

Measuring the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Electoral Processes and National Budgets in Africa

Zenda Ofir

Department for Africa

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Sida Evaluation 07/32

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Acronyms

AATAZ	Anti-AIDS Teachers Association of Zambia
ABU	AIDS Budget Unit
AMICAALL	Alliance of Mayors and Municipal Leaders Initiative for Community Action on AIDS at the Local Level
ARVs	Antiretrovirals
BIS	Budget Information Service
CCM	Country Coordinating Mechanism
CSBI	Civil Society Budget Initiative
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSR	Centre for Social Research
EMB	Electoral Management Board
EQUINET	Regional Network on Equity in Health in Southern Africa
ESRF	Economic and Research Foundation
FODEP	Foundation for Democratic Process
FPTP	First past the post
GAP	Governance and AIDS Programme
GBS	General Budget Support
GFATM	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
HAPCO	HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office
HDT	Human Development Trust
IBP	International Budget Project
IDR	Institute of Development Research
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
INESOR	Institute of Economics and Social Research
KAPSA	Kenya Private Sector Association
KETAM	Kenya Treatment Access Movement
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MP	Member of Parliament
MAP	Multi-Country HIV/AIDS Programme
MEJN	Malawi Economic Justice Network
MHEN	Malawi Health Equity Network
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MoH	Ministry of Health
MMP	Mixed Member Proportional System
MP	Member of Parliament
NAC	National AIDS Council
NACC	National AIDS Control Council
NASA	National AIDS Spending Assessment
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NHA	National Health Assessment
NID	Namibia Institute for Democracy
PANE	Poverty Action Network of Civil Society in Ethiopia

PATAM	Pan-African Treatment Access Movement
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PER	Public Expenditure Review
PLWHA	People Living with HIV/AIDS
PR	Proportional Representation
PPM	People's Progressive Party
RBF	Rockefeller Brothers Fund
REDET	Research and Education for Democracy
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADC-PF	SADC Parliamentary Forum
SADC-ECF	SADC Electoral Commissions Forum
SAHARA	Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS Research Alliance
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
SIPAA	Support to the International Partnership against AIDS in Africa
TACAIDS	Tanzania Commission for AIDS
TAMWA	Tanzania Media Women Association
TANGO	Tanzania Association of NGOs
TEC	Tanzania Electoral Commission
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UN CHGA	UN Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance in Africa
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	UN Economic Commission for Africa
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
WHO	World Health Organisation
WOFAK	Women Fighting Aids in Kenya
YAV	Youth Action Volunteers
ZAC	Zanzibar AIDS Commission
ZAPHA	Zanzibar Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS
ZARAN	Zambia AIDS Research and Advocacy Network
ZEC	Zanzibar Electoral Commission
ZNAN	Zambia National AIDS Network
ZNCCIA	Zanzibar National Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture

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- All the stakeholders taking valuable time to discuss their insights and experiences, demonstrating their commitment to the Project.

I trust that this report will serve as a useful platform for debate and action as this Project moves forward into its final stages.

Zenda Ofir
June 2007

Executive Summary

The Project

This evaluation was commissioned after implementation of around two-thirds of the research project, Measuring the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Electoral Processes and National Budgets, which has been ongoing since 2005 in nine countries across Africa. It is managed by the Governance and AIDS Programme (GAP) of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) and funded by Sida through the Swedish/Norwegian Regional HIV/AIDS Team for Africa based in Lusaka. Local implementing agencies were selected in each country and supported to form a network of researchers and organisations with the task to do research, build their expertise in one of the two component areas and facilitate the use of the research results to influence national stakeholders broadly divided into policy-makers, civil society organisations and the media.

The Evaluation

The two month long evaluation was designed to be formative to inform further implementation and future plans. It was thus designed as an implementation evaluation based on five key performance areas. Special emphasis was placed on the quality and utility/use of the research. Methods were mainly qualitative, designed for triangulation by source and method. While no ethical problems were encountered, the timing, lack of sufficient documentation as well as the exhausting nature of the field mission and logistical challenges affected the evaluation design. Using the same data collection instruments enabled some comparison between the two components and allowed patterns between stakeholder groups across countries to emerge. On the other hand aggregation of findings across countries and between components meant that performance per country was not addressed and not enough was done to record systematic comparative data, analyse contextual influence, focus on accountability, give nuanced interpretations of different experiences and good practice. Instead the evaluation focused on overarching issues and lessons. Recommendations have therefore been made on how to enhance the utility of the evaluation for future reference.

Project Achievements

Achievements are in line with what can be expected during early stages before findings are made public and are centred on the processes of implementation and building of profile through the innovative areas of work. Most prominent has been the awareness raising nationally and internationally of issues related to governance and HIV/AIDS. IDASA-GAP has solicited early interest in the work at international and regional conferences and stakeholder meetings have sensitised national role players. This has been further enhanced by significant media publicity in some of the countries where early results have been discussed. Implementation has also mobilised national role players to collaborate, exposed weaknesses in national planning and data systems and illustrated both the possibilities and challenges in getting the work done at a national level. Stakeholders admit to becoming more aware of the need to link HIV/AIDS and governance interventions. The fact that processes have been managed in this manner means that although project delays have led to declining memory of the Project, reviving interest will be relatively easy. The most important achievement may be that Project processes have been designed in a manner that engaged stakeholders early on in a manner that provided some sense of buy-in despite the sensitive topics and ever-present political complexities.

Relevance and Timeliness

This Project is one of few focusing on the interface between HIV/AIDS and governance in Africa. It is both relevant and timely given the increasingly urgent need to understand this aspect. Its relevance was confirmed through the establishment of component priorities during high level national and regional stakeholder consultations as well as previous experiences with smaller ‘pilots’. Stakeholder views of national needs in this area were well aligned with the component objectives (apart from the expressed need for performance evaluation of agencies to which HIV/AIDS resources are entrusted). Stimulating the use of research relevant to current policy processes has been an integral part of the Project design; it was set up to provide credible research that can serve as evidence for institutional and policy decisions. Timely as the Project was, implementation delays and the need for synchronisation across countries meant that opportunities to influence national plans or review processes have been missed. And in spite of their relevance both components touch on sensitive issues that will require delicate management during dissemination of findings.

Project Design

A detailed and coherent Project design guided implementation, strengthened by the incorporation of lessons from prior ‘pilot’ experiences. A more systematic articulation of the theory of change with analysis of Project assumptions and alternative pathways for action would have reduced risk and brought more focus and clarity to certain issues. These include the conceptual base for Project and gender and rights-based implementation, the need for differential financial inputs, the role of contextual differences, and knowledge management strategies. IDASA’s implementation approach and prior experience helped offset some of the design weaknesses through good preparation of in-country partners and prescriptive research methodologies and engagement processes.

Progress and Factors Affecting Implementation

Significant delays of up to six months in both components (more severe in the resource tracking component) were experienced due to a confluence of circumstances: predictable yet challenging difficulties associated with data accessibility, collection and analysis; unforeseen problems with the readiness of the NASA software for data collection; some partners’ inadequate commitment to vigorous work towards timely delivery, mostly said to be due to over-commitment of key persons; the departure of key ABU staff members at a critical period of implementation (and hence undue pressure on the IDASA-GAP management and team), which weakened peer review processes as well as in-country capacity building efforts and compromised IDASA-GAP’s attempts to exert pressure to speed up processes; and IDASA-GAP’s insistence on report revisions and additional data gathering for quality outputs following several peer review processes. The need for synchronised action at key points delayed action even in countries that were able to adhere to the schedule. Interest among stakeholders waned during long periods of inactivity and lack of information on progress; during the evaluation some ‘key informants’ could hardly remember the Project. Yet apart from meeting deadlines the Project has stayed close to the initial implementation plan. Successful delivery remains possible even though the dissemination and networking strategies may not play out completely as planned.

Implementation was also affected – not surprisingly and in spite of the thoughtful initial selection processes – by uneven partner capacities. Several countries struggle in general with research capacities in all sectors and partners selection was a challenge. It is therefore unfortunate that the departure of ABU staff significantly weakened their technical assistance and in-country capacity building efforts. In no instance was the selected partner(s) regarded as inappropriate although in a small number of

cases their political and/or technical credibility were questioned¹ and alternatives proposed. No rule for partner selection can be established and is clearly dependent on the context, in particular the relationship between government, civil society, academic institutions and donors/development partners, which differs significantly between the participating countries.

The delays highlighted some of the inherent challenges in the organisational model in spite of its broad acceptance among the vast majority of informants (and according to them, the stakeholders in all participating countries). The perceived success of the model was based on the widely held and sometimes glowing respect and appreciation for IDASA-GAP's management style, knowledge and integrity; the valued opportunities for learning and sharing of experience and concerns across geographic boundaries during face-to-face meetings; and the flexibility to adapt to local contexts yet work within a larger process and content framework applicable across all participating countries.

Yet the inevitable dependence on active horizontal and vertical communication and timely responses was a serious challenge and cast a shadow across an otherwise well implemented project. In spite of convenient Internet and telephone access a significant number of partners (especially but not exclusively in the resource tracking component) did not respond timely to IDASA prodding for information and response². Weak excuses included high communications costs (solutions could have been found), but most admitted to a lack of commitment to communicate – in the words of one informant, “especially when we were not making progress as we should have done”. The lack of focus among all on establishing an active knowledge network between partners and researchers and with other regional initiatives further highlighted and aggravated this situation. While IDASA-GAP has been applauded for efficient project management and insistence on quality, it was amiss in not paying serious attention to increasing the accountability of partners by finding innovative ways to encourage and enforce contractual reporting and staff commitments, systematic and organised process documentation and regular partner reflection on performance using the monitoring and reporting system.

Two other critical elements are determining the success of this effort – the quality and credibility of the results and the extent to which implementation processes enhanced opportunities for use and influence of the work.

Quality

IDASA-GAP (and ABU before its disintegration) has a strong emphasis on quality that should stand their work in this sensitive Project in good stead. At least eight mechanisms have been implemented to enhance the credibility of Project outputs. While some partners and researchers share this commitment to quality, others have suffered from several types of capacity constraints. The additional data collection and another round of report reviews have been contributing to further project delays. While this has confirmed IDASA-GAP's essential commitment to quality, the resource tracking component in particular will require special efforts to ensure credible results before the end of the Project period. It is thus unlikely that all Project objectives would be achieved by the end of the extended Project period (September 2007). The absence of comprehensive process documentation is also weakening the ability of the implementers to defend all aspects of the work. The non-optimal use of reference groups in some countries has also contributed to this situation.

¹ In the absence of a more extensive study it is impossible to determine the motivation for the objections

² This aspect was also observed during the evaluation. At times lack of communication seriously affected the logistics and document access.

Use and Influence

IDASA and its partners have also been aware that influencing local policy and decision-makers towards use of findings and long-term institutionalisation is about more than good dissemination strategies. However, although mechanisms for buy-in and ownership included stakeholder workshops and Reference Groups, the engagement of stakeholders in a personalised, strategic and regular manner has not been emphasised. Several Reference Groups did not operate as envisaged, with none or infrequent meetings. While high level busy people might be difficult to mobilise on a regular basis, especially if they demand meeting payments which might not be forthcoming, this has not been adequately followed up to find solutions. In some countries stakeholders have thus disengaged from the process, while a few others have not been adequately engaged from the beginning. But it is unlikely to have had a major negative effect, as significant interest has been created and there is some level of expectation among stakeholders in each of the countries.

Sustainability

All these efforts, even though not perfectly executed, have helped to lay the basis for the sustainability of positive results. A key element for sustainability which has been meeting with mixed results is the engagement of both those organisations able to influence national policies, processes and strategies, and strategic civil society organisations that can use the work for advocacy. Although not yet fully operational, networks of trained persons can now be nurtured to support national and regional initiatives. Obstacles remain, for example institutionalisation of processes in government or in civil society organisations can be a sensitive matter given the politics of relationships between sectors. Work also still needs to be done to offer policy – and decision-makers solutions and next steps, and to ensure public awareness of some of the most relevant findings. It is therefore imperative that resource-wise this part of the Project – and the period after its termination – is not neglected. The continued engagement of IDASA-GAP, which has been at the cutting edge especially of work on electoral processes, may be an important factor in expanding the work and impact of the Project on the continent. It is very well positioned to continue with this important task.

Conclusion

This work at the interface of governance and HIV/AIDS is still experimental and even pioneering in the case of the electoral processes component. The challenges posed to data gathering and analyses, the need for early and astute stakeholder engagement across diverse sectors and agendas, the coordination of many partners with widely different capacities across geographic boundaries, as well as the sensitive nature of the issues that have to be dealt with, has made this a complex project to manage and execute. Given the many challenges and constraints, IDASA-GAP in collaboration with its in-country partners has done very well, especially given the pressure on all as a result of the disintegration of ABU. In spite of some design and implementation weaknesses they should be congratulated on a very significant achievement and on numerous lessons learnt in the process.

In view of the relatively limited investment (a subjective judgment as a cost-benefit analysis has not been done) the money spent to date is likely to have been well invested. But all will eventually hinge on whether the work is used for the benefit of the people at whom it has been aimed, and whether the important work on governance and HIV/AIDS will continue to gain prominence and be given an opportunity to flourish. The final stages of the Project, effective measures for sustainability, and subsequent work based on the lessons learnt in this Project will be critical for long-term success.

1. Background and Context

1.1 HIV/AIDS and Governance

1. More than any other disease in recent times, HIV/AIDS has the potential to challenge the often fragile democratic systems and practices in Africa. The reasons stem from its unique nature – its silent spread over many years, the ignorance and stigma attached to it and its targeting of the most productive age groups in society. Experts fear that over time the burden of the pandemic may strain political systems, provoke instability and undermine three key factors regarded as crucial to strengthening and maintaining democratic rule – steady economic growth and reduced inequalities; appropriate levels of expertise that can support institutionalised democratic processes; and rulers and citizens committed to democracy³.
2. In stark contrast to many other major HIV/AIDS related concerns, this area of work – the interface between HIV/AIDS and governance in democratic systems – has been neglected. Only a handful of researchers and institutions are working on the effect of HIV/AIDS on political, social and economic systems⁴, with the result that relatively little is known that can inform government and civil society responses to the threat in these domains.

1.2 First Steps

3. This situation prompted action by the Governance and AIDS Programme (GAP) of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA). With a three year grant from the Ford Foundation, GAP was developed in 2001 as a regional project with the vision (1) to determine the manner and extent to which AIDS will impact on democratic consolidation, and (2) to work with relevant governance institutions to develop appropriate responses. The Project under evaluation followed from two streams of activity conducted by GAP and the (then) AIDS Budget Unit (ABU) of the Budget Information Service of IDASA between mid 2002 and the beginning of 2005:
 1. Since mid-2002 ABU coordinated an international comparative budget analysis of how governments fund their HIV/AIDS activities. In September 2004 the results of this study, which included four African and five Latin American countries, were made public at a regional seminar in Johannesburg. At this event several individuals and institutions from different countries indicated their interest to ensure that this work would be extended to other countries in Africa.
 2. In April 2003 GAP held a ‘Governance and AIDS Forum for Southern Africa’ in Cape Town in collaboration with the EU and the UNDP HIV and Development Project for Sub-Saharan Africa, bringing together senior representatives from 12 SADC countries. Areas of priority identified at the forum led to the establishment of an exploratory project coordinated by IDASA, aimed at determining the impact of HIV/AIDS on key areas of electoral processes. South Africa was the first country to be studied (between November 2004 and January 2005) with support from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (US\$82 000). The experiences and lessons led to a proposal to use the lessons from this first phase to extend the project to several other countries in Africa.

³ Mattes, R. 2003. Healthy democracies? The: potential impact of AIDS on democracy in Southern Africa. Occasional Paper 71, p 3. April. Retrieved from [http://www.iss.co.za/Pubd/Papers/71/Paper 71.html](http://www.iss.co.za/Pubd/Papers/71/Paper%2071.html); 03 July 2006.

⁴ Strand, P. and Chirambo, K (eds). 2005. HIV/AIDS and Democratic Governance in South Africa. Illustrating the Impact on Electoral Processes. GAP-IDASA.

Box 1: Participating countries

Electoral processes component Resource tracking component

Botswana	Ethiopia
Namibia	Kenya
Senegal	South Africa
Malawi	Malawi
Tanzania	Tanzania
Zambia	Zambia

Box 2: Purpose of the Project*Overall aim*

To contribute towards improved national policies, programme planning and budgeting for mitigation of the impact of HIV and AIDS morbidity and mortality.

Objectives of the governance component

1. Establish impact of pandemic on electoral systems, voter participation, elected representatives and electoral management bodies.
2. Advocate and lobby for appropriate changes in policy and planning processes.
3. Identify the structural and other inherent weaknesses in the national response to HIV/AIDS.
4. Engender informed policy dialogue and public awareness of the broader implications of the pandemic and governmental responsibilities in addressing the pandemic.
5. Contribute to the ongoing debate about appropriate electoral systems in the context of HIV/AIDS.
6. Stimulate more urgent actions and increased allocations to facilitate treatment, care and support programmes.
7. Encourage greater participation of PLWHAs in governance processes.

Objectives of the HIV/AIDS budgeting component

1. Track HIV/AIDS resources and analyse the budget from an HIV/AIDS perspective.
2. Train civil society and research organisations in the participating African countries to undertake HIV/AIDS budget analysis.
3. Work with NGO research partners to develop a common framework for HIV/AIDS targeted expenditure in the country budget (possibly using a rights-based framework).
4. Analyse the HIV/AIDS budget outputs in terms of efficiency, equity and intended achievements.
5. Make recommendations to national-level policymakers on the effectiveness and efficiency of budgeting and funding mechanisms for government's response to HIV/AIDS.
6. Develop training materials for budget analysis and training-the-trainers programme.
7. Establish an African regional network of NGOs involved in HIV/AIDS budget analysis.
8. Improve public knowledge of their government's fiscal obligations and responses with regard to HIV/AIDS.

4. In December 2004 Sida, through the Lusaka-based Swedish-Norwegian Regional HIV and AIDS Team for Africa, allocated funding to IDASA for a project that would enhance the pool of knowledge and expertise on the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Governance, consisting of these two components, each conducted in six countries (Box 1). While the two components each had its own management structure, work plan and objectives (Box 2), areas of synergy were to be sought and exploited during Project implementation.

1.3 The Resource Tracking Component

1.3.1 The context

5. The Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, adopted by governments at the Special Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGASS) on HIV/AIDS in 2001, marked the beginning of a period of significant increase in political will and commitment of resources to combating the pandemic. Several regional meetings followed, the most pertinent when African leaders met to produce the Abuja Declaration in 2003. International funding programmes were aligned to these commitments, while UNAIDS took on a greater role in tracking resources and monitoring progress against the UNGASS Declaration.
6. This component was thus launched against an increasing focus in participating countries on the need to meet national UNGASS targets and find strategies that link policy and implementation. This has put HIV/AIDS budget allocations at the centre of the debate. Each of the participating countries has some national development plan with strategies to combat HIV/AIDS – the responsibility of a coordinating body, usually a national AIDS council (NAC). Yet in the absence of evidence it is not clear whether government budgets plus external funding sources actually support such strategies effectively. Major external funds such as PEPFAR and the Global Fund (GFATM) have tempted governments to allocate relatively small amounts of national budgets to HIV/AIDS⁵, leading to questions around the sustainability of strategic interventions over time as well as internal control over where these moneys are best spent.
7. The large amounts of funding available to combat the pandemic have led to stretched national capacities with limited absorption capacity. This has raised questions not only around the need for greater capacity but also around whether, in the absence of effective resource tracking, allocations are balanced and addressing priority needs. Inevitably this situation, coupled to general development trends has raised issues of harmonisation between the external partners as a group and between them and the government. In several countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya and Zambia, efforts are under way to align strategies and funding allocations for greater impact.
8. In some of the participating countries civil society voices are growing stronger. In Tanzania or Ethiopia these organisations still deliver services rather than fulfil a watchdog role. But civil society networks are increasingly active in the HIV/AIDS arena, demanding more accountability and transparency from government and external partners. At the same time the NGO/CSO sectors perceive government efforts to assess their funding sources as an effort at control. In Tanzania for example, donor basket funding has indeed limited funding to civil society organisations.
9. These diverse interests inevitably lead to some tensions in spite of the recognition on both sides that this type of work serves the interests of all stakeholders – albeit in different ways.

⁵ In Kenya for example, more than 80% of HIV/AIDS allocations are from external sources, with around 76% from the US alone

1.3.2 The Initiative

10. This component is essentially the second phase of a project conducted in four African and five Latin American countries⁶. At the final session of the regional seminar held in Johannesburg on 20 September 2004, participants expressed their support for the “continuation, deepening and extension of the research and for a network which could provide links between practitioners and representatives from regional and multi-lateral organisations, and government officials who use the data”⁷.
11. The funding provided by Sida for this component was to support an expansion of phase 1 to include five more countries, the assessment of more elements and a broader package of training activities for parliamentarians, government officials, civil society and research agencies. The UNAIDS developed National Aids Spending Assessment (NASA) methodology for HIV/AIDS resource tracking was to be the basis for the research⁸.
12. Collaboration between ABU and the UNAIDS Global Consortium on Resource Tracking for HIV/AIDS supported the idea of the formation of an African (institution-based) resource network in the area. Harmonisation and collaboration for maximum impact were needed between related initiatives; research using a variety of methodologies was being conducted by several other organisations⁹. ABU also wished to expand its contact with the Pan-African Treatment Access Movement (PATAM), the Regional Network on Equity in Health in Southern Africa (EQUINET) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which after hearing the results of the first phase of the project had added “tracking of resources for accountability and transparency” to the objectives of the SADC Business Plan on HIV/AIDS.
13. The rationale given for this component was thus twofold: (1) The need to enhance the ability of national governments to plan for and implement HIV/AIDS interventions by monitoring public as well as donor expenditure in this field; and (2) the need for a transparency and accountability measure to provide a focus for civil society’s watchdog and advocacy role. The national budget was seen as the most reliable indicator of the priority given by the government to the epidemic, and a long-term and systematic response could only be ensured if the primary allocation for HIV/AIDS programmes was from the national government rather than donor community. On the other hand the large amount of funds for combating HIV/AIDS entering many countries meant that donor resources needed tracking to facilitate planning and appropriate balancing of resources for different types of interventions. The recent rollout of large-scale national anti-retroviral (ARV) programmes also necessitated the monitoring of allocated funds.

⁶ The countries in Africa were Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa.

⁷ DASA-GAP and ABU, 2004. Measuring the impact of HIV/AIDS on electoral processes and national budgets in Africa. Revised Funding Proposal submitted to Sida. 30 September. p 26.

⁸ NASA tracks resources in a comprehensive, standardised and relatively simple manner, easy to adapt to a particular country’s circumstances. It tracks all HIV/AIDS expenditure from all sources – public, private and international. It identifies for which purposes the funds were spent, the beneficiaries and the objects of expenditure. It captures actual expenditure and compares this with what was allocated or committed, and identify discrepancies. It allows for cross-country comparison. At the time of the project a software package (NASA-RTS) was under development by UNAIDS to facilitate data analysis.

⁹ Such as PHRplus/Abt Associates utilising the HIV/AIDS sub-analysis of the National Health Accounts methodology in four African countries; SidaLAC using the National AIDS Accounts methodology in two African countries; and the South African Human Research Commission (HSRC) which had examined HIV/AIDS allocations in six sub-Saharan countries with a similar purpose.

14. A number of lessons learnt during the first phase of the project were incorporated into the second phase planning to give it a better chance of success. The second phase was also designed to synchronise and build on the work done by ABU in conjunction with ActionAid SIPAA between September 2004 and March 2005 during which the capacity of NGOs in nine countries were developed to undertake applied HIV/AIDS budget studies.
15. A set of criteria applied during exploratory visits was used to identify appropriate countries¹⁰ as well as research partners¹¹. It was decided not to include a Francophone country in view of their different national budgeting system and the extensive time and resources for French/English translation of documents. By engaging NGO partners in the research and building their capacities to screen primary data sources, the design focused from the beginning on independence of analysis from the influence of national governments, as well as on building internal country capacity with a specific focus on civil society.
16. The content of the research was to focus on (1) the budget inputs - HIV/AIDS allocations from nationally-sourced revenue as well as donor funds¹² – identifying and analysing allocated funds and projected budgets for HIV/AIDS for financial years 2000 to 2006, and mapping funding flows from national treasury to government departments and local agencies responsible for implementation; (2) budget outputs, i.e. what is bought with the funds spent. Comparison of actual expenditure against budgeted amounts would allow some analysis of the efficiency of spending of HIV/AIDS allocations.
17. The research approach for each country included stakeholder meetings, a Reference Group and internal and external technical reviewers for buy-in, content planning and quality control, data collection through budget document analysis as well as interviews with key role players at sub-regional level. For capacity building, three budget analysis training workshops, site visits for technical assistance by IDASA staff or phase 1 participants, dissemination and capacity-building workshops focusing on advocacy skills, and the development of training materials and a training-of-trainers programme were envisaged activities. Tailor-made dissemination strategies would conclude the component, while a tentative set of indicators for monitoring results would provide a roadmap to success. Equal funding allocations were made to each of the countries for the research component, with the express requirement that each country should aim to raise funds for dissemination of the results in appropriate format.

1.4 The Electoral Processes Component

1.4.1 The Context

18. Over the past six decades more than 40 of the 53 countries in Africa have become democracies. Many of these emerging democracies are fragile and the effects of the ongoing HIV/AIDS pandemic on these systems are still not well understood. Researchers have begun only relatively recently

¹⁰ These were to include: (1) viable NGO research partner (existence, availability, interest and capacity of NGO partner institutions); (2) continuation of Phase 1 (i.e. building on ABU's previous or ongoing experience); (3) stakeholder environment (demand, interest or willingness expressed by governments, public institutions, civil society organisation including academic institutions); (4) nature of budgeting system (reliance on donor aid; budgeting process and degree of budget reform; quality and availability of budget documentation); (5) prior research conducted in that country (e.g. NAA or NHA); (6) cost/logistics (including language); (7) potential for regional collaboration and networking (including inclusion in ABU's work with Action Aid SIPAA); (7) overlap with GAP countries; and (8) PEPFAR country and/or Global Fund recipient.

¹¹ These were to include: (1) a reliable contractual partner (i.e. established and experienced, and known to have delivered good results in the past); (2) a partner who has done HIV/AIDS policy analysis (reports, surveys, research, not necessarily economics or budget-related) and would like to move into budget analysis, OR has done economic research and analysis or budget-monitoring in the past, and would like to move into HIV/AIDS as a new content area; (3) has two experienced researchers who can be assigned to this project for its duration.

¹² Including international NGOs and the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

to compile evidence of the demographic, economic and social impacts of the disease on communities and national economies and systems.

19. But how does a disease that spreads silently and quickly, and is often characterised by stigma, discrimination and therefore denial impact on fragile systems of democratic governance? Little is known, in spite of doomsday scenarios painted by some scientists whose basic premises for African democracy are contested by some. Yet few dispute the potential devastation of HIV/AIDS on political institutions. According to social researchers one of the three key factors crucial to sustaining and consolidating democratic rule is a professional civil service and strong, viable and autonomous courts, legislatures, executives and electoral systems at national and local levels¹³. The institutionalisation of such bodies and processes requires skilled personnel with sufficient resources, expertise and predictable procedures and rules – enabling the rules of democratic governance to become routine and independent of the forces of corruption or the whims of the ruling political party¹⁴. Democracies are furthermore more sensitive to economic stagnation and crisis than authoritarian regimes, and poorer democracies are more sensitive than richer ones.
20. In theory then, HIV/AIDS could threaten at least two indispensable institutions for democracy¹⁵. The first is the set of institutions responsible for organising and conducting regular free and fair elections, the electoral commissions which will be tested to their utmost if they start lose skilled personnel and election supervisors while struggling with unreliable voters' roles and potential fraudulent voting processes. Electoral funding could also become a problem, especially in constituency based systems if increasing numbers of by-elections were to be held.
21. The second set of key democratic institutions includes national regional and local legislative bodies, where rapid membership turnover could significantly deplete essential skills and experience, for example in parliamentary portfolio committees. Furthermore, people with a sense of helplessness and lack of control over their future as life expectancy rates plunge may resort to apathy or action driven by perceptions that democracy is not a priority and that they have nothing to lose.
22. All of these have the potential to be major destabilising factors and may have major implications for the life expectancies of fledgling multiparty systems in large parts of Africa. HIV/AIDS may threaten to block or even reverse democratic development in Africa. But much more research is needed to provide evidence to confirm or dispute this dire scenario.

1.4.2 The Initiative

23. IDASA GAP argues that democracies are sensitive systems of governance that place a high premium on service delivery, and thus need strategies that can assist growing democracies to absorb and respond effectively to the political, economic and social shocks brought about by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This work in this component was to assist in this effort and was encouraged by the interest in such research expressed by several key stakeholders at the April 2003 Forum noted above. Interested stakeholders included the Electoral Commission Forum of SADC Countries (SADC ECF), members of the SADC Parliamentary Forum and a number of other representatives from governments and civil society. In response, IDASA-GAP oriented its research to investigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on democratic consolidation.

¹³ Mattes, R. (2003). Healthy democracies? The potential impact of AIDS on democracy in Southern Africa. Occasional Paper 71, University of Cape Town, p 2.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

24. This component examines the electoral systems, political institutions, electoral management and administration and voter participation. It seeks to test hypotheses developed by IDASA which held that the number of deaths from HIV/AIDS could threaten the democratic order and political stability through the need for increasingly expensive and unsustainable electoral systems, perceptions of voter fraud and ghost voting, as well as frequent leadership change. The institutional capacity of democratic systems was thought to be undermined through the impact of HIV/AIDS on the 15–49 age group – the most productive citizens, voting population and political representatives.
25. A snapshot study of the electoral process in Zambia indicated that the number of by-elections was increasing. As the majority of countries in the SADC region have an electoral model (the First Past the Post – FPTP) which demands by-elections in response to vacancies, these made countries in the region particularly vulnerable to the impact of the pandemic on these systems.
26. The research also had to focus on the cost of accommodating patients and caregivers and, from a rights-based perspective, on their ability to participate in the electoral processes as active party members, voters or leaders. The impact of HIV/AIDS on the voters' roll and voter turn-out also had to be investigated in view of the principle that all citizens have the right to full participation in elections¹⁶. The leadership of political parties and Parliament could be eroded as well as the capacities of electoral management bodies, election officers and monitors to conduct effective election processes. Understanding the linkages between HIV/AIDS, gender, poverty and participation was to be a further focus.
27. Lessons learnt during a similar project conducted in South Africa with support from the Rockefeller Brothers' Foundation (RBF) as well as the preliminary study in Zambia were to inform this component. The electoral models in six countries were to be used to determine the effects of HIV/AIDS on electoral systems. The majority of selected countries would use the FPTP rather than Proportional representation (PR) system. The methodology was to include a study of relevant documents, structured interviews, a public opinion survey and focus group discussions.
28. Strategic research institutions in each country were to be selected to conduct the research and assist with the dissemination of the results. Selection was to be based on those partners with whom IDASA had a trusted relationship and/or with proven track records in the fields of HIV/AIDS and governance – in particular the latter. Consultative or reference groups would be established to help guide this component. Stakeholders were to include the Electoral Commissions and their regional Forum, Parliaments and their regional Forum, NGOs working in the HIV/AIDS sector, National AIDS Councils, government representatives, political parties, media and civil society groupings. Draft research findings were to be disseminated at stakeholder forums and strategic meetings aimed at smaller groups of key stakeholders such as politicians, programme planners and the media. Methodology workshops were to be held, good practice would be shared to build capacities between partners, and debriefings organised before publication of results. A research facilitator from IDASA was to mentor all the researchers, conduct site visits and review reports. A capacity building programme for stakeholders such as relevant NGOs, electoral management bodies and HIV/AIDS councils would be held towards the final stage of the component. These were to use the research results to develop monitoring, advocacy and lobbying strategies that could prepare stakeholders to map, evaluate and respond to the effects of HIV/AIDS.

¹⁶ Principle of the African Union (AU) and the SADC elections Charter – AU Guidelines and SADC Charter, Mauritius 2004

29. A network of like-minded research institutions was to be established through this work, supported by a database to ensure retention and sharing of acquired knowledge, and accessible to all interested bodies. Guidelines on dealing with HIV/AIDS as electoral issue were also to be developed and distributed to a wider stakeholder network. Internal M&E was foreseen as an integral part of execution of this component in each country, based on tracking of a pre-determined set of indicators.
30. A second phase was foreseen, although not as part of this component. This second phase was to concentrate on encouraging the development of strategies for increased political participation of citizens in governance processes, with particular focus on political parties, their elected representatives and civil society groupings. HIV/AIDS Council commitment to new strategies was to be encouraged, as well as mentor and researcher exchange programmes.

2. Introduction to the Evaluation

2.1 The Rationale for the Evaluation

31. The agreement between Sida and IDASA required a Mid-Term Evaluation to determine Project performance with the aim to
1. improve implementation; and
 2. inform future planning, among others by serving as one of the bases for consultation and decision-making on future collaboration between the Regional Team and IDASA.
32. The evaluation results are to inform (1) the Swedish-Norwegian Regional HIV and AIDS Team for Africa, (2) IDASA and (3) the Swedish and Norwegian embassies in each of the participating countries.

2.2 The Nature of the Evaluation

33. The evaluator was tasked to study the whole Project, thus both components, based on a set of issues and questions provided in the Terms of Reference (Annex 1). She established a framework (Table 1) and evaluation matrix (Annex 2) guided by the following:
1. The evaluation was external and independent, commissioned by the Swedish-Norwegian Regional HIV and AIDS Team for Africa, the partner overseeing the Project on behalf of Sida, the main funder of the initiative. The evaluator had no previous contact with IDASA or any of the implementing agencies and was not subjected to any prescribed approach or pressure by the commissioning organisation or stakeholders.
 2. The evaluation was also formative, scheduled to be conducted during 2006. Delays due to staff changes in the Regional Team forced postponement until the first quarter of 2007 towards the end of the project period in September. It was therefore primarily an implementation evaluation aimed at finding out what worked and what did not, and why.
 3. The evaluation framework is based on a set of five Performance Areas in line with a model based on a study of the literature on the evaluation of research.¹⁷
 4. As the underlying purpose of the Project is to influence policy and decision-makers to take action based on sound evidence, two aspects warranted special attention:
 - The quality of the work, based on the quality assurance processes rather than technically assessing the quality of the outputs. The latter was left to the professionals engaged by IDASA for this purpose.
 - The extent to which the design and implementation of the Project were promoting the use of the results.
 5. The Project theory served as a further base for the evaluation. The relevance and timeliness of the objectives/outcomes themselves were also issues for evaluation. It is not useful to “do things right” if “the right things” are not done.

¹⁷ Hovland, I. (2007). Making a difference: M&E of policy research. Earlier draft, now Working Paper 281. Results of ODI research presented in preliminary form for discussion and critical comment. Overseas Development Institute.

6. In spite of the pre-determined project theory, Projects in developing countries should be implemented in a flexible way to allow for learning and adaptation during execution. The evaluation was therefore also in line with a goal-free evaluation. It assessed the flexibility to learn and adapt and tried to identify unexpected results. While the evaluation questions guided the evaluation, important issues were allowed to emerge.
7. For the sake of improvement, formative evaluations have a tendency to emphasise negative aspects. While this may be the case here, the evaluation raises such issues to allow stakeholders to debate and use as they see fit.
8. Utilisation-focused evaluation¹⁸, where participatory methods encourage ownership of the results among stakeholders, is a useful methodology for formative evaluation, but the timeframe and logistical challenges limited opportunities for its implementation. In spite of this the evaluator aimed to facilitate processes to encourage stakeholders to think critically about their own strengths and weaknesses and those of the component as a whole.
9. Although the Project was initially envisaged to consist of two inter-related and harmonised components, very little common ground could be found between them. As a result they were evaluated separately within the same overall framework and then comparisons made to inform the Project as a whole.
10. The unit of analysis was each component and not the intervention per country. This was largely due to the low sample size per country. The evaluation did not attempt to judge in-country teams' performance or compare performance, and conclusions were reached in each of the Performance Areas for each component and for the Project as a whole. Using the same data collection instruments enabled comparison between the components and allowed patterns between stakeholder groups across countries to emerge. Identifying good practice examples posed a particular challenge in the absence of analysis of the context in each country.

2.3 The Evaluation Framework

34. The evaluation framework design was based on the Terms of Reference and informed by a model developed from an extensive literature study (noted above). This model was used to frame and focus the evaluation (Table 1) and devise the guiding evaluation matrix (Annex 2) which shows the triangulation by method and source used during data collection and analysis.

¹⁸ This approach is especially desirable in many development contexts. Refer to Patton, MQ. 1997. *Utilisation-focused Evaluation*, Third Edition. Sage Publishers.

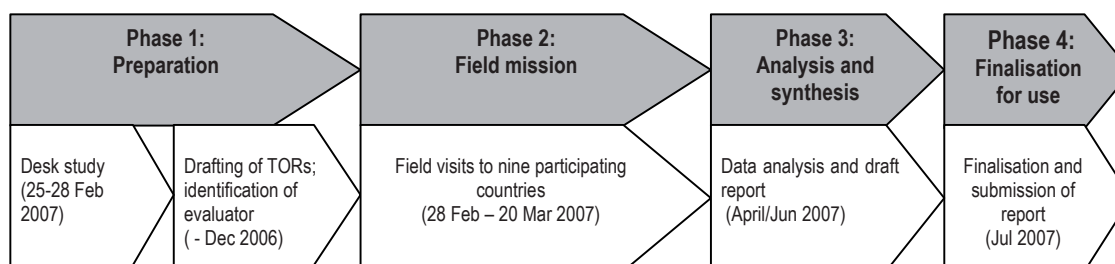
Table 1: The Evaluation Framework

Performance Area 1: Strategy and direction	Performance Area 2: Management and processes	Performance Area 3: Outputs	Performance Area 4: Uptake	Performance Area 5: Outcomes and impact
1. Relevance of the work • Alignment with needs and priorities • Timeliness • Responsiveness 2. Quality of the design • Logic and coherence • Risk management • Innovation	3. Progress • On track towards objectives? • Influencing factors • Adaptive management 4. What works, what does not and why? • Management styles and systems • Institutional model • Partner selection and capacities • Ownership	5. Quality and credibility • Appropriate quality assurance system • Implementation of system • Credibility of the work/results	6. Use of results • Role of the design • Role of implementation • Use in national plans and among stakeholders	7. Contributions to change • Achievements • Alignment with expectations • Unintended consequences 8. Sustainability • Project conclusion • Exit strategy • Long-term plans 9. Implications for the future • Lessons • Exploring synergies • Regional vs multi-country • Role of IDASA

2.4 The Evaluation Process

35. Forty person-days were allocated to the evaluation, including a field mission to eight of the participating countries. The evaluation process is outlined in Figure 1. Data collection consisted of a desk study and the field mission.

Figure 1: Phases of the Evaluation Process



36. Resource constraints limited the time spent in each country to two days per component. Botswana¹⁹ and South Africa were not included in the analysis.

¹⁹ Botswana was not included in the field mission as contact could not be made with the partner organisation

2.5 Methods

37. Credible evidence to inform findings was obtained through triangulation²⁰ using a variety of methods and sources for verification. Due to the formative and implementation nature of the evaluation, data collection was based on qualitative methods.

1. A study of key documents was used to inform the evaluator before, during and after the field mission. Documents were obtained from IDASA-GAP Team, from each of the in-country partners and from Internet searches.
2. Open-ended face-to-face and in some cases telephonic semi-structured interviews were conducted with IDASA representatives, the Regional Team and stakeholders in each country. Stratified purposeful sampling was used to solicit inputs from a diversity of sectors and institutions identified through a rudimentary Project stakeholder map drawn up at the beginning of the evaluation. Final selection of interviewees was made by each in-country partner based on their availability and the significance of their status and involvement in the Project. Snowball sampling was used to a very limited extent.

38. Due to the formative nature of the evaluation it was important to engage with and challenge those closely involved with the Project. The sampling strategy was affected by the need for coordination of the interviews by the country coordinators and could have been biased towards those most active in or supportive of the intervention. However the frank discussions and critical attitudes of many of the informants – encouraged through an interview approach that encouraged learning and improvement rather than performance assessment and judgment for continued funding – are likely to have limited any negative consequences from this approach.

39. A total of 98 stakeholder representatives from the following groupings were interviewed:

1. Project partners and implementers, in particular the coordinators and researchers;
2. Project reference groups;
3. Potential users, in particular;
 - key government departments;
 - National AIDS Councils or related bodies;
 - For one of the components, electoral commissions and political parties;
 - Umbrella organisations or networks for civil society organisations, NGOs and People Living with HIV/AIDS;
4. Norwegian and Swedish embassies;
5. Key donors.

40. Only six out of 13 embassy staff members contacted felt equipped to provide inputs into the evaluation. The others felt either too new or uninformed about the Project to give comment.

41. An interview guide based on the evaluation framework and matrix directed the interviews. Informants were also allowed to raise any issues they felt were important to discuss. The focus on interviewing particular types of stakeholders in each country assisted in identifying patterns related to the concerns of each stakeholder grouping, although the number of informants per country was small.

²⁰ Triangulation: Consistency of different findings checked in this case (1) within the same method (triangulation of sources) and (ii) generated by different data and information collection methods (methods triangulation).

42. For data analysis a combination of deductive and inductive²¹ approaches was used to uncover emerging patterns and themes while being guided by the evaluation framework and Project logic.

2.6 Quality Assurance

43. The evaluation was guided by the African Evaluation Guidelines²² as well as the Qualitative Evaluation Checklist²³. Primary stakeholders will also be given opportunity to comment on the draft report and these comments will be considered before its finalisation.

2.7 Evaluator Values and Biases

44. The following were the main evaluator values or biases that affected the evaluation design and data interpretation:

- In any research project the credibility of the end product is paramount, and dependent on the quality of the methodology, the rigour with which it is applied, and the skill of the researcher in finding innovative solutions to process or technical challenges. This should be well documented so that the credibility of the work can be assessed. If the research is not completely credible it should not be published or used.
- Policy-orientated research requires those engaged in it to understand in depth how policy is influenced and how to manage their processes for maximum use and results, especially where it is an explicit part of their responsibility.
- In spite of difficulties with any work in developing countries, persons and organisations responsible for delivery should be held strictly accountable to do so. Excuses for non- or late delivery can only be made if all options to get the work done on time have been exhausted.

2.8 Constraints

45. While there were no ethical concerns hampering the evaluation, it could have been technically strengthened – even in rapid review mode.

1. The evaluation was hampered by logistical challenges – mainly due to lack of timely responses by country coordinators – as well as difficulties in getting key documents²⁴ from partners before conclusion of the evaluation. Only half of the partners responded to requests for additional information or documents during or after the field visits.
2. The evaluation did not collect enough data on the credibility of the Project and IDASA among key role players and organisations in the region, and of the level of existing interaction between them.
3. A stakeholder survey with closed and open-ended questions to test hypotheses or preliminary findings could have yielded additional insights. Surveys aimed at policy-makers officials can be notoriously time-consuming, so this approach was not considered for this already delayed evaluation. In hindsight, those interviewed could have been asked to complete a short questionnaire on key issues at the end of the interview. Even though the sample size was too low per country, a cut across countries per stakeholder group would have been useful.

²¹ Inductive analysis involves discovering patterns, themes and categories in data. Findings emerge through the analyst's interaction with the data. Deductive analysis involves analysing data according to an existing framework.

²² Refer to the latest published version at www.afrea.org.

²³ Retrieved on 14 April 2006 from www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists. Published by the Evaluation Centre, University of Western Michigan. September 2003.

²⁴ For example reports or minutes of reference group or stakeholder meetings.

4. The sampling strategy suffered from the fact that many persons were not available during the specific period during which a country was visited, and instead of random sampling of stratified groups of stakeholders, the evaluator was dependent on country coordinators' efforts to set up the interviews. Apart from the inherent bias this could bring to the fore, the emphasis had to shift to those identified as key informants from research teams, reference groups and stakeholders from Electoral Commissions, National AIDS Councils, NGO umbrella organisations, political parties and PLWHAs.
5. The decision to visit eight participating countries in five weeks for in-depth interviews with individuals and groups was time-consuming and exhausting especially given some of the logistical challenges. But it would have been difficult to obtain the same level of cooperation and frankness by email or over the telephone, especially when working with relatively senior government and agency officials.
6. The aggregation of findings across countries and between the components may not have done justice to individual performance, and important nuances may have been lost in the process. More work should have been done to ensure systematic comparison on key issues but with low numbers of informants per country this would have been challenging.

2.9 Conclusion

46. The formative nature of the evaluation provided an opportunity to study what worked during design and implementation, what did not and why, using a model that focused on five key performance areas for research projects aimed at influencing policy. The late timing and submission of the report, lack of sufficient documentation as well as the exhausting nature of the field mission and logistical challenges affected the evaluation design, in particular the sampling strategy and opportunities for obtaining systematic comparative data, limiting opportunities for the eliciting of good practice. This was somewhat offset by the opportunity to engage with diverse stakeholders per country and across countries in a manner that encouraged critical reflection and triangulation. Although the evaluation identified main issues and uncovered patterns in how different categories of stakeholders reacted to the Project, recommendations are made in the final chapter on how the value and use of the evaluation can be enhanced during the final Project stages.

3. Findings: Performance Area I – Strategy and Direction

3.1 Relevance and Timeliness

47. Relevance is determined by timely alignment with national needs and strategies, usually embodied in the support of key stakeholders and maintained through responsive implementation during changing circumstances. The funding partners of this Project (and preceding pilot efforts) have been visionary in supporting work in this important niche area. Research on the interface between HIV/AIDS and governance has been both relevant and timely and has remained so over the past two years. The topic brings together two critical fields in current development thinking. HIV/AIDS is an increasingly important strategic priority for governments and donors. Yet the effect of HIV/AIDS on governance systems remains a neglected area of work in spite of the vast amount of resources being poured into HIV/AIDS interventions.
48. According to reports, work on both components was strongly supported by high level representatives from government and other relevant organisations in the region. The choice to work on HIV/AIDS resource tracking was perhaps the most obvious, prompted by increasing calls for transparent information and accountability from government and donors, the “Three Ones” principles and the catalytic effect of the activities of the UNAIDS Global Consortium for Resource Tracking for HIV/AIDS. The first phase IDASA project and subsequent feedback in September 2004 further kindled interest among the high level delegates at that forum.
49. The situation in each participating country is complex. Donor initiatives remain fragmented and influential. For example PEPFAR, the Global Fund (GFAMT) and the World Bank MAP have overtaken (sometimes by a large margin) national budget allocations to HIV/AIDS²⁵, making governments vulnerable unless they have adequate evidence to support their strategies. Zambia for example failed to qualify for the next round of the Global Fund, yet does not know whether previously committed funds had been allocated to most needed areas. Even though the majority of donors and governments are working towards harmonisation in strategy and budget allocations, no-one in the participating countries knew the total amount of resources allocated to HIV/AIDS interventions – or the extent to which these serve national strategic priorities. Key informants therefore confirmed that they regarded this work as important for better economic governance and accountability, transparency, evidence-based advocacy and long-term planning. A major stakeholder demand not met was the strongly articulated need to assess the outputs and impact of the allocations and expenditures.
50. The work was also pioneering in nearly all participating countries. Even with similar objectives the ongoing National Health Assessments (NHA) and Public Expenditure Reviews (PER) do not offer the same level of detail or track allocations and actual spending in a comprehensive, cross-cutting, multi-sectoral manner. In Zambia a similar UNDP initiative in its early stages was subsequently integrated with the Project and placed as responsibility of the official Finance Technical Group. With only one exception all informants agreed²⁶ that the work was complementary to, and enhancing existing initiatives, with the envisaged level of detail more useful for accurate planning.

²⁵ In Kenya, for example, one country through PEPFAR provides 76% of all national commitments to HIV/AIDS and the donor community as a whole around 84%, giving them in principle extraordinary power over relevant decision-making.

²⁶ Chirambo, K. (2006) Democratisation in the age of AIDS. Understanding the political implications. Published by GAP IDASA, p 1.

51. While the Project is timely, there is some impatience among those who wanted to use the results for national plans and UNGASS reporting. In spite of good intentions the work has not been completed in time for the latter. Open policy windows – such as the development of the HIV/AIDS framework for 2008–2012 in Tanzania and the NAC effort in Zambia to develop a toolkit for mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in all governance structures and processes should be Project targets. Similar initiatives in Africa by UNAIDS, PHR+ and Action Aid may over time also affect the usefulness of the work. This provides a strong imperative to join forces as initially envisaged, but not yet fully implemented at this stage.
52. Work in the area of the impact of HIV/AIDS on electoral processes has received even less attention and GAP is the first research unit in Africa to establish an empirical link between HIV/AIDS and democratic governance with the electoral process as an entry point. In this sense the research is timely – most countries in Africa do not have extensive experience with democratic processes and the political and financial effects of HIV/AIDS on the sustainability of democratic systems have not been investigated. SADC-ECF and other high level participants in the April 2003 Governance and AIDS Forum emphasised the importance of the work to help avoid post-election conflict. Most key informants in the evaluation expressed their support based on insufficient knowledge of the effect of increasing infection numbers on one of the main requirements for a sustainable democracy. Although the topic is not a clear focus in national strategic plans, it fits frameworks for action and in several cases (Zambia and Namibia in particular) was seen as having potential to contribute to upcoming revisions of electoral laws.
53. On the surface the work is thus considered relevant, but a number of key informants pointed out that if the research and findings were not handled well, political sensitivities over stigma may well be brought to the fore through this component and complicate the fight against the disease – especially if data around causality are disputed and the public profile of politicians, their followers and specific parties is affected. Political resistance could thus diminish the potential use of findings and any financial imperatives. This was clear from the reserved reactions of several of the informants from key bodies such as Electoral Commissions. In Senegal the research was initially not seen as a priority given the relatively low prevalence rate, but certain government officials are seen to be supporting the initiative for its potential to inform future action if the situation becomes more critical. Doing the work well in advance of any election also seems to lessen sensitivities among stakeholders.
54. Finally, the Project may have been launched at a good time when national ‘policy windows’ were opening, but since progress overall has been slow, opportunities to influence national development plans, electoral reform or national HIV/AIDS strategies may have been missed. On the other hand ongoing reviews of constitutional or electoral systems, such as in Malawi or Namibia continues to present opportunities for use of the findings. This highlights the need for planners and implementers to consider and focus on pertinent processes and products to maximise opportunities for influence, especially those plans and policies that would influence systems over the next five or more years. One such missed opportunity is a great loss – and there were several over the lifetime of this Project.

3.2 Quality of the Project design

55. Both components are expansions of earlier ‘pilot projects’, bringing to the design the benefit of learning from previous experience and thus minimising potential design weaknesses. Specific design strengths include (1) the focus on the interests of both government and civil society; (2) in-country capacity building towards institutionalisation of the methodology; (3) the formation of knowledge networks within each country, between countries and with other regional and global initiatives; (4) institutional structures and methodologies facilitating cross-country comparison while allowing flexibility for essential contextualisation; (5) the formal engagement of organisations from the

beginning towards capacity building, ownership and accountability; (vi) alignment of the efforts with those of ongoing complementary efforts.

56. In both cases the objectives and strategies were well motivated, the project logic²⁷ coherent and in the case of the electoral processes component, relevant to the hypothesis to be tested. So overall the design logic makes sense, but may have inherent weaknesses that may not be immediately apparent. A more comprehensive, systematically articulated (schematic) project logic or ‘theory of change’ (for the whole component and per country) and exploration of alternative possibilities may have made the implementers more aware of potential gaps and problem areas. For example, articulating the inputs more clearly and linking them to the activities and expected results would have surfaced the need for interrogating two different scenarios based on the same or different allocations per country, given their contextual differences (geographic area, population size, number of institutions).
57. The implementation approach showed that the dissemination and institutionalisation of results were a Project focus. Yet relevant strategies and outcomes were not well formulated integral part of the work. This is also reflected in the monitoring system. The ‘indicators’/‘indicators of achievement’ are mostly process, not performance indicators, and lacking qualitative substance. This is bound to lead to an inaccurate assessment of real progress²⁸. Several indicators in the resource tracking component are too vague to be meaningful²⁹. Many of the expected impacts will show only over time after termination of the Project, and the indicators will be tracked somewhat prematurely. There is also no indication that the monitoring system is being used by the country implementers in a thoughtful manner for learning and improving – perhaps only for compliance, and then not really taken into account in the reporting. The potential negative effects were offset by IDASA’s experience and guidance during implementation.
58. Neither a knowledge management (for example for process documentation and good record keeping) nor communication strategy was explicitly articulated as a priority and fundamental part of the design (and hence perhaps the insufficient funding), except for mention of activities to share information between implementers. These strategies are particularly important given the comparative nature of the work and the fact that especially the resource tracking component was to establish more sustained and possibly institutionalised work per country.
59. Particular strengths in content and process were (1) the dual focus on support to government as well as civil society in terms of capacity building and the usefulness of findings; as well as strong foci on (2) increasing advocacy capacities both within participating countries and through cross-country collaborative networks; (3) ongoing technical support, training (including ‘training of trainers’ in the resource tracking component) and opportunities for sharing across sectors for in-country capacity building and sustainability³⁰; (4) formal engagement from the beginning of a variety of strategically selected stakeholders with the intent of creating ownership and enhancing quality; (6) a common methodology for cross-country comparison, yet allowing some flexibility to tailor-make processes and methods to local circumstances; (6) engaging institutions rather than individuals to enhance accountability and increase potential for larger buy-in, capacity building and institutionalisation;

²⁷ The logical relationship between the objectives, implied strategies, activities, expected outputs and ‘impacts’/‘outcomes’, and an analysis of the assumptions that underpin the project logic.

²⁸ For example “number of workshops held” does not necessarily indicate that they were effective, only progress with implementation. Planned pre and post testing might have assisted in understanding the extent to which they were providing the right knowledge.

²⁹ For example “Dissemination and use of training package”.

³⁰ The strategy consisted of (1) two training workshops in budget analysis and NASA methodology for the principal researcher and a government representative from each country, based on (2) a common terms of reference and methodology; (3) technical support visits, including transfer of skills between partners; (4) intermediate workshops to share preliminary findings and jointly solve problems; (5) close peer review of draft reports, and (6) formal internal and external review processes.

and (7) attempting to align efforts with those of other key agencies for mutual reinforcement of one another's aims.

60. In the resource tracking component the outputs were well defined, but the 'specific objectives' could have been more usefully formulated as strategies to achieve the 'overall objectives', while the desired results³¹ ('impacts' in the project proposal) were essentially short or medium-term outcomes rather than longer-term impact³². Several target groups for the expected changes were not clearly stipulated. Information and tools were to be developed and disseminated without a clear emphasis on issues of ownership and buy-in. Providing access to information or the mere existence of an analytical framework does not mean that research will be used. An influencing strategy well articulated right from the start may have brought in each of the countries somewhat more structure to efforts to engage and retain the interest of influential stakeholders.
61. The undertaking in the electoral processes component to focus on incorporating poverty, human rights, gender and the voices of the marginalised, including the inter-linkages between HIV/AIDS, gender, poverty and participation is appreciated. However exactly how these aspects were to be incorporated in the study was not obvious and apart from a very brief reference in the initial contract that gender aspects should be considered, the inclusion of PLWHA groupings and a focus on disaggregated data, it is not quite clear how well this has played out during implementation.
62. Plans to harmonise the two components³³ failed to materialise and the lack of any real overlap was already reflected in the design.

3.3 Conclusion

63. The Project addresses a niche area that is growing in importance yet to date has received surprisingly little attention. Both its components are widely recognised by stakeholders as relevant and timely efforts to expand knowledge in this area, and both were launched after clear indications of support from key national and regional organisations. But in spite of their relevance, both components – and especially that on electoral processes – touch on sensitive issues requiring delicate management if findings are to be used as envisaged. And timely as the Project was, implementation delays and the need for synchronisation of processes between countries meant that opportunities to influence national plans or review processes have been missed in some cases.
64. The logical and coherent design ensured good guidance for implementation and benefited from the incorporation of lessons from preceding (pilot) initiatives. Yet somewhat inadequate attention to systematically documenting the theory of change with its underlying assumptions and alternative pathways led to several design weaknesses that were fortunately offset by IDASA's focus on the preparation of in-country partners and an insistence on fairly prescriptive methodologies and implementation processes.

³¹ Here defined as the changes in skills, attitudes, knowledge, understanding, condition, etc. brought about through the intervention, in other words the 'outcomes' and longer-term 'impact'.

³² Although this could be due to confusion in the use of terms to describe the project theory.

³³ Through joint planning, joint dissemination of research findings and joint progress reports and review meetings.

4. Findings: Performance Area II – Management and Processes

4.1 Progress

65. Implementation activities in the *resource tracking component* were in line with the detailed work plan in the Project proposal. Activities started early in 2005 with exploratory visits to each country, the selection of partners and engagement of stakeholders, followed by a training workshop for selected researchers from partner organisations. As planned, data collection was initiated early in the second half of 2005.
66. Two main factors contributed to significant delays during implementation.
1. For reasons mostly beyond the control of the researchers, difficulties with data collection and analysis stymied progress in all countries. The level of detail and disaggregation required, as well as lengthy waiting periods for permission to access official records became real obstacles to progress. This situation was exacerbated by the fact that the NASA software, under development by UNAIDS and to be used for UNGASS reporting, was not yet tested in Africa and ready to support the process in a timely manner.
 2. A second important factor was the structural changes in IDASA leading to the integration of ABU with GAP. Nearly all ABU staff resigned, leaving very little coordination capacity at a critical time in the component lifecycle. This situation was exacerbated by an apparent lack of commitment by several implementing partners to move the work forward with some vigour in spite of difficulties. In essence the work faded from stakeholders' – and researchers' – memories. Communication with IDASA broke down almost completely (and was not good in the resource tracking component even before key IDASA staff departed). Activities proceeded slowly, but in-country stakeholders confirmed that the early enthusiasm was lost and the work overtaken by other priorities. University and NGO consultants often suffer from keeping too many balls in the air simultaneously and this affected the work in nearly every country. Partner representatives admitted that they had under-estimated the amount of work and progress would have been faster if the project had remained a priority for them.
67. These factors had a knock-on effect on the preparation of the final country and comparative synthesis reports as well as the final dissemination and capacity building activities (Annex 6). Very little progress was also made with two important overarching priorities – the establishment of an African network of interested organisations, and the project website.
68. A request by IDASA for extension of the component period until the end of September 2007 was granted. Without a full staff complement and in view of problems with the technical quality of several of the reports, it might be difficult to meet all objectives in the remaining time.
69. The *electoral processes component* proceeded according to plan until around September 2006. While some countries (Namibia, Zambia) had submitted their draft reports according to given deadlines in April, others submitted first drafts months later. After reviews of the first drafts, further work was needed. Malawi and Tanzania submitted their second drafts for review by IDASA around March 2007; Botswana and Senegal were at the time still working on first drafts. Progress was thus completely out of phase and this delayed the finalisation of the process for all countries. The draft consolidated report and dissemination processes were thus delayed by at least six months (Annex 6).

70. As turnaround times for review of reports by IDASA-GAP were very short, the delays were essentially due to difficult and slow data collection, analysis and reports writing in four of the six countries. Similar reasons to those for the resource tracking component were given by the researchers. In the absence of good national data systems, it was difficult to get reliable data from so many different stakeholder groups and different inadequate databases, and sensitive data on for example HIV/AIDS related deaths or proxy indicators. Here also, other priorities affected the speed with which work was done. In one case the consultant contracted by the implementing agency to do the work did not deliver and a replacement had to be found.

71. With the allowed extension to September 2007 it should be easier to finalise this component given that significant review of most of the reports as well as further stakeholder inputs had already been done.

4.2 Key Factors Influencing Implementation

4.2.1 Management by IDASA

72. IDASA's leadership and management of the Project were judged by all partners as efficient and effective (In the case of ABU until key staff resigned; the hiatus that followed affected their capacities). One competent and committed partner called them 'exceptional'. Significant credit was given by a majority of informants as well as his staff to the IDASA-GAP Manager. The GAP and ex ABU teams were also commended for

- pioneering this field of work;
- having a high level of expertise in their field of work (although some questioned their lack of expertise in the field of HIV/AIDS);
- being accessible, hard-working and committed to the task;
- using their good communications skills to drive the planning, capacity building, research and review processes according to plan, following up consistently and keeping the pressure on partners to deliver according to set deadlines and desired quality;
- setting an example through quick turnaround times for review (in the electoral processes component);
- providing good planning and useful methodology guidelines without being overly prescriptive;
- giving people with expertise among the partners a chance to represent the regional effort at conferences; and
- not driving an own ideological agenda in spite of their mission to support and enhance the voice of civil society (only one stakeholder differed from this perception).

73. But there have been shortcomings, mostly in ensuring that all partners stuck to agreed upon approaches and actions and delivered not only reports but adhered to proper management procedures. Problems in this regard were experienced with around half of the coordinating partners.

74. Tighter management by IDASA and more vigorous implementation of the Project by some of the in-country partners (by their own admission) could have speeded up the difficult processes of data gathering and analysis. Of particular concern is the fact that the majority of partners, especially in the resource tracking component, did not communicate in a timely manner with IDASA in spite of many attempts to get them to do so.

75. Multi-site projects that have to keep to the same deadlines normally benefit from regular monitoring so that problems can be identified and addressed as soon as they arise. For example the resource tracking contracts with primary partners stipulated short reports every two weeks, yet this was not done and several partners neglected regular communication with the management team. Enough attention was also not paid to establishing a working 'knowledge network' connected through an active listserv, and demanding participation and accountability for timely action where requested. Furthermore, in several cases the reference groups did not operate according to expectations in terms of regular meetings or documentation of minutes. This was not addressed in spite of the fact that the facilitation of stakeholder engagement and quality assurance through these structures was an important part of the work.
76. Although the rationale for the move of the function to Pretoria to become part of GAP was well justified, the drop in performance due to the significant loss in expertise and experience has not yet recovered. Quick turnover in replacements for project management, research facilitation and capacity building prevented the formation of a stable and active team respected as much as ABU for their technical and management expertise. In view of the very competitive market for specialists, IDASA seems to struggle to provide salaries and portfolios able to retain staff. This does not mean that the GAP management and staff have not been actively pursuing the processes to keep the ball rolling and finding the right people, but this has taken time and has stretched their own capacities.
77. As noted by one of the partners: "Once deadlines were lost, people stopped working hard, and IDASA's guidance disappeared".
78. This also resulted in slow take-off of the envisaged close collaboration (in the resource tracking component in particular) with international role players such as UNAIDS, UNDP, the International Budget Project (IBP), the Civil Society Budget Initiative (CSBI), ActionAid and others.

4.2.2 Quality of the Project Theory

79. As discussed in chapter 3, the Project design was well reasoned, and strengthened through the integration of lessons from previous experience as well as stakeholder input during early consultative meetings. This gave structure to the implementation. IDASA's management style ensured that planned activities were done. On the other hand the lack of a clearly formulated logic model or theory of change diminished the focus on the division of financial allocations and the need for clarity on how issues of gender would be treated, for example. A better formulation of (especially qualitative) indicators and of the assumptions underpinning the design would have helped with risk management. Finally, an integrated 'influencing strategy' may have encouraged more in-country partners to seek active support – early on – from specific influential individuals.

4.2.3 The Organisational Model

80. The organisational model has broad support from stakeholders, yet has had positive and negative effects on the Project. Analysis of stakeholder responses and the way in which implementation played out shows the strengths of the model but also highlights some important caveats:
1. Coordination is done by a credible organisation within the region which ensures African ownership and puts oil on the wheels of cross-country collaboration, learning, problem-solving and comparative work for greater impact. The model is of course expensive if people have to move to central points for training, reporting and planning, and implementation across so many countries means less emphasis on in-country capacity building of a critical mass, but the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. The caveat is that the model will work only if the coordinating organisation (1) is effective; (2) does not impose any ideology or agenda on partners; (3) allows a good measure of flexibility in design and implementation given different country contexts; and (4) if the partners are responsive, accountable and keen to learn.

2. The engagement of capable and credible partners in each of the countries offers local ownership and greater opportunity for sustainability of benefits after termination of the intervention. The selection of appropriate and capable partners according to sound criteria is important and does not guarantee success (see below).
 3. The engagement of solid organisations (university units and NGOs) with a good track record and the capacity to manage projects and field teams – instead of individual consultants – reduces risk and enhances opportunities to ensure accountability. Contractual agreements and terms of reference provide the framework for participation and should be strictly enforced, which was not always done in this Project³⁴. In spite of this both NGO and university consultants are at any given time engaged in several projects and by their own admission seldom give a specific project the agreed upon attention. In at least one instance the primary researcher has not provided the necessary guidance.
 4. Engaging in-country partner teams to collaborate helped to mobilise complementary cross-disciplinary expertise for research and advocacy. However it also increases complexity due to the additional layer of relationships. The selection process itself has to be handled with sensitivity. Selection for the resource tracking component was done by IDASA in consultation with local stakeholders, giving some important distance to the process. But in some cases this resulted in partners who were not necessarily comfortable with each other, equally enthusiastic participants or at the same level of professional expertise. This posed significant difficulties during collaboration. A few advocacy partners have not shown adequate interest in the work to date.
 5. The engagement of some organisations working in democracy and/or governance and not necessarily steeped in the HIV/AIDS field – and vice versa – brought fresh perspectives and new fields of expertise into HIV/AIDS debates, built HIV/AIDS related capacities in organisations that otherwise would not have had the opportunity, and centred attention on issues of governance and democracy. But some of the organisations had to go through steep learning curves. Either individual consultants had to be contracted or organisational capacities had to be built, demanding commitment to learn from partners as well as adequate training opportunities and in-country technical support. In all these aspects there were shortfalls, and quality or timeframes suffered as a result. Furthermore, multi-disciplinary research teams were essential for good progress, yet in one or two cases partners did not have the capacities to field such teams.
 6. The core research teams and reference groups provided from an early stage for multi-sector and multi-disciplinary interaction and buy-in as well as some quality control. The inclusion of for example Ministries of Finance and Health, civil society organisations, National Aids Commissions, Electoral Management Boards/Commissions and especially PLWHAs brought diverse perspectives into planning and implementation processes.
81. Success is largely dependent on how well some of the complexities around this model are managed, including (1) forming a network or community of researchers that do communicate, share, learn and make progress together; (2) creating local ownership in spite of central management, which demands a good understanding of the different partners and the contexts in which they work; (iii) managing from afar, yet ensuring administrative and technical quality and rigour among the partners; and (iv) determining the extent to which governments should be allowed to play a powerful role or be in the driving seat.

³⁴ In Ethiopia for example, key government agencies were officially invited by IDASA to send representatives to stakeholder meetings. When such an agency was selected to be an official in-country partner, the representatives continued their engagement without IDASA extending an official invitation to the organisation. This negatively affected the sense of project ownership by the agency. Similar issues came to the fore in Tanzania.

82. Implementation challenges in this model include: The different capacities and levels of commitment, and hence speed with which work is done means that some countries easily lag behind others, resulting in waning interest among stakeholders as well as researchers³⁵. Network formation and accountability for reporting and communication need constant encouragement. Understanding the organisational and sector relationships (for example between government, key agencies, civil society and the media) and political context in each country is crucial and may affect even the authorship of the reports.

4.2.4 Partner Capacities, Approaches and Credibility

83. The importance of partner capacities has been described in the preceding section. One key additional aspect is the reputation of the lead partner. IDASA has generally done well in identifying suitable organisations accepted by all. It has built on existing relationships with some of those they knew and also used stakeholder input to select organisations with a good reputation in research and/or good relationships with (yet not too close to) key actors in government, parliament, important bodies such as NACs and EMBs, NGO networks and others.

84. While several informants raised questions around the capacities and positioning of some of the partners, none were found to be unacceptable. Yet this aspect is a minefield – complex and country-specific, dependent not only on understanding organisational performance but on relationships between government, civil society, donors and the academic sector. As a rule of thumb NGOs do not have the professional profile of universities and organisations such as National AIDS Councils and are often perceived to be only – in the words of one high level government informant – “running after projects to make money”. Yet several of the NGOs in this Project were said to have a very good reputation. Stakeholders agree that universities are generally a “safer, more neutral” choice. Universities also have the added advantage of giving students exposure to relevant research. On the other hand university units or staff members are also seen as “too academic”, operating as lone consultants or aligned with a particular NGO or activist grouping, thus diminishing their credibility. Many NGOs also already have enumerators and field coordinators in place³⁶. In some countries government wants to be in the driving seat, but the asymmetrical power relationships might then affect the credibility of this type of project in the eyes of civil society. Clearly no hard and fast rule exists and each case should be judged in the context of that country. The Project should also be designed to deal with the threat offered by incorrect partner choice.

85. The importance of key personalities in giving organisations with a reputable profile should also be recognised. They give stability and credibility. In one case the primary NGO partner used to have a good reputation, but key people have left and are now competing with their old organisation with a much more effective network of political support. In this case the primary partner is in danger of being marginalised and its findings not taken seriously by the government.

4.2.5 Technical Support and Capacity Building

86. As noted above, capacities of partners were strained, yet in the resource tracking component staff changes meant that all facets of the IDASA strategy for capacity building and in-country technical support could not be fully implemented or not implemented by recognised experts, especially during critical phases of data collection, analysis and report writing. In particular, site visits to provide technical assistance and build in-country capacities could not be executed as planned.

87. As a consequence the IDASA review judged several draft reports as lacking the analytical quality required for a credible and useful end result. Some of the review statements have been contested, but it is clear that several partner research leaders had underestimated the intensity and level of

³⁵ Eight months in the case of Namibia

³⁶ Kenya is a good example.

work required and, as noted before, may not have adequately prioritised this component. Whatever the reasons, there is cause for concern about the analytical quality of the first draft reports in this component and care has to be taken to ensure that the final findings have the required credibility and quality to serve the intended purpose.

4.2.6 Data Accessibility and Integrity

88. Both components faced similar challenges in accessing credible data for comparative purposes as their preceding 'pilot' projects. The resource tracking component is used as an example. The While the NASA software was not ready or pre-tested and the struggle with its premature implementation discouraged some of the teams (or provided an excuse for inadequate performance) seasoned persons argue that the NASA methodology was easy to implement. Yet researchers counter that the required level of detail (especially on the ground) made data collection difficult and unrealistic. Data in medical and care facilities as well as those required for electoral processes are in many countries not systematically recorded and (understandably) deemed to be too much to collect or disaggregate just for this purpose. Recorded budget allocations are rarely the actual expenditure and audited figures are not readily available. Blanket allocations limit relevant detail. Specific line items for HIV/AIDS often do not exist and classifications and definitions are not standardised. In spite of the focus on face to face interaction for more accurate information, input from civil society organisations was difficult to obtain. CSOs are often reluctant to expose themselves in this manner. Where NGO researchers did not have the power of NACs or government behind them, or have established relationships with organisations that could provide access, they struggled (for example in Zambia). The initial insistence by IDASA on partnerships with these Councils and government has been bearing fruit.
89. In other countries other factors inhibited data collection. For example in Ethiopia political issues, information systems and civil society uprisings contributed to major delays. The distance in operation between the federal, regional and local authorities also posed challenges. In this case closer collaboration with regional and local authorities may have helped. Donors (especially the most powerful) were also not always forthcoming with required information. Central databases on donor funds do not seem to exist. In larger countries such as Tanzania and Ethiopia relatively few districts could be sampled and even though carefully selected, may not adequately compensate for contextual differences between sub-regions.
90. These are just some of the issues that delayed progress and made the execution of both components according to expectations difficult. This is also why these issues and their implications for the current and future work should be recorded and analysed.

4.2.7 Communication, Knowledge Management and Accountability

91. Partner organisations commended IDASA's attempts to communicate with the implementers on a regular basis through email or telephone, but a surprisingly large number (50%) acknowledged that their own response was often slow or absent. Their reasons were that other priorities tended to interfere, that communication was avoided when progress had not been adequate and that the costs of phoning was prohibitive and not part of the budget. In the view of the evaluator this is completely unacceptable and a worrying sign of lack of commitment and accountability among too many primary partners (especially from the resource tracking component). If there were valid problems these should have been communicated with IDASA, and solutions found.
92. Horizontal communication between countries was also woefully inadequate for an intervention of this nature intended to establish a network of organisations capable of driving or acting as a resource for future initiatives. An electronic discussion forum or even listserv was not established – a basic requirement for 'knowledge networks' today. This meant that there was very little real sense of 'community' between participants except for very occasional face to face meetings and training events. Thus a good opportunity for sharing of experiences and joint problem solving were lost.

93. Knowledge management – today an essential part of project management – was further weakened by the lack of systematic process documentation, especially of methodological constraints and challenges, and of key points and decisions of reference group/stakeholder meetings. Only a few such documents were available and in most cases seemed even to require time to get together, indicating inadequate (electronic or paper) filing systems. (Shared) databases with key information should have been readily available in IDASA as well as among partners. For example IDASA did not have a readily available database of partner contacts and several partners could not make available any stakeholder maps, lists of invitees to meetings compared to those who attended, and details of reference groups. Lists of stakeholders workshop participants did not include the position of the person which, given the strategic importance of understanding the level of representation from different organisations, should be of concern. The absence of mechanisms to retain institutional memory in written form also limits opportunities for the identification of good practice.

4.2.8 Financial Allocations and Incentives

94. The financial aspects of the Project were not investigated, but perceptions among the primary partners are that the allocations and flows were well managed (although one country partner complained of suffering a significant loss through exchange rate fluctuations). Three issues affected implementation:

1. The scope of work in large countries such as Ethiopia and Tanzania showed that the allocation of the same amount to all countries was not appropriate (In Ethiopia it was too little to cover an acceptable sample of districts or train enumerators and data gathering was based on the largely inefficient method of mailed surveys).
2. In many African countries it is the norm to pay persons under certain circumstances to attend meetings, and this amount can be high when they are for example MPs who have to come from afar. The lack of funds was said to have been one of the main reasons why reference groups were not constituted or did not meet regularly in some countries, but this could not be verified.
3. This Project was largely experimental and it was therefore difficult to get an accurate estimate of costs. Time-consuming data collection meant that in some instances research teams were underpaid, illustrating the commitment of some teams to the work in spite of this situation.

4.3 Conclusion

95. In spite of challenges the Project has done well in remaining on track towards meeting its objectives, albeit somewhat late. The commitment and expertise of IDASA in particular, as well as that of many of the in-country partners have helped to ensure that this has overall been a well managed programme. But it has been affected by inefficiencies and difficulties, several beyond the control of the managers and implementers. In the absence of process details the evaluator could not confirm the extent to which lengthy delays could have been avoided through harder or more innovative work and more 'driven' implementation. There is however no doubt that over-commitment to other projects by partners or researchers and the departure of key ABU staff who have been difficult to replace have had a significant negative impact on progress and performance.

96. The organisational model proved to be viable and accepted among stakeholders, with the express caveat that the efficiency and integrity of the central coordinating agency is of crucial importance. Where processes were completed according to plan, good in-country partner research and management capacities and the ability to field multi-disciplinary/multi-skilled research teams were critical. Several partners were exemplary in continuing work in spite of rather low budget allocations. Yet the inadequate efforts on all sides to keep systematic records and process documentation, as well as poor communication and inadequate networking made it harder to use this Project as example of good practice.

5. Findings: Performance Area III – Outputs

5.1 Quality Assurance

97. The quality of research is imperative for success and the credibility of findings. It is too early to use conventional measures³⁷ for assessing the quality and effect of the research outputs in this Project. Instead of trying to evaluate the draft products – a specialist activity – we studied the quality assurance system of the Project.

98. It is quite apparent that IDASA has placed a premium on high quality work and has established several mechanisms for this purpose. If well implemented these should provide all that is necessary to ensure quality results. Yet not all went well during implementation. In the resource tracking component an initial specialist review found several draft reports to fall short in terms of data collection and analysis. In the electoral processes component, questions remain over the data and causality arguments used to establish impact of HIV/AIDS on electoral processes and the various role players. But IDASA's processes should enable it to deliver in the end according to their set standards.

5.2 Mechanisms for High Quality Work and Outputs

99. The following are the main components of IDASA's quality assurance system for this Project, applied with slight variations in each of the two components:

1. IDASA has had leaders and staff in GAP and ABU (until their departure) with specialist expertise, excellent management capabilities and commitment to the task.
2. IDASA used a set of criteria and consultative processes to find the best available in-country partners who were well positioned with appropriate expertise and a good reputation, and able to combine specialist knowledge in research on democratic (governance) issues with expertise in advocacy. They were also in principle positioned to draw specialists in as required to form research teams with the necessary diversity of expertise.
3. The research methodology was well developed by IDASA and quite prescriptive in an effort to ensure comparability, yet retain flexibility for application in different country contexts.
4. Research leaders were drawn together for training and interaction to ensure a common understanding of the research goals, approach and methods, and to help develop the methodology further as the Project unfolded. Technical assistance was also provided in each country by specialists sent by IDASA, and persons who were involved in for example the Afrobarometer.
5. In principle the in-country partners were required to submit regular reports (in the case of the resource tracking component, short progress updates every two weeks) and record key events and activities.
6. IDASA stipulated the establishment in each country of a cross-sectoral stakeholder reference group to give direction and review methodology, progress and results from different perspectives. The composition of these reference groups was spelt out to ensure the participation of key organisations. In certain cases an established group was used in order not to duplicate existing mechanisms, for example in Zambia where the Finance Technical Group of the National AIDS Council fulfilled this function. In Kenya the NACC obtained the input of individuals playing the role of a reference group.

³⁷ Hovland, I. (2007). Making a difference: M&E of policy research. Working Paper 281. Results of ODI research presented in preliminary form for discussion and critical comment. Overseas Development Institute.

7. Internal in-country as well as external peer review processes (by specialists contracted by IDASA) were to be established. The internal peer review processes in the resource tracking component were initially conceived to be the engagement of in-country experts to review draft reports, but eventually consisted of processes of stakeholder engagement and comment at inception of the work and in some cases, reference group meetings. In Zambia the peer review process included comment by a consultant who was initially not selected to do the work, yet was regarded as competent to provide an independent perspective on the draft product. The external peer review process consisted of IDASA appointed consultants who could review all the reports per component. The external expert reviews are essential to the quality assurance system and it is therefore imperative that IDASA maintains its philosophy to appoint highly credible persons for this task.
8. Preliminary research findings were discussed at forums between researchers, but no official dissemination was to take place before external peer review processes were completed and reports revised to IDASA's satisfaction.

5.3 Quality Challenges and Constraints

100. The quality assurance mechanisms noted in section 5.2 could not always be implemented as desired. The following summarise the main challenges and constraints:
 1. Only two draft reports contain the briefest of descriptions of methodology. In some reports on the resource tracking component no reference is made at all to the overall approach and methods. It is not enough to refer to the initial methodology outline prescribed by IDASA. Understanding the details- for example the sampling strategies, reasons for selection of certain sites and methods of analysis and verification – is crucial for assessment of the credibility of the work. A thorough analysis of constraints, quality assurance mechanisms and methodological lessons for the future should have been described in each report – and if not on the report on findings, then in a separate report on methodology. Approaches varied and reasons are not necessarily clear.
 2. The loss of high level expertise at a critical time during implementation of the resource tracking component had a serious effect on its progress and quality. IDASA tried to fill these positions quickly but this proved to be harder than expected. The delay in appointing a full complement of staff with the appropriate expertise resulted in less (strict) communication with in-country partners, less control over the timing and less support to help improve the quality of their work. The hiatus after the departure of IDASA staff also meant that an effective peer review and high quality in-country technical assistance by IDASA staff or appointed experts was not available at critical times as planned.
 3. The methodology was at times hampered by systemic problems and/or by the lack of adequate financial resources to remedy some of these weaknesses, for example to enable credible sampling strategies, verify or update secondary data and access comparative or disaggregated (secondary) data. Ideally where these types of challenges exist, the researchers should have the responsibility to document and analyse the implications for the integrity of their work. This was not consistently done.
 4. Uneven capacities as well as overloading of lead researchers have affected the quality of the work. This is a common situation in organisations dependent on income through contract work and has been noted by partners themselves as detrimental to good progress, communication with IDASA, management of reference groups and an emphasis on quality.

5. In several countries the Reference Groups hardly met in spite of expectations that during the planning and research process meetings should be held once a month. Partners noted that it was difficult to get high level people together on a regular basis around a particular project, especially if they were not paid to do so. But key informants in several countries also confirmed that few efforts were made to establish or manage an active group. Invitations to nominate a representative were often issued only in writing with no follow-up and there were examples where meetings were arranged and postponed without adequately informing participants. The different examples of reference group activity (in the case of the resource tracking component) were in Tanzania (where reference group members were paid and met several times to assist with methodological challenges) and Zambia, where key agencies took ownership of the process as part of an existing structure.
6. In some cases the one or two stakeholder meetings partly fulfilled the role of a reference group. Bringing them together to comment on intent and completed work was perceived by most key informants as useful for cross-fertilisation of ideas and for developing better understanding of different perspectives. But partners acknowledged that the representatives were often stronger politically than methodologically, and that in several meetings technical discussions were largely overshadowed by political posturing. The level of expertise and understanding also usually varied greatly. While there is great value in gathering diverse perspectives, this meant that there could be little emphasis on discussions around methodological rigour. More technical experts could have been brought more systematically into consultative processes to help resolve methodological constraints. In one particular case where an expert was present, harsh criticism of the methodology followed. In one instance technical specialists met before the larger group. Several persons in one particular country also found too few clear linkages between the findings and recommendations; even if the linkages were there, people clearly did not understand or buy into them.
101. The combined effect of all these factors on the quality of the outputs could not be judged during this evaluation. External experts were engaged for this purpose by IDASA. But written reports as well as verbal communications indicated that some of the resource tracking component reports in particular might require additional work to bring them up to the expected standard.

5.4 Conclusion

IDASA-GAP (and ABU earlier) has an exemplary emphasis on quality that should stand their work in this sensitive Project in good stead. Several process mechanisms have been implemented to help ensure the credibility of Project outputs, but inevitably implementation has brought challenges. Partners have suffered from capacity and other constraints, while the change in ABU staff has once again negatively affected capacity building and review processes. The role of the reference groups has also been uneven.

The focus on quality outputs has meant that where concerns have been expressed by external reviewers (in both components – more so in resource tracking than in the other) additional data are being collected and the reports revised to enhance quality in spite of further Project delays. At the time of the evaluation several reviews and revisions were still ongoing for several late submissions. If these were found to be inadequate, challenging strategies and timelines would be required to finalise the reports in time and disseminate their results.

6. Findings: Performance Areas IV/V – Uptake, Outcomes, Impacts

6.1 Achievements and Unintended Results

102. Without final findings and concerted dissemination over time it is too early to assess expected change (such as policy and process reforms, increased awareness and capacities) brought about by the Project. We could at best get some preliminary impressions around spin-offs of processes or uptake³⁸ of preliminary findings. This could be done only within the limitations of evidence found in available documents, and through stakeholder observations and anecdotes. Impact logs were not kept and it was not timely for doing user surveys or citation analysis of policies, guidelines, web-sites, newspaper articles and others.
103. The achievements centre mostly around collaboration, awareness creation and capacity building. In *both components* individuals and organisations from disparate sectors³⁹ have started working together towards common goals as part of research teams or active reference groups, in spite of different perspectives on how results should be used. Government informants also confirmed that the work has raised awareness among officials and national organisations of important systemic weaknesses in national data availability.
104. In the *resource tracking* component, stakeholders and reports show several achievements through processes to date. Evidence on the use of preliminary findings is still too weak to confirm, but nearly all informants participating in the resource tracking component agree that key national role players have not only been made aware of the benefits, but saw a demonstration that it can be done in a practical manner. Influential individuals and organisations have thus become more interested and in principle willing to join the effort or consider the research outputs. Some local individual capacities were also built in the use of the NASA methodology. While few in number (only 1–2 per country), some have the potential to be in-country trainers and focal points, for example for the growing UNAIDS network on resource tracking. In Ethiopia for example, the national component coordinator and primary partner organisation have been requested to participate as key resource in a multi-partner national Technical Working Group which will now engage in a larger effort.
105. In spite of questions around some areas of conjecture and reasoning in the draft reports, the *electoral processes component* is producing largely credible state-of-the-art knowledge in an understudied niche area. This component has not suffered some of the staff setbacks of the other and more opportunities were available to highlight the work from public platforms, stemming primarily from the profile and active engagement of IDASA in this niche area since 2001. The worth of the work on this component (sometimes with a stronger focus on preceding efforts) has been increasingly recognised through mostly positive press coverage, especially in South Africa, Zambia and Namibia and through the engagement of IDASA-GAP in important meetings and publications, including
- an award for best presentation at the South African National AIDS Conference in Durban, 2005 (an unusual acknowledgment of the value of socio-political work at a largely medical research conference);

³⁸ That is, whether the research has been picked up by others.

³⁹ Governments, NACs, NGOs/civil society networks and academic institutions.

- use of the work in the official fact sheet of the SADC-PF, which now according to reports circulates simplified versions of the work to more than 2 000 Members of Parliament (MPs) in SADC;
- a keynote address at the International Conference for Democracy Promoting Foundations in Stockholm in 2005;
- presentation of the work (according to reports) to 75 senior delegates at the International HIV/AIDS Conference held in Toronto, 2006, where IDASA-GAP also had its own satellite sponsored by RBF;
- two hour presentation at a 2006 DFID HIV/AIDS Seminar at the London School of Economics;
- panel presentations at a SADC-PF and Harvard University conference on HIV/AIDS in Botswana in 2007, distributing a synthesis of the Project research to regional MPs upon request; and
- an invitation to participate in the Working Group Meetings of the UN Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance in Africa (CHGA) in Casablanca, and publication of some of the research in 9 000 word chapter in an upcoming UNECA book 'Governing a Pandemic: HIV/AIDS'.

106. As with the resource tracking component, stakeholders confirmed that the meetings held during Project inception and implementation have raised awareness of the issues as well as expectations that the effort will point the way forward. Overall, comments were positive. Political party representatives acknowledge that they are starting to think about manifestos that include guidance on this topic; officials note that reviews of electoral systems and national development or HIV/AIDS plans should take cognisance of the work; and many believe that one of the most important achievements (in both components) is the effective inclusion of PLWHA voices in discussions.

107. Speeches and comments for public consumption at workshops could be political rhetoric and it is still difficult to establish to what extent the findings will be used or influential. A cautionary note: due to the sensitive nature of the research, the results will have no impact if their credibility is questioned either for technical or political reasons. The causality evidence has to be based on very reliable methodology and analysis, otherwise the hypothesis could drive the findings or the latter could be used or questioned for political expediency. This was an issue in several evaluation interviews. At least one methodology specialist – one of the very few encountered as 'key informants' – had significant criticism of the work done to date in that country. Several high level workshop participants expressed their doubt or concern at the main problem of establishing a clear linkage between the number of deaths and HIV/AIDS. External peer reviews of the reports commissioned by IDASA will confirm the technical quality.

"You cannot just say the electoral system should be changed based on these findings. Negative aspects of the new system should also be considered. Small parties suffer if they don't have contact with the electorate, so eventually accountability might go. Recommendations to do this were already made after the 1995 elections by (international) electoral experts pushing for change. It is a political thing. If you propose it today to our government it will be rejected outright. Let us accept it: democracy is expensive."

Key informant, Electoral Commission

108. Finally, although an impressive number of important national organisations have been engaged in project processes and workshops, often at quite senior level, in each case the number of informed persons remains limited. Only in a very few organisations have representatives kept their senior managers updated of progress or findings. Staff movement can thus quickly cause a setback. This emphasises the need for larger-scale dissemination and targeted efforts to ensure broader uptake in key organisations. Delays also meant that the work could not be used to inform UNGASS reports as was initially envisaged.
109. The evaluation did not focus enough on possible unintended positive or negative consequences of the work to date. None could be found, but it may be that the data gathering or analysis has fallen short in this respect. It should be interrogated at the end of the Project to ensure awareness of all the results of the Project, and monitored over time if subsequent work in these areas continues.

6.2 Use and Influence

110. This Project has intended from the beginning that the research findings should be used to influence policy decisions. Much has been written in the literature on how to influence policy through research^{40 41 42 43}. These recognise that the two worldviews of policy/decision-makers and researchers do not necessarily sit well together and special efforts are needed to ensure that key people and organisations note, own and use research effectively. Efforts should therefore centre not only on ensuring credible findings, but identifying and using ‘policy windows’; providing information to key ‘points of power’ (influential individuals) through developing personal relationships; facilitating understanding of technical issues through carefully selected, appropriate communication mechanisms; harnessing media and advocacy opportunities to get active commitment beyond the core group of participants; and making the most of the political context. Finally, solutions should be offered and not only findings^{44 45}.
111. ‘Buy-in’ and more ideally, ‘ownership’ of processes is known to increase the chance of success, use and influence of research results. But these terms can be interpreted and used rather glibly. Where government officials and politicians are a target group, the potential for ‘ownership’ becomes a complex issue. Many demands are made on their time and loyalty, contexts change, and research has to be special to claim ‘ownership’ over time by a particular organisation or person. Yet to increase the potential for eventual use, smart and carefully implemented strategies can increase awareness and engagement at influential levels. Prescribing in each country the engagement early on of a strategically selected group of key organisations⁴⁶ through various stakeholder meetings was a good approach. The organisations’ involvement in selecting partners and discussions before

⁴⁰ Vincent R. 2006. Breaking barriers: Effective communication for universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010. PANOS. Retrieved from <http://www.panos.org.uk/PDF/reports/breakingbarriers.pdf> IDRC. 2004. IDRC in the Public Policy Process: A Strategic Evaluation of the Influence of Research on Public Policy. Retrieved from http://web.idrc.ca/en/ev-26606-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

⁴¹ Ferguson, J. 2005. Bridging the gap between research and practice. Volume 1(3), 46–54. Retrieved from www.km4dev.org/journal Pollard A. and Court, J. 2005. How civil society organisations use evidence to influence policy processes: A literature review. ODI. <http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/intro/general/2005/07evidence.pdf>

⁴² Young J. 2005. Bridging Research and Policy: The RAPID Approach. ODI. Paper presented at the SISERIA Conference, African Economic Research Institutions and Policy Development: Opportunities and Challenges. Dakar, Senegal, Jan 2005. Retrieved from http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/11085709621Bridging_Research_and_Policy.pdf

⁴³ Church, C. 2005. Mind the Gap: Policy Development and Research on Conflict Issue. INCORE, University of Ulster, Ireland. Retrieved from www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/cgi-bin/bibli.pl?doctype=Report.

⁴⁴ Neilson, S. 2001. Knowledge Utilization and Public Policy Processes: a Literature Review. Ottawa: IDRC Evaluation Unit.

⁴⁵ Coffman, J. 2007. Evaluations to Watch; Evaluations based on Theories of the Policy Process. The Evaluation Exchange. Volume XIII, No. 1, Spring 2007, Issue Topic: Advocacy and Policy Change. Retrieved from <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval/issue34/eval2.html>

⁴⁶ Generically stipulated to include important government departments and agencies such as NACs and ECs, civil society and non-government umbrella organisations and networks, including PLWHAs, and the media.

and during implementation; as well as the support by reference groups and dissemination workshops were critical parts of creating buy-in.

112. In spite of invitations to stakeholders being mostly extended by letter without additional work to encourage high level interest, the topic prompted impressive representation from a wide variety of organisations (Namibia and Botswana started with smaller reference group meetings) and keynote speeches by Ministers and senior EMB officials. Opinions vary on whether the level of representatives was senior enough for real influence. Full records of invitations to stakeholder meetings as well as attendance records which include the positions of representative compared to well-designed stakeholder maps were mostly not available for the evaluation. It appears that although organisational interest remained, delegates changed significantly and few remained involved throughout the process, including in reference groups. Organisational change and significant turnover among meeting and reference group participants may indicate a lack of prioritisation of the effort, but could also enhance institutional awareness. Only very few instances were found where organisational representatives made a serious effort to communicate their experiences within their organisations.
113. The nature of the relationships in this field between civil society, the government, MPs and national agencies such as NACs and EMBs differ across countries and processes should be adapted accordingly. This requires excellent understanding of these often complicated relationships during the initial selection of partners as well as the process to engage and keep the interest of the right stakeholder organisations and individual champions at the right level. Strategies in Ethiopia, where the government has to lead such efforts, will differ from those in Kenya and Tanzania or where relationships are somewhat more relaxed, or Malawi and Zambia where the dialogue is sometimes under strain.
114. This was displayed in the resource tracking component, where navigation of organisational sensitivities and engagement of key players was more successful in Kenya (and Zambia) than in Ethiopia (Tanzania). In the former case work was done through existing multi-sectoral structures. Both civil society and the government were a firm part of the initiative, including the important Ministry of Planning and Finance and the Office of the President for the 2030 Plan for Economic Recovery. The NACC ICC reports to the powerful CCM and also acts as Reference Group. Relationships are said to be comfortable and based on complementary interests. The private sector is not involved but an umbrella business alliance (KAPSA) has attended meetings.
115. It is crucial that in-country partner organisation(s) leading the research is credible – as noted before, a tough task. An important related emerging issue is the ownership of the research findings and reports. In most cases several partners (in some cases the ‘reference group equivalent’) were involved in the planning and research processes. Who should be seen as the main owner of the report? Which approach would ensure credibility of the report and its use by the most important stakeholders? Key actors should not be placed in a position where the findings can be easily dismissed due to doubt around the political or technical credibility of the authors and/or authoring organisations. Yet this is complicated by the nature of the relationships. In one country the national HIV/AIDS council and government is comfortable with NGO partners leading and authoring as long as they are kept in the picture; in another the government has to be in the driving seat; in another case UNAIDS was noted as the best international agency as compromise in a complex situation. This highlights the importance of the country context and processes managed accordingly from the beginning.
116. As discussed, several reference groups did not operate as intended. This limited their influence. Project delays and long periods without communication with stakeholders in several countries also caused loss of momentum and stakeholder disengagement from the process.

6.3 Sustainability

6.3.1 Elements of sustainability

117. This Project will be most worthwhile if its findings are used in a positive manner to make changes in HIV/AIDS policies, resource allocations and governance strategies. In order to sustain positive change (or the potential for positive change), in the envisaged absence of external support national (and/or regional) structures or strategies should be in place to continue with the work. National interest and ownership is therefore of paramount importance, as are political, economic and socio-cultural conditions that can help sustain any positive effects.
118. The Project has been designed with sustainability in mind, even though this was not well articulated in the initial proposal. The early engagement of key stakeholders, the reference groups and envisaged linkages to networks are all indications of an attempt to ensure buy-in and ownership towards sustainability. This has already borne some fruit. The awareness and engagement processes in the resource tracking component have led to the emergence of several exploratory processes towards institutionalisation of the methodology, harmonisation in government or integration with PER processes. In Ethiopia the primary partner will be involved as a resource in a similar process started by ActionAid in conjunction with other role players. In the electoral processes expressions of interest have come mainly from political parties, civil society organisations and some EMBs, and there have been good efforts to engage MPs and parliamentary portfolio committees. Given the issues of stigma and hesitance among the political elite to submit to public scrutiny on HIV/AIDS this interest may not play out in action.
119. The importance of influencing relevant regional and national policies and strategies has already been discussed. This is a key element for sustainability and implies tracking their design processes and understanding the key influencing levers – those persons and organisations with maximum influence over such processes. The generic identification of key stakeholders ensured that awareness was generally raised among the right type of organisations, although the level of decision-making or influencing power of participants is still not clear. There are some indications that ‘champions’ are emerging to continue promoting the work in government and other key agencies such as the NACs, MPs and also in civil society is therefore still an open question, especially as several key individuals have raised some private concerns during the evaluation about preliminary findings (the validity and agenda for the comments remain unclear). Initial stakeholder maps could have done more to identify those with the power to enact change in the relevant areas. Civil society organisations and umbrella networks have expressed commitment to continue with the work and use the findings for advocacy.
120. A key decision that will affect sustainability is whether work in this area should continue primarily at a national or regional level. Well placed regional bodies have played an important role in confirming priorities during the initial Project planning stages and certain individuals have been involved in some of the Project processes. Yet all informants agreed that the primary focus should be at national level given the inertia inherent in regional bodies and their inability to exert real binding power over national governments and bodies. While they may be somewhat above the partisan agendas operating at national levels, they are not seen as powerful enough to effect real change unless the buy-in is primarily at national level. But they are important bodies to engage, and their awareness, understanding and support can play an important role in future action and funding opportunities. This should be taken a step further while not losing the multi-country approach, which is in turn more effective than single-country strategies.
121. A rather neglected element in the Project and evaluation is a good analysis of the role of national versus sub-regional or local structures in the work and in continuing action. Several of these structures have been engaged in data collection efforts, creating some awareness, but it is a com-

plex issue and might be context-specific given the level of decentralisation of government in a particular country.

122. Another strategy for sustainability is the engagement of other donor programmes to convince them to support related actions in their own programmes. It might therefore have been an omission not to include key embassies with programmes in relevant areas. Most of the Norwegian and Swedish embassies contacted were not aware of the Project and its significance for their work, yet expressed keen interest once given the context. Organisations should be mobilised to support efforts exploring the interface between governance and HIV/AIDS even if they would not agree with the current priorities and thrust of the two components.
123. A critical mass of expertise is also important for sustainability. Placing those with specialist expertise from the Project in a position to train others in their country and in the region, and engaging them in regional and global networks with similar goals were part of the initial plan. Due to the implementation challenges this was not done to the extent envisaged and as a result should have a high profile during the final stages of Project execution.
124. Offering strategies and realistic solutions and not only findings will give less experienced organisations (for example new political parties) an opportunity to integrate aspects into their own planning over the long term. This was part of the envisaged plan during the dissemination stage and another reason why enough resources and effort should be allocated to this last stage.
125. Finally, mobilising civil society is an important part of enhancing chances of sustainability. Navigating political and partisan agendas and priorities is complex and does not guarantee success. The normal inertia in government and/or issues of stigma and fear of disclosure, especially among the political elite and leadership may prevent action. In democratic societies therefore, the mobilisation of citizens is crucial to keep pressure on the government, other independent organs of democracy and on political leaders. The strategy to ensure that role players from these diverse sectors as well as the media are informed has been useful and should be continued in an effort to create public awareness and debate based on evidence rather than rhetoric.
126. In conclusion then, the design and implementation of this Project has in significant ways laid the groundwork for sustainability. Exploring those examples that can serve as good practice and ensuring a strong focus on this aspect during the final phases of the Project will significantly enhance the value this Project can add to society.

6.3.2 Role of IDASA

127. IDASA-GAP could be a key element in efforts to ensure that positive results from the Project are maintained – if it continues to create and expand knowledge, evidence and awareness in this field in Africa. Will it be able and inclined to do so? It places an expressed priority on ‘knowledge-based governance’. In the SADC region it has been instrumental in building the profile of the work on governance and HIV/AIDS. It has a ready profile and growing reputation for work on the interface between governance and HIV/AIDS. It has laid the foundations for several networks of resource persons in the fields covered by the two components. It has by now significant experience in the management of multi-country networks and has proven its management capabilities in this regard. And if necessary, it can and does draw on the expertise and experience of a number of IDASA’s other organisational units, with deliberate efforts to transfer knowledge between the units. Yet it tends to retain only a small core team to force collaboration based on firm partnerships instead of a potentially patronising “we can do it all” approach.
128. IDASA has consolidated its expertise through its recent restructuring, specifically a view to increase their international activities, driven by their exposure through GAP. In this context merging the work of ABU with that of GAP was a logical and positive move which should yield long-term

benefits in spite of the sacrifice in expertise when key persons left. It has key strengths that make it a very well placed organisation for work on the continent in areas related to its mission⁴⁷, which has been a strategy since 2005. These include a 20 year history of, and reputation for bringing people together across ideological and cultural divides, with the first work outside South Africa done in 1998. They are thus able to handle political and cultural minefields when people from different sectors and backgrounds have to collaborate. They are comfortable in operating in ‘unknown spaces’, working with confidence based on experience tempered by respect for, and sensitivity to others⁴⁸. They also do not impose their ideologies on their Projects – (at least not in a detectable way). In spite of changes in the leadership and makeup of staff, the core values of the organisation seem to have been maintained and carefully nurtured. They continue to have a knowledge-based approach, keen to learn and utilise lessons and adding considerably to the pool of knowledge in their priority areas through publication of their work.

129. These characteristics and approaches give them an advantageous position in networking and working across cultural and geographic borders. While it is not possible to assess the quality of their engagement, they appear to have the ability to link up strategically with key bodies as needed. A number of projects are currently executed in multi-country mode, often linking up in some way with regional bodies. They have (albeit fairly new) working relationships with relevant SADC bodies (demonstrated in this Project by their engagement with SADC-PF and SADC-ECF), AU organs, UN regional offices and global headquarters (for example UNAIDS), southern African media (for example through editorial forums) and regional networks strategic to their work such as AMICAALL, PATAM, EQUINET and others. Their work on the widely appreciated and recognised Afrobarometer assists in this process. Their credibility is also confirmed by invitations as keynote speakers and co-hosting important forums and events. Their Executive Director is part of an expert group in UNECA, and they also have two small offices in Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo since 2003.
130. Threats remain, as has been demonstrated when they lost a very significant amount of expertise during the restructuring process, from which they are still struggling to recover. According to key informants in IDASA they also struggle to offer competitive salaries given the tremendous need and competition for specialised people in the market. This may be partly why it still retains a reputation for a workforce driven by idealism and commitment to their mission and the organisation’s core values. It also makes use of a network of external experts to overcome this problem. Maintaining small core teams can also be a dangerous strategy as they have to be careful to find niche areas of work true to their expertise areas and values, cannot over-commit for fear of inadequate delivery and may get into trouble when a key person leaves. In this Project the expertise and respect stakeholders hold for the IDASA-GAP manager seem to have been a critical success factor. South Africa-based organisations also have to be sensitive to perceptions of hegemony on the continent, but IDASA does not seem to have encountered this problem as yet, and certainly not in this Project. Their staff members are also drawn from a variety of countries in Africa.
131. All these elements position IDASA (and IDASA-GAP specifically) very well to expand its regional role in moving forward the knowledge on, and action in the field of Governance and HIV/AIDS, thus potentially adding to the sustainability of the work and results. It can probably do so more in the area of electoral processes where it is doing truly leading edge work, than in the HIV/AIDS resource tracking arena with more global and regional players and where specialist expertise is needed even beyond the budget monitoring work in which it has the most experience (This has to

⁴⁷ Building sustainable democracy by building democratic institutions, educating citizens and advocating social justice.

⁴⁸ While this is IDASA-GAP’s own description of how they work, this is also the experience of the evaluator who has been observing IDASA’s work at a distance over the years.

some extent been demonstrated by the recent struggle to find the high level of specialised skills needed to lead this effort in IDASA-GAP).

6.4 Conclusion

132. It is too early to expect significant impact from the Project, but the engagement of a variety of stakeholders for introduction of the work and preliminary discussion of findings has helped to raise awareness among important government and civil society organisations and the media, and contributed to the technical capacity of the participants. Responses have been largely positive although some concerns about methodology and data integrity remain, as well sensitivity about how the findings will be used in the political arena. Overall the processes of engaging key stakeholders and, in only a few cases, reference groups were well designed and implemented given the challenges of mobilising influential role players, but could have been improved through more personal contact as well as more regular updates on progress. But the potential level of use and influence remains hard to predict. The sensitive nature of the topic lends itself to rhetoric which in the end might not mean that findings will indeed be used.
133. In spite of implementation challenges, opportunities for sustainability of the benefits from this Project have arisen and may continue to do so as the pace dissemination of results increase. Several design and implementation processes have been aimed at enhancing the chance of sustainability, mainly around the key areas of creating buy-in and ownership among influential stakeholders and transferring expertise to each of the participating countries. Despite implementation problems, there are signs that these processes may be bearing fruit. Only time will tell whether they have been effective, given the complex, less-than-enabling environment in which the Project is operating. The continued engagement of IDASA-GAP, which has been at the forefront especially in the work on electoral processes, will be an important factor in expanding the work and impact of the Project on the continent. It is very well positioned to continue with this task.

7. Lessons and Good Practice

Strictly speaking the following reflect lessons learnt during the Project as well as lessons inferred and informed by the experience of the evaluator.

The evaluator has a number of examples of apparent good practices in specific countries illustrating some of the lessons, but more detailed analysis is needed if they are to be held up to scrutiny. These lessons have therefore been constructed to serve as a guide to finding good practice. In order to enhance the value of this evaluation, we propose the following: before conclusion of the Project, when IDASA and partners are gathered together, the lessons below can be used by the implementers to compare approaches and establish the details of each potential good practice, written up as a separate document for future initiatives. In a well facilitated process participants are often best placed to analyse exactly what led (or did not lead) to the good practice, and under what conditions it can be transferable.

Ensuring Relevance

1. It helps to bring together diverse high level (political) role players to determine their priorities in a broad area of interest before structuring the topic and content of the research. Discussions at such forums help to ensure relevance and that policy-makers' information and evidence needs are taken into account, and enhances buy-in into project processes and results.

Building on the Body of Knowledge

2. Make sure a project design and implementation are informed by prior experiences, but make provision for the need to change when contexts are different. This will help to diminish risk.

Knowledge management for learning and expanding the body of knowledge on process

3. The nature of pioneering research as well as this organisational model for multi-country collaboration requires a strong emphasis on knowledge management right from the design phase across a range of aspects. One of the most critical is the need to document, analyse and compare both process and methodology decisions. This will not only give a true indication of the methodological rigour and hence credibility of the work, but also serve as important source of process research and lessons for the future. Systematic documentation could include for example good record keeping of who was invited to stakeholder or reference group meetings, who actually attended, their position in their organisation, the consistency of their attendance and key issues they raise. Analysis of this data can then serve as basis for a further engagement strategy as well as deeper understanding of the dynamics and need for contextualised approaches in the different countries. This has not been done in the Project and may mean the loss of significant experience.

A clear theory of change

4. A well articulated and schematically displayed theory of change that also shows assumptions and alternative pathways to impact will increase the logic and coherence of the design, and help with managing risk through the identification of gaps and potential threats. But the theory of change should also be flexible and not keep implementers to adhere to outdated strategies when change is well justified.

The need to understand political and socio-cultural contexts

5. A certain level of contextual analysis before or early on in the Project will assist in identifying threats and political minefields, diminishing risk and optimising efforts. This is of particular importance when identifying in-country partner organisations, 'points of power' and reference group or stakeholder members. It includes getting to know more about the nature of the relationship between the

government, agencies such as the NACs and ECs, NGOs, universities and civil society organisations. In-depth studies may not always be possible where literature is not available, so engagement with key individuals who can provide keen insights and analytical perspectives could assist in this task. It also emphasises the need to try to engage partners who understands the political and social contexts, and are connected to influential organisations. IDASA's criteria for identification of partners did take this into account.

In-country partner selection

6. In spite of good selection processes it will always be difficult to determine whether a partner will deliver. Engaging a reputable organisation rather than an individual will assist but may still not guarantee delivery. When organisations are contracted, any parallel commitments that might affect project delivery should be made clear and they should be held to agreements around the allocation of adequate expertise and time.
7. The selection of (technically and politically) credible research organisations is critical if results from sensitive projects are to be used by key stakeholders. Engaging organisations with already established networks and contacts with key government and civil society role players are particularly useful. But no hard and fast rule exists with respect to the most appropriate sector. Each case depends on the situation in the country in terms of the relationship between the government, donors, the academic sector and NGOs/civil society. Partner selection processes should be sensitive to these dynamics and even then success cannot be guaranteed as political motivations may affect the best efforts. The best strategy is to design and monitor the Project to deal in a timely manner with any threat around partner choice.

Partner capacities

8. Partner organisations should ideally already be well networked with key organisations and have a reputation of being non-partisan. They should also be able to field multi-disciplinary teams of researchers – mobilised either in-house or through outsourcing – so that the research burden does not fall only on one researcher, or on a team with a single disciplinary background.

Forming active knowledge networks or communities of practice

9. A second important aspect of knowledge management in this type of model is the formation of an active knowledge network or community of researchers who communicate, share, find solutions, learn and make progress together across countries (and with similar regional initiatives where these could add value) even after Project termination. Knowledge networks are known to add significant value especially to research efforts. In this Project network formation was envisaged but not established. The absence of electronic communication between participants as well as other experiences in Africa shows that this culture is often absent. The intent should be clear from the beginning that this is an integral part of a project and special efforts should be made to find innovative ways to establish an active network.

Synchronisation versus open 'policy windows'

10. There are many important benefits to multi-country collaboration such as cross-fertilisation of ideas, mutual learning and increased opportunities for comparative analysis and results. A disadvantage is that processes may need to be synchronised given key events such as training, workshops for discussion of findings and comparative report reviews. This may delay processes in some sites and cause missed opportunities for influencing national planning or review processes. Given the aim to produce research that can serve as evidence for policy decisions, such processes should be identified from the beginning, and plans made to maximise opportunities for use and influence.

Credible technical work and outputs

11. The relevance of the Project to national interests will not guarantee the use of its findings. The delicate nature of this type of work means that unless findings, conclusions and recommendations can be defended, are clearly understood and their dissemination managed sensitively, they could be misused or be seen as serving a specific agenda. Credible methodologies and implementing organisations are critical to success. This requires an emphasis on quality assurance processes and the careful selection of partner organisations.
12. In a multi-country project the chance of success is enhanced when coordination includes developing methodology and processes of engagement by drawing from earlier experience, being prescriptive in their implementation across countries to enable comparative as well as high quality data and analysis, and yet retaining a measure of flexibility given the differences in country contexts. However, changes should be well justified and documented and the implications considered.
13. Processes combining internal (reference groups, stakeholders, in-country peers appointed by partners) and external peer review processes (recognised external experts contracted by coordinating organisation) and if differences of opinion arise, dialogue between the two (not done in this project) provide the best opportunity for satisfactory research outputs. These core quality assurance mechanisms can be enhanced by establishing criteria to ensure engagement of the best available organisations and researchers, appropriate training, cross-country learning and using monitoring data as early warning signals (latter not implemented in this project).
14. Peer review processes need to be credible in an environment where different capacities make partner organisations dependent on technical assistance and support.

Minimising delays

15. It is difficult in any developing circumstances to ensure that a project is completed within given (usually ad hoc) timeframes. The quality of the management will determine the extent to which delays are justified or inevitable. Coordinating organisations should therefore aim to ensure that contracts and mechanisms are designed to keep implementers accountable for delivering results, reporting in time on delays and progress with finding solutions, and not over-committing their time to other projects.

Political credibility of the work and outputs

16. Who should be seen as the main 'owner' of the report to help ensure credibility and use by the most important stakeholders? Key actors should not be in a position where findings can be dismissed by casting doubt on the political or technical credibility of the authors and/or authoring organisations and this should be considered when decisions are made around the level of engagement and role of influential organisations. The decision is complicated by the tensions between the interests of government and civil society and requires thoughtful management. Context is again important. In one country the national HIV/AIDS council and government is comfortable with NGO partners leading and authoring as long as they are kept in the picture. In another the government has to be in the driving seat if there is to be any chance of uptake on their part (and this may affect the credibility of the report among civil society). In another case UNAIDS was noted as possible compromise in a complex situation. All these decisions require integrity and have to be handled with a great deal of care and experience.

Use and influence

17. This type of research can be used by diverse stakeholders, but requires their collaboration and buy-in through systematic engagement as early on as possible. Much depends on how the partner engages with key groupings and influential individuals. Stakeholders easily lose interest, especially if

information is not forthcoming on a fairly regular basis. The use of research findings is therefore about more than reference groups and eventual dissemination. It is about identifying influential organisations and individuals and drawing them in. Nearly every informant in this Project felt that they should have been engaged early on in a more strategic, ongoing and especially personal manner. This requires an ‘influencing’ rather than ‘communications’/‘dissemination’ strategy (unless an organisation does not wish to be seen to influence). Such strategies are well described in the literature and should inform the overall Project strategy. Among others they require carefully designed stakeholder maps – more than lists of organisations, instead designating power relationships and influence. Influencing strategies should be clearly integrated into the Project design and budget.

Engagement of influential individuals

18. The effective engagement of influential persons in the Project can facilitate data access, increase use of findings and ensure greater credibility of findings. Examples in the Project included drawing into a small reference group a key person on electoral reform processes at a time when such a process is imminent and getting the support of the main person who can facilitate access to MPs and especially portfolio committees. The opposite also happens, where a head of the national AMICAAL was left out of the stakeholder engagement processes in spite of having been a leading author of the national HIV/AIDS strategy in that country.

Identifying, inviting and engaging reference groups

19. Several reference groups did not operate as intended, missing good opportunities for technical input and political buy-in. Strategies that counter this include (1) Stakeholder meetings elect reference groups and hold them accountable; (2) Organisations should be asked or formally informed of selection of reference group representatives, so that it is clearly organisational and not individual representation; (3) Benefits and expectations should be clearly spelt out and formally addressed in a face-to-face meeting rather than only through a letter of invitation; (4) Partners should make a real effort to establish ongoing interaction. (5). In many countries in Africa a nominal payment for representatives on such a group will increase their viability. This should be considered in budget allocations.
20. Where official mechanisms for engaging a cross-section of stakeholders already exist, they can be effective reference groups that facilitate buy-in as long as they are credible and the integrity of the process and end products can be maintained.⁴⁹
21. The process of engaging stakeholders in reference groups should be managed in a manner that ensures organisational awareness and commitment, otherwise turnover in staff may mean loss of support from the organisation.
22. The way in which stakeholder or reference group meetings have been conducted may not have been the optimal format in all countries given the different stakeholder maps, the tendency to political

⁴⁹ Zambia provides an example of an effective approach, where the most critical body for ownership was regarded as the National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council (NAC) which reports to the CCM. The NAC has since taken full ownership of the initiative and is set to disseminate and use the results. HIV/AIDS strategies are part of the five year national development plan, so evidence for planning and resource allocations is welcomed. These efforts are also supported by one M&E plan, limiting fragmentation. The NAC was thus engaged early on, as well as other key players such as the main NGO network (ZNA) representing disparate civil society organisations, ActionAid, PLWHA organisations and the MP Forum. On the other hand the processes worked less well in Ethiopia, where HAPCO, the Ministry of Health and MOFED was engaged in meetings, but discussions were not held or formal agreement made in all cases. Informed people also changed with reorganisation of HAPCO and Ministry of Health. Institutional ownership in these critical bodies was therefore not created. The new initiative in this field of the Technical Working Group has much more ownership by government due to the manner in which it was established, with full HAPCO involvement right from the start.

grandstanding or rhetoric and lack of opportunity for in-depth engagement with methodology and the implications of findings. Several meetings were regarded by critical stakeholders as briefings rather than real opportunities to engage. As this might become counter-productive, alternative models may need to be investigated based on these experiences.

Training, exposure and in-country technical support

23. In-country technical support and training – including training of trainers to help prepare over time a ‘critical mass’ of people in key organisations and per country – are essential for successful institutionalisation and transfer of skills, and thus for sustainability. It is less effective to train one or two people outside the country. This should be seen as only a starting point.
24. Enough money should be provided in budget allocations to ensure adequate site visits, not only by experts for training and technical support, but also to enable some personal contact by the coordinating team for improved teamwork and management. Funding for cross-country sharing at least once, preferably twice per year also increases the potential for successful Project delivery.

Strategic approach to financial inputs

25. When dealing with countries of significantly different geographic distance and population size, the scope of the sampling strategies will differ and so should the financial allocation for data collection and analysis. ‘One size fits all’ will not work.

Sustainability

26. The sustainability of benefits from this type of project should be a key aspect for consideration already during the design stage, and should be a continuous target during implementation. Sustainability is most often linked to local buy-in and ownership, the transfer of appropriate expertise to well-placed persons and organisations, and an enabling environment.

8. Recommendations

8.1 For Project Improvement and Closure

To the Funding Agency

The main recommendation we can make is to allow IDASA-GAP and its partners to work out a good plan for the final stage and closure. Enriched by these experiences, they are eminently capable of doing so and IDASA-GAP has a clear idea of what should be done in line with the original intent. The following emphasise some of the main areas for attention.

1. Since many of the delays were not under control of the implementers, the extension of the Project completion date to September 2007 was justified. As Annex 6 indicates, additional time will enable important dissemination activities and network formation. Allow extension until December 2007 if IDASA-GAP requests this. IDASA-GAP is a performance-oriented unit with good management practices. Furthermore, much of the research has been experimental; and more time will significantly increase the chance to have an impact. (This at no cost to the current funder; even the allocation of additional well-justified resources will in all likelihood be justified given the relatively low cost of the Project to date.) But then a clear roadmap with deadlines should be established and IDASA-GAP and partners should be held accountable to follow it with rigour.
2. We support the IDASA-GAP manager's vision and insights and ability to move the Project forward to a good conclusion. We thus support the intention to use the last part of the Project and the already available additional funds to consolidate networks of persons and organisations interested, complete a useful website, and focus these early stages of the dissemination and advocacy work on the political leadership, key political role players and points of influence, civil society networks and the media, providing policy-makers with tools for evidence-based decisions and generally enabling those engaged in development to factor the findings into their work.

To IDASA-GAP and In-country Partners

3. Focus on ensuring that key role players cannot question the credibility of the work. Gaps and loopholes should be addressed or admitted and strategies proposed to resolve these in future. Flawed reports should not be released unless 'damage control' and 'way forward' strategies are in place.
4. Important decisions should by now have been taken around the identity and ownership of the reports, as this may have a significant influence on the credibility and acceptability of the findings. Whose logos will appear? Who should be seen as the authors of the reports, retaining their integrity yet enhancing their credibility and profile? This will need careful thought especially where reference groups of key stakeholders have been actively overseeing the work.
5. Give attention to knowledge management for a good exit in order to increase its credibility and value to the Project. IDASA-GAP and partners need to document and for those who follow make available useful details of methodological approaches, challenges and solutions; 'what works and what does not' and why, the role of context and good practice examples (with reference to the 'evaluation lessons').
6. Funding is not available for all needed dissemination processes. Explore partnerships government and others, especially where strong relationships have already been established. Joint dissemination between the two components may optimise resources and increase awareness of the importance of the interface between governance and HIV/AIDS.

7. With the available experience and some generic guidance it will now be easier for the partners to adapt the dissemination or 'influencing' strategies to suit each country's context. Where small reference groups are operating they can assist with the strategy. Otherwise get a few well placed organisations to work together to determine the best way to get the research results used.
8. In line with modern experiences with 'influencing strategies' draw new stakeholder maps to determine in each country the key points of influence for the dissemination effort. Bring donor/funding agency representatives as well as appropriate embassy staff into the process, even at this late stage. Embassy officials managing bilateral HIV/AIDS or Governance programmes in the Norwegian and Swedish embassies were generally not aware of the Project (and certainly not of any details) or of its potentially strategic importance to their work. In line with the decentralisation of government, determine how best in each case to ensure that regional councils and local authorities are included in dissemination processes and in local response. Focus on MPs, National Assemblies, Principal Secretaries (or equivalents), NACs, AMICAALL and similarly placed networked organisations is critical.
9. Translate research findings into language and formats suitable for the diverse audiences including policy briefs and laymen's briefings aimed at stimulating media (including the powerful medium of radio) and public opinion without raising rhetoric or sensationalism. With research reports credible enough to withstand broad scrutiny, efforts to stimulate a national debate around key issues will increase impact. Mechanisms to maintain over time a regular flow of information on these topics will be useful to maintain public interest. Maintaining an active website that becomes a reference for reports could assist.
10. There is some difference of opinion on whether a larger stakeholder meeting or a series of smaller meetings with stratified groups is needed. We propose that any major briefing (negatives: people might disengage, key persons might not attend and only one representative per organisation; positives: more media attention and opportunity for cross-sector discussion) should be followed by small group meetings for those with common interests, in order to get tailor-made discussion of the implications of findings, recommendations and possible solutions. (This has already been requested, among others by political party representatives and MPs). IDASA-GAP's overall expertise plus key role players' insights into context could be brought to bear to find solutions and find strategic ways forward.
11. Devise strategies to make more than one representative per key organisation aware of the findings. Small group meetings provide opportunities to draw more people into discussions on findings and their significance.
12. Most importantly, for the sake of sustainability of positive results or benefits:
 - Find ways to get those with credible new resource (especially) tracking expertise and reliable performance engaged in national, regional and global networks and initiatives.
 - Include in final discussions ways of integrating NASA with PER and other related efforts, identify gaps and suggest ways forward.
 - Tie up with other similar initiatives (information and representation from regional and global networks) to give more power to the dissemination effort.
 - Consolidate a network of credible electoral processes specialist researchers who can assist IDASA in further work in the area on the continent. Capitalise on those organisations who want to remain involved in these areas – several have expressed their interest to do so.
 - Interrogate whether there were unintended results of the Project and if so, determine the implications for sustainability.

8.2 In the Long Term

Our recommendations beyond Project closure are simple, and based on the premise that the experience of IDASA and its partners in this Project should be brought to bear on long-term strategies for further work in this field.

1. Continue supporting work on the niche theme of the interface between governance and HIV/AIDS – even if specific foci and priorities change with perceived need and demand. Work in this theme produces theoretical and practical knowledge on issues that are bound to grow in importance and demand. Sida and other funders as well as implementers can be pioneers and with current experience can remain at the forefront of work in the area. The work is of interest to many and can make a real difference if used. This does not automatically mean success, since the enabling environment is complex. But it is likely to be worth the investment given the opportunity for innovative and useful work.
2. There is a real need to take this work to the regional level, but it would be a mistake to focus all efforts there and to make it the pivot for implementation. A two-pronged, even three-pronged approach should be followed. The national level – in a multi-country model – should remain the main focus for strategy and implementation, but with greater engagement and knowledge sharing with influential organisations at the regional level (organs of SADC, COMESA, NEPAD, AU – to be determined through careful mapping of relevant and influential individuals and organisations in this field, and also to some extent at global level) and an emphasis on understanding and answering their demand for knowledge and evidence – including translating the current state of knowledge in a format and process useful to them. Innovative networking models of engagement should be investigated. The situation with respect to the sub-regional/local levels is less clear and should be investigated. This has received little attention during the Project and the implications of this are not clear at this stage.
3. Synthesise the current state of knowledge and identify key gaps for a solid body of knowledge that can lead to dynamic policy and strategy interventions. Among others pay attention to socio-cultural aspects and how they are currently influencing relevant perceptions and processes, in line with the work promoted by the Senegal team. This is bound to be of major importance if real, long-term, sustainable solutions are to be found.
4. Find influential champions at national and regional level who can promote the use of work on this theme or sub-themes to other influential persons and organisations.
5. Focus further research work on finding solutions to the problems and challenges of specific stakeholder groups, not only on findings and general recommendations.
6. If IDASA is not to remain engaged in an expansion of work, mechanisms should be developed to ensure that their excellent expertise and experience in this area is not lost.
7. Link all future efforts more effectively and as a priority to other existing networks and projects for mutual learning and fast expansion of both the knowledge base and contextualised solutions. This will entail a specific way of working that includes a significant focus on sound knowledge management strategies. Among others ensure systematic documentation of process challenges and solutions, and support the work with a website and databases that can be a true resource on the continent and globally.

Annex 1 Terms of Reference

Mid-Term Review of Study: “Measuring the impact of HIV/AIDS on electoral processes and national budgets in Africa”

1. Introduction

Sub-Saharan Africa continues to bear the brunt of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, with the epicenter of the pandemic located in southern Africa (UNAIDS 2006). But, while the stock of knowledge on the socio-economic impacts of HIV & AIDS has grown, much less is known about the challenges to democratic governance.

To contribute towards development of the necessary evidence base, and of appropriate policy and planning responses, the Swedish-Norwegian Regional HIV and AIDS Team for Africa (the Team) signed an agreement with the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa)⁵⁰ in December 2004. The agreement is for 2½ years support (December 2004–June 2007) to the Governance, and AIDS Budget units of Idasa’s Governance and AIDS Programme (Idasa-GAP).

The support to Idasa-GAP is for implementation of a multi-country comparative study entitled “Measuring the impact of HIV/AIDS on electoral processes and national budgets in Africa”. Working with collaborating research institutions in selected countries in southern Africa, the project has two components: a) investigation of the impact of HIV&AIDS on democratic governance (operationalized as electoral systems, voter participation, elected representatives, and electoral management bodies), and b) examination of the process of HIV&AIDS budgeting.

The agreement with Idasa requires a Mid-Term Review of the project in 2006: Due to delays occasioned by a change in staff within the Team, the review will only be carried out over the first quarter of 2007 (see Section 8). This document presents the Terms of Reference for said review.

2. Project Background

The aim of the project is to contribute towards improved national policies, programme planning, and budgeting for mitigation of the impacts of HIV and AIDS morbidity and mortality.

Governance Component

Objectives – On the basis of document reviews, structured interviews, public opinion survey data, and focus group discussions carried out in six (6) countries (Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania, Senegal, Namibia, Botswana) this aspect of the study seeks to:

- a) Establish the impact of the pandemic on electoral systems, voter participation, elected representatives, and electoral management bodies.
- b) Advocate and lobby for appropriate changes in policy and planning processes
- c) Identify the structural and other inherent weaknesses in the national response to HIV/AIDS
- d) Engender informed policy dialogue and public awareness of the broader implications of the pandemic and governmental responsibilities in addressing) the pandemic

⁵⁰ The Institute for Democracy in South Africa is an independent public interest organization committed to promoting a sustainable democracy in South Africa and elsewhere, by building democratic institutions, educating citizens and advocating social justice

- e) Contribute to the on-going debate about appropriate electoral systems in the context of HIV/AIDS (e.g. how it affects the budget, representation and diversity)
- f) Stimulate more urgent actions and increased allocations to facilitate treatment, care and support programmes
- g) Encourage greater participation of PLWHAS in governance processes

Expected Outputs

- Country-specific research reports
- Popular short versions of each country report
- Summarised comparative report on findings from all participating countries
- Media articles
- Conference presentations
- Journal articles
- Strategic training workshops
- Research network of Aids and governance civil society organizations in Africa established
- Website

Expected Outcomes

- Research outputs utilized in policy processes
- Systems and structures established to improve citizen participation in electoral processes
- Efficient and effective citizen and voter registration systems developed
- Greater involvement of PLWAs in electoral processes

HIV/AIDS Budgeting Component

Objectives – This aspect of the study is being carried out in Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania, South Africa, Ethiopia, and Kenya. On the basis of budget documents and provincial/ departmental records of expenditure, stakeholder meetings, reference groups, interviews with key persons and agencies, and self-administered questionnaires, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Track HIV/AIDS resources and analyse the budget from an HIV/AIDS perspective.
2. Train civil society and research organizations in the participating African countries to undertake HIV/AIDS budget analysis.
3. Work with NGO research partners to develop a common framework for tracking HIV/AIDS targeted expenditure in the country budget, possibly utilising a right-based framework.
4. Analyse the HIV/AIDS budget outputs in terms of efficiency, equity, and intended achievements.
5. Make recommendations to national-level policy makers on the effectiveness and efficiency of budgeting and funding mechanisms for government's response to HIV/AIDS.
6. Develop training materials for budget analysis and a training-the-trainers programme.
7. Establish an African regional network of NGOs involved in HIV/AIDS budget analysis, to enable the sharing of information on research methodologies, other related projects, and distribution of findings.

8. Improve public knowledge of their government's fiscal obligations and responses with regard to HIV/AIDS.

Expected Outputs

- Country reports
- Research network of civil society organizations in Africa engaged in resource-tracking for HIV/AIDS
- Training package
- Media articles
- Training workshops and seminars
- Website

Expected Outcomes

- Research outputs utilized in policy processes

3. Purpose of the Mid-term Review

The review is being carried in order to:

- Improve performance during implementation, and
- Inform future planning for regional level programming.

4. Stakeholders

The review stakeholders are listed in Table 1. The stakeholders may also be categorized as either primary (beneficiaries), or secondary (interest groups), as follows:

Primary Stakeholders – Swedish-Norwegian Regional HIV&AIDS Team for Africa, Lusaka (the Contract holder)
– Swedish/Norwegian embassies in the study countries
– Idasa

Secondary Stakeholders – Idasa's In-country Research Partners
– Project's In-country Reference Groups/Stakeholders

The results of the review are aimed at the primary stakeholders. The primary stakeholders will use the information internally and, in the case of the Team and Idasa, report of the review will provide one of the bases for consultations and decision-making on future collaboration. On the other hand, the consultant is expected to meet and interview/consult the secondary stakeholders, as well as the relevant Swedish/Norwegian embassies.

5. Scope of the Review

The primary focus of the review is on current performance. At the same time, the review process should also include some examination of the possibilities for future regional-level collaboration between Idasa-Gap and the Team:

5.1 Performance Review

This aspect of the Mid-Term Review will:

- Evaluate progress in implementation to date, against the project objectives, expected outputs, and expected outcomes) and workplan. Specific questions to be addressed will include:
 - Is the goal hierarchy (objectives, expected outputs, and expected outcomes) adequately specified?
 - Should the objectives be adjusted in any way?
 - What outputs/outcomes have actually been achieved?
 - What is the quality of the identified outputs/outcomes?
 - What is/was the level of participation/involvement of secondary stakeholders in design and implementation?
 - Was the timeframe for project completion realistic? Idasa has recently requested a no-cost extension to September 2007. Will this period of extension be sufficient to ensure project completion?
- Analyze the organizational arrangements with respect to the effectiveness and efficiency of the project. Specific questions to be addressed will include:
 - What is the quality of the in-country research partners?
 - Idasa-Gap has recently undergone organizational/staffing changes. How is/will this affect project effectiveness?
- Provide recommendations to improve performance

5.2 Future Scenarios on Collaboration

This aspect of the Mid-Term Review will:

- Explore possibilities for future collaboration between the Team and Idasa-Gap, on a regional (as opposed to multi-country) programme. Specific areas of inquiry can include:
 - The nature of the links (if any) that exist between the project/Idasa-Gap and regional advocacy/lobbying organizations on governance?
 - The nature of the links (if any) exist between the project/Idasa-Gap and regional Intergovernmental Organizations? (e.g. SADC, EAC, ECOWAS, AU)
 - The links nature of the links (if any) between the project/Idasa-Gap and global governance-related processes/organizations?
- Provide recommendations on future regional-level programming

6. Methodology

The review will be based upon a review of relevant documentation (see Annex 1), interviews and consultations with relevant stakeholders, particularly those in-country.

In-country research partners will, on the basis of agreement between the Consultant and Idasa, be responsible for setting up the relevant in-country meetings stakeholders and key informants. To reduce the costs of travel, the discussions with Idasa will occur first in South Africa. The consultant's visit to Zambia should then be timed to occur as early during the Country Visits phase as possible, to facilitate a briefing by the Team in Lusaka. All deliverables will be submitted to the Team in Lusaka.

7. Deliverables

The consultant will deliver three (3) products, including:

1. First Draft of the Report of the Review
2. Final Draft of the Report of the Review
3. Presentation of Final Report of the Report

The final report of the review should be in Times Roman, font size 12, and not be more than 35 pages in length. The report should be structured along the following lines:

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction
3. The project and its development context
4. Findings and Conclusions
5. Recommendations on Performance
6. Lessons Learned and Recommendations on Future Programming
7. Annexes

8. Consultant's Experience and Technical Competence

The consultant should have a strong background in project evaluation, knowledge of institutional and capacity development, and have done some work in the area of HIV and AIDS. Extensive work experience in sub-Saharan Africa is also a requirement.

9. Timeframe

The planned timeframe for the review is as follows:

Table 2 Mid-Term Review of Idasa GAP – Sida HIV&AIDS, Governance, and Budgetin Project: Timeframe

Activity	Responsibility	Schedule
Idasa Orientation and Document review	Idasa/K Chirambo	Week 4
Country Visits + Visit to the Team (Lusaka)	Consultant	Weeks 5–9
Submission of First Draft Report	Consultant	20 Mar'07
Presentation on First Draft Report	Consultant	31 Mar'07
Comments on First Draft Report delivered	Team/M Tawanda	10 April'07
Submission of Final Report	Consultant	17 April'07

Table 2 “Measuring impact electoral processes and HIV and AIDS Budgeting”: Stakeholder Map

HIV and AIDS budgeting		Governance
Reference groups/stakeholders		
Drawn from Parliament, NGOs in HIV/AIDS, National AIDS Councils, Government reps., Political parties, Media, Civic groups		Drawn from Electoral Commissions, Parliament, NGOs in HIV/ AIDS, National AIDS Councils, Government reps, Political parties, Media, Civic groups drawn from
In-country research partners		
Botswana		Southern African Centre for Policy Dialogue and Development (SACPODD)
Ethiopia	Institute for Development Research (IDR), Addis Ababa University Poverty Action Network Ethiopia (PANE) HIV/AIDS Prevention Control Programme (HAPCO), Ministry of Health Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED), ActionAid	
Kenya	Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR) Department of Economics, University of Nairobi Kenya Treatment Access Movement (KTAM), Ministry of Finance (MoF) National AIDS Control Council (NACC)	
Malawi	Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN), Action Aid International National AIDS Commission, UNAIDS	Centre for Social Research CSR (University of Malawi)
Namibia		Namibia Institute for Democracy (NID)
Senegal		Centre for Environmental Studies, University of Cheikh Anta Diopp
Tanzania	Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF), Youth Action Volunteers Tanzanian Commission for AIDS (TACAIDS), Zanzibar AIDS Commission (ZAC), Ministry of Finance (MoF)	Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF)
Zambia	Institute for Economic and Social Research (INESOR), University of Zambia Catholic Center for Justice, Development and Peace (CCJDP) Zambian National AIDS Council (NAC)	Institute for Economic and Social Research (INESOR), University of Zambia Foundation for Democratic Processes
Swedish-Norwegian Regional HIV and AIDS Team for Africa, Swedish/Norwegian Embassies in Study Countries, IDASA		

Annex 2: The Evaluation Matrix

Performance Area	Key Issue	Key Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Information Sources
Strategy and direction	Relevance of the Project	1. Is it worthwhile conducting this work at this time in each of the participating countries and in the region overall?	1.1 To what extent has the Project been, and continues to be, in line with the needs and challenges faced by each of the participating countries? 1.2 To what extent was the Project design, and in particular the objectives and expected outcomes, informed by the relevant context in each country, including the policies and initiatives already under way? 1.3 Is this a timely intervention? Are the objectives and expected outcomes / impact right for each country and region at this time? 1.4 Has the Project been responsive to subsequent changes in context (if any) that might affect its relevance?	
	Quality of the design	2. Is the project design and strategy leading to a sound intervention?	2.1 Is the Project design logic, coherent and without critical gaps that could affect its chances of success? 2.2 Have Project assumptions been clearly formulated to help manage risk? Have risk factors been adequately taken into account in the design? 2.3 Has the Project design provided for innovations that may help better ensure that the objectives are achieved?	
Management and processes	Progress	3. To what extent have Project progress been in line with expectations?	3.1 Is the Project on track towards meeting its objectives within the given timeframe? 3.2 What internal and external factors have had a significant influence on progress? How well did the Project deal with these? 3.3 Does the Project have internal processes enabling it to track progress and performance, to learn and make timely adjustments if needed?	
	Implementation	4. What works? What does not and why?	4.1 Have management styles and systems been conducive to effective implementation? 4.2 How well has risk been managed? 4.3 Is the institutional model conducive to effective and efficient Project implementation? 4.4 Were the criteria for partner selection appropriate and applied? 4.5 Have the partner capacities been appropriate for the Project? 4.6 Are Project approaches and processes conducive to ownership of the results by a variety of stakeholders?	

Performance Area	Key Issue	Key Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions	Information Sources
Outputs	Quality assurance	5. How well have processes been managed to ensure quality work and credible products?	5.1 To what extent have appropriate quality assurance mechanisms been established? 5.2 Have they been implemented? 5.3 Have the quality assurance mechanisms been shown to be conducive to high quality research and credible findings and reports?	
	Use of results	6. To what extent has the work been 'picked up' by others?	6.1 To what extent has the Project design promoted the use of the work? 6.2 To what extent has the Project implementation processes promoted the use of the work? 6.3 Are there signs that results have been taken up in national plans or by key stakeholders? Are there examples of use of the research by stakeholders?	
	Intended and unintended results and consequences	7. Has the work directly or indirectly contributed to changes in behaviour, knowledge, policies, capacities or practices?	7.1 What has the Project achieved to date? What changes has it made? 7.2 Has this been in line with expectations? 7.3 Have there been any unintended consequences from the work?	
Outcomes and impact	Sustainability	8. How can positive results be sustained over time?	8.1 What does sustainability mean in the context of this Project? 8.2 Did the way in which the Project was executed increase the potential for sustainability? Is an exit strategy in place? 8.3 Are plans and processes in place to sustain positive results and benefits over time after Project termination? 8.4 Are circumstances and conditions such that they improve the chance of sustainability of positive results and benefits?	
	Implications for the future	9. What can be done to build on the lessons and results of the Project in the region?	9.1 What can be done in a next phase to build effectively on the lessons and experiences of this Project? 9.2 To what extent should synergies between relevant initiatives in the participating countries and region be improved? How can harmonisation be encouraged? 9.3 To what extent should the Project be expanded at a regional rather than multi-country level? 9.4 What should IDASA's role be, if any, in a future initiative?	

Annex 3: Key Informants

PROGRAMME FOCUS					
Dr Kondwani Chirambo	Manager, Governance and AIDS Programme (GAP)	IDASA	Pretoria	South Africa	
Mr Rabelani Daswa	Researcher / Trainer, AIDS Budget Unit, GAP	IDASA	Pretoria	South Africa	
Ms Bodli Day	Programme Officer: HIV/AIDS	Royal Norwegian Embassy	Dar es Salaam	Tanzania	
Mr Ketil Eik	First Secretary	Royal Norwegian Embassy	Addis Ababa	Ethiopia	
Dr Paul Graham	Executive Director	IDASA	Pretoria	South Africa	
Dr Theresa Guthrie	Director	Centre for Economic Governance and AIDS in Africa	Cape Town	South Africa	
Ms Lena Hasle	First Secretary: Political Governance	Royal Norwegian Embassy	Lusaka	Zambia	
Ms Marietje Myburgh	Communications Specialist, GAP	IDASA	Pretoria	South Africa	
Ms Vasanthie Naicker	Administrator, GAP	IDASA	Pretoria	South Africa	
Ms Camilla Redner	Programme Officer: Democracy and Human Rights	Embassy of Sweden	Nairobi	Kenya	
Dr Michael Tawanda	Regional Advisor	Swedish/Norwegian Regional HIV/AIDS Team for Africa	Lusaka	Zambia	
Ms Vibeke Trålim	First Secretary	Royal Norwegian Embassy	Lilongwe	Malawi	

COMPONENT FOCUS: RESOURCE TRACKING					
Ethiopia					
Mr Abraham Zerihum	Programme Assistant	UNAIDS		Addis Ababa	
Dr Gebret Alemu	n/a	Institute of Development Research (IDR), University of Addis Ababa		Addis Ababa	
Mr Yimer Hassen Ali	Finance Manager	HAPCO		Addis Ababa	
Mr Nigussie T Aredo	M&E Team Leader, Inspection Department	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED), Government of Ethiopia		Addis Ababa	
Mr Eshetu Bekele	Executive Director	Poverty Action Network of Civil Society in Ethiopia (PANE)		Addis Ababa	
Ms Tiruye Damtew	Projects M&E Team Leader	HAPCO		Addis Ababa	
Mr Hussien Faris	Director of Planning and Programmes	HAPCO		Addis Ababa	
Ms Rahel Gizaw	Advocacy Officer	ActionAid Ethiopia		Addis Ababa	

Workie Mitiku	Consultant and Member	Technical Working Group, Resource Tracking	Addis Ababa
Mr Merkuria Wordofa	Head: Information, M&E Department	HAPCO	Addis Ababa
Kenya			
Dr Killingo m Badrin	Chief Executive	Meru Hospice	Nairobi
Mr Patrick Muriithi Kaburi	M&E Coordination Specialist	National AIDS Control Council (NACC), Office of the President	Nairobi
Ms Anne Kamau	Economist, External Resources Department	Ministry of Finance, Government of Kenya	Nairobi
Mr Julius Kamau	Board Member	Kenya Treatment Access Movement (KETAM) Women Fighting AIDS in Kenya (WOFAK)	Nairobi
Mr Peter Kinuthia	Economist / Financing Strategy	National AIDS Control Council (NACC), Office of the President	Nairobi
Mr Urbanus M Kikoko	Lecturer and Consultant	School of Economics, University of Nairobi	Nairobi
Mr James Korir	Lecturer	Department of Economics, Kenyatta University	Nairobi
Mr Thomas Maina	n/a	Ministry of Health, Government of Kenya	Nairobi
Mr Meshack Ndolo	n/a	Ministry of Planning and National Development, Government of Kenya	Nairobi
Dr Odundo	n/a	School of Education, University of Nairobi	Nairobi
Prof Enos Njeru	n/a	Department of Sociology, University of Nairobi	Nairobi
Mr Leonard Okello	International Head, HIV&AIDS Programmes	ActionAid International	Nairobi
Ms Dorothy Onyango	Executive Director	Women Fighting AIDS in Kenya (WOFAK)	Nairobi
Dr Chris Ouma	PMTCT Programme Officer	UNICEF Kenya	Nairobi
Mr Wambugu	n/a	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Kenya	Nairobi
Malawi			
Mr Mavuto Bamusi	Deputy National Coordinator	Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN)	Lilongwe
Ms Juliet Chilwe	Researcher	Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN)	Lilongwe
Dr David Chitete	M&E Advisor	UNAIDS	Lilongwe
Mr Davie Kalomba	n/a	National AIDS Commission	Lilongwe
Mr Edward Kataika	Deputy Director of Health Planning Services	Ministry of Health, Government of Malawi	Lilongwe
Mr Andrew Kumbatira	Executive Director	Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN)	Lilongwe
Ms Martha Kwathaine	National Coordinator	Malawi Health Equity Network (MHEN)	Lilongwe

Mr Ephraim Mzengo	n/a	ISE	Lilongwe
Tanzania			
Dr PS Bujari	Executive Director	Human Development Trust (HDT)	Dar es Salaam
Dr Flora Kessy	Senior Research Fellow	Economic and Research Foundation (ESRF)	Dar es Salaam
Dr Irenei Kiria	Executive Director	Youth Action Volunteers (YAV)	Dar es Salaam
Mr Sylvester Mabumba	CSPD Coordinator	Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, Government of Zanzibar	Zanzibar
Ms Mariam Masasi	Programme Officer - Global Fund	ActionAid International, Tanzania	Dar es Salaam
Dr Oswald Mashindao	Senior Research Fellow	Economic and Research Foundation (ESRF)	Dar es Salaam
Ms Nuru R Mbarouk	Head: Advocacy & IEC	Zanzibar AIDS Commission (ZAC)	Zanzibar
Dr Robert Mhamba	Lecturer	Institute for Development Studies, University of Dar es Salaam	Dar es Salaam
Mr Salum Mussa	Member	Zanzibar Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS (ZAPHA+)	Zanzibar
Mr Sultan Othman	Chief Accountant	Zanzibar AIDS Commission (ZAC)	Zanzibar
Zambia			
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Mr Jolly Kamwanga	n/a	Institute of Economics and Social Research (INESOR)	Lusaka
Mr Emmanuel Mali	Programme Officer	Catholic Commission for Justice, Peace and Development	Lusaka
Ms Chisimba Mulambia	Research Assistant	Institute for Economics and Social Research (INESOR)	Lusaka

COMPONENT FOCUS: ELECTORAL PROCESSES

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Dr Charles Chilimampunga	Director	Centre for Social Research (CSR), University of Malawi	Zomba
Mr Henry Chingalpe	Lecturer	Chancellor College of Political and Administrative Studies, University of Malawi	Zomba
Mr Derek Lakudzala	NEC Member	Petra	Blantyre
Dr-Alistair Munthali	Deputy Director	Centre for Social Research (CSR), University of Malawi	Zomba

Ms Thandie Nkivole	Head	Electoral Commission	Blantyre
Dr Mary Shawa	Secretary for Nutrition, HIV & AIDS	Department of Nutrition, HIV & AIDS, Office of the President, Government of Malawi	Lilongwe
Mr Chris Walker	NEC Member	PPM Party	Blantyre
Namibia			
Prof Andre du Pisani	Dept. of Political & Administrative Studies	University of Namibia	Windhoek
Mr Graham Hopwood	Consultant	Namibia Institute for Democracy (NID)	Windhoek
Dr Justine Hunter	Project Manager: Public Dialogue Centre	Namibia Institute for Democracy (NID)	Windhoek
Mr Philemon Kanime	Director of Elections; CEO	Electoral Commission of Namibia	Windhoek
Ms Doris Kellner	Project Manager: Civic Education Programme	Namibia Institute for Democracy (NID)	Windhoek
Mr Theunis Keulder	Executive Director	Namibia Institute for Democracy (NID)	Windhoek
Mr David Lush	Manager: HIV AIDS Programme	IBIS	Windhoek
Ms Hilda Nakakuwa	Public Relations Officer	Electoral Commission of Namibia	Windhoek
Senegal			
Prof Cheikh Niang	Regional Coordinator West Africa, SAHARA	Institute of Environmental Sciences, University of Cheikh Anta Diop	Dakar
Ms Marie Ndiaye	Statistician	Directorate of Statistics	Dakar
M Mamadou Diop	Sociologist	Institute of Environmental Sciences, University of Cheikh Anta Diop	Dakar
Dr Ndella Diakhaté	Epidemiologist	Teaching Hospital of Fann	Dakar
Ms Mame Diarra Seck	Vice-Coordinator	National Network of PLWHA (RNP+)	Dakar
Ms Marie Ange Guéye	Consultant	Civil Society (Private sector)	Dakar
Ms Ndock Diop	Research Assistant	SAHARA Programme	Dakar
Tanzania			
Prof Amon Chaligha	Commissioner	Department of Political Science, University of Dar es Salaam Tanzania Electoral Commission	Dar es Salaam
Ms Joan Chamungu	Chairperson, Commissioner	Tanzania Network of Women Living with HIV/AIDS; TACAIDS	Dar es Salaam
Mr Ibrahim Mzee Ibrahim	Clerk	House of Representatives of Zanzibar	Zanzibar
Dr Flora Kessy	Senior Research Fellow	Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF)	Dar es Salaam

Prof Ernest Mallya	Professor	Department of Political Science / Research and Education for Democracy (REDET), University of Dar es Salaam	Dar es Salaam
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Mr Saleh Yusuf Mnemo	Public Relations and Information Officer	Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC)	Zanzibar
Ms Gladness Munuo	Member / Journalist	Tanzania Media Women Association (TAMWA)	Dar es Salaam
Mr Ali Vuai	Act. Executive Director	Zanzibar National Chamber of Commerce (ZNCCOA)	Zanzibar
Zambia			
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Hon Mike Mulongoti - MP	Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Zambia	Lusaka
Mr Kenneth Mwansa	National Programme Coordinator	Alliance of Mayors and Municipal Leaders Initiative for Community Action on AIDS at the Local Level (AMICALL)	Lusaka
Ms Malala Mwendela	Executive Director	Zambia AIDS Research and Advocacy Network (ZARAN)	Lusaka
Mr Elijah Rubvuta	Executive Director	Foundation for Democratic Process (FODEP)	Lusaka
Dr Alex Simwanza	Director of Programmes	National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council	Lusaka

n/a = not available upon report completion

Annex 4 References

The literature review for this evaluation included a large number of documents in the following categories, obtained per partner country for each of the two projects.

1. List of reference group members.
2. Reference group meeting minutes.
3. List of stakeholder meeting invitees and participants.
4. Stakeholder meeting reports.
5. Preliminary Research Reports: Impact of HIV/AIDS on electoral processes.
6. Preliminary Research Reports: Impact of HIV/AIDS on national budgets.
7. Detailed work plans.
8. Examples of email and other correspondence between partners and with stakeholders
9. Examples of data capture using NASA and other software programmes.
10. Project budget and expenditure records.
11. Presentations made by IDASA staff at various international forums.
12. Newspaper and magazine articles, press clippings.

Note that not all documents could be obtained from all participating countries in spite of repeated requests for information. On certain topics this hampered cross-country comparison and tabulation of data:

In addition, the following publications served as references for the study:

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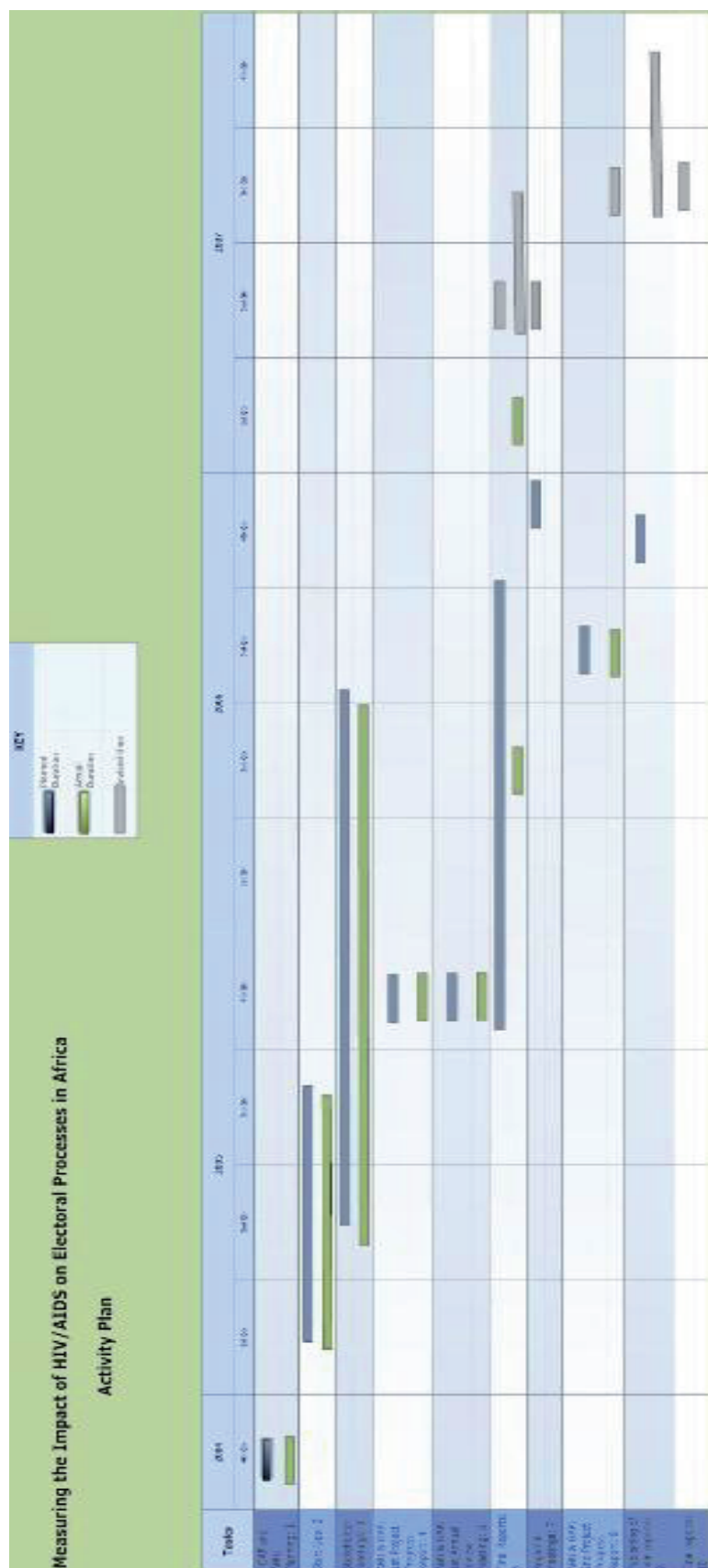
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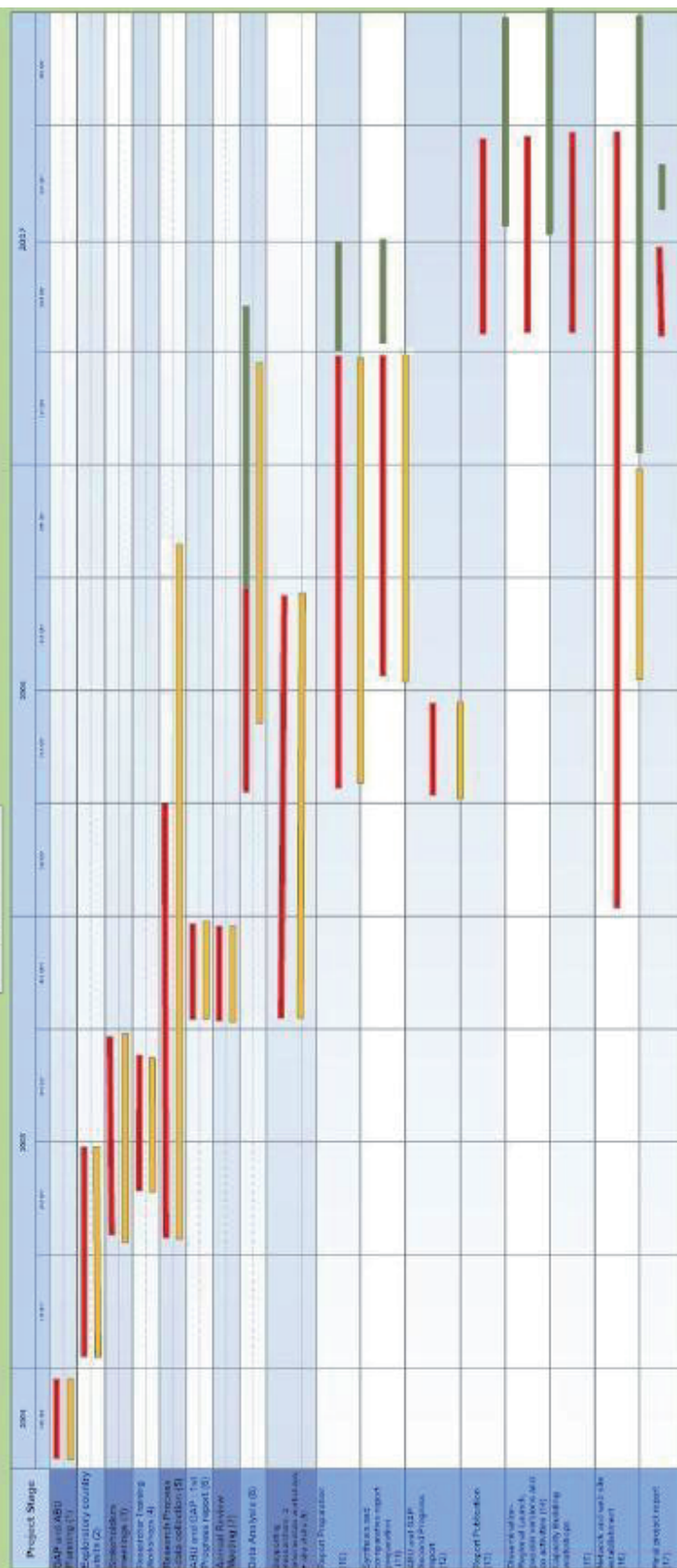
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Annex 5: Planned, Actual and Proposed Timelines



Age Group	Percentage
21-30 years	35%
31-40 years	25%
41-50 years	20%
51-60 years	15%
61+ years	5%



Annex 6 Quick Reference – List of Findings

Performance Area 1: Strategy and Direction

1. The relevance of both components in this Project is confirmed by the keen interest of strategically placed national and regional stakeholders in the work, the urgent need to expand understanding of the interface between governance and HIV/AIDS in view of the acknowledged impact of both these areas on development in Africa, and the dearth of work in the area, especially in the electoral processes component which is seen as pioneering the field (together with its predecessor).
2. Both components are timely efforts, given the increasing awareness of the destructive effects of HIV/AIDS on national systems in Africa as well as the current emphasis on good governance, transparency, accountability, and the effective and harmonised use of resources. But delays and the need to synchronise activities and outputs across countries have meant that opportunities for influencing national plans and reforms, and reporting to UNGASS have been missed.
3. The detailed and coherent Project design, informed by lessons from ‘pilot’ experiences, guided implementation throughout the Project lifetime and is an important reason that with some extended time the Project may well be able to deliver the expected results.
4. Key aspects strengthening the design include the balanced focus on the interests of both government and civil society; the emphasis on in-country capacity building and ownership/institutionalisation for sustainability, where possible; the undertaking to form knowledge networks within each country, between countries and with other regional and global initiatives; institutional structures and methodologies facilitating cross-country comparison while allowing flexibility for essential contextualisation; the formal engagement of organisations from the beginning to ensure capacity building, ownership and accountability; and the intent to align this with other ongoing complementary efforts.
5. While the overall the design logic makes coherent sense, its underlying theory of change was not fully explored. Assumptions and alternative pathways were not systematically interrogated to identify potential threats and gaps, exposing the Project to greater risk. This is clearly reflected in the inadequate risk assessment in the original proposal.
6. Other design shortcomings include the blanket financial allocations per country; insufficiently articulated knowledge management and communications strategies and a greater emphasis on how the expressed articulation of linkages between HIV/AIDS, gender, poverty and participation would play out in the electoral processes component.
7. The monitoring system contains several vague formulations of anticipated outcomes and indicators⁵¹, insufficiently formulated ‘indicators’ or ‘indicators of achievement’ which, as mostly process indicators, may be misleading (unless only tracking implementation progress)⁵². Since a number of the expected impacts will show only over time after termination of the Project, the indicators will be tracked somewhat prematurely. There is also no indication that the monitoring system is being used by the country implementers for other than compliance – and then even not effectively. However the potential negative effects of an inadequate monitoring system were somewhat offset by IDASA’s experience and guidance during implementation.

⁵¹ For example “Dissemination and use of training package”.

⁵² For example “number of workshops held” does not necessarily indicate that they were effective, only progress with implementation. Planned pre and post testing might have assisted in understanding the extent to which they were providing the right knowledge.

8. Although these design aspects weakened implementation somewhat, the preparation of the in-country teams as well as the fairly prescriptive implementation approach by IDASA reduced their potential negative impact.

Performance Area 2: Management and Processes

9. In spite of delayed schedules implementation has been fairly consistent with the Project design, mainly due to its consistent use to guide implementation; partners' respect for IDASA-GAP's management style and efficiency; the multi-disciplinary research expertise of teams fielded by the partner organisations, the processes for buy-in (even though unevenly applied) and the special efforts by partner organisations to engage high level and strategically well placed stakeholders from diverse sectors to participate in key parts of the Project.
10. Predictable and unpredictable delays (more severe in the resource tracking component) and the need for synchronisation of processes across countries slowed down delivery in both components by around six months. Main contributing factors included uneven partner capacities, IDASA-GAP insistence on quality products, predictable yet challenging difficulties with data gathering and analysis, the insufficient allocation of financial resources for satisfactory sampling strategies and lack of management towards on-time delivery by several of the in-country partners.
11. The need for synchronised action at key points during implementation caused delays across the board, contributing to waning interest among stakeholders in most countries during long periods of inactivity and lack of information on progress. This had a negative but not completely destructive effect on the interest in the results.
12. The resource tracking component was particularly vulnerable due to the departure of key ABU staff. Yet it was clear that a good number of in-country partners in this component were not adequately committed to on-time project delivery, primarily due to competing priorities and inadequate preparation for time-consuming data collection.
13. Not all partners were laid-back or negligent in their communication and reporting. Around half performed well and had clear commitment to the task, in several cases even cross-subsidising work from other projects to ensure adequate end results.
14. Given the institutional model's dependence on an active knowledge network, the lack of communication, consistent reporting and networking diminished the effectiveness of the whole effort. The inadequate efforts on all sides to keep systematic records and process documentation further detracted from the potential of this Project as an example of good practice.
15. Overall IDASA-GAP's management approaches and skills were above average, yet they struggled to exert the necessary pressure for partners to be accountable for timely delivery and response and failed to ensure proper and systematically organised process documentation that could give a better sense of the quality of activities, and inform future initiatives.
16. The partners selected by IDASA-ABU and GAP were well accepted by diverse stakeholders, although in a small number of cases their capacities as well as political and technical credibility were questioned by stakeholders. A more extensive study would be needed to show the motivation behind these objections. Difficulties may still arise upon presentation of final findings and recommendations, given the diverse nature of and sometimes tense relationships between government, civil society and academia in the different countries.

Performance Area 3: Outputs

17. IDASA has had a clear focus on quality and established at the start a set of at least eight mechanisms to increase the chance of high quality outputs. Part of the reason for Project delays was IDASA-GAP's insistence on credible findings and high quality reports.
18. Varying capacities which could not be adequately addressed, especially where ABU expertise was lost, and levels of commitment among partners contributed to uneven quality of draft products, resulting in repeated reviews and additional work to fill gaps and ensure credible findings.
19. The delay in appointing a full complement of staff with the appropriate expertise in resource tracking resulted in less (strict) communication with in-country partners, less control over the timing and less support to help improve the quality of their work. The hiatus after the departure of IDASA staff also meant that an effective peer review and high quality in-country technical assistance by IDASA staff or appointed experts were not available at critical times.
20. Although reference groups were to help ensure good quality research processes and reports, they were often not established or optimally used. While stakeholder inputs helped to contextualise the generically prescribed methodology and engagement processes, they were not adequate to ensure consistent quality throughout.
21. Knowledge management has been somewhat neglected in spite of its essential high profile in this type of multi-country research project. The envisaged website for appropriate resources did not materialise, and processes and methodological challenges and solutions have not been well documented. The latter makes it hard to determine the extent to which the generic methodology was challenged by local conditions. It also makes it difficult to determine the rigour with which the work was executed.
22. The challenges in the implementation of the resource tracking component in particular make it unlikely that the work will be completed to the required standard on time, even with the extension to September 2003.

Performance Areas 4 and 5: Uptake, Outcomes and Impact

23. Achievements were in line with what can be expected at this stage before findings are made public. Rather than bringing about real change – hardly likely given the early stage of finalisation and dissemination of findings – they have been mostly centred on the processes of implementation and building of profile through innovative areas of work.
24. The most prominent contributions to date have been the awareness raising nationally and internationally of issues related to governance and HIV/AIDS, the mobilisation of national role players from disparate sectors⁵³ to start working together towards common goals, the identification of weaknesses in national planning and data systems, and illustration of the possibilities and challenges in getting such work done at a national level.
25. The most important contribution to date is likely to be that in spite of implementation weaknesses, the Project processes have been designed and implemented in a manner that has given diverse stakeholders from early on a sense of buy-in despite the sensitive nature of the topics and ever-present political complexities. Even in the face of waning interest caused by the significant delays, it should be relatively easy to revive interest in the findings.

⁵³ Governments, NACs, NGOs/civil society networks and academic institutions

26. The way in which stakeholder or reference group meetings have been conducted may not have been the optimal format in all countries given the different stakeholder maps, the tendency to political grandstanding or rhetoric and lack of opportunity for in-depth engagement with methodology and the implications of findings. Formats need to be revisited given the rich experience to date.
27. Some key stakeholders are questioning the validity of the preliminary findings in several countries. While it is impossible to determine the motives, some of the opinions are justified. This makes it imperative for the implementers to safeguard the quality of their work and be in a position to defend what was done as well as the conjecture to arrive at recommendations.
28. The evaluation did not satisfactorily explore possible unintended positive or negative consequences of the work to date. None could be found, but this is unlikely and it may be that the data gathering or analysis has fallen short in this respect.
29. Although much was done to design and execute processes for buy-in and ownership of the research and findings, a large majority of informants felt that their engagement was too infrequent to have achieved this. Regular updates on progress and some personal contact with key persons would have made this easier – in other words, something akin to an ‘influencing strategy’ would have had a better effect. The turnover in persons attending meetings also contributed to this situation. But the work did raise awareness even before final results – an achievement in itself.
30. Delays mean that some early opportunities to influence policy (e.g. electoral reviews), planning (e.g. national development or HIV/AIDS plans) or reporting processes (e.g. UNGASS) were or may be lost.
31. Although not all have met with equal success, the basis for the sustainability of positive results from the Project has already been laid at an early stage. This has been done mainly through the engagement of respectively organisations able to influence national policies, processes and strategies, and strategic civil society organisations that can use the work for advocacy the building of networks; as well as transfer of expertise to and within networks of trained persons – although still very small in number - for national and regional initiatives.
32. The focus on sustainability in the design and implementation of the Project has led to several examples where government agencies are exploring possibilities for institutionalising HIV/AIDS resource tracking or enhancing existing budget tracking processes, where those involved in this Project are seen as resource persons for national efforts, and awareness of the Project has created an acknowledged interest among persons with a potential influence over policy and planning processes.
33. The continued engagement of IDASA-GAP, which has been at the cutting edge especially of work on electoral processes, will be an important factor in expanding the work and impact of the Project on the continent. It is very well positioned to continue with this important task.

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