Citizen Participation in National Governance
The role of civil society in devising and implementing anti-corruption strategies

1.0 Introduction

Nowadays, citizens increasingly demand a governance scheme free of bureaucratic / administrative corruption, patronage, nepotism, diversion of public funds and stealing of public assets; instead they demand a governance scheme that promotes development and equity. It is, citizens are demanding more participation in the decision-making process of public policies, as well as on their implementation and follow-ups.

In this sense, a key message from The Quality of Growth book recently published by the World Bank Institute, is that civil society supervision and involvement over the decision-making and functioning of the public sector has been a crucial counterweight and instrument to improve governance (2000, p. 165). Furthermore, among the most internationally demonstrable ways to assure civil society participation, the following can be mentioned: (i) ensuring public access to government information; (ii) requiring transparency in government to meet openly with civil society; (iii) conducting public hearings and referenda on drafts, decrees, regulations, laws; (iv) publishing judicial, legislative and other decisions and keeping a registry (making public information unrestricted); (v) ensuring freedom of the press by prohibiting censorship, discouraging use by public officials of libel and defamation laws as a means for intimidating journalists, and encouraging diversity of media ownership; (vi) involving civil society to monitor government performance in areas such as accountability and large-scale public procurement bidding, and (vii) using new web-based tools on the Internet for transparency, disclosure, public participation and dissemination of information.

1.2 Audience: Country level stakeholders including representatives from civil society (including trade unions and professional organizations), government, staff of development agencies, parliament, and elected representatives.

1.3. Duration: from 3 hours to 3 days, depending on the needs from participants and overall learning program.

2.0 Aims of the module

The Citizen Participation in National Governance module is design to provide civil society and public officials representatives with a set of tools and techniques enacted to promote good governance at the national level to serve citizens. Moreover, it will expose participants with conceptual and theoretical explanations of governance and participation, as well as with a series of practical experiences.

3.0 Objectives

At the end of the module, participants will be able, among others, to:

- Recognize the relevance of governance and the roles of government and civil society to promote good governance.
- Understand the empirical evidence in the relationship between governance, empowerment and poverty reduction.

• Recognize the importance of building coalitions between civil society -
government in devising and implementing participatory strategies.
• Familiarize with various forms of participation and how to promote.
• Design, devise and implement participatory anti-corruption strategies.

4.0 Content Areas / Subject Matter (see annex 1)

In order to provide participants with a ordered and logic sequence the next structure will
be followed. Section one introduces the conceptual framework for governance and
citizen participation. Section two explores the relevance of citizen participation and why it
is important to be addressed by national governments. The types of participations are
described (information, participation, consensus building, negotiation and collective
action), in particular it will explain the differences among them.

Section three introduces a model for developing practical strategies to promote collective
action and citizen participation, as elements to sustain good governance at the national
level. Last but not least, section four presents a series of case studies to expose
participants with the types of issues that may be addressed, the strategies and
instruments that may be developed, and how citizens may be involved in national
governance issues.

Among the topics to be covered in this module are the following:
• The definition (government vs. governance) and levels of governance (local,
national, global).
• Components / elements of good governance.
• The relationship between good governance, civil society and development.
• The role of civil society in governance. Enabling factors and obstacles for
participation.
• Participatory governance. Definition and relevance of participation. Degrees
of participation (information, consultation, negotiation, participation).
• Why, when and who participate? Benefits and costs of participation.
• The collective action approach.
• Participation and representation in democratic governance. Mechanisms for
interaction between citizens and the Parliament.
• Case studies and best practices in national governance.

5.0 Resource Materials / including case studies.

This module includes a series of case studies to expose participants with the types of
issues that may be addressed, the strategies and instruments that may be developed,
and how citizens may be involved in national governance issues. The case studies
include:

• National Dialogue in Bolivia
• Assembly of the Poor – mass agitation campaigns in Thailand
• The Process of National Consensus Building in Costa Rica

For a detailed bibliography, see annex 3.
6.0 Methodology

This module is delivered in a participatory, interactive way. It is designed to be offered through distance learning using a blended method of classroom instruction, self-paced and peer learning. Each section of the module is designed to stand as part of a whole, hence it provides a better understanding on the issues involved for citizen participation in national governance, when it is covered in all the sections.

When delivered via video-conference, presentations will focus on practical ways used and concrete experiences from participants in promoting civil society participation as a tool to improve governance and promote sound development (i.e. key representatives from civil society and government will describe several important initiatives which led to reduce corruption and improve governance in their countries).

7.0 Media Technology to be used

Face-to-face, print, video-conferencing.

8.0 Evaluation.

At the end of the module, participants will be asked to fill out an evaluation questionnaire which gives them the possibility to evaluate and rank each aspect of the module. This evaluation becomes an important feedback instrument for the developing of future modules.

9.0 Learning outcomes.

1. Users of this module will be able to identify the national framework for citizen participation which explains:
   a) Consequences and costs of corruption
   b) Types of corruption
   c) Tools to combat corruption

2. This module explains practical strategies to promote collective action and citizen participation, hence participants will be able to learn how important is the role of the civil society in this process.

3. Participants will also understand a step by step case studies in which the Government and Civil Society design an action plan for fighting corruption and development, as well as on to use the tools mentioned in it.

10.0 Impact.

The program impact is to show that the issues of transparency and efficiency are strategic entry points for addressing citizen participation in national governance. These issues are also key features in enhancing public sector credibility and legitimacy.