

SUPPORTING POLITICALLY SMART SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA) proposes a new form of funding civil society groups working to solve difficult governance and development problems. It fills a gap in the funding landscape as it targets long-term constructive engagement between state and civil society organizations (CSOs). The innovations to date include setting up a distinct grant-making component and some initial institutional incentives so that grantees are rewarded for acting in a politically savvy way. Though it is a novel approach, there are many challenges for the GPSA to deliver on its promise.

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A NEW PLAYER IN THE SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY GRANT-MAKING LANDSCAPE

In 2012 the World Bank's Board of Directors approved the [Global Partnership for Social Accountability](#) (GPSA). The GPSA is a coalition of donors, governments, foundations, academics and CSOs that supports civil society and governments to work together to solve critical governance challenges in developing countries.

The World Bank's grant-making in social accountability did not first start in 2012. In the last decades, the [World Bank has supported a range of social accountability initiatives](#) such as the enactment and monitoring of access to information legislation by supporting country and regional CSO coalitions, sectorial initiatives to set up citizen monitoring frameworks (in health, education, social protection,



GLOSSARY

For the GPSA, social accountability— or beneficiary engagement with policy-makers and service providers in monitoring and assessing government performance – provides feedback on and voices demand for improved service delivery, thereby contributing to greater development effectiveness. See [here](#).

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infrastructure, etc.), procurement and budget monitoring, and parliamentary monitoring across regions and countries, to give some examples. As importantly, many other grant-makers have a tradition and valuable experience supporting civil society organizations to advance social accountability through a range of mechanisms.

This includes, but is not limited to, the [United Kingdom Department for International Development's](#) support for CSOs with global reach and expertise and the [Open Society Foundation's](#) support for grassroots organizations using monitoring for accountability in the health sector. The [Indigo](#) Trust provides micro grants for civil society work leveraging technology in Africa; the Ford Foundation supports advocacy for transparent and effective governments across the world (e.g. on Indonesia see [here](#)).

The social accountability grant-making market, of which the GPSA is now part, is complex. **This note reflects about the role of the GPSA in this complex grant-making system.**



A NICHE IN THE SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY GRANT-MAKING MARKET

Our main point in this note is that the GPSA proposes a qualitative innovation in the social accountability field, filling a gap in the grant-making market. The Partnership's funding of \$26.5 million dollars may look significant to some, but it is not its major added value to the grant-making market.

Consider current sources of funding for social accountability work. Many grant-makers, including the World Bank itself, already support discreet, short-term, social accountability projects to try to affect the decisions of government officials.

For instance, [Results for Development's Transparency and Accountability Program](#) has supported organizations that use community score cards and public expenditure tracking surveys in low and middle income countries. Colleagues at [Making all Voices Count](#) have just awarded between 31,000 and 100,000 GBP to 28 groups proposing cutting-edge solutions to improve citizen engagement in government decision-making.

There is also a long tradition of grant-makers' support for capacity-building on social accountability. This approach prioritizes investing in developing civil society's organizing and monitoring skills; in these cases, both the theories of change and resulting operational designs reflect the assumption that better civic capacity will lead to more accountability. In terms of the problems targeted, this type of approach is sometimes, though not always, devised either in an isolated manner or in adversarial terms vis-à-vis the public sector institutions responsible for solving them (see e.g. [here](#)). By adversarial advocacy, we mean efforts to use information or other resources to confront government actors and try to force them to change policies or behaviors mainly through public demonstrations and naming and shaming campaigns (for additional discussion of this approach see [here](#)).

All this work is important. It co-exists with the growing realization that there are many development and governance challenges and contexts that require long-term, politically informed collaboration between state and civil society actors (see [GPSA Note 1](#)). Take for instance, developments in Brazil where civil society groups have taken advantage of social observatories, councils, and other institutional channels for citizen voice to work with national and sub-national state actors to improve policies, governance, and development outcomes (and yet retain their independence).

In this case, civil society is acting more as a joint problem-solving partner and not just as voices of public critique. The value of this collaboration is that it brings to bear the skills, resources and unique capacity for **civil** society to generate accountability within the public sector, an iterative process which may not be possible when CSOs take a purely adversarial stance.



Unlike funding for short-term, demand-side or adversarial advocacy and technical social accountability support for this kind of **long-term, constructive engagement between state and civil society means adding a new approach to the grant-making field.**

The GPSA's governing body identified a gap in the social accountability field. It strategically chose to focus its efforts and direct its resources to funding a specific type of approach to social accountability (collaborative problem-solving). This approach aspires to make the most of the GPSA's existing resources and institutional set-up, while also addressing the gap in funding that civil society organizations typically face.

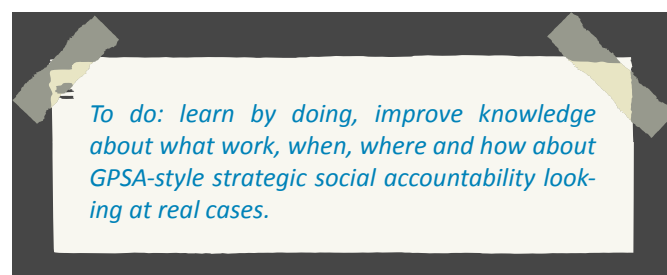
The strategic decision to focus on collaborative projects also takes into account the non-material resources, including access, leverage and power that the World Bank expects to mobilize in support of its projects.

The World Bank has an official and unique relationship with governments, which it hopes to use to create more space for state-CSO interaction and open policy dialogues to CSOs.

During a meeting with GPSA grantees, a Bank official suggested grantees should use World Bank country offices and take advantage of the symbolic power they provide. One of the GPSA grantees explained how her organization is working with the World Bank country officials so that they take up and advance civil society recommendations with government decision-makers when it matters and in ways that have a real chance to influence them. Knowledge is also a key resource the World Bank and the GPSA hope to lever.

To clarify the point, making the decision to fund collaborative social accountability does not mean to say that other approaches should not be funded or are not effective. Quite the contrary, GPSA partners often also take alternative routes.

The GPSA's focus is a politically informed decision to try to strategically make the most of the GPSA's opportunities and constraints, given less than perfect evidence about what works, when, where and how in terms of social accountability, generally, and strategic social accountability in **particular** (also see [GPSA note 1](#)). The GPSA also values alternative approaches to social accountability, but seeks to innovate in ways individual funders and long term social accountability advocates did not or could not do on their own (more on this in the [GPSA's knowledge platform](#)).



These ideas are some of underlying building blocks of the GPSA's theory of change – its expectation about how its resources will further collaboration. We look at what this means in operational terms, next.

Inputs

Design of GPSA's Grant Making Component



Design of GPSA's Knowledge Component



Outputs

Grantee's application of political economy approach to their Social Accountability strategy



Bank staff's application of political economy approach to Social Accountability



Knowledge and learning of GPSA's approach to Social Accountability



Outreach and collaboration with the GPSA's Global Partners



Outcomes

Constructive engagement with Executive decision makers



Collaboration between CSOs and State Accountability Institutions



Redesign based on Outputs



Other Contextual Factors

20 TEST CASES

In taking into account the gaps in the social accountability grant-making market, the unique resources of the World Bank, and its comparative advantages, the GPSA is trying to make the most of the context in which it was set up. The GPSA is a vehicle to enable funding for **strategic social accountability**.

Over the next 3-5 years, the GPSA will provide between \$500,000 and 1,000,000 over 3-5 years to 20 projects tackling development challenges that, a priori, would benefit from politically smart collaboration between state and civil society actors (Table 1).

*“Strategic social accountability”
The approach embodies four main components:*

- Problem-solving
- Politically-responsive and multi-pronged strategies
- Multi-stakeholder coalitions
- Adaptive learning

Check [GPSA's theory of change](https://thegpsa.org) (thegpsa.org) and [GPSA Notes 1-6](#) for a more in depth discussion about these.

Project Objective	Organization	Location	GPSA Contribution	Main Social Accountability Mechanism to Engage Government Constructively
1. Social Engagement for Budgetary Accountability	Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF)	Bangladesh	\$848,968	Open budget sessions and neighborhood meetings, to be used by Union Parishad (municipal) and Upazilla (district) public officials to prioritize public investments and assess service delivery.
2. Journey for Advancement in Transparency, Representation and Accountability	CARE Bangladesh	Bangladesh (Northwest region)	\$644,138	Institutionalizing a participatory budget process mandated by law at Union Parishad and Upazilla levels, by combining the use of formal and informal participatory mechanisms with community radio information campaigns and training of journalists.
3. Improving transparency and budget accountability in education, agriculture, water and sanitation, and public housing	Fundación Intermón Oxfam	Dominican Republic	\$727,984	Establish a national consortium of thematic observatories to strengthen sector budget accountability and service delivery using social audits, community scorecards and budget analyses.

All GPSA projects' plans of action are made up of several separate elements or methods that attack a problem from several directions using multiple institutional entry points (i.e. they are multi-pronged, see GPSA Note 4). Here we focus on the main social accountability mechanism to keep things short.

Project Objective	Organization	Location	GPSA Contribution	Main Social Accountability Mechanism to Engage Government Constructively
4. Improving maternal health service delivery	Yayasan Wahana Visi Indonesia (YWV – Indonesia)	Indonesia (36 villages in Timor Tengah Utara, Sikka, and Alor Districts)	\$950,000	Monitoring the national Maternal Health Program (Jampersal) by using SMS-based feedback mechanisms and systematizing data through an open, web-based, database to identify service delivery bottlenecks.
5. Improving health determinants at the village level	Development Policy Institute (DPI)	Kyrgyz Republic	\$598,833	Strengthen citizen feedback from Village Health Committees (VHC) by providing training and information on budget processes that will effectively allocate and monitor health determinants in the public budget.
6. Reducing teacher absenteeism and increasing transparency in the delivery of education materials	CARE Malawi	Malawi (125 schools)	\$950,000	Improve education services by developing feedback tools for students and parents to assist the Ministry in monitoring teachers' absenteeism in 125 schools, and to assist the Office of National Procurement in monitoring procurement of teaching and learning materials (TLMs).
7. Increasing transparency in the delivery of educational materials	Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN)	Malawi	\$705,000	More transparent and efficient procurement and delivery of teaching and learning materials (TLMs), by monitoring TLMs contracts and their execution and assisting the Ministry to improve procurement.
8. Improving the quality of education from primary to upper secondary schools	EXPERT GRUP	Moldova	\$ 696,955	Monitor education services in 100 Moldovan schools by facilitating the engagement of students and parents with school authorities to address budget allocation.
9. Improving access to and quality of health service provision for vulnerable groups	Concern Mozambique	Mozambique (Niassa and Zambezia provinces)	\$700,000	Build the capacity of local community-based organizations to monitor the quality of health services and engage with the Ministry of Health to address locally identified performance issues.

Project Objective	Organization	Location	GPSA Contribution	Main Social Accountability Mechanism to Engage Government Constructively
10. Improving the transparency and performance of the Conditional Cash Transfer program	Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government (CCAGG)	The Philippines (Northern Luzon region.)	\$800,000	Improve existing feedback mechanisms of the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Program to improve the Department of Social Welfare and Development's targeting and to assess the experience of CCT beneficiaries for health and education services.
11. Improving Water Quality and Sanitation Services	Oxfam Tajikistan	Tajikistan	\$850,000	Strengthen the capacity of water associations to monitor the quality of water and sanitation and enable the Water Regulator to ensure adequate provision of water services.
12. Improving health service delivery	CORDAID (The Catholic Organization for Relief and Development Aid)	Democratic Republic of Congo (Bas Congo and South Kivu)	\$800,000	Combining service assessment tools with formal agreements between District and Provincial health service providers, users and Health Committees to monitor the quality of health services.
13. Improving budget accountability in health and education sectors	SEND-GHANA	Ghana (50 poorest districts)	\$850,000	Expand the use of SEND's participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) methodology to combine the monitoring of health and education services with sector budget monitoring, at local, district, regional and national levels.
14. Improving healthcare quality in hospitals and primary healthcare centers	Center for Health Policies and Studies (PAS Center)	Moldova	\$730,000	Monitor hospital and healthcare centers' performance by combining both service providers' and users' feedback on healthcare quality. This will be used by the Ministry of Health, Parliamentary Committee on Social Protection and National Council for Evaluation and Accreditation to ensure that the planned health reforms and performance-based financing will become more transparent and patient-centered.

Project Objective	Organization	Location	GPSA Contribution	Main Social Accountability Mechanism to Engage Government Constructively
15. Improving access to education and performance	Globe International Center (GIC)	Mongolia (8 Provinces)	\$650,000	Combining the use of community scorecards and the "Good School Assessment" tools, to assess education quality at school level, assess education expenditures through budget analysis and inform implementation of the goals set out in the Education Master Plan 2006-2015.
16. Improving access and quality of primary school education	CARE International Maroc	Morocco (Vulnerable communities in Grand Casablanca and Marrakech Regions)	\$720,000	Identify areas for improvement in primary education, while strengthening collaboration between Parents Associations and (regional and national) education authorities in 80 primary school to improve allocation of education budgets.
17. Improving transparency and performance of the conditional cash transfer program, TEKOPORÁ	Fundación Comunitaria Centro de Información y Recursos para el Desarrollo (CIRD)	Paraguay	\$600,000	Using citizen-led municipal roundtables to strengthen the social accountability mechanisms of the Cash Conditional Transfer Program (TEKOPORÁ) by sharing information with the Secretaría de Acción Social (the Social Action Secretariat) to improve its targeting and the quality of health and education services linked to the program.
18. Improving access to information and service delivery in health and education sectors	Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail (UGTT)	Tunisia	\$800,000	Monitor health and education services, and infrastructure investments by developing a SMS system to gather information, assessing service quality at the facility level and setting up a web-based platform to systematize, share and channel the feedback generated to decision-makers.

Project Objective	Organization	Location	GPSA Contribution	Main Social Accountability Mechanism to Engage Government Constructively
19. Improving procurement practices in education, health and agriculture	Africa Freedom of Information Centre (AFIC)	Uganda	\$650,000	Strengthen accountability and the performance of social services by combining contract monitoring tools, political economy analyses of procurement, and the institutional strengthening of Uganda Contracts Monitoring Coalition (UCMC) in partnership with the Office of the Prime Minister and various Ministries.
20. Improving education service delivery	ANSA-EAP	The Philippines	\$700,000 (Open Society contribution)	Establish local partnerships between the Ministry of Education, parents and students at 46,000 schools in The Philippines to help students and parents access accurate information and give feedback about educational services through a web-based platform.

KEY INNOVATIONS IN THE GPSA APPROACH TO GRANT-MAKING

The GPSA did not come up with social accountability, nor did it come up with the idea of politically savvy funding in development. However, in operationalizing its strategy, the GPSA is taking concrete, transformative steps that move forward both fields in practice. We reflect on these steps, sharing insights from the GPSA's Grantee Workshop and [GPSA Global Partners Forum](#) which took place in May 2014 (for a participant's view on the Forum itself check out [here](#)).

Incorporating previous experience and evidence into its strategy and operations: Using knowledge to inform and adapt development interventions is a necessary, yet challenging proposition. The GPSA's theory of change and its grant-making processes have been built taking into account available, albeit imperfect, evidence about the social accountability field.

For examples, you can check the [citations in the results framework](#) document or our discussion of the way evidence influenced thinking in the selection of GPSA projects in GPSA Notes 1 -6. Here, we want to flag a bigger picture issue: the theory of change we visualized above sets out a series of expectations and goals about how the GPSA's inputs are expected to cause four key outputs:

1. The integration of a comprehensive political economy approach into the operational strategies of the GPSA's grantees borne out of direct engagement with decision makers that have authority over service delivery or the governance of service delivery.

2. The application of political economy analyses by the Bank's Task Team Leaders (TTLs) and the Country Management Units (CMUs) working with the GPSA grantees.

3. The knowledge and learning that the GPSA will produce through analysis and sharing of grantee activities and experiences among grantees, Global Partners, and other key actors working on social accountability initiatives.

4. Communication and technical assistance provided by the GPSA's Global Partners

In turn, these four outputs, along with specific contextual factors, are expected to contribute to two concrete **outcomes**:

1. Increase constructive engagement between civil society actors and government decision makers in the executive responsible for improved service delivery;

2. Facilitate collaboration between social accountability initiatives of civil society actors and state institutions of accountability for overseeing actors in the executive responsible for service delivery.

BOX 1

Contextual Factors are likely to influence the opportunities for partners to affect the two main outcomes of the GPSA's theory of change:

- i. Space for civil society to operate, particularly the existence and enforcement of constitutional rights that protect civil society such as civil liberties, information rights and freedom of the press.
- ii. Level of government openness, including minimum levels of transparency, which provide key information inputs to facilitate the work of social accountability mechanisms.
- iii. State capacity, including the quality of public service management, resource use, and the availability of human resources to ensure an intervention actually can translate to government performance.
- iv. Level of political accountability, which creates incentives for leaders to use their authority in the interests of the citizenry, and amplifies the impact of social accountability interventions.
- v. Institutionalization of checks and balances, including horizontal accountability institutions such as legislative oversight, judicial review and audit agencies, which provide natural entry points for collaboration between civil society and the state.

This causal chain is a test, we cannot presume things will work out as predicted in the 20 GPSA projects. At the same time, it sets out a series of specific steps that are plausible in 3 to 5 years' time. All the projects' milestones include the expectation that:

(i) a social accountability process targeting a specific policy problem will be set up in partnership or in collaboration with clearly identified public sector institutions and decision-makers,

(ii) the process's initial design and subsequent iterations are informed by political economy analyses that are integrated into the operational work,

(iii) the process generates relevant information that public sector institutions and decision-makers use to introduce changes to, or improve, the performance of policies, programs and service delivery processes as evidenced by public policy and management instruments (e.g. official regulations, program directives and memorandums, facility-level rules and regulations, etc.),

(iv) the process is registered through a monitoring and evaluation system that is linked to the project's knowledge and learning plan.

In other words, the GPSA presents the field the opportunity to learn by doing and trace the conditions under which its expectations are borne in practice.

Incentives for politically savvy action throughout the project cycle: Since the 2000s, there is much reflection about how donors should think about politics (see [here](#)). Many GPSA Global Partners –[DFID](#) to [Oxfam](#) and [Care](#), among others, have been at the forefront of experimentation with political economy. The road has not been without obstacles. Translating these ideas into systematic behavioral change so that all development partners use their joint political thinking to inform how they go about change-making throughout the project cycle – not just through discreet diagnostics – is pro-

bably the main challenge today (see [here](#), [here](#)).

Documenting and analyzing when, where, and how politically savvy social accountability efforts work (and whether political action makes a difference) is a related test, of course.

The GPSA is creating a unique laboratory to engage in and learn about politically informed social accountability across the project cycle. Paraphrasing one of the grantees: after many years of explaining our projects as solely technical, the GPSA is asking us to change and make them **political**.



Jeff Thindwa May 15
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"Voice Without Power is just Noise" NGO advocate from [#Uganda](#) Via [@jacobcharold](#) [#GPSAForum](#) [#SocialAcc](#)

As the GPSA makes an explicit effort to ask about incentives, institutions, and power dynamics, grantees have started highlighting some of the issues they're experiencing. [Some face the challenge of working in contexts of highly centralized states while others have to face the challenges that decentralization processes bring along.](#) We heard grantees reflect about how their interventions need to be tailored to take into account how the governing party mobilizes votes and support in different regions of a country or how they need to take into account and lever divisions within a governing coalition to bring about change. Other grantees reflected that they do not expect the same approach to trigger reactions from national and sub-national partners.

In other words, as we looked into the 20 projects we reflected on how political parties articulate and aggregate citizens' demands (including, but not limited to electoral [mandates](#), [vote buying](#), [clientelism](#) and [territorial strategies](#)). The good news is that we have linked existing research to give you a head start!

These efforts go beyond words, which perhaps is the biggest innovation for the discussion about political economy in development. The GPSA defined its theory of change, tailored its country calls for proposals, and selected grantees with a politically informed eye (see GPSA Notes 1-6). Political economy is a key issue in its knowledge strategy, and politically informed action by its grantees and Bank staff are outputs that the GPSA is 100% responsible for achieving.

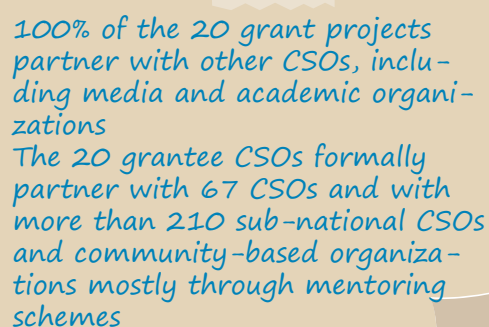
The GPSA is also asking its grantees to monitor how political economy analysis informs and helps justify course-correction in projects. Imagine a civil society organization that learns through working with public officials that it would be better to design different interventions in municipalities that are financially dependent on the national government from those that are not. Often, a CSO has little incentives to change its plans because the risk of punishment for not doing what it committed to do is high – these kinds of institutional incentives often undermine efforts to use political analysis (see [here](#)).

The GPSA is taking a different approach and accepting well-reasoned, politically informed adjustments and taking it as a measure of success. The GPSA is also asking World Bank staff engaged in its projects to provide information about the relevance of these politically informed adjustments – cross checking information and encouraging multi-stakeholder joint-reflection and action.

Interested in learning more about these indicators and monitoring system? Check out the [results framework](#). Do you think it can work out?


A broad take on civil society: The GPSA is also innovating in identifying the civil society groups it can support. Support is by no means limited to elite civil society organizations whose core activity is to promote social accountability from the national capital. The GPSA received a broad range of applications from a large number of usual and non-usual players in the social accountability field, including groups whose core area of interest is a particular service delivery sector such as health or education. It selected for funding projects from local non-governmental organizations and others linked to international non-governmental organizations. There are think tanks and a trade-union leading GPSA projects.

All of the grantees, in turn, lead partnerships and coalitions that extend to networks of a broader range of more unusual players. A good question to discuss as projects unfold is whether this broader basis of political and technical capital makes a difference in achieving positive change.



100% of the 20 grant projects partner with other CSOs, including media and academic organizations
The 20 grantee CSOs formally partner with 67 CSOs and with more than 210 sub-national CSOs and community-based organizations mostly through mentoring schemes

Promoting state-society constructive engagement: The idea to support civil society working with governments and state control institutions is in the GPSA's formal documents, as well as in high-level statements. At a conversation about the GPSA, World Bank's Vice President for Leadership, Learning and Innovation, Sanjay Pradhan said: "The cutting edge of development work is not just to amplify the voice of the poor. It is to ensure that the government responds to that voice of the poor. Platforms like this are incredibly precious and too few. We need to work hard to make it work." GPSA Program Manager, Roby Senderowitsch, blogged "The GPSA helps citizens have a voice, helps governments have an ear, and, through a close collaboration, supports public institutions to respond to citizen demands".



Food for thought regarding state-society relationships in social accountability
Click [here](#) for research and [here](#) for a conversation.

These kinds of statements focusing efforts and resources on states, civil society, and their interaction are key to put formal documents to work in practice, but they also need to be owned and adapted to individual projects, so that grantees, their partners, and the World Bank staff supporting them put them to work to solve concrete problems on the ground.

What could that look like in practice? For example, CARE Malawi's project to address chronic problems of teacher absenteeism and a weak supply chain in teaching and learning materials (TLMs) is being supported by the GPSA. The project makes use of the intrinsic advantage CSOs have in monitoring local public service outcomes on the ground, and the advantage government has in being able to introduce and enforce new incentives and rules at scale to alter the performance of the overall sector. By making precise and credible local information about teacher absenteeism and TLM supply available to public sector managers tasked with improving sector performance, the collaboration between civil society and government can be much more effective than if each acts in isolation.

One particularly innovative partnership led by Oxfam Tajikistan builds on institutions of state accountability, the checks and balances that exist within government to improve service delivery. The water regulator is mandated to improve public service delivery by overseeing water companies and protecting consumers while water user associations are naturally motivated to seek for improved water supply. By strengthening the capacity of water users' associations to monitor the quality of water supply and sanitation, and by providing a platform for regularized communication between these associations and the water regulator, the information available to the water regulator can be greatly increased, assisting them to perform their horizontal accountability functions. Political economy analyses typically highlight the asymmetric information and risk of capture evident in regulatory institutions.

By being politically savvy – by increasing the information available to the regulator and bringing civil society to the table – this project seeks to generate increased social accountability.

So, there is no single recipe or toolkit for constructive engagement. It takes critical thinking and strategic social accountability action. Madina Aliberdieva from Oxfam Tajikistan reflected on this issue:

"Our projects will require us to challenge and overcome some deeply rooted dynamics, assumptions and behaviors in our countries. This also includes challenging our traditional approaches to working with the most vulnerable populations. While striving to empower the poor, the focus should not only be on them, but also on finding ways to ignite the interests of all stakeholders, especially the decision makers, to take the voices of citizens seriously, despite their prevalent reluctance to accept changes. We, as GPSA grantees, should therefore contribute to building an enabling environment for constructive engagement between the government, service providers, civil society organizations and the community at large. And this is how the 'magic' will happen!"

The 'magic' of GPSA social accountability programs will only take place when all stakeholders, donors, grantees, partners and beneficiaries develop shared goals and strategies and productive working relationships. Of course, the key ingredient will be to engage every actor in reflective participatory processes, without limiting it to establishing artificial 'social contracts' between those who have power and those who don't. This is what Roby Senderowitsch, the GPSA Program manager, was trying to convey at the very beginning of the workshop with these simple questions: What is the problem in your country? So what? What is next? Why would the important stakeholders want to engage in your project? What is 'in it' for them?"



BIG QUESTIONS

We know there are many challenges and questions around the implementation of the GPSA's ideas about strategic, collaborative social accountability. We think this is natural. The GPSA and its approach are new. Also, the sheer number and quality of partners make it a high-stakes bet for the social accountability field to show whether it can fulfill its promise. So, we won't be able to cover all questions about the GPSA you are probably thinking of. We want to focus on a few big question marks we think are particularly timely.

The GPSA is in a privileged position as it can take on our best understanding to date about social accountability and structure its grant-making to put cutting-edge ideas to work. This means the GPSA also has a unique advantage to learn with others and convey what it takes to make its brand of social accountability to work.

And, there is much demand to develop this knowledge. In May 2014 at the GPSA Forum, World Bank President Jim Kim, put it in clearly:

"My very real expectation is that much more money will be available for us to invest. In order to be able to do it we have to be able to show results and the important thing is for the grants that we have made to show that there's a real impact This is a sea change in the way the GPSA represents a fundamental change in the way the World Bank Group looks at the importance of civil society so we have to protect it. We have to make sure again that the grants that we're providing are really having an impact and this is something that is a very high stakes issue for all of us. We really have to make sure that there are real outcomes there. And so that's the most important thing."

This ask puts some pressure on the GPSA to help its portfolio of grantees to deliver – which is likely to take much more than funds – and to evaluate systematically its portfolio. The results framework document sets some broad parameters for a possible road forward, but we still need to see whether and how plans to implement these ideas will shape up. How will systems be structured so that GPSA meets the outputs it's 100% responsible for? Will the assumptions, including those about the ability of GPSA grantees to work with Bank staff hold (automatically or through GPSA nudging)? What does the Knowledge and Learning work look like? Is it linked to the evaluation component? Are appropriate resources allocated in a timely manner? Can the GPSA afford to wait for a formal, ex-post evaluation five years down the line? How is the broader social accountability field going to **react**?



Sam Polk @spolkR4D · 15 May

Jim Kim offers sober picture of what it will take to increase wb support for civil society: onus on cs to show impact #GPSAForum



Courtney Tolmie @CourtneyTolmie · 15 May

Jim Kim: As social accountability results become stronger, World Bank advocacy will become more. Pressure 4 more evidence #GPSAForum



Florencia Guerzovich @guerzovich · 15 May

Having @GPSA_org is almost a miracle. We have high expectations, make it happen Kim #gpsaforum #socacc #wblive



Victoria Vlad @Victoriavladd · 15 May

Dr. Kim 'The goal at the end of the day is to show that we can be more effective in ending poverty' #GPSAforum #wblive @WorldBank



These and other practical answers will determine whether the GPSA will have a shot at responding to President Kim's ask or not.

And for us outside the GPSA, the GPSA is asking all of us to innovate and inviting us to get out of our comfort zone. Can we overcome structural and organizational barriers to innovation in the social accountability field? Will we take the risk?

