**ANNEX 1: Overview of Steering Committee Recommendations for proposals**

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| 1. **Bangladesh - Manusher Jonno Foundation** | **Concept/Rationale**  Overall concept and rationale are clear; further clarification is needed on the following issues:   * Relationship (complementarities, synergies, etc) between proposal and ongoing MJF’s social accountability projects, including CARTA Project (JSDF-funded) and facilitation of CSOs’ network and knowledge sharing on social accountability. How will the GPSA funding add value to these ongoing initiatives? * MJF’s role at the national level: how will MFJ consolidate the feedback generated from sub-grantees’ interventions? What mechanisms are envisioned in this respect? Who in the government will benefit from these feedback? What incentives do government officials have to use this information in order to trigger (what) specific changes in policies, processes, etc? * Targeting: rationale for selecting 10 CSOs and relationship with geographical criteria that will be followed, including coverage of Union Parishads.   **Social accountability approach**   * Given the high number of social accountability initiatives focusing on local governance in Bangladesh, the Proposal should consider taking stock of the different “models” (e.g. Sharique Program, VSO Program, Democracywatch, Uttaran, etc) that are being implemented by different CSOs and CSO networks across the country. This analysis should precede the selection of CSOs and inform this selection. The proposal should also incorporate mechanisms for sharing these intervention models with sub-grantees. * MJF’s role in terms of facilitating knowledge-exchange and coordination of these experiences across the country should be considered and emphasized in the Proposal. A structured K&L Plan should be developed at the project’s outset.   **Project Team**   * Proposed team includes only 2 full-time staff (and part-time Governance Manager) The team composition is small given the Proposal’s substantial investment on capacity-building and continuous mentoring support of sub-grantees. The recommendation is to revise the team composition, and include any cross-support from Capacity-Building and M&E Units at MJF which are not captured in the proposed team. * Planned consultancy support must also be included.   **Budget**   * Proposal budget is unclear about the specific on-granting amount. Recommendation is that such amount should represent a high proportion of GPSA granting in order to ensure that sub-grantees receive adequate financial support to implement sub-grants. * Breakdown of “Other Costs” should also be described in the Budget Narrative (in addition to answering the question on “On-granting” included in this section)   **Evaluation**   * Limited approach including baseline, mid-term and end of project survey. Evaluation design should also include other complementary evaluation tools, as part of a consistent overall design framework. |
| 1. **Dominican Republic – Fundacion Intermon Oxfam** | **Concept/Rationale**   * Sound overall concept and rationale building on prior and ongoing work on budget monitoring and sectoral monitoring in the DR. * Multi-stakeholder engagement strategy based on the creation of National Thematic Consortium aimed at consolidating the feedback generated from local-level social accountability interventions and using this feedback to advance proposals with national-level authorities, including Executive and Legislative branches. * Further refining is recommended on proposal’s focus on (i) specific problems that would be addressed through social accountability tools/mechanisms, (ii) type of information that is expected to be gathered and generated by the Project, (iii) what and how will these feedback be channeled to (which) government actors and service providers, and (iv) what are the incentives of the different government actors identified to act upon this information in order to champion reforms and changes in policies, processes and programs.   **Social Accountability Approach**   * Approach considers collaborative planning, negotiation and consensus-building skills to be built amongst targeted CSO leaders at the local level; acquired capacities would be used to engage in interface spaces with service providers and government officials, and develop agreements to be monitored. * Operative Approach: proposal should make an effort to further elaborate on the specific problems that are envisaged to be addressed through the use of various social accountability tools/mechanisms, in the targeted sectors. What specific problems are planned to be addressed in each sector? What type of feedback is expected to emanate from the SAcc interventions? Also needed would be an analytical and graphic flow of:   + Sub-national level interventions: in each sector, “make the connections” between civil society actors (distinguishing between CSOs and service users -if participation of the latter is considered, how are they going to be convened, what are the limits and constraints to their participation, how can their participation be enabled and facilitated?) and service providers and public officials that will be engaged; What type of information/inputs are needed for these processes to take place?; What mechanisms will be used to ensure a continuous coordination between sub-national and national-level spaces?; What types of monitoring tools can be incorporated into this coordination mechanism to help all actors involved keep track of the Project’s activities?   + National-level interventions: similarly, a coordination mechanism should be built into the proposed Consortium in order to ensure that activities-outputs are carried out in a harmonized manner, and consistently across the different sectors.   **M&E Plan/Results Framework**   * Adequate overall RF and M&E Plan; further refining of Project-level outcomes and intermediate outcomes is recommended ensuring that the definition of outcome indicators is not output-based. Proposed evaluation design should be defined at the outset of the Project, and involving early on the external evaluation specialists.   **Project Team**   * Proposed team is small in relation to the Project’s scale; inconsistent information provided in the Project Team table and under the Budget Narrative section. * Critical positions such as Social Accountability Coordinator/Expert, and M&E Expert are missing. * Positions, roles and dedication of Mentee CSOs’ staff must also be included. * Consultancy support (specifying individuals and/or firms and specific responsibilities) must also be listed. * Overall team composition must reflect the scale and types of expertise needed for this Project; it is recommended that the Project team be revised and restructured. |
| 1. **Malawi – CARE Malawi** | Many positive comments about the Proposal -- Project that could have a regional impact, could become a reference if it’s successful. Malawi is ahead of many other countries in many sectors.  **Context**  Relationship between proposal and ongoing project supported by Trocaire (Euros 1,200,000/ 8 years until 2016) currently under implementation by CSEC, mentioned in Prior Experience: Enhancing civil society participation in influencing government decisions in the education sector) How does this proposal complement and/or scale-up the activities under said project?  **Rationale/Governance analysis**  Further specify how will the data gathered through the project (i) help the GoM address problems of teacher absenteeism and procurement in education; data generated through the project should feed into existing national data systems, and (ii) Teacher absenteeism problem should be approached as a symptom, and the root causes of the problems should also be analyzed in the context of the project.  **Social Accountability Approach**   * Component 1: Procurement monitoring. Any previous work done already with Office of Public Procurement? The success of this component seems to rely heavily on the ability of the applicant to access procurement information, so the relationship with such Office is critical. Risk in this regard has been rated as medium. Also relevant will be that the project is able to identify critical reforms/milestones that are expected to be achieved under the Procurement Monitoring. What progress has the ODPP achieved so far? What are the critical challenges that remain to be addressed? What mechanism(s) will the project put in place that will generate feedback that can be used by the ODPP? * Component 2: Teacher absenteeism. “Regular monitoring and reporting through a customized SMS tracking system using a mobile platform will be introduced. All SMS reports will be accessible online through a dynamic user interface. --and will be searchable by monitor mobile number, date, time, school and teacher. Data visualizations--such as real-time bar charts and maps—will enable Ministry officials to track trends and identify schools which require immediate follow-up.” * Any previous experience developing a similar type of ICT? Is there any sequencing planned to test the tool before deploying it to the 150 schools? What is this proportion relative to the total number of public schools in Malawi? Are these 150 schools located in the 5 Districts mentioned? What is the relationship between these 150 schools and the 75 schools mentioned under “Project’s direct beneficiaries? Has applicant probed the Ministry of Ed’s interest in supporting it? How institutionalized would this tool be? Would it be wholly dependent on external parties or is there a goal of institutionalizing it within the system? * Very important to anticipate or embed into the pilot interventions the possibility of scaling-up if the intervention proved to be successful. How does the applicant envision a scenario where the monitoring tool and the process as a whole would be scaled-up by the MEST? * SMS-based tool design should encourage anonymous reporting of data, in order to build trust among users, in particular, to minimize the risk that individuals may be punished for reporting school-level problems. * Sequencing of proposed activities, and articulation between procurement-related monitoring and monitoring at the school level. For example, procurement analysis reports are planned as an annual exercise, based on which the procurement monitoring would be carried out at the local/school level. Not clear enough how this timing would work; no mention of school calendar year in Malawi, etc.   **Communications strategy**  Seems relevant to consider developing a communications strategy including a conflict resolution/collaborative planning expert(s) given the likelihood that the focus on teacher absenteeism might generate negative attitudes from teachers and the Teachers’ Union (TUM). This is not fully addressed in the description of the component  **K&L Component**  “The combination of the scorecard with a mobile monitoring platform is an innovation, and the experiences of this initiative will be valuable for scale-up and a case study documenting the process, learning and outcomes will be developed and shared widely.” An area that needs revision is the proposal's conception of the learning and knowledge sharing that ought to take place. Although some of the proposals are credible, the proposal does give the impression that this is an after-thought and that most of the focus would be on implementing the two project goals. Has the applicant identified the K&L expert and the communications expert that will help them develop the K&L strategy, and the comms strategy?  **Refining Results Framework**  There appears to be a well though through M&E framework and although there are a few inadequacies that need to be addressed in the results framework, the framework does seem aligned to the overall goals of the project. Suggestions include:   * The outcome indicator for main outcome 1 is too vague and needs to be reformulated and refined. * The project's adoption of a dual strategy of baseline and end of the project evaluations is fine but the problem is that in-between one would not and will not be able to gauge whether they are on track in terms of achieving their goals. There is need for milestones, which would allow one to independently verify whether progress is indeed in the right direction. * In the narrative description of the project and the M&E framework, one needs a clearer statement about how the project will bring about a successful link between the proposed activities, the lobbying or advocacy actions and the outcomes that have been planned for this project. * Data generated by the Project should be approached as “Open Data”, so that the information benefits not only the Project’s partners, but also other CSOs, in Malawi and in other countries. * Project could consider possibility of carrying out a randomized control trial with a control group.   **Project Team**  Except for Project Manager, who is listed as part-time (personnel?), the rest of the team is planned to be hired. Has the applicant already identified candidates for these positions? How will it ensure that these positions are filled with highly qualified people? All the positions are critical for the success of the project. Also, NOT listed are consultancy positions, which are mentioned throughout the Project, such as, the contract with Souktel, a K&L and a communications expert. ASK applicant to provide a description of responsibilities that would be included here, and if it has already identified experts for the latter two positions.  **Project Duration**  3 years seems a tight time frame for achieving the project’s objectives. Moreover, the country will hold national elections in 2014, so although the applicant has rated this risk as low, this is a further reason for extending the time frame at least 1 more year. However, if CARE Malawi can duly justify and demonstrate that it can carry out the Project in 3 years, this may be considered.  **Proposal Budget**  Overall budget needs to be revised based on the GPSA SC approved funding envelope of US$950,000.   * “Goods” Expense Category: needs to be broken down clearly in the Budget, and justified in the Budget Narrative, since the amount as it stands is very high.   **Coordination with Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN)**  The GPSA has pre-selected a proposal submitted by MEJN. This proposal bears some similarities with CARE Malawi’s proposal, particularly on the Procurement Monitoring Component. The GPSA SC has recommended that both organizations coordinate the proposals’ overall strategies and operational aspects. This should be reflected in the revision of both proposals. |
| 1. **Philippines – Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government (CCAGG)** | **Concept/rationale**   * The strategic approach of this proposal meets all of the priority criteria and considers some specific mechanisms (i.e. mobilizing Parent Leaders, coalitions and external partners) that can enhance project outcomes. The noteworthy aspects strengths of this proposal are outlined in its strategic focus on:  1. Mobilizing and empowering household beneficiaries in the use of SA tools, conducting Family Development Sessions (FDS) and building capacity of Parent Leaders as community-based facilitators and mentors, participation in Barangay governance, and representation in local bodies (This reinforces the findings of the CCT impact evaluation January 2013 which notes that “the FDS also could be used as an avenue to empower and facilitate the poor to voice demands for more and improved social service delivery. This would not only benefit the program through improved health and education services, but it could also plant seeds for a more organized venue for the poor to voice their needs.”) 2. Designing a communication and outreach strategy and mobilizing citizen volunteers for collective action, working with media and network partners and mobilizing coalitions of support (NLCGG, RECITE); and 3. Establishing close collaboration with relevant national and local government and engaging external partners to leverage their expertise in key areas of the project (PTF for knowledge and learning, RECITE for SA tools, ANSA-EAP for capacity building).  * Lessons learned and ongoing experience: further explanation is needed in this area, particularly reflecting CCAGG’s and RECITE’s experience under the PtF-funded Project. * Constructive engagement strategy: the linkages between the proposed activities and the expected outcomes must be clear and ensure that the Project will be adding value to the information and activities already undertaken by the CCT Program. Also relevant would be to describe clearly what type of information the Project will provide to government stakeholders, and in which ways will this information contribute to improving the CCT Program’s implementation.   **Social Accountability Approach**   * The proposal’s operative approach is consistent with the overall strategy and objectives. The range of activities defines how this will be operationalized. However, the geographic scope is limited to the CCT program in Northern Luzon. It is important to put in place learning and peer exchange mechanisms that would ensure that the Project’s experience is shared with other CSOs working on the CCT Program in other regions. In terms of sustainability, there is less clarity on how external resources will be mobilized beyond the grant period. * Overall, the proposed SAcc approach is comprehensive; an explicit effort should be made to ensure that the “menu” is manageable and within the implementing organizations’ capacities.   **Institutional Capacity**   * Project Team: the proposed team seems insufficient to carry out a Project of this scope; partners’ positions and responsibilities are not detailed and should be included. While the Project Manager and the Training Officer would have 100% dedication to the project, this falls short to adequately cover for an adequate supervision and implementation of the Project’s activities; in particular, capacity-building activities are a significant portion of the Project and additional support should be included here (if partners will complement the Project Team in this area, it should be reflected in the team’s description). Moreover, other activities such as the actual design and implementation of social accountability tools (e.g. community scorecards) are also resource and time-consuming, and this workload should also be reflected in the Project Team. Consultant positions also need to be included in the Project Team’s description.   **RF and M&E**  This should be revised after refining the proposed activities in line with the project objectives. |
| **5. Indonesia – Yayasan Wahana Visi Indonesia (World Vision Indonesia)** | **Scope and other comments**   * The project aims to scale up ongoing work. How will this work out in terms of continuing work done, and what is new? How will the original work be affected? * The applicant will need to establisha good baseline study, so that the results can be properly evaluated in several years. |
| **6. Mozambique – Concern Universal Mozambique** | * The proposal extends work already being done, with funding from DfID. * It has a unique focus on vulnerable groups. |
| **7. Bangladesh – CARE Bangladesh** | **Clarification on relationship between proposed project and ongoing work**   * Relationship of the proposed project with CARE Bangladesh’s ongoing programs and activities related to local governance and social accountability. * If similar activities are being carried out in other UPs, what is the value added that GPSA funding would bring to CARE’s existing program on local governance? SC’s recommendation is that GPSA support should focus on supporting SAcc activities that are not funded through other means by CARE. * Further clarification needed on rationale for selecting 15 targeted UPs in North-west region; since openness of UP Chairs seems to be very important for success of UP-level interventions, how are you planning to undertake such selection? If selection is not random, this could affect possibility of doing RCT with control group. At the same time, it’s important to be realistic about risks of engaging unwilling UPs.   **Project team**   * The proposed core team is all to be hired, and no partnerships with local CSOs/CBOs are proposed. Given that the proposal focuses heavily on capacity-building activities at the local level, and that the 6 “Field Facilitators” that are expected to be hired will be mainly responsible for the effective implementation of such activities, how will you ensure that these staff have the necessary capacities and skills to execute these responsibilities? Will these staff be based in the targeted UPs?   **Social accountability approach**   * Overall approach is comprehensive and considers a combination of diverse SAcc tools and mechanisms to achieve different, albeit complementary objectives. Further clarification needed on whether CARE Bangladesh has had experience designing and implementing CSCs, as these are included, and a reference to the need for external support from CARE Malawi and CARE UK Governance Adviser, for this purpose, is indicated. If not prior experience, this could affect estimated time frame, as CSCs are time and resource-intensive and need iterations to achieve ownership, but also because of multiple stakeholders involved. * Has CARE Bangladesh already tested the approach of relying on community radios in other UPs to disseminate public information to poor and vulnerable communities in other UPs? Same question re. training journalists. * Regarding supply-side activities: although training of UP members seems reasonable to be proposed, has the Project considered coordinating UP training and other related activities (such as the development of the software for the UP Information Centre) with the Ministry of LG and the HLP? Since there is a high level of funding already dedicated for training UPs, GPSA funding should be focused on activities whereby supply-side actors are engaged with demand-side actors, while HLP’s funding would complement any required training on the supply-side.   **M&E Plan and RF**   * Overall adequate M&E plan (including possibility of RCT), and RF, including an explicit attention to measuring GPSA’s results areas; further revision needed to ensure that defined outcomes and outcome indicators are well-aligned with the project’s core objectives and intended impacts (e.g.: some outcome indicators are somewhat output-based, others still ambiguous about focus on expected changes in skills, capacities, attitudes, and processes; measurement of media-related activities is still output-based and more work needed to refine outcomes and outcome indicators) * M&E could consider mini-evaluation at 1-year to ensure project is on track; also suggested by reviewers is the description of the project’s routine-based monitoring, since this is not fully clear from the M&E question.   **Proposal Budget and Project Duration**: Requested Funding of US$990,981 | SC Approved Funding of US$644,138   * Component 3: includes, among other activities, capacity-building of UP members. Explore possibility of obtaining complementary funding through HLP, which already has allocated funding for training of UPs? SC recommendation however is to ensure the project’s sustainability and that it can deliver the training as proposed to UP members; work with them to ensure this. * Project duration of3.5 years/42 months; considering the project’s high investment on capacity-building of both demand and supply-side actors, the duration could be tight; however, SC’s recommendation was to respect this time frame if Project Team can manage this intense short timeline in 3.5 years without stretching out.   **Request Project’s Operational Plan** (with Gantt Chart); to be attached to Grant Agreement. |
| **8. Tunisia – Al Bawsala** | **Strategic Approach**   * Building on the organization’s progress achieved on monitoring the National Constituent Assembly, since its inception a year ago, GPSA’s funding would support the organization’s expansion of its civic monitoring work at the national level, by focusing on institutions such as the Prime Ministry’s Office and the Presidency of the Republic, and on sub-national level monitoring of regional Councils. It is recommended that the proposal’s title be revised to reflect this broadened scope. * While the proposal spells out a strategy focused on increasing access to information and transparency –mainly by activating the right to access public information, and making this information available to citizens-, it lacks a strategy for building upon this information in order to achieve concrete changes, both in government and in citizens’ capacities for civic engagement. The proposal should further elaborate on how the information generated by the Project will be used by national and sub-national government actors (and which government actors may benefit from the information generated by the project), and contribute to advancing critical governance and development reforms; similarly, how can this information be used by citizens to demand for better governance and development outcomes.   **SAcc Approach**   * Builds on ongoing use of (i) access to public information, information analysis, and development of policy proposals; and (ii) use of citizens’ forum (Q&As with politicians). The same tools are planned to be used with the Executive and sub-national governments. The Project should consider exploring other social accountability tools and mechanisms that may complement the ones proposed:   + In terms of strategies, different types of analyses such as stakeholder analysis, and political economy analysis, could help to identify key actors –both within and outside the government- with whom the Project could partner to advance specific issues, but also to help the Project refine its understanding of contextual factors, positions and interests of key actors;   + In terms of specific social accountability tools and mechanisms, the Project could broaden the “menu” of options to be considered along the Project’s lifetime. Even without prescribing or pre-defining specific tools/mechanisms at this point –albeit planning for their use-, the Project may take on a proactive approach to identifying other options. * Activities and outputs laid out in the Project Components are described in very general terms and are mostly input-based. Some objectives are phrased as activities and not focused on defining expected outcomes. Building on the key Project-level outcomes, this section should clearly “make the connection” between such outcomes, and the activities and outputs to be delivered. This information will provide the basis for developing the Project’s Operational Plan (including an activity Gantt chart), and for understanding the Project’s sequencing, both at the strategic and at the operational/action levels. * Key question is not just transparency as an end in itself but also as a means to fostering better governance and development results that can have a measurable impact on peoples’ quality of life.  Targeting Executive and sub-national levels may be taken as entry point to focus on issues and sectors that are more relatable to the conditions affecting peoples’ quality of life, e.g., access to and quality of basic services, such as water and sanitation, health, education, transport, etc.   🡪For both the project’s strategic and operational approach, the proposal needs to be further developed and reflect the organization’s strategic visioning in terms of the results it expects to achieve during the Project’s lifetime (3 years), related to changes in the governance system and to citizen’s capacities for engagement.  **Project Team**  Positive that Project builds on the existing team and proposes them with full-time dedication. Personnel to be hired, however, seems to be leaning heavily on hiring researchers for monitoring Executive and sub-national level activities, and less on deepening the work on promoting civic participation (3 positions proposed for Monitoring Executive Branch; 6 research positions for sub-national monitoring; and only 2 for community participation, 1 full-time and 1 part-time). In order to strengthen the Project’s capacity for designing and implementing citizen participation tools/mechanisms, partnerships with other CSOs/CBOs (local or national) –or with College students, or a formal civic volunteering program- could be considered.  **Project Budget**  Overall budget must be revised based on SC’s approved funding envelope of US$600,000. |
| **9. Kyrgyz Republic – Development Policy Institute** | **Concept/Rationale**  First time applicant proposes to focus on health sector and project targets an ambitious geographic coverage; although the proposal indicates it has already formalized a partnership with the national Association of Village Health Committees, the applicant should provide further clarification on:   * Has applicant already approached Ministry of Local Government and Ministry of Health about the proposal? [“Regional units of the Ministry of Health (District Health Offices (DHO) would be partners. The government of KR, through the Ministry of Health (National Center for Health Promotion), State Agency for Local Government (SALG)”] What type of information will the project produce that is expected to be used by the Government? How will this information assist the government in making better decisions about budget allocations in the health sector? What types of reforms and changes are expected to be achieved in terms of improvements to basic services associated to health determinants? * Targeting (and sequencing) approach is unclear:   + capacity-building is expected to cover 99% of rural municipalities;   + 120 LSGs (26% of total local governments) expected to implement PRAs to identify health priorities and allocate local budgets;   + Technical assistance to 51 VHCs; and   + A focused intervention in a sample of at least 10 local governments is planned for a “joint, long-term program”. * This is an ambitious goal and no sequencing is provided in the proposal. Also relevant in light of the country’s geographic complexity (e.g. difficulty of reaching mountainous and hard-to-reach areas). * Proposal indicates that DPI is working in Jalal-Abad and Issyk-Kul oblasts (13 villages) under the “Voice and Accountability” Project (supported by Swiss Cooperation), with scaling-up plans to 1 pilot per rayon across the country. * Has DPI considered starting in these Oblasts, where it has field experience, and developing a scale-up strategy throughout the GPSA Project’s duration? * What is the rationale of providing training to all VHCs if only 51 are going to receive technical assistance and follow-up? * (From Proposal) *Direct Beneficiaries: Number of targeted direct beneficiaries: different figures provided in different sections of the proposal: ‘quanti coverage is 450 ayil aimaks or 99% of rural municipalities; 1,600 VHCs, 2,000 VHC reps. Trained; “minimum of 1,000 employees and 225 rural municipalities -60% of local government); at least 120 LSGs will use PRAs (26% of total); technical assistance to 51 VHCs (?); public hearings and local health policies approved in “at least 10 LSGs”* (?)   **Social Accountability approach**  Large-scale training of VHCs (with mentoring of neighbors included); at least 120 LSGs will use PRAs to include health priorities in local budgets; 10 LSGs where public hearings and local health policies approved, and VHCs piloting use of ICTs for monitoring health budget. Several issues unclear with SAcc approach:   * PRAs as main SAcc tool for participatory planning; training would also include budget analysis in health sector and monitoring at local level (including use of website “Infosystema” [www.okmot.kg], where all payments, including procurements, and income records in local budget are reflected online) * In some municipalities, in order to assess progress, the Municipal Index of Social Justice will be applied, which is reflecting the determinants of health and equity of resource distribution among groups of citizens. * “Technical assistance” to VHCs for (i) implementing PRAs, (ii) using website to monitor budget allocations in health, (iii) participating in public hearings and advocating for the approval of local health policies “ In at least 51 municipalities, the VHCs will receive technical assistance and equipment (computer and printer), connection to Internet. This will enable them to better interact with the local governments.” | * Focused intervention in 10 LSGs: unclear how this type of intervention will be different from the technical assistance that the project will provide to the 51 VHCs.   **Project Components**  Based on the revised targeting strategy, the description of the Components should also be revised. Currently, Component 1 stands for training, Component 2 for implementing PRAs by VHCs, and 120 LSGs using this information to make budget allocation in health; and Component 3 for providing technical assistance to 51 VHCs for monitoring health budget, and for “long-term program” in at least 10 LSGs. The whole flow and consistency across components should be revised.  **Proposal Budget**   * Any other sources of funding for this project, and what is the relationship with ongoing support from Swiss Cooperation (project "Voice of Citizens and Accountability of LSG: budget process") * On-granting question not answered; need to specify on-granting amount planned for AVHC * Overall Proposal Budget needs revision and clarification * [Technical assistance in the form of computers and Internet access will be provided to 51 VHCs; 2 PCs for Association ] Clarification on expenses related to provision of computers and internet access to VHCs.   **Results Framework and M & E**   * Applicant needs to clarify how participatory monitoring could be embedded in the M&E to reinforce stakeholder’s ownership and participation. Specify how ICT mechanisms could be used to do so and how this would be sustained beyond the project life. * The monitoring seems too focused on longer-term health outcomes which may take a longer time to emerge. More focus on interim results, and especially capacity building. * In addition to end-of-project evaluation, the proposal should incorporate a mid-term evaluation. Baseline data should start to be collected at project start, in order to feed into the project’s mid-term and end evaluations. M&E Specialist should start working on designing the project’s evaluation framework at the beginning of the project.   **Project Team**   * Some positions indicated to be for less than the overall Project duration; eg. Expert on Community Involvement (2) for 24 months; expert on public finance (30 months) * Overall strong team; including part-time M&E specialist for total project duration, communications expert * Mentoring: key positions also identified in Mentee CSO (AVHC). Project plans to hire 51 field consultants under AVHC during project’s 2nd and 3rd year for supporting VHCs. Some quality control of this contracting and supervision process will need to be put in place.   **Project Duration**   * SC recommendation to extend project duration to at least 4 years (36 to 48 months) – Project’s 4th year could be considered for phasing out the project and ensuring that Mentee CSO and VHCs are able to continue the activities without direct support.   **Other points**   * Referenced annexes not available in “Attached Files” in electronic application. Need to upload. * Operational Action Plan (with Gantt Chart) should be prepared in order to have a clearer understanding of the project’s sequencing. |
| **10. Honduras - FOPRIDEH** | **Concept and rationale**   * At the national level, the applicant aims at influencing public procurement reforms taking advantage of its participation in the Consultative Committee of the National Procurement Agency (ONCAE). It will do so in consultation with its membership, through the Democratic Governance Commission within the organization (Component 1)   + This objective is somewhat diffuse in that it does not provide an explanation of the progress achieved in the country regarding strengthening the public procurement system, and which are the impending critical reforms. Proposal should elaborate further on this point. * At the sub-national level, the applicant aims at implementing social audits by setting up a Citizen Observatory which would function mainly through the use of ICTs such as mobile technology, to involve citizens in the monitoring of basic services in health and education, and in roads (Component 2)   + This objective appears to be overly ambitious and no details are provided as to the justification for focusing on these sectors, particularly in relation to FOPRIDEH’s prior experience. Also, FOPRIDEH has already been working on setting up observatories with support from a JSDF grant. How would the GPSA support complement and add value to such ongoing work? This should be clarified in the proposal.   **Social Accountability approach**   * The proposal must further elaborate on the proposed social accountability approach; first, by providing a more thorough analysis of the achievements and failures experienced in the country in the implementation of social audits, especially considering that FOPRIDEH has been one of the main actors promoting this methodology. How do the “Observatories” function and in which ways do they change the flow of how social audits have been carried out in the past? * The applicant argues that social audits have been conducted through a confrontational approach with the state in the past; conversely, they propose to use a collaborative approach. Beyond this, the analysis of the relationship with the state, and any specification of promising entry points, or relationships that have proven useful in the past are lacking. * There should be a clear, logical sequencing between the structure of the Observatories, inputs from social audits at the local level, inputs from advocacy activities and policy analysis at the national level, among others, and the linkages between those inputs and the outputs 🡪outcomes that you’re expecting to obtain from this cycle. Specifically, what problems in the selected sector(s) will the Project address through this methodology? What kind of feedback (and from whom) will be generated? Who in the government would benefit from this feedback? What entry points have been identified where there are clear incentives from government actors to ACT UPON the information generated by the Project? * The third objective is to promote accountability standards of CSOs themselves; this would be done through training of CSOs on compliance with basic transparency standards (Component 3). This Component seems disconnected from the other two; FOPRIDEH should elaborate further on the need to implement this Component, and on the outcomes that are expected to be achieved in terms of changes in institutional processes and actual operations of targeted CSOs.   **Targeting**   * Sectoral targeting: selected sectors to work on are health, education and roads, in addition to procurement. FOPRIDEH should analyze if it can realistically cover all the sectors proposed, or if it should narrow its focus and target specific problems within one or two sectors. * Geographical targeting: Although the applicant specifies the geographic scope of this sub-national level intervention (“citizens from the municipalities of the western, central and southern region of the country” for Component 2, and “citizen transparency commissions, community based organizations (i.e.. water boards), legally established civil society organizations (i.e.. NGO's) and FOPRIDEH's thematic internal commission for Democratic Governance” for Component 3) , it is unclear why these regions have been prioritized. What is the relationship with the ongoing work in the framework of the JSDF Project? Also relevant is to map out the initiatives on social accountability undertaken by other CSOs and to ensure that (i) the proposed targeting doesn’t duplicate other efforts already being made by other CSOs; (ii) if there’s an overlap, how do you propose to coordinate the work with other CSOs; and (iii) direct beneficiaries/participants are duly identified for the work that is planned in each sector.   **Project Team**   * The new hires proposed may not be sufficient to cover the additional responsibilities and activities the project will imply. Recommend considering hiring more staff, especially with expertise in ICTs and training, to improve in-house capacity. Would take stock of organization's existing capacity to vet whether growth is appropriate and manageable at this time. The applicant doesn’t specify the roles of consultants who would provide critical services such as training, and ICT support for developing civic applications. The applicant should be required to expand on the Project Team by including such positions. * Positive partnership arrangement, both with CARE Honduras and Center for Human Development (also FOPRIDEH members), and with FOPRIDEH’s members of the Democratic Governance Thematic Commission. Will these partners receive financial support (through on-granting or as consultants) for delivering specific products? What are the specific roles that these partners will contribute to the Project? This information should be provided as part of the Project Team.   **M&E and RF**   * The M&E plan is pretty basic although it does consider basic tools for collecting users’ feedback, and for tracking project activities. Some elements of the M&E plan are solid, but many confuse outputs with outcomes or impacts. An increase in the number of reports or proposals is not unto itself an impact if that increase does not lead to a specific type of change. * Recommend further work on defining theory of change to guide the M&E process, and taking the indicators a step further from outputs to outcomes. lt would be necessary to require the applicant to refine the M&E plan, and to expand on how the proposed tools and indicators reflect the overall logic of the project’s Results Framework. |
| **11. Tajikistan – Oxfam Tajikistan** | **Concept/Rationale**   * Very well structured and articulated proposal based on a holistic approach (including policy, institutional and capacity outcomes) in the context of a clear targeted subsector. The proposed sector-specific social accountability activities represent a logical extension of Oxfam’s current rights-based service delivery-oriented activities. Oxfam's capacity to manage and lead the project is well established by its experience and track record. Oxfam's perceived strengths - convening and brokering - is amply leveraged into project activities. * The proposal is supported by solid sectoral analysis and evidence of proven operational expertise in this area. Further details should be provided on the progress made in the context of the TajWSS Network of Stakeholders, and on Oxfam’s rationale for proposing the partnership with the Consumers’ Union of Tajikistan. * The overall concept would benefit further elaboration on (i) What type of feedback will the Project generate (at both national and sub-national levels)?, (ii) How will this information be used to contribute to measurable improvements in W&S service delivery?, and (iii) What are the incentives amongst government officials, water service providers and water regulator to act upon this information? * The proposal’s explicit attention to gender dimensions of social accountability is highly commendable. Specific monitoring tools and indicators to capture the Project’s impact on gender dimensions should be explicitly incorporated.   **Social Accountability Approach**   * Role of key partner: further clarification on the role of the Consumers’ Union of Tajikistan in the Project, including outreach capacity at the sub-national level, etc * Targeting: rationale for selecting the proposed targeted communities; sample’s proportion relative to overall national indicators. * Further elaboration on proposed sub-national level work and ongoing projects in the W&S Projects (including WB-supported Project) * If external support will be required to design and implement the social accountability approach (including devising appropriate tools/mechanisms and an overall strategy), and what are the envisaged general guidelines of this approach.     **Results Framework/ M&E Plan**   * The Results Framework is adequate (for this stage of development).The RF includes clear and realistic targets. Outcomes and outputs are well-articulated. The proposal puts forward a well-developed M&E strategy with a good mix of qualitative and quantitative techniques. It also provides for expert technical assistance from the international Oxfam network and an independent final evaluation. Evaluation could consider a RCT with a control group.   **Institutional Capacity & Project Team**   * Team composition is all to be hired, which is of concern as no explanation is provided as to why the existing staff hasn’t been leveraged into the team. Recommendation is to revise the proposed team composition. It is recommended that the Project Manager be considered a local hire, and that any needed international support be provided for mentoring local staff, so as to strengthen local staff’s capacities, particularly on social accountability. * The roles and positions planned for the Consumers’ Union of Tajikistan must also be included in the Project Team. |
| **12. Moldova – EXPERT GRUP** | **Concept/Rationale**   * Timely proposal addressing demand-side needs in the context of the education sector reform ongoing in Moldova. Segment(s) of the population that has to benefit from this project are clearly defined. It stresses the value of citizen involvement in monitoring school performance rather than the tools themselves. It will implement the Ministry of Education's principal SA tool--the Education Stakeholder Reporting Cards--rather than inventing new one without buy-in from the authorities. The proposal could consider in addition to perceptions the students’ scores (e.g. on Baccalaureate exams) as a measure of school performance. * Constructive engagement * Further explanation is needed on whether the Ministry of Education has already been engaged on the proposal, and what are the specific plans to engage and obtain buy-in. The applicant indicates it has an ongoing partnership with Ministry of Finance, but there’s no mentioning of the Min. Education; also relevant should be to build the project’s proposed activities on a sound political economy analysis, including positions and interests of other stakeholders, such as teachers’ union, etc. * Who in the government is going to use the information, how and why? What are the incentives to use this information? What if the Minister changes? How will the incentives be aligned? * Sequencing of the Project and implementation progress of the Education Reform: Since School Administrative Boards are in the process of being established, how will the Project proceed in this regard? What is the information available about the extent to which PTAs exist and are active at the school level in Moldova?      * How will the Project complement and/or coordinate with existing initiatives supported by CSOs working in education monitoring? How could the Project create synergies with the World Bank Moldova Education Reform Project?   **Social Accountability Approach**   * Given low pre-existing capacity on design and implementation of social accountability tools, applicant proposes to contract international experts. This seems reasonable, but it will be important to ensure that in-house capacities are built both for the applicant and for regional CSOs. * Targeting:   + Proposed sequencing of social accountability tools should be revised with international experts and also discussed and agreed with regional CSOs partners. School Administrative Councils are yet to be created: how does this affect proposed activities? Also important will be to revise the targeted population vis-à-vis the sequencing of activities, and to analyze whether the goal of 300 schools isn’t too ambitious; it may be necessary to phase it, starting with a smaller sample. WB Moldova Education Reform Project soon to be effective; 94 Hub Schools (sample); could complement with EG’s targeting.   + Further clarification on the criteria that will be used to select the sample of schools that will be part of the Project. * Selection of 15 Regional CSOs: why 15? What is the criteria that will be used to select these CSOs? What type of technical assistance will be provided to these CSOs? What kind of commitment will be required from them? Any type of financial support considered? * ICT: partly related to the engagement with the Ministry of Education, how the proposed web-platform is expected to be sustainable; it seems that the Ministry of Education should be involved from the outset, and specific commitments may be considered for supporting this platform. Provide further information about the expected usability of the website, users’ engagement strategy, etc. * Since the applicant is a research CSO, it should develop a capacity-building plan that addresses the needs of regional CSOs, including institutional strengthening needs, in addition to capacities related to social accountability. This will also help to strengthen the project’s sustainability. Further information should be provided about the organization’s prior experience at the regional and local level, including with local and regional CSOs, particularly focused on the education sector.   **Results Framework and M&E Comments**   * It might be appropriate to add some measurement of education outcomes and of parent and student satisfaction levels as project outcomes. The assumptions and risks in the RF could be further developed. As it stands, it appears that several potential risks have not been considered. The fact that the proposal builds M&E into the continued improvement of project implementation is very good. It would be useful to include some more outcome level indicators, e.g. on improvements in education quality or beneficiary satisfaction levels. |
| **13. Malawi – Malawi Economic Justice Network** | **Concept/Rationale**   * Overall concept and rationale are clear, albeit lacking more elaboration on the added value of the proposed GPSA-supported Project vis-à-vis the applicant and its partners’ ongoing experience on social accountability, and monitoring the education sector * Partly related to the above, the proposal needs to make a stronger case for the specific contribution that it will make to (i) generating feedback (from education users and stakeholders, and from policy and processes analyses) that will be used by government stakeholders to improve transparency and accountability in the education sector, specifically in education procurement. What type of information will be generated by the Project that will add value to existing processes and data collection initiatives? Who in the government will benefit (and be interested in or gain from) from the information generated by the Project?; and (ii) generating changes in skills, capacities, attitudes and behaviors of targeted Project participants, particularly at the school level. * Further specifying expected outcomes/impacts in terms of reforms and changes at the local level in the education sector.   **Social Accountability Approach**   * Both MEJN and its partners have already developed extensive experience on social accountability; thus, the elaboration of the capacity-building strategy should make explicit the current assessment of local and national level capacities and skills acquired, and the existing capacity gaps that the Project will address. What has been learned and applied so far? In which ways will the GPSA-supported Project advance (and innovate, if applicable) with regards to the types of capacities that have been built into local and national CSOs for social accountability? How will the capacity-building operational strategy ensure that training activities are approached as “hands-on learning” processes rather than one-time events with weak follow-up mechanisms? * The overall SAcc approach has been generally discussed in the proposal, but it is still lacking a logical sequencing and rationale for combining specific tools/mechanisms; if the Project team has yet to further elaborate on this approach, this should be made explicit in the proposal and include the development of a clear SAcc plan as an initial task upon the Project’s start.   **Project Team**   * It is positive that most of the proposed team builds on the existing staff of both MEJN and its partners; however, a concern raised is that none of the proposed team members will have full-time dedication to the Project (highest dedication is 60% for the Project Manager), and field officers, which are yet to be hired, would also have a 30% dedication to the Project. It is recommended that MEJN and its partners review the Project Team structuring and ensure that at least one critical management/coordination position has full-time dedication to the Project, and that local-level positions are structured in a way that guarantee field staff commitment and responsibility towards the Project.   **Coordination with CARE Malawi Project**   * MEJN and CARE Malawi should coordinate both projects, and ensure that they collaborate and complement in terms of national and sub-national activities. This should be reflected in the revised versions of both proposals.   **Project duration**   * Similar to the case of CARE Malawi, the project duration seems tight (3 years) for a proposal that plans to invest significant time and resources on building capacities of partner CSOs at the local level. Moreover, the country will hold national elections in 2014, which may be a further reason for extending the time frame at least 1 more year. However, if MEJN can duly justify and demonstrate that it can carry out the Project in 3 years within an intense schedule, this may be considered.   **Targeting**   * Further details needed on the targeting approach; should be revised based on coordination arranged with CARE Malawi.   **Results Framework and M & E**   * Monitoring – although there is some discussion of what will be monitored, this is pretty boilerplate language about monitoring processes that could be applied to any similar application. More details are needed on (1) what will be monitored specifically, (2) how it will be monitored specifically, and (3) what will be done with the information gathered. * Evaluation – the evaluation discussion is stronger than the monitoring discussion, largely because it does provide some details about how the evaluation will be done (methods). The methods seem reasonable – but again, more details are needed about what is actually being evaluated and how will this information be used.   **Detailed Comments about Specific Application Questions**   * **Governance and/or development issues:** Describe governance issues related to procurement in education; identify problems and state of current discussion regarding procurement reform in education. * **Strategy for building multi-stakeholder support:** beyond describing various partnerships that are active, explain the strategy that will be followed at both national and sub-national levels to ensure buy-in from key stakeholders for the Project. * **Constructive engagement:** define the specific feedback mechanisms that will be used to advocate for more efficient and transparent procurement and budgetary processes in education; how will the feedback from procurement monitoring at the school and district level be used by the Government (and who, specifically, within government) to impact such processes in a measurable manner? * **Social accountability mechanisms or tools:** answer provided is diffuse and process-oriented. Monitoring of 5 critical stages of public financial management is proposed; however, it is unclear how will this process unfold at the different levels that will be engaged in the Project (school, districts, etc). * **Summary of lessons learned:** further elaboration of lessons learned in terms of (i) lessons on best approaches to building capacities of local and national CSOs for social accountability (given the substantial prior investments in this issue); (ii) lessons from benefits and challenges of working in partnership amongst various CSOs, CSO networks, and other type of stakeholders, including the media and academia; and (iii) lessons on the learning acquired about working in the procurement (in education) sector, as this is a highly-technical sector. * **Capacity Building:** the project still lacks a consistent capacity development strategy and plan; beyond describing the actors that will be targeted for CB activities, the proposal must describe what is the overall strategy and selective methodologies that will be used for ensuring that these actors can act upon the skills and capacities they will be exposed to; if the Organization still hasn’t been able to develop a full-fledged CB strategy and plan, it should include this task as one of the first activities in the Project.   **Project Components**   * Procurement monitoring: some outputs need to be further detailed and possibly broken down into intermediate outputs in order to provide periodic evidence of the Project’s progress in achieving final outputs as indicated under this Component (e.g. “Procurement Monitoring Model” established) * Institutional strengthening of CSOs: the activities and outputs under this component will need further refining, and be tied to the Project’s overall CB strategy and plan. Proposed outputs are somewhat diffuse and still unable to capture concrete deliverables (e.g. “network and collaboration”, “social accountability capacity-building” * Knowledge and learning from the experiences and achievements of the project: in addition to the K&L strategy as an output, the Communications strategy should also be included as an output; proposed IPAL framework to be applied to the Project in partnership with Keystone Accountability should also be included as a deliverable under this Component (as this framework is also applied as a K&L tool); the proposal’s description of its M&E Plan is too general, and will need to be further developed and reflected in its RF as well. |