



4th ENP Networking Seminar

Trust in Government

Conclusions

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Importance of Trust

- Citizen's trust in government = fundamental for acceptance that government decisions are legitimate
- Only when decisions are perceived as legitimate will governments be “successful” in their policies (have good policy outcomes)



Reasons for lack of trust

- History and culture
- Absence of political consensus
("government doesn't listen to us")
- Economic/political crisis





Incentives for reform

- Internal need felt at different levels of society
- Enthusiasm and desire for change
- Expectations of citizens
- International standards or EU or other external pressure
- Economic crisis





Obstacles to reform

Those afraid of changes because of fear of

- Loss of political powers
- Worsening economic situation

Conventional bureaucracy

Civil servants (like all human beings) are
“routine-animals”





Conclusions

from presentations and discussions

Key foundation stones for building and maintaining trust in government:

- Transparency
- Accountability
- Integrity
- Participation





Transparency

- Not an end in itself
- Context matters (transparency not always 1st demand of citizens)
- Transparency is not communication but providing clear and complete information
- Quality of information matters (e.g. budget):
 - Timeliness
 - Relevance
 - Reliability
 - Comprehensiveness





Accountability

- Results matter
- Public information about government activities provides basis for holding governments to account
- Independent expert opinion to explain technical information needed (e.g.: SAIs to audit and explain/report) to avoid wrong interpretations
- example: Financing of political parties:
 - To avoid that business controls a political party
 - Accounts are published and controlled





Integrity

- Democracy gaps leading to the desire for integrity reform and fight against corruption:
 - Debates about values
 - Constitutional changes/Legal changes
 - Challenge: Implementation
- Can integrity systems develop in “non-democratic” systems?
 - Step by step approach
 - Rather do the possible than do nothing
 - Use the time for intellectual work and preparation of a democratic system until the time is ripe





Participation

- Informed societies/citizens
- Encouragement
- Ex.: Participation of NGOs in budget planning
 - Drafts of parts of budget are published by line ministries
 - Feedback from NGOs
 - Draft budget adopted by Government (before sending it to Parliament)
 - NGO participation in discussions on budget of parliamentary committees





Citizens will trust governments that are able to prove their ability to

- Protect citizens
- Secure citizens' rights
- Improve citizens' lives
- Promote entrepreneurship
- Provide good governance





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Thank you!