

Mapping Political Context: Governance Questionnaire - Resources - Overseas Development Institute (ODI)

<http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/details.asp?id=5528&title=governance-questionnaire>

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The **Governance Questionnaire** was designed by GTZ as a tool to analyse the political and institutional frameworks, actors and relationships in a country. The aim is to help development practitioners to produce better informed and more effective strategies for policy reform (DFID/World Bank, 2005; Faust and Gutiérrez, 2004).

The approach varies significantly from other tools as it takes the view that political reform processes are strongly influenced by informal values, norms, customs and processes, rather than following formal rules (DFID/World Bank, 2005). This is thought to apply particularly in new democracies or weakly institutionalised political systems (Faust and Gutiérrez, 2004). It also explicitly sets out to employ a multi-disciplinary approach, combining political science, law, economics, legal anthropology and empirical social research.

The Governance Questionnaire does not aim to provide a comprehensive assessment, but rather to highlight important issues, facilitate debate and stimulate further enquiry to inform decisions about how to support reform (OECD DAC, 2005).

How does the Governance Questionnaire work?

The Governance Questionnaire is still in the early stages of implementation and the pilot studies are not yet complete. The questionnaire is split into specific sets of questions, organised by arenas and sub-arenas designed to be used in any combination the user requires. The six political arenas are:

- Relationship between state and society;
- Political system;
- Political culture, change agents and development paradigms;
- Politics and gender;
- Economic policy and the political framework of markets;
- International integration.

The methodology for using the Governance Questionnaire includes a number of distinct steps, but it is recognised that steps may themselves be altered or omitted as needed. Respondents are asked to assess the six political arenas in society. Qualified respondents - decision makers and practitioners from representative groups of society - are selected to give their assessments in response to the questionnaire.

10 to 15 people are recommended per study. This is a fairly small sample, but a workable and realistic figure. The questionnaire can be completed in written form or used as a guide for structured but open-ended interviews. Similarly, the questions can be answered simply (yes; partly; no), or can be expanded using additional 'filter' questions, multiple answers, or by providing reasons for answers. As such, variations on the Governance Questionnaire can be used to map context at different levels of detail.

Elements of the Governance Questionnaire

Conceptual approach and indicators

- The Governance Questionnaire highlights the importance of understanding power relationships and structures between state and society and, in so doing, takes into account

trends and barriers to political and institutional reform. It provides a full list of the six political arenas, their sub-arenas, and questions designed to provide information on the individual components of those sub-arenas. For example, for the first political arena, 'relationship between state and society', the following sub-arenas and components are listed in figure below.

Data

- The questionnaire, or elements of it, could be employed by CSOs seeking to gain a better understanding of political context. The fact that the questionnaire can be conducted using a small sample of people, and at varying levels of detail, might make it particularly appealing to those CSOs that are short of time and money.

Analysis, presentation and recommendations

State and society arena: sub-arenas and components

<p>Sub-arena 1: Enforcement capacity of the state</p> <p>1.1 Sectoral scope of state enforcement capacity</p> <p>1.2 Territorial scope of legitimate monopoly of power</p> <p>1.3 Mode of enforcement of monopoly of power</p> <p>1.4 Homogeneity of monopoly of power</p> <p>1.5 Competition between various regulatory systems</p>
<p>Sub-arena 2: Acceptance of the state</p> <p>1.6 Relationship between citizens and state</p> <p>1.7 Recognition of state institutions</p> <p>1.8 Assumption of commitments</p> <p>1.9 Provision of physical safety</p>
<p>Sub-arena 3: Society's expectations of the state</p> <p>1.10 Opportunities for citizens to express opinions</p> <p>1.11 Opportunities for citizens to participate</p> <p>1.12 Responsiveness to citizens' demands</p> <p>1.13 Identification of public needs</p> <p>1.14 Intrastate conflict management</p>

- The Questionnaire provides guidance on the importance of each arena. In the example of the arena that looks at 'the relationship between state and society', it is explained that this relates to the various elements of a functioning state, and that these are presupposed by concepts of 'good governance'. This approach also provides a basis for users to choose the arenas, or the aspects cutting across arenas, that are most important in understanding political context for their purposes and from their position.
- The Governance Questionnaire can be used in a number of ways:
 - In its entirety, to give an overview of the political and institutional context for policy.
 - To study the characteristics and relationships that define a particular political arena within a country, such as gender and politics or the role of economic policy.

- To assess a narrower range of issues across several political arenas by selecting appropriate questions. A user might, for example, look at the perceptions of the rule of law throughout a country's political arenas (Faust and Gutiérrez, 2004: 12).

- For an international or 'outsider' analyst, using the Governance Questionnaire can provide a good overview of the relationships and structures defining the political context for policy reform. For a domestic or 'insider' analyst, the Governance Questionnaire might provide new insights into some arenas to complement prior knowledge

This tool first appeared in the ODI Toolkit, *Mapping Political Context, A Toolkit for Civil Society Organisations*.