

Citizens at the Center: A Strategic Review of Good Practices and Lessons Learned for Renewal of World Bank Support for Citizen Engagement and Social Accountability

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4. West Africa Coastal Areas (WACA) Resilience Investment Project

East Asia and Pacific (EAP)

5. Cambodia Voice and Action: Social Accountability for Improved Service Delivery and Integration of Social Accountability into National and Subnational Systems Projects
6. Indonesia Improving Teacher Performance and Accountability (KIAT Guru) Project
7. Philippines Rural Development Project

Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECA)

8. Georgia Kakheti Connectivity Improvement Project
9. Kyrgyzstan Community Development and Investment Agency (ARIS)
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Latin America and the Caribbean (LCR)

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Abbreviations

ABCD: Assets-Based Community Development
ACReSAL: Agro-Climatic Resilience in Semi-Arid Landscapes
ARIS: Community Development and Investment Agency (Kyrgyzstan)
ASA: Advisory Services and Analytics
BBL: Brown Bag Lunch
BF: Beneficiary Feedback
BFI: Beneficiary Feedback Indicator
BoT: Board of Trustees
BRT: Bus Rapid Transit
CBO: Community-Based Organization
CCDR: Country Climate and Development Report
CCIA: Climate Change Institutional Assessment
CDD: Community-Driven Development
CDF: Comprehensive Development Framework
CE: Citizen Engagement
CESA: Citizen Engagement and Social Accountability
CLR: Completion and Learning Reviews
CMU: Country Management Unit
CPF: Country Partnership Frameworks
CPS: Country Partnership Strategy
CS: Civil Society
CSC: Corporate Scorecard
CSO: Civil Society Organization
DPF: Development Policy Financing
DPL: Development Policy Loan
EAP: East Asia and the Pacific
EBRD: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECA: Eastern Europe and Central Asia
EITI: Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
ENB: Environment, Natural Resources, and Blue Economy Global Practice
ESF: Environmental and Social Framework
ESS: Environmental and Social Standard
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD: Focus Group Discussion
FY: Fiscal Year
GAC: Governance and Anticorruption
GEMS: Geo-Enabling initiative for Monitoring and Supervision
GM: Grievance Mechanism
GP: Global Practice
GPSA: Global Partnership for Social Accountability
GSG: Global Solutions Group
HEAL: Health Enhancement and Lifesaving
IADB: Inter-American Development Bank
ICNL: The International Center for Non-Profit Law
ICR: Implementation Completion and Results Report
ICT: Information and Communication Technology
IDA: International Development Association
IDB: Inter-American Development Bank
IDS: Institute of Development Studies (Sussex University)

IEG: Independent Evaluation Group
IFI: International Financial Institution
IPF: Investment Project Financing
ISAF: Implementation of the Social Accountability Framework
ISR: Implementation Status and Results Report
JSDF: Japan Social Development Fund
LCR: Latin America and Caribbean Region
MAR: Management Action Record
M&E: Monitoring & Evaluation
MENA: Middle East and North Africa
MoE: Ministry of Education
NECTAR: Nagaland Enhancing Classroom Teaching and Resources
NGO: Nongovernmental Organization
NGOC: NGO and Civil Society Center (ADB)
OAG: Office of the Auditor General (Kenya)
ODI: Overseas Development Institute
OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OGP: Open Government Partnership
PAD: Project Appraisal Document
PEA: Poverty and Equity Assessment
PFM: Public Financial Management
PFR: Public Finance Review
PforR/P4R: Program-for-Results Financing
PIU: Project Implementation Unit
PLR: Performance Learning Review
PME: Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
POM: Project/Program Operational Manual
PRSP: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RRA: Risk & Resilience Assessment
RSB: Roma Sounding Board
SA: Social Accountability
SAR: South Asia Region
SCD: Systematic Country Diagnostic
SEP: Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SNA: Sub-National Administration
SNDD: Subnational Democratic Development
SPF: State and Peace-Building Fund
SSERP: Sector Support for Education Reform Project*
SSI: Social Sustainability and Inclusion
TOR: Terms of Reference
TTL: Task Team Leader
UN: United Nations
WACA: West Africa Coastal Areas
WB: World Bank
WBG: World Bank Group
WDR: World Development Report
WHO: World Health Organization

Glossary of Key Concepts and Terms

Citizen engagement refers to the two-way interaction between citizens and the state that gives citizens a stake in decision-making with the objective of improving development outcomes. It allows for the fulfillment of citizen rights (and responsibilities) to access information, voice views, participate in public life, influence decisions that affect their lives, and seek accountability.

Social Accountability refers to the broad range of actions and mechanisms (beyond voting) that can empower citizens to hold the state (and other powerholders) to account and efforts by civil society, media and state actors to support these. Social accountability approaches, therefore, represent a subset of citizen engagement where the objective of the engagement is to exact accountability. They seek to complement and reinforce, not replace, conventional (political, fiscal, administrative, legal) accountability mechanisms.

*For Citizen Engagement and Social Accountability (CESA) there are multiple entry points throughout the public governance cycle. CESA practices can be initiated by state or non-state actors, undertaken independently or jointly, and may be informal or institutionalized. CESA practices are diverse, but common elements include accessing or generating information and evidence, strengthening citizen voice, and direct dialogue/negotiation with state actors.

According to the CE Strategic Framework and the Environmental Stakeholder Framework (ESF), the definitions of citizens, beneficiaries, and stakeholders are as follows.

- **Citizens:** ultimate client of government, development institutions, and private sector interventions in a country. The term citizen is understood in the broad sense of referring to all people in a society or country in an inclusive and non-discriminatory way.
- **Beneficiaries:** the subset of citizens directly targeted by and expected to benefit from a WB-supported project or program. They can include individuals, groups, associations, or organizations, and may (or may not) belong to the public or private sectors and may represent a variety of interests.
- **Stakeholders:** people who will be informed and consulted about the project including individuals, groups, or communities that (i) are affected or likely to be affected by the project (project-affected parties) and (ii) may have an interest in the project (other interested parties).

Citizen charter is a document that informs citizens about the service entitlements they have as users of a public service; the standards they can expect for a service (timeframe and quality); remedies available for non-adherence to standards; and the procedures, costs, and charges of a service. The charters entitle users to an explanation (and in some cases compensation) if the standards are not met.

Citizen report card is an assessment of public services by the users (citizens) through client feedback surveys. It goes beyond data collection to being an instrument for exacting public accountability through extensive media coverage and civil society advocacy that accompanies the process.

Citizen satisfaction surveys provide a quantitative assessment of government performance and service delivery based on citizens' experience. Depending on the objective, the surveys can collect data on a variety of topics ranging from perceptions of performance of service delivery and elected officials to desires for new capital projects and services

Citizen/user membership in decision-making bodies is a way to ensure accountability by allowing people who can reflect users' interests to sit on committees that make decisions about project activities under implementation (project-level arrangement) or utility boards (sector-level arrangement).

Citizens' juries are a group of selected members of a community that make recommendations or action participatory instrument to supplement conventional democratic processes.

Community contracting is when community groups are contracted for the provision of services, or when community groups contract service providers or the construction of infrastructure.

Community management is when services are fully managed or owned by service users or communities. Consumers own the service directly (each customer owns a share) when they form cooperatives.

Community monitoring is a system of measuring, recording, collecting, and analyzing information; and communicating and acting on that information to improve performance. It holds government institutions accountable, provides ongoing feedback, shares control over M&E, engages in identifying

and/or taking corrective actions, and seeks to facilitate dialogue between citizens and project authorities.
Community oversight is the monitoring of publicly funded construction projects by citizens, community-based and/or civil society organizations, participating directly or indirectly in exacting accountability. It applies across all stages of the project cycle although the focus is on the construction phase.
Community scorecard is a community-based monitoring tool that assesses services, projects, and government performance by analyzing qualitative data obtained through focus group discussions with the community. It usually includes interface meetings between service providers and users to formulate an action plan to address any identified shortcomings and make improvements.
Consultation , as distinct from dialogue, is a more structured exchange in which the convener commits to “active listening” and to carefully consider the comments, ideas, and recommendations received. Good practice consultations provide feedback on what was heard, and what was or was not incorporated and why to ensure that consultations contribute to improved policies and programs.
Focus group discussions are usually organized with specific goals, structures, time frames, and procedures. Focus groups are composed of a small number of stakeholders to discuss project impacts and concerns and consult in an informal setting. They are designed to gauge the response to the project's proposed actions and to gain a detailed understanding of stakeholders’ perspectives, values, and concerns
Grievance mechanism (or complaints-handling mechanism) is a system by which queries or clarifications about the project are responded to, problems with implementation are resolved, and complaints and grievances are addressed efficiently and effectively.
Independent budget analysis is a process where civil society stakeholders research, explain, monitor, and disseminate information about public expenditures and investments to influence the allocation of public funds through the budget.
Participatory budgeting is a process through which citizens participate directly in budget formulation, decision-making, and monitoring of budget execution. It creates a channel for citizens to give voice to their budget priorities.
Participatory physical audit refers to community members taking part in the physical inspection of project sites, especially when there are not enough professional auditors to inspect all facilities. Citizens measure the quantity and quality of construction materials, infrastructure, and facilities.
Participatory planning convenes a broad base of key stakeholders, on an iterative basis, to generate a diagnosis of the existing situation and develop appropriate strategies to solve jointly identified problems. Project components, objectives, and strategies are designed in collaboration with stakeholders.
Procurement monitoring refers to independent, third-party monitoring of procurement activities by citizens, communities, or civil society organizations to ensure there are no leakages or violation of procurement rules.
Public Expenditure Tracking involves citizen groups tracing the flow of public resources for the provision of public goods or services from origin to destination. It can help to detect bottlenecks, inefficiencies, or corruption.
Public hearings are formal community-level meetings where local officials and citizens have the opportunity to exchange information and opinions on community affairs. Public hearings are often one element in a social audit initiative.
Public reporting of expenditures refers to the public disclosure and dissemination of information about government expenditures to enable citizens to hold government accountable for their expenditures.
Social audit is a monitoring process through which organizational or project information is collected, analyzed, and shared publicly in a participatory fashion. Community members conduct investigative work at the end of which findings are shared and discussed publicly.
User management committees refer to consumer groups taking on long-term management roles to initiate, implement, operate, and maintain services. User management committees are for increasing participation as much as they are for accountability and financial controls.

Executive Summary

Abstract: The World Bank has largely succeeded in meeting the corporate requirements outlined in its 2014 Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Citizen Engagement, but those minimal requirements do not represent an adequate benchmark for meaningful and impactful citizen engagement and social accountability (CESA). To more fully realize the benefits of CESA, critical for the Bank's mission to end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity on a livable planet, a stronger, more strategic, systems-oriented and partnership-based approach to CESA is required. To renew and revitalize its CESA agenda, in alignment with the strategic directions of the evolution roadmap and based on lessons learned to date, this Review recommends that the World Bank take steps to: 1) improve the quality and outcomes of project-level CESA; 2) strengthen country systems for CESA; 3) support enabling conditions for CESA; and 4) ensure an institutional support system for CESA that is fit-for-purpose. Priority actions to implement these entry points include: (i) systematizing the implementation and monitoring of country-level CESA assessments and action plans; (ii) strengthening in-country multistakeholder platforms, and partnerships with and support for civil society actors; (iii) supporting the design and implementation of high quality, inclusive, "vertically-integrated" CESA in priority sectors; and, (iv) increasing resources for the effective implementation of the Bank's CESA agenda.

Introduction

The World Bank has largely succeeded in meeting the corporate requirements outlined in its 2014 Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Citizen Engagement, but those minimal requirements do not represent an adequate benchmark for **meaningful and impactful citizen engagement and social accountability** (CESA). To more fully realize the benefits of CESA, critical for the Bank's mission to end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity on a livable planet, **a stronger, more strategic, systems-oriented and partnership-based approach to CESA** is required.

The Bank's **evolution roadmap** calls for "enhanced civil society engagement" and "enhanced CESA", acknowledging that partnerships with civil society are "critical to ensuring development impact" and that enhanced CESA in World Bank work will "enhance accountability and governance". Based on a stocktake of experiences and lessons learned to date, this review identifies four key challenges to be addressed in renewing and revitalizing the World Bank's CESA agenda, aligned with the strategic directions of the evolution roadmap. These include: (i) improving the quality and outcomes of **project-level CESA**; (ii) strengthening **country systems for CESA**; (iii) supporting **enabling conditions for CESA**; and (iv) ensuring a **fit-for-purpose institutional support system for CESA**. The Review lays out **entry points** to be considered to address each of these challenges. It also highlights **priority actions** that have been collated taking into account anticipated impact and resource requirements.

By clarifying the complementary and mutually reinforcing nature of the **ESF (ESS10)** and **CESA** agendas and by strengthening alignment of **GPSA** successor-financed activities with the Bank portfolio, the proposed way forward brings **greater coherence** and **synergy** to the implementation of these four important and inter-related areas of work, providing a solid foundation for more **strategic, meaningful, and impactful delivery of development outcomes**.

Strategic Objective #1 - Improve the quality and outcomes of project-level CESA

Why is this important?

- Engaging citizens and CSOs in a meaningful way in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of WB-supported projects is critical to achieving **effective development results**.
- Bottom-up approaches that engage citizens meaningfully at the community/local level **provide the foundation** upon which **higher-level "vertically integrated" engagement mechanisms** can be developed.

Key findings

While Bank project teams have made great strides in consulting with citizens to collect feedback, the use of approaches that give citizens a meaningful say in **decision-making** remains limited. **Social accountability** approaches, which have particularly strong potential to empower citizens, fight corruption and contribute to development effectiveness by engaging citizens/CSOs in monitoring and oversight, remain underutilized and a lack of adequate **stakeholder** and **political economy/power analysis** limits the ability of WB-supported projects to understand and address power differentials between different groups of stakeholders. A failure to allocate project funds for CESA purposes has resulted in a **significant design to implementation gap**, and a **deficit of adequate CESA-oriented human resources** and **capacity/skills** within WB project teams and PIUs further constrains the implementation of planned CESA activities. While progress has been made in **leveraging ESF-CESA synergies**, more work is needed to ensure a **coherent, client-focused and genuinely inclusive approach** and to improve the **quality, tracking and reporting of monitoring indicators**. Finally, **collaboration with CSOs** as social mobilizers/organizers, implementing partners, facilitators and independent monitors is critical to achieving high quality CESA, but is hampered by **cumbersome bureaucratic procedures** and **lack of financing**.

Strategic Objective #2 - Strengthen country systems for CESA

Why is this important?

- Approaches that strengthen country systems (both state and non-state) for CESA are more likely to yield **scalable and sustainable development results**.
- CESA at this level can also contribute to broader goals such as **enhanced citizen-state relations** and more **responsive and accountable governance**.
- The nature of WB development support (which spans multiple sectors, stakeholders, levels of government and funding cycles) makes it **uniquely well-placed** to encourage and support a **holistic, systems-oriented approach to CESA**.

Key findings

Promising examples exist of WB-funded projects that support embedded CESA practices, but much more could be done to support **"vertically integrated" CESA systems** from local to national level, including through the judicious use of **digital technologies**. Due to the current focus on IPF-related corporate requirements, **country-level, systems-oriented CESA** has received less attention at the Bank. As a result, CESA has not yet been fully or effectively integrated into the Bank's **country engagement model** and there is strong, and largely untapped, potential to make use of **CPF products**, as well as lending instruments like **P4Rs** and **DPF** to support systems-level CESA. **Strengthening the CESA orientation and capacities of existing country systems/institutions** (especially those with an accountability/oversight mandate) can be a particularly strategic and effective way to achieve CESA goals. While the Bank continues to support CESA as a core practice across its operations, it should pay **specific attention to areas of priority importance where CESA is likely to have greatest strategic impact** (e.g., climate action, anticorruption, fragility and conflict) and use its unique convening power to support **inclusive multi-stakeholder CESA platforms and mechanisms** at the country/portfolio/sector level in areas of priority importance.

Strategic Objective #3 - Support enabling conditions for CESA

Why is this important?

- Understanding and addressing issues of civic space is **critical for the World Bank's ability to meet its development goals**.
- The Bank's high-level commitments to transparent, accountable and participatory development and to meaningful engagement with citizens and CSOs are all **directed related to and influenced by civic space**.
- The Bank has acknowledged **shrinking civic space** over the past decade (noting that this "narrows the policy space" and "limits the channels available to citizens to engage"), however, there is **no clear operational guidance** on how to respond to this challenge.
- Understanding the context in which CESA is undertaken is key to the **successful design and implementation of CESA practices**.
- A failure to adequately understand the context in which engagement takes place can put **citizens, civil society and project-affected communities at risk**.

Key findings

The Bank's approach to CESA needs to be **better informed by context analysis** and **supportive of enabling conditions**. With governments in many countries facing a crisis of legitimacy and trust, efforts to enhance civic space and CESA can serve to **strengthen relationships between citizens and the state, build trust and renew the social contract**, especially in **fragile and conflict-affected contexts**. However, a **lack of political will and capacity to engage** (on the part of both state actors and citizen/CSOs) pose a challenge in many country contexts and, despite the Bank's commitment to "not tolerate reprisals and retaliation against those who share their views about Bank-financed projects", the institution has been criticized by some for what is seen as an **inadequate response to reprisals** in some cases. **Governance-oriented DPF** is a particularly **well-suited** and currently **underutilized instrument** for supporting an enabling (legal, policy and institutional) environment for CESA and civil society, and efforts to address systems-level issues and support enabling conditions for CESA will benefit from a **stronger focus on CESA within the Governance GP**.

Strategic Objective #4 - Ensure a fit-for-purpose institutional support system for CESA

Why is this important?

- The Bank's ability to fulfill its CESA commitments, and to implement the Entry Points of IEG's 2018 evaluation and this review, are dependent upon a **fit-for-purpose institutional support system**.
- Ensuring adequate institutional support will allow the Bank to reap the **untapped benefits** of CESA.
- The Bank's failure to adequately resource its CESA commitments runs the **risk of reputational damage**.
- Given **growing demand for CESA support**, it's important for the Bank to bolster its capacity to respond.

Key findings

Despite strong corporate commitments, CESA remains a largely **peripheral and poorly funded mandate** at the Bank. Current staffing, skills and resources for mainstreaming CESA across the Bank are **not fit-for-purpose**. The Bank's CESA GSG and network of CE Focal Points play a critical role but **lack time and resources to support the operationalization of the approach** beyond the minimal requirements. The Bank's **current skills set is not optimal** to effectively implement its CESA agenda. Specialized expertise in the fields of participatory governance, political economy/power analysis, citizen-state relations, civil society and social accountability is largely lacking. The current system of monitoring and reporting does **not incentivize high quality** CESA. The Bank has conducted only a

relatively small number of **studies of CESA impact**. Given the state of implementation of the agenda, important learning could be gleaned from more systematic impact evaluation. There is a **deficit of effective knowledge management** in relation to CESA at the WB.

Considering these findings, the review proposes 21 entry points to meet the identified strategic objectives. These involve, among others: updating and expanding operational guidance on CESA, strengthening country engagement, increasing learning and capacity development opportunities, and enhancing funding for CESA. Based on an assessment of the anticipated impact and required resources of these entry points (summarized in the table below), and guided by the strategic directions of the evolution roadmap, proposed priority actions to renew the Bank's CESA agenda are to:

- 1) **Systematize the implementation and monitoring of country-level CESA assessments and action plans;**
- 2) **Strengthen in-country multistakeholder platforms, and partnerships with and support for civil society actors;**
- 3) **Support the design and implementation of intensified, systems-level CESA in sectors/ issue areas deemed as priorities by in-country actors; and,**
- 4) **Increase resources for the effective implementation of the Bank's CESA agenda.**

Conclusions

In the current global context, **effective CESA is more important than ever** to respond to multiple crises and achieve development effectiveness and efficiency. Despite high-level corporate commitments to CESA, **the Bank's CESA agenda has remained largely peripheral, projectized and under-funded**. To achieve its twin goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity on a livable planet, **the Bank must actively engage the people it exists to serve**, not as project "beneficiaries" but as primary stakeholders, who are actively engaged in development decisions and actions and to whom both the Bank and governments are ultimately accountable. Since 2014, the concepts of citizen engagement and social accountability have gained broad-based recognition across the Bank; another **shift in mindset** is required to move the agenda **from the periphery to the center** of the Bank's work and to **position it as a leader in this field**. The Bank's current **evolution process** represents an important opportunity for the institution to reposition CESA, not only as essential at the project level, but as core to the Bank's role as a global development institution. The entry points and priority actions put forward in this review propose practical pathways towards a renewed "CESA 2.0" that integrates principles of **inclusive, systems-level engagement and accountability** across all aspects of Bank support for global development, in line with the strategic directions of the evolution roadmap.

Summary Table of Proposed Entry Points¹

Color code:

= High Impact/Low Resources
 = High Impact/Med. or High Resources
 = Medium Impact/Low Resources
 = Medium Impact/Med. or High Resources

	Anticipated Impact (High, Medium, Low)	Required Resources (High, Medium, Low)	Type of Action			
			Operational guidelines	Country engagement	Learning/ Cap. Dev.	Staff & CSO funding
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #1 - IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND OUTCOMES OF PROJECT-LEVEL CESA						
1.1 - Support project teams to design, implement and build capacity for CESA practices that go beyond consultation and satisfaction surveys to give citizens/CSOs a say in decision-making and oversight (from project design through implementation and evaluation).						
a. Update guidelines on ensuring the closure of the feedback loop.	M	L	X			
b. Facilitate access by project teams to detailed operational guidance (including case study examples) on the design and implementation of high quality CESA practices (beyond consultations and GMs).	M	L	X			
c. Issue guidelines for expanding project-level M&E into a social accountability mechanism (e.g. through participatory M&E, citizen/CSO oversight, third-party monitoring and proactive public disclosure of results).	M	L	X			
1.2 - In priority sectors, systematize the practice of project/sector-level stakeholder and political economy/power analysis (including an assessment of the civil society landscape) to support better-informed CESA and broader project/sector goals.						
a. Building on current good practice examples, develop and disseminate detailed operational guidelines for the implementation of civil society, stakeholder, political economy/power analysis (of different levels of complexity).	M	L	X			
b. Include modules on the <i>why</i> and <i>how</i> of political economy/power analysis in CESA capacity development programs for operational staff and project teams.	M	L			X	
1.3 - Adopt a coherent and coordinated approach to ESF (ESS10) and CESA in project design and implementation arrangements and roles and responsibilities at project level.						
a. Update operational guidance clarifying the complementary and mutually reinforcing nature of ESS10 and CESA (including enhancing the CESA content of country-level ESF Overview Assessments).	M	L	X			
b. Through the issuance of technical advice and operational support, promote the inclusion of high quality CESA practices (beyond consultations and GMs) in SEPs.	M	M	X			

¹ Note that, to avoid duplication, cross-referenced entry points (i.e., 1.2.c, 1.3.f, 1.4.f, 2.1.c, 2.5.c, 3.3.b, 4.1.e, 4.4.c) are not included in this table.

c. In the context of both ESS10 and CESA, bolster efforts to adopt a multidimensional and intersectional approach to social inclusion.	M	M	X		X	
d. Prepare and provide to implementing agencies updated detailed guidelines on how to strengthen the inclusiveness of SE and CESA mechanisms, taking into account specific country and sectoral nuances.	M	L	X			
e. Consider a coordinated/integrated approach to developing, monitoring and reporting on CESA and ESS10 (and, potentially, gender equity) results indicators.	M	L	X			
1.4 - Shift institutional focus and incentives from CESA at design to CESA implementation and results, seeking to ensure that CESA activities outlined in the PAD are budgeted for and supported by meaningful results indicators.						
a. Update good practice guidelines to ensure that CESA activities outlined in the PAD or SEP have clear operational provisions and a corresponding budget line.	M	L	X			
b. Ensure that project-level SE/CESA plans include an assessment of implementation capacity and a budget for capacity development activities as required.	M	M	X		X	X
c. Designate a clear CESA focal point among PIU staff.	M	L		X		
d. Provide detailed technical guidance (e.g. checklists, sample questions, aide-memoire templates) on how to cover CESA in supervision missions and how to report on CESA in ISRs and ICRs.	M	L	X	X		
e. Update guidelines (including examples) for the development of strong, results oriented SE/CESA indicators.	M	L	X			
1.5 - Facilitate more effective and nimble ways to partner with (different categories of both formal and informal) CSOs at the project level.						
a. Update operational guidance and technical advice (based on existing good practices and lessons learned) on facilitating collaboration with CSO implementing partners.	M	L	X	X		
b. Streamline operational procedures, providing space to co-create and adapt appropriate strategies over time with CSO implementing partners, rather than dictating predetermined procedures.	M	L	X	X		
c. Consider adopting a WB policy statement on collaboration with CSOs.	M	L	X			
1.6 - Expand funding for CSOs to support third party monitoring and social accountability at both the project and sector/country-level.						
a. Where there is client buy-in, include support for capacity development and accompaniment of CSO partners in project budgets.	M	M			X	X
b. Sustain/enhance access by project teams to Trust Fund resources, which represent a vital source of support for CESA and collaboration with CSOs.	H	M/H		X		X
c. Replenish and expand GPSA successor funding to support third-party monitoring and social accountability initiatives by CSOs (beyond project budgets).	H	M/H		X		X
d. Strengthen alignment of GPSA successor-financed activities with the Bank portfolio and actively engage in-country actors in supporting and responding to the findings and outcomes of GPSA successor initiatives.	M	M		X		
e. Adopt a model whereby GPSA successor grant funds are managed and on-granted by CSO intermediaries, thereby and alleviating the burden of the Bank's cumbersome bureaucratic procedures on grantees.	M	L	X			

f. Consider a system whereby GPSA successor grantees are selected by an international committee of respected CSO representatives and CESA experts, ensuring a majority of representatives from the global South.	M	L	X			
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #2 - STRENGTHEN COUNTRY SYSTEMS FOR CESA						
2.1 - In priority sectors (where CESA is deemed to be most feasible and/or impactful), support project teams to design and implement intensified, vertically integrated CESA strategies, that strengthen country systems and make local to national linkages.						
a. Consult with in-country actors to identify (and describe in the country-level CESA action plan) priority sectors/operations for intensified, systems-oriented CESA (see Entry point 2.4).	H	M	X	X		
b. Issue guidelines regarding the inclusion of citizens/CSOs representatives on project/sector-level advisory and/or oversight committees (as one important strategy of vertical integration).	H	L	X	X		
2.2 - Support the protection and promotion of digital civic space and further develop (and study) hybrid approaches that make use of emerging technologies and digital social innovations to complement and reinforce analog CESA activities.						
a. In the Bank's ongoing support for digital development, prioritize country-level digital policies, frameworks, and tools that foster meaningful and inclusive citizen participation and protect and promote digital civic space.	M	L	X	X		
b. Enhance digital advisory/consultative services for task teams to expand the existing set of technology and software-related services available to clients and project teams.	M	M		X		X
c. Undertake more research to understand how and under what circumstances digital engagement enhances government responsiveness and accountability and recommended ways to promote online inclusiveness.	M	M			X	
d. As part of the proposed CESA knowledge platform (see Entry point 4.4), include a digital CESA repository.	M	L			X	
2.3 - Prioritize strengthening the CESA orientation of existing institutions and systems, including formal accountability institutions (such as supreme auditors, anti-corruption agencies, and ombudsman offices).						
a. Include an assessment of existing (state and non-state) accountability institutions as part of CPF country-level diagnostics (or other ASA).	M	L	X	X		
b. In drafting the CPF and country-level CESA action plan, consider opportunities and actions to strengthen the CESA orientation of existing accountability institutions/systems (at the local to national level).	H	M	X	X		
c. Support efforts by citizens/CSOs to make collective complaints/claims to existing accountability institutions (e.g., anti-corruption agencies, ombudsman offices, GMs).	M	L		X		
d. Building on existing good practice, promote embedded and centralized (vs. project specific) GMs.	M	L	X	X		
2.4 - Systematize (the preparation, public dissemination and operationalization of) country-level CESA action plans, ideally supported by a multi-stakeholder advisory committee.						
a. Provide operational guidance for the inclusion of CESA-related themes in the new suite country-level diagnostic reports products (i.e., CCRDs, PEAs, PFRs, RRAs and gender assessments).	H	L	X	X		
b. Issue operational guidelines for all CPFs to include in Annex (or be accompanied by) a country-level CESA action plan (including actions to promote enabling conditions for CESA and civil society).	H	M/H	X	X		

c. Provide country teams with good practice examples, learning notes and sample outlines to facilitate the preparation of country specific CESA action plan.	M	L			X	
d. Issue guidelines for annual (internal and public) reporting on CESA monitoring and results indicators, in national languages (not just English).	M	L	X	X		
e. Ensure that CESA-related issues are discussed in annual portfolio review meetings by the CMU.	M	L	X	X		
f. Issue guidelines for CMUs to convene (or mandate an existing) multi-stakeholder advisory group to support and oversee the design and implementation of the country-level CESA action plan.	M	L	X	X		
2.5 - Use the full range of Bank products/instruments (e.g. including CCDRs, CCIAAs, CPFs, ASAs, P4Rs and DPF) to support systems-level CESA.						
a. Expand the current CESA corporate requirements for IPFs to include P4Rs and DPF.	M	L	X	X		
b. Building on existing good practices and lessons learned, develop operational guidance on how P4Rs and DPF can be used to strengthen systems-level CESA.	M	L	X			
2.6 - Play an active role in creating or, ideally, supporting existing platforms for regular multistakeholder dialogue and oversight at country-level.						
a. Actively support and leverage existing country-level, multistakeholder mechanisms (such as OGP government-civil society platforms, EITI working groups and tripartite IFI-civil society-government committees).	M	L		X		
b. Convene and support spaces and mechanisms for facilitated multistakeholder dialogue, deliberation and collaboration on priority areas/themes (such as climate action, anti-corruption, inclusion and gender equity).	H	L		X		
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #3 - SUPPORT ENABLING CONDITIONS FOR CESA						
3.1 - Systematize country-level CESA/enabling conditions assessments to inform CESA strategies/action plans and include a CESA or civic space indicator in the corporate scorecard or dashboard.						
a. Issue operational guidelines for country-level CESA assessments to be conducted (in the context of CPF-related country-level diagnostics) to inform country-level CESA action plans and project-level CESA activities.	H	M	X	X		
b. Draft and disseminate good practice examples as well as recommended sources of information (i.e., existing civic space indices) to facilitate the assessment of enabling conditions for CESA.	M	L			X	
c. Include an indicator in the corporate scorecard or dashboard to track changes in CESA/civic space in countries where the World Bank operates.	M	L	X			
3.2 - Expand the use of Governance DPF as a vehicle for supporting enabling conditions for CESA and civil society.						
a. Proactively explore with government counterparts the potential benefits of CESA/civic space-oriented governance DPF.	M	L		X		
b. Issue operational guidance and technical advice on the use of DPF "prior actions" to promote civic space and support enabling conditions for CESA.	M	L	X			
3.3 - In partnership with other actors, support country-level initiatives to nurture political will and promote enabling conditions for CESA and civil society.						

a. In dialogue with government counterparts (and, ideally, in partnership with other relevant stakeholders), identify opportunities to strengthen enabling conditions for CESA and civil society.	M	L		X		
3.4 - Scale up CESA-related capacity development for state and non-state actors from the local to national level (including citizens/CSOs, local officials, higher level public servants and elected officials and PIUs).						
a. Consider adapting and applying an approach like the ESF Mapping Tool to assess the CESA knowledge/skills, gaps and priority capacity strengthening needs (of state and non-state actors at different levels).	M	L		X		
b. Considering country-specific needs and priorities, allocate budget for CESA awareness-raising and capacity development activities at the country-level (including the introduction of CESA modules into the core curriculum of public service training institutes).	H	M			X	X
c. Systematize CESA capacity development for PIU staff, consultants and implementing partners, ideally supporting "joint" capacity development opportunities (that bring together state and non-state actors).	H	M/H			X	X
3.5 - Ensure a strong and unequivocal response to reprisals against stakeholders who share their views about Bank-financed projects.						
a. Incorporate contextual risk assessment (including an assessment of risk of reprisals) into project/sector-level stakeholder and political economy/power analyses and country-level CESA/civic space assessments.	M	L	X	X		
b. Proactively engage with government counterparts on the Bank's stance on reprisals.	M	L		X		
c. Adapt project design and implementation to prevent and mitigate reprisal risk (e.g., by holding separate consultations with vulnerable or at-risk stakeholders and ensuring confidentiality or anonymity when required).	M	L		X		
d. Develop and disseminate a strict and explicit protocol to immediately elevate a report of a reprisal to a level above the country or project team receiving the report and to prioritize the safety of the person reporting the reprisal.	M	L	X			
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #4 - ENSURE A FIT-FOR-PURPOSE INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR CESA						
4.1 - To implement the entry points of this review (and the 2018 IEG evaluation), an increase in CESA human resources is required. A cadre of qualified full-time CESA specialists is recommended.						
a. Create a cadre of qualified full-time CESA specialists at country level.	H	M/H				X
b. Allocate resources to transform current part-time regional and sectoral CE Focal Point roles into full-time CESA Specialist roles.	H	M/H				X
c. Review the Bank's current skills set with a view to enhancing the institution's expertise in the fields of participatory governance, political economy/power analysis, citizen-state relations, civil society, citizen engagement and social accountability.	M	M				X
d. Encourage and support a stronger emphasis by the Governance GP (and greater collaboration between the Governance GP and CESA GSG) on issues of civic space, participatory governance and the application of systems-level CESA approaches throughout the public governance cycle.	M	L/M		X		
4.2 - Enhance visibility and build skills for CESA Bank-wide through awareness-raising events and capacity development opportunities for SSI specialists and all operational staff.						

a. Organize an annual high-level CESA event (that brings together Bank and non-Bank participants), as well as regular Bank-wide BBLs/learning events to raise the institutional visibility of the CESA agenda.	M	L			X	
b. Offer enhanced opportunities for both SSI specialists and operational managers and staff Bank-wide to participate in (different levels and types of) tailored CESA training courses to deepen their CESA expertise.	H	L/M			X	
c. Explore with OPCS the possibility of incorporating a CESA module into the regular TTL training, aimed at developing a citizen-centric mindset.	H	L			X	
4.3 - Introduce a new system of monitoring and reporting that tracks and incentivizes CESA quality and results at both the project/portfolio and country level.						
a. Replace the previous CSC CE indicator with a composite indicator that captures CESA quality and results at both the project/portfolio and country level and publish disaggregated findings annually.	H	M	X	X		
b. If a composite indicator is not adopted, replace the previous BF indicator with a CESA results-based indicator.	M	L	X			
c. Include a requirement to assess SE/CESA performance in the ICR Preparation Guidelines.	M	L	X			
4.4 - Harvest and disseminate learning (across projects, countries and sectors) and facilitate access to operational guidance and technical advice on CESA by creating a user-friendly platform for learning and knowledge exchange.						
a. Allocate resources for more analyses of (project and country-level) CESA experiences and impact evaluations of CESA activities, and for the preparation (and/or updating) of learning notes, case studies, sample tools, etc.	M	M			X	
b. Create and manage a central knowledge database/platform to provide Bank staff (and external actors) easy access to user-friendly CESA learning notes, guidelines, Operations Manuals, sample TOR, etc.	H	L/M			X	

Citizens at the Center:

A Strategic Review of Good Practices and Lessons Learned for Renewal of World Bank Support for Citizen Engagement and Social Accountability

I. INTRODUCTION

1. **The time is right to review and renew the World Bank’s approach to supporting citizen engagement and social accountability (CESA).**² Taking into account the global importance of this agenda, growing external advocacy for strengthened World Bank (WB) action on CESA and the institution’s own current internal reform (i.e. evolution roadmap) process, this report aims to strategically review good practices and lessons learned in the Bank’s support for CESA and identify entry points for improvement. This review was undertaken in parallel with an independent evaluation of the Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA). Together, the findings of both these studies will serve to inform the drafting of a Strategic Options paper outlining an approach for the next phase of World Bank support for CESA (“CESA 2.0”) for submission to senior management by end 2023.

2. **There is a broad-based consensus that poverty reduction and other critical global development goals cannot be achieved without active citizen participation.** According to the Bank, citizens play a critical role in advocating, helping to make public institutions more transparent, accountable, and effective, and contributing innovative solutions to complex development challenges.³ Growing evidence suggests that, under the right conditions, meaningful forms of citizen engagement (CE) can result in better governance, citizen empowerment, more positive and constructive citizen-state relations, strengthened public service delivery, and, ultimately, enhanced development effectiveness and well-being.⁴ Conversely, a lack of citizen engagement in development decision-making (CE) and oversight (SA) can lead to costly failures and wasted resources such as,

² In its 2014 *Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Citizen Engagement*, the Bank defines *citizen engagement* as “two-way interaction between citizens and governments or the private sector within the scope of WBG interventions—policy dialogue, programs, projects, and advisory services and analytics—that gives citizens a stake in decision-making with the objective of improving the intermediate and final development outcomes of the intervention”. The Bank defines *social accountability* as “an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, i.e., in which it is ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations who participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability. Mechanisms of social accountability can be initiated and supported by the state, citizens or both, but very often they are demand-driven and operate from the bottom-up”. Social accountability approaches, therefore, represent a subset of citizen engagement where the objective of the engagement is to exact accountability. These and other key concepts and terms are defined in the attached glossary.

³ World Bank. Citizen Engagement and Social Accountability Global Solutions Groups [webpage](#). Last Updated: Apr 10, 2023

⁴ A 2010 meta-analysis of citizen engagement in 20 countries, for example, identified positive democratic and developmental outcomes in constructing citizenship, strengthening practices of participation, strengthening responsive and accountable states, and developing inclusive and cohesive societies (Gaventa and Barrett 2010). A meta-analysis by Fox (2015) found that strategic approaches to CE that support enabling environments for collective action and build state capacity to respond to citizen voice have the most impact. Brinkerhoff and Wetterberg (2016), in investigating CE as a driver of effective service delivery, good governance, and citizen empowerment, underline the importance of contextual factors such as the degree of decentralization, civic space and willingness of citizens to engage with state actors. Haus et. al. (2022) found positive impacts of transparency and participation in public budgeting across a variety of contexts. The U4 Anti-corruption Resource Center cites positive impacts of citizen engagement in increasing good governance and anti-corruption efforts, pointing out that the extent of these impacts is influenced by factors such as the type of CE practice implemented, political will and access to information (Marin, 2016).

misplaced investments that fail to respond to priority needs and concerns of primary stakeholders (because their voices are not heard), implementation delays and failures (due to a lack of local buy-in or failure to understand local dynamics or mechanisms), failure of development benefits to reach their intended beneficiaries (because they weren't consulted or involved), and leakages/mismanagement of funds (due to a lack of public transparency and oversight).

3. **The citizen engagement agenda has evolved over multiple decades and is based on several conceptual and operational streams.** In the 1960s, experts began to recognize that "people matter" and that local context and social factors play an important role in the success of development projects (Hirschman 1967). In 1969, Arnstein proposed a schema of how differing levels of citizen involvement can contribute to public decision-making and outcomes which continues to inform the analysis of citizen participation approaches today (Arnstein, 1969). In the 1970s, criticisms by NGOs and popular movements of state-led "modernization" efforts, perceived as exacerbating socio-economic disparities, ushered in more participatory, bottom-up approaches. Throughout the 1980s and 90s, a consensus emerged that engagement with non-state actors was essential to operationalize what came to be known as *people's participation*. Extending the depth and breadth of participation became a key feature of development debates (UNDP 1993, Cornwall 2006). Issues of power relations, elite capture, and inequities within communities were acknowledged and development institutions increasingly looked to civil society for solutions (Hulme & Edwards, 1997). At the turn of the century, the good governance agenda and an emphasis on demand-driven development and social accountability extended the initial focus of participation in grassroots-level development, to underline the importance of citizen and civil society participation at all levels of public decision-making (from local to national and international) and at all stages of the governance cycle - from public agenda-setting and policy-making to budgeting, monitoring public expenditures and services and oversight (Goetz & Gaventa 2001, Malena et. al 2004).

4. **In recent years, global research and practice have placed increased emphasis on how to make citizen engagement and social accountability practices more strategic and effective.** The increasing complexity of policymaking and the failure to find adequate solutions to some of humanity's most serious and pressing problems - such as climate change, health emergencies, growing inequality, conflict, and violence - have prompted governments, development institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs) and citizens to rethink how to engage in dialogue, shared decision-making and collective action that is more meaningful and impactful. Increased attention has been paid to understanding and addressing obstacles to effective engagement and analyzing what works and why (Anderson et. al. 2020). Better understanding the context in which citizen participation practices are undertaken and supporting enabling conditions for CESA has also been an important theme, particularly in a context of shrinking civic space in many countries (O'Meally 2013, Grandvoinnet et. al. 2015, CIVICUS Monitor Global 2021). Increasingly, efforts have also focused on taking an ecosystems approach that seeks to vertically integrate CESA approaches, build links across levels of government to amplify citizen voice and capacity to address systems-level issues, and shift the scale from local to national and transnational levels (Halloran 2015, Fox 2016).

5. **Citizen engagement (CE) has a long history at the World Bank.** Documented as far back as the 1970s, stakeholder engagement, as expressed through consultations, social accountability, community-driven development, participatory approaches, and empowerment, has long been an integral part of the World Bank Group's operational activities. Engagement has included stakeholders at multiple levels, ranging from consultations with client country governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), and the private sector, to participation of direct and indirect project beneficiaries.

6. **Initially, stakeholder engagement was driven by a concern for reputational risk management** as consultations regarding World Bank Group policies, approaches, and operational

instruments were introduced in the late 1970s and early 1980s to address criticisms of various forms of adverse impacts generated by World Bank-supported operations. Over time, this reactive approach evolved into a more proactive engagement with citizens through participatory assessments and deliberate strategies to ensure that projects reflected and responded to stakeholder concerns. As concerns over exclusion and poverty grew during this period, the Bank expanded investments in basic needs, human capital, and the provision of basic services (for example, health and education), and recognized the need to ensure that the voices of women and vulnerable groups were heard.

7. **During the 1990s, the concept of participatory development led to increased operational collaboration** with community members and service user groups, and partnerships with CSOs as intermediaries and service providers. Also, a range of multisector operations aimed at providing goods and services to communities through demand-driven operations were brought under the umbrella of community-driven development (CDD) operations. Building on the work of Chambers (1983), these operations emphasized participation, transparency, and local empowerment to manage resources, identify priorities, and implement projects that address community-level development challenges. Consultation with stakeholders, including borrowers, development partners, civil society organizations, and beneficiaries, in policy and strategy formulation, including in the formulation of country assistance frameworks, sector strategies, and development policy lending, also became more systematic from the mid-1990s. In 1994, in support of this multi-stakeholder engagement approach, the Bank rolled out a pioneering Information Disclosure Policy. During this period, the Bank also introduced country-level, client-owned Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), prepared in a participatory manner in consultation with citizens and civil society. Social assessments were introduced to support incorporating participation and social analysis into the design and delivery of operations. The World Bank *Participation Sourcebook* provided a how-to guide to help Bank staff to support participatory approaches in economic and social development (World Bank 1996). In 1999 President Wolfensohn introduced the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF), establishing a country-led process for setting development strategies that prioritized human and social development and emphasized partnerships between governments (at all levels), civil society, the private sector, and external assistance agencies.

8. **The early 2000s were marked by a broad move toward greater openness, transparency, and accountability.** During this period, concepts of citizen voice, empowerment, and social accountability emerged. The 2004 *World Development Report* famously outlined both "short" and "long" routes of accountability to make services work for poor people (World Bank 2004) and, in 2005, the Bank adopted a social development sector strategy that identified inclusion, cohesion, and accountability as key operational principles (World Bank 2005). Wolfensohn's priority of addressing corruption was another important driver during this period, as was the Bank's 2007 *Governance and Anticorruption (GAC) Strategy*, which enshrined the "demand for good governance" approach and focused on citizens as the ultimate stakeholders for better governance through efforts to strengthen voice, participation, and transparency (World Bank 2007).

9. **Important steps were taken in the 2010s to bolster and formalize the implementation of the Bank's CESA agenda.** In 2011, President Zoellick's "A New Social Contract for Development" speech prioritized citizen participation and social accountability as central to the Bank's role as a global development institution, stating that successful development is not possible without citizen participation and that an empowered public is the foundation of a successful state. The following year, the Bank established the [Global Partnership for Social Accountability](#) (GPSA), a multi-donor trust fund with the mandate to offer strategic support in the form of grants to civil society organizations to promote social accountability initiatives, knowledge management, and capacity-building. Shortly thereafter, in 2014, the World Bank adopted a *Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Citizen Engagement*. The Strategic Framework has the overall objective to mainstream CE in WBG-supported policies, programs, projects, and advisory services and analytics, where such engagement can improve

development results and, within the scope of these operations, contribute to building sustainable national systems for CE. The Strategic Framework outlines several principles to guide the mainstreaming of CE in WB-supported operations. It states that it should be results-focused, context-specific, and gradual; it should foresee engaging citizens and beneficiaries throughout the operational cycle (to inform project design, implementation, and operation, and to facilitate the identification and management of social and environmental risks and impacts); and it should seek to strengthen country systems where possible.

10. **To monitor progress on the WB’s commitment to achieving 100 percent CE in projects that have “clearly identifiable beneficiaries” (i.e., investment project financing), the WB’s corporate scorecard includes an indicator on “percentage of projects with beneficiary feedback indicator at design”** that has a Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) baseline. Accordingly, all investment lending operations approved since FY15 should have a citizen-centric design that articulates the citizen engagement and social accountability (CESA) mechanism(s) that will be deployed by the project and include at least one CE indicator in the project’s results framework. Moreover, task teams for such investment lending operations are required to begin reporting on CE indicator(s) in the projects’ Implementation Status Reports (ISR) by the third year of implementation. Since FY18 task teams are also required to report on the status of grievance mechanisms (GMs) in the ISRs of their projects.

11. **Entry points for citizen engagement and social accountability interventions in investment lending projects have been expanded under the WB *Environmental and Social Framework (ESF)* that was launched in October 2018** and is comprised of ten Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs). The ESF’s ESS10 on *Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure* requires meaningful consultations throughout the project life cycle (i.e., design, implementation and monitoring) and mandates the establishment of a responsive GM in all investment project financing. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), which IPF projects are required to prepare in accordance with ESS10, describes the purpose, frequency, and methods of engagement with clearly identified stakeholder groups, as well as resources and responsibilities for implementing stakeholder engagement activities. Moreover, CE interventions are applicable for the remaining ESSs.⁵ For example, ESS2 on Labor and Working Conditions requires a separate GM for workplace-related issues.

12. **In 2018, the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) conducted an independent evaluation of the WBG’s progress in implementing the *Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming CE*.** The IEG’s report on *Engaging Citizens for Better Development Results* assessed how effectively the WBG has mainstreamed citizen engagement at the project, country, and corporate levels. The four key recommendations that emerged from this report’s findings were to: i) Reflect in the corporate priorities for CE the need to achieve greater depth and quality of the citizen engagement activities it supports; ii) Encourage and support efforts to establish, where appropriate, “thick” i.e. meaningful citizen engagement that is regular and continuous, uses multiple tools and is embedded in country systems; iii) Strengthen the monitoring of its citizen engagement activities by systematically adopting results framework indicators that are results-oriented; and, iv) Seize the opportunity of the implementation of the ESF to leverage CE mechanisms—beyond consultations and GMs—to reach the objectives of managing social risks, strengthening country systems, and promoting social inclusion.

13. **Monitoring of the implementation of IEG's recommendations over the past four years by the Committee on Development Effectiveness has identified both areas of significant progress and persistent challenges.** Ongoing efforts to respond to the IEG’s recommendations, especially to achieve deeper, more meaningful CE activities that are embedded in country systems, have highlighted the

⁵ Paragraph 28 under ESS10 states that the Borrower will define clear roles, responsibilities, and authority as well as designate specific personnel to be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of stakeholder engagement activities and compliance with this ESS.

need to not only enhance the "thickness" of current CE practices but also to critically assess the limitations of present-day approaches and to consider the need for a renewed institutional vision and strategy that places citizens, the Bank's ultimate clients, at the center of its work. Conceptual and operational developments in the field of citizen engagement since the adoption of the 2014 *Strategic Framework*, as well as the evolving global landscape of citizen-state relations, marked in many countries by shrinking civic space⁶ and rising authoritarianism, also underline the current need to rethink and strengthen the Bank's CESA agenda.

14. The Bank's current evolution process offers an important and timely opportunity to renew and augment the Bank's CESA agenda and to move towards structural and operational systems and practices that place responsiveness and accountability to citizens at the heart of the Bank's role as a global development institution. The evolution roadmap calls for "enhanced civil society engagement", acknowledging that partnerships with civil society are "critical to ensuring development impact" and that encouraging CESA in World Bank work will "enhance accountability and governance" (Development Committee 2023, pp. 4 & 12). The recent consolidation of the GPSA and the global CE secretariat allows for a more coordinated approach to these two inextricably linked agendas. Over the past decade, the GPSA has channeled financial and technical support to CSOs in over 30 partnered countries. However, it has until now not been fully leveraged to integrate deep social accountability with the WB's CE agenda. Bringing these functions together under the same program management and technical leadership provides an opportunity to channel resources and assistance to both governments and civil society and to support mechanisms (from local to national level) for effective and meaningful engagement between the two. As stewards of public funds and development resources, both governments and the World Bank are ultimately accountable to the citizens on whose behalf those resources are mobilized and managed and, as acknowledged in the evolution roadmap, the integration of social accountability mechanisms into institutional and country systems is key to development effectiveness.

II. REVIEWING WORLD BANK SUPPORT FOR CESA

A. Objective of the Review

15. The overarching objective of this review process is to strengthen the use and impact of CESA approaches in country strategies, projects and analytical work across the Bank. The purposes of this study are to: (i) review and draw *lessons* from how CESA approaches are currently implemented by the Bank; (ii) explore key current *challenges* and *opportunities* (at the project, country and institutional level) for the Bank's support for CESA; and, (iii) propose entry points to inform an updated approach for World Bank support for CESA.

16. The study builds on the conceptual framework and recommendations of the 2018 IEG independent evaluation. In doing so, it seeks to take stock of the extent to which the institution has succeeded in implementing the IEG's recommendations and to identify underlying factors that have contributed to or impeded progress. In this context, it explores efforts to: enhance the depth and quality of CESA activities (including by using the implementation of the ESF to leverage CE mechanisms); expand the use of CESA approaches (beyond IPFs) across all Bank products; promote systems-oriented and country-level CESA; bolster institutional support for the CESA agenda;

⁶ Civic space is defined as *the set of legal, policy, institutional and practical conditions necessary for non-governmental actors to access information, speak, associate, organize and participate in public life* (OECD Observatory of Civic Space, 2020).

strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of CESA activities; and support ongoing learning and knowledge exchange.

17. Considering current critical global development priorities, ongoing learning and innovations in the field of CESA, as well as the Bank's evolutionary change process, the review also explores the potential elements of a more fundamental renewal of the Bank's approach to and support for CESA.

This forward-looking approach explores issues such as: ensuring that CESA initiatives are informed by contextual political economy and power analysis; making better use of CESA approaches to prevent and address corruption; leveraging the power of CESA to advance current strategic priorities such as global climate financing; addressing current constraints in engaging and supporting civil society actors; nurturing political will and capacity for CESA; and, proactively supporting an enabling environment for CESA.

B. Strategic Importance of CESA

18. In the current global context, meaningful CESA is more important than ever to the successful achievement of the Bank's and the world's development priorities. Many top development priorities—such as action on climate change, health emergencies, growing inequality, conflict and violence—cannot be addressed without the active and meaningful participation of citizens and civil society in processes of agenda-setting, decision-making, collective action and oversight. Key stakeholders, both within and outside the World Bank, identified numerous priority development goals for which CESA is of strategic importance.

- a. ***Social sustainability and process legitimacy*** - The Bank's recently published strategy on *social sustainability* underlines the critical importance of this theme in achieving development goals and identifies *process legitimacy* as one of its four key components, and as a driver for the other three, namely: social cohesion, inclusion, and resilience (Barron, Cord et. al. 2022).⁷ The renewal of the CESA agenda is inextricably linked to current efforts by the Bank to operationalize process legitimacy. Of particular relevance are those CESA interventions that: embrace accountability approaches within the policy arena and the design of country strategies; create spaces for voicing concerns and negotiating solutions (especially for excluded and marginalized groups); understand and address power dynamics; and seek to build trust and engage for the long haul.
- b. ***Social inclusion*** - Long a prominent development theme, since COVID, social inclusion has emerged as a key priority for the Bank's support for post-pandemic recovery and sustainable development.⁸ The Bank's Environmental and Social Framework recognizes that social inclusion is critical for all the Bank's Investment Project Financing and the term "inclusion" figures prominently in IDA20 Policy Commitments across different sectors and Practice Groups. CESA approaches play a principal role not only in ensuring that socially marginalized and vulnerable groups are *included* but in creating mechanisms whereby they have a meaningful say in *decision-making* and *oversight*. Numerous CESA mechanisms and practices (such as gender-responsive budgeting, alternative budgets and disaggregated community scorecards) are

⁷ *Social sustainability* is defined as when all people feel part of the development process and believe that they and their descendants will benefit from it. Socially sustainable communities and societies are willing and able to work together to overcome challenges, deliver public goods, and allocate scarce resources in ways that are perceived as legitimate and fair by all so that all people may thrive over time. *Process legitimacy*, one of four key components of social sustainability, functions within the 'policy arena' - the fora where individuals, government, and stakeholder groups debate, negotiate, and compromise to set goals, design policies and programs, and implement them (Barron, Cord et. al. 2022).

⁸ The World Bank defines inclusion as "*the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people, disadvantaged on the basis of their identity, to take part in society*" (World Bank 2013).

specifically designed to facilitate the active participation of diverse social groups and to capture and amplify minority or weaker stakeholder voices.

- c. **Public service delivery** - Citizens around the world, and in particular people living in poverty, rely on essential public services (e.g., in the sectors of health, water and sanitation, education, transport and security) to meet their basic human needs, and a majority of the Bank's portfolio is devoted to supporting the effective delivery of such services. Despite decades of investment, important challenges remain and the need to accompany "supply-side" improvements with "demand-side" initiatives that empower service users to demand responsiveness and accountability has become increasingly clear. Many CESA mechanisms (such as service charters, GMs, social audits, community-led or third-party monitoring, joint management board and citizen oversight committees) are specifically designed to achieve a shift towards more effective inclusive, client-focused and corruption-free public service delivery.
- d. **Climate action** - Climate action is seen as a key area in which CESA is critically important to ensure sustainable and inclusive progress. With billions in public climate finance already mobilized and significant increases foreseen in the coming years, the Bank recognizes that strengthening accountability by promoting transparency and citizen engagement throughout the financing ecosystem, from policy development and project design to implementation and evaluation will be critical. CESA approaches are considered vital to ensure that these unprecedented financial flows reach targeted communities and are used in an effective, efficient and accountable manner (Cord et. al. 2023, Ponniah and Tominaga 2023, USAID 2022, OECD/World Bank/UN Environment 2018). The Bank is seen as having an important role to play both in enabling meaningful upstream participation and oversight by CSOs at the macro level and empowering local communities to monitor and partake in climate action on the ground.
- e. **Governance and anti-corruption** - The Bank estimates that corruption accounts for between 10%-25% of public spending globally and affirms that corruption, inefficiency and poor governance leads to immense losses, including in the context of Bank-supported projects and programs (World Bank 2020).⁹ While the Bank can and does take action to avoid corruption and leakages in the operations it finances, and in public resource management more generally, (e.g., through safeguards, monitoring, support for government audit and anti-corruption agencies and a specialized Integrity Vice Presidency for investigating allegations of corruption and bribery), these measures are viewed by some as missing opportunities to leverage CESA (PTF 2023a). Social accountability approaches (including social audits, expenditure tracking and community/CSO-led monitoring) are considered by many as an essential and underutilized strategy for deterring and detecting corruption and achieving responsive and accountable local and national governance.
- f. **Conflict and fragility** - The Bank functions in numerous fragile and conflict-affected contexts where development initiatives face a host of challenges related to weakened institutional structures, poor governance, lack of security, poverty, exclusion, and contestation over scarce resources. CESA approaches have been found to be particularly crucial in such situations both to help ensure that the development process is inclusive, transparent, responsive to community needs and less susceptible to corruption, and due to their potential to positively impact societal dynamics that lie at the heart of fragility by building trust, strengthening social cohesion and improving citizen/society-state relations. A 2017 note on *Citizen Engagement in Conflict-affected Areas* found that, even in complex and fragile environments, CESA mechanisms can "significantly improve development effectiveness" and "have the potential to reduce the likelihood of future conflict by addressing dynamics that are at the heart of fragility and conflict"

⁹ Procurement losses are estimated to be up to 30%, see: G. Ware, S. Moss, J. Campos, and G. Noone, *Corruption in Public Procurement: A perennial Challenge*, in J. Campos and S. Pradhan, *The Many Faces of Corruption: Tracking Vulnerabilities at the Sector Level*, World Bank, 2007.

(Yamouri 2017). Regardless of the country setting, *all* development projects are susceptible to risks of conflict (related to differing perspectives about development priorities and strategies, unequal access to benefits, negative impacts, etc.) that CESA approaches can play a key role in helping to mitigate.¹⁰

- g. *Poverty reduction*** - It's clear that the Bank's dual mission of reducing the share of the global population that lives in extreme poverty to 3% and increasing the incomes of the poorest 40 percent of people in every country cannot be achieved without the direct participation and ownership of this priority group of people. CESA approaches engage and empower people living in poverty as active stakeholders (rather than as passive "beneficiaries") and enable them to have a meaningful say in decisions affecting their lives and oversight of how resources mobilized in their name are managed and allocated. For this reason, situating CESA at the center of the Bank's work, by acknowledging the need to engage with and account to citizens living in poverty as the Bank's ultimate clients, is essential to achieving the Bank's core mandate of global poverty reduction.

C. Research Methodology

19. In conducting this strategic review a mixed methods and case-based approach was adopted to assess support for CESA across a cross-section of WB operations and products. The study is not intended to be a comprehensive stock take of the Bank's CESA experience, nor an impact evaluation. The process was rather designed to explore key emerging issue areas and collect information about illustrative CESA cases, lessons learned, institutional challenges and opportunities that can inform a strategic rethink. The research methodology for the study comprised the following:

- a. ***Literature review*** - As a first step, the review team conducted a desk review of relevant documents including previous stock takes, assessments, impact evaluations, and formal and informal learning notes and think pieces from within and outside the Bank. The review considered the annual monitoring findings of the CESA Global Solutions Group (GSG), the conclusions of the 2018 IEG independent evaluation, and Management Action record (MAR) updates submitted since. The attached bibliography indicates a list of (Bank and non-Bank) documents consulted.
- b. ***Scoping survey*** - To inform the research process, a survey of WB regional, sectoral and country-level CE focal points was conducted (n = 28). The survey was composed of a mix of multiple choice and open-ended questions regarding: (i) respondents' roles as CE focal points; (ii) their assessment of the strengths and challenges/limitations of the Bank's current approach to CESA and entry points to address those; and (iii) their suggestions regarding innovative or informative examples of CESA practices from across the Bank's global portfolio. Survey questions are attached in Annex 1.
- c. ***Qualitative case studies*** - Based on the findings of the literature review and scoping survey, a diverse set of examples of CESA practices in the context of Bank operations was identified. Qualitative research aimed to cover all geographic regions and multiple sectors and to review meaningful CESA approaches across a cross-section of Bank operations and products - i.e., Country Partnership Frameworks (CPFs), Development Policy Financing (DPF), Investment Project Financing (IPFs) and Program-for-Results Financing (PforR). It also sought to identify projects in priority sectors for WB engagement (e.g., climate adaptation, crisis response,

¹⁰ A study by the IDB on the nature and consequences of conflict in infrastructure projects in Latin America and the Caribbean for example found that, despite the fact that a large proportion of projects are affected by conflicts¹⁰, unfortunately "in most cases...community engagement is regarded as a secondary requirement which needs to be fulfilled in order to comply with regulations" and that its "crucial function for preventing conflicts is often not seen" (Watkins et. al. 2017, p. 4).

conflict, health, social inclusion). The exercise did not involve a comprehensive stock-take of Bank-wide projects/approaches, but rather an analysis of a select number of “positive outliers”. The study identified and drew lessons from a cross-section of approximately 40 Bank-supported operations. Case studies of 20 of these examples are attached in Annex 2, while others are referred to in the body of the review. Case studies were selected based on their potential to provide operational insights and learning, rather than as examples of "good practice" per se. Case study analysis was guided by aggregate messages from the literature regarding key challenges, factors of success and impact including, for example, the influence of factors such as civic space, power dynamics, civil society engagement, and political will, as well as lessons regarding how CESA initiatives have sought to: inform and amplify citizen voice, empower citizens to influence decision-making, promote social inclusion and gender equity, strengthen country systems for state-citizen interaction, achieve sustainability, make innovative use of digital CESA tools and contribute meaningfully to enhanced public service delivery and development effectiveness.

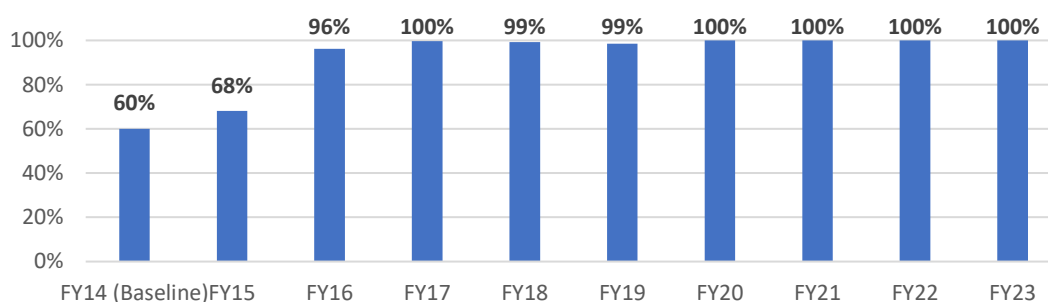
- d. **Key informant interviews** - To inform the drafting of case studies, the review team interviewed not only responsible TTLs and social development/CE specialists but, whenever possible, also government counterparts, PIU members, CSO implementing partners, and other stakeholders to validate information, draw on front-line knowledge and capture diverse perspectives. Beyond project-level actors and WB CE focal points, the review team conducted interviews with a range of staff and managers from across the Bank as well as external experts and practitioners with CESA experience and expertise from other IFIs, development partners, civil society and academia. A list of persons consulted, 70 in total, is attached as Annex 3.
- e. **Group consultations** - In addition to individual interviews, the review team conducted a series of group consultations and focus group discussions (FGDs) with Bank staff, PIU/government representatives, development partners, CSO representatives and other CESA specialists in different regions. Along with an open online feedback page (active from January to April 2023), these consultations aimed to collect inputs from in-country actors and other international stakeholders on current perceived strengths and weaknesses, operational lessons and entry points with regard to the Bank’s CESA agenda. A list of consultations conducted, and the resulting key findings, is attached in Annex 4. In total, approximately 85 Bank staff and 180 external actors participated in group consultations.
- f. **Quantitative analysis** - With technical support from IEG, the review team conducted an in-depth desk review and quantitative analysis of 67 Country Partnership Frameworks (approved between July 2017 and January 2023). 28 PLRs were also reviewed to assess the progress on CESA approaches and indicators identified in the Results Matrices of reviewed CPFs.
- g. **Analysis and entry points** - Based on analysis of research findings, this report outlines a series of entry points as to how the World Bank can strengthen the effectiveness and impact of its CESA agenda.

D. Current Status of Implementation of the WB CESA Agenda

20. Monitoring findings show that the WB has performed strongly in meeting its established corporate CE requirements. As shown in Figure 1, since 2014, there has been steady progress in mainstreaming CESA into project design - i.e., declare an intention to engage with citizens during implementation, and explicitly describe CE mechanisms in Project Appraisal Document/Project Paper - and the target has been met. According to ongoing monitoring by the CESA GSG, as shown in Figure 2, there is currently close to 100 % compliance also for including at least one beneficiary feedback indicator in results frameworks to monitor citizen engagement throughout project implementation. In FY22, 100% of newly approved projects "with identifiable beneficiaries" (323 IPFs) were deemed as having a citizen-oriented design and 98% of projects (317 out of 323 IPFs) included beneficiary

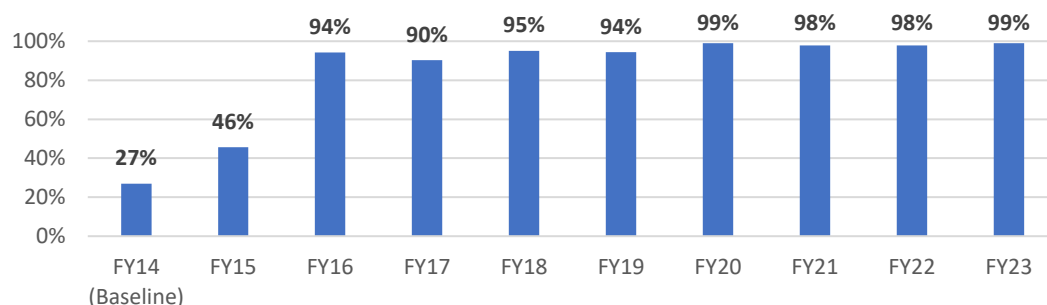
feedback (BF) indicator(s) in the results framework (Park and Sah 2022). While compliance during implementation is somewhat lower, there has been steady improvement in reporting on the implementation of CE mechanisms, with 73% of FY19 portfolio projects (145 out of 200 IPFs) reporting on or making credible progress towards reporting on BF indicator(s) in their results frameworks by their third year of implementation (in FY22), and 81% of CE-related indicators meeting their targets by project completion.¹¹

Figure 1 – Share of IPFs with "citizen-oriented design" (FY14-FY23)



Source: Park and Sah 2023

Figure 2 – Share of IPFs with Beneficiary Feedback indicator in Result Frameworks (FY14-FY23)



Source: Park and Sah 2023

21. **While the mainstreaming of CESA mechanisms across a broad swath of Bank-supported operations is an important achievement, the meaningfulness of the Bank's current requirements is limited.** As acknowledged by the 2018 IEG evaluation, the Bank's progress in meeting its corporate commitments to CE is a significant accomplishment and the "change in mind-set whereby the value of engaging citizens is now encouraged across the Bank Group's work, is a major achievement" (IEG 2018). Research found, however, that the current requirements are considered by many as a low and not very meaningful bar that has prioritized quantity (i.e., 100% compliance) over quality. According to monitoring criteria, the first requirement of "citizen-oriented design", for example, may mean no more than the description of a single consultation or feedback mechanism in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD). Since basic consultation is a standard practice in most operations, the 2018 IEG evaluation found that, in fact, the type of engagement mechanisms included in project design had not actually changed much from before the introduction of the corporate mandate (IEG 2018). Regarding the second corporate requirement, as discussed below (under Finding 1.5), the quality of CE-oriented indicators included in project results frameworks varies greatly. For example, an independent assessment of 57 projects in four countries (FY15-17) found that while most projects incorporated at least one CE indicator, "the data captured and the results made available are so narrowly framed that

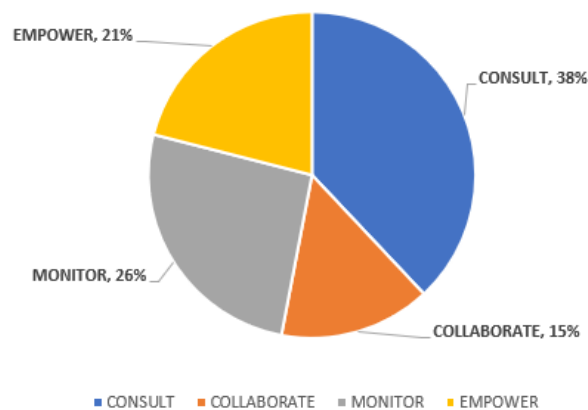
¹¹ This finding is based on an analysis of ICRs (FY18 to FY23) undertaken by IEG in early 2023 in the context of its CESA Learning Exercise.

they do not meaningfully inform the public about the nature and impact of civic involvement" (Nadelman 2020, p. 3). Finally, the third corporate requirement on "implementation", is based solely on whether a project has reported on its CE indicator, and not whether CE activities were actually implemented. As a result, while current corporate requirements are technically being largely achieved, there is a perception both among staff and external observers that mainstreamed citizen engagement has become a mechanistic agenda and that the WB is not yet realizing the full potential of its CESA agenda.

22. Since 2018, sustained efforts to support "thicker" CE have resulted in numerous examples of innovation and good practice. In each new FY, a significant number of projects introduce deep and innovative forms of CESA that go beyond the minimal requirements to give citizens a meaningful role in participatory decision-making and oversight. Over the years, several stocktaking exercises and assessments have identified examples of rich and impactful CESA practices.¹² As documented in Annex 2 (and cited throughout this report), research undertaken in the context of this review identified numerous examples of deep and meaningful CESA, some of which adopt an embedded systems-level approach, demonstrating that such practices are achievable in the context of Bank-supported operations.

23. Despite a growing body of good practice, overall, a lack of focus on depth and quality of CESA persists, and examples of CESA approaches that give citizens meaningful influence over decision-making remain the exception rather than the rule. In 2018, the IEG found that "the flipside of the corporate emphasis on mostly quantitative targets has been the limited application of quality standards in the design, implementation, and monitoring of citizen engagement" (IEG 2018, p. vii) and this remains largely true in 2023. The review found that, as in 2018, most engagement remains "thin", with consultations and grievance mechanisms (GMs) still constituting the most common practices. As shown in Figure 3, a pilot assessment of CE quality, based on a CE Intensity Scale adapted from the *2014 Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming CE*, revealed that more than a third (38%) of 213 projects approved in FY23 remained at the lowest level of 'Consultation', compared to 21% that made it to the highest level of 'Empowerment'. 15% of projects reached the intermediate level of 'Collaboration', by granting citizens some level of decision-making influence, while a further 26% of projects engaged citizens in 'Monitoring' (Park and Sah 2023).

Figure 3 - Breakdown of projects approved in FY23 by Quality of CE (n= 213)



Source: Park and Sah 2023

¹² See, for example: Kumagai 2020; Kumagai et. al. 2019; Masud et. al. 2019; Nadelman et. al. 2019; World Bank 2017, World Bank 2022, 2022a, 2022d; World Bank, EU and Australian Aid 2020; and Yamouri 2017.

III. RENEWING WORLD BANK SUPPORT FOR CESA

24. While steady progress has been made over the past decade in implementing the Bank's CE Strategy, the review found that there is a need to renew and revitalize the Bank's CESA agenda. An overall finding is that, while the Bank has largely succeeded in meeting the CE corporate requirements outlined in the 2014 *Strategic Framework*, those minimal requirements do not represent an adequate benchmark for meaningful and impactful CESA. To more fully realize the benefits of CESA, critical to achieving global development goals and the Bank's twin goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity on a livable planet, a stronger, more strategic, systems-oriented and partnership-based approach to CESA is required. Based on a stocktake of experiences and lessons learned to date, this review identifies four key challenges to be addressed in renewing and revitalizing the World Bank's CESA agenda, for more strategic, meaningful, and impactful delivery, aligned with the strategic directions of the evolution roadmap. These include: (i) *improving the quality and outcomes of project-level CESA*; (ii) *strengthening country systems for CESA*; (iii) *supporting enabling conditions for CESA*; and, (iv) *ensuring an institutional support system for CESA that is fit-for-purpose*. The Review lays out entry points to be considered to address each of these challenges and highlights priority actions that have been collated taking into account anticipated impact and resource requirements.

A. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #1 - IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND OUTCOMES OF PROJECT-LEVEL CESA

25. The first challenge identified by the review is the need to improve the quality of CESA in Bank-supported projects and programs. As outlined above, the review found that while the institution has made strong progress in consulting with citizens in the design of IPFs, the quality or depth of engagement remains low and tapers off during project implementation. In line with the 2014 Strategic Framework, the recommendations of the 2018 IEG evaluation and the strategic directions of the evolution roadmap the goal is for Bank operations to empower citizens by implementing higher quality CESA practices with a focus on participatory and inclusive decision-making and government accountability and responsiveness.

Why is this important?

- Engaging citizens and CSOs in a meaningful way in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of WB-supported projects is considered critical to achieving **effective development results**.
- Beyond successful project outcomes, meaningful local-level CESA has been found to contribute to **broader goals** of citizen empowerment, strengthened citizen-state relations and more transparent and accountable governance.
- Bottom-up approaches that engage citizens meaningfully at the community/local level **provide the foundation** upon which **higher-level "vertically integrated" engagement mechanisms** can be developed.

Key findings

Finding 1.1 - Bank project teams have made great strides in consulting with citizens to collect feedback, but the use of approaches that give citizens a meaningful say in decision-making remains limited.

26. As outlined above, while the near totality of Bank-supported IPFs include some mechanism of consultation, CESA approaches that give citizens a meaningful say in decision-making remain the exception rather than the rule. While official Bank statements indicate that the objective of mainstreaming CESA is to give citizens a stake in development decision-making, as shown above in Figure 3, among projects approved in FY23Q4, less than a third (28%) of projects considered compliant with the Bank's corporate CE requirements actually meet this criterion - by making provisions for some level of shared decision-making through citizen "collaboration" or "empowerment". The *2014 Strategic Framework* outlines a wide range of CESA practices, including those that engage citizens in (varying levels) of decision-making. In practice, however, only a small subset of these (i.e., consultations and GRMs) are regularly used. As shown below in Figure 4, among CE mechanisms introduced by projects approved in FY22Q4, only a handful - such as *community management/contracting* (9 projects), *community scorecard* (5 projects), *citizen membership in decision-making bodies* (3 projects) and *participatory budgeting* (1 project) - represent approaches that give citizens influence over decision-making processes (Park and Sah 2022).

Figure 4: Breakdown of CESA mechanisms from the FY22Q4 portfolio



Source: Park and Sah 2022

27. Empowering citizens with a meaningful say in decision-making is essential to development effectiveness, but institutional resources and incentives for such approaches are lacking. Research found that while Bank staff may be aware of deeper and more intensive CESA approaches and operational resources (such as case studies and how-to manuals) are available, the number of staff with specialized expertise in these areas is limited and financial resources (for the extra time and effort it takes to put such approaches in place) are lacking (see Findings 4.1 to 4.4). Unless TTLs are personally convinced of the value of such approaches, or their managers are pushing for more intensive CESA, there are currently few institutional incentives for project teams to go beyond the minimal CESA requirements, especially when faced with time and resources constraints (see Finding 4.4). Based on research, some operational lessons for giving citizens a meaningful say in decision-making are summarized in Box 1.

Box 1 - Operational lessons for giving citizens a meaningful say in decision-making
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish mechanisms for early and regular engagement, with a focus on closing the feedback loop. • In designing CESA mechanisms, consult with the stakeholders the mechanisms will aim to engage. • Be explicit about defining (ideally in a participatory manner) the <i>terms of the engagement</i> - e.g., Is the engagement consultative or decisional? How much decision-making influence do engaged stakeholders have? How will consultation findings be used? By whom? How will consultation findings be reported back to participants? • Be intentional about including traditionally marginalized groups and take steps to address power differentials among stakeholder groups - e.g., by supporting less powerful groups to organize and find their voice and/or convening separate deliberative spaces as appropriate. • Support citizens to organize and deliberate amongst themselves before engaging with powerholders. • Draw on the expertise of CSOs in designing and facilitating processes for participatory deliberation and decision-making. • When possible, introduce CESA mechanisms that give citizens a direct and final say in decision-making (e.g., through processes of participatory policymaking, referenda, collective action planning, participatory budgeting, community contracting). • Support mechanisms for participatory and inclusive management at the community-level and beyond (e.g., through provisions for the inclusion of citizen/CSO representatives in project, district, sector or higher-level advisory committees or management boards).

28. The review found that meaningful forms of citizen participation at the project level are not always identified as CESA by the current monitoring system. For example, community-driven development (CDD) projects¹³ - as well as other sector operations, such as water and sanitation projects - often include strong mechanisms for citizen engagement and shared decision-making at the community level, however, because these practices are not necessarily "tagged" as CE nor described in the "CE paragraph" of the PAD they may not be detected as "citizen engagement".¹⁴ Moving forward, it would seem to make sense to adopt a more coherent approach in the implementation and monitoring of CDD and CESA mechanisms. The *Philippines Rural Development Project* (as described in Annex 2.7) exemplifies a CDD operation that involves structured and systemic citizen engagement in local level infrastructure and livelihoods sub-projects at every stage of the project process – including priorities setting, planning, design, procurement, implementation monitoring, operation and maintenance - the impact of which could potentially be even further enhanced through "vertical integration" (see Finding 2.1) and the scaling up of citizen decision-making roles beyond the community/sub-project level.

¹³ The Bank currently supports around 90 CDD operations worth approximately 8.5 billion dollars. See Annexes 2.7, 2.9 and 2.17 for examples of CDD projects with strong CESA dimensions.

¹⁴ Current streamlining measures which strictly limit the content and length of PADs and advise against replication of any information that is covered in other documents (such as SEPs) mean that PADs do not always provide a full or accurate picture of CESA plans.

Finding 1.2 - Social accountability approaches, which have particularly strong potential to empower citizens, fight corruption and contribute to development effectiveness by using in-country systems to engage citizens/CSOs in monitoring and oversight, remain underutilized.

29. Research found that only a minority of Bank-supported projects practice social accountability.

As shown above in Figure 4, a pilot assessment by the CESA GSG found that among (159) projects approved in the FY22Q4 sub portfolio, tried and tested social accountability tools such as community score cards, citizen report cards and social audits were used in just 10 projects (or 6% of the portfolio) and only 19% of projects engaged citizens in a monitoring role (Park and Sah 2022). The successful outcomes of projects that have incorporated social accountability mechanisms - such as the *Cambodia ISAF Program* (see Annex 2.5), the *KIAT Guru Project* in Indonesia (see Annex 2.6), and the *CASA1000 Community Support Project* in Kyrgyzstan (see Annex 2.9) - offer evidence of the important potential benefits of SA practices and valuable lessons to inform their expanded use across Bank-supported operations. Research found that third-party monitoring is also underutilized. Although the Bank has acknowledged third-party monitoring as an important accountability mechanism and published a *How-To Note* on the subject as early as 2013¹⁵, monitoring findings show that the use of such approaches remains limited. The *FY22 MAR Update* reported that the Bank continues to "explore ways to leverage the role of CSOs to hold governments accountable for the use of funds and effective project implementation", but an independent review found that most Bank-supported projects that include provisions for third-party monitoring "use it as a management tool rather than as an input to inform CE" and that "the lack of commitments to public disclosure of third-party monitoring results means that even if external monitors maintain independence from project implementers, their work loses its value as an accountability tool for the public" (Nadelman 2020, p. 3).

30. The review also found a lack of attention to social accountability at the portfolio/country level.

A review of CPFs (FY18-23) found that the term "social accountability"¹⁶ appears in 36% of CPFs, however, in most cases details around how social accountability practices would be implemented or supported are lacking. Only four (or 6% of) CPFs (Cambodia, Nepal, Nigeria, and South Africa) mention social accountability in the description of a focus area or cross-cutting theme and only two (3% of) CPFs included an indicator in their results matrix that makes an explicit reference to the use of a social accountability tool or framework (Sah 2023). As described below in Box 2, Cambodia stands out as making exemplary strides through the ongoing Implementation of the Social Accountability Framework (ISAF) - a unique and ground-breaking joint government-civil society program that is fully integrated into the country's decentralization program and has also spurred the incorporation of embedded CESA mechanisms in other sectors, such as nutrition and water and sanitation.

Box 2: Emerging social accountability in Cambodia

The Implementation of the Social Accountability Framework (ISAF) is a unique and ground-breaking program in the Cambodian context. It has become a significant part of the ten-year Subnational Democratic Development (SNDD) Strategy, the Government's decentralization program. As a joint government-civil society program, the ISAF aims to empower citizens, strengthen partnerships between sub-national administrations (SNAs) and citizens, and promote enhanced accountability of SNAs to improve local service delivery. Phase I (2014-2018) involved designing, testing, and refining ISAF's four operational components: (1) transparency and access to information and open budgets, (2) citizen monitoring, (3) implementation of Joint Accountability Action Plans, (4) capacity building and communication, and (5) program management, monitoring and evaluation. Partnerships between supply-side (state) and demand-side (civil society) actors were established, and ISAF

¹⁵ See Gurkan and Van Wicklin, 2013.

¹⁶ Mention of social accountability in the CPS/CLRs has not been considered for this analysis.

activities were successfully rolled out to more than half of the communes in 75 percent of the provinces across the country. Community scorecards (based on performance assessments by citizens/service users and self-assessments by service providers) were successfully implemented in 786 communes, with the active involvement of more than 270,000 citizens. During Phase I, ISAF focused exclusively on rural primary schools, health centers and commune administrations with service providers and users reporting enhanced mutual understanding and improved communication as a result of the citizen monitoring process. ISAF Phase II (2019 – 2025), supported by a multi-donor Trust Fund, aims to consolidate the gains of Phase I, apply lessons learned to refine and build on current ISAF tools and methodologies, achieve full national coverage of communes, establish sustainable support networks for active citizenship, integrate social accountability practices into existing government systems, and potentially include additional public services such as district administration, water and sanitation services and natural resource management. Building on ISAF achievements, social accountability mechanisms are also being incorporated into other WB-supported projects, including the *Cambodia Nutrition Project* and *Water Supply and Sanitation Improvement Project*. For more information, see Annex 2.5.

31. A renewed focus on social accountability, including third party monitoring by CSOs, is considered an important way to enhance the quality and impact of CE approaches. Social accountability practices are seen as a particularly robust form of CE as they clearly define the "terms of engagement" by affirming the role of citizens as *right-holders* and government and WB as *duty-bearers*. Social accountability approaches empower citizens and CSOs to not only provide feedback, but to oversee development processes and seek and expect responsiveness and accountability, making them a powerful means both for bolstering a sense of local ownership and control and fighting corruption. Moving forward, strategies and practices that aim not only to gather feedback but to give citizens oversight over the use of public funds, especially in priority areas like climate financing, are considered critical from both a development effectiveness and anti-corruption perspective. In addition to building social accountability mechanisms (such as community score cards, citizen report cards, social audits and other forms of citizen/community-led monitoring and oversight) into project design, plans to potentially reorient the GPSA to play a more targeted role in enhancing accountability in WB operations by supporting third party monitoring and other CSO-facilitated social accountability approaches are a welcome development in this sense.

32. Social accountability approaches also merit increased attention and investment as an anti-corruption measure. The Bank acknowledges that corruption and poor governance lead to the tragic loss of a significant portion of precious development resources and that the poorest sections of society are disproportionately impacted by the loss of these resources (World Bank 2020). The Bank has estimated that corruption accounts for between 10%-25% of public spending globally and that the cost of capital investment projects being consumed by corruption ranges from 10% to 30% (Ware et. al. 2007, Andersen et. al. 2020). Based on these figures, it has been estimated that \$3-4bn/yr. of IDA funds may go astray (PTF 2023a).¹⁷ In response to this problem, the Bank has adopted a number of safeguard measures and has made significant investments in public sector reforms aimed at addressing problems of corruption. However, it has also acknowledged that supply-side initiatives are inadequate and that citizens and civil society have a vital role to play in ensuring independent, demand-side monitoring and oversight. The enhanced use of social accountability practices, at the project, country and international levels - represents an important means to ensure public scrutiny of development investments - thus deterring corruption and mismanagement, while simultaneously empowering citizens and strengthening local ownership and control of development interventions.

¹⁷ The situation is exacerbated by the fact that a large proportion of IDA financing goes to countries considered as high risk for corruption. In FY22, for example, half of the \$38bn allocated by IDA funds went to just 10 countries, 6 of which were amongst the 40 most corrupt governments on earth, according to Transparency International's *Corruption Perception Index*, and 2 more were amongst the next 20 (PTF 2023a).

Finding 1.3 - A lack of adequate stakeholder and political economy/power analysis limits the ability of WB-supported projects to understand and address power differentials between different groups of stakeholders.

33. To effectively support constructive, inclusive and impactful engagement, a nuanced understanding of power dynamics among stakeholders and explicit efforts to address power differentials are required. CESA approaches bring together stakeholders with vastly divergent levels of power and influence to engage with one another. The WDR 2017 *on Governance and the Law*, underlines that an understanding of power—the ability of groups and individuals to make others act in their interest and bring about specific outcomes— is essential to the effective design and implementation of governance and development initiatives and points to ways that citizens can collectively and strategically engage with powerholders to shift power asymmetries and shape incentives and preferences (WDR 2017). The 2017 *Citizens as Drivers* report found that power is at the very heart of citizen engagement initiatives and that effective engagement strategies can lead to a shift towards more equitable power relationships - through a combination of pressure, collaboration, and coalition building (Citizens as Drivers, 2017, p. viii).¹⁸ Similarly, Fox (2015) has distinguished between tactical and strategic approaches to CESA, with the former assuming that the introduction of engagement mechanisms and tools will make a difference on their own, while the latter acknowledges the need for CESA initiatives to incorporate or be accompanied by efforts aimed at understanding and challenging power relationships. This shift to more strategic, politically informed CESA - what some observers have referred to as a transition from “Accountability 1.0” to “Accountability 2.0,” (Carothers, 2016) - underlines the need for Bank projects to incorporate power-based analysis and change strategies.

34. While most projects/SEPs include some form of (at least basic) stakeholder analysis, analysis of power relations was found to be a much less common practice. One such study undertaken in Mali and Niger in 2019 to identify and assess relations between formal and informal social intermediaries operating within locations of Bank-financed projects was found to have "significant operational implications for social accountability interventions and CE mainstreaming", leading the authors to conclude that such interventions should "be mandatorily premised on an in-depth understanding of societal dynamics and incumbent accountability relations of each community" and that "failure to do so can not only risk the effectiveness of the social accountability and/or CE interventions but also the resilience of the entire community" (Yamouri and Balasuriya 2019, p. 2). While traditional political economy analysis (drawing on existing country-specific templates) can provide important insights, newer approaches like "relationship mapping" to analyze power dynamics, "governance diaries" to help to capture the citizen-eye view and "civil society observatories" to study changes in civic space, as well as other in-depth, bottom-up, contextually-based approaches, can help to better understand spaces for action, unpack power relationships between actors and identify the salient issues that are most likely to galvanize active citizen demand (Gaventa et. al 2023). Such approaches are particularly important in complex or conflict-affected settings but can serve to inform to CESA in all project contexts. Ideally, project-level CESA plans should also include an analysis of the consequences of *not* engaging citizens and potential (country/sector/project-specific) challenges and risks.

¹⁸ The Citizens as Drivers (2017) report further notes that change was brought about most effectively by strategically combining institutional engagement with extra institutional pressure, especially in cases where elite-led institutional policies do not support the rules and policies needed for transparency, accountability, and development outcomes. Examples of such pressure cited by the report include community-based monitoring undertaken by Integrity Watch Afghanistan (IWA), ReAcción's student monitoring in Paraguay, and grassroots campaigns organized by Serbia on the Move.

Finding 1.4 – Progress has been made in leveraging project-level ESF (ESS10)-CESA synergies, but more work is needed to ensure a coherent and genuinely inclusive approach.

35. The CESA and ESF agendas are strongly complementary and mutually reinforcing. Both *citizen engagement* (as required by the 2014 *Strategic Framework*) and *stakeholder engagement* (as mandated by ESS10) are about ensuring a participatory, bottom-up approach to development which listens to and accounts to primary stakeholders. Both rely on mechanisms of information-sharing, outreach, dialogue and collective decision-making. Beyond these strong similarities and overlap, as summarized in Box 3, each approach also has particular features which make the two agendas complementary and mutually reinforcing. For example, backed by mandatory guidelines and dedicated staff and budget, the ESF policy has a level of internal institutional enforcement that is missing from the CESA agenda; while CESA approaches offer important scope to enhance the quality of engagement (beyond ESF-mandated consultations and GMs) and to extend and amplify engagement beyond the project level.

Box 3 - Complementarities between the Bank's CESA and ESF agendas

CESA	ESF (ESS10)
1. Corporate commitment with targets (not a policy).	1. Policy with legal implications (i.e., mandatory).
2. CE Framework applies to all aspects of WB operations; targets apply to IPFs.	2. Applies only to IPFs.
3. Emphasis on development outcomes.	3. Emphasis on managing social/environmental risks and impacts.
4. Broad focus on citizens and their organizations (CSOs).	4. Focus on project stakeholders (including local and national authorities).
5. Emphasis on approaches that give citizens a say in decision-making and oversight (and a wide range of practices/tools for achieving this).	5. Current emphasis on consultations and GMs (with strong scope to expand use of approaches that give citizens a say in decision-making and oversight).
6. Requirement to include indicator in results frameworks.	6. No requirement to include related indicators in results frameworks.

Source: Adapted from *Citizen Engagement Secretariat Training Materials (2019)*.

36. Despite ongoing progress, the potential for integrating CESA into the ESF process remains largely unrealized. When introduced, the ESF was perceived by actors both inside and outside the Bank as a powerful entry point to push for strategic and robust CESA (IEG 2018, Nadelman 2020).¹⁹ Almost five years after its adoption, most stakeholders interviewed felt that the ESF, initially viewed as a gamechanger in how the Bank would design and implement projects, has subsequently reverted back to a risk management/due diligence measure²⁰, with most SEPs only responding to the minimal requirements (for consultations and GMs) and with varying levels of implementation. A 2021 independent review found that "strategic coordination between the ESF and CE is currently limited, undermining synergy between the agendas" (Nadelman 2021, p. 18). A 2022 stocktaking of CE practices in the Latin America and Caribbean Region (LCR) similarly found "ample room to better utilize SEPs under the ESF as a mechanism to raise the quality of engagement with citizens" (World Bank 2022d, p. 102). The LCR report underlines, in particular, strong scope for strengthening the robustness of engagement strategies and tools, making more timely use of feedback during project design and

¹⁹ The 2018 IEG Evaluation, for example, stated that "The ability of the Bank to bridge the two agendas can raise the level of ambition in terms of depth and quality of citizen engagement activities and meet expectations of many in the World Bank" (IEG. 2018. pp. xv).

²⁰ The ESF defines social risks as possible or actual negative impacts on communities and workers as a result of Bank-supported project activity. By ensuring engagement between government officials and various stakeholders, CE mechanisms are seen to help avoid, mitigate or manage social risks and impacts, specifically, those mentioned in the ten Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs).

implementation, and closing the feedback loop by communicating the results and relevant actions to project stakeholders.

37. There is a need for a more coherent and client-focused approach to the ESF (ESS10) and CE frameworks moving forward. The 2018 IEG evaluation called for the Bank to intensify synergies between the ESF and CESA agendas. Research found that efforts to do so are ongoing and the current ESF reform process offers strong potential to avoid duplication and enhance synergies. Case study research revealed several examples of projects that have gone beyond standard ESF requirements to incorporate deeper and more meaningful forms of citizen engagement into their SEP and to support efforts to strengthen country systems for sustained engagement. For example, as described in Annex 2.8, beyond conducting intensive consultations with project stakeholders and establishing a hotline and digitalized GM, the SEP for the *Kakheti Connectivity Improvement Project* in Georgia foresees active ongoing decision-making roles for local communities regarding road use and the maintenance of economic infrastructure along the highway. In Peru, the SEP for the *Lima Metropolitan BRT North Extension Project* was prepared as part of a broader citizen engagement strategy which, beyond consultations, includes ongoing monitoring of citizen satisfaction with engagement mechanisms (see Annex 2.12). Under the *Nagaland Enhancing Classroom Teaching and Resources (NECTAR) Project in India*, CESA/SEP activities - including the ongoing engagement of both students and parents in decision-making roles regarding school strengthening initiatives - have been integrated into the government's core approaches and strategies (see Annex 2.18). Since 2018 the Bank has sought to identify and share good practices related to CESA and ESF linkages, developed and delivered training programs aimed at further integrating CESA into the ESF²¹ and (more recently) begun to actively monitor the CESA content of SEPs. Moving forward there is scope to: avoid duplication by focusing CESA efforts on systems-level support and on operations (such as P4Rs and DPF) that are not covered by ESS10; leverage SEPs as an entry point for practices that (go beyond consultations and GMs to) give citizens a say in decision-making and oversight; ensure coherence by supporting clients in developing a country-level plan that includes project-level SEPs, vertically integrated CESA mechanisms (in priority sectors) and actions to support enabling conditions and systems for CESA (for example, through P4Rs and DPF); enhance the CESA content of country-level ESF Overview Assessments and, harmonize the monitoring and reporting of SEP and CESA indicators. In the case of both project-level CE and SEPs, it's important to acknowledge that corporate requirements and targets have been a critical driver of the results achieved to date. Moving forward, the continued use of (updated) requirements, along with measures such as tagging (building on the successful experience of gender tagging) will likely be important to avoid losing ground.

38. While a particular strength of the ESF is its emphasis on gender equity and social inclusion, attention to multidimensional and intersectional²² social inclusion remains a challenge. The 2022 *LCR CE Stocktake* found that the ESF has led to a significant improvement in rigorous stakeholder mapping which, while previously rare, has now become commonplace, thanks to the clear templates provided as part of the SEPs (World Bank 2022d). This review found that while significant progress has been made in promoting CESA and SEPs that are gender inclusive, less headway has been made in ensuring the meaningful inclusion of other social groups including, for example, refugees/migrants, persons with disabilities, the elderly, persons living in remote and disadvantaged areas, ethnic/gender minorities, etc. An independent review of the Bank's CE commitments in

²¹ For example, the findings of a recent quality review of CE in SEPs in LCR (undertaken in the context of the *Strengthening Citizen Engagement in LCR ASA*) are being used to inform the drafting of a handbook and to tailor operational support, awareness raising, and training activities for WB teams and clients.

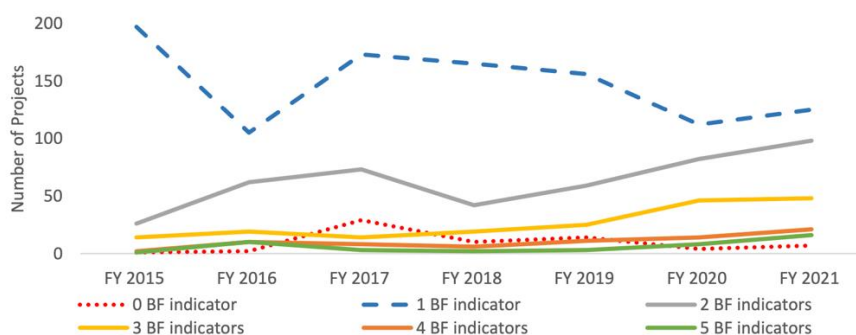
²² An "intersectional" approach to inclusion recognizes the interconnected nature of multiple social characteristics - such as race, class, gender, age, physical ability, etc. - that create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

Mozambique, Myanmar, Nigeria, and Pakistan, for example, found that projects consistently committed to addressing social inclusion concerns related to gender, but not to other dimensions of social exclusion (Nadelman et. al. 2019, p. 56) A review of projects in the Bank’s CE database approved between FY14 and FY20 found that in most of those projects, the inclusion of persons with disabilities was not incorporated in project implementation guidelines, strategies, plans, budgets, or monitoring and evaluation with any specific actions or measures. A 2022 Technical Note on *Disability-Inclusive Citizen Engagement* underlines the importance of including disability-disaggregated indicators in project progress monitoring instruments, SEPs, evaluations of community engagement, and beneficiary feedback mechanisms; and recommends that every project should have at least have one organization of people with disabilities as a permanent disability focal point for consultation throughout project planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring (World Bank 2022d). At the country level, a review of (67) CPFs approved from FY18-23 found that all country frameworks were prepared in close consultations with a broad range of stakeholders but that efforts to consult with youth and women were observed in only 24% and 15% of CPFs respectively and only a handful of countries involved consultations with people with disabilities (4 countries), indigenous people (2 countries), refugees (2 countries) and sexual minorities (1 country), indicating significant room for improvement with regard to social inclusion at this level as well (Sah 2023).

Finding 1.5 - There is scope to improve the quality, tracking and reporting of CESA monitoring indicators.

39. While the Bank has made strong progress in meeting its quantitative corporate requirement for CE monitoring, quality is lacking. For the past several years, the Bank has come very close to fulfilling its 100% CE monitoring target, with 98% of projects including at least one beneficiary feedback (BF) indicator in its results framework. As shown below in Figure 5, the number of projects with multiple BF indicators has also increased steadily since FY18, reaching 58% of projects in FY21. While these are important quantitative achievements, research found that the quality of CE monitoring continues to lag with most indicators measuring process outputs versus results (Johnson and Park 2021). Perhaps due to the wording of the corporate requirement itself which (for reasons that are unclear) refers to *beneficiary feedback* indicators rather than CESA indicators per se, research found that most project indicators focus on "low end" CESA practices (such as consultations and GMs). Even when (growing numbers of) projects include "high end" CESA practices that empower citizens with a say in decision-making, indicators to capture these deeper practices are not often included in the Results Framework (Park and Sah 2022, Nadelman 2021). These findings resemble those of the 2018 IEG Evaluation which found that indicators captured only a small subset of CE mechanisms and failed to track results (IEG 2018).

Figure 5 - Numbers of BF indicators used per project (FY15-FY21)



Source: Johnson and Park 2021

40. The review also found considerable room for improvement in reporting on CESA results, especially regarding public disclosure. CESA actions can be elevated and reinforced when accurate and timely information about a project’s implementation progress and achievements is publicly shared. This helps not only in promoting transparency and accountability and closing the feedback loop, but also in enabling citizens to effectively participate and contribute to the project’s success in delivering positive development outcomes. Despite these important benefits, the review found that only a small number of projects proactively share their CESA (and broader development) monitoring results with the public. A review of projects approved in FY22Q4, for example, found that only 14% of projects made commitments in their PADs to proactively share CE results with public (Park and Sah 2022). As a good practice, task teams should be encouraged to not just “report up” to Bank Management but also “report out” to the public by disclosing CESA results/data. Directly engaging citizens and CSOs in measuring and assessing project and CESA results through participatory monitoring and evaluation (PME) methodologies is another important way to promote transparency and accountability and should also be actively incentivized as good practice. For example, as described in Annex 2.11, the *Distribution Grid Modernization and Loss Reduction Project* in the Dominican Republic relied heavily on participatory M&E to ensure that social compacts agreed (via a participatory process) between citizens and electrical distribution companies were effectively implemented. Under the project, a network of community-level monitoring committees (comprised of close to 10,000 directly elected community representatives) played a key role in: sensitizing community members on rational electricity use and payments, monitoring project activities and outcomes, collecting grievances, channeling these to distribution companies (via their social specialists) and reporting back to the community on outcomes. Such PME systems represent an important CESA practice that should be encouraged and incentivized. The Bank could also be more proactive in both using and helping to disseminate the results of independent citizen or CSO-led monitoring of Bank operations. During consultations, several CSO representatives engaged in such initiatives reported challenges in bringing their results to the attention of WB and government officials and eliciting a response or follow-up actions.

Finding 1.6 – CESA activities outlined in the PAD (at project design) frequently have no corresponding budget line. This lack of dedicated project funds has resulted in a significant design to implementation gap.

41. While a majority of projects surpass minimal CE requirements at design, research found an important gap between design and implementation. A failure to fully implement CESA activities as described in PADs or project documents was repeatedly flagged as an issue in interviews and FGDs with operational Bank staff, PIU representatives and implementing CSO partners. This shortcoming was also underlined in an independent review of 57 projects in four countries (FY15-17) which found that, while most projects exceeded the Bank’s minimum CE design requirements, a majority only described their CESA plans in very general terms; with only a few explaining *how* CE commitments would be implemented. This was even true of those projects (the majority) that ranked as having "robust" or "comprehensive" CE design features (the top two categories of the 5-level CE Density Scale used by the researchers) (Nadelman et. al. 2019). Unfortunately, WB monitoring data provides very limited information about the broader operationalization of CESA mechanisms since what's referred to in annual monitoring reports as "CE compliance during implementation" is, in fact, a measure of the percentage of projects that report on their BF indicators by their third year of implementation (73% of projects in FY22), rather than a measure of the implementation of CESA activities per se. During consultations, PIU representatives highlighted Project/Program Operational Manual (POMs) as the most important reference document for the implementation of project activities and underlined the importance of including in POMs a detailed description of proposed CESA practices and guidelines for the operationalization.

42. Research suggests that that the failure to achieve more meaningful implementation and results is, in large part, a resourcing issue. Lack of adequate resourcing for CESA activities emerged as a common theme in consultations with Bank staff, PIUs and CSO partners. WB respondents underlined the lack of Bank budget to support CESA staff and consultant time during design and implementation, while PIUs emphasized the lack of allocation of resources in project budgets for the implementation of planned CESA activities. A recent study found that "while CSO engagement in, and oversight of, country operations is important for development impact and helps the Bank perform its fiduciary responsibility, funding is ad hoc and rare" and that "explicit funding for CSO engagement is rarely evident in project appraisal documents"(PTF and OSF 2022, p. 8). An IDS Policy Briefing on Bank-supported CE found that "projects rarely specify dedicated funding for CE in project design, turning it into an unfunded mandate that must compete with other priorities" and that "as long as this situation continues, even projects that make ambitious CE commitments may not deliver on them" (Nadelman 2020, p. 3). Based on the same research, a 2021 Accountability Research Center Working Paper found that that it was "common for project teams to document CE design plans that met the mainstreaming requirement without having considered with the client what the actual implementation costs would be or if the project budget had accounted for such activities" and that "this kind of disconnect between plans and actual costs had practical implications, including that the responsible government agency or project unit would potentially not be able to execute CE commitments to the degree envisioned, if at all" (Nadelman. 2021, p. 13). A recent independent review of a *Reproductive Health Services Improvement* project in Uganda came to a similar conclusion, finding that while "citizens and other project stakeholders were involved during consultations to design the project...this wasn't the case during the implementation phase", that "there was no budget provision to implement the project's citizen engagement commitments" and that moving forward the WB should "ensure that appropriate funding for the implementation of citizen engagement activities is provided" (AFIC and UCMC 2021, p. 3 and 33). Several Bank staff interviewed saw this problem as symptomatic of a broader phenomenon at the WB whereby a lion's share of the Bank's administrative budget is dedicated to project design rather than project implementation, and the system of internal reward and recognition "is focused on getting a project to the Board, not on what happens afterwards".

43. According to a majority of stakeholders, obtaining funding for CESA is a challenging endeavor. The lack of dedicated funding means that TTLs often must search for supplementary funds to execute CESA commitments. Bank staff interviewed indicated that Country Management Units (CMUs) will sometimes earmark funds, but this only tends to happen when the country manager/director is personally convinced of the importance of CESA or there is a regional directive. Given the range of pressures and demands on TTLs and lack of incentives for ensuring high quality CESA implementation, a high degree of personal commitment is required for individual TTLs to go the extra mile to seek the necessary resources. World Bank-executed Trust Funds have been a crucial source of supplementary funding for CESA purposes, but they are not equally available across all regions and sectors and are not an adequate or sustainable source of funding for the Bank's CESA agenda. Based on a recent review, the Partnership for Transparency Fund reports that the "small amounts of financing for CSOs made available from Trust Funds hosted by the Bank" are "negligible relative to needs and not regarded as fit-for-purpose and involve high transactions costs that discourage their use" (PTF 2023, p. 2).

Finding 1.7 – A deficit of adequate CESA-oriented human resources and capacity/skills within WB project teams and PIUs further constrains the implementation of planned CESA activities.

44. Research found a lack of CESA staff and expertise at both the institutional and country level. In consultations with Bank staff and PIUs, a lack of adequate staff/consultant time and specialized skills emerged as a principal barrier to the achievement of the CESA agenda. As shown in Figure 6, in a

survey of WB (regional, sectoral and country level) CE focal points conducted by the review team (n = 28), 89% of WB CE focal points assessed the level of human resources dedicated to CESA in their region/sector to be "inadequate" or "entirely inadequate". Regarding in-country CESA expertise, as shown in Figure 7, a majority (59%) of CE Focal Points assessed the availability of such expertise within their portfolio as 'Moderate', 37% responded that in-country expertise was "Limited", while only 3.7% gave a rating of 'Strong' and no one gave a rating of 'Very Strong'. Proposed actions to address these shortcomings are outlined in Entry Points 4.1 to 4.4.

Figure 6 - How would you assess the level of human resources dedicated to CESA in your region/sector?

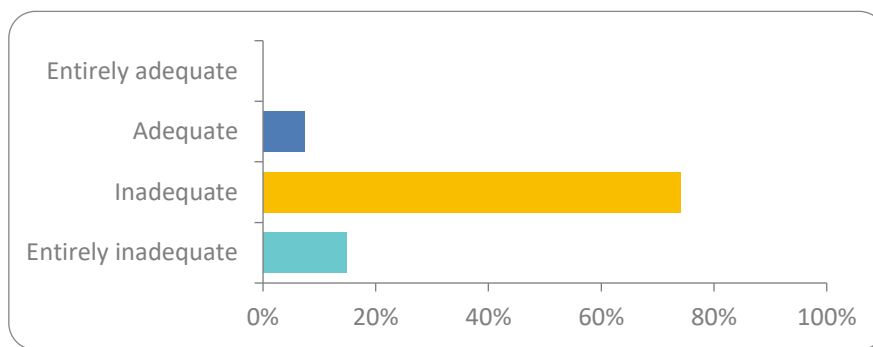
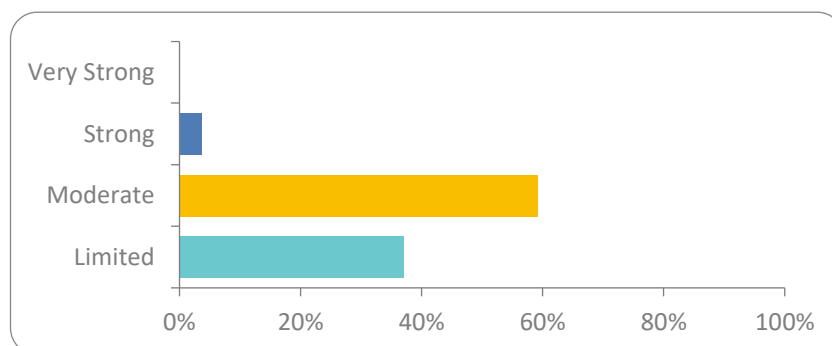


Figure 7 - How would you assess the availability of adequate in-country expertise on CESA within your portfolio?



Box 4 - CESA capacity-building at the project level

In Tajikistan, to support sustainable public sanitation investments, the *Municipal Infrastructure Development Project Additional Financing* adopted a highly participatory approach that engaged citizens in the design of public sanitation investments, as well as their implementation and ongoing management. Without the engagement of the communities and beneficiaries, the facilities provided under the original project quickly fell into disrepair due to lack of community ownership in their use and maintenance. Capacity building was needed to support the participatory management approach. Working with communities, encouraging their active participation and promoting community ownership was a relatively new and innovative approach in Tajikistan and, at the outset, there was limited capacity in the PIU to do so. Intensive training was carried out for all PIU staff on citizen engagement concepts and methods, participatory planning and budgeting, and the establishment and management of community-led committees. The staffing of the PIU was also strengthened with community development specialists and social mobilization officers who were positioned in the communities (Sommer and Kdolsky 2019).

CESA capacity-building is also an important aspect of numerous projects highlighted in Annex 2 In Kenya, for example, building the capacity of national and county institutions to improve the delivery of devolved services and to manage climate risks through enhanced citizen engagement and social accountability is the core objective and key activity area of the *Devolution Support Project* and *Financing Locally-Led Climate Action Program* (see Annex 2.1). Training in CESA concepts and practices for community members and government

officials at local, sub-national and national levels is also a fundamental element of the West Africa Coastal Areas (WACA) Resilience Investment project (Annex 2.4). Substantial technical assistance and capacity building for parliamentary stakeholders (i.e., MPs, committee staff, clerks) on how to ensure budget transparency and how to engage effectively with the Auditor General's office and the public proved critical to the success of *Transparency and Accountability DPLs* in Morocco (Annex 2.16). Finally, in India, the NECTAR project partnered with CSOs to build the capacity of School Management Committees to *engage students, parents, teachers and school administrators* in participatory and inclusive planning and decision-making (Annex 2.19).

45. Efforts to support CESA capacity development at the project and country level are growing, but still inadequate. Consultations with PIU representatives revealed a strong, and currently largely unmet, demand for CESA capacity building. The absence of a designated CESA focal point among PIU staff, a lack of requisite CESA skills among PIU staff and consultants, limited operational support and a lack of capacity development opportunities were identified by Bank staff and PIU representatives alike as current shortcomings. Despite expressed demand, the review found limited evidence of project funds being allocated for purposes of CESA capacity building. Case study research found that projects with strong CESA performance often cited investments in capacity development as a key factor of success. Some examples of this are described above in Box 4. Research also found promising, if isolated, evidence of efforts to build PIU, government and CSO capacity for CESA at the portfolio/country level. Box 5 describes efforts to build capacity for ICT-supported CESA across the sub-region of the Western Balkans. Another example of using Advisory Services and Analytics (ASA) for CESA capacity development at the country-level, this time in Burundi, is described in Box 9. Future much-needed efforts to bolster in-country CESA expertise and skills should build on these examples of good practice.

Finding 1.8 - Collaboration with CSOs as social mobilizers/organizers, implementing partners, facilitators and independent monitors is critical to achieving high quality CESA, but is hampered by cumbersome bureaucratic procedures and lack of financing.

46. Civil society organizations play a critical role in CESA. The influence of individual citizens is typically limited, but collectively they become more powerful. For this reason, collaboration with and support for (formal and informal) citizen associations, community-based organizations and social movements is key to successful CESA. For example, as described in Annex 2.19, the *Swachh Bharat Mission Support Operation Project* in India largely attributes its unprecedented success in reducing open defecation in rural areas to the efforts of an army of frontline community mobilizers engaged through an array of existing community-level structures such as women's associations, self-help groups, co-operatives, Anganwadi workers, community-based organizations and Panchayati Raj institutions. CSOs, including more specialized/professional NGOs, also play an important role as intermediaries and operational partners in the implementation of CESA. Very often, CSOs have the community mobilization, public education, facilitation and advocacy skills that CESA practices require, and a sub-set have become experts, leaders and innovators in the CESA field. That said, in most countries, the civil society landscape is complex and diverse and not all civil society actors or organizations are capable, credible or legitimate. CSOs can mirror the weaknesses of the state in which they operate - sometimes being captured by the elite or functioning as "GONGOs" ("government NGOs"). The operational capacity of (especially smaller or less professionalized) CSOs can also be limited by a lack of adequate resources, personnel, skills and operating systems. For this reason, mapping the civil society landscape, identifying relevant credible and capable partners and participants and, ideally, collaborating with them from the earliest stages of design, is an important part of preparing CESA initiatives. Case study research found that collaboration with CSO

implementing partners, as well as investments in their capacity development, were features that most projects with strong CESA outcomes had in common (see Annex 2).

Box 5 - Building capacity for ICT-supported CESA across the Western Balkans

In the Western Balkans, the *Green Growth Citizen Engagement and Online Platforms* ASA (2022-23) provided technical support to build the capacity of WB project teams and government counterparts to advance the use of technology and operationalize CESA platforms. Under the ASA, in addition to conducting country-specific CESA capacity-building workshops in Serbia, Kosovo, and Bosnia Herzegovina, the regional CESA team organized a Western Balkans-wide workshop designed to advance the use of technology and operationalization of ICT platforms for CESA. Twenty-seven project implementation units (PIUs) from across the sub-region attended the workshop. The list of participants included PIU members from active and pipeline projects, with specific attention to projects involved in green energy transition. The workshop featured sessions on applied CESA, self/assessment exercises – which encouraged PIUs to work in groups to identify key challenges faced in the design and implementation of CESA activities in their projects – and presentations on best practice models and ICT platforms, followed by a series of live demonstrations and exercises in which participants tested and learned first-hand how to use online tools. The facilitators addressed the most common issues that PIUs encounter with regards to civic technology - e.g. data collection, feedback management, transcription of survey responses and minute meetings from public consultations; highlighting the benefits associated with online platforms and how such tools can improve the ability of PIUs to collect large volume of feedback from citizens and adequately conduct CE activities. The workshop also featured an action learning and planning session, in which PIUs worked together to identify specific next steps and actions designed to overcome specific challenges and the support required from the task team. Several project teams received subsequent technical assistance to develop or strengthen existing country-level online CESA platforms. In Kosovo, for example, the *Fostering and Leveraging Opportunities for Water Security Program in Kosovo* will receive support to adapt online software and tools for the facilitation of stakeholder and citizen engagement activities, while the *Strengthening Digital Governance for Service Delivery project* will instead receive technical assistance to expand the capabilities of the e-Kosova online platform (a national platform providing links to administrative services in the country).

Source: World Bank. (2023). Western Balkans Green Growth Citizen Engagement and Online Platforms (ID: P180016): Activity Completion Summary (ACS).

47. The Bank has an extensive history of collaboration with CSOs, which some stakeholders feel needs reinvigoration. The Bank has long recognized CSOs as key development actors, repeatedly stated its desire to collaborate with CSOs and adopted a policy on collaboration with CSOs as early as 1981. Some interviewees (both from inside and outside the Bank), however, felt that "things have moved backwards" over the past decade and that a focus on "citizen" engagement has potentially downplayed the importance of "civil society" engagement. A review by the CESA GSG of the FY22Q4 sub portfolio, for example, found that a distinct role for CSOs was foreseen in just 41% of projects (Park and Sah 2022). At the country level, a review of CPFs (FY18-23) found that interactions with civil society actors are more prevalent during design than implementation. While the term "civil society" was mentioned in 99% of CPFs, the review found that an overwhelming majority of CPFs referred to CSOs only in the context of consultations undertaken during the preparation of the CPF, as opposed to engagement with CSOs in other activities. Despite strong demand during CPF consultations for strengthened monitoring and oversight by CSOs, only five (7% of) CPFs document a collaboration with CSOs to meet these objectives. Only eight (12% of) CPFs proposed fostering or maintaining ongoing partnerships with civil society for effective service delivery and positive development outcomes, only six (9% of) CPFs referred to civil society in their description of focus areas or cross cutting themes and just two (3%) mentioned civil society in their Results Matrix Indicators, leading the review to conclude an "absence of a systematic engagement with the civil society during the course of implementation of country programs" (Sah 2023, p. 7). For some observers, the fact that the Bank's current [operations manual](#) no longer includes a policy statement on collaboration with CSOs - in contrast to the [Asian](#)

[Development Bank](#), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development²³ and the [Inter-American Development Bank](#) which have policies and updated action plans in place for engaging with CSOs - also "raises serious questions about the Bank's current commitment and policy on engaging with CSOs in its operations" (PTF 2023). The evolution roadmap endorses enhanced collaboration with CSOs, acknowledging that "partnerships with civil society are critical to ensuring development impact" and stating that the Bank will "deepen its **partnership with civil society**, especially at the country and regional levels, to make the evolution process more effective". In line with this evolution roadmap objective, a wide range of civil society groups have called on the Bank to include guidance on collaboration with CSOs in the operations manual and to adequately fund the Bank's commitment to partnering with civil society actors (OGP Civil Society Steering Committee 2021 and 2023, PTF 2022, Vogl 2023).

48. A lack of financing to support CSO roles as third-party monitors and agents of social accountability at both the project and country level is seen as limiting the implementation of the Bank's CESA agenda. As discussed under Finding 1.6 a failure to allocate project funds for CESA activities and for supporting and partnering with CSOs is considered a principal challenge. Just as projects earmark a certain portion of resources for purposes of external audit, establishing a set amount of funding to be set aside to systematically support the implementation of social audit (for which tried and tested methodologies exist) could be one important way to, at least partially, address the current CESA and CSO financing gap. Global civil society has made repeated calls for the Bank to provide stronger financial support for civil society capacity building and CSO-driven CESA initiatives at both the project and portfolio/country level - including through mechanisms like the GPSA and other trust funds. Pointing out the "tremendous imbalance" between enormous development resources channeled to governments and the "paltry support for civil society"²⁴, civil society coalitions have called for IDA funds to be set aside to support independent monitoring by CSOs and/or for the GPSA trust fund to be replenished and expanded - arguing that such resources would more than pay for themselves by preventing the waste that results from the current lack of robust monitoring and accountability mechanisms and public scrutiny (OGP Civil Society Steering Committee 2021, PTF 2022).²⁵ Some interviewees flagged the need to explore more innovative approaches to CESA financing - underlining, for example, the strong potential to tap into private sector funding (e.g. from private foundations) or to potentially raise funds for CESA through vehicles like social impact bonds or even crowdsourcing.

49. Adopting more streamlined, flexible and adaptive approaches to project implementation would also go a long way towards facilitating and maximizing the benefits of collaborating with CSOs. In interviews and FGDs, the Bank's rigid timeframes, cumbersome procedures and inflexible implementation practices were repeatedly cited by CSO partners as barriers to effective operational collaboration. While administrative requirements are an inevitable aspect of Bank operations, providing more space for co-creation, learning and adaptation, especially in the earlier stages of the project cycle, could enhance partnerships with CSOs and improve their outcomes. As described by Bain et. al (2016), a transition from current "control-oriented" approaches, to more "adaptive" approaches that engage partners in co-creating strategies and allow for continuous learning and adjustments throughout implementation, is recommended. The 2022 LCR CE Stocktaking report, for example, recommends that Bank-supported projects learn from and aim to replicate the good practices of innovative Dedicated Grant Mechanisms which empower CSOs and communities

²³ The EBRD is currently updating its CSO Engagement Strategy and continues to implement a Civil Society Enhancement Framework that focusses on supporting the capacity development of CSOs in strategic areas.

²⁴ See Pradhan 2017.

²⁵ The proposal for at least 1% of the IDA 20 replenishment to be dedicated to CSO funding was put forward by the Partnership Transparency Fund and endorsed by a significant number of CSO actors, including the Open Government Partnership Civil Society Steering Committee.

(including people in more vulnerable situations, like indigenous peoples) to have a greater role in the design and implementation of development policies and programs through participatory governance and decision-making mechanisms and adapted procedures (World Bank 2022d). As the timeframe for establishing and reaping the benefits of meaningful CESA does not fit neatly into 5-year project cycles, it is also important to invest in country systems and institutions that can be sustained and built on over time, and over multiple project cycles (see Findings 2.1-2.5). Depending on the country context, this can also require actions to build government buy-in for CSO partnerships and CESA more broadly, for example, through south-south learning where clients see civil society facilitated CESA practices in action, and their benefits (See Findings 3.2 and 3.3).

Entry points

50. Based on research findings, the following actions are recommended to improve the quality and outcomes of project-level CESA:



1.1 - Support project teams to design, implement and build capacity for CESA practices that go beyond consultation and satisfaction surveys to give citizens/CSOs a say in decision-making and oversight (from project design through implementation and evaluation).

- a. Update guidelines on ensuring the closure of the feedback loop - e.g., define a clear process on how beneficiary satisfaction surveys are used to inform subsequent project activities, how inputs generated through consultation are utilized, etc.
- b. Facilitate access by project teams to detailed operational guidance (including case study examples) on the design and implementation of high quality CESA practices (beyond consultations and GMs), with an emphasis on techniques for supporting participatory decision-making and downwards accountability.
- c. Issue guidelines for expanding project-level M&E into a social accountability mechanism (e.g. through participatory M&E, citizen/CSO oversight, third-party monitoring and proactive public disclosure of results).



1.2 - In priority sectors, systematize the practice of project/sector-level stakeholder and political economy/power analysis (including an assessment of the civil society landscape) to support better-informed CESA and broader project/sector goals.

- a. Building on current good practice examples, develop and disseminate detailed operational guidelines for the implementation of civil society, stakeholder, political economy/power analysis (of different levels of complexity).
- b. Include modules on the *why* and *how* of political economy/power analysis in CESA capacity development programs for operational staff and project teams.
- c. Facilitate access by project teams to in-country expertise in political economy/power analysis and civil society assessment (see Entry point 4.1).



1.3 - Adopt a coherent and coordinated approach to ESF (ESS10) and CESA in project design and implementation arrangements and roles and responsibilities at project level, ensuring meaningful social inclusion.

- a. Update operational guidance clarifying the complementary and mutually reinforcing nature of ESS10 and CESA, including enhancing the CESA content of country-level ESF Overview Assessments and emphasizing the importance of ESS10 in ensuring inclusive project-level engagement and the contributions of CESA in proposing mechanisms for vertically integrated participatory decision-making and oversight in priority sectors.

- b. Through the issuance of technical advice and operational support, promote the inclusion of high quality CESA practices (beyond consultations and GMs) in SEPs.
- c. In the context of both ESS10 and CESA, bolster efforts to adopt a multidimensional and intersectional approach to social inclusion which, in addition to gender, takes into account factors of age, ethnicity, physical ability, legal status, socio-economic status, etc.
- d. Prepare and provide to implementing agencies updated detailed guidelines on how to strengthen the inclusiveness of SE and CESA mechanisms, taking into account specific country and sectoral nuances.
- e. Consider a coordinated/integrated approach to developing, monitoring and reporting on CESA and ESS10 (and, potentially, gender equity) results indicators.
- f. Continue to offer social specialists opportunities to deepen their CESA knowledge and skills (see Entry point 4.2), while also enhancing access to in-country CESA expertise (see Entry point 4.1).



1.4 - Shift institutional focus and incentives from CESA at design to CESA implementation and results, seeking to ensure that CESA activities outlined in the PAD are budgeted for and supported by meaningful results indicators.

- a. Update good practice guidelines to ensure that CESA activities outlined in the PAD or SEP have clear operational provisions and a corresponding budget line.
- b. Ensure that project-level SE/CESA plans include an assessment of implementation capacity and a budget for capacity development activities (for PIUs, government counterparts, implementing partners and community members) as required.
- c. Designate a clear CESA focal point among PIU staff.
- d. Provide detailed technical guidance (e.g. checklists, sample questions, aide-memoire templates) on how to cover CESA in supervision missions and how to report on CESA in ISRs and ICRs.
- e. Update guidelines (including examples) for the development of strong, results oriented SE/CESA indicators.
- f. Shift the focus of corporate requirements, reporting and monitoring to include not only CESA at design but also CESA quality, implementation and results (see Entry point 4.3).



1.5 - Facilitate more effective, nimble and streamlined ways to partner with (different categories of both formal and informal) CSOs at the project level.

- a. Update operational guidance and technical advice (based on existing good practices and lessons learned) on facilitating collaboration with CSO implementing partners, including community-based organizations and social movements.
- b. Streamline operational procedures, providing space to co-create and adapt appropriate strategies over time with CSO implementing partners, rather than dictating predetermined procedures.
- c. Consider adopting a WB policy statement on collaboration with CSOs.



1.6 - Expand funding for CSOs to support third party monitoring and social accountability at both the project and sector/country-level.

- a. Where there is client buy-in, include support for capacity development and accompaniment of CSO partners in project budgets.
- b. Sustain/enhance access by project teams to Trust Fund resources, which represent a vital source of support for CESA and collaboration with CSOs.
- c. Replenish and expand GPSA successor funding to support third-party monitoring and social accountability initiatives by CSOs (beyond project budgets).

- d. Strengthen alignment of GPSA successor-financed activities with the Bank portfolio and actively engage CMUs, project teams and other relevant in-country actors in supporting and responding to the findings and outcomes of GPSA successor initiatives.
- e. Build on the experience and lessons of the current Green Accountability call for proposals, to adopt a model whereby GPSA successor grant funds are managed and on-granted by CSO intermediaries, thereby allowing for more flexibility in grant-making and alleviating the burden of the Bank's cumbersome bureaucratic procedures on grantees.
- f. Consider a system whereby GPSA successor grantees are selected by an international committee of respected CSO representatives and CESA experts, ensuring a majority of representatives from the global South.

B. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #2 - STRENGTHEN COUNTRY SYSTEMS FOR CESA

51. The second challenge identified by the review is to adopt an institutional approach that is geared toward strengthening country systems for CESA. This extends beyond responsiveness at the project level only and acknowledges the core role of CESA in achieving development effectiveness, governance, and empowerment goals at the country level. Moving beyond the local to think about CESA at a larger scale involves looking at the “accountability ecosystem” as a whole and identifying entry points that offer the greatest leverage (Halloran, 2021). In this vein, Fox (2016) calls for strategic approaches which are “vertically integrated” - i.e., that make local to national linkages, amplifying local-level citizen voices to influence decisions, actions, and institutional reforms up to the national level (and beyond). Global research and learning suggest that CESA approaches that take into account decision-making structures at multiple levels; support inter-relationships between local, subnational, national, and international actors; and use a strategic mix of multiple tactics and tools are most likely to be produce significant and sustainable impacts (Gaventa & McGee 2013, Fox 2015, Fox et. al. 2016, Nadelman et. al. 2019). "Sandwich approaches" that support sustained citizen and civil society action from below while, at the same time, promoting enabling actions by state reformers from above, have been found to have the greatest chances of success and impact (Fox 1992 and 2015; Acheron and Isaac 2016; Fox, Robinson and Hossain 2022). In addition to project-level interventions, this involves working with governments to build political will for CESA and adopt a culture of openness, transparency, participation, accountability, and institutionalized power-sharing, all of which contribute to enhanced development effectiveness.

Why is this important?

- Approaches that strengthen country systems (both state and non-state) for CESA are more likely to yield **scalable and sustainable development results**.
- CESA at this level can also contribute to broader goals such as **enhanced citizen-state relations** and more **responsive and accountable governance**.
- The nature of WB development support – which spans multiple sectors, stakeholders, levels of government and funding cycles - makes it **uniquely well-placed** to encourage and support a **holistic, systems-oriented approach** to CESA.

Key findings

Finding 2.1- Promising examples exist of WB-funded projects supporting embedded CESA practices, however, much more could be done to build/strengthen country systems for CESA from local to national level.

52. Adopting a more strategic systems-oriented approach to CESA is key to achieving enhanced impact. A review by IDS of donor-led empowerment and accountability activities found that *multi-scalar strategies* helped programs to "navigate the governance and service delivery landscape to activate accountability at different levels, move around obstacles, and highlight systemic issues" and thus "contribute to systemic changes in policy and practice beyond just their localized sites of operation" (Anderson et. al 2020, p.7). These strategies involved activating pressure for reform at multiple levels, for example, by supporting the vertical aggregation of citizen demands and claims on authorities and the vertical integration of civil society actions (e.g., by linking grassroots organizations with sub-national and national level CSO activism and campaigns). Research found that the Bank has strong potential and opportunity to support such strategies through its operations and country engagement framework. As described in Annex 2, a significant number of WB projects and programs assessed by the review team have supported a systems-oriented approach to CESA. The ISAF program in Cambodia, for example, has established a country-wide, multisectoral social accountability system that connects community-level civil society actors and organizations to national NGO networks, while also transmitting citizen voices and demands from local to national levels through government channels (see Annex 2.5 and Box 2). In Ukraine, the implementation of multiple user feedback mechanisms at different levels throughout the health sector have evolved over time into a unified, vertically integrated system that links service users to health actors at local, regional and national levels and closes the feedback loop (see Annex 2.10). To support agro-climatic resilience in Nigeria, the ACREsAL project strengthens existing community groups (and, where necessary, supports the creation of new ones) to design, implement and monitor climate resilient watershed management plans, and links them to a centralized grievance redress system to promote local to national feedback loops and downwards accountability (see Annex 2.3). The review found that there is strong scope to expand and systematize the application of such embedded, vertically integrated CESA across Bank operations.

53. While not yet the norm, an increasing number of Bank-supported projects have sought to build on existing country mechanisms to institutionalize and "vertically integrate" CESA, most frequently via centralized systems for citizen feedback and grievance redress. A recent global stocktake of grievance and feedback mechanisms found that, over the past decade, an increasing number of countries have established or expanded centralized, country owned GMs (World Bank 2022).²⁶ Similarly, a 2021 review of Stakeholder Engagement Plans in the Latin America and the Caribbean portfolio found that close to half (48%) committed to using an existing institutional GM. The *Nicaragua Second Land Administration Project*, for example, successfully leveraged an existing system for alternative dispute resolution, based on indigenous and traditional systems and endorsed by Nicaragua's Supreme Court of Justice, to address land rights disputes within the project (World Bank 2022b). In Vietnam, *Transport and Urban Development Operations* helped ensure vertically integrated citizen feedback and grievance resolution by leveraging and supporting existing public administration one-stop shops, present in every rural commune and city ward, to disseminate information on Bank-financed projects and transmit citizen feedback and complaints upwards to the relevant government and WB officials (Patel et. al. 2022).

²⁶ Some countries (e.g., Morocco and Korea) have established state-of-the-art processing and monitoring systems, that "close the feedback loop" by producing regular statistics on the number and nature of feedback and complaints received and addressed.

54. Beyond GMs, some Bank-supported projects have also contributed to strengthening country systems for deeper forms of CESA. In 2022, the CESA GSG implemented a pilot review to assess the extent to which PADs reflect the use of existing country systems by projects to build, strengthen, scale and/ or sustain citizen engagement. The review revealed that this aspect of CE is currently not clearly articulated in PADs. It detected only 9 out of 159 projects approved in FY22Q4 (just 6% of projects) that proposed to use or reinforce existing country-level systems (in all cases, for purposes of grievance redress). Despite this shortcoming, the review found evidence of increased efforts in recent years to institutionalize CESA into mainstream governance practices by strengthening counterparts' own interfaces between government and citizens (Park and Sah 2022). Case study research (see Annex 2) identified numerous operations that aim to institutionalize CESA either by establishing regular/permanent CESA mechanisms (e.g., citizen assemblies with agenda-setting roles, permanent advisory panels or regular annual planning assemblies) or policies to guarantee participatory decision-making (such as a policy to conduct citizen assemblies prior to major decisions, or to inform parliamentary committees). As demonstrated by the example of the Kyrgyz Republic SSERP in Box 6, strategies that Bank-supported projects can use to strengthen country systems for CESA include: building on existing platforms for dialogue and decision-making, building consensus around participatory processes and guidelines, supporting ongoing coordinated supply-side and demand-side actions, and aligning CESA processes with public planning and budgeting cycles. Moving forward, the Bank should build on existing (and continue to identify new) good practices and lessons learned on support for systems oriented CESA approaches and provide more practical guidance for staff on how to do so.

55. In taking a systems approach to CESA, it's beneficial and strategic to build on organic structures and seek bottom-up solutions. Experience shows that in aiming to support sustainable systems of CESA, it's important to look for positive examples of where/how citizens are already coming together - to access information, ask questions, engage and demand accountability - and build on those (World Bank 2017). This may involve seeking to enhance the CESA orientation of existing government mechanisms or supporting civil society systems. Ideally, CESA practices should flow from and use existing community infrastructure, rather than dropping in new, predesigned mechanisms or bodies. This can be achieved by supporting existing social movements and CBOs and building on existing (governmental and non-governmental, formal and informal, online and offline) channels and platforms for local engagement and accountability. Ideally, engagement with local actors should happen on their terms, in their spaces and through their organizations (rather than via externally imposed processes and platforms). Youngs finds that a failure to do so can result in "cosmetic consultations" that "undermine the possibility of systemic transformation" (Youngs 2022, p. 12).

Box 6 - Supporting systems-level CESA in the Kyrgyz education sector

In the Kyrgyz Republic, where the CPF prioritized support for local communities to engage in much-needed education sector reforms to improve school management and accountability, the Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) supported an innovative partnership between the Ministry of Education, the Bank and the Aga Khan Foundation to develop an innovative project focused on engaging and building the capacity and knowledge of community stakeholders, including teachers, school directors and school-level Boards of Trustees in the poorest districts in the Kyrgyz Republic. Through the *Sector Support for Education Reform Project* (SSERP), the Bank was providing school directors, teachers and officials at the local and central levels with training and technical assistance, however, no consideration was given to demand-side action in the design of SSERP, and no support was included for the engagement of communities. The JSDF grant sought to address this shortcoming by working closely with the MoE and CSO implementing partners to strengthen the capacities of existing school-level Boards of Trustees (BoTs) to engage community members in improving school governance and financial oversight. Through a participatory process, the rights and responsibilities of

different categories of local-level stakeholders (i.e., students, parents, school officials, BoT members, local authorities and community members) and their roles in complementing supply-side reforms and actions to improve school performance were agreed. The resulting social contract was subsequently reviewed and endorsed by all concerned stakeholders before being posted publicly for the entire school community's information. Synchronized complementary government activities, included in SSERP and the Ministry of Education and Science annual work plan and budget, focused on mandating BoTs roles, approving citizen engagement guidelines, and generating performance and budget data to improve transparency and accountability. Project activities were embedded in existing systems to support effectiveness and sustainability. Performance over time was monitored through an adapted community scorecard process that was designed to feed into the existing school development planning and budgeting system and timed to align with the annual school management cycle (e.g., training events were scheduled during semester breaks; community scorecard assessed were timed so that resulting joint action plans fed into the annual school development planning process; and, financial support for priority school improvements was provided towards the end of the school year to allow for the possibility of works to be undertaken during the summer months). Through "vertical integration" (via district and national-level Boards of Trustees networks, multi-stakeholder forums), the project also ensured that local-level school improvement priorities requiring higher-level intervention or support were transmitted to relevant government officials and national partners.

Source: Plummer, J., C. Malena and V. Suozzi. (2017). Engaging Communities for Better Schools: Engaging citizens to improve school management and accountability in the Kyrgyz Republic. ECA CE Learning Note #12. Washington, DC.: World Bank.

Finding 2.2 - The judicious use of digital technologies can help to institutionalize CESA practices and achieve both horizontal and vertical scaling-up.

56. Digital technologies have transformed the possibility to scale, sustain and systematize citizen engagement and social accountability practices. The use of widely available and affordable connected technologies to promote two-way interactions between governments and citizens has transformed opportunities for engagement and inclusion by facilitating quicker and wider reach. The use of technology to involve citizens directly in data collection (e.g., via online feedback/dialogue, drone imaging and various forms of crowdsourcing) provides policymakers, development actors and citizens themselves with valuable data and information they need to make informed decisions. Since the early 2000s, numerous well-known examples such as [Ushahidi](#) (a crowdsourcing platform in Kenya), [Check My School](#) (a hybrid system for monitoring school quality in the Philippines), and [OnTrack](#) (a citizen feedback program in Bolivia) have demonstrated the potential for new technologies and crowdsourcing approaches to broaden the information base on which decisions are made, and, ultimately, to enhance responsiveness to people's needs. Moving forward, the use of artificial intelligence provides enhanced opportunities to process massive amounts of citizen-generated data to guide government decisions in real time. Digital CE can be a particularly well-suited mechanism to engage youth and can also be inclusive for mobility-challenged people and less risky for citizens who fear retaliation. The digitalization of administrative processes can also reduce the costs of CESA-related data collection and management and information-sharing. In this sense, the CivicTech activities of the Governance GP are highly relevant to the Bank's CESA agenda and enhanced collaboration between the two groups to support digital CESA innovations is recommended.

57. Digital CESA tools are increasingly used in Bank operations. According to CESA GSG monitoring findings, 38% of projects approved in FY22Q4 include digital CESA interventions (of varying complexity and usage) (Park and Sah 2022). Research found numerous examples of virtual consultations, as well as the use of digital tools to facilitate citizen monitoring of services or measure beneficiary satisfaction

in Bank-supported projects.²⁷ In Pakistan, for example, the *Punjab Public Management Reform Program* demonstrates how e-governance innovations to improve internal performance monitoring on the 'supply side', combined with 'demand side' ICT-supported citizen feedback mechanisms can be mutually reinforcing in achieving improving public service accountability and outcomes (see Annex 2.20). In Kyrgyzstan, an on-line CESA platform managed by the national Community Development and Investment Agency (ARIS) serves as a tool for participatory deliberation, consultations, priority setting and decision making for multiple WB-supported projects, as well as a depository of knowledge and resources related to different CESA tools and activities (social audits, community meetings, community scorecards, etc.) (see Annex 2.9). The 2022 *Amplifying People's Voice* report shares further case studies and identifies numerous opportunities and best practices for mainstreaming CE through digital technologies (World Bank 2022a).

58. An increasing number of Bank-supported projects make use of digital GMs. In early 2023, the Global Unit of SSI and ENB collaborated for the first ENB-SSI Joint Session for the Tech-for-ESF webinars on Digital Technologies for Grievance Redress Mechanisms (GMs), focusing on the advantages and challenges of incorporating digital technology for GM into ESF design and implementation, with details on how to access available technologies, and best practices examples. With digital GM, Bank teams can save time and budget even while increasing the scope of their CESA efforts by customizing and re-using existing software. A recent initiative that makes available an open-source digital GM application for use by any World Bank-financed project is likely to lead to a steep increase in e-GMs in the coming years. The application can be used by GM focal points, grievance redress committees, and PIUs to record, manage, and report on grievances more effectively and has a variety of functions such as registration, routing, alerts, resolution, appeals, training materials, etc. While establishing an ICT platform for GM can greatly facilitate communication and information management, Yamouri (2017, p 6) reminds us that there is no silver bullet and that a successful GM chain - which includes uptake, monitoring, resolution and timely feedback provision - is still reliant on an "overall back-office structure" and "commitments from all stakeholders, including service providers and government officials".

59. Digital mechanisms can reinforce but not replace more direct forms of offline engagement. The principal obstacles to closing accountability gaps and empowering citizens are nontechnological in nature, and it's important that enthusiasm about technological innovations doesn't distract attention away from core issues of citizen-state relations and power-sharing. As Yamouri (2017, p. 6) reminds us "ICTs should be treated as a tool for CE interventions and not an objective in and of itself. While ICT tools can facilitate the communication, it is the communication, dissemination of information, and response to that information, which is at the center of CE approaches". As digital access and literacy varies widely across and within countries, adopting digital approaches also risks amplifying the voices of the connected at the expense of others.²⁸ The 2016 WDR on *Digital Dividends*, for example, warns that ICT instruments may reinforce socioeconomic inequalities in citizen engagement (World Bank 2016a). Similarly, Kabeer (2016) found that digital exclusion is both *caused by* and can serve to *exacerbate* existing gender (and other social) gaps. Kumagai and Iorio (2020, p. 22) also remind us to consider how digital approaches "influence the level of trust in government, how transparency enabled by technology influences trust, and whether citizens will trust emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, in public participation arenas". An additional challenge is that PIUs and

²⁷ The KoBo Toolbox (including the Geo- Enabling Initiative for Monitoring and Supervision, GEMS), for example, has proved a quick and cost-effective alternative to traditional surveys in multiple countries.

²⁸ The 2017 WDR (p. 240), for example, cites data from Brazil, showing that the use of internet voting on municipal budget proposals revealed stark demographic differences between online and offline voters: online voters are more likely to be male, university-educated, and richer.

governments are often not at the forefront of technology and the introduction of new digital practices can result in scarce time and resources being eaten up by technical vs. "substantive" issues.

60. It is recommended to continue to develop (and study) hybrid approaches, that make use of different levels of technologies and digital tools to reinforce and complement offline approaches. Online platforms, while opening up the possibility for great numbers of citizens to participate in consultative processes, tend to generate fairly passive and fragmented input that rarely leads to quality debate or deliberation. To address this shortcoming, numerous countries have begun to experiment with developing collaborative, ongoing offline dialogues as an offshoot of online platforms (Youngs 2022). The 2022 Stocktaking of CE in LCR found that while the use of digital technologies is on the rise, they are not likely to replace in-person engagement methods; and rather, are best used to complement them. The report highlights the benefits of combining traditional and digital means of engagement, pointing out that "it's not just providing the technology, it is also the engagement around the technology that leads to successful and efficient results" (World Bank 2022d, p. 101). Yamouri (2017.p 6) adds that, especially in conflict-affected and fragile contexts, digital CE tools should be treated as "a supplementary channel for information and engagement, not a replacement" and "need to be combined with non-ICT tools to reach out to citizens and beneficiaries on both sides of the digital divide". Similarly, a recent report by ICNL (2023) finds that "In practice, investments in e-participation have often failed to achieve meaningful outcomes" and "Such programs must be part of a larger initiative to increase civic engagement and opportunities for two-way communication between public authorities and citizens, both online and offline – while promoting appropriate respect for the civic freedoms that undergird effective participation" (ICNL 2023, p. 23).

61. An increasingly important dimension of CESA is the protection and promotion of digital civic space.²⁹ In its recent report on "Enhancing Digital Civic Space Through the OGP Process", ICNL outlines a series of recommendations to protect and promote civic space, including, for example by: promoting open data and free access to information, supporting inclusive country-wide internet access, ensuring appropriate safeguards to protect privacy rights, adopting a human-rights based approach to the governance of AI systems, and addressing issues of disinformation and online violence. The role of state and state-sponsored actors in manipulating the information ecosystem through coordinated digital campaigns—thereby eroding trust in democratic processes— is well-documented and the breadth and scope of such disinformation campaigns is expected to increase with the proliferation of generative AI tools to create realistic video and images. Given this new reality, digital skills initiatives that involve 'media literacy' may become crucial for low-literacy populations who increasingly access visual content through their smartphones, bypassing traditional media and knowledge gatekeepers. Ostensibly to curb dis/misinformation, many countries have passed (or are in the process of passing) legislation criminalizing harmful online speech---and use these laws to crack down on dissent, thereby reducing social accountability (Funke & Flamini 2019). While debates over content moderation (and thus what constitutes digital civic space) are evolving and contentious, the Bank could have a role in advising governments, convening big technology platforms, and supporting an emerging ecosystem of CSO's working on digital rights globally. The Bank's Identification for Development (ID4D) initiative has begun engaging with CSOs, and recently published a good practice note for engagement, acknowledging the importance of a multistakeholder, federated ecosystem approach as digital IDs may become the basis for all digital citizen-state interactions in countries where these systems are being developed (World Bank 2022c).

²⁹ Digital civic space is defined as the legal, social, and technological conditions that allow citizens to participate fully in the public sphere by exercising digital freedoms (ICNL 2023, p. 4).

Finding 2.3 - Strengthening the CESA orientation and capacities of existing institutions (especially those with an accountability/oversight mandate) can represent a strategic and effective way to achieve CESA goals.

62. All countries have existing systems of citizen engagement and, to achieve sustainable CESA, it is important for Bank-supported operations to understand what these are and explore ways to support and strengthen them. One of the guiding principles of the 2014 *CE Strategic Framework* is to adopt an approach that is geared toward building institutions that incorporate citizen voices in decision-making processes, thereby increasing the responsiveness and accountability of government. While an institution-building approach to CESA is not the norm, research found multiple examples of Bank-supported projects that have sought to build or strengthen the CESA orientation and capacities of existing institutions. Such approaches - including efforts to influence organizational working cultures, support institutional reforms, establish new operating systems and processes, and build the relationships required to implement them - can be complex and time-consuming and require a good degree of experimentation, learning and adaptation. Consultations revealed that such approaches are often considered high risk by project and country teams but are also acknowledged to bring strong returns. As described in Annex 2, case study research found that time and resources invested in strengthening existing country systems and institutions for CESA (rather than supporting stand-alone or one-off CESA activities) frequently paid off in terms of effectiveness, impact and sustainability. In Kenya, an institution-building approach has resulted in a sustainable system for citizen engagement in budgeting decisions and climate resilience measures via county governments (Annex 2.1). In Cambodia, it has equipped the Ministry of the Interior, numerous line ministries and commune administrations to systematically report to citizens on performance results and integrate the recommendations of regular community scorecard assessments into action plans (Annex 2.5). In Ukraine it has created a multi-tiered citizen feedback system that spans the health sector (Annex 2.10) and in Afghanistan it strengthened the capacity of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, national NGOs and Community Development Councils to support a responsive and accountable nation-wide system of community-driven development (Annex 2.17).

63. The Bank could play a much more active role in strengthening existing accountability/oversight institutions (such as ombudsmen bureaus, auditor general offices, anti-corruption agencies, human rights commissions and public prosecutors). The WB's mission statement (WB 2013, p. 33) acknowledges that "a sustainable path towards ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity involves creating...institutions, structures, and processes that empower local communities, so they can hold their governments accountable". The 2017 WDR on *Governance and the Law* notes that "legal institutions of horizontal accountability such as national courts and ombudsmen offices can be a strategic asset for organized groups of citizens"(World Bank 2017a, p. 238). As described in Box 7, some Bank operations have successfully supported strengthening the CESA orientation of accountability institutions. However, research found such investments to be relatively rare. Given the critical importance of such institutions in promoting accountability, good governance and social justice - and evidence of successful Bank support for such bodies - these types of investments deserve more attention. A recent IDS Policy Briefing, for example, advises that the Bank "could vastly improve the odds of meeting its CE goals if it were to provide direct project support to national accountability agencies to carry out their distinctive roles and responsibilities within the accountability process" and that "this could ultimately be more effective and have longer-term impacts than projects attempting to contribute to an enabling environment for CE in isolation" (Nadelman 2020, p. 4).

Box 7 - Kenya Office of the Auditor-General: Citizens Accountability Audit Engagement Framework

With the support of the WB and in collaboration with CSOs, in 2022 the Kenya Office of the Auditor-General officially committed to enhancing citizen participation in governance, and in particular in public audit, by

adopting an Engagement Framework for Citizen's Accountability Audit. In doing do, the Office appreciated "that CSOs engaged in accountability work compliment what we do and that we can benefit from each other through partnerships and action aimed at improving accountability in the management of public resources and the delivery of public services". The Framework acknowledges that effective and meaningful citizen engagement is essential to ensuring accountability in the management of public finances and the delivery of public services. It "places citizens at the center of governance and provides the setting in which the OAG will implement citizen engagement through participatory audit of public programs and projects". Besides spelling out values and guiding principles underpinning engagement, the framework also provides a structure for participatory audit and monitoring of the implementation of public programs and management of public finances. The Framework acknowledges that CSOs and citizens are increasingly engaged in governance at the National and County levels of government, especially through increased participation in the budget making process and in oversight, using audit tools like Social Audit and Community Score Cards in exacting accountability from government. The OAG acknowledges its primary responsibility in auditing budget execution and expenditure efficiency but "considers CSOs as key partners in promoting and ensuring accountability in governance due to their ability to mobilize and work with citizens".

Source: Kenya Office of the Auditor-General. 2022. Citizens Accountability Audit Engagement Framework.

64. Relying on existing government systems for CESA does not come without challenges and may not be appropriate in all contexts. Research found that key challenges encountered in seeking to support CESA through existing government channels include systems that are dysfunctional, unresponsive, or discriminatory, that fail to pay staff, experience high turnover of employees, or lack a participatory culture and/or understanding of CESA approaches. Experience shows that, especially in restrictive environments or where engagement efforts involve traditionally marginalized or oppressed groups (such as indigenous peoples, LGBTI+ groups, conflict-affected populations or socioeconomically disadvantaged groups), initial investments in organizational culture change and trust-building may be required to overcome mutual misgivings and enable meaningful participation in government systems. The 2022 Stocktake of CE in LCR found, for example, that "especially in contexts where polarized views can be a source of exclusion, discrimination, and retaliation" setting up parallel third-party systems under the project could be a more sensible approach to ensure confidentiality and provide safe spaces to share genuine feedback (World Bank 2022d, p. 90).

Finding 2.4 - Country-level, systems-oriented CESA has received less attention at the Bank, due to the current focus on IPF-related corporate requirements. As a result, CESA has not yet been fully or effectively integrated into the Bank's country engagement model.

65. The review found wide variation across countries and regions in the level of CESA integration into country engagement plans. With technical support from IEG, the review team conducted, through a CPF review, an assessment of CESA practices at the country level. The review found that while 75% of CPFs make at least some reference to citizen engagement during the implementation of the country program, about half (48%) of these refer to CE in a generic or "symbolic" way, while the other half (52%) offer a more detailed discussion of the planned engagement process - e.g. as a means of improving the effectiveness of service delivery; strengthening public sector governance; enhancing the accountability and transparency of WBG-supported operations; building community resilience; strengthening monitoring and oversight; or mitigating risks to the CPF program. Only 6% of CPFs reviewed mention "citizen engagement" as a focus/priority area or cross cutting theme (Sah 2023).

66. Only a subset of CMUs has a country-level CESA strategy/action plan. Overall, a quarter (27%) of CPFs reviewed include a detailed plan of how CE will be mainstreamed during the CPF implementation

process. Many of these are from the ECA region where Citizen Engagement Country Roadmaps³⁰, which lay out a comprehensive plan on how CE will be mainstreamed during the CPF implementation process, are required (Sah 2023). Among the five countries outside the ECA region with CE Roadmaps, the *Guinea CE Roadmap*, for example, seeks to mainstream CE approaches across its portfolio by leveraging existing efforts to encourage community participation and citizen feedback at the rural commune level in support of decentralization. The roadmap aims to ensure the success of governance objectives and frontline service delivery in a low-capacity environment by promoting the economic empowerment of women, youth and the poor, prioritizing their needs, and monitoring local budgets and feedback with respect to local service delivery. Highlights of the Malawi CE Road Map are described in Box 8. (Further details about the Malawi CPF are attached in Annex 2.2.)

67. The review found a reasonable number of CPFs with CESA indicators, particularly at the level of progress reporting. In keeping with the results-focused approach of the 2014 *Strategic Framework*, task teams are encouraged to define the results of CE interventions (e.g., related to improvements in program or project effectiveness, enhanced development outcomes or improvements in processes of engagement) and incorporate suitable results indicators in CPF Results Frameworks to enable monitoring of CE interventions. The 2019 *Mainstreaming CE through the WBG's Country Engagement Model* Technical Note found that "even CPFs that have CE interventions do not always include corresponding indicators to monitor their results" and that "this practice has implications for reporting on CE in the PLRs and CLRs, which are not always described in detail". Despite these shortcomings, the review of CPFs (FY18-23) conducted by the research team found that a majority (67%) have at least one CESA indicator. Among these indicators (132 in total), only a minority (38%) relate to CPF objectives, while the majority (62%) are progress indicators. As depicted in Figure 8, below, the largest cluster of CPF CESA indicators relate to "fiscal transparency & public sector accountability (27%), followed by indicators related to "participatory planning, decision-making and monitoring (17%) and "assessment of beneficiary feedback" (14%) (Branco 2023). As shown in Figure 9, an analysis of these indicators according to the Bank's CESA quality scale finds a relatively homogeneous distribution of CPF CESA indicators across the three lowest rungs of the CESA "ladder" - "Inform" (35%), "Consult" (25%), and "Collaborate" (34%) - and a much smaller number (6%) at the final step of "Empowerment" (proxied by the CESA indicator type "Community management") (Branco 2023). In applying a gender lens to CPF CESA indicators, the review determined that only 22% (15 out of 67) of CPFs had a gender-sensitive CESA indicator (Branco 2023).³¹ This shortcoming means that the institution is missing out on potentially valuable disaggregated data and that, in a majority of projects and countries, CESA monitoring is gender-blind.

Box 8: Malawi Citizen Engagement Roadmap

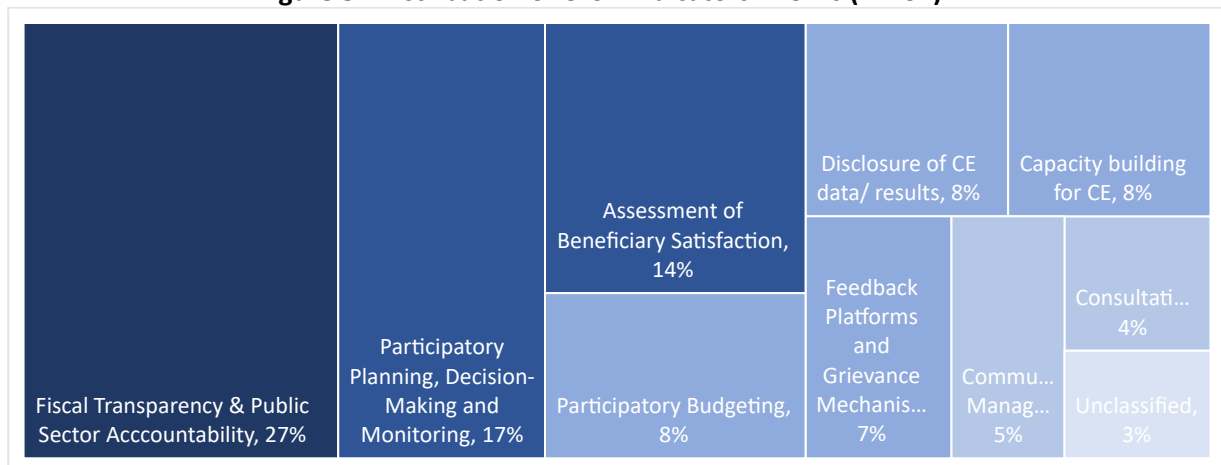
The Malawi Country Partnership Framework (FY21-25) is guided by a Citizen Engagement Roadmap aimed at integrating demand-side interventions into the design and implementation of the WB country program. The CPF and Roadmap were developed based on extensive consultations with a broad range of stakeholders including the government, civil society organizations, and development partners. The Roadmap introduces a

³⁰ The CE Country Road Map is an action plan tool used to articulate country-level objectives, outline areas of focus, define responsibilities, and set out concrete steps. While roadmaps vary from country to country, they are developed around a similar set of activities including: country-level actions, sector and project-level actions, and actions to incorporate and monitor citizen engagement (CE) mechanisms and results indicators across investment lending operations to ensure compliance with corporate requirements for CE.

³¹ This corresponds to 15 indicators, in other words 12 percent of the total number of CESA indicators.

politically informed, country systems level approach to CE- a clear shift from the more traditional projectized approach to CE. It builds on existing program and sector engagements, promotes economies of scale, supports iterative learning across the portfolio, and prioritizes high-priority policy areas such as agriculture and energy. The Roadmap proposes CESA interventions at three levels. (i) At the *macro level*, structural reforms are foreseen to strengthen the enabling environment for public accountability by increasing transparency, proactive information dissemination, citizen and public participation in policy making and implementation. Specific proposed actions include the annual publication of a comprehensive Citizens' Budget, the operationalization of the Access to Information Act, the facilitation of spaces for citizen/CSO deliberation on high-priority development issues, and improved citizen engagement on Local Authority Annual Investment Plans. (ii) At the *sector and systems level*, the Roadmap focuses on how CE innovations can be institutionalized within government systems, while also encouraging the use of technology to amplify citizen voice and strengthen citizen-state feedback loops. This includes support to the media and civil society to make information more accessible and actionable, innovations with CivicTech tools, and the strengthening of government systems to institutionalize incentives for responsiveness to citizens. (iii) At the *portfolio level*, the Roadmap encourages CE synergies and economies of scale across the WBG's Malawi portfolio to strengthen safeguards compliance and monitoring while supporting mechanisms that go beyond enabling individual feedback to bolster collective action. Proposed actions include the exploration of an umbrella grievance redress mechanism across clusters of WB-supported projects, the launch of a portfolio-wide approach to citizen satisfaction surveys, and provision of a standardized package of CE support to projects at the design stage. For more information, see Annex 2.2.

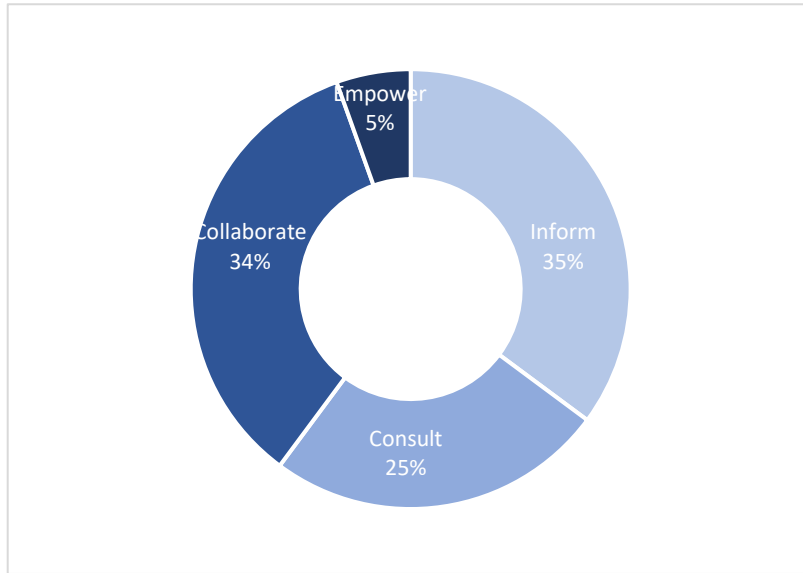
Figure 8 - Distribution of CESA indicators in CPFs (n=132)³²



Source: Branco 2023.

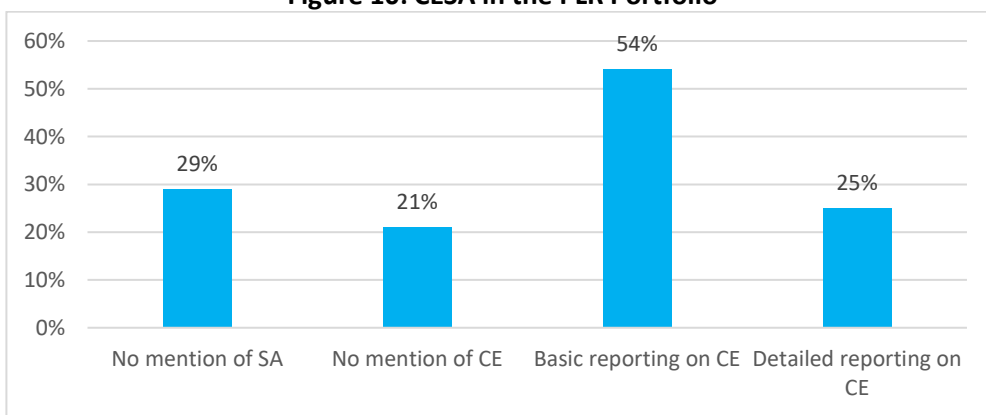
³² The following four CESA indicators were clustered under an unclassified category: Mainstream citizen engagement in the World Bank portfolio; Citizen Engagement Analysis (CEA) produced for at least four projects; Number of services for which citizen engagement mechanisms developed; Adoption of service delivery/citizen's charters. These indicators are part of the pool of 132 CESA indicators identified and have been considered for the calculation of the number of CPFs with at least one indicator.

Figure 9 - Classification of CESA indicators in CPFs according to the Bank's CESA quality scale



68. A review of Performance and Learning Review (PLR)³³ documents found a promising degree of progress reporting on CESA commitments, albeit with room for improvement. As shown in Figure 10, among PLRs reviewed (a total of 28), 21% made no mention of CE, 54% included basic reporting on CE (i.e., provided a brief update on CE by way of reporting on corporate requirements), while 25% (mostly from the ECA region) went beyond basic reporting to provide a detailed analysis of the implementation of CE commitments and future plans - greatly facilitated by the inclusion of a CE Roadmap in all the ECA CPFs. The review found that three quarters (75%) of PLRs reported on the progress of CESA indicators included in their CPF Results Frameworks. Of these, data showed that a third (33%) had already achieved the target set out in the CPF and another third (30%) were on track to meeting their target (Sah 2023). These findings, while providing encouraging evidence of the incorporation of CESA into CPF products, also point to opportunities to expand and deepen this practice.

Figure 10: CESA in the PLR Portfolio



Source: Sah 2023.

³³ A PLR provides an opportunity to review and report on progress of the CPF midway through implementation and make adjustments as necessary.

Finding 2.5 - There is strong, and largely untapped, potential for the Bank to make use of CPF and ASA products, as well as lending instruments like P4Rs and DPF to support systems-level CESA.

69. There is strong scope to enhance the integration of CESA throughout the CPF cycle. The 2014 *Strategic Framework* identified numerous entry points for scaled up CE across Bank operations based on the World Bank Group’s country engagement model. The 2018 *IEG Evaluation* similarly proposed multiple country-level entry points for CE including: consultations for the preparation of Systematic Country Diagnostics (SCDs)³⁴ and Country Partnership Frameworks (CPFs); the identification of related priority areas for inclusion in country operations; and the inclusion of CE indicators in CPF results frameworks.³⁵ During consultations, the view that CESA-related processes and content can enrich the quality of CPF products was frequently expressed by respondents both inside and outside the Bank. While research (as described above) found signs of progress in supporting country-level CESA, it also revealed considerable room for improvement in integrating CESA throughout the CPF cycle.

70. Research found evidence of significant citizen/CSO engagement in the preparation of country-level diagnostic reports and CPFs, but room for improvement in reflecting CESA-related issues and actions in the content of the CPF products.

- a. In conducting *Country-Level Diagnostics*, the 2019 Technical Note on *Mainstreaming CE through the WBG’s Country Engagement Model* encourages task teams to examine how CE issues constitute challenges and opportunities for adequate, inclusive, and sustainable growth and poverty reduction, and how CE practices can contribute to the relevant development outcome areas (Masud et. al. 2019). Numerous interviewees (both internal and external) pointed out the importance and operational usefulness for country diagnostics to include an assessment of the civil society landscape and civic space (see Finding 3.1).
- b. Recently introduced *Climate and Development Reports* (CCDRs) and *Climate Change Institutional Assessments* (CCIAs) represent another important entry point for meaningful CESA. Given that the goal of these reports is to guide climate investments and policies by helping countries prioritize the most impactful actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and boost climate adaptation, collaboration with citizens and CSOs is essential. While the roll-out of CCDRs will continue over the coming years, the first set of reports (published in 2022) already provide valuable examples of good practice in incorporating CESA. The [Iraq CCDR](#), for example, engaged extensively with citizens, civil society and private sector stakeholders to inform climate policies and establish the foundation for ongoing climate dialogue. This involved: a social media survey to understand the Iraqi’s perspective on climate change issues and effects; in-person FGDs with oil workers, agricultural workers and women’s groups, university students and youth; and the formation of a multistakeholder CCDR advisory group comprised of representatives from the government, private sector and civil society.
- c. Masud et. al. (2019) propose numerous ways for CESA to be reflected in *Country Partnership Frameworks* (CPF). They recommend, for example, that CPFs should: include an assessment of civic space (i.e., the conditions for CESA) in the Country Context section; describe how operations & analytical work will integrate CESA (including as a CPF pillar or cross-cutting issue); identify how CESA interventions can contribute to risk management; incorporate CESA-related indicators in the Results Framework; and ideally, include a detailed CESA Roadmap or Action Plan in Annex. Examples of CPFs that have successfully mainstreamed CESA-related

³⁴ Note that, as of October 2023, SCDs are replaced with an updated suite of country-level diagnostic reports (e.g., Country Climate and Development Reports, Poverty and Equity Assessments, Public Finance Reviews and Risk and Resilience Assessments).

³⁵ The World Bank management response to this assessment concurred that the country engagement model provides opportunities for wide citizens’ participation in defining challenges and priorities for World Bank engagement through the SCD and CPF processes.

issues into their analysis, operational programming and monitoring plan are described in Annex 2. As described in Annex 2.2 (and in Box 8 above), the Malawi CPF includes an ambitious politically informed CE Roadmap backed by multiple World Bank operations and ASAs for its implementation on the ground. The Iraq CPF (FY22-26), which adopts a pillar-based approach to integrate CE, was developed based on extensive consultations with a broad range of stakeholders and is accompanied by a CE Framework that provides the government with options for entry points to mainstream CE based on the CPF and the Iraqi government's development priorities (see Annex 2.14).

- d. **Performance and Learning Reviews** (PLRs) and **Completion and Learning Reviews** (CLRs) also represent important opportunities to (i) explore how CESA activities have contributed to CPF objectives and propose mid-course improvements as necessary (in the case of PLRs) and (ii) assess CESA experiences and lessons learned to inform the next generation of country engagement approach in a country (in the context of CLRs).

71. Moving forward, the Bank should provide staff with further guidance on how to integrate CESA into the CPF cycle. Acknowledging that "task teams are yet to make full use of CE mainstreaming in the CPF cycle to benefit from citizens' inputs and feedback", the 2019 Technical Note on *Mainstreaming CE through the WBG's Country Engagement Model* shares examples of success and provides valuable practical guidance on how Bank teams can further integrate CESA in the CPF cycle - e.g., by describing how to conduct CESA analysis in the context of CPFs, PLRs, and CLRs; identifying entry points for CESA content in different sections of CPF products; and, providing examples of consultation practices during the CPF Cycle, sample research questions, as well as a list of proposed CESA research databases and diagnostic tools. Looking ahead, it will be important to develop further operational resources to support Bank staff in deepening country-level CESA processes - e.g., by providing guidance on understanding and supporting enabling conditions for CESA; designing vertically integrated CESA mechanisms; and, convening and supporting mechanisms for participatory multi-stakeholder dialogue, decision-making and oversight at the project, sectoral and country-level.

72. ASA is already used to inform and support CESA and there is strong potential for more efforts in this direction. The review revealed multiple examples of CESA-related ASA at the project, portfolio/country and regional levels. Many of the projects and programs highlighted in Annex 2 benefitted from CESA-related ASA to inform their design and implementation. ASA has also served to both inform and assess the implementation of the CESA agenda at higher systems levels. In Pakistan for example, a *Country System & CE Portfolio Review* used a desk study, a TTL survey, FGDs & interviews to assess the integration of CE mechanisms in government systems and WB operations and propose numerous entry points for enhancing the effectiveness of public consultations and other CE mechanisms. As described in Box 9, a country-level ASA in Burundi served to strengthen CESA implementation across the portfolio. A region-wide CE ASA in LCR, in addition to providing operational support to project teams and funding CE capacity building activities (including trainings in 11 countries and 44 PIUs), supported both country-level and regional-level analytical work (including country CE profiles and civil society assessments and a regional stocktaking of CE good practices and lessons learned) (World Bank 2022b). Such examples of CESA-oriented ASA represent an invaluable source of learning and guidance for the future of the agenda. Moving forward, as the Bank seeks to adopt a more systems-oriented approach to CESA, there will be an increasing need for ASA related, for example, to context analysis, stakeholder and political economy/power analysis, civic space assessment and the evaluation of CESA experiences, impacts and lesson learned. Participatory ASA can also be an important instrument for advancing CESA and impacting policy development. During consultations, in-country CSOs lamented the fact that community voices are too rarely incorporated into WB analyses. They also highlighted the important role that the WB can play in supporting or drawing on CSO-generated research and policy work in the context of ASA and called on the Bank to

bolster such efforts as an important way to make citizen/CSO voices heard and strengthen their impact on policy reforms.

73. P4Rs, especially in the Governance sector, have strong potential to support systems oriented CESA. Because current CE corporate requirements do not apply to Program-for-Results (P4R), Bank staff indicated that these operations are not considered "bread and butter" CE work (like IPFs are), even though they are acknowledged as having strong potential to promote CESA actions and enabling conditions. As they're based on national sector strategies, P4Rs foster country ownership and allow the Bank to play a more arm's-length role. They thus provide the space to collectively define priority results and strategies and offer an additional incentive for action by providing resources once agreed results are achieved. Research found that P4R programs (in particular, those in the water and sanitation and urban infrastructure sectors) frequently involve deep forms of engagement which are not necessarily captured through CE tags and monitoring. Case study research also revealed numerous examples of P4Rs that have effectively supported sustainable, systems-level CESA. As described in Annex 2.15, the *Jordan Inclusive, Transparent and Climate Responsive Investments* P4R, for example, uses disbursement linked indicators to create incentives for enhanced social accountability of public investments, including results linked to evidence-based policy making and responsiveness to citizen feedback (through improved government service standards and the operationalization of a government-centralized GM). The Kenya *Financing Locally-led Climate Action* P4R (see Annex 2.1) builds on the previous *Devolution Support* project to empower citizens to partner with their county governments to assess climate risks and identify, implement and monitor socially inclusive solutions tailored to local needs. In Pakistan, the *Punjab Public Management Reform* P4R (see Annex 2.20) established a robust state-wide social accountability system by supporting a sustainable, mobile-based mechanism that coordinated "supply-side" and "demand-side" actions for monitoring the performance of essential public service providers.

Box 9 - Strengthening portfolio-wide CESA capacity in Burundi through ASA

The World Bank Burundi CPF (FY19-23) highlighted the importance of rebuilding the broken social contract between citizens and the state and called for a different way of doing business in Burundi, central to which was the need to re-establish trust between the government and the population, including through an enhanced role for civil society to strengthen transparency and accountability. In support of these efforts, an initial *Mainstreaming CE in Burundi* ASA (launched in FY19) partnered with an international NGO to conduct a review of CESA in the WB-financed portfolio and to assess the policy, legal and institutional framework for CESA in Burundi. The ASA was successful in securing support for the CESA agenda from (initially skeptical) key ministries and in brainstorming along with task teams and PIUs to develop a roadmap on how to build on current innovations and strengthen CESA approaches in the future. In FY21, financial support was secured from Bank Budget and a State and Peace-building Fund (SPF) grant to implement a follow-up *Strengthening Implementation of the Roadmap for CE in the Burundi Portfolio* ASA designed to build the capacity and willingness of the state, CSOs and citizens to engage with each other constructively to improve development outcomes across the country portfolio. Under this ASA, action was taken to: (i) support the enabling environment for CESA in Burundi and (ii) build capacity on CE for government, civil society, project teams and communities. Specific activities included: research and documentation of good practice CESA examples in Burundi; the preparation of an easy-to-use guidance note on options for CESA that are proven to work in the Burundi country context; the development of training modules to help commune and *colline* councils better manage processes of community feedback and grievance redress; and, the design and delivery of CESA capacity development opportunities for PIUs, government counterparts and CSO implementing partners (including a detailed needs assessment, a series of tailored project-specific workshops, in-person and online tool-specific clinics and a national CESA Learning Forum). At the three-day CESA Learning Forum, conducted in March 2022, 80 participants (from 12 of the 13 ongoing projects in the Burundi portfolio) were exposed to a wide range of CESA approaches and tools and, based on this learning, prepared project-specific CE Action Plan for follow up. Lessons learned from the implementation of this ASA included: the importance of collaboration with CSOs (which brought significant added value to virtually every activity of this ASA); the benefits of peer learning (which allowed for valuable

exchanges of information and expertise and created a degree of healthy competition between project teams); and, the value of a “portfolio-wide” approach (which not only facilitated peer learning but reinforced a sense of community of practice, allowed projects in preparation or in early stages of implementation to integrate elements into their design coming from other projects in the same country).

Source: State and Peacebuilding Fund. (2022). *Implementing the Roadmap to Strengthen Citizen Engagement in the Burundi Portfolio (P171970): Results Achieved and Lessons Learned Note*.

74. More could be done to bolster the CESA dimensions of P4Rs and DPF. Strengthening citizen engagement and social accountability in P4Rs and DPF can serve both to strategically advance the CESA agenda and to enhance the effectiveness and impact of P4R and DPF operations. As outlined above, while many P4Rs already incorporate engagement and accountability practices, steps could be taken to ensure more systematic integration of CESA into P4R programs. Given their focus on building the capacity of country-owned institutions and processes, the design of P4R programs (in any sector) could benefit from systematic political economy and civic space analysis. There is also scope for P4Rs to include support for enabling conditions and mechanisms for CESA as an integral part of their interventions and to expand participatory and third-party monitoring in the context of P4R verification protocols. Research also suggests that P4Rs offer particularly fertile ground for adaptive approaches that engage meaningfully with local actors and take better account of the country context. For example, a study by ODI, based on the Bank’s Nigeria country portfolio, found that “the P4R instrument seems to lend itself well to a locally owned process of achieving results through problem-solving coalitions that experiment, learn, and scale new approaches to achieving specific outcomes” (Bain 2016, p. 31-32). This potential to promote collective systems-level learning and co-creation is another aspect of P4Rs that should be further explored and encouraged by the Bank. Development Policy Financing (DPF), an instrument also not covered by current CE corporate requirements, is another important vehicle for supporting CESA. Given its particularly strong potential to contribute to creating a favorable environment for CESA, DPF is discussed under Strategic Objective #3 of this report on supporting enabling conditions (see Finding 3.5).

Finding 2.6 - There is strong scope for the Bank to use its unique convening power to support inclusive multistakeholder CESA platforms and mechanisms at the country/portfolio/sector level.

75. The Bank can play an important potential role in convening and facilitating interactions and dialogue between citizens/civil society and the state at the country level. The Bank is seen as having unique capacity to create spaces to convene and deliberate and catalyze diverse stakeholders across the accountability ecosystem (Halloran, 2021). The 2017 publication on *Citizens as Drivers of Change* concluded that while international actors have an important role to play in supporting CSOs financially, “they may be most effective at creating spaces for social groups to convene, both among themselves...as well as with elite actors” and that the CSOs studied “benefited considerably from international interventions to create spaces for deliberation” (World Bank 2017, p. ix). The IEG Evaluation found that, outside of CPF consultations, the Bank uses its convening power to bring citizens to the policy discussion table less frequently.

Box 10 - The Tanzania Citizen Engagement Platform

Launched in 2021, the Tanzania Citizen Engagement Platform aims to enhance country development effectiveness by bringing together WB, government, members of civil society groups and academia, development partners and citizens to discuss critical development issues within the parameters of the Tanzania Country Partnership Framework. The intention is to collect insights from a diverse range of stakeholders and to share them with relevant World Bank sector colleagues for consideration in their project implementation and engagement. The active participation of government representatives ensures that feedback received via the platform can also inform public decision-making, learning and action. Every year, the TCEP organizes a high-level event focused on a specific thematic priority. Past

themes have included digital development and climate action. Platform discussions cover a wide range of issues including: enhanced government-CSO coordination and collaboration; inclusive participation (of local community members, women, persons with disability, youth, pastoralists and marginalized social groups) in the design and implementation of development projects; strategies for scaling up awareness at the local level; and, the need to build capacity of research institutions to work in partnership with local communities to infuse traditional knowledge in development activities etc. More information can be found [here](#).

76. Ideally, the Bank can partner with other international and national actors in facilitating CS-state engagement and build on existing good practices examples and lessons (from the Bank and other development partners). Facilitating constructive engagement and collaboration between state and citizens/CSOs is a growing international movement and represents a core component, for example, of global initiatives such as the [Open Government Partnership](#) and the [Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative](#). Experience suggests that adopting a coordinated and inclusive approach in establishing country-level multistakeholder platforms for engagement and accountability can enhance their effectiveness. Gaventa et. al. (2023, p. 13), for example, find that "including other donor actors, informal and formal leaders, social movements, as well as more institutionalized NGOs, is critical for successful alliance building for accountability in settings with diverse forms for authority". Referring to the Bank's efforts to understand and support renewed social contracts, IEG underlines the importance of partnering with other stakeholders, advising that "relying more on partnerships can increase civic mobilization and political transformation" and that "CMUs should convene broad country-level coalitions beyond government actors" (IEG 2019, p. xii). As outlined above below in Box 10, the Citizen Engagement Platform established under the latest CPF in Tanzania brings together representatives from across government, civil society and development partners. As described in Annex 2.4, the second *West Africa Coastal Areas Resilience Investment Project* will support platforms for multistakeholder dialogue and decision-making at multiple levels. Beginning with a pilot in Ghana - comprised of support for the national-level Civil Society Platform on Oil and Gas, Ghana EITI and Public Interest Accountability Committee; various multistakeholder platforms at the regional/subnational level; and dialogue spaces linked to the Community Resource Management Area system at the local level - the project ultimately plans to replicate this three-tier engagement model across all three participating countries and also to set up a regional CSO Platform Secretariat to provide coordination and implementation support. In seeking to establish or support existing country-level multi-stakeholder platforms, the Bank can build on the good practices and lessons of these and many other initiatives. As described in Box 11, the Asian Development Bank, for example, has rich experience in supporting country-level CSO engagement.

Box 11 - ADB support for country-level CSO engagement

More than twenty years ago, recognizing the critical development role of NGOs and CSOs, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) established its NGO and Civil Society Center (NGOC) as its focal point for partnering with CSOs. The creation of the NGOC at ADB headquarters and the CSO Cooperation Network across ADB's resident missions in 2001 put in place the institutional arrangements for cooperating with CSOs through regular consultations and dialogues, and for training ADB staff to understand the roles of CSOs and ways to involve them in ADB's activities. ADB is currently scaling up these efforts by establishing Civil Society Advisory Councils at its headquarters in Manila, as well as across its Resident Missions. The expansion and standardization of this network of Civil Society Advisory Councils across ADB's Developing Member Countries builds on the experiences and lessons of Resident Missions (such as Mongolia and Indonesia) that have successfully piloted such approaches. A 2022 study of ADB-CSO engagement in South Asia underlines the importance of encouraging regular interaction among CSOs, ADB, and the government at country level, outside the project cycle and recognizes the strategic role that ADB can play in encouraging this tripartite engagement. In addition to the formation of country-level Advisory Councils or tripartite sector groups, it recommends inviting CSOs to present their experience at ADB and government planning events to allow government officials and ADB staff to enhance their knowledge of the capacities and expertise of specific

organizations and groups. The report also highlights the benefits of engaging CSOs in upstream policy dialogue. To this end, it identifies as good practice: conducting comprehensive stakeholder mapping in the early stages of policy formulation or review; preparing and agreeing clear consultation plans with stakeholders; and, sharing draft policies in advance, ensuring that they are translated into appropriate national languages and that ample time is allowed for stakeholders to make meaningful and specific comments on proposals. In 2021, ADB updated its operational guidelines on *Promotion of Engagement with Civil Society Organizations* and published a *Sourcebook for Engaging with CSO in ADB Operations* that provides ADB staff and developing member country officials with detailed practical advice, templates, and tips on maximizing the benefits of engaging with CSOs across policy development and review, country programming, and throughout the project cycle. The sourcebook complements existing resources ADB has produced on increasing CSO engagement in ADB-financed activities, including e-learning, case studies, guidance materials, and templates. Visit the [ADB and Civil Society webpage](#) for more information.

Sources: ADB 2021; ADB 2022; ADB 2022a.

77. Such platforms can be particularly empowering for groups that typically face social and political exclusion. Support for the creation of the National Council for the Development of Indigenous Peoples in Panama and the Roma Sounding Board in Romania (as described in Boxes 12 and 13) are two examples of how the Bank has supported platforms for institutionalized, systems-level engagement and dialogue with a focus on socially excluded groups. As demonstrated by these cases, in seeking to support such platforms for engagement, it's important to pay close attention to process and to carefully consider factors such as: which spaces are most appropriate for productive interaction, what the "terms of engagement" will be, how they will be defined and managed and by whom.

Box 12 - Tackling the structural exclusion of indigenous peoples: The Panama Indigenous Peoples Plan

In 2015, the World Bank SCD for Panama identified stark inequalities faced by Indigenous Peoples, finding that the existing National Plan for the Integral Development for the Indigenous Peoples was not being implemented effectively. The Bank team leveraged its dialogue with the government to include support for the Plan under the 2016 CPF and to ensure that new lending in Panama would contribute to its implementation – including a DPL series with prior actions to legally recognize the National Indigenous Peoples Roundtable and advance the implementation of the Plan. While these actions were not initially successful, continued dialogue with the government advanced awareness and appreciation of the Plan. The Bank provided technical assistance on international good practice, and in 2016 the government requested Bank financing to implement the Plan. The Bank's Indigenous Peoples loan to Panama was the first of its kind in 20 years. All of the critical design decisions were carried out with the Roundtable, the government, and the Bank in a tri-party process – designing *with* Indigenous Peoples instead of *for* them. The Bank's continuous engagement also contributed to the creation of the National Council for the Development of Indigenous Peoples in 2018 (formerly the National Indigenous Peoples Roundtable). The Council provides a structured platform for coordination between the 12 Indigenous Congresses and Councils and government agencies to execute a coordinated development agenda in IP territories that is in line with the Plan. This Council is a unique structure that significantly strengthened the voice and participation of indigenous peoples in policy making. The project to implement the Plan was approved in 2018 and served as a catalyst for other development organizations (including the FAO and IADB) to contribute financing. The investment in relationships and trust building is paying off as the Bank continues supporting the Government's commitment to strengthen the participatory policy-making process and the allocation of public resources to indigenous communities. The Bank accompanied the Government in the preparation of Law 301 that establishes measures for the Integral Development of Indigenous Peoples in Panama, which was unanimously approved in 2022. This new Law sets an important precedent for the region and aligns with international best practices. Some of the elements that make this legislation innovative include: (i) the adoption of the National Indigenous Peoples Development Plan; (ii) a framework for the inclusion of all indigenous peoples, both within and outside indigenous territories, in planning and implementation of

policies and public investments; and, (iii) a monitoring system to keep track of policy commitments and targets.

Source: World Bank. (2018). *Panama Support to National Development Indigenous Peoples Plan (P157575)*.

**Box 13 - Support for systems-level engagement and dialogue with socially marginalized groups:
The Roma Sounding Board**

The Roma Sounding Board (RSB), a national platform for ongoing consultations with the Roma community in Romania, is an example of a systems-level approach to social inclusion. Convened by the Bank in 2017, and composed of a cohort of 18 Roma CSOs, the RSB represents a move from talking about issues related to the Roma to working directly with the Roma community to ensure that their voices and perspectives are heard by the government, the Bank and other development partners - which respects the principle of *"nothing for us without us"*. Since its inception, systematic consultations have been conducted with RSB on the Bank's IPF portfolio and broader national policies, strategies and investments. As a result of the RSB, Romania's 2018 SCD incorporated a Roma Note and the FY19-23 CPF included a Roma Country Roadmap annex. Ongoing findings and feedback from the RSB were also reflected in written inputs on the 2023 SCD update. The RSB has ensured that Roma voices were taken into account in: (i) Romania's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic; (ii) WB operations under the Bank's 2018-2023 Country Partnership Framework for Romania; and (iii) the implementation of the EU Structural and Cohesion Funds 2021-2027. Insights from RSB members have allowed the Bank to address barriers to last mile engagement in reaching the most vulnerable population groups in Romania through policies and investments (e.g., vaccination hesitancy; access to legal documents; access to school and health services). The RSB has contributed to: improved understanding, trust and cooperation between the WB and the Roma CSO community (overcoming a previous relationship of negative perceptions and public criticisms of the Bank by Roma CSOs) and increased visibility of the Roma agenda in Romania and inside the Bank. It has also *strengthened the voice and agency of Roma CSOs* - increasing their access to world class knowledge and information and enhancing their capacity to frame policy issues and to engage strategically in processes of policy dialogue, government reforms and WB operations. Moreover, the RSB acts as an accountability mechanism, ensuring that the Bank "walks the talk" and reflects Roma voices and needs in its policy dialogue and operations. The effective functioning of the RSB is ensured by a dedicated focal point in the portfolio team (to identify upstream opportunities for engagement) and a support person to runs the RSB Secretariat. Additionally, ESF specialists have played an important role in effectively incorporating RSB inputs (e.g., into the Romania Health PforR, Safer Schools and RAS Floods projects). Challenges faced by the RSB have included: the limited participation of grassroots community organizations (due to capacity constraints); lack of attention to *intersectional issues* (e.g. ethnicity and gender); *differing expectations* between RSB members (mostly interested in accessing government counterparts and receiving support for their advocacy work) and the Bank (most interested in inputs to inform its portfolio and policy dialogue); and, limited capacity of PIUs and government to respond operationally to Roma demands. The experience of the RSB has shown that investing in institutional and structured multi-stakeholder national and local community platforms takes time, but ultimately builds capacity, trust and enables proactive and coordinated planning and implementation of WB operations.

Sources of information: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/romania/brief/roma-sounding-board>,
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2021/04/08/ame-sam-roma-we-are-roma>

Finding 2.7 - While the Bank continues to support CESA as a core practice across its operations, it should pay specific attention to areas of priority importance where CESA is likely to have greatest strategic impact (e.g., climate action, anticorruption, fragility and conflict).

78. In parallel to the mainstreaming of citizen-oriented approaches across its operations, given limited time and resources, the Bank should make strategic investments in those areas where CESA approaches can make the biggest difference. Numerous development goals for which CESA is of high strategic importance are outlined in para. 19. Among these, during interviews and FGD research,

certain themes emerged as top priorities. As outlined in Box 14, for example, using CESA approaches to *strengthen the accountability of the climate financing ecosystem* is viewed as an urgent need. Making more strategic use of CESA approaches - at the project, portfolio/country and global levels - to *fight against corruption and the resulting loss of precious development resources* (as discussed under Finding 1.2) also emerged as an area of priority action. As discussed under Finding 3.4, CESA strategies are also seen as having a particularly important and strategic role to play in *fragile and conflict-affected contexts*. As the Bank seeks to renew its CESA agenda, support for intensified, systems-level CESA practices in these and other areas identified as priorities at the country level is recommended.

Box 14 - Strengthening the accountability of the climate financing ecosystem through CESA

CESA has strong potential to strengthen the accountability of the climate financing ecosystem at both the local and global levels. It is important to empower citizens and communities to design, implement and monitor climate actions on the ground, while simultaneously enabling meaningful engagement between climate finance institutions and CSOs at the macro level. Kumi Naido argues that "ordinary people should be front and center in developing green climate policies" (UNRISD 2022, p. 26) To this end, development projects should aim to make climate policy issues accessible to citizens. In Kosovo, for example, the GPSA partnered with the Balkan Green Foundation and other local CSOs and media to further Green Agenda policy debates and enhance access to climate information, including through an innovative 'Ask the State' platform that makes data sets and other information available to the public in a user-friendly language and format. It's especially important for historically underserved communities to have a say in climate finance decisions and monitoring. Indigenous communities hold vital lessons for broader climate action and have to date often been left out of decision-making. A current GPSA grant that empowers Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendant communities in the Latin American and Caribbean region to track climate finance flows will hopefully serve as an example for much more action of this type. Initiatives like the *Locally-led Climate Action Program* which is now being piloted at national scale in Kenya (see Annex 2.1) are demonstrating how community-level citizen engagement can enhance local ownership of WB-supported climate projects. Systems of bottom-up participatory accountability (e.g., CSO third party monitoring, social audits, community level oversight committees, robust disclosure regimes for information/indicators) are needed to complement efforts by governments to address and respond to citizen feedback, including strengthened government oversight bodies (as discussed under Finding 2.3). Given the pressing need for innovative and scaled-up CESA in the public climate finance ecosystem, the recent launch by the GPSA of a [Green Accountability](#) Call for Proposals aimed at creating demonstration cases of meaningful participation of civil society and local communities in ensuring accountable public climate finance is a welcome development. Just Energy Transition Partnership funds are a key opportunity given the extensive resources they channel. As they tend to be managed by Ministries of Energy, that may not be the most well-versed on issues related to CESA, strengthening the capacity and willingness of these institutions to collaborate with CSOs in developing and supporting systems of citizen engagement and social accountability is a priority. At the global level, a recent UN report calls for a new eco-social contract based on reimagined multilateralism and solidarities whereby "power asymmetries [are] rebalanced by empowering the global South and civil society actors" (UNRISD 2022, p. 19). Developing internationally agreed standards around upstream participatory processes (with a focus on just transitions that do not adversely affect developing countries and marginalized social groups) and strengthening CESA mechanisms to ensure accountability at all stages of climate finance could contribute to this goal.

Entry points

79. Based on research findings, the following actions are recommended to strengthen country systems for CESA:



2.1 - In priority sectors (where CESA is deemed to be most feasible and/or impactful), support project teams to design and implement intensified, vertically integrated CESA strategies, that strengthen country systems and make local to national linkages.

- a. Consult with in-country actors to identify sectors/operations where CESA is deemed to have the greatest feasibility or potential impact and include provisions for intensified, systems-oriented CESA in these areas in the country-level CESA action plan (see Entry point 2.4).
- b. Issue guidelines regarding the inclusion of citizens/CSOs representatives on project/sector-level advisory and/or oversight committees (as one important strategy of vertical integration).
- c. Continue to document and share good practice examples of CESA initiatives from different sectors and regions that build/strengthen country systems (see Entry point 4.5).



2.2 - Support the protection and promotion of digital civic space and further develop (and study) hybrid approaches that make use of emerging technologies and digital social innovations to complement and reinforce analog CESA activities.

- a. In the context of the Bank's ongoing support for digital development (guided by the Digital Development GP) prioritize country-level digital policies, frameworks, and tools that foster meaningful and inclusive citizen participation and protect and promote digital civic space.
- b. Enhance digital advisory/consultative services for task teams to expand the existing set of technology and software-related services available to clients and project teams.³⁶
- c. Undertake more research to understand how and under what circumstances digital engagement enhances government responsiveness and accountability as well as recommended ways to promote online inclusiveness, address the digital divide and enhance media literacy.
- d. As part of the proposed CESA knowledge platform (see Entry point 4.4), include a digital CESA repository (i.e., a curated suite of digital CESA technologies, practices, trends, case studies, regulatory frameworks, open-source software applications, tools and other technical assets that can be used, re-used, and tailored by PIUs for their clients' specific needs).



2.3 - Prioritize strengthening the CESA orientation of existing institutions and systems, including formal accountability institutions (such as supreme auditors, anti-corruption agencies, and ombudsman offices).

- a. Include an assessment of existing (state and non-state) accountability institutions as part of CPF country-level diagnostics (or other ASA).
- b. In drafting the CPF and country-level CESA action plan, consider opportunities and actions to strengthen the CESA orientation of existing accountability institutions/systems (at the local to national level), including extending CESA capacity development opportunities to the leadership and staff of existing accountability institutions (see Entry point 2.4).
- c. Support efforts by citizens/CSOs to make collective complaints/claims to existing accountability institutions (e.g., anti-corruption agencies, ombudsman offices, GMs).
- d. Building on existing good practice examples, promote the strengthening of embedded and centralized (vs. project specific) GMs.

³⁶ Sub-Entry Points 2.2.b, 2.2.c and 2.2.d draw on the findings and Entry Points of the Bank's 2022 *Amplifying People's Voices* report (World Bank 2022a).



2.4 - Systematize (the preparation, public dissemination and operationalization of) country-level CESA actions plans, ideally supported by a country-level multi-stakeholder advisory committee.

- a. Provide operational guidance for the inclusion of CESA-related themes in the new suite country-level diagnostic reports products (i.e., CCRDs, PEAs, PFRs, RRAs and gender assessments).
- b. Issue operational guidelines for all CPFs to include in Annex (or be accompanied by) a country-level CESA action plan (including actions to support enabling conditions for CESA and civil society).
- c. Provide country teams with good practice examples, learning notes and sample outlines to facilitate the preparation of country specific CESA action plan.
- d. Issue guidelines for annual (internal and public) reporting on CESA monitoring and results indicators, in national languages (not just English).
- e. Ensure that CESA-related issues are discussed in annual portfolio review meetings by the CMU.
- f. Building on existing good practice examples of country-level tripartite IFI–CSO-government committees, issue guidelines for CMUs to convene a multi-stakeholder advisory group to support and oversee the design and implementation of the country-level CESA action plan (or to mandate an existing multistakeholder committee with this role).



2.5 - Use the full range of Bank products/instruments (e.g. including CCRDs, CCIAAs, CPFs, ASAs, P4Rs and DPF) to support systems-level CESA.

- a. Expand the current CESA corporate requirements for IPFs to include P4Rs and DPF.
- b. Building on existing good practices and lessons learned, develop operational guidance on how P4Rs and DPF can be used to strengthen systems-level CESA.
- c. In the guidelines for the preparation of country-level CESA action plans (see Entry point 2.4), include information and examples about potential entry points for CESA throughout all stages of the public governance cycle (e.g., including policymaking, planning, public financial management, service delivery and evaluation/oversight).



2.6 - Play an active role in creating, or ideally supporting existing, platforms for regular multistakeholder dialogue and oversight at country-level.

- a. Actively support and leverage existing country-level, multistakeholder mechanisms (such as OGP government-civil society platforms, EITI working groups and tripartite IFI-civil society-government committees).
- b. Convene and support spaces and mechanisms for facilitated multistakeholder dialogue, deliberation and collaboration (from the community to national level) on priority areas/themes where CESA is likely to have greatest impact (such as climate action, anti-corruption, PFM, inclusion and gender equity and social cohesion).

C. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #3 - SUPPORT ENABLING CONDITIONS FOR CESA

80. The third strategic objective identified by the review is for the Bank to better understand and proactively support enabling conditions for CESA. The 2014 CE Strategic Framework states that citizen engagement is "highly context-specific and sensitive to governments and citizens' capacity and willingness to engage, as well as to social, political, economic, environmental, cultural, geographic, and other factors." Global research suggests that the effectiveness of CESA approaches is limited when they fail to unpack and address the complex and interrelated factors that influence power relations,

political will, and decision-making processes and outcomes (Gaventa & McGee 2013, Malena 2009). This is particularly and increasingly important in the current global context of shrinking civic space (i.e., the freedom and means to speak, access information, associate, organize, and participate in public decision-making)³⁷. In line with the findings of the 2018 IEG evaluation, this review found considerable scope for the Bank to do more in this area - for example, by more systematically analyzing the in-country conditions for CESA and supporting actions and reforms that protect and enhance civic space.

Why is this important?

- Understanding and addressing the issue of civic space is **critical for the World Bank's ability to meet its development goals**.
- The Bank's high-level commitments to transparent, accountable and participatory development and to meaningful engagement with citizens and CSOs are all **directed related to and influenced by civic space**.
- The Bank has acknowledged **shrinking civic space** over the past decade - noting that this "narrows the policy space" and "limits the channels available to citizens to engage" (WDR. 2017. p. 235) - however, there is **no clear operational guidance** on how to respond to this challenge.
- Understanding the context in which CESA is undertaken is key to the **successful design and implementation of CESA practices**.
- A failure to adequately understand the context in which engagement takes place can put **citizens, civil society and project-affected communities at risk**.

Key Findings

Finding 3.1 - Actors both within and outside the Bank acknowledge the need for the institution's approach to CESA to be better informed by context analysis and supportive of enabling conditions.

81. Understanding the context in which CESA practices are undertaken and supporting enabling conditions for CESA are understood as being key to achieving results. Since the adoption of the 2014 *CE Strategic Framework*, the Bank has acknowledged the critical importance of enabling conditions for citizen engagement and the need for a context-specific approach. Numerous Bank documents underline the importance of understanding the contextual political economy factors that affect citizen engagement (O'Meally 2013, Grandvoinet et. al. 2015, IEG 2018, Masud et. al. 2019). External actors have also argued that "for the Bank to effectively implement its commitments to stakeholder engagement...it needs to better understand the constraints, challenges, gaps and opportunities that enable or constrain participation in a country's development process" and tailor its approaches accordingly (Donaldson et. al. 2022, p. 11). In addition to helping Bank teams ensure that necessary precautions are taken in situations of constrained civic space, such analysis is also seen as essential to helping the WB be better informed and nimbler in responding to opportunities when signs of expanding civic space are detected.

³⁷ According to the CIVICUS Monitor, 88.5 percent of the world's population lives in countries rated as having "closed", "repressed", or "obstructed" civic space (CIVICUS Monitor, 2021). Recognizing this worrisome trend, the OECD, for example, recently established a Global Observatory of Civic Space, which uses a survey instrument and in-depth, country-level civic space cans to assess, measure, and identify opportunities to protect and enhance civic space (OECD, 2021).

82. Research found, however, that currently only a subset of CESA strategies and practices are grounded in thorough context and political economy analysis. While a number of ASA reports have explored civic space issues³⁸ and while an increasing number of country and project teams aim to include CESA-related issues in their analytical work, research found a lack of systematic civic space analysis. The team's review of CPFs (FY18-23) found that while no country framework mentioned the term "civic space", 13 CPFs (19%) made reference to issues and constraints related to the enabling environment or conditions for civil society and CESA.³⁹ In most cases, these references appeared only as part of the country context description and were not necessarily accompanied by any proposed concrete actions to address the challenges identified.⁴⁰ Similarly, research found no mention of the "civic space" in PLRs reviewed, but it did detect reference to the state of the enabling environment for CSOs and CESA activities in almost a third (29%) of PLRs, including for example, references to issues such as legal frameworks, country rankings on Voice and Accountability in the Worldwide Governance Indicators, political and social polarization and public trust in the government (Sah 2023). The 2022 *Stocktake of CE LCR* calls for increased efforts to make available to task teams easily digestible country-specific information on the environment for CESA (i.e., CESA country profiles) which it notes could also help to inform CPFs, SEPs and other project and country-level assessments. It adds that, ideally, the Bank should update its analysis of civic space regularly,⁴¹ using the findings to inform its ongoing dialogue with borrower government and operational decisions.

83. To meet its high-level CESA commitments, the Bank must invest more both in understanding and supporting enabling conditions. The Bank is seen as having unique capacity to take a lead in this area but is currently seen as lagging behind. The Bank has yet to adopt a systematic approach to analyzing and supporting civic space, even though a growing number of international actors have highlighted the pressing need to do so. For example, a group of private financial institutions and ESG data providers recently co-published a report underlining the critical importance of analyzing civic space and proposing ways for financial institutions to enhance their assessment and action in this area. The report acknowledges that "open and unrestricted civic space is critical for the financial sector to create long-term value in a sustainable and just way" and recommends the establishment of a working group that brings together financial institutions, academics and civil society organizations to discuss civic space restrictions (ABN AMRO et. al. 2023, p. 3). On the multilateral front, the OECD recently introduced a global [Observatory of Civic Space](#), highlighting the importance of civic space as a foundation for development and good governance.

84. Including a civic space or CESA indicator in the Bank's corporate scorecard (or dashboard) would send an important signal and provide a much-needed metric reflecting the enabling conditions for CESA at the country level. A growing number of country and project teams undertake political economy analysis, including analysis of civic space-related issues, to inform and guide Bank operations. As discussed above, such analysis has been conducted in the context of SCDs, ASAs and

³⁸ CE country profiles, undertaken in the context of the recent LCR CE ASA and Social Accountability Country Profiles conducted in the MENA region following the Arab Springtime are considered examples of good practice in this regard.

³⁹ For example, the Cambodia CPF notes that while CSOs are prevalent, they have little influence on government policy and only a narrow space for meaningful dialogue. The Kazakhstan CPF states that political openness, independent media, and civil society remain stunted in Kazakhstan, while the CPF for North Macedonia remarks that the political environment in the country has led civil society to become increasingly constrained, and that corruption, transparency, and citizen participation measures have levelled off or worsened.

⁴⁰ A smaller number of CPFs have proposed concrete actions to address civic space challenges. For example, as described in Box 8, the Malawi CPF outlines a series of interventions and legal reforms aimed at increased public transparency, the formalization of citizens' right to petition, more accountable service delivery, and reduced corruption.

⁴¹ It's been noted that political economy studies are often undertaken as a one-off analysis and conducted by external consultants, making it hard to update them as contexts change (Bain et. al. 2016). Incorporating regular updates into the annual country program and/or drawing on existing annually updated civic space indices (such as the CIVICUS Civic Space Monitor) to inform decision-making could help address this challenge.

the preparation of CPFs, IPFs and other instruments. A CSC indicator would serve not only to ensure coherence with the Bank's current commitments to contextually adapted CESA, it would also bolster efforts by CMUs and project teams to include civic space metrics in their country-level and project-level analyses. The inclusion of a measure of civic space or CESA in the CSC would also respond to multiple and growing calls from civil society and other global stakeholders for the Bank to show leadership in this area. A range of established civic space indices with global reach and methodological rigor exist,⁴² facilitating the inclusion of such a metric in the corporate scorecard or dashboard.

85. The Bank should be more proactive in supporting enabling conditions for civil society and CESA through its country engagement, ideally, in partnership with other key actors. In 2018, IEG noted that "after several decades of progress, the space for citizens' voices is shrinking globally" and posited that "in this context, the WBG's commitment to citizen engagement can catalyze change" (IEG 2018, p. 1). As discussed below, the Bank can encourage and support enabling conditions for CESA in multiple ways. In doing so, it should ideally proactively seek to partner with other actors that share similar goals. A coalition-building approach is considered particularly important for in-country efforts to protect civic space and create enabling conditions for CESA. The Bank already collaborates with a range of organizations and movements active in supporting civic space (including initiatives like the Open Government Partnership and Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative) and should consider augmenting such partnerships.

Finding 3.2 - A lack of political will and capacity to engage (on the part of both state actors and citizen/CSOs) pose a challenge in many country contexts.

86. The Bank is well-placed to build political will for CESA and could be more proactive in doing so. In consultations with in-country actors, lack of political will to introduce CESA approaches or to respond to citizen demands was frequently cited as a principal challenge. On the flipside, identified cases of effective CESA, as documented in Annex 2, frequently cited the buy-in and support of (different levels of) government actors as a key factor of success. Experience shows that the chances of powerholders having the political will to act are greatest when they come to *want* to undertake a given action ('political want'), feel confident they *can* undertake that action ('political can'), and feel they *must* undertake the action ('political must') (Malena 2009). Country-level stakeholders considered the Bank well-placed to support all three of these mutually reinforcing elements of political will and called on the institution to bolster its efforts to do so. PIU representatives urged the Bank to be more proactive in raising awareness about the importance of CESA at all levels of government, including top leadership. Sharing concrete examples of success to help government actors understand the multiple potential benefits of CESA approaches - both in achieving development and governance goals and in boosting their own legitimacy and popularity - was seen as an important way for the Bank to nurture political will in the context of country engagement. Facilitating interactions and relationship-building between state and non-state actors, creating incentives (e.g., through grant funding or performance-based financing) and/or applying pressure (e.g., by linking CESA practices to prior actions or conditionalities) were also cited as potentially effective ways to influence political will.

⁴² These include, for example, the CIVICUS [Civic Space Monitor](#) and the [Voice and Accountability](#) dimension of the WB Worldwide Governance indicator. CIVICUS provides an appraisal of the extent of policies, laws, and practice for freedoms of association, and peaceful assembly and expression of citizens in a country. The Voice and Accountability Indicator captures perceptions of the extent to which a country's citizens can participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media. Both indicators are reported yearly and have a global coverage. In either case, one could report the percentage of countries with open civic spaces, or the percentage of countries with a high rank of voice and accountability. The availability of time series data will allow to report changes in the enabling conditions of CE or to show the trends.

During consultations, linking CESA practices to ESG performance standards was flagged as a potentially particularly powerful incentive, given that countries' ability to attract financing and foreign investment rely on such ratings.

87. Enhanced investments in CESA capacity building for in-country (state and non-state) actors is considered key. In 2018, the IEG found that "citizen and state actors' lack of capacity and willingness to engage represent major constraints to successful engagement" and that "creating capacity requires a long-term investment that, although not feasible in all projects, is essential to improving collective action and producing lasting change" (IEG 2018, pp. xiii). The IEG evaluation also found that less than a quarter of projects (23%) reviewed had at least one engagement mechanism that included capacity enhancement activities in their design. While this review was not able to generate comparative quantitative data for 2023, qualitative research clearly indicated an ongoing unmet demand for in-country CESA capacity development. During consultations, support for CESA training and learning opportunities for country-level actors (at both the local and national levels) was flagged as a priority - both to build the expertise and skills required to implement CESA strategies and as a means of strengthening political will (through a bolstered sense of 'political can'). Enhanced training opportunities for PIU staff, consultants and implementing partners was underlined as a particular priority. Incorporating CESA modules into the core curriculum of civil servant training was also identified as a strategic and effective way to support longer-term, systems-level capacity development.

88. Research found promising examples of CESA capacity development, at both the project and country level, that could serve to inform more efforts in this area. Case study research revealed numerous ways in which Bank-supported projects have incorporated CESA capacity building activities. For example, service providers involved in the *Modernization of Government Services Project* in Moldova benefitted from capacity-building trainings on citizen engagement, social inclusion and gender, which according to an intermediate monitoring indicator included in the project Results Framework ("*Share of relevant staff from public authorities trained in citizen-centric service redesign and delivery*") achieved a result of 100 percent (Jones and Pfeil 2019). In some cases, as described in Box 15, the Bank has supported the development of deeper, more specialized, institutional capacity to implement CESA across sectors. The review of CPF products also found evidence of CESA-oriented capacity development support at the country level. For example, the Morocco CPF includes plans for intensive capacity building and technical assistance to establish mechanisms for public engagement with Parliament and to support line ministries and CSOs/NGOs to better understand, integrate and implement CE approaches and mechanisms, and Turkey's most recent PLR indicates that CE capacity building support will be prioritized during the remainder of the CPF (Sah 2023).

Box 15 - Supporting the development of institutionalized CESA capacity at country level

In Kyrgyzstan, the presence of a multisectoral, independent implementing agency has helped to facilitate effective CESA across sectors. The Community Development and Investment Agency (ARIS), was established in 2003 with the purpose of alleviating rural poverty by building the capacity of communities and local self-government bodies. While the ARIS mandate is to implement community-based projects, it also supports the nationwide development of water supply and sanitation infrastructure, as well as district heating, urban, and pasture and livestock management projects. ARIS currently manages six WB-financed projects, along with projects financed by other donors. Although it is under a supervisory board chaired by the President's Office, it has a level of separation from the Government that has enabled it to function relatively well—delivering critical development projects in the country. Despite political pressures, ARIS's widespread presence in villages throughout the country and its contacts in local government and communities make the rollout of citizen engagement processes straightforward and systematic. A network of ARIS fieldworkers, present in each oblast, organize community mobilization and support community and local self-government capacity building. During

Covid ARIS livestreamed events and accelerated the development of a digital citizen engagement platform, resulting in significantly higher levels of transparency. The Bank has collaborated with in-country CSO actors to support the ongoing capacity building of ARIS development officers in CESA approaches and tools. For more information, see Annex. 2.9. *Source: Plummer and Temirbaeva. (2021).*

Finding 3.3 - With governments in many countries facing a crisis of legitimacy and trust, efforts to enhance civic space and CESA can serve to strengthen relationships between citizens and the state, build trust and renew the social contract.⁴³

89. Experience shows, that through small incremental gains, CESA approaches can contribute to broader goals of building trust, improving state-society relations and renewing the social contract.

A 2017 study on *Building Trust in Government through CE* found that "trust in government and citizen engagement form a mutually reinforcing, interdependent dynamic... that affects development outcomes and effectiveness (Kumagai & Iorio 2017). Operational experience shows that meaningful engagement can lead to enhanced mutual understanding by allowing government officials to better comprehend citizen problems and concerns and helping citizens and communities to gain more knowledge about government processes and the various constraints and trade-offs they face. Through regular engagement, all parties can develop more constructive communication, negotiation and collective deliberation capacities, ultimately providing the basis for enhanced trust and collaboration. CE mechanisms introduced in the context of the *Modernization of Government Services Project* in Moldova, for example, helped shift the mindsets of public servants and build trust between bureaucrats and citizens. A senior staff member from the e-Governance Agency noted: "When citizens are asked to participate in the reform and redesign of a service...when they are co-creating something with the authority, it changes the relationship. It takes them both out of their silo and facilitates real dialogue, which is really a new model and complete change in culture in our context" (Jones and Pfeil 2019, p. 2). Yamouri notes that as citizens engage constructively with state actors across different sectors and public services, "a new culture of collaboration and trust arises as both groups of stakeholders experience the benefits of addressing development issues collectively" (Yamouri 2017, p. 6). When such interactions become the norm, it contributes to the evolution of a new social contract based on a responsive and accountable state.

90. In some cases, the Bank has shown agility in responding to emerging opportunities and persistence in challenging contexts to support a renewed social contract; it should build on and expand such efforts.

A recent UN publication has noted that "in a world of multiple crises, rising inequalities and social injustice, large numbers of people, organizations and movements are calling for the creation of a new social contract between citizens and governments" and that this "needs to be grounded in...deliberative processes at different levels... and with different sets of stakeholders, to arrive at a shared vision" (UNRISD 2022, p. 19 and 223). In some cases, the Bank has demonstrated its capacity to strategically support such developments. For instance, after the election of a new president in Uzbekistan, the World Bank opportunistically proposed the framing of a new implicit social contract in the country's 2018 PLR, including a proposed National Citizen Engagement Framework to complement and supplement CESA mechanisms embedded into World Bank projects (IEG 2019). The IEG has highlighted this example as good practice and encouraged the Bank to take more such initiative, underlining that "the World Bank has effective, yet underexploited, channels to renegotiate key features of the social contract by facilitating citizen dialogues with various levels of state actors" (IEG 2019, p. x). In Cambodia, despite restricted civic space and a challenging

⁴³ A social contract can be defined as the explicit and implicit agreements between state and citizens defining rights and obligations.

environment for CSO-state relations, by adopting a long-term approach, building consensus around a set of guiding principles and investing in capacity development and relationship-strengthening, the ISAF program (as described in Annex 2.5) was able to create a safe and constructive space for government-civil society collaboration and roll out an extensive multi-sectoral CESA program with national coverage. Such programs are rare in the Bank's portfolio and the experiences and lessons they've generated should be further studied and used to support similar interventions in other countries.

Finding 3.4 - Experience shows that even in challenging contexts there is potential for productive engagement and that CESA can play a particularly important role in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

91. Despite the inherent challenges, experience suggests that CESA approaches can be especially useful and effective in fragile contexts. Common challenges associated with fragile and conflict-affected contexts include limited state capacity, institutional instability, corruption, low levels of social cohesion, constrained civic space and lack of a credible social contract, all of which contribute to chronic poverty and exclusion (Gaventa et. al. 2023, Yamouri 2017). Additionally, Nixon et. al. (2017, p. 7) note that "a lack of trust in public institutions and experience of the state as a source of conflict or oppression may result in citizen disengagement from formal accountability and redress processes". Such issues represent important challenges for the practice of CESA but are also exactly the types of problems that CESA can play a unique and strategic role in addressing. A recent multi-country research program focused on empowerment and accountability in fragile and violent settings concluded that, even in such challenging contexts, there are prospects for productive citizen engagement and that "despite the odds faced in settings with long histories of authoritarian rule, small gains can be found which in turn have the potential to become significant building blocks for more systemic change by nurturing a culture of accountability between citizens and sources of authority" (Gaventa et. al. 2023, p. 11). This finding validates an earlier meta-analysis of citizen engagement in 20 countries which found that in the least democratic and stable countries, citizen associations played a very important role in achieving positive democratic and developmental outcomes, and that citizen engagement was not necessarily riskier in weaker political regimes - with backlash against increased citizen voice observed across all settings, including more "democratic" states (Gaventa & Barrett 2010). Yamouri (2017) argues that the weakness of formal institutions in fragile and conflict-affected contexts makes participatory CESA mechanisms inherently more useful/necessary, and that these mechanisms have the potential to positively impact societal dynamics that lie at the heart of fragility by building trust, reinforcing state legitimacy, deterring fraud and corruption, and improving state-society relationship - thus reducing the likelihood of future conflict.

92. Research has found that effective CESA mechanisms can also help build social cohesion. CESA mechanisms that entail face-to-face interaction among citizens have been shown to promote trust between community members and improve social cooperation. Nazneen (2023) cites examples of how women's protests in fragile settings contributed to increased critical awareness and a collective sense of the ability to act together; and similar gains in social cohesion and collective empowerment have been noted as a result of donor supported CESA initiatives and in cases where intermediaries mobilized members of their community to challenge government action or inaction (Anderson 2023, Anderson et al., 2023). Based on the experiences of WB-supported projects in fragile and conflict-affected countries, Yamouri (2017, p. 2) finds that "participation allows community members to widen social identification, develop a broader perspective, become cognizant of common goals, recognize and respect diversity even when opposing opinions, develop a capacity for cooperation and reciprocity, and learn the norms of social inclusion. It paves the way to addressing challenges collectively, thereby improving social collaboration and collective action". As described in Annex 2.3, under the ACREsAL Project in Nigeria, CESA mechanisms are designed not only to support the project's

core objective of enhanced agro-climatic resilience, but also to contribute to social cohesion and peacebuilding.

93. Operational experience provides important lessons to address the inherent challenges in integrating CESA mechanisms in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Given the limitations of weakened institutions in fragile environments, Yamouri (2017) notes the importance of making maximum use of existing community structures and CSOs, based on careful organizational analysis (to assess capacity, credibility and legitimacy) and clear selection criteria. A related operational lesson is the importance for CESA initiatives in fragile and conflict-affected contexts to include a strong focus on capacity development for both state and non-state actors. As many fragile contexts are characterized by deliberate and embedded patterns of exclusion, another lesson is that specific provisions to ensure that existing patterns of marginalization are not replicated within CESA approach are required. Numerous analysts have pointed out that a flexible and adaptive approach - one that is carefully tailored to the specific country, and local, context and can be readjusted in response to evolving and unpredictable dynamics - is also especially important in fragile and conflict-affected contexts (Nixon et. al. 2017, Yamouri 2017). Finally, Gaventa et. al. (2023, p. 8) advise that in contexts of repression and eroded social cohesion scaling up efforts need to take a back seat to addressing the more fundamental and urgent constraints to citizen action such as "overcoming fear, creating a sense of expectation and obligation, building or protecting safe spaces for engagement, and establishing trust and relationships between stakeholders". Case study research, as documented in Annex 2, identified numerous examples and lessons of the effective use of CESA strategies in fragile settings. In Afghanistan, for example, both the *Citizens' Charter Project* and its predecessor the *National Solidarity Program* represent rich systems-level CESA experiences in the context of a conflict-affected/dysfunctional state (see Annex 2.17).

Finding 3.5 - Development Policy Financing (DPF)⁴⁴ is considered a particularly well-suited and currently underutilized instrument for supporting an enabling (legal, policy and institutional) environment for CESA and civil society.

94. The strong potential of DPF to support CESA mechanisms and enabling conditions is, as yet, largely unrealized. The 2018 IEG evaluation concluded that, despite its strong potential to trigger reforms to create an enabling institutional environment for citizen-state collaboration, DPF is not systematically used to support the CE agenda (IEG 2018, pp. xiv-xv). A subsequent 2020 DPF portfolio review found that among a total of 2,140 DPF prior actions approved between FY14 and FY18, only 60 (or 2.8 percent) were directly linked to CE elements (Kumagai 2020).⁴⁵ Among these, approximately half aimed to support an enabling environment for CE, while the remainder related to the implementation of a specific CE action. The review further found that the majority (76%) of prior actions related to "Information-sharing", the lowest rung of the CE quality ladder. The remaining 24% aimed to support "Consultation", while none of the prior actions were judged to correspond to more intensive CESA approaches of "Collaboration" or "Empowerment"⁴⁶. The 2020 review concludes that "the usage of prior actions for CE elements...presents an opportunity for the Bank to further exploit

⁴⁴ DPF supports borrowers to implement policy and institutional reforms aimed at addressing actual or anticipated development financing requirements. The legal terms of DPF identify "prior actions" that are deemed critical to achieving the objectives of the development policy operation.

⁴⁵ The review also noted a decline in the usage of prior actions linked to CE elements from (4.8% in) FY14 to (1.9% in) FY18.

⁴⁶ Desk research conducted in the context of this Strategic Review found similar results - with the vast majority of current CESA-related prior actions still clustered at the lower end of the CE quality spectrum, a handful of prior actions supporting citizen "monitoring/oversight", one case related to "collaboration" and no prior action related to "empowerment".

this entry point systematically to advance CE mainstreaming in DPFs" and recommends further exploration of how DPFs can best support deeper forms of CESA (Kumagai 2020, p. 7).⁴⁷

95. Existing examples of CESA-related DPF prior actions demonstrate multiple ways in which they can support an enabling environment for CESA and civil society. According to the Bank's [DPF prior action database](#), since FY14, DPFs in at least 19 countries have included prior actions linked to supporting an enabling environment for CESA. For example, as described in Annex 2.16, Morocco has implemented multiple CESA-related prior actions over the course of three governance-oriented DPF operations.⁴⁸ CESA-enabled prior actions have included support for the establishment of access to information laws and decrees, the publication of citizen budgets, disclosure of PFM documents and the introduction of more transparent and accountable public procurement procedures. Some prior actions support CESA by establishing laws and regulations to create GMs, support independent or third-party monitoring, conduct citizen report cards or enable civil society organizations and the public to participate in policy decision-making in specific sectors.

Finding 3.6 - While the Bank's CESA agenda is largely led by the Social Sustainability and Inclusion Global Practice, efforts to address systems-level issues and support enabling conditions for CESA will benefit from a stronger focus on CESA within the Governance GP.

96. CESA has the potential to contribute to development effectiveness and efficiency at every stage of the public governance cycle. The *World Development Report 2017: Governance and the Law* redefined the concept of governance as "the process through which state and nonstate actors interact to design and implement policies within a given set of formal and informal rules that shape and are shaped by power" (World Bank 2017a, 3). This reframing of governance provides an opportunity to further develop interventions to strengthen core government functions by advancing systems-level citizen participation and social accountability. While CESA activities undertaken in the context of IPFs tend to focus on processes of local-level public service delivery, the Bank's country engagement model and development policy instruments offer important opportunities for supporting more upstream, country systems-level CESA initiatives. As shown in Figure 11, and described in the Glossary, the CESA "toolkit" includes a broad range of strategies and approaches that can be used (at both the local and national level) throughout the public governance cycle - only a small sub-set of which are currently regularly used in the context of Bank-supported projects.

97. CESA's role in enhancing core governance processes of agenda-setting, policy-making and public financial management can have more far-reaching impacts than local, project-level interventions. As outlined in the 2017 *World Development Report*, there is broad-based consensus that citizen engagement in processes of public *polycymaking* can contribute to the adoption and implementation of sound policies and, consequently, enhance their impact on socially desirable goals and development outcomes (World Bank 2017). The WHO (2022), for example, has recently published a report on *Implementing CE within Evidence-informed Polycymaking* which acknowledges the limitations of top-down approaches and proposes practices like deliberative policy dialogues to allow for participatory polycymaking. Citizen engagement in country systems can also strengthen systems of *public financial management* and more general *oversight*. The 2014 *Strategic Framework for Mainstreaming Citizen Engagement* identified PFM as one of five key areas where CE can potentially improve the achievement of development outcomes, concluding that CE in the PFM processes has led to more inclusive responsive budget processes, and pro-poor fiscal policies. A 2019 Note on

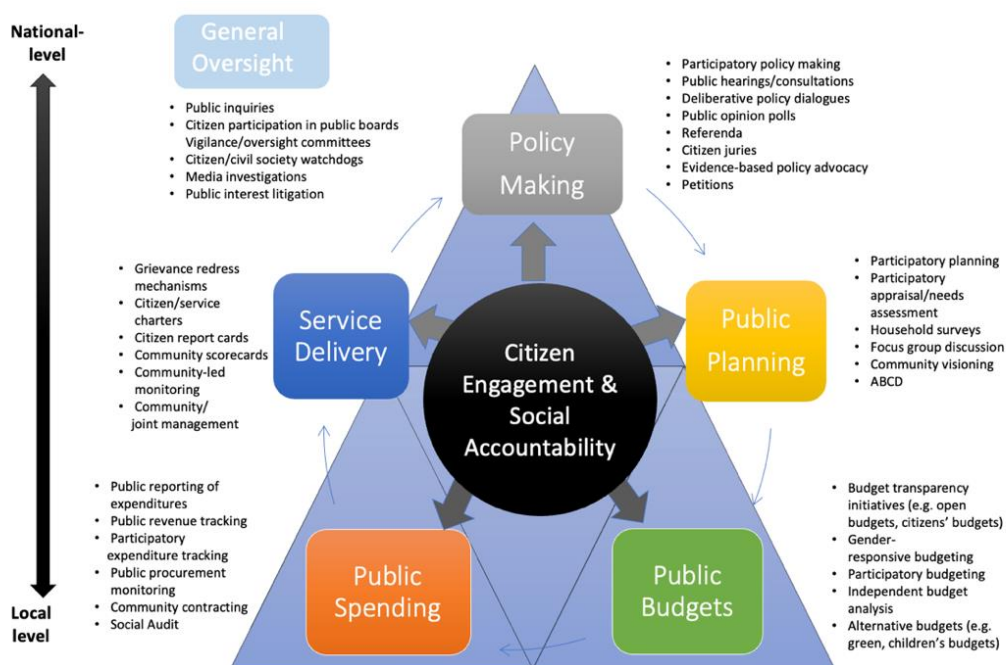
⁴⁷ A Retrospective of the DPF FY21 portfolio highlights numerous efforts to promote an enabling private sector environment but makes no mention of any efforts to support an enabling environment for CESA.

⁴⁸ Other countries with CESA-related prior actions in their DPF portfolio are Brazil, Mozambique, the Solomon Islands, Jordan, Sierra Leone, Vietnam, Colombia, Kyrgyz Republic, Madagascar, Pakistan, São Tomé and Príncipe, Seychelles, and Tanzania, Ethiopia, Armenia, Paraguay, Madagascar, and the Dominican Republic.

Mainstreaming CE in PFM identifies entry points for CESA at all stages of the PFM cycle - including the design of fiscal laws and policies, budget formulation and enactment, public expenditure reporting and tracking, participatory/social audits, and independent oversight of public finances - and argues the need for CE in PFM to move beyond transparency measures to promote budget literacy and more active citizen and civil society engagement in PFM processes (Kumagai et. al. 2019). Experience shows that diverse and inclusive engagement can have the greatest impact on PFM by ensuring that budgets and their implementation reflect the needs of all citizens - including poor people, women, children and youth, the elderly, disabled, refugees and internally displaced persons, indigenous peoples, and gender and sexual minorities. Finally, as discussed under Finding 2.2 citizen/CSO engagement with supreme audit institutions and public oversight bodies such as anti-corruption agencies and ombudsmen offices can also contribute to enhanced overall oversight and the effective and efficient use of public resources (Pande 2021 and 2022, Mendiburu 2020, IBP 2021).

98. The advancement of the Bank's CESA agenda would benefit from a stronger governance focus. The Bank's Governance GP has produced important analytical work on a wide range of issues related to CESA and supports projects to enhance transparency (including of PFM), oversight institutions, decentralization and GovTech, including (CivicTech), however, CESA-related areas of activity have remained quite marginal to its core focus on "supply-side" governance. Moving forward, a stronger emphasis by the Governance GP (and greater collaboration between the Governance GP and CESA GSG) on issues of civic space, participatory governance and the application of systems-level CESA approaches to enhance government responsiveness, accountability and integrity across sectors and throughout the public governance cycle, will be key to the successful progression of the agenda.

Figure 11 - CESA throughout the Public Governance Cycle



Source: Malena and Landry 2018 (reproduced in 2021 CESA training materials for WB staff).

Finding 3.7 - Despite the Bank's commitment to "not tolerate reprisals and retaliation against those who share their views about Bank-financed projects", the institution has been criticized for what is seen as an inadequate response to reprisals in some cases.

99. Although the Bank has adopted strong measures to protect those who speak up about Bank-supported operations,⁴⁹ external observers have accused the Bank of neglecting the risks that citizens take when exercising voice and not doing all it could in response to some cases of reported reprisals (Gallagher K. and Donaldson C. 2020, Nadelman 2020). As it continues to implement its CESA agenda and to actively encourage citizens, including individuals and groups in vulnerable situations, to exercise voice and agency in the context of Bank-supported projects, these civil society analysts call on the Bank to put its full institutional weight behind ensuring that these primary stakeholders do not come to harm as a result. Specific proposals include for the Bank to incorporate contextual risk assessments to identify the risk of reprisal, adapt project design and implementation to prevent and mitigate reprisal risk, and apply a clear unrestricted protocol to respond to reports of reprisals (Gallagher K. and Donaldson C. 2020).

Entry points

100. Based on research findings, the following actions are recommended to support enabling conditions for CESA:



3.1 - Building on existing good practice examples, systematize country-level CESA assessments to inform country-level CESA action plans and include a CESA or civic space indicator in the corporate scorecard or dashboard.

- a. Issue operational guidelines for country-level CESA assessments to be conducted (in the context of CPF-related country-level diagnostics) to inform the development of country-level CESA action plans and project-level CESA activities.
- b. Draft and disseminate good practice examples as well as recommended sources of information (i.e., existing civic space indices) to facilitate the assessment of enabling conditions for CESA.
- c. Include an indicator in the corporate scorecard or dashboard to track changes in CESA/civic space in countries where the World Bank operates.



3.2 - Expand the use of Governance DPF as a vehicle for supporting enabling conditions for CESA and civil society.

- a. Proactively explore with government counterparts the potential benefits of CESA/civic space-oriented governance DPF.
- b. Issue operational guidance and technical advice on the use of DPF "prior actions" to promote civic space and support enabling conditions for CESA.



3.3 - In partnership with other actors, support country-level initiatives to nurture political will and promote enabling conditions for CESA and civil society.

- a. In dialogue with government counterparts (and, ideally, in partnership with other relevant stakeholders), identify opportunities to strengthen enabling conditions for CESA and civil society.
- b. Include in country-level CESA action plans, actions to strengthen enabling conditions for CESA and civil society (see Entry point 2.4).

⁴⁹ Including its ESF Directive on [Addressing Risks and Impacts on Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups](#) and [Guidelines to Reduce Retaliation Risks and Respond to Retaliation During the Panel Process](#).



3.4 - Scale up CESA-related capacity development for state and non-state actors from the local to national level (including citizens/CSOs, local officials, higher level public servants and elected officials and PIUs).

- a. Consider adapting and applying an approach like the ESF Mapping Tool to assess the CESA knowledge/skills, gaps and priority capacity strengthening needs (of state and non-state actors at different levels).
- b. Considering country-specific needs and priorities, allocate budget for CESA awareness-raising and capacity development activities at the country-level (including, where there is buy-in, the introduction of CESA modules into the core curriculum of public service training institutes).
- c. Systematize CESA capacity development for PIU staff, consultants and implementing partners, ideally supporting "joint" capacity development opportunities (that bring together state and non-state actors) to promote relationship-building and a shared understanding of CESA principles and practices.



3.5 - Ensure a strong and unequivocal response to reprisals against stakeholders who share their views about Bank-financed projects.

- a. Incorporate contextual risk assessment (including an assessment of risk of reprisals) into project/sector-level stakeholder and political economy/power analyses (see Entry point 1.2) and country-level CESA/civic space assessments (see Entry point 3.1).
- b. Proactively engage with government counterparts on the Bank's stance on reprisals.
- c. Adapt project design and implementation to prevent and mitigate reprisal risk (for example, by holding separate consultations with vulnerable or at-risk stakeholders and ensuring confidentiality or anonymity when required).
- d. Develop and disseminate a strict and explicit protocol to immediately elevate the report of a reprisal to a level above the country or project team receiving the report and to prioritize the safety of the person reporting the reprisal.

D. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #4 - ENSURE A FIT-FOR-PURPOSE INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR CESA

101. The fourth and final strategic objective identified by the review is for the Bank to invest in an institutional support system for CESA that is fit-for-purpose. The review found the current level of support for CESA at the Bank to be inadequate. In addition to a scarcity of dedicated staff and resources, the review also found institutional incentives and support for CESA-related learning and knowledge management to be lacking. Achieving deeper and higher quality CESA - in line with the Bank's own current commitments, IEG recommendations and external demand - will require institutional investments in both human and financial resources. In addition to strengthening its own support system and funding for CESA, the Bank can play a key role in mobilizing resources from other donors, both public and private, to replenish and expand trust funds, including the GPSA, to expand support for CSOs - especially those from the global South - to undertake CESA initiatives.

Why is this important?

- The Bank's ability to fulfill its CESA commitments, and to implement the recommendations of IEG's 2018 evaluation and this review, are dependent upon **a fit-for-purpose institutional support system.**

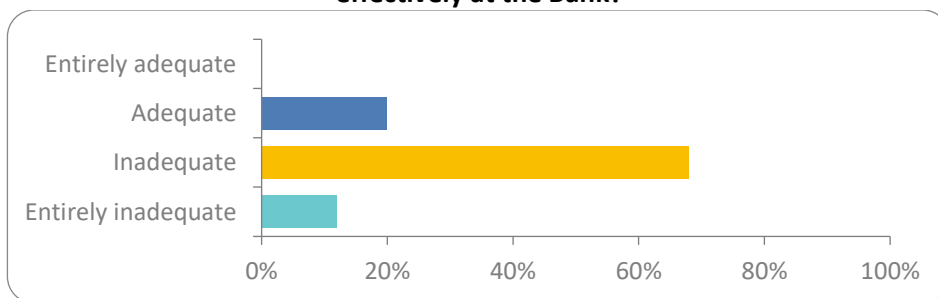
- Ensuring adequate institutional support will allow the Bank to reap the **untapped benefits** of CESA.
- The Bank’s failure to adequately resource its current CESA commitments runs the **risk of reputational damage**.
- Given **growing demand for CESA support**, it’s important for the Bank to bolster its capacity to respond.

Key Findings

Finding 4.1 - Despite strong corporate commitments, CESA remains a largely peripheral and poorly funded mandate at the Bank.

102. While multiple Bank publications and statements affirm CESA as a top priority, this has not translated into the allocation of resources for the operationalization of the agenda. Both internal and external reviewers have remarked on the lack of resources dedicated by the Bank to CESA activities (IEG 2018, Nadelman 2021). As shown in Figure 12, in a survey conducted by the review team, 80% of WB (regional, sectoral and country level) CE Focal Points assessed the current level of resources available for implementing CESA effectively at the Bank as "inadequate" or "entirely inadequate".⁵⁰ While Bank management and staff interviewed expressed broad support for the CESA agenda, those more actively engaged in CESA activities lamented the fact that, due to a lack of time and resources, they were unable to support deeper and more meaningful CESA, while those less engaged interpreted the lack of allocated resources as a signal that enhanced CESA quality was not in reality an institutional priority and that their time was better spent on (multiple) other competing needs.

Figure 12 - Overall, how would you assess the level of resources available for implementing CESA effectively at the Bank?



103. The institutional visibility of the CESA agenda remains limited. In interviews with Bank staff, the low profile of the CESA agenda within the institution was also flagged as a limiting factor. Compared to other key agendas, interviewees pointed out the relative paucity of high-profile events to signal the importance of CESA and attract the interest and engagement of Bank staff beyond the inner SSI circle. To address this shortcoming, interviewees proposed more Bank-wide BBLs and workshops to allow a broader spectrum of staff to learn about the agenda and, potentially, the organization of an annual "CESA Day" (similar to the existing Anti-Corruption Day or Women's Day). Another proposal was to engage Bank staff more actively in annual GPSA Forums, which were seen as important, high-level events, but perceived as being for CSOs and not for an "internal" audience.

⁵⁰ Similarly, as reported under Finding 1.7, 89% of WB CE focal points assessed the level of human resources dedicated to CESA in their region/sector as "inadequate" or "entirely inadequate".

Finding 4.2 - Current staffing, skills and resources for mainstreaming CESA across the Bank are not fit-for-purpose. The Bank’s CESA GSG and network of CE Focal Points play a critical role but lack time and resources to support the operationalization of the approach beyond the minimal requirements.

104. There is a lack of dedicated specialized staff to support the operationalization of quality CESA. The 2018 IEG Evaluation found that the corporate commitment to mainstream CE had "generated awareness and buy-in among senior management and staff" but also found that limited dedicated staff time was available to operationalize the approach beyond ensuring compliance with the minimal corporate requirements" (IEG. 2018. pp. vii-viii). This review found a very similar situation in 2023. The Bank's cadre of Social Development specialists, often focused on social risk management, lack the time and often the expertise to adequately support the operationalization of quality CESA. As illustrated in Figure 13, a majority (52%) of surveyed CE Focal Points assessed the amount of time they were personally able to devote to CESA as "inadequate" or "entirely inadequate". Almost three quarters (73%) of surveyed CE Focal Points indicated that they devote less than 40% of their time to supporting CESA activities, and for a majority (63%) of these, the proportion of their time spent on CESA is less than 20%. Only a very small minority (less than 8%) of CE focal points reported devoting 80 to 100% of their time to CESA (see Figure 14). The survey revealed broad-based consensus that to meet the institution's commitment to deeper and higher quality CESA, the allocation of human resources, both in the anchor and across operational departments, the Bank needs to be reassessed and enhanced.

Figure 13 - Is the amount of time you devote to CESA adequate to respond to needs?

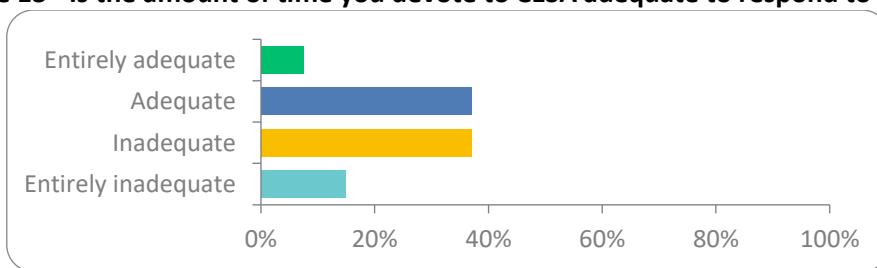
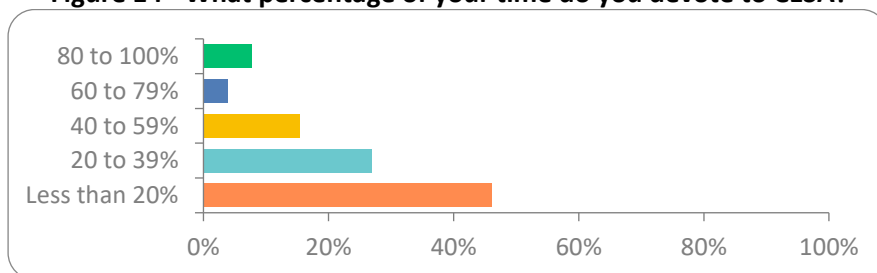


Figure 14 - What percentage of your time do you devote to CESA?



105. CE Focal Points are champions of the CESA agenda at the Bank, but they are limited by their narrowly defined mandate and lack of time and resources. The Terms of Reference for Focal Points largely limit their role to ensuring compliance with minimal corporate requirements. By default, CE Focal Points are frequently called upon for technical advice and assistance by project teams, but most Focal Points are unable to provide the time requested. A 2021 independent review found that in addition to being hampered by "significant time and financial constraints", "the institutional emphasis on compliance with minimum project design standards has meant that most [regional and global practice CE Focal Points] do not know if or how the design commitments are carried out in practice" (Nadelman 2021, p. 7). Numerous CE Focal Points interviewed highlighted the disconnect between

the critical nature of the CESA agenda and the lack of dedicated resources, with one stating "We're not doing what needs to be done, we're doing what we can with the we have...we're trying to do transformative work on a shoestring". Another commented, "The CE mandate has been completely underfunded. We need resources. Without resources, we're going nowhere. It's a miracle that CE focal points do what they do". Allocating resources to allow current part-time regional and sectoral CE Focal Point to transition into full-time CESA Specialist roles would go some way towards meeting current operational demand.

106. An important step towards achieving higher quality CESA, as called for by the 2018 IEG Evaluation, will be to enhance the presence of CESA specialized staff, especially at the country level.

In-country capacity (i.e., human and financial resources) to support CESA is often limited. Only a subset of CMUs have a country-level CE Focal Point and, typically, these staff are only able to devote a very small percentage of their time to CESA. As outlined in Box 16, the (currently unfulfilled) task load involved in achieving meaningful CESA at the portfolio and country-level, points to the need for a full-time CESA Specialist in every CMU (with variations by country based on the size and nature of the portfolio). Currently, the decision to allocate country funds for CESA purposes depends largely on the personal level of interest and knowledge of individual country managers/directors. Guidelines from Bank management acknowledging the importance of country-level CESA and establishing clear targets/requirements (regarding the presence of CMU-level CESA expertise and the implementation of CESA action plans) would contribute to a less ad hoc system of country-level CESA support.

Box 16 - Proposed tasks for country-level CESA specialists

- Lead the development of the CMU's country-level CESA strategy/action plan.
- Lead/support analytical work (i.e., country-level CESA/civic space assessment) to inform the Bank's CESA strategy/action plan.
- Convene and coordinate a multi-stakeholder advisory committee to support and oversee the implementation of the country-level CESA strategy/action plan.
- Build and facilitate relationships between the CMU and relevant civil society actors.
- Conduct/coordinate CESA awareness-raising events and capacity development activities for in-country actors (including government counterparts, PIUs and implementing CSOs).
- Where applicable, in partnership with other development partners, convene/support a country-level coalition to nurture political will and promote enabling conditions for CESA and civil society.
- Convene/support platforms for multistakeholder dialogue and oversight at the country/portfolio/sector level on areas of key strategic intervention.
- Act as an in-country liaison for the GPSA successor facility.
- Coordinate the annual monitoring and reporting of country-level CESA indicators.
- Advise and support task teams in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of "vertically integrated" CESA mechanisms in priority sectors.
- Support project/sector-level stakeholder and political economy/power analysis (including an assessment of relevant civil society actors) to inform the design of CESA mechanisms.
- Collaborate closely with social specialists to ensure ESF-CESA synergies.
- Contribute to the drafting of CESA-related good practice case studies, learning notes and other knowledge products.
- Depending on the country context and portfolio, CESA specialists could also potentially serve a broader governance or social mandate.

Finding 4.3 - The Bank's current skills set is not optimal to effectively implement its CESA agenda. Specialized expertise in the fields of participatory governance, political

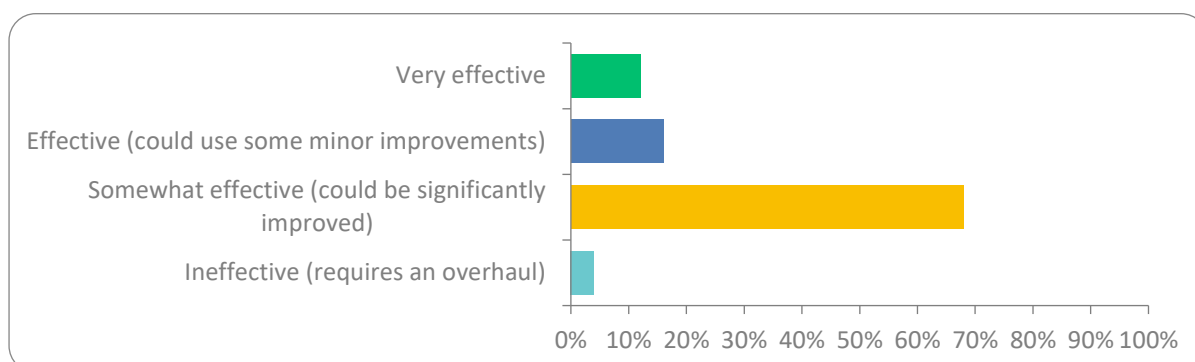
economy/power analysis, citizen-state relations, civil society and social accountability is largely lacking.

107. Power relations are at the heart of the CESA agenda (and, arguably, development itself) and the capacity to understand and influence these relations is key to the successful implementation of the agenda. As the Bank seeks to implement higher quality CESA practices which involve collective decision-making and power-sharing and as it aims to support systems-level engagement and accountability strategies, the expertise of governance specialists, political economists and power analysts becomes even more important. As discussed, there is strong scope for the Governance GP to play a more active role in supporting the Bank's CESA agenda. It is also recommended to review the Bank's current skills set with a view to enhancing the institution's overall level of expertise in the fields of participatory governance, political economy/power analysis, citizen-state relations, civil society, citizen engagement and social accountability. In recruiting staff to fill future positions - such as proposed country-level CESA specialist roles - it will be important to bring on board people with such skills to complement the current cadre of Bank CESA-oriented staff who mostly have a social science (versus political science) profile.

Finding 4.4 - The current system of monitoring and reporting does not incentivize high quality CESA.

108. The review found broad consensus that the Bank's current CE reporting requirements are inadequate and need to be replaced by a system that incentives higher quality, more meaningful CESA practices at both the project and country level. Since the adoption of the 2014 *Strategic Framework*, CE monitoring and reporting requirements have contributed to the successful mainstreaming of minimal CE standards across WB IPFs, however, they have failed to incentivize deeper, more meaningful CESA activities. As shown in Figure 15, a large majority (72%) of surveyed CE Focal Points, who play a key role in the implementation of the current monitoring and reporting system, felt that the system could be significantly improved. Currently, monitoring and reporting is based on a review of project design documents (i.e., PADs) and Implementation Status and Results (ISR) reports to determine whether projects meet the minimal requirements of at least one CE mechanism at design and at least one beneficiary feedback indicator that is reported on after three years. The World Bank's corporate scorecard currently includes "Projects with beneficiary feedback indicator at design (%)" as a Tier 3 indicator to track CE. This indicator is considered inadequate for several reasons. First, there's the conceptual concern that "beneficiary feedback" does not equate to "citizen engagement". Second, the indicator fails to capture or assess the quality of the project-level CE indicator it detects. Third, by focusing on feedback/consultation only, the indicator fails to reflect the deeper, higher-quality forms of CE (such as citizen roles in decision-making and oversight) that the institution aims to incentivize. Fourth, the current indicator focuses on the design stage only and tells us nothing about what is actually implemented or achieved during the life of the project. Finally, the indicator relates only to project-level CE and tells us nothing about efforts to engage and account at higher systems levels.

Figure 15 - How would you assess the current system of CESA monitoring and reporting?



109. Based on research findings, this review proposes a new system of CESA monitoring and reporting that is focused on the quality of implementation and results (rather than intentions at the design phase only); incentivizes deeper, higher quality forms of CESA in priority sectors; and, captures not only project-level initiatives but also country/systems-level CESA. The details of a proposed composite indicator designed to meet these objectives is outlined in Annex 5. Replacing the current corporate scorecard indicator with a multi-dimensional CESA indicator of this type would go a long way towards incentivizing higher quality, more systems oriented CESA practices on the part of both project and country teams. As described in Annex 5, reporting on such an indicator will require adjusting the current monitoring process to include a more substantive review of project implementation and completion reports as well as inputs from CMUs. While the composite indicator is designed to generate an aggregate portfolio/country-level score, it's recommended that the CESA GSG continue to publish an annual monitoring report that provides detailed data on each individual criterion of the composite CESA indicator - disaggregated by region, country, sector, etc. - accompanied by qualitative descriptions of good practice examples. Should such a composite CESA indicator prove unfeasible, a alternative could be to adopt one over-arching results-based indicator at the portfolio level (e.g. % of projects that have successfully achieved the CESA targets set out in their results framework) and/or country level (e.g. % of in-country stakeholders feel that the Bank effectively supports constructive engagement with citizens and CSOs in processes of development dialogue, decision-making, implementation, and oversight).

Finding 4.5 - The Bank has conducted only a relatively small number of studies of CESA impact. Given the state of implementation of the agenda, important learning could be gleaned from more systematic impact evaluation.

110. Significant evidence exists of the positive impacts of CESA, but evidence and analysis to help understand the specific nature and extent of those impacts and unpack how various conditions and factors contribute to successful outcomes are lacking. In 2013, a special issue of the *Development Policy Review*, focused on the impact and effectiveness of CESA-type initiatives, found positive outcomes in multiple areas - including improved delivery of services, better budget utilization, greater state responsiveness, and empowerment of local voices - but still concluded that "the evidence base is not large enough to begin to assess overall trends – there are simply not enough good impact studies" (Gaventa & McGee 2013, p. 16). Nixon et.al. found evidence to be particularly weak on the role of accountability programming in the longer trajectory of citizen-state relationships, impact beyond specific interventions and the contributions of non-state actors (Nixon et. al. 2017). Over the past decade, numerous studies, including by the World Bank, have assessed the impacts of CESA interventions and strengthened the evidence base of positive outcomes - particularly with regard to

improvements in public services and the reduction of corruption.⁵¹ Despite these various studies, a follow-up special issue of *Development Policy Review* in 2023, focused on citizen action for accountability in challenging contexts, still found a lack of impact evaluation, as well as limited consensus on how best to measure impact (Fischer-Mackey & Fox, 2022, Gaventa et. al. 2023). The Bank could both enhance its own learning and operational expertise and make an important contribution to the broader literature and evidence base by allocating resources for more analyses and impact evaluations of CESA activities at both the project level and higher systems/country-level. Cost-benefit analysis of CESA approaches could be particularly useful in demonstrating the advantages of the agenda from an economic/monetary perspective.

Finding 4.6 - There is a deficit of effective knowledge management in relation to CESA at the WB.

111. While a rich body of WB CESA-related operational resources exists, research found that analysis of experience and impact is still patchy and that a central knowledge database/platform providing easy access to learning notes, guidelines, Operational Manuals, sample TOR etc. is lacking. Some staff indicated that when they or their departments developed CESA-related operational tools or produced learning notes or cases studies of best practice, there was no obvious place or way to share those resources. Staff emphasized the usefulness of sharing practical operational documents - such as Operational Manuals and TORs - that are rarely made publicly available and, even within the World Bank, often only shared based on specific requests or personal connections. Creating a central knowledge database/platform to provide Bank staff (and, ideally, also external actors) with easy access to CESA-related operational resources, analyses and training materials and a space to exchange experiences, share success stories and seek operational advice could support enhanced practice and learning, and contribute to efficiency and cost-effectiveness by allowing project teams to build on existing knowledge and avoid needless replication of efforts or reinventing of the wheel. The Bank could potentially build on the existing GPSA knowledge management hub for this purpose - expanding access to both Bank-generated resources and (the rich body of) materials from external sources. As discussed under Finding 4.1, accompanying this platform with the organization of regular seminars, workshops and training courses to present and discuss available resources would augment visibility and learning.

Finding 4.7 - Since 2014, the concepts of citizen engagement and, to a lesser extent, social accountability have gained broad-based recognition across the Bank; another shift in mindset is required to move the agenda from the periphery to the center of the Bank's development work and to position it as a leader in this field.

112. The World Bank is at an important juncture, with a far-reaching internal reform process taking place under new leadership at a time when demand for an evolution step change towards "CESA 2.0", characterized by deep, systems-level engagement, has never been stronger. The last decade of significant progress in mainstreaming basic CE practices across much of the Bank's portfolio provides a solid foundation on which to build a new generation of CESA practices whereby those who the Bank exists to serve - i.e., citizens of developing countries - have a meaningful say in how the institution and borrowing governments manage, use and account for development resources at the local through to global level. This will require both a shift in mindset, to reposition CESA at the center of the Bank's mandate, and the consequent allocation of adequate human and financial resources, especially at country level, to operationalize the vision. As outlined in this report, such a shift will require that the CESA 2.0 agenda is not only supported by SSI, but also taken up by actors across the institution -

⁵¹ See, for example, Brinkerhoff & Wetterberg 2016, Marin, 2016, Holland 2017, Waddington et al. 2019, World Bank et.al. 2020, Haus et. al. 2022.

including, among others, the Governance GP (to support country systems-level CESA and instruments like DPFs and P4Rs), other GPs (to expand and deepen sector-level CESA), OPCS (to provide updated operational guidance regarding CESA and collaboration with CSOs) and CMUs (to identify and support priority portfolio and country-level CESA interventions, convene multistakeholder platforms and contribute to CESA monitoring and evaluation).

Entry points

113. Based on research findings, the following actions are recommended to ensure a fit-for-purpose institutional support system for CESA:



4.1 - To implement the entry points of this review (and the 2018 IEG evaluation), an increase in CESA human resources is required. A cadre of qualified full-time CESA specialists is recommended.

- a. Create a cadre of qualified full-time CESA specialists at country level.
- b. Allocate resources to transform current part-time regional and sectoral CE Focal Point roles into full-time CESA Specialist roles (ideally and ultimately aiming for a structure like that of the gender agenda, with dedicated regional teams, led an H or senior G-level expert).
- c. Review the Bank's current skills set with a view to enhancing the institution's expertise in the fields of participatory governance, political economy/power analysis, citizen-state relations, civil society, citizen engagement and social accountability.
- d. Encourage and support a stronger emphasis by the Governance GP (and greater collaboration between the Governance GP and CESA GSG) on issues of civic space, participatory governance and the application of systems-level CESA approaches throughout the public governance cycle.
- e. Allocate adequate human resources to allow the CESA GSG to amp up Bank-wide CESA capacity development opportunities (see Entry point 4.2) and CESA knowledge management (see Entry point 4.5).



4.2 - Enhance visibility and build skills for CESA Bank-wide through awareness-raising events and capacity development opportunities for SSI specialists and all operational staff.

- a. Organize an annual high-level CESA event (that brings together Bank and non-Bank participants), as well as regular Bank-wide BBLs/learning events to raise the institutional visibility of the CESA agenda.
- b. Offer enhanced opportunities for both SSI specialists and operational managers and staff Bank-wide, including CMU-based social staff, operations officers and communications officers, to participate in (different levels and types of) tailored CESA training courses to deepen their CESA expertise.
- c. Explore with OPCS the possibility of incorporating a CESA module into the regular TTL training, aimed at developing a citizen-centric mindset (drawing inspiration, for example, from the survivor-centric approach that is taught on GMs for gender-based violence work).



4.3 - Introduce a new system of monitoring and reporting that tracks and incentivizes CESA quality and results at both the project/portfolio and country level.

- a. Replace the previous corporate scorecard CE indicator (% of projects with a BFI) with a composite indicator that captures CESA quality and results at both the project/portfolio and country level (such as that outlined in Annex 5). Publish findings annually, providing data on

each individual criterion of the proposed composite CESA indicator (disaggregated by region, country, sector, etc.) and highlighting innovative practice examples.

- b. If a composite indicator is not adopted, replace the current BFI indicator with a CESA results-based indicator such as "% of projects that have successfully achieved the CESA targets set out in their results framework or SEP" (portfolio-level indicator) or "% of in-country stakeholders feel that the Bank effectively supports constructive engagement with citizens and CSOs in processes of development dialogue, decision-making, implementation, and oversight" (country-level indicator).
- c. Include a requirement to assess SE/CESA performance in the ICR Preparation Guidelines.



4.4 - Harvest and disseminate learning (across projects, countries and sectors) and facilitate access to operational guidance and technical advice on CESA by creating a user-friendly platform for learning and knowledge exchange.

- a. Allocate resources for more analyses of (project and country-level) CESA experiences and impact evaluations of CESA activities, and for the preparation (and/or updating) of learning notes, case studies, sample tools, etc.
- b. Create and manage a central knowledge database/platform to provide Bank staff (and external actors) easy access to user-friendly CESA learning notes, guidelines, Operations Manuals, sample TOR, etc.
- c. Package these products in user-friendly formats and disseminate them proactively, for example, via regular seminars/workshops (see Entry point 4.2).

E. PRIORITY ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

114. To help prioritize among the numerous entry points identified by this review, the summary table on pp. iv-ix categorizes each entry point by the type of action it entails (i.e. updating and expanding operational guidance, strengthening country engagement, increasing learning and capacity development opportunities, and enhancing funding for CESA) and assesses its (i) anticipated impact (low, medium high) and (ii) resource requirements (low, medium high). **Guided by this analysis, and by the strategic directions of the evolution roadmap, proposed priority actions for implementing the entry points identified by this review are the following:**

- 1) **Systematize the implementation and monitoring of country-level CESA assessments and tailored country-level CESA action plans.** (See entry points 1.4, 2.4, 3.1, 3.4, 4.3)
 - i. **Conduct country-level CESA assessments** - Update guidelines to ensure that the new suite of *country-level diagnostic reports* (e.g., Country Climate and Development Reports, Climate Change Institutional Assessments Poverty and Equity Assessments, Public Finance Reviews and Risk and Resilience Assessments) includes an analysis of: *enabling/disabling conditions* for CESA, the *civil society* landscape, key *CESA stakeholders*, *potential entry points* for CESA throughout all stages of the public governance cycle, and priority *capacity development needs*.
 - ii. **Support country-level CESA action plans** - Update CPF guidelines to (i) incorporate CESA (e.g., as a pillar, activity area or cross-cutting theme) as appropriate, and (ii) include in annex (or be accompanied by) a tailored CESA action plan that articulates country-level CESA objectives, identifies priority sectors/areas of focus, defines responsibilities, and sets out concrete steps for the *implementation of CESA at the country and portfolio level* and support for *enabling conditions and capacity development*.

- iii. **Implement and monitor the results of CESA action plans** - Introduce an updated monitoring system (such as that outlined in Annex 5) that incentivizes *CESA implementation and results* at both the *country and portfolio/project level*.
- 2) **Strengthen in-country multistakeholder platforms and partnerships with/support for civil society actors.** (See entry points 1.5, 1.6, 2.6, 3.3)
- i. **Support in-country platforms for multi-stakeholder dialogue and oversight** - Use the Bank's unique convening power to establish and/or support existing country/sector-level mechanisms for *multi-stakeholder dialogue and oversight*.
 - ii. **Streamline operational procedures** - Adopt more flexible, streamlined and adaptive approaches to project implementation to facilitate more *effective and nimble operational partnerships* with (different categories of both formal and informal) CSOs and maximize the benefits of those collaborations.
 - iii. **Expand funding for CSOs** - Encourage the allocation of resources for CSO-implemented CESA activities in *project budgets* and mobilize increased resources to support third-party monitoring and social accountability at both the project and sector/country-level (e.g., via *IDA/IBRD funds and trust funds, including a replenished and expanded successor GPSA facility*).
- 3) **Support the design and implementation of intensified, systems-level CESA in sectors/issue areas deemed as priorities by in-country actors.** (See entry points 1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 2.5)
- i. **Support intensified, systems-level CESA in priority sectors** - In sectors flagged as priorities in the country-level CESA action plan, support project, sector and country teams to implement and build capacity for *high quality, inclusive and vertically integrated CESA practices* (that give citizens/CSOs a say in decision-making/oversight and make local to national linkages).
 - ii. **Sustain and enhance mainstreamed portfolio-wide consultation practices** - Continue to ensure that all operations with identifiable beneficiaries (including P4Rs and DPF) plan and budget for *meaningful, inclusive consultation* and "*close the feedback loop*."
 - iii. **Adopt a coherent and client-focused approach to CESA and SE** - Clarify the *complementary and mutually reinforcing* nature of the ESS10 and CESA frameworks and, to avoid duplication, focus CESA efforts on systems-level support and on operations (such as P4Rs and DPF) that are not covered by ESS10 and harmonizing the monitoring and reporting of SEP and CESA indicators.
- 4) **Increase resources for the effective implementation of the Bank's CESA agenda.** (See entry points 4.1, 4.2, 4.4)
- i. **Increase CESA staff time** - As part of the Bank's current "comprehensive review of its budgetary needs and processes" assess and address the need for *enhanced CESA expertise and staff time*, especially at country-level. Take steps to transition part-time CE focal points (at sectoral, regional and country level) into full-time CESA specialists.
 - ii. **Enhance capacity building and visibility** - Provide *capacity building* opportunities to staff across the Bank to enhance CESA knowledge and skills. Enhance visibility of the CESA agenda via an *annual CESA day* and *high-profile public event*.
 - iii. **Support learning and knowledge exchange** - Harvest and disseminate *CESA learning* (across projects, countries and sectors) and facilitate access to operational guidance and knowledge resources on CESA via an *online user-friendly CESA clearinghouse*.

IV. CONCLUSION

115. Despite high-level corporate commitments to citizen engagement and social accountability, the Bank's CESA agenda has remained largely peripheral, projectized and under-funded. Much has been achieved since the adoption of the 2014 *Citizen Engagement Strategic Framework* in meeting minimal corporate requirements, but enhancing the quality of CESA, as called for by the 2018 IEG Evaluation and endorsed by the evolution roadmap, has proved more elusive. Research revealed a high level of consensus - among respondents both within and outside the Bank - that achieving deeper, more meaningful and impactful CESA will depend on the institution allocating more resources to the agenda.

116. As stewards of public funds and development resources, both governments and the World Bank can use CESA approaches to fulfill their responsibility to account to the citizens on whose behalf those resources are mobilized and managed. To achieve its twin goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity on a livable planet, the Bank must actively engage the people it exists to serve, not as project "beneficiaries" but as primary stakeholders, who are actively engaged in development decisions and actions and to whom both the Bank and governments are ultimately accountable. From this perspective, the more systematic practice of social accountability is an essential element of due diligence.

117. In the current global context, effective CESA is more important than ever to respond to multiple crises and achieve development effectiveness and efficiency. It is increasingly acknowledged that many top development priorities—such as the climate crisis, anti-corruption, conflict and violence, poverty, social inequities and public health emergencies — cannot be addressed without the active participation of citizens and civil society in decision-making and oversight (from the local to the national and global systems levels). The proposed CESA 2.0 agenda will directly contribute to enhanced development effectiveness and efficiency by:

- Ensuring that development decisions consider diverse viewpoints and respond to the priority needs and concerns of the people they are meant to serve;
- Promoting social inclusion and equity by giving marginalized and vulnerable groups a meaningful say in processes of deliberation, decision-making and oversight;
- Mobilizing broad-based support for and participation in the implementation of development initiatives;
- Deterring corruption and mismanagement through increased levels of transparency, accountability and participation; and,
- Building mutual understanding, trust and social cohesion thus strengthening the foundation for more stable and sustainable development outcomes.

118. The Bank's current evolution process represents an important opportunity for the institution to reposition CESA, not only as essential at the project level, but as core to the Bank's role as a global development institution. The CESA agenda, in essence, represents a paradigm shift from a supply-driven model of development to one that is demand-driven and where citizens and communities feel ownership of development interventions and play a central role in their oversight and monitoring. Over the past year, the Bank's evolution process has spurred growing calls from diverse quarters (e.g., CSOs, government representatives, private foundations, bilateral and multilateral agencies) for the World Bank to show leadership in stepping up its institutional and global support for strategic and systems-level CESA. By clarifying the complementary and mutually reinforcing nature of the ESF (ESS10) and CESA agendas and by strengthening alignment of GPSA successor-financed activities with the Bank portfolio, the entry points and priority actions put forward in this review bring greater coherence and synergy to the implementation of these three important and inter-related areas of work, providing a solid foundation for more strategic, meaningful, and impactful delivery of development outcomes. They propose practical pathways towards a renewed "CESA 2.0" that integrates principles of inclusive, systems-level engagement and accountability across all aspects of Bank support for global development, in line with the strategic directions of the evolution roadmap.

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