

## E-FORUM

### “Making Accountability work for the Citizens: CSOs-State Accountability Engagement”

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March 11 – April 3, 2015

#### ABOUT THE E-FORUM

This 3-week E-forum will be held on the [GPSA Knowledge Platform](#) and will consist of an online discussion board where multiple stakeholders are expected to share their views, knowledge and experiences related to engagement between state horizontal accountability institutions (Supreme Audit Institutions and Ombudsman Offices among others) and civil society organizations to promote governance reforms and strengthen the overall accountability system.

The E- forum will explore patterns of engagement between accountability institutions and CSOs, and will address key questions concerning different types of collaboration between these stakeholders: How can accountability institutions and civil society work together to promote good governance? What are the entry points for engagement? When and how is it possible to advance cooperation, and when and why may it not be feasible? What challenges may be overcome to encourage collaboration? How to assess the impact of collaborative initiatives?

#### BACKGROUND

There is an increasing interest around engagement between state accountability institutions and civil society. Recent academic research on “co-production of public control” in Brazil -which encompasses both state oversight bodies work as well as social accountability work by social movements, civil society organizations (CSOs) and the media-, as well as on “[societalization of horizontal accountability institutions](#)” highlight the need to explore this further. Research on “[strategic social accountability](#)” also stresses the importance of supporting pro-accountability networks that may work across state and society to improve service delivery and government responsiveness, and achieve development goals.

The importance of SAIs’ engagement with other stakeholders has been recognized in INTOSAI resolutions (ISSAI N° [20](#), [21](#), and [12](#)). Further, several SAIs have started to promote initiatives to engage with citizens, such as [citizen participatory audits in the Philippines](#) and citizen oversight initiatives (*veedurías ciudadanas*) in Colombia. This collaboration has also been observed between CSOs and Ombudsman Offices, for example, in a joint project by [CARE](#) and ForoSalud on social monitoring of health services for defending maternal health rights in Puno (Peru).

The World Bank Demand for Good Governance (DFGG) companion note to the GAC II Update raised this issue in 2011. More recently, the GPSA has featured collaboration between grantees and state accountability institutions as part of its Theory of Change. Consequently the [GPSA Results Framework](#) Outcome #2 focuses on “collaboration between social accountability initiatives and state accountability institutions... to gather evidence and to coordinate efforts for greater accountability” based on the assumption that state accountability institutions could also be users of data and evidence gathered by CSOs to hold governments to account”. Furthermore, this Results Framework notes that “weak formal oversight institutions -legislators and supreme audit institutions- deprive civil society actors of an important route to influencing state actions and ensuring accountability”.

## MAIN GOALS

- ✚ Identify entry points for engagement between accountability institutions and civil society, and analyze approaches and tools designed to encourage collaboration.
- ✚ Reflect on the various factors that may influence prospective collaboration between accountability institutions and civil society, as well as the benefits and obstacles entailed along the process.
- ✚ Share good practices of engagement between accountability institutions and civil society, and discuss possible initiatives which could trigger reforms in governance.
- ✚ Help stakeholders who are interested in improving their ability to make their efforts more strategic (and thus potentially more effective) to conduct readiness self-assessments.

## TARGET AUDIENCE

This E-forum is targeted to various stakeholders exploring and/or working on accountability initiatives, including representatives from:

- ✚ Supreme Audit Institutions
- ✚ Ombudsman Offices
- ✚ Civil Society Organizations
- ✚ Cooperation Agencies
- ✚ Academics, consultants, among others.

## E-FORUM FORMAT

The E-forum will be hosted by the GPSA Knowledge Platform. Participants will need to log in or [create a user account](#) prior to joining the forum. A link to the discussion thread will be uploaded [HERE](#) on March 11th.

Just before the E-forum begins, on March 10th at 10:00AM EST, a **webinar** on CSOs-state accountability institutions’ engagement will be delivered by Prof. Enrique Peruzzotti through the GPSA Knowledge Platform. Participants are encouraged to join this introductory activity

([HERE](#)), as it is expected to open the debate and shed light on some issues which will be addressed during the forum.

The E-forum itself will last three weeks, from March 11th to April 3rd, and will be structured around three core modules. The moderator will briefly introduce a topic, pose brief questions, and present videos or excerpts from studies so that participants may reflect on these issues and share their views and experiences, while also encouraging discussion with other participants.

In order to ground discussions on a common framework, a preliminary version of a learning note will be shared during the first week, which will delve into the most recent debates on CSO-accountability institutions' engagement. It is expected that this note will help participants get familiarized with the conceptual approach to the topic and address the key questions that need to be answered to promote strategic collaboration between accountability institutions and CSOs.

Finally, building upon participants' interventions, and in view of sharing the conclusions and drawing some lessons from the experiences exchanged along the three-week forum, a second knowledge note will be delivered and uploaded on the GPSA KP. Also, discussions will continue at the U4-CMI-University of Bergen's workshop "*The 'in-betweens': Institutions of accountability*", to be held in Bergen (Norway) on April 22-23, 2015 (see [HERE](#)).

## CONTENT

The E-forum will be structured around three main themes, as listed below. It is expected that several guiding questions and contributions by the moderator will encourage participants to share their views, experiences and questions.

### **Theme 1: Advancing accountability institutions-civil society engagement: Exploring the determinants, benefits and challenges for collaboration**

During week #1, the E-forum will focus on the approaches to civil society engagement with accountability institutions, and explore the possible determinants, benefits and obstacles entailed in collaboration. In this sense, the questions will delve around the institutions' mandates and structure, as well as into CSOs' mission, while also exploring the legal framework for collaboration between these stakeholders:

How may various OI-SAI models affect engagement approaches? What internal and external factors may contribute or hinder such engagement? Is there a normative framework backing collaborative initiatives? Is transparency of accountability institutions a pre-requisite for collaboration?

### **Theme 2: Tools, strategies and good practices of civil society engagement with accountability institutions**

During week #2, the discussions will deal with questions to assess whether both accountability institutions and civil society are ready to embark on engagement initiatives, and focus on strategies and tools to foster collaboration, while also encouraging the exchange of good practices:

When is engagement between both stakeholders a win-win situation? What resources are needed to promote collaborative initiatives? What type of stakeholders get engaged and how? Do accountability institutions play a role in facilitating CSOs' access to public information? Are ICTs and social media effective tools for engagement?

### Theme 3: Assessing the impact of engagement: lessons learnt and way forward

Along the week #3, the debate will focus on efforts for assessing the impact of engagement:

What do current initiatives tell about the effectiveness of engagement initiatives in promoting good governance? How can they remain sustainable over time? Is it possible to draw on general indicators to measure effectiveness of these initiatives?

## TIMELINE & RELATED ACTIVITIES

✚ **Introductory Webinar:** March 10th at 10:00AM EST, GPSA Knowledge Platform.

*How can citizens collaborate and engage with accountability institutions to improve government performance and access to fundamental rights?* **Expert:** Enrique Peruzzotti.

The overall aim of the session is to exchange experiences about GPSA grantees, Global Partners and other practitioners' efforts and steps in engaging with state accountability institutions. The webinar (co-sponsored by the GPSA, the WB Public Participation in Budget and Audit Program, ACIJ and U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre) will provide common ground to explore the topic in more detail along the E-forum.

See more [HERE](#).

✚ **E-forum:** March 11th – April 3rd, GPSA Knowledge Platform.

See more [HERE](#).

✚ **Workshop:** April 22nd-23rd, Bergen (Norway).

*The 'in-betweens': Institutions of accountability.*

Moving forward, discussions will continue at the U4-CMI-University of Bergen workshop, where the role of accountability institutions will be explored so as to address their institutional position and preconditions for effective functioning, their patterns of engagement with the citizenry and other stakeholders, and their measurement challenges, among other research topics.

See more [HERE](#).