iChallenge Workshop Summary
October 29ᵗʰ – 30ᵗʰ, 2014
OECD Conference Centre, Paris, France

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Paris, France
iChallenge Workshop

Background

On October 29-30 2014, the World Bank hosted a two-day iChallenge workshop at the OECD Conference Center in Paris, France. The workshop marked the culmination of the iChallenge competition - an initiative to crowd source ideas for indicators to measure government capacity and performance. The workshop followed the annual meeting of the OECD's Effective Institutions Platform. The iChallenge is part of the multi-stakeholder Indicators of the Strength of Public Management Systems (ISPMS) initiative, which has now assembled a set of regularly collected cross-national indicators that meet the ISPM criteria and that can be used to provide a "health check" of a country's governance and public management systems and to prioritize and target reform efforts and track progress. The workshop also provided an opportunity to review the progress of the ISPMS project and to consider next steps.

The iChallenge competition took place between April 14, 2014 and July 1, 2014, and received 92 ideas from around the globe for indicators to better measure government capacity and performance. An expert review panel assessed the merits of the ideas submitted and announced three finalists, who were invited to present their ideas at this workshop.

The purpose of the workshop in Paris was to recognize the iChallenge finalists and their ideas, and also to bring together a group of experts and stakeholders in the field of governance indicators to deliberate on what has been achieved and to suggest the way forward. The central objectives of the workshop were to: review the winning ideas/indicators and to use this to consider options for building and improving on what had been done so far. The 35 workshop participants (Appendix 1) represented development partners, developing country governments and academia.

The workshop was organized in three sessions over a day and half (Appendix 2).

The first session kicked off the event with a series of panel discussions on how to measure state capacity, and generated a variety of innovative ideas that provide new avenues for further work in the area.

The second session featured presentations from each of the three iChallenge finalists, followed by discussion and feedback from participants and members of the Evaluation Panel

present at the meeting. Participants then joined breakout sessions with the iChallenge finalists to help them refine their ideas and develop concrete proposals for data collection.

The third session reviewed options for the next steps for the ISPMS initiative and centered on a discussion of the various uses of the existing ISPMS dataset.

Opening

The workshop began with a general introduction to the work that has been carried out under the ISPMS. Mario Marcel Cullell, Senior Director of the Governance Global Practice, began by congratulating the three iChallenge finalists and welcoming the attendees of the workshop, before going on to describe the rationale behind the ISPMS initiative. Vivek Srivastava, Lead Public Sector Specialist, Governance Global Practice then provided an update on the results of iChallenge competition and outlined the objectives of the workshop (Appendix 3a).

Session 1: How should Government Performance be Measured?

The first panel session of the workshop evaluated the ISPMS approach to measuring government performance, and the links with post-2015 SDG discussion. The panel consisted of Nick Manning, Former Head of the World Bank's Governance and Public Sector Management Practice; Nathanial Heller, Executive Director of Global Integrity, a leading NGO in the field of governance; and Piero Stanig, Assistant Professor in the Department of Policy Analysis and Public Management of Bocconi University. The panel discussion debated the merits of the wide variety of different governance indicators that have emerged over the last decade, the various purposes that these indicators serve, and how best to get more insight into public management systems. Key points that emerged during the panel discussion included:

- Nick Manning identified two main purposes of indicators: those that operate as 'tin openers' (they suggest that something isn't working, and help to start a conversation about the underlying problems) and others that operate as 'dials' (indicate direction of movement and are directly actionable). He also distinguished between those that have intrinsic value and those that have instrumental value. *Conceptually, the ISPMS are in the nature of 'dials' with instrumental value whereas the SDG indicators would more likely be 'tin openers' and have intrinsic value*. Nick suggested that we might have reached the limits of the current ISPMS approach and that a change in tactics may be needed. Surveys—such as those that measure staff engagement--are potentially an option.

- Nathaniel Heller noted that there is no single 'silver-bullet'/'unicorn' data set that can provide a measure of state capacity. He emphasized that citizens don't

just view "state capacity" as what services government deliver; rather, *how* government operates (such as the *transparency* of government actions) is equally important. In addition to government-generated data, "bottom-up" data (from citizens) is needed to triangulate and increase the legitimacy of "official" statistics. Nathaniel also noted that determining the instrumental value of governance indicators is very difficult.

- [Piero Stanig](#) argued that state capacity is an abstract concept that is difficult to observe; as a result, it is not clear how it should be measured and how it can be related to what we observe in terms of outcomes.

The second panel discussion in the session focused on the issue of what government performance looks like from a citizen's perspective, looking at challenges and opportunities of measurement. The session began with a presentation on citizen-perspective indicators by Steve Knack, Lead Economist at the World Bank [(Appendix 3b).](#) Mario Marcel outlined his thinking on how governance from a citizen's perspective can change our approach to thinking about state capacity. The subsequent discussion focused on whether it was possible for citizen-perspective indicators to meet the ISPMS criteria and what types of data we can collect that will enable us to get a better sense of the costs of government actions for citizens. Key points that emerged included:

- *Citizen-perspective indicators should be used as a complement to government perspective indicators* to identify the most salient public management issues—i.e. they can help define what is "action-worthy".
- *There is a distinction between indicators that reflect a citizens' perspective and those that are collected directly from citizens.* Indicators from the "Citizen perspective" can be collected from a variety of sources. For example, a citizen's perspective on government often involves fairness, reliability, responsiveness, integrity, and inclusivity. These can be measured in a variety of ways, including perception surveys, behavioral responses, experiences, administrative data, and even big data.
- *Data collected from citizens can be used to triangulate the measures of state capacity obtained from other sources.*
- *Citizens generally refer to political leadership rather than service delivery when talking about trust* and their perspective on service delivery is typically at a meso and micro level.
- *There are approaches that focus on measuring citizen's behavior rather than their opinions* which can be used to infer their views on state capacity and that improve the reliability of citizen perspective data.
- *Citizen surveys are generally less useful for measuring upstream state capacity issues,* but they can help us localize upstream problems.

The final session of the day began with a presentation by Mark Glaser, Professor of Public Administration at Wichita State University, on public trust and community investment projects, which outlined the results of his research on the relationship between public investment decisions and citizen attitudes towards public and self-interest (Appendix 3c). The subsequent discussion investigated how the survey technique utilized in the study could be used in other areas of governance. The following points were raised during the subsequent discussion of the presentation:

- The technique used for the survey is similar to other innovative approaches stemming from behavioral economics to develop citizen feedback loops.
- This sort of collaborative feedback loop could be very useful to build trust in government and improve governance outcomes, particularly in terms of citizen's willingness to pay taxes.
- There are other elements of trust that need to be measured by governance indicators; how much citizens trust each other, how much government's trust the citizens, how much trust there is within government (among actors), and between government and its employees.

Session 2: iChallenge: New Ideas for indicators

Day 2 of the iChallenge workshop began with a presentation by Jordan Holt, who provided the background to the iChallenge, described the variety of indicator submissions that were received, and outlined the evaluation and selection process.

The remainder of the session centered on the presentations by the three iChallenge Finalists of their indicator proposals:

- **Average number of bids per procurement process in a year and/or the average number of firms submitting bids per procurement process in a year** [submitted by Federico Ortega, World Bank].

- **The response time (days) to an official inquiry made online** [submitted by Alexandru Roman, Assistant Professor at California State University of San Bernandino].

- **Budget Literacy Index** (the extent to which budget documents are understandable to parliamentarians/CSOs/citizens) [submitted by Babacar Sarr and Maria Elkdhari. Babacar works at the International Budget Partnership and Maria is a PhD student at CERDI in France].

Each of the iChallenge finalist's presentations were followed by feedback from members of the Evaluation Panel and a general discussion. The workshop then broke up into breakout sessions to discuss the iChallenge finalist's indicators proposal.

The breakout sessions provided suggestions to the finalists to further improve their ideas. In some cases such as for the Budget Literacy Index, these sessions also provided a forum to discuss opportunities for piloting these indicators.

Session 3: The ISPMS Initiative Going Forward

The final session of the workshop focused on the next steps for the ISPMS initiative, with an eye towards prioritizing areas of future work based on the needs of indicator users.

The session began with a demonstration of the new ISPMS Dashboard by Patricia Austria (World Bank), a software tool designed to enable clients to utilize the ISMPS indicators more effectively.

This was followed by a roundtable discussion on 'What state capacity indicators are the most salient for users, and how can the existing set be improved?' The subsequent discussion focused on how best to utilize the ISPMS dashboard, and what steps are required to ensure that the work done on the ISPMS indicators reaches the widest audience. The key points raised are summarized below:

- *There is a dearth of data on state capacity;* existing indicators are mainly used for internal compliance purposes, and not for diagnostic or performance-related analysis of state capacity.
- *The ISPMS dataset is unique* in that it assembles a set of indicators that cover a range of public management systems and the indicators in the dataset meet the ISPM criteria.
- *The ISPMS indicators should be widely disseminated and their use encouraged*. The Bank should keep the existing dataset updated, and allow users to comment on its functionality.
- *There is a wide audience for these indicators* and is expected to include governments, academics and practitioners, and we need to engage with these groups to ensure that ISPMS is widely used and can provide the most added value
- *There is a trade-off between having comparable indicators across countries and having indicators that are useful for project level diagnostics* — the latter generally require more detail and depth.

This was followed by a set of breakout sessions on what the focus of the initiative could in the next phase. Participants self-selected into groups that focused on:

- ➢ **Opportunities to "market" and promote the use of the ISPMS dataset.**
- ➢ **The scope of using administrative data as a source for ISPMS.**
- ➢ **The use of survey data as a source for ISPMS.**

Conclusions from the Workshop

See presentation here.

- ✓ *Governance indicators should be distinguished based on type and purpose. Thus, SDG indicators would have a very different purpose (to attract attention to issues and would very likely be based on intrinsic values such as transparency) from the ISPMS which measure the performance of aspects of public management systems* and could be used for calibrating and targeting reforms and would typically be indicators with instrumental value.
- ✓ *Citizen's perspectives could be used to triangulate and confirm the salience of indicators from other sources.*
- ✓ *There was a general consensus among participants that the ISPMS initiative has deepened our knowledge and understanding of the issues surrounding the measurement of state capacity.* The iChallenge initiative was valuable in further developing our understanding and appreciation of the ISPMS criteria. The process of running the competition and evaluating the entries also served to reveal the challenges of applying the ISPMS criteria, in particular the difficulty of developing indicators with cross-country comparability.
- ✓ *As a result of the ISPMS initiative and the iChallenge, there is now a sustainable and comprehensive set of cross-country data* on various aspects of public management systems and these indicators provide a diagnostic toolkit that will greatly aid governance work going forward.
- ✓ *There was also agreement that the ISPMS approach in the first phase of collecting existing indicators that meet a set of criteria has reached its limits and that new avenues could be explored.*

Next Steps

Participants at the workshop identified the following next steps to advance the ISPMS initiative further:

Existing dataset

- **Keep the existing dataset updated.**

- **Develop a strategy for disseminating and promoting the use of the ISPMS database among governments, academics and practitioners.** The use of the Global Data Alliance as a means of doing this would be explored. Promote the ideas of the iChallenge finalists and attempt to pilot the indicators.

- **Invite comments and suggestions for improvement on the existing set of indicators.**

New sources/avenues

- **The meeting agreed that in the next phase potential sources for generating primary data are worth exploring.** Ideas that came up in the discussion included:

  - *"Data Clubs"* that provide incentives for data sharing across countries

  - *Surveys of public servants* to get at issues such as "engagement" that could provide insights into the functioning and strength of key aspects for public management systems

  - *Learn from citizens* about their perceptions of public management systems

- **The option of using administrative data to supplement the existing ISPMS is not very promising** because of lack of standardization, comparability and availability of data across a large number of countries.

In addition, a key next step would be to identify potential funding options to support the next phase of the of the ISPMS initiative.