

Planning An Effective Peer Review

A Guidebook For National Focal Points



The South African Institute of International Affairs

Foreword

With the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the continent has begun a great journey. The process is unique in the world for the breadth of its analysis and the intensity of the process. Most importantly, the APRM is an inward looking mechanism, designed not to please external benefactors, but to encourage the culture of accountability in Africa based on self-imposed standards of good governance.

Many thousands of people have participated in APRM and shown great dedication to making the process rigorous and fair. Much remains to be learned but participants have generously offered their time and insights to help improve the process.

This guide book is based on a four-year research and training programme by the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), which has conducted APRM training in a dozen countries and interviewed civil society, government, research institutes and APRM governing council members in Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Mauritius, Algeria and South Africa. This volume tries to organise the insights from those interviews in a simple and straightforward manner.

While there inevitably will be challenges to overcome in a new process like APRM, readers should consider the enormity of the effort that has gone into the process and its tremendous potential to help deliver improved governance, which can lead to greater political freedom, peace, prosperity and economic development.

This report was written by Ross Herbert and Steven Gruzd of the South African Institute of International Affairs. This guide was prepared for the *APRM Best Practices and Lessons Learned Workshop for Peer Review Focal Points in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa*, on 20-21 February 2007 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Ross Herbert and Steven Gruzd are, respectively, the manager and deputy manager of the SAIIA Governance and APRM Programme.

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Many thanks to the participants in the Ghanaian, Kenyan, Rwandan, Mauritian, Algerian and South African peer reviews, whose insights and dedication to peer review contributed immensely to this report. We would also like to express special appreciation to the APRM Panel of Eminent Persons and the APRM Secretariat, who deserve the continent's gratitude for keeping this important process credible and on track, even when their hard work largely falls outside the public spotlight.

The African Development Bank, United Nations Development Programme, and UNECA also deserve credit as the technical support agencies, who have assisted greatly with country reviews, advice on the process and through many other forms of support. And special thanks to UNECA for its dedication to APRM and in particular to the UNECA APRM Support Unit for its editorial comments, its support for this report and for ensuring that the Focal Point workshop became a reality.

Ross Herbert, February 2007



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Planning an Effective Peer Review

The African Peer Review is an important undertaking for Africa, its people and each country that goes through the process. To get the most from the process, it is important to plan ahead, anticipate the key issues and set in motion strategies to maximise the benefits while effectively managing the important challenges that arise.

This is the essence of effective management in any field and is particularly important in a complex process like APRM, which brings together thousands of people from different backgrounds. For almost everyone it will be a new experience, requiring participation in newly formed institutions.

This manual outlines the key lessons and best practices demonstrated in the early APRM countries, provides ideas for APRM innovations that could be helpful in improving on the early country experiences and offers checklists of the main points involved in different phases of the process.

The following pages will set out the five stages of APRM, several national institutions to be established, a variety of research methods, and budgeting and staffing considerations. These details are steps on the road to the two most important end products: a **country self-assessment report (CSAR)** and a **programme of action (POA)** to address the gaps identified in the self-assessment.

But APRM is not about documents. They are only a means to an end. APRM is about positive change and improving governance.

Because change involves diverse people, competing interests and many points of view, APRM should be seen in social and political terms. As a result, this APRM overview focuses on both the political and the technical aspects, which constantly affect each other.

Ignoring the political dimensions of consultation can cause controversy, while ignoring some of the technical aspects can add complications. Fortunately, many people have been through the experience and have shared the benefit of their efforts, which this booklet tries to faithfully capture.

Understanding the Positive Benefits of APRM

Officially the purpose of APRM is “to foster the adoption of policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated sub-regional and continental economic integration through sharing of experiences and reinforcement of successful and best practice.”¹

In workshops across the continent, participants have listed other related benefits including:

1. Improving the quality of governance.
2. Finding solutions to problems that might be neglected or marginalised.
3. Deepening democracy and strengthening national institutions.
4. Building national consensus and political trust needed to find new solutions.
5. Boosting the image of the nation and continent with investors and development partners.

Because it involves political actors, civil society and the private sector, APRM is a social process that relies on both technical competence and candour. As the APRM founding protocol notes: “Every review exercise carried out under the authority of the Mechanism must be technically competent, credible and free of political manipulation. These stipulations together constitute the core guiding principles of the Mechanism.”²

But the process also requires political skill to bring people with diverse concerns to a common view about problems and solutions. That requires being attuned to the sensitivities of diverse stakeholders, building trust through transparency and setting up governing bodies and procedures that are widely seen to be professional, inclusive, fair and rigorous.

The official guidelines note: “The organisation of public participation in the APRM process is in itself a central aspect of enhancing the state of governance and socioeconomic development in the participating country. Such interactions can build trust, establish and clarify mechanisms for ongoing engagement and empowerment of stakeholders.”³

External observers of a national APRM process will form favourable impressions following the same factors that matter to citizens: the candour of its reports, the openness of its process, the rigour of its analysis, the strength of proposed solutions, and the innovations the country brought to the process.

These qualities of a high-quality review can be summed up in the acronym **COPPER**:

Candid	The end result should be a report and programme of action that both discuss problems, solutions and best practices honestly and frankly
Open	The process used to develop the report and programme of action should be open and transparent.
Planned	The process should be well-planned, anticipating problems and incorporating the lessons learned from APRM pioneer countries.
Participatory	The process should involve broad participation from the public, business, government and different regions, ethnic and religious groups.
Exemplary	A process that reflects well on government and the nation should strive to incorporate the best practices from other APRM nations and bring some innovations to strengthen the APRM system.
Rigorous	The research and analysis should be of a high quality, be systematic and objective.

¹ OAU, *APRM Base Document*, AHG/235 (XXXVII), Annex II, Durban 8 July 2002, paragraph 1.

² *Ibid.*, paragraph 3.

³ NEPAD APRM, *Guidelines for Countries to Prepare for and to Participate in the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)*, November 2003, paragraph 36, p 12.

APRM Basics – Structures and Stages

The peer review process defines institutions at the continental and national level.

Continental Institutions

The Committee of Participating Heads of State and Government is known as the **APR Heads of State Forum** or APR Forum. It comprises of the presidents or prime ministers of the 26 countries that have acceded to the APRM. It meets about twice a year, often on the margins of AU Summits, and it is this group of peers that reviews fellow leaders. It is the APRM's highest decision-making body.

The **APR Panel of Eminent Persons** (APR Panel) currently consists of seven Africans of high standing and integrity appointed by the APR Forum to oversee the review process in individual countries, ensure the integrity of the process, consider review reports and make recommendations to the Forum. The Panel is currently chaired by Dr Dorothy Njeuma (from Cameroon) and its other members are Professor Adebayo Adedeji (Nigeria), Mr Mohammed Babes (Algeria), Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat (Kenya), Dr Graça Machel (Mozambique), Dr Marie-Angelique Savané (Senegal) and Dr Chris Stals (South Africa).

The **APR Secretariat** is based in Midrand, South Africa and provides secretarial, technical, coordinating and administrative support services for the African Peer Review Mechanism. The secretariat is funded by voluntary contributions from countries that have acceded and by development partners.

The APRM has three **Technical Partners** that provide support services, advice and assistance. They are the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the African Development Bank (ADB). Country support and country review missions frequently use experts from these institutions.

A **Country Review Team** is the group of African experts who conduct the country review mission under the supervision of one member of the Panel of Eminent Persons. The review team draws from the technical partners, eminent academics, business leaders, the APRM secretariat and independent consultants. It visits an APR country for two to three weeks, to assess the integrity of the national process and conduct research to develop the final country review report.

The **Country Review Report** provides an assessment of best practices and governance gaps in the country under review. It makes reference to the self-assessment conclusions but goes beyond them as team members feel necessary. Countries under review are allowed to comment on the report and their comments form an appendix to the final report, but they are not allowed to edit the text.

The **Self-Assessment Questionnaire** provides the basic structure for the peer review analysis. It is divided into four thematic areas and offers guidance on the kinds of factors to be considered in conducting a governance analysis. It includes 25 objectives, 58 questions and 183 indicators as well as questions inquiring about the ratification and implementation of the various APRM standards.

National Institutions

The APRM Guidelines stipulate that each participating country must have an **APR Focal Point** in government, to act as a liaison between the continental secretariat and the national APR structures. This focal point is usually a minister, diplomat or senior civil servant.

The country must also create a **National Governing Council** or **National Commission**. The council is responsible for managing an inclusive national process to produce two key documents: a **country self-assessment report** and **programme of action**. The Eminent Persons have advised that this council should include government, business and civil society members, and crucially have a non-government majority and a civil society or private sector leader. Most countries have chosen to make this body representative of different national constituencies (including women, youth, labour unions, people with disabilities, business organizations, among others).

Most countries have also established a small local **APRM Secretariat** to assist with administrative and logistical tasks.

Countries have also contracted academics or think-tanks as **research institutions** to compile the self-assessment report and programme of action as well as perform desk research, conduct surveys, manage workshops and locate specialist expertise needed to answer parts of the questionnaire.

APRM Stages

The APR process follows five broad phases:

Stage 1 – Preparation and self-assessment: The country to be reviewed has initial consultations with the APR Secretariat, and later hosts a country support mission and signs a memorandum of understanding assenting to the review. The country appoints a national focal point and national governing council/national commission to oversee and drive the APR process, and develops its research and consultation programme. Simultaneously, the APR Secretariat writes a background paper on the country, as well as an issues paper highlighting key governance concerns. The stage ends when the country submits its country self-assessment report and programme of action – based on the APRM self-assessment questionnaire and the outcomes of research and consultation – to the Secretariat.

Stage 2 – The country review visit: Using the issues paper and the country's self-assessment as a basis, a team of 15-20 African experts led by a Panel member visits the country for two-to-three weeks to conduct the country review mission. The team assesses the integrity of the country process and conducts further research and interviews on key governance issues.

Stage 3 – Preparation of the final country assessment: Following the country review mission, the Panel and Secretariat compile a draft country review report based on the mission, the self-assessment, programme of action and background research. This report is sent back to the country for comment. The country may append its comments, but not amend the Panel's report.

Stage 4 – The peer review: The final review report is submitted to the APR Forum, and the head of state is "peer reviewed" by fellow heads of state.

Stage 5 – Presentation to the public and African institutions: Six months after the report is discussed by the Forum, it is publicly released, after being tabled at institutions such as the Pan-African Parliament and regional economic communities.

Understanding the APRM Questionnaire and Its Implications for Research

APRM focuses on systems of governance, not individuals: APRM is not a scorecard or rating of certain individuals in government or the present or past political party in office. Rather the questionnaire is designed to find information on the systems of governance and what would improve them.

Structure of the questionnaire: In planning a national peer review process, the most important thing to bear in mind is the level of detail required by the APRM Self-Assessment Questionnaire. It has 25 objectives, 58 questions and 183 indicators, which are divided among four thematic areas or chapters:

- Political and Democratic Governance
- Economic Governance and Management
- Corporate Governance
- Socio-Economic Development

Implications of complexity: The early written guidelines envisioned a process by which the focal point handed out the questionnaire to a list of individuals, gathered up their responses and collated them into a self-assessment report. However, experience has shown that other arrangements are needed for technical and political reasons.

Given the questionnaire's length and technical detail, it is very difficult for individuals or even organisations to complete all of the sections in a timely and comprehensive manner. As a result, early APRM countries all realised the need to bring in specialist expertise and use different teams and research methods to address the different questionnaire sections.

Technical input: The questionnaire asks a variety of technical questions for which specialists will be needed, such as how monetary and economic policy is set, how the private sector is engaged in policy setting processes, how local government consultation works, the extent to which African treaties and standards have been operationalised in law, and how corporate governance and anti-corruption systems work. To complete the APRM exercise in the expected timeframe, countries will thus have to put in place a research process to get all of the sections of the questionnaire completed.

Popular input: Although technical experts and document-based research will be required, completing the questionnaire is not simply a process of finding correct answers. APRM looks at both the systems of governance and the end results: the quantity and quality of education, for example, or the distribution of social benefits. In every society there are many views about these issues and as a result, APRM requires that countries engage in broad-based consultation to inform both the self-assessment report and the programme of action. Although a few experts might be able to write a report quickly, the need to consult the people means that there must be consultative processes that gather public input in a structured way.

The sections below will discuss different methods of gathering technical and popular input. That principle – that APRM needs both popular and technical inputs – is an important element that should inform planning and management of the process.

Building a constructive atmosphere for APRM: It is important to recognise that government, civil society, parliament and political parties all will have a degree of concern about the APRM process but they may not all agree on the best way forward. Thus it is very important to take steps to build trust and consensus around the process. Declaring a process

or governing structures without widespread prior consultation can spark anxieties, which can result in protest and public complaint. Taking the time before officially launching the country's APR implementation plan to consult with opposition politicians, parliament and civil society adds to the length of the process but can be a very valuable investment in pre-empting disputes about fairness or transparency.

Allow time for translation and modification of questionnaire: Because much of the questionnaire is too technical for ordinary citizens, it must be translated into local languages to enable effective public participation. The questionnaire also may not include some subjects of national importance and participants are encouraged to add questions to clarify these issues. However, from a planning point of view, it is important to note that translating or changing the questionnaire takes a significant amount of time.

Specific research challenges: Although the questionnaire has four themes, there are substantial areas of overlap between sections. If a different research agency is assigned to each section, the process becomes more time consuming if each agency separately addresses the overlap areas. The following are some suggestions that may make the process of research and report writing easier:

- **Gender issues** arise in both the political and socio-economic sections, but gender analysis can require some specialised knowledge of the law that a political or social research agency might not possess. It may be useful to group the gender related questions and commission a separate group of specialists to do an analysis of these elements.
- **Development/growth strategy** issues arise in the economic, corporate and socio-economic sections. Various questions touch on a conducive environment for growth, sustainable development and the regulatory environment that corporations operate in, including factors of law, regulation, infrastructure and services. It may be constructive to group these related questions and assign a team to prepare an analysis, which then is critiqued in public and technical workshops.
- **Corruption and oversight** issues arise in the political, economic and corporate sections. Best practice in fighting corruption suggests that countries need a variety of systems for fiscal oversight, transparency in decision-making and spending, balance of powers, and investigation and prosecution. To ensure an effective system for fighting corruption, countries also need supportive regulations to manage areas such as political party finance, media freedom, conflict of interest, corporate ethics and disclosure rules, regulation and investigation of company ownership, regulation of banking and money laundering and other systems. It would be more efficient to group these issues together and make a separate commission to experts to prepare an analysis, then critique that analysis within the designated research agencies and in public and technical workshops.
- **Local government** issues arise in the political, economic and socio-economic sections of the questionnaire under discussion of “decentralisation”. However, assessing local government powers and procedures is a specialised area. It may be helpful to group these questions and commission an expert or experts to prepare a written analysis that, as above, would be subjected to a critique by the main research agencies and in workshops.

Organisational Issues

Because of the high level of public interest in APRM and the need for it to be seen to be fair and inclusive, Ghana pioneered the idea of installing a governing council. Rwanda, Kenya and South Africa all embraced the practice in different ways, but all recognised the political value in having a council that oversees the process and helps ensure its objectivity and fairness.

Elections and the need for institutional independence: Elections can pose a particular concern for APRM, depending on the timing of the two processes. If the APRM were to become politicised or its research was drawn into political competition, it could have very negative consequences. Ghana recognised the risk that the APRM process might take longer than planned and could spill into the election season. As a result, they took several key steps to insulate the APRM process by making it institutionally independent. These steps included choosing highly respected non-partisan council members with solid management and research experience; allowing the council to run its own financial affairs and choose its own support staff; and using non-partisan research bodies to manage the consultation and report-writing processes. Ghana also helped de-politicise the process by consulting with political parties about the selection of members of the Governing Council.

Two styles of council – eminent persons vs constituency representation: Pioneer countries have used two main types of governing councils. The first is based on the eminent persons concept used to govern the continental APRM process, which sought non-partisan very senior people who are widely seen as being people of integrity. Ghana followed this model and chose a small panel of seven distinguished citizens to act as the process's top decision-making body at national level. Rwanda, Kenya and South Africa all used larger councils with membership chosen to represent key constituencies, such as business, labour, religious groups, women, non-governmental organisations and so on.

Ghana's approach resulted in members with stronger management skills and because it was smaller, decision-making was at times more effective. A constituency-based council can be more representative but members are not always chosen for their management skill but for who they represent. The larger size of constituency-based councils also can make them more unwieldy and expensive, if members are paid on a per-diem basis.

To pay council members or not? Some countries have chosen to pay members of their governing councils while others have not. In South Africa, members were not paid and found that the burdens of attending meetings, often at short notice, was difficult because council members were senior people and had full-time jobs. Civil society members recommended that funding be provided to second civil society representatives to the process on a full-time basis. However, in Kenya some disputes arose around funding to civil society and some felt that decision-making was slowed down initially by the system of offering per-diem payments for each meeting attended. But some have noted that such problems are less about the payment system and more about the need to select mature, distinguished citizens who put the process above considerations of personal gain.

Research institutions: Ghana was the first to conclude that a governing council itself could not manage all of the details of such a large process. It pioneered the idea of using independent research institutions to coordinate the process and prepare the national self-assessment and programme of action. This approach lends additional public credibility to the process because it was felt government officials would not be able to objectively review their own departments. To bolster the perceived fairness of the process – to both government and civil society – research institutes coordinated various workshops and research methods that drew both government and civil society into a common conversation about governance systems. Several key points have arisen in early APRM countries:

- **Selection procedures:** To bolster the credibility of the process, research institutes ideally should be selected based on a set of published criteria that look at their capacity and independence. Where possible, research institutions should be invited to tender for the positions in an open and transparent process.
- **Available staff:** The APRM process has proven more difficult than originally envisioned and countries have not been able to complete the exercise in the six-to-nine months period noted in the original guidelines. As a result, it is vital that research bodies who agree to do the work have sufficient staff that can be dedicated to the effort full-time for the duration of the process. In some cases, some staff at research bodies had other duties that meant they were unable to devote sufficient manpower to the task, which can affect either the speed or quality of the work.
- **Ability to sub-contract:** Because the APRM questionnaire is divided into four themes, Kenya, Ghana and South Africa appointed four research bodies to compile the reports. However, many of the APRM questions are quite specialised and require the ability to use outside experts to answer certain questions. For example, only a few people may know how monetary policy is set or be able to analyse trade, environmental or labour law. In case the research institute does not have all of the requisite expertise in-house, its terms of reference and budget should allow it to subcontract to other local experts to handle certain technical points.

Research and Consultation Methods

The complexity of the questionnaire means that no single research method alone will be sufficient to provide the kinds of answers required in the APRM. Many public submissions may describe a problem but not tell the whole story or how to solve the problem. So provision must be made for researchers to assess various inputs and do follow-up investigation with experts.

In the pioneer countries, 15 types of research and consultation activities were used. Below is a short list of them followed by an explanation of the best practices and lessons learned in each area:

Technical Inputs

- Desk research
- Expert surveys
- Focus groups
- Expert workshops
- Expert readers/editors
- Government interaction
- Validation processes

Public or Consultative Inputs

- Public conferences
- Citizen surveys
- Invitation to make written submissions
- Civil society convenors
- Parliamentary hearings
- Outreach to political parties
- Outreach to the media
- Programme of action (POA) workshops

Technical Research Methods

- **Desk research:** This should be the starting point of any research plan – to gather what has already been written about the country. Many documents have already been produced assessing aspects of governance and socio-economic development. These can include long-term strategy or national vision documents; Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers; national budgets; development plans; auditor-general’s reports; parliamentary committee investigations and reports, UNDP human development reports on socio-economic issues and UNECA’s governance research. (See Appendix B for a list of sources that can be helpful in building up the self-assessment and programme of action.)

A Solid Foundation for Desk Research

Begin Building the Self-Assessment by Making Specialist Desk Research Commissions: Because of the diversity of issues in the APRM questionnaire, it can make the research effort faster and more effective to group related questions into an issue cluster and contract an expert to write an assessment of each group of related questions. For example, several APRM objectives discuss aspects of human rights. Similarly it is easier to assign specialised experts to do the desk research on gender, trade, health, education, and infrastructure. In analysing the questionnaire with the Lesotho Governing Council, participants broke the questionnaire into 25 issue clusters. The Lesotho process is not complete and some issues may be grouped together for simplicity, but the exercise offers a valuable starting point in identifying what forms of expertise and desk research are needed.

Political and Democratic Governance

1. Managing conflict (including crime and cross-border issues)
2. Constitution/rule of law
3. Electoral systems & practices
4. Parliament
5. Judiciary
6. Human & political rights (including media freedoms and rights of children and vulnerable groups)
7. Gender (rights, fairness, socio-economic dimensions)
8. Decentralisation (including questions in the economic and socio-economic sections. Also could include issues of traditional rule, service delivery, land and environmental issues)

Corporate Governance

9. Business environment
10. Corporate behaviour
11. Corporate accountability

Economic Governance and Management

12. Economic & development strategy (to include questions on sustainable development from socio-economic section)
13. Sound administration, oversight, corruption and money laundering (including corruption questions from Political section)
14. Regional integration & trade

Socio-Economic Development

15. Self-reliance
16. Environment
17. Education
18. Health (including HIV)
19. Water & sanitation
20. Housing/shelter
21. Agriculture (including access to markets, inputs, supports, food security)
22. Finance (including micro-finance)
23. Transport
24. Energy
25. ICT

In order to begin building the national report and give participants in workshops something to respond to, it would be helpful to commission an expert writer in each of those issue clusters. Each writer would have six tasks:

- 1) Identify the relevant existing reports,
- 2) Prepare a bibliography of key reports and sources,
- 3) Prepare a list of key issues mentioned in those existing reports,
- 4) Under each issue, provide a list of supporting evidence from those reports, using footnotes to make it easy to find the relevant portions in future.
- 5) Extract from the existing reports a list of their recommendations and propose others that are suggested by the evidence.
- 6) Each specialist researcher would also be responsible for translating their sections into local languages.

Once these commissioned desk research papers are complete, research agencies can flesh them out through public meetings, survey findings and discussions with government experts.

Expert surveys: Ghana and Kenya complemented their citizen surveys (see following page) with surveys of several hundred experts, who were carefully chosen for their knowledge of the various thematic areas of APRM. An expert survey is not representative of popular views but can provide an important measure of the problems affecting particular areas and provides a means to answer some of the highly technical questions in self-assessment questionnaire and identify potential solutions for the programme of action. Because it draws on more educated and well informed respondents it can help in identifying recommendations and details of problems the causes of which are not widely known.

Focus groups: Surveys often raise questions and require further clarification. One approach to help explore particular problems or the views of key groups is to hold focus group discussions of five to 20 people. These allow participants to elaborate on issues and can help identify subtle problems, such as the causes of land conflicts or ways of harmonising traditional rule with local government.

Expert Workshops: Less structured than focus groups, expert workshops should be focused on a given theme and allow adequate time to fully debate issues and find or critique solutions. South Africa used this approach in its process. However, it found that a one-day seminar for each of the four APRM themes was too little to cover the diversity of topics in each theme.

Expert readers/editors: Because the process of assembling a long report involves many people and many forms of input, there inevitably will be editing/grammar mistakes and potential misunderstandings around technical matters. To catch mistakes and give the text a thorough reading, Ghana and Kenya established the best practice of turning the four thematic area reports over to an expert reader for each section. This person was tasked with identifying both editing and substantive issues in the report. Rwanda also used academic reviewers.

Validation processes: Even when the research plan provides for extensive public input, there is inevitably a desire by all parties to see the text and comment on its conclusions before it is made final. People will be concerned about whether their inputs were included or translated appropriately. It is also important to recognise that, as noted in the expert editor's point above, there are many ways in which the point of a given submission could be subtly misconstrued or tell only part of a complex story. Thus it is important to build robust processes to debate the report and leave sufficient time to have a full conversation on all of its elements. Distribution of the text in advance enhances the exercise.

Government interaction: The ultimate goal of APRM is to make better policy and governance systems. One key lesson learned from all the early countries is that there is a tendency to make the process of preparing the national self-assessment report a technocratic exercise. Because top government officials have many duties they tend to delegate to junior officials and can find at the end that they are surprised by the report findings and can reject the proposed solutions because they have not been briefed on the chain of reasoning leading to particular recommendations. However, if ministers were involved all through the process, there might be strong complaints that government was meddling. As a result there is a need to engage senior civil servants and ministers in the processes of expert workshops so that they can hear about preliminary findings and comment based on their knowledge of existing government programmes and systems. It is important that the research agencies and lead writers of each section remain in charge of the editing process and consider government as one of the variety of constituencies to be consulted. In some countries, such encounters turned into sessions where government dictated what should be in the report, which is contrary to the APRM rules and the spirit of the process.

Popular Consultation Methods

Public conferences: There is a political need to allow ordinary citizens avenues to express their views. However, public conferences need to be factored into plans and budgets. They require rental of facilities, sound systems, provision of food, travel, accommodation for organising staff, and systems to publicise the meetings and send invitations to key organisations.

Such meetings lend credibility to the process, but they also have certain weaknesses. The larger the meeting the more difficult it can be to manage a meaningful conversation that results in solid evidence and useful policy recommendations. Citizens often do not come armed with the specific facts to prove a case, so that issues raised in public events must be followed up with additional research and investigation. Smaller workshop meetings can go into greater depth on issues but more such encounters are needed for the process to gain credibility and visibility and cover all regions of the country.

Citizen surveys: To ensure that the views of a wide variety of constituency groups and regions are captured, the process needs some kind of structured approach. A citizen survey using a representative sample can provide this. The positives are that it is organised, reaches all regions and allows views to be quantified, i.e. in saying that X percent of people agree that a certain issue is a top priority. Polling citizens also takes away the element of subjectivity that can affect what constitutes a major or minor issue. It also reaches a nationally representative sample of citizens. However, surveys take time, funds and specialised expertise to plan and execute.

Formal invitations to make written submissions: Inviting civil society to make written submissions can be a good way to signal that the process is open and transparent. And it can result in information from diverse groups that make writing the final country self-assessment easier and more thorough. For example, only a few experts may know about monetary policy. Getting them to write an analysis can make the process easier.

Civil society convenors: Although countries appoint different civil society groups to the governing council, their membership on the council does not mean that civil society views are necessarily included. Governing council members do not write the self-assessment themselves and council members are often not professional writers or researchers. Because they also have full-time jobs, they can struggle to keep up with the demands of the process. In Kenya, certain members were designated as convenors, who were to call meetings of their constituencies and gather inputs for the self-assessment. The idea was a good one, but the process did not operate because of insufficient funds or logistical staff to assist the convenors. In South Africa the function was not given a name but funds were provided to civil society members of the governing council to gather their membership and prepare written reports on areas of interest. This is a potential best practice but the lessons learned showed that explicit steps and support are need for this function to work and many groups need the assistance of a writer/editor.

Parliamentary hearings: In every country so far, parliaments have expressed strong interest in APRM and expected to be briefed and involved. Even where the executive and parliament are dominated by the same party, parliament wanted to express its views. Kenya and Rwanda included parliamentary representatives on their governing council but this did not translate into broad engagement. The South African parliament chose to write its own APRM report and convened hearings to gather public and expert testimony, which provided valuable evidence to researchers who assembled the national self-assessment report. Inviting parliament to hold public hearings can be a useful way both to welcome parliamentary participation and it can extend another avenue of public participation.

Outreach to political parties: In all countries so far, leaders have expressed concern about what the political opposition might do with APRM reports. Ghana established a best practice by reaching out to the political opposition. Before publicly naming its governing council members, Ghana consulted with the opposition on the acceptability of its proposed members and criteria for selecting eminent, non-partisan people. Briefing parliament on the research plans before they are final and inviting its committee chairs to the expert workshops would be other methods to involve members of parliament. They will expect to be given ample time to read and comment on the draft country assessment through the validation processes.

Outreach to the media: The media is an important force in shaping public opinion and if it begins to take negative views on the process, that perception will be magnified throughout the citizenry. As a result, special care should be taken to brief the media as plans develop, so they know what to expect and are invited to make inputs. Media freedoms are a key part of political and democratic rights and they should be actively engaged to gather their views on these points.

Programme of action (POA) workshops: An important lesson learned is that all early countries put off development of the programme of action until the end, which put them under intense time pressure. The process of drafting the self-assessment has taken much longer than the six to nine months envisioned in the APRM guidelines. As a result, little time was left for the POA. Given that good policy is usually not made in a rush, it would be best practice to take steps early in the process to start building the POA. See the later discussion of a model desk research system that would help capture all of the already existing recommendations in one list. South Africa attempted to hold workshops and validation conference on both the self-assessment and the POA, but found that the conversation in these events was overwhelmingly consumed with discussing problems and not solutions. Such experiences suggest the best practice of dedicating separate events to fleshing out the POA and having breakaway groups of stakeholders and experts to work on particular points, such as education, health, etc.

Making a Consultation Plan – A Best Practices Approach

From the previous section, it is clear there are a number of options in forming an APRM research plan. This section will focus on how to translate that list into a working plan, bearing in mind the elements of a sound plan, which is Candid, Open, Planned, Participatory, Exemplary and Rigorous.

Consult before taking decisions: APRM experience in all the early countries shows that the public will be very interested in the process and expects to be involved in all phases. To allay concerns that the process will be managed behind closed doors and to signal openness, Kenya established a best practice of consulting about the process before decisions were taken about national governing structures or research processes. Consulting first can build instant credibility for government and lead to more harmonious relationships and richer public discussion of the process.

Engage through the media: While a later section offers detailed strategies for engaging the media, it is important to note here that media should be considered as a part of the consultation plan. Many citizens make their decisions about national events based on press coverage so it is important to engage early and candidly with the media. Talk shows on radio and television can be particularly effective ways of starting the national conversation about how to manage APRM. Such programmes can be used to inform the public about the process, and mention the different methods – surveys, public submissions, research bodies, and conferences – that are under consideration.

Study the questionnaire: Before finalising consultation plans, it is vital that participants familiarise themselves with the kinds of questions asked in the questionnaire. Identifying clusters or related issues and experts or institutions that can help analyse them can make the research phase go more smoothly. Such a list also is a useful planning tool to help match the issues with interested parties or experts who should be invited to participate.

Identify experts: In keeping with the notion that the questionnaire requires both popular and technical inputs, the consultation plan should attempt to identify key experts and opinion makers on the various specialised areas of the questionnaire.

Plan an inclusive series of public meetings: Meetings that are open to the public and advertised in advance play an important role in signalling the openness of the process and affording citizens the opportunity to comment. It is important to ensure that such meetings include a balance of key groups such as urban and rural areas, different provinces or districts, and other key dimensions that may be sensitive such as north-south, Christian-Muslim, coastal and inland.

Supplement public meetings with a well-planned scientifically based citizen survey: While public meetings are important politically to the process, the conversations can be hard to manage and may not always provide enough time for all of the issues in APRM. To ensure that consultation is more thorough and that the process cannot be accused of making its conclusions on a subjective or partisan basis, it can be considered best practice to ground the national self-assessment in a citizen survey based on a representative sample of different regions, incomes, religions as well as gender and age. In planning for a survey, consult with survey experts about how much time, money, staff and training would be required to administer a survey.

Consider how to get government and civil society to engage: Because the end product of a national self-assessment is a lengthy report, the process can tend to take on a technocratic aspect with the report writing delegated to research institutes and the governing council. However, if the process reaches conclusions that government or political figures do not

accept, there can be problems when it comes to implementing the recommendations. As a result, consideration should be given to how to get top government officials to read through the self-assessments and engage in discussion of issues without dominating the conversation. Government must leave space for alternative views to be expressed and dedicate time to absorbing the findings and discussing them internally. One approach would be to ensure that permanent secretaries or other top civil servants attend public meetings and experts workshops and participate in the issue debates.

Ensure proper computer, email, website and administrative support: A smooth-running computer setup with email and a website can make the consultation process much easier and more effective. There should not be software and connectivity problems when invitations have to go out. Relying on established research institutes that already have such infrastructure can be one way to get the operation up and running quickly.

Dedicate staff and time to developing a database of civil society organisations: Broad consultations are a logistical challenge that requires management. Invitations must be written and sent in good time. But that cannot be done without an accurate list of contacts for key constituencies. Creating such a list is not hard but takes time and attention to detail.

Identify key institutions and constituencies: Don't rely on umbrella bodies to pass on the word. Instead of assuming that the chancellor of a university will pass on invitations to the relevant academic departments, it is much better to develop a discrete list of experts by asking around and holding brainstorming sessions with knowledgeable people. Building such a list will require many telephone calls and invitations for interested parties and groups to submit names and contact details for inclusion on the national APRM list. NGO councils can help but there are many key bodies and individuals that they won't have details for. Here are just a few of the key organisations to find:

- the judicial service commission
- retired judges
- retired diplomats
- the law commission
- parliamentary committee chairpersons
- regional organisations and governments
- religious federations
- gender organisations
- research institutes
- academic bodies
- tender board members
- the registrar of companies
- banking and stock market regulators
- labour unions
- experts on trade, economic policy, tax and other specialised aspects of governance
- industry groups
- student organisations
- youth groups
- political parties
- the human rights commission
- the electoral commission
- the auditor-general
- the chamber of commerce
- legal societies
- opinion columnists
- talk-show hosts and producers
- newspaper editors
- journalists focused on business, development or governance
- human rights, anti-corruption, press-freedom and anti-poverty advocacy groups

Planning for an APRM National Survey

The APRM guidelines require broad public consultation in the formation of the national self-assessment report and programme of action. While countries have used public meetings and invited citizens to make written inputs, these approaches have weaknesses. Written inputs may not come from all intended groups and are particularly more challenging undertakings for rural constituencies and the poor. Conferences are useful because they can reveal unexpected issues, but they tend to be attended by elites and participants often do not come armed with evidence and clear solutions.

Robert Mattes, deputy director of the Afrobarometer project notes in his recent paper on surveys and the APRM: “Even the most well-funded public consultation exercise may engage the attention of only a small fraction of ordinary citizens, let alone get them to participate, especially if people do not see any real incentive in doing so.”⁴

Mattes goes on to say that, “any process of national self-review would be incomplete if it only included the assessment of elites (whether they be government officials, technocratic experts, or civil society stakeholders) and excluded the opinions of the mass public. The true state of political and economic governance in a given country cannot be assessed simply on the basis of an objective analysis of the rules, resources and behaviour of the economy, government institutions and large corporations.”⁵

Citizen surveys offer a structured approach to capturing the views of the mass public and are therefore a valuable complement to other forms of APRM consultation. When based on a representative sample of citizens they can fairly reflect the views of the rich and poor, women and men, young and old, urban and rural. And because answers can be put in a quantifiable format, a citizen survey can provide a clear picture of the location and intensity of governance problems or show the extent of citizen satisfaction.

Elements of a Successful Survey

While useful, surveys require time, staff and resources and therefore must be built into APRM plans from the beginning. The following are key elements that should be considered in planning a survey:

- A survey that is representative of national opinions must be based on a sample set of individuals that accurately reflect the demographic, ethnic and regional breakdown of the national population.
- Obtaining such a sample set can be aided by an accurate census system. If a survey team must develop its own sample set, the process takes additional time and money.
- Surveys that only talk to the heads of households can fail to account for the views of different social groups, such as women and youth. Furthermore, the opinion of the head of the household is not reflective of the opinion of all individuals within the household.
- The APRM Questionnaire is designed for research and thematic purposes and is not suitable as an opinion survey instrument. For example, ordinary citizens are unlikely to be able to critique details of how monetary policy is set or the specifics of an independent

⁴ Mattes R, *Using Representative Opinion Surveys in the African Peer Review Mechanism Process*, paper presented at APRM Lessons Learned Workshop, South African Institute of International Affairs, Muldersdrift, 12-13 September 2006, p 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*

judiciary. As a result, the concepts in the APRM Questionnaire would have to be transformed into concrete policy issues that citizens would be asked to rate and which citizens can reasonably offer opinions about. Language would have to be simplified and questions rephrased in a multiple-choice format. This also takes time, money and staff.

- Once the APRM Questionnaire has been translated into an appropriate format, it also must be translated into local languages. Given the technical nature of governance terminology, such local language translations would have to be tested against actual citizens to ensure there are not misunderstandings. This also adds time and expense to the survey plan.
- Sample size matters. Larger samples can give more accuracy but cost more. By using a sample size of 1,200 individuals, the sampling error is reduced to +/- 3 points. Statistically the sample size has an impact on the sampling error. Doubling the sample size reduces the sampling error by 1 point. For instance using a sample of 600 gives a sampling error of +/- 4 points, while a sample of 4,800 gives a sampling error of +/- 1 point.
- Once a survey instrument is ready, it must be administered by an adequate number of staff, who must be trained in how to complete the form and how to capture the relevant demographic and location data.
- After all of the survey forms are complete, they must be analysed and conclusions drawn from the data.

Time: According to Mattes, the following are reasonable timeframes to allocate to the various phases of surveying. The process can be compressed depending on the availability of an accurate sample set and questionnaire. Ensuring that enough time is allocated for such a survey should be an important factor in APRM planning.

Activity	Advisable timing
Questionnaire design	4 weeks
Advertising and awarding bids to research providers	3 weeks
Questionnaire translation	1 week
In-house pilot of questionnaire and redesign	2 weeks
Sample design and sample drawing	2 weeks
Training fieldworkers	2 weeks
Field pilot	1 week
Field work	4 weeks
Data entry, cleaning, presentation of marginal results	4 weeks
TOTAL	23 weeks

Costs: Conducting surveys is an expensive exercise. Depending on the size of the country and its infrastructure (i.e. roads to allow for the easy movement of fieldworkers), the cost may vary from US\$ 85,000 to US\$ 125,000 for a sample of 1,000 individuals, according to the Afrobarometer survey project.

Key Roles of the National Focal Points

The Focal Point plays a key facilitation and diplomatic liaison role in the APRM system. The Focal Point is the main point of contact for the APRM Secretariat and Eminent Persons and is responsible for providing needed documents and making logistical arrangements for the various phases of APRM. Within the country, the Focal Point plays an equally important role in ensuring that government provides the needed financial support, spending approvals and policy input to the National Governing Council and its supporting research agencies.

Because the objectivity and independence of the governing council are paramount in the APRM system, the relationship between Focal Point and council is critical. In a training video recorded for SAIIA, Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat, a member of the Panel of Eminent Persons, and its chairperson at the time said:

The basic document clearly states that it should be a tripartite arrangement of the civil society, the corporate sector and the government. I think the formula that we have been trying to encourage is one-third, one-third, one-third, and that the leadership of that national commission or national committee or governing council, whatever name you want to call it, should come from the civil society or the corporate sector and not from the government, because *we don't want to see this as a government project. The government cannot be driving a programme for which itself is being evaluated. So this is why we want to make sure of its autonomy and independence, to make sure that there is no domination, the government is not saying we cannot do that or we cannot do this.* If that is the case, then you report to the panel, and the panel is there to protect the independence of the committee itself, so that it functions ...

The governing council is like a board. All the major decisions will be taken by the council, of course with the support of the ministry concerned. Normally it may be in the ministry of planning or the ministry in charge of Nepad, but it [the focal point] should not interfere. It is the council that will determine all the areas. That is the way it has worked for Kenya, Rwanda, and even Ghana. It is that committee that will sit, will plan for example the civic education, the consultation throughout the country. It is that committee that will negotiate with the donors to raise funds for the actual evaluation. It is that committee that will also select the institutions to carry out research, and will carry out the publicity ... You don't refer to anybody else. Of course there may be some financial aspects where you will have to refer to either the committee of the donors or to the ministry concerned.⁶ (Emphasis Added)

According to the *APRM Guidelines*:

It is the responsibility of the participating country to organise a participatory and transparent national process. In so doing, each participating country must establish a Focal Point for the APR process, which should be at a Ministerial level, or a person that reports directly to the Head of State or Government, with the necessary technical committees supporting it. The APR Focal Point can be established as an integral part of existing structures or as new ones. However, it is critical that the work of the APR Focal Point is inclusive, integrated and coordinated with existing policy-decision and medium-term planning processes.⁷

These guidelines were promulgated before the early countries began implementing their national APR processes. In practice, these countries saw value in establishing a multi-stakeholder national governing council or national commission outside of government (sometimes with government representation) to manage the process, because this body gave added legitimacy and credibility to the endeavour.

⁶ Interview with Ambassador B Kiplagat, Nairobi, Kenya, 27 April 2006.

⁷ NEPAD APRM, *Guidelines for Countries to Prepare for and to Participate in the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)*, November 2003, point 34, p 11.

The National Focal Point has a number of critical roles:

- **Signalling government intent:** Perhaps the most important role of the focal point is being the face of government in the process. Who the focal point is and how he or she acts to build trust and ensure rigour in the APRM process sends strong signals to civil society. If the focal point rather than the NGC seems to be driving the process, questions and doubts may be raised about its integrity and intent.
- **Building understanding and relationships with the NGC:** The respective roles of the focal point and NGC must be clearly delineated, and it is important for the focal point to allow the NGC the space to manage the national process credibly and effectively.
- **Ensuring effective government-civil society interaction:** In order to reach sound policy recommendations, the peer review process needs extensive interaction between government, the governing council, civil society groups and researchers, who must assess the validity of public submissions and recommendations. The focal point should be the key player in ensuring that key government staff – including senior political figures – remain abreast of the process and participate in conferences and expert workshops.
- **Affording access to government and documents by research agencies:** The focal point can help the research agencies to meet with and interview key government officials who hold information necessary to develop the self-assessment and POA, and assist with accessing important documents (such as records of treaty compliance and accession to APRM governance standards). Ghana appointed officials in each government department, ministry and agency as “APR focal persons” to facilitate this process.
- **Planning the country review mission:** An effective, inclusive country review requires good planning and allocation of sufficient time to ensure that the review team can have broad stakeholder consultations without being rushed. This planning should leave adequate time for travel.
- **Facilitating country missions:** The focal point is the key person responsible for the activities and logistics related to APRM country support missions and country review missions, in collaboration with the APR Secretariat. He or she needs to plan these visits effectively, and budget for the in-country costs.
- **Providing effective budget management:** The APRM process involves considerable financial outlay and requires meticulous and transparent budget management. This is a major role of the focal point, particularly in managing the flow of funds from government and/or development partners to the NGC, research agencies and local secretariat, as well as expenditure rules and procedures.
- **Ensuring effective support to the POA:** Once the programme of action is finalised, it must be effectively implemented. The focal point’s connections with and influence within government are vital to ensuring that there is political buy-in and commitment by all players, within and outside of government.

Developing the Programme of Action (POA)

Each country must produce two documents: a Country Self-Assessment Report (CSAR) and a Programme of Action (POA) to address all the governance problems and policy challenges identified in the self-assessment. Because the CSAR must be done first and it is a very large undertaking, countries have tended to put off consideration of the POA until near the end of the process, when time pressure can be acute.

Early country experience suggests that it would be best-practice to start considering the POA much earlier in the process. Once countries have begun drafting the POA they have found that it is time-consuming and difficult to assemble a POA that is achievable, contains accurate costs of programmes and realistically assigns responsibilities, resources and deadlines.

Critically, any POA that deals with major national problems requires time for consultations to ensure that various parties agree on the way forward. This is reinforced by the APRM guidelines, which call for broad public participation not only in the CSAR but also in crafting the POA. The guidelines also note that the POA should not be a “wish list” separate from existing national plans. Ideally, it should bring together national development plans, action items envisioned in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and other interventions based on the APRM process.

Some key considerations related to the POA:

Prioritise the POA: The POA should not be hurriedly assembled towards the end of the process when deadlines are looming, but carefully integrated into the process of compiling the CSAR. As part of their terms of reference, research agencies should be tasked to develop recommendations to address each problem they describe in their technical reports or in the CSAR. A letter of invitation to all major civil society groups to make written submissions with recommendations can be an effective way of making the process inclusive and ensuring citizens are aware their participation is desired.

Commission POA desk research: Desk research is the starting point of the CSAR and proper commissioned desk research can help the POA development process. Researchers can be tasked with combing through existing national plans and strategies, and collecting solutions that have already been noted or are partly underway. A workshop can be used to gauge whether solutions should consist of new or modified laws, additional budget allocations, improvements to the quantity or quality of staff in certain departments, or efforts to develop new forms of capacity.

Hold POA-specific events: It is perhaps human nature, but the early APRM countries showed that the discussion in APRM conferences tends to be dominated by problems with comparatively little or superficial attention to finding solutions. Holding an event that seeks both problems and solutions can be very difficult to chair. Finding solutions for a given problem area also requires a focused team of experts and participants, who can debate alternatives. As a result, the early country experiences suggest it would be best practice to dedicate separate workshops to developing policy responses to particular challenges.

Don't neglect the big, hard-to-solve problems: While some problems can be addressed with a simple legislative change, some big issues have many contributing causes and cannot be addressed with quick-fixes. Examples include unemployment, HIV, crime or infrastructure. Countries should guard against the temptation to focus the POA on smaller problems because they are more easily solved and thus neglect the big issues. The POA should include a priority list of the nation's biggest problems for which solutions may not be immediately apparent. For these, the POA should include a commitment to conducting

additional policy dialogue, research and policy experimentation. For very large problems, such issues may require a commitment of a decade or more.

Facilitate stakeholder commitment: Early countries have found that holding workshops with ministers and permanent secretaries are vital to achieve the political commitment needed to endorse the report and support the programme of action. Government, civil society and the private sector will all have responsibilities in implementing the POA, so achieving their understanding and buy-in is crucial. Several strategies used in early countries can help facilitate this kind of policy dialogue:

- Kenya used a NGC that was civil society led and had a civil society majority. When its reports and POA were complete, they were presented to a meeting of government permanent secretaries. In an important lesson learned, Kenyan officials said this meeting was difficult because the secretaries had not previously been aware of the report and either not absorbed its arguments or saw them as intrusions. This suggests a best practice of briefing the permanent secretaries early and inviting them to participate in the expert's workshop phases, where the POA is developed.
- Researchers will need to call on government departments for information. Rwanda noted how it is important to reassure government staff that they are free to speak their minds and should provide information for the process. Ghana helped this process by appointing an official liaison in each ministry who was responsible for providing information and assistance to APRM researchers.
- Top government officials will need time to study the report and should be involved in workshops and conferences to ensure that there is a meeting of minds with civil society and researchers.
- Realistic costing of action items is difficult and requires that countries think through the details of the staffing, facilities and operating costs that go into new or expanded programmes. Some early countries found that initial estimates were not very realistic.

Communication, Public Information & Media Strategies

The first step in making an effective communication plan is to assess the social-political context that will surround the APRM process. Peer review has an explicitly political dimension, because it is about developing a plan to shape the nation's future and it involves diverse constituencies and perspectives. Civil society groups, the media and opposition parties may have different views from government on the many aspects of the process, such as how the governing council should be organised, how research should be conducted, who is consulted and what the final report and POA should say.

Both government and civil society may well be anxious about the APRM process. Government may be concerned about whether the media and political opposition will use the material to score points or embarrass government. Civil society in all the early countries expressed concern that government would attempt to interfere, rush the process or manipulate the editing to produce a text more favourable to the incumbent administration. These concerns should be seen as natural but manageable factors.

Perceptions really matter in this process – it must be open and credible, and be seen as such. All players may be wary of the other's motives and actions, and will look for signals of sincerity and openness. Understanding and accepting different perspectives, building trust, and demonstrating that there is nothing to fear and nothing to hide are vital elements of managing public communications effectively.

Building Trust and Credibility

Here are some recommendations to build trust and dispel suspicion:

Consult widely before deciding on APRM plans and structures: APRM is a challenging and complex process that countries have never been exposed to before. Ghana and Kenya were credited for the best practice of formally committing their initial research, consultation and validation plans to paper and then discussing them broadly before they were finalised. South Africa, Rwanda and Mauritius incurred criticism and scepticism because they did not do this. Early countries like Ghana have successfully anticipated potential criticism from the opposition, civil society and semi-autonomous government bodies, and by hearing these concerns first-hand Ghana was able to adapt institutions and procedures to address them.

Advertise public consultation meetings: People can easily feel slighted or excluded if they are invited late (or not invited at all) to key meetings, and may attribute their exclusion to negative motives. To avoid such accusations, advertise public meetings well in advance in national or local newspapers. It sends an important signal of openness and inclusion.

Develop a broad contacts list: Invest time and resources to develop a solid and accurate list of NGOs, academics, autonomous government bodies, key experts and journalists, so that all stakeholders can receive personal invitations to participate in events, and contact them by letter or email in good time.

Encourage frankness without fear: Rwandan officials thought it important to send early signals that citizens and particularly government employees should speak freely in giving information to APRM without fear of punishment.

Make the governing council process transparent: Holding open governing council meetings or making the minutes public demonstrates there is nothing to hide.

Include the media on the NGC: Having media representation on the national governing council would also signal inclusiveness and sincerity. Lesotho, for example, has a member of the Media Institute of Southern Africa on the NGC.

Post draft texts on the Internet: Transparency is enhanced when the NGC makes copies of public submissions and draft versions of reports available on the Internet. Even if Internet usage is low, it signals that authorities welcome comment and are not trying to hide material or monopolise information. South Africa did this to good effect.

Getting the Most out of the Media

The media is an important force in shaping public opinion and if it begins to take negative views on the process, that perception will be magnified throughout the citizenry. As a result, special care should be taken to brief the media as plans develop, so they know what to expect and are invited to make inputs. Media freedoms are a key part of political and democratic rights and they should be actively engaged to gather their views on these points.

While the media will likely be interested in the peer review, many newspapers, radio and television stations are thinly staffed and consequently may not have the time or experienced journalists needed to handle complex topics. The news media is often largely driven by events, and may focus on the major set pieces such as the launch, arrival of country missions and the release of reports, with little written in between unless specific efforts are made. Key steps that could encourage broader coverage include:

Cultivate contacts: Relationships with key players in media outlets should be cultivated. The more information journalists have about the process, the more likely they are to cover it.

Media management training for NGC: Some basic training for NGC members can make them much more effective in dealing with the media and can help avoid some common mistakes that can create distrust or antagonistic stories.

Propose APRM radio and TV talk shows: All countries have tried in limited ways to use the radio and television but this could be enhanced by encouraging talk shows on the process, the research plan and about the findings as they emerge. News items also could be used to notify the public of upcoming workshops to better enable participation.

Stimulate debate through opinion articles: Ministers could be encouraged to write opinion columns in national newspapers on the key national priorities that encourage the public to make inputs about how to solve them. Send letters to NGOs encouraging them to write in the newspapers about key national priorities in the press with reference to the APRM.

Influence editors: It is important to note that although reporters suggest story ideas, they require approval from editors about which stories to pursue. Editors make the decision about what is newsworthy and how issues will be handled, so if they do not understand APRM or are suspicious of it, they will not allocated reporters to the story. Thus a special briefing on the research plan and governing arrangements for editors of both print and electronic media would be helpful.

Hire a dedicated media-relations person: The governing council should consider hiring a professional media-relations person to be tasked with carrying out media outreach. This person should be tasked with gathering the contact details of all editors and reporters in print, identifying all of the possible news and talk show programmes on radio and television and finding the producers for those shows. They also should respond to all requests for information and arrange interviews with the Focal Point and governing council.

Encourage live broadcasts: The media liaison person should develop a plan to persuade particularly the electronic media to carry talk show discussions of the research plan and other key aspects of the national process. They could arrange a live broadcast of some of the expert's workshops and of the final report validation conferences. The NGC also should liaise with Parliament about the potential of broadcasting hearings on governance.

Country Review Processes and Challenges

After the country completes its self-assessment report and programme of action, it will host a country review mission. Composed of about 15-20 African academics and governance experts, the review team is led by a member of the Panel of Eminent Persons. The team typically spends two-to-three weeks in-country, and has two major priorities: to establish whether the local APR process was fair, inclusive and consultative; and to perform a thorough review of the key governance issues. The Panel and Secretariat write the final country report based on the observations of the country review mission, background research by the APRM Secretariat, the country self-assessment and any direct submissions from citizens. This final report – not the country self-assessment – is discussed by heads of state in the APR Forum.

National Focal Points are responsible for liaison with the continental APR Secretariat and making the necessary logistical and financial arrangements for the review mission.

Some logistical factors that Focal Points need to consider:

Budget for the cost of the review visit: While the Secretariat pays for the review team members to travel to the country, the host country bears all other costs. These can be substantial as they involve hotel accommodation, food and transport costs for a large team of people that can spend up to three weeks in a country. Review teams often travel around the country, holding meetings in major cities as well as smaller towns and in rural areas, with additional logistical, protocol and financial implications. It is important to budget accurately for these costs, and learn from the experiences of other countries.

Minimise ceremonial events and rationalise travel: Country review members are in the country to work, so the focal point should ensure that cultural and ceremonial events are kept to a minimum, and that not all team members need to attend such occasions. Previous teams have noted that too much of their time is consumed by meeting dignitaries, cutting down on time available to conduct interviews. It is also important to allow the team sufficient time in the major urban centres to consult with experts.

Provide documents for the review team: The focal point should provide access to documents for the review team, including the self-assessment report and POA, technical reports, written submissions and background documents. In particular, they should make available documents indicating the status of ratification and implementation of protocols and agreements, which all countries so far have struggled to verify. (See standards list in Appendix A.)

Inform and invite civil society: The NGC should continue to build trust during this phase, and the review visit should be conducted with openness and transparency. To allow citizens and organisations to interact with the team, their itinerary should be adequately publicised in advance. Like the consultations and public meetings in the self-assessment process, events involving the review team should be advertised in newspapers to encourage ordinary people to become involved.

Planning and Budgeting For APRM

A well-considered budget and a research/consultation plan are essential for peer review. Unless a country considers and budgets for the specific activities involved in a peer review, including the many staff and logistical expenses, it may find insufficient funds for consultation, research or other key items.

Based on the best-practice that countries should commit their research and consultation plans to paper to facilitate proper planning and enable public comment, SAIIA drafted the following model research plan. It is based on discussions at a workshop with the Lesotho National Governing Council. Because of national elections and the need to finalise budget allocations, the plan was not adopted by Lesotho and remains a discussion document. However it represents a useful point of departure for planning in other countries.

By formalising a research plan, Lesotho aimed to improve the quality of its budgeting and planning. The following elements of the research plan are presented in roughly the order in which they would occur. It is also a checklist of activities and likely costs involved in each activity.

Start-up Processes

- **Agree on National Governing Council procedures:** Agreeing on clear rules is important in avoiding problems in a governing council and should include setting policies on voting, per diems, media outreach, editing processes and relationships with government and other stakeholders. This would be a best practice to avoid some of the disputes that had arisen in other APRM countries, which can damage trust and cast doubts on the process. There also seems to be a need to more clearly define the role of the research institutes in relationship to the NGC. This could easily require a day or more and could require funds for venue hire, meals and transport, the employment of a facilitator and a note-taker.
- **Draft a research plan:** The first actual research step should be to write and circulate a research plan to be debated in a full meeting of the NGC with input from other interested stakeholders. Creating a research plan would require input from academics, survey experts, civil society and government. Ideally the governing council would discuss various options, agree on a basic plan, assign a researcher to write it up and circulate the draft for comment. Costs may involve venue hire, meals, transport, and provision for photocopying.
- **Discuss the research plan publicly:** Once public comment on the research plan is received, an additional governing council meeting would be needed to agree on which items to include and exclude. The research plan should also be discussed in the media and with parliament and political parties and NGOs so that stakeholders are assured that it will be comprehensive, thorough and fair in its approach. The costs for organising these meetings would mirror those above.
- **Draft research institutes' agreements:** Research institutes require a contract that spells out agreed remuneration levels and contingencies in the event the APRM schedule slips and/or the workload changes significantly. It also should stipulate the number of full-time researchers to be dedicated to the effort and assurances that they do not have other work obligations. Make provision for legal fees and allocate time for negotiations.
- **Select research institutes:** Research institutes should be selected according to written criteria and invitations to tender should go to all suitable institutions in a transparent tender. Council should discuss with potential candidates which specific experts the

institute can commit to APRM and for what duration. It is also important to ensure that the named experts do not have other work obligations that would limit their availability to APRM. This selection and vetting process will take time and council members must be available to meet and discuss the selection.

- **Revise the questionnaire:** The APRM questionnaire is a valuable guide for research but it is not structured for popular use and involves language that is too technical for many people. To adapt it as a citizen survey instrument, countries must allocate time and funding to hire appropriate survey expertise. Once simplified, additional funds and time are needed for translation into local languages.
- **Create a national APRM website:** Launching a website can be an important tool for disseminating information to the media and stakeholders, including posting of questionnaires, announcing meeting venues, posting press releases and contact information. Time, funds and staff must be allocated to design the site, secure the web address, fill the site with documents and make provision for adding new content.
- **Invite written public submissions:** South Africa established a best practice by inviting written inputs from the public and NGOs. Actively inviting written inputs from organisations and experts can be an important signal of openness and can make the work much easier for the researchers who must compile the national report. However, specific individual invitations are much more effective than general comments or advertisements. To refine the South African approach, it would be better to develop a comprehensive list of stakeholder organisations and send a formal request to them to put their thoughts on paper regarding any or all parts of the questionnaire. They should be given a reasonable time of 60 to 90 days to prepare submissions. Submissions should be collated and uploaded onto national APRM websites. Budgets would need to make provision for this.
- **Develop a database:** The above point emphasises the need for the NGC and national secretariat to dedicate staff to compiling a database of stakeholders – including NGOs, religious bodies, labour unions, business organisations and parliament (see list of potential stakeholders on page 14). Many of these groups may be based far from the country's APRM offices, or may have a low public profile, but reaching out to them will add to the credibility of the process and the strength of its analysis. Such a stakeholder database would require one or two full-time staff, who should begin developing it early in the process so invitations can go out smoothly.
- **Facilitation assistance:** Not all organisations have adequate expertise or resources to compile high-quality submissions, although such groups may have valuable perspectives. APRM should provide support for those approached in the previous stage. This will involve convening several workshops to help them compile written reports. A budget will be needed for organising these workshops, including venue hire and engaging an appropriately skilled facilitator/editor. This may be particularly useful for regional focus groups aimed at rural concerns or understanding sources of conflict. Kenya initiated the idea of civil-society convenors but did not get sufficient input this way because it offered no facilitation assistance. South Africa offered NGC members and selected constituencies small funds to hold meetings of their members to draft APRM responses. While this has budget implications it increases participation and pre-empts potential complaints that organisations were unaware or unable to make input. Such interventions could be economically accomplished by paying a professional writer/editor to assist key groups for a one-day workshop.

Research and Consultation

- **Expert desk research:** APRM should not reinvent the wheel and a lot of information on governance already exists in various reports. To start the process, researchers should gather existing reports and documents reflecting on governance issues then extract from them descriptions of key problems, evidence of the extent of those problems and recommendations. Once complete, this desk research should result in a fairly comprehensive issues list, backed up by evidence and footnotes, and matched by recommendations. This list should be organised into the four APRM thematic sections. Consultations and workshops should be informed by the issues that come from the desk research phase and use it as a basis for discussions. Citizen and expert surveys should include questions to validate or test the key problems noted in desk research. Because the four APRM themes are very broad and include diverse subjects, it may be easier to identify smaller more manageable issues and commission specialist researchers to pull together all available reports in each area.

In the APRM questionnaire, there are roughly 25 distinct issue clusters including such areas as human rights, electoral systems, gender, trade, corruption and oversight, parliament, etc. For each issue cluster, an expert would be commissioned who would be responsible for finding existing reports and governance analyses, preparing a bibliography, extracting from these sources the major issues, citing evidence to demonstrate the extent of such problems, providing footnotes, and extracting any recommendations to address the issues. These recommendations would form a useful starting point in crafting the national programme of action. The report for each issue cluster would have to be prepared and footnoted according to an agreed format. Research institutes could write these papers in-house or assign them to outside specialists, depending on the availability of skills. Each cluster author would be expected to read and comment on the papers of authors in related issue clusters. Such authors will need to be paid (including reimbursement for overheads relevant to research), and provision should be made for a professional copy edit of the manuscripts. The fee to each commissioned author could be in the vicinity of \$1000 and the work could reasonably be completed in one month. This desk research would take a minimum of a month.

- **Expert workshops:** Once the expert desk research is completed, the expert reports need to be subjected to scrutiny and evaluation. A series of workshops where experts can discuss and add to the desk research reports would enhance the reports' value. Reports must be copied and delivered to invitees before the workshops. For each issue-cluster a list of approximately 20-30 experts from academia, business, government and civil society would be drawn up by the research institute. Once the issue-cluster papers are completed they would be circulated to this set of experts for 10 days. One or two related issue clusters could be covered during a one-day workshop to critique the list of issues and recommendations. It is estimated that a total of 12 such workshops would be needed – covering two issues per workshop. Attempting to cover all the issues in the four APRM thematic areas has proven too difficult in a one or two-day workshop. Follow-up research would be needed to ensure that any new points or factual disputes raised in the seminars would be incorporated into revised papers. They could be circulated for use in parliamentary hearings. The costs involved would be those pertinent to organising a workshop, as well as the printing and distribution costs involved in getting the report out to participants.
- **Best practice research:** Examples of what has been done to address particular problems elsewhere in Africa can be instructive for dealing with domestic problems and can strengthen the POA. It would be advisable to commission research papers to interrogate

best practices in key areas identified in the desk research phase. To give this idea substance, SAIIA suggested formalising the idea by commissioning a series of best-practices papers on a few areas of known importance to the nation. Because of the expense of travelling to other countries and the difficulty of finding writers knowledgeable about many countries, this list would have to be limited. A specialist could be commissioned to identify best-practice strategies in a particular area. The goal would be to identify solutions that could be incorporated into the programme of action. Writers would have to be paid fees for this.

- **Surveys:** Surveys are a powerful instrument to measure public views on governance. They complement public meetings and pre-empt concerns that only elites or selected individuals are invited to APRM conferences. They also offer a structured way to understand the views of all national constituencies. Ad hoc surveys that are not based on representative samples can result in very distorted findings that don't accurately reflect national opinion or problems. For example, only surveying participants in urban conferences would likely bring a very strong bias toward urban issues and neglect rural issues. To be done properly, they require adequate time and funding and should be done by experienced survey specialists. A proper survey can take several months to plan and execute. The citizen survey would be complemented by a survey of experts. Research institutes would be responsible for preparing a summary report of the survey findings that would be an attachment to the country self-assessment. In addition, the results would be incorporated into the reports for each issue cluster.
- **Focus groups:** Focus groups can be another means of gathering information and getting a better understanding of what people think of important issues. They could be useful in interrogating survey and research results. They are less representative than a survey but can be very helpful in finding solutions to particular problems or ensuring participation by busy groups, such as business, which has tended to be under-represented in APRM discussions. Research institutes should create a plan for focus groups based on the survey results and areas where they feel the expert desk research/workshops left some issues still in dispute/needing clarity. The costs here would involve assembling the relevant groups, conducting the sessions (perhaps hiring suitable facilitation expertise), and analysing the data gathered.
- **Consolidate research into four documents:** Once surveys, expert workshops and desk research have been completed, the material must be collated into large reports dealing with the four APRM thematic areas. This should be part of the research institutes' fees.
- **Citizen conferences:** The above consolidated documents should be presented and debated at citizen conferences. To allow citizens greater input into the process, conferences should be held in different regions. Conferences larger than 100 people can be difficult to manage and make meaningful resolution of disagreements difficult. Conference costs should include venue hire; microphone, speaker and projector rentals; simultaneous translation in some cases; printing and distribution of reports; catering; transportation and accommodation for set-up staff when staging events in far cities. Provision must be made for adequate numbers of staff to coordinate logistics, take notes of proceedings, tape record events, gather contact details of participants, send out invitations, advertise events in a timely way, and post information on websites, among other activities. Failure to provide adequate funds for consultation can lead to questions about the robustness or fairness of the process. Valuable lessons can be learned from staff who co-ordinated public meetings for Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper processes.

- **Programme of action workshops:** Although authors and experts are asked to come up with recommendations, experience in other APRM countries showed that when both problems and solutions are discussed in the same conference, the large majority of time is consumed with the problems. Thus early country experience suggests the best practice of hold separate events to build on the recommendations drafted by the desk researchers. It would not be necessary to hold a separate conference for each of the 25 issue clusters. Issues could be grouped in each of the four thematic areas and the recommendations discussed for each theme in a one-day event. Subgroups should be designated for specialised areas like education, health, infrastructure, corruption, employment, etc. Such events require a specialist to chair and should involve the key authors and desk researchers as well as NGOs and government officials involved in each area. Identifying these people and scheduling so all can participate is a challenge. Costs for venue hire, printing, meals and transport should be included.

Wrap-Up Processes

- **Permanent secretaries briefing:** Government officials will ultimately have to ensure that the Programme of Action is put into practice, so it is important that they are persuaded to buy into the process. The NGC should arrange a briefing for permanent secretaries by research institutes as well as actively try to arrange for such senior civil servants and political decision-makers to participate in workshops. Allocations of time and necessary funds should be made for this.
- **Expert thematic readers:** The quality of the research effort can be strengthened by having it critiqued. This would ensure that that other issues are not left out or problems of language, clarity or misinterpretation are caught. Each of the four thematic areas should be read and commented on by an eminent academic. Readers' fees would be paid.
- **Final experts validation workshop:** To provide a final opportunity for comment and discussion, revised drafts, with all input, should be submitted to validation conferences. These events should not be rushed, but should allow reasonable time to interrogate the issues. Adequate and realistic allocations of time and money should be made for this event.
- **Public validation workshops:** In addition to the experts' workshop above, countries have found it valuable to hold one or more public validation conferences, to which the media and citizens are invited. These can pre-empt public concerns over transparency and help build a public mandate for the actions to be taken in the POA. Following on the Ghana best practice, the report, now revised to include citizen input and surveys, should be subjected to a 200-person 3-4 day validation conference that would work through each section of the report and its related recommendations. Venue, printing and promotion costs apply.
- **Editing:** The reports should be edited to ensure a consistent format, footnoting and style, and a generally professional finish. Editing fees would need to be paid.

Administration

- **Host the Country Review Mission:** The visit of the Country Review Mission would incur costs for accommodation, transport, meals and assorted logistical support – such as translation services.
- **Printing and distribution of final report:** Interested parties will want to see the final reports, and a sufficient quantity should be printed to make this possible. Funds will be needed to cover printing and distribution.

- **Marketing:** APRM is not always well-known to citizens. Funds are needed to ensure that people are aware of it and understand why it is happening. A media outreach strategy can assist with spreading the word but there will be direct costs for printed materials and banners. Funds are also needed to advertise coming events. Live television broadcasts are valuable but radio and television stations may not have the resources for these. Thus the APRM budget should include provisions, if possible.
- **Support staff:** APRM requires people to do administrative tasks, and it would be better to have a dedicated team than to have people seconded or partially seconded from government. Early countries noted that seconded workers often face pressures to carry on with their permanent jobs, which can hamstring APRM efforts. An internship programme (using university graduate students) could help reduce some of the costs and provide the staff needed to compile databases and coordinate events. Interns who forgo a semester of university would have to be paid. The project also will need a core of professional staff to handle logistics, media management, drafting invitations, handling accounting, drivers, etc. A support staff of 10 or more may be needed as governing council members will not be able to focus on activities full-time.
- **Overheads:** A well run process will need to make financial provision for setting up dedicated office space, which should include a meeting room, and space to gather and organise public submissions. It also requires furniture and basic office equipment and services such as computers, software, internet and email access, telephones and postage.

APPENDIX A: APRM Standards by Thematic Area

Standards Applicable to all Sections
Charter of the United Nations(1945), UN
Constitutive Act of the African Union (2000) AU ⁸
Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance (2003), AU
New Partnership for Africa's Development – Framework document (2001), AU
Political and Democratic Governance Standards
Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa – Solemn Declaration (2000), OAU ⁹
Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa – Memorandum of Understanding (2002), OAU
Declaration and Plan of Action on Drug Control Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking in Africa (1996), OAU
Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government on the Establishment within the OAU of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (1993), OAU
Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (1949), UN ¹⁰
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts (2000), UN
Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU (2002), AU
Resolution on Women in Conflict (2000), UN Security Council
Declaration of Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and Countering Racism, Apartheid and Incitement to War (1978), Unesco ¹¹
Declaration on the Framework for an OAU Response to Unconstitutional Changes of Government (2000), OAU
Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa (2002), OAU/AU
Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1949), UN
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), UN
Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952), UN
Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993), UN
Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), OAU
African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1981), OAU
African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990), OAU
Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984), UN
Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (1969), OAU
Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), UN
Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951), UN
Declaration and Plan of Action for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (1999), OAU
Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power (1985), UN
Declaration on Social and Legal Principles Relating to the Protection and Welfare of Children, with Special Reference to Foster Placement and Adoption Nationally and Internationally (1986), UN
Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion and Belief (1981), UN
Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993), UN
Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from being Subjected to Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1975), UN
Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1998), UN
Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons (1975), UN
Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities (1992), UN
Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (1949), UN
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), UN
International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990), UN
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), UN
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976), UN
Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (2002), UN

⁸ African Union

⁹ Organisation of African Unity

¹⁰ United Nations

¹¹ United Nations Economic and Social Council

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2000), UN
Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), UN
Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (1967 entry into force), UN
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), UN
Convention against Corruption (2003), UN
Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions (1997), OECD ¹²
Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (2003), AU
Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power (1985), UN
Economic Governance and Management Standards
Core Principles for Effective Banking Supervision (1997), Basle Committee on Banking Supervision
Insurance Core Principles (2000), International Association of Insurance Supervisors
Core Principles for Systemically Important Payment Systems (2001), Committee on Payment and Settlement Systems, Bank for International Settlements
Principles of Corporate Governance (2004), OECD
Convention against Corruption (2003), UN
Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions (1997), OECD
Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (2003), AU
International Auditing Standards - Handbook of International Auditing, Assurance, and Ethics Pronouncements (2006 edition), International Federation of Accountants (IFAC)
Best Practices for Budget Transparency (2001), OECD
Code of Good Practices on Transparency in Monetary and Financial Policies: Declaration of Principles (1999), IMF ¹³
Guidelines for Public Debt Management (2001), IMF and World Bank
Revised Code of Good Practices on Fiscal Transparency (2001) I
Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (1991), OAU
Forty Recommendations (2003), FATF
Special Recommendations on Terrorist Financing (2004), FATF ¹⁴
Corporate Governance Standards
Core Principles for Effective Banking Supervision (1997), Basle Committee on Banking Supervision
Insurance Core Principles (2000), International Association of Insurance Supervisors
Guidelines on Corporate Governance of State-Owned Enterprises (2005), OECD
International Auditing Standards – Handbook of International Auditing, Assurance, and Ethics Pronouncements (2006 edition), International Federation of Accountants (IFAC)
International Accounting Standards, IASB ¹⁵
King Report on Corporate Governance for South Africa (2002)
Principles for Corporate Governance in the Commonwealth (1999), CACG ¹⁶
Principles of Corporate Governance (2004), OECD
Report of the Committee on the Financial Aspects of Corporate Governance - Cadbury Report (1992), Cadbury Committee
Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (1957), ILO
Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (1958), ILO
Equal Remuneration Convention (1951), ILO ¹⁷
Forced Labour Convention (1930), ILO
Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (1948), ILO
Minimum Age Convention (1973), ILO
Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention (1949), ILO
Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (1999), ILO
Codes on Industrial and Environmental Safety and Hygiene, WHO ¹⁸

¹² Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

¹³ International Monetary Fund

¹⁴ Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering

¹⁵ International Accounting Standards Board

¹⁶ Commonwealth Association for Corporate Governance

¹⁷ International Labour Organisation

¹⁸ World Health Organisation

Socio-Economic Development Standards
African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation(1990), International Conference on Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development Process in Africa
Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa – Solemn Declaration (2000), OAU
Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa – Memorandum of Understanding (2002), OAU
Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development (2002), WSSD ¹⁹
Millennium Declaration (2000), UN
Millennium Development Goals (2000), UN
Report of the World Summit for Social Development (1995)
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), UN Fourth World Conference on Women
Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), AU
African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1981), OAU
African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990), OAU
Declaration on the Right to Development (1986), UN
Cross-Cutting Issue: Gender
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), Fourth World Conference on Women
Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1949), UN
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), UN
Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952), UN
Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993), UN
Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), OAU
Resolution on Women in Conflict (2000), UN Security Council
Cross-Cutting Issue: Corruption
Convention against Corruption (2003), UN
Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions (1997), OECD
Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (2003), AU
Forty Recommendations (2003), FATF
International Auditing Standards – Handbook of International Auditing, Assurance, and Ethics Pronouncements (2006 edition), International Federation of Accountants (IFAC)
Special Recommendations on Terrorist Financing (2004),FATF

¹⁹ World Summit on Sustainable Development

APPENDIX B: Useful Sources for Desk Research on Governance

Name/Source	Description	Access Point
National Development Plans	Each country usually produces comprehensive plans that set out national development priorities. Useful to identify government programmes and initiatives, especially in infrastructure, social services, health, education, housing poverty reduction, industrial development.	Ministry of Planning or equivalent; government website or government printing office
Auditor-General's Reports	Useful as they outline systemic problems in fiscal and economic management, which departments and regions are performing well or poorly, and often identify specific cases of economic mismanagement and potential/actual corruption.	Office or website of the Auditor-General or government printing office
Election Observer Reports	African countries host a number of local, African and international observers for local, parliamentary and presidential elections. Comparisons of the issues raised in these reports are good pointers to weaknesses in electoral laws and practice in a country. Note that they often differ in what is reported and how it is interpreted.	Useful reports are available from National Electoral Commissions, local election monitoring groups, SADC (or other relevant regional body), SADC Parliamentary Forum, the African Union, the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa, Commonwealth, European Union, UN and US government observer missions.
Human Rights Reports	Most countries have local Human Rights Commissions that produce annual reports. Depending on the country, reports from Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the US State Department highlight key human rights and governance issues.	Human Rights Commission, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, or US Department of State Human Rights Reports
Anti-Corruption Reports	Most countries have local Anti-Corruption Commissions or similarly named bodies that produce annual reports. This should be supplemented with independent assessments produced by local anti-corruption groups or lobbies, investigative newspaper reports, local chapter of Transparency International or similar bodies.	Anti-Corruption Commission Transparency International Chapter Other local anti-corruption organisations Investigative newspaper articles
Budget Speech	The Minister of Finance's Annual Budget Speech usually provides details of government priorities and spending patterns, as well as key programmes and initiatives.	Ministry of Finance/Treasury Government Website
Reports on the Judiciary	Most countries have a judicial services commission that reports on the operation of the judiciary. Similar reports may be produced by the law society or similar legal bodies.	Judicial Services Commission Law Society
Reports of parliamentary oversight committees	These are crucial reports that should monitor and track government expenditure, and hold departments and officials to account for spending. Others like ethics committees hold MPs accountable for their conduct and actions.	Public Accounts Committee Ethics Committee
Ombudsman's reports	Most countries have an ombudsman charged with following up claims of maladministration and corruption. They should produce annual reports.	Office of the Ombudsman (sometimes called the Public Protector).
UNAIDS	This UN site has up-to-date country profiles on the state of HIV and Aids across the globe.	www.unaids.org

Name/Source	Description	Access Point
Reviews by UN Agencies	Both the UNDP and UNECA have done considerable work on governance issues, and may have produced reports on particular countries.	www.undp.org and local UNDP office www.uneca.org and local UNECA office
Transparency International	Corruption Perception Index and Bribe Payers Index – show perceptions of corruption in particular countries, as well as which countries pay the most bribes, and to whom.	www.transparency.org
UNECA governance studies	The 2005 UNECA African Governance Report is the result of extensive research covering governance practices in 27 African countries. UNECA does a lot of research on governance issues in general. See also Striving for Good Governance in Africa Synopsis of the African Governance Report 2005	http://www.uneca.org http://www.uneca.org/publications1.htm
Center for Public Integrity Rankings	Nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization in Washington, DC, that concentrates on ethics and public service issues.	www.publicintegrity.org/
World Bank/IFC Doing Business Surveys	Useful to corporate governance assessment: Covers 155 countries, and all country scores are updated annually. The surveys address 10 areas of regulation: starting a business, dealing with licenses, hiring and firing workers, registering property, getting credit, protecting investors, paying taxes, enforcing contracts, trading across borders, and closing a business. Experts answer questions in their area of expertise on the basis of their expertise.	www.doingbusiness.org/
Investment Climate surveys	These surveys are designed to monitor the business environment, not governance <i>per se</i> . ICS collect data from firms on both objective and subjective indicators covering a wide range of investment climate dimensions. Its database contains information on about 75 countries; it aims to cover 20–30 countries each year and resurvey each country every three years or so.	http://research.worldbank.org/ics/isp/index.jsp
IMF fiscal Reports on Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSCs).	Participation in an ROSC is voluntary and the authorities retain the right not to publish the final report, although most have agreed to publish fiscal ROSCs. As of the end of 2005, fiscal ROSCs have been completed for 80 countries, and 76 of these have been published.	available on the IMF ROSC Web site at http://www.imf.org/external/np/rosc/roscc.asp
Sectoral reviews	There will be reviews of particular sectors of the economy including health, education, water, housing, sanitation, poverty reduction etc. these may have been done by local university departments or think tanks, donors or regional or international research institutions.	

Name/Source	Description	Access Point
<p>World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessments (CPIA)</p>	<p>CPIA quintile rankings (all countries are divided into five groups based on their rank relative to other nations) have been disclosed by the World Bank but not the actual scores for each element of governance measured. In 2006 the Asian Development Bank, the African Development Bank, and the World Bank will join the IADB in disclosing country performance assessment ratings, which largely determine the allocation of those banks' concessional funds.</p> <p>CPIAs examine policies and institutions, not development outcomes, which can depend on forces outside a country's control. The CPIA looks at 16 distinct areas grouped into four clusters (box 5.2). Bank staff score individual countries along an absolute 1–6 scale based on highly specific criteria. The criteria provide a guide to factors worth considering.</p> <p>A. Economic management</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Macroeconomic management 2. Fiscal policy 3. Debt policy <p>B. Structural policies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Trade 5. Financial sector 6. Business regulatory environment <p>C. Policies for social inclusion/equity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Gender equality 8. Equity of public resource use 9. Building human resources <p>D. Public sector management and institutions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Social protection and labour 11. Policies and institutions for environmental sustainability 12. Property rights and rule-based governance 13. Quality of budgetary and financial management 14. Efficiency of revenue mobilization 15. Quality of public administration 16. Transparency, accountability, and corruption in the public sector 	<p>www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance/data http://info.worldbank.org/governance/kkz2002/notes.html</p>
<p>World Bank Institute rankings of national governance along 6 attributes</p>	<p>Data are available for more than 160 countries and each country is ranked according to its performance relative to other nations or regional averages. The data can be obtained easily from the World Bank Institute web site. The rankings amalgamate a variety of indicators of governance into six broad measures: with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Voice and accountability ▪ Political stability and absence of violence ▪ Government effectiveness ▪ Regulatory quality ▪ Rule of law ▪ Control of corruption 	<p>www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance/govdata/</p> <p>Or Google search for "Worldwide Governance Indicators: 1996-2005"</p>
<p>World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Index</p>	<p>This index ranks the competitiveness of global economies and is relevant to the Economic Governance, Corporate Governance and Socio-Economic Development sections of APRM. See also the Africa Competitiveness Index.</p>	<p>http://www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/gcp/Global%20Competitiveness%20Report/index.htm http://www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/gcp/Africa%20Competitiveness%20Report/index.htm</p>

Name/Source	Description	Access Point
<p>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development–Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) Baseline Indicator Set for Procurement (BIS) tool</p>	<p>Provides an approach to assessing procurement systems but rankings are not available for many countries. The Baseline Indicator Set (BIS) for Procurement — has been proposed to be piloted in 10 countries. Specific “actionable” indicators measuring key aspects of public administration have been piloted in three countries.</p>	<p>http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/12/14/34336126.pdf</p>
<p>Global Integrity Index (GII)</p>	<p>The items in the index provide useful insight into best practices in promoting accountability and preventing corruption. Developed by the Center for Public Integrity, the index focuses on measurement of “the existence and effectiveness of mechanisms that prevent abuse of power and promote public integrity, and on the access that citizens have to their government.” The GI is based on answers to more than 290 detailed questions that identify specific elements that make up a sound public integrity system. The index has been estimated only for 25 countries— 6 OECD countries, 12 middle-income countries, and 7 IDA-eligible low-income countries. Global Integrity aims to increase the number of countries covered to over 100 by the end of 2006. Although the index is only available for a few countries, its list of questions provides a valuable check-list for examining governance.</p>	<p>www.globalintegrity.org.</p>

OTHER

- Search the SARP website – they have many reports relevant to governance issues; www.sarpn.org.za
- Google search on your country name, key phrases and report www.google.org
- Search the Afrobarometer website for info on your country www.afrobarometer.org
- Use Google Scholar to find more academic reports <http://scholar.google.com/schhp?sourceid=navclient&hl=en>
- Contact major NGO advocacy groups for recent reports or campaigns
- Contact the local chapter of the Media Institute for Southern Africa for info on freedom of the press and freedom of information, as well as other governance issues.
- Ask key university departments and think tanks for reports produced in recent years

APPENDIX C: Possible APRM Innovations

In the course of discussions with APRM participants, SAIIA has accumulated a list of potential innovations and best practices that could strengthen national APRM processes. They are included as food for thought.

Make best practices research a formal part of the research plan: The intent of APRM is partly to encourage countries to study best practices and adopt them. However, so far this has not been an explicit part of the research process in any APRM country. To give this idea substance, countries could commission a series of best practices papers that examine how certain issues are handled elsewhere in Africa and the world. These papers could be discussed in POA workshops and suitable approaches embraced as part of the national POA.

Media management training for NGC: The media will be interested in the process and will want to ask many questions. Basic training for the NGC can make members much more effective and avoid some common mistakes that can create distrust or antagonistic stories.

Media outreach: Media understanding of APRM is low and this can create problems of either lack of coverage or poorly informed coverage. Building trust with editors can be valuable to the tone of coverage. Equipping editors with information on the process and what to expect can help convince them that this is an important story and should be given significant space in the news. However, to sustain media coverage there needs to be a steady release of information as the process unfolds. This process would be improved by appointment of a dedicated media officer or public relations firm to assist the press and promote stories in the news.

Live broadcast of validation conferences: Television and radio can be used to spread the word on APRM and signal government commitment to the POA. Staging a live broadcast of launch conferences, expert workshops, parliamentary hearings and/or validation conferences could help with this. This would require funds for the TV crews and live links.

Serialising reports in newspapers: Several countries so far have struggled to gather written input from society. And the perceived openness of the process affects the level of political commitment and follow-through that it enjoys. One way to generate media stories would be to create shortened versions of the expert desk-research papers, which would outline some of the key policy issues for which input is sought. These shortened papers would include the main issues and recommendations gathered so far. They would be introduced with a short introduction by the NGC inviting the public to comment. This shows openness and transparency and will increase the amount of public input.

Revising the questionnaire with issue clusters: Participants involved in writing APRM reports have noted that the structure of the APRM questionnaire made research and report writing more difficult and the material was not accessible to ordinary citizens. Thus it would improve the research process to divide the questionnaire's four themes into more bite-sized pieces or clusters of issues, each of which could be given out as a desk-research commission. Once complete, these papers can be reassembled into the four sections of the APRM.

Explicit workshops to develop the programme of action: While countries have developed their POAs through a combination of public comments and ad hoc processes, they were under time pressure because they did not build a dedicated part of the research programme for the POA. Because other countries left the POA until the end, they had to repeatedly revise their POAs to make them sharper and more realistic in their costing. This suggests a best practice of holding a series of workshops dedicated to fleshing out and costing the POA.

POA research: To support the POA workshops above, desk research should seek out all existing major recommendations from various governance reports. They should extract the existing recommendations into a footnoted recommendations list. These lists would form the basis of the document to be discussed in the POA workshops.

Citizen rather than household survey: Kenya and Ghana used household surveys that interviewed the head of household, but the Afrobarometer project noted that some distortions can come from relying on heads of household who will usually be older males. This tends to underplay the views of women, single people, the elderly and others. Thus a survey of randomly representative citizens would be preferable to a household survey.

Website: Creating an interactive national APRM website can be a valuable tool to disseminate information, advertise upcoming meetings, and post draft documents and citizen submissions. This best practice helps build credibility for the process.

NGC incentive scheme: The per-diem payment scheme for NGC members can create negative incentives. Some participants suggested basing remuneration on an incentive scheme with either monthly honoraria contingent on attendance of all meetings or payment based on the process meeting certain milestones on agreed dates. Participants have noted that the amount of fees should be modest and transparently available to the public so that there are not accusations of self-enrichment.

Use of graduate students in research/support: The NGC requires substantial administrative support. One way to do this more affordably and build expertise on APRM would be to create a university internship programme, which would select 10 graduate students to take one semester off from studies and work for the NGC and/or research institutes as paid interns.


Document process: Participants noted that it is important for both the credibility of the process and for APRM's goal of learning best practices that the process be well documented so lessons can be learned by other countries and the process refined in future years. A researcher could be commissioned to follow all of the stages and write a process report.

Participant photographs: One way to build community conversation about APRM would be for the research team to provide a group photo to all participants in the various district and expert workshops. These photos could be taken with a digital camera and distributed at each event. Participants would take the photos home, which would stimulate more conversation in villages. This would have modest cost but help demonstrate to a wider population that APRM events were real and substantive in their public participation.

Civil society report-writing support: Participants have mentioned that while civil society appreciates the opportunity to comment during the APRM process, groups often have difficulty making meaningful written input. The function of civil society convenors on the Kenya NGC did not produce any inputs because little support was offered to facilitate and schedule. South Africa provided some funds to allow NGC members to convene meetings of their memberships, but many groups did not have writers on staff and struggled to produce reports in a timely way. This suggests that the process could be strengthened by offering funds to hire a professional writer or academic to assist targeted stakeholder groups in drafting a submission. The funds could cover hiring a meeting room, transport and lunch for a one-day event in which the facilitator would provide an overview of APRM and solicit from members their concerns and recommendations. These points would be written up by the facilitator as a sectoral submission approved by the organisation.

Circulation of reports prior to validations: It would strengthen the process of consultation if participants receive printed copies at least 7-10 days prior to each event so that they have time to study the material. By so doing, this would allow participants to discuss the drafts with peers and friends to gather wider input.

Written procedural charter/rules for NGC: To avoid problems around decision-making, financial management, adding or removing NGC members and to add to the sense of openness and credibility, countries should write a detailed charter with rules for decision-making on the NGC.



The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is a unique process through which African countries, governments and citizens collaborate to improve the quality of governance, economic development and political freedom. Because it examines all aspects of governance, it is challenging technically and politically. But it also brings significant potential benefits to African societies.

This guide is designed to help participants effectively realise those benefits. It draws on lessons learned in the APRM pioneer countries, offers best practices, ideas for APRM innovations and useful planning and budgeting checklists.

The product of a four-year research effort by the South African Institute of International Affairs, this guide is based on extensive interviews with participants in the early APRM countries - Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Mauritius and South Africa - as well as the APRM Secretariat, panel of Eminent Persons and technical advisors to the process.

For further information on and assistance in training and research material please contact:

The South African Institute of International Affairs

Governance and APRM Programme

Tel: (27-11) 339 2021

Fax: (27-11) 339 2154

Website: www.saiia.org.za (click on the “APRM Resource and Training Centre” icon)

Ross Herbert
Project Manager
herbertr@saiia.wits.ac.za

Steven Gruzd
Deputy Project Manager
Steven.Gruzd@wits.ac.za