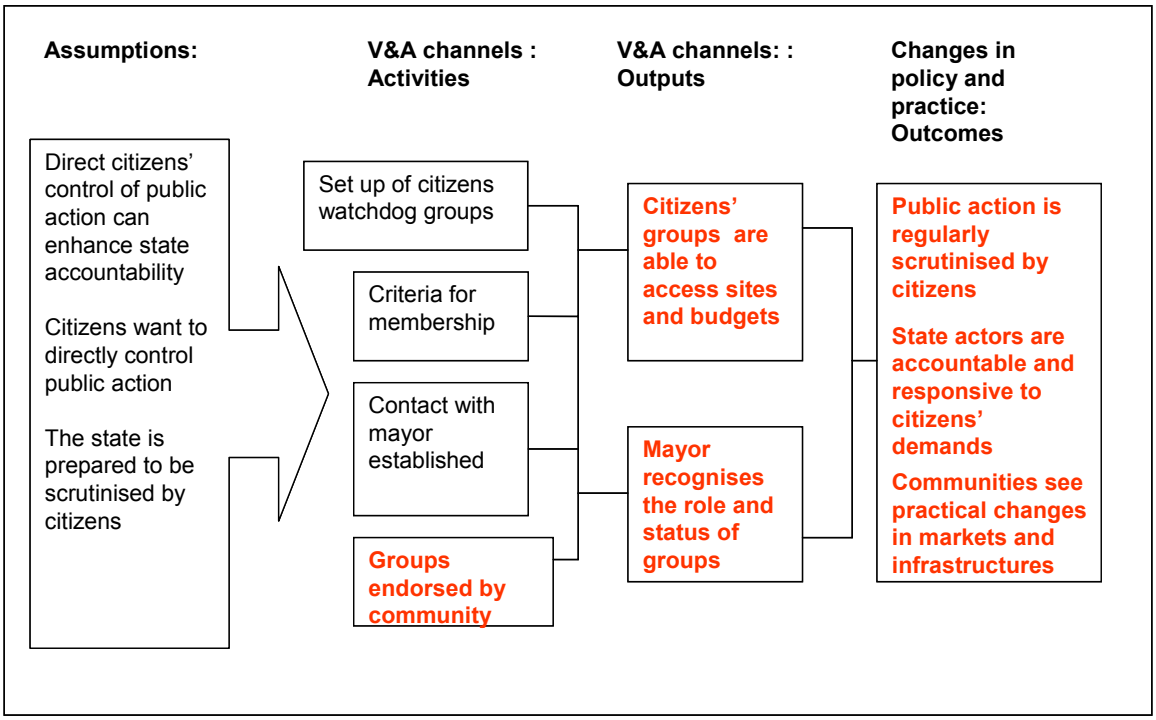
This is an example arising on a relatively linear model based on a set of assumptions related to lack of technical capacities of state institution undermining their accountability to citizens.



The connectedness between the expected results, the observed results and the assumptions underlying the programme logic was analysed by considering the mechanisms linking the five components of the framework. The outcomes highlighted in red are those which, although envisaged by the 'programme theory' and defined as expected results of the project, are not being met in reality. The analysis of the mechanisms linking the original assumptions underlying the logic model and the different steps of the model revealed a mismatch between the donors' assumptions, the activities supported by the interventions and the expected results. In particular, the original assumption of the direct linkage between improved technical skills and efficiency of local state actors and improved transparency accountability was not corroborated by the findings of the empirical analysis. In this respect, this aspect of the programme theory could be considered as flawed. Crucially, an analysis of the model of change underlying this particular intervention should contribute to explaining why the assumptions held by donors were not correct and what could be done in practice to design a more realistic intervention. .

Example 2 Citizens' watchdogs and V&A

This is an example drawn form a project seeking to set up local groups of citizens' watchdogs aimed at directly holding the state to accountant at the local level



In this case, the analysis of the 'goodness of fit' between the original assumptions and the observed outcomes revealed an overall disconnect between the different steps envisaged by the original project design – including activities and outputs – and the reality of project implementation. In this case, the elaboration and analysis of the change model suggested a substantial disconnect between the donors' vision and assumptions about the suitability and feasibility of direct citizen monitoring of state action and the reality of the context.

The Evaluation framework can be applied to develop and test the feasibility of identifying and testing V&A models of change for different donors, for different contexts (e.g. country or sub-regions) and sectors/areas of interventions (e.g. media or human rights).

8. The DAC evaluation criteria in the context of V&A

The DAC criteria of *relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability* represent a useful reference for evaluating development assistance. In the context of this framework it is suggested that their systematic application could be particularly useful for evaluating individual V&A interventions rather than for the overall assessment at the country level. In particular the criteria of efficiency and effectiveness may not be suitable for this analysis as it will be drawn on a variety of sources rather than on individual projects and programmes, which would be too artificial to assess against a pre-determined fixed set of criteria related to individual projects or interventions.

The systematic evaluation of all individual interventions against the DAC criteria should provide enough consistency and rigour that can be built on in the overall country analysis.

In the table below we seek to identify some specific and relevant questions for applying the DAC criteria in the context of V&A interventions. It should be recognised that in the context of this particular evaluation framework the application of some DAC criteria might be more useful than others. In particular, the criteria of efficiency may not be directly applicable as it is mostly concerned with evaluating individual programmes or projects in relation to the efficient use of inputs and resources. with a pre-determined set of objectives. Similarly an assessment of effectiveness might be hampered by the lack of specific V&A objectives for the interventions considered by the analysis.

Table 2: DAC evaluation criteria in the context of V&A

DAC Criteria	Description	Relevant questions in relation to V&A
Relevance	The extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor.	▪ How well matched are V&A interventions to the political and socio-economic context? ▪ In what ways do V&A interventions take account of the specificities of the enabling environment? ▪ Are opportunities, entry points and risks clearly articulated? ▪ Are the objectives and activities of V&A interventions consistent with the key features of the enabling environment? ▪ Are the objectives and activities consistent with expected results and outcomes? ▪ What are the key assumptions? (particularly for capacity building)
Efficiency	Efficiency measures the outputs, qualitative and quantitative, in relation to the inputs.	▪ Are project/programme inputs consistent with the efficient achievement of outputs and outcomes? ▪ Have project funds been disbursed in ways consistent with the efficient achievement of objectives? ▪ Given objectives, were alternative approaches available that could have used resources more efficiently?
Effectiveness	A measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives.	▪ Have V&A interventions achieved or are likely to achieve their objectives? ▪ To what extent is the choice of V&A channels and mechanisms adequate to achieve the intended results? ▪ What are the main obstacles/challenges to achieve policy, practice and behaviour change? ▪ Has there been any change in objectives? ▪ What explains any non-achievement of objectives? ▪ Are there unexpected outcomes?
Impact	The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.	▪ What are the key achievements of V&A interventions in terms of policy, practice and behaviour change? ▪ To what extent are these related to outputs and direct results (i.e. capacity building, channels and mechanisms ▪ What are the intended/envisaged pathways from V&A outcomes to broader development outcomes such as poverty reduction and governance?

Sustainability	Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable.	▪ How likely is it that outputs supported by V&A interventions will be sustained? ▪ What actions/conditions have been put in place to sustain changes in channels and mechanisms for V&A into the future? ▪ Will positive changes be difficult to reverse? ▪ Are capacities supported by V&A interventions likely to be sustained and result in sustained improvements in V&A over time?