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Sida Decentralised Evaluation

Ian Christoplos
Peter da Costa
Dena Lomofsky

Faten Aggad
Linnea Hincks
Raphaëlle Bisiaux

Evaluation of Afrobarometer's Regional Programme 2011–2017

Final Report

Authors: Ian Christoplos, Peter da Costa, Dena Lomofsky, Faten Aggad, Linnea Hincks and Raphaëlle Bisiaux

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SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Address: SE-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden. Office: Valhallavägen 199, Stockholm

Telephone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64

E-mail: info@sida.se. Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>

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Ian Christoplos
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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CDD-Ghana	The Ghana Center for Democratic Development
CP	Core Partner
EDC	Electronic Data Capture
EQ	Evaluation Question
ET	Evaluation Team
EU	European Union
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
LAPOP	Latin America Public Opinion Project
MSU	Michigan State University
NP	National Partner
OSP	Office of the Special Prosecutor
PMU	Project Management Unit
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UCT	University of Cape Town

Preface

This evaluation of Afrobarometer was commissioned by the Embassy of Sweden in Addis Ababa and undertaken by a team from NIRAS during the period of November 2017 to February 2018. The Evaluation Team consisted of Ian Christoplos, Peter da Costa, Dena Lomofsky, Faten Aggad, Linnea Hincks and Raphaëlle Bisiaux.

The Evaluation Team wishes to thank the staff of Afrobarometer and the many stakeholders interviewed in the course of the evaluation. The intensity of engagement throughout the evaluation process was striking and indicative of the commitments that exist to ensure that the voices of the citizens of Africa are heard.

Executive Summary

Afrobarometer is “a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across Africa”. This evaluation of Afrobarometer was commissioned by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of Afrobarometer’s activities between 2011 and 2017, as well as the sustainability of the organisation. In addition to informing the design of the next phase of Swedish support to Afrobarometer (2018-2022), the evaluation also serves a broader learning process aimed at bolstering Afrobarometer’s future sustainability.

The scope of the evaluation was three-fold:

- a. **Effectiveness and Efficiency:** Afrobarometer’s results were assessed in relation to agreed plans during the period 2011-2017, with a specific focus on Surveys, Communications and Capacity Building, as set against Afrobarometer’s theory of change;
- b. **Organisational Structure:** The organisational structure of Afrobarometer was assessed so as to provide guidance to inform its efforts to evolve into a stronger and more sustainable organisation;
- c. **Sustainability:** The assessment included a forward-looking analysis to contribute to an ongoing process aimed at securing Afrobarometer’s future efficiency and sustainability.

Theory of change

The original Afrobarometer vision and mission of making citizens' voices heard remains valid and is generally shared by staff and external stakeholders alike. However, citizen’s experience of governance has evolved in many ways since its establishment, generating new obstacles as well as new opportunities to amplify citizen voices. This has heightened external expectations that Afrobarometer should move beyond its core mission into more actively addressing the ‘so what’ question – what needs to be done to ensure that beyond being aware of citizen views on governance, duty bearers act to improve service delivery and respect citizen rights. The Evaluation recognises that these expectations are largely beyond what Afrobarometer can respond to directly, and Afrobarometer will need to continue to make judicious decisions about the scope of its mandate for policy analysis. The Evaluation Team notes, however, that insufficient attention has been given to the factors that determine how users engage with Afrobarometer data and reports to themselves address the ‘so what’ question.

Recommendation: In the process of elaborating a five-year programme it is essential that Afrobarometer further reflects on its theory of change and finds ways to link it more systematically with surveys, communications and capacity development activities.

Surveys

By the end of Round 6, surveys had been conducted in a total of 37 countries¹, the highest number of countries covered in its existence to date, and a significant achievement. Afrobarometer has exceeded contractual obligations – both in the speed of delivery of the survey results, and in the manner of their dissemination. The targets have been met despite considerable financial, contextual, and political challenges that Afrobarometer was largely able to overcome. Here again, impressive performance leads to even higher expectations, many of them not realistic, that Afrobarometer engages in other smaller surveys between the main two-year intervals.

Recommendations: The Evaluation Team encourages Afrobarometer to sustain its focus on quality and on ensuring the protocol is implemented to guarantee the integrity and credibility of the survey. Continued attention should be paid to building additional bridges with other survey organisations and even the other work done by National Partners outside of their Afrobarometer engagements. Afrobarometer should retain its basic structure of surveys at two-year intervals while exploring opportunities to better engage with ‘fresh’ data emerging in the interim from other sources.

Communications

Overall, Afrobarometer has ramped up the quality, scope and volume of its communications outputs considerably. It has engaged new stakeholders, increased visibility, and made good headway in improving the tracking of the survey’s footprint. This constitutes a vast improvement in an area where Afrobarometer had been noticeably weak in the past.

However, while Afrobarometer has emphasised making its findings more visible, it has not been as effective in recognising and responding to demand. As such, it has not systematically partnered with the growing community of organisations, researchers and journalists who are using or brokering Afrobarometer data. This is evident particularly at national level where practical communications skills remain a significant limitation. Despite the Online Data Analysis tool, which a sub-set of respondents has referred to as a useful resource, there also remains an unmet demand for further mining and analysis of its datasets done jointly with research institutions, think tanks and other institutions using Afrobarometer data. Afrobarometer has therefore been unable to capitalise on opportunities to learn from how data is used and feed this back into its next-generation communications strategy.

Recommendations: Afrobarometer should reformulate communications plans and targets to be less ‘supply-driven’ and better reflect progress in relation to strengthened institutional relations and engagements (more of what Afrobarometer contributes to rather than what it does). As part of this Afrobarometer should invest in conducting a more systematic stakeholder mapping, including reassessing roles and capacity needs

¹ This consisted of 35 in R5 and 36 in R6, across a total of 37 countries.

for different engagements. Afrobarometer should further develop and refine its toolkit for tracking its reach, influence and impact, and use insights gleaned to more creatively engage users. We encourage Afrobarometer to explore opportunities to maintain visibility between survey releases through partnerships (e.g., academics, think tanks) in order to complement efforts by national partners. There is room for stronger synergy between the monitoring and evaluation, and the communications tracking functions.

Capacity development

Capacity development as conceived of in the annual plans is well-calibrated to address Afrobarometer's needs as related to delivering and effectively communicating the survey. Additionally, the wider 'public good' dimension is of critical importance to entrenching the value of citizen perception surveys and in building a community of practice in Africa. Significant impacts have been achieved, notably in providing in-depth, hands-on training to national partners prior to roll-out of survey rounds and building communications and data management capacity. In particular, the Summer Schools were widely viewed as pivotal in ensuring that partners understood the underlying reasoning behind why and how the survey was designed and how it fed into social research intended on impacting on the policy discourse. Despite the impacts achieved, and of the three pillars of the network's operations, capacity development has been most severely affected by the financial crisis, with most activities suspended in 2016.

Recommendations: The variety of issues arising with different partners suggests the need for a more tailored approach to setting capacity targets reflecting different contexts and demands, as well as the varying capacities and levels of potential engagement of individual national partners. Afrobarometer should create a more explicit and transparent system for decisions on capacity development prioritisation, including justifications linked to the strategic vision.

Costs versus quality

Afrobarometer surveys cost more to produce than other surveys, notably those produced by private opinion polling firms, as well as perception surveys produced by 'barometers' in other parts of the world. Most private survey firms are less expensive and ambitious, but more agile. This is because Afrobarometer's detailed, strict and standardised survey model and methods are designed to achieve a level of quality and cross-country comparability that is higher and unique, and therefore more credible and applicable for regional analysis. Some interviewees (particularly from the media) express frustration with Afrobarometer's approach of producing surveys every two years, as the releases are perceived to be less timely and therefore less relevant for responding to rapidly emerging concerns. Appropriate ambitions for some of the key variables that impinge on efficiency, most notably the size of the sample and of the questionnaire, are inevitably related to the different uses of the data – but the Evaluation generally judges that Afrobarometer has found a 'happy medium'. Electronic data capture has been crucial to reducing costs and improving survey efficiency, and a number of respondents question why it took so long to make the shift, though the Evaluation Team recognises that this has proven challenging to undertake on a continental basis – due to challenges such as lack of reliable internet access and lack of widely accessible, user-friendly electronic data capture software in many countries.

Recommendation: Afrobarometer should document the cost, quality and overall efficiency gains registered as a result of the transition from paper-based to electronic data capture, while continuing to explore additional technological means to enhance survey efficiency and quality.

Organisational structure

Afrobarometer is a 'loose' network as opposed to a unitary organisation, wherein 'membership' is based on memoranda of understanding. Most responsibilities are defined in operational manuals rather than in a document describing governance and relations within the organisation. It has evolved organically over time, but structures continue to resemble a 'pilot project'. Whereas this has had clear advantages in the past, some structures (or lack thereof) are now proving problematic. There is a heavy reliance on co-founders and a confusing hybrid of a network with shared values among 'partners' and a sub-contracting structure. The relationship between central management, core partners and national partners has been insufficiently articulated and creates gaps in engagement and accountability. It has been glossed over by a vague concept of partnership.

Recommendations: The new structure for Afrobarometer should have clear governance and management structures, with a transparent differentiation between the two, and should give early attention to succession issues. Organisational restructuring plans need to ensure that breaking down silos between different departments and sub-regions is anchored in a functional analysis of how all should jointly contribute to achieving outcomes within the overall theory of change.

Financial sustainability

Fundraising is currently led by the founders and senior staff. It is not handled in a structured manner. There is an awareness within Afrobarometer that the promotion of democratic governance as a global good is no longer as much of a donor priority as it was in the past, but no clear indication of a consensus regarding if and how much Afrobarometer may need to adapt its focus to respond to the changing landscape of funding opportunities. The financial crisis created an awareness of the need to find a way to set aside reserves, but discussions are at an initial stage regarding how.

Recommendations: Afrobarometer's management should engage fundraising expertise, but ensure that this input includes experience and up-to-date understanding of trends and priorities of a range of categories of different potential financiers. Governance should be restructured in such a way as to leverage fundraising expertise and influence.

1 Introduction and Methods

1.1 Background

Afrobarometer describes itself as “a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across Africa”. From its inception in 1999 up to 2015, it had conducted six complete rounds of surveys. Round 6 (2014-2015) involved interviews with an estimated 54,000 citizens in 36 countries, representing the views of more than three-quarters of Africa’s population. Fieldwork for Round 7 began in September 2017 and is set to be completed in 2018. A key feature of Afrobarometer is that it conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent’s choice with nationally representative samples that yield country-level results with a margin of sampling error of $\pm 2\%$ (for a sample of 2,400) or $\pm 3\%$ (for a sample of 1,200) at a 95% confidence level².

Afrobarometer functions as a continental network. At the apex of the management structure is a Project Management Unit (PMU) based at the Center for Democratic Development-Ghana (CDD-Ghana) in Accra, where the Executive Director and co-founder, Prof. E. Gyimah-Boadi, is based³. The PMU, established in 2011 at the start of Round 5, has overall responsibility for implementing the survey and related operations, as well as for budgeting, contracting and finance. CDD-Ghana also serves as the core partner (CP) for Anglophone West Africa and North Africa, and its staff include an Operations Manager for Fieldwork (North, East and Anglophone West Africa) as well as a data manager and communication specialist. Core partners (CPs)⁴ are responsible for managing surveys in the respective sub-regions or geographic zones of focus, maintaining quality control, as well as for leading dissemination and communications. National Partners (NPs) are contracted and trained to administer the surveys and are also involved in communications activities in their respective countries.

² Afrobarometer (2017). Highlights of Round 6 survey findings from 36 African countries. 21 March 2017.

³ The PMU includes central project management, accounting and finance as well as monitoring & evaluation functions.

⁴ Other CPs are the Institute for Empirical Research in Political Economy (Francophone Africa, based in Cotonou, Benin); Institute of Development Studies, University of Nairobi (East Africa, based in Nairobi, Kenya); Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (Southern Africa, based in Cape Town, South Africa). University of Cape Town, also in South Africa, and Michigan State University in the US are support units. A number of central functions are distributed among various CPs and Support Units – such as the Data Manager who is at UCT; the Acting Director of Communications who is U.S.-based; the Website and Social Media Manager based in Nairobi; and the Operations Manager for Fieldwork (Southern & Francophone Africa), based in Malawi.

The primary body for providing strategic guidance and taking network-wide decisions is the Afrobarometer Executive Committee, made up of the Executive Director, Deputy Director, and Senior Advisers, Project Directors of each of the CPs, the team of Operations Managers, and other central functions. The other co-founders – who serve as Senior Advisers – are Prof. Michael Bratton, from the Department of Political Science at Michigan State University (MSU) in the U.S., which originally incubated Afrobarometer before transferring the management responsibility to CDD-Ghana in 2008; and Prof. Robert Mattes, who until recently was based at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in South Africa. A Deputy Director, Prof. Carolyn Logan, leads a small Support Unit at MSU that backstops Afrobarometer, focusing on quality assurance (of samples, data sets, publications) and hosting of the project website. A second Support Unit, which includes the Network Data Manager, is housed at UCT.

Bilateral donors provided the bulk of core funding⁵ to support Afrobarometer network activities in Rounds 1 through 6. These multi-year grants came primarily from the U.K. Department for International Development, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development. In Rounds 6 and 7, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation joined this core donor pool as a key funder. Additional funding was also contributed by a number of other funders. More recently, shifting priorities in the global funding landscape—notably away from democracy and governance—have meant that some of Afrobarometer’s previous bilateral donors are no longer able to support its work at the same levels as previously. This was a primary cause of a ‘financial crisis’ that came to a head for the network in mid-2016.

1.2 Purpose

The objective of this evaluation, commissioned by Sida, is to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities carried out by Afrobarometer between 2011 and 2017, and assess the sustainability of the organisation. The evaluation will inform the design of the next phase of support to Afrobarometer (2018-2022) by Sweden, via its Embassy in Addis Ababa. The evaluation is also intended to serve a broader learning process within Afrobarometer and among its various partners that was stimulated in response to a temporary financial crisis that emerged in 2015-2016. As such, the evaluation has drawn on a process of critical reflection that was well underway. It will also contribute to a body of knowledge that will support efforts to bolster Afrobarometer’s sustainability by informing a soon-to-be initiated organisational development process that will focus on how best to help Afrobarometer transition from a collaborative network into a self-standing, sustainable organisation.

It has been our understanding, from the ToRs, that this focus on effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability implies that the overall relevance of Afrobarometer’s work in relation to Swe-

⁵ The total projected budget for the expansion phase of Afrobarometer for Rounds 5 and 6 (2011-2015) was US\$ 30.43 million (Source: Round 5 and 6 Proposal, 30 March 2011). The budget for Rounds 7 and 8 (2016-2020) is slightly in excess of US\$ 30 million (Source: Round 7 and 8 Proposal, Revised 30 April 2016).

den's Regional Development Cooperation Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa 2016-2021 is largely recognised and that the ultimate impact of Afrobarometer's work is likely to be beyond the scope of the evaluation. Nonetheless, we also recognise that the emphasis in the ToRs on assessing Afrobarometer's theory of change involves exploring some aspects of relevance and intentions to achieve impact. Reflection on these aspects is intended to shed light on aspects related to Swedish policies and also the potential to avert future financial crises by better understanding other donors' policies and priorities. This has emerged as an important aspect of the analysis in light of the fact that Afrobarometer was somewhat caught by surprise by the shift in donor interests that greatly contributed to the financial crisis.

1.3 Methods

In order to make a determination of Afrobarometer's progress against results, to determine the extent to which Afrobarometer is providing value-for-money, and to understand the state of Afrobarometer's organisational effectiveness and sustainability, our approach has been multi-dimensional, including **summative** (looking back) **as well as formative** (forward-looking) **dimensions**.

The evaluation has applied a **theory-based approach** to interrogate the Afrobarometer theory of change as a basis for assessing how the underlying assumptions behind what Afrobarometer is about are perceived by different stakeholders, and to what extent Afrobarometer is delivering against different categories of results. The starting point for this exercise was the Afrobarometer Strategic Vision 2017-2022⁶, which describes the network's strategic focus for the next five years as follows:

- To produce scientifically reliable data and analysis on public opinion in Africa;
- To strengthen the capacity of African institutions for democratic governance survey research and analysis; and
- To broadly disseminate and apply democratic governance survey results.

In interviews it became apparent that awareness of this document was often hazy within Afrobarometer. Nonetheless, awareness was strong of the overall vision from when Afrobarometer was established in 1999, "*...to 'let the people have a say' on issues of democracy, governance and development, at a time when the voices of ordinary Africans were muted and little was known about popular attitudes and behaviour regarding the pressing challenges of African political economy*" (Strategic Vision 2017-2022). As a result, the team's focus on the underlying theory of change has highlighted the nuances of how that vision is being perceived. This also involved looking at the factors affecting the Afrobarometer 'niche' and 'comparative advantage', in light of the evolving contexts in different countries over time – including dynamics such as growth in the number of actors producing public opinion surveys in a subset of countries covered by Afrobarometer.

⁶ Annex B, pp.11-19, Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of Afrobarometer's regional programme 2011-2017 (15 August 2017)

This complex and evolving operating environment has generated a sense of urgency as to the need to fast-track Afrobarometer's evolution from a loose network to a self-standing, sustainably resourced organisation that is well-positioned to impact positively on the African governance landscape in the future. The Evaluation Team's analysis has focused specific attention on unpacking the internal discourse regarding this critical juncture in the development of the organisation.

Afrobarometer's Strategic Vision 2017-2022 reflects the response of the management team to the existential crisis, as it identifies four strategic priorities going forward:

- Institutionalising Afrobarometer;
- Building financial sustainability;
- Expanding the stakeholder/user base; and
- Maximising efficiency.

The Evaluation Team has explored how the priorities, opportunities and obstacles to the change process are perceived by the Afrobarometer PMU in Accra, the CPs and NPs. Particular attention has been paid to how the financial crisis, and the manner in which stability was restored following the crisis, has spurred action in addressing the long-standing organisational ambiguities that may or may not have impacted negatively on Afrobarometer's effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

To complement the theory-based approach, the Evaluation Team has pursued a **process evaluation** to assess effectiveness – namely the programmatic results relative to plans and targets, with a specific focus on the surveys, communications and capacity development.

Both internal stakeholders and a broad range of actors using Afrobarometer data have been questioned about their views on the content and perceived quality of Afrobarometer's surveys to see if they were delivered as originally planned, and in a way that reflects the diverse qualities that these different actors expect to underpin credibility and utility. In assessing the implementation of the programme, the Evaluation Team has sought to trace paths to desired outcomes through (a) capacity development efforts, (b) enhancing communications processes and outputs, and (c) lessons that Afrobarometer has learned regarding sustainability in the course of its response to the financial crisis.

Aside from surveys, capacity development and communications constitute core pillars of the Afrobarometer project. Capacity development is broadly recognised as central to ensuring the credibility of Afrobarometer's data, the quality of communication efforts, and the building of a wider 'community of practice'. Communications are considered critical to the demand for and uptake and use of the survey. As such, the evaluation has assumed that these components must function in an integrated manner, and the Team has explored how the PMU and CPs have engaged with the NPs to deliver this integrated strategy.

Our working hypothesis was that demand would be related to the following factors:

- Credibility of the data as related to the perceived quality of the surveys;
- Independence of the analysis as related to the 'positioning', i.e., roles and relationships of the Afrobarometer NPs;
- Quality and accessibility of Afrobarometer communication outputs;
- Extent to which Afrobarometer has explicitly engaged in tactics to stimulate uptake

- and use of its survey findings;
- Demand for empirical evidence within the policy process (outside of Afrobarometer's sphere of control and with limited Afrobarometer influence, but nonetheless central to understanding risks and opportunities facing Afrobarometer); and
- Relevance of Afrobarometer's areas of focus.

As part of the process dimension of the evaluation, the Team has also assessed the cost-efficiency of Afrobarometer surveys and the extent to which the investment by Sida and other funders is yielding value for money. This has included looking at how the move from manual to electronic data capture (EDC), has impacted on cost-effectiveness in Afrobarometer's operations. The Evaluation has also assessed the impact of the financial crisis on the scope and scale of capacity development activities and communications efforts. The efficiency and internal effectiveness analysis was undertaken simultaneously with an internal control review⁷, which provided an opportunity to compare and reflect over findings regarding the appropriateness of Afrobarometer's institutional structure and procedures.

Establishing value for money has been challenging, given Afrobarometer's relatively unique role and the multiplicity of contexts in which the survey is conducted and dissemination occurs. This has involved looking at PMU, CP and NP capacities (individually and jointly) to maintain national networks among policy actors. An aspect of this has been to delve into whether the current partnership arrangements as related to quality control of the surveys lead to greater value for money in terms of fostering the credibility needed to ensure uptake of the findings in the policy sphere.

The findings, conclusions and recommendations of this evaluation in particular seek to inform wider thinking on how best to ensure Afrobarometer's future sustainability. This has included looking at staffing and management structures, skills and capacity gaps, governance and institutionalisation dimensions, and funding dynamics – without necessarily arriving at definitive conclusions regarding future organisational forms that are expected to emanate from the upcoming organisational development process.

In terms of our sampling approach, evaluating the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of Afrobarometer during the period under review presented particular methodological challenges, especially given the large number of countries (37) surveyed in the last three rounds (5 and 6 from 2011-2015, and the early stages of Round 7 in 2017). These countries are geographically, linguistically and demographically diverse. The limited budget available, as well as time constraints, called for a purposive approach to sample selection. The Evaluation Team has undertaken field visits to a total of seven countries. These include the Four Core Afrobarometer Partner countries – **Benin, Ghana, Kenya and South Africa**. In these four countries, the team has analysed both the role of the Afrobarometer National and Core Partners them-

⁷ Ernst and Young (2018) Report on the review of internal management and control of Afrobarometer, January 2018.

selves within their respective sub-regions, and also the role and influence of Afrobarometer in informing and stimulating a more open policy discourse in these host countries and across the sub-regions. To ensure linguistic and regional representativity, provide insights into the capacity of national partners and shed light on the uptake and use of the Afrobarometer survey at national level, Evaluation Team members have also visited three other countries:

- **Tunisia** (North Africa, the only country in that sub-region in which Afrobarometer consistently conducts both survey and dissemination activities, and works with a strong national partner);
- **Cape Verde** (Lusophone Africa and example of a small, technocratic state with a well-established Afrobarometer partner that may be seen as a potentially ‘ideal user’ of Afrobarometer). This has also ensured linguistic and regional representativity; and
- **Ethiopia**. A Team member visited Addis Ababa to meet with the Sida regional team and interview regional organisations and other agencies with a presence there that use, or could be potential users of, Afrobarometer survey data. Given that Ethiopia hosts two of the three premier African regional organisations and is the continental hub for engagement with the African regional system, it has been important to ascertain whether, and to what extent, Afrobarometer should consider bolstering its presence there. Through a national lens, Afrobarometer has experienced difficulties in Ethiopia in recent years, last conducted a survey in Round 5 and took the decision not to conduct subsequent surveys due to the anomalous survey results as well as prevailing constraints in the political climate. This in itself provided an interesting opportunity to explore the conditions in which the validity of Afrobarometer survey data, however rigorously gathered, could be called into question.

The Evaluation Team has also undertaken virtual interviews with selected stakeholders in other countries to obtain an overview of possibly differing processes underway in these contexts.

As part of the fieldwork, **96 interviews have been conducted** with a broad sample of Afrobarometer stakeholders, from producers of Afrobarometer surveys to communicators to end users, including:

- National and regional think tanks;
- Civil society organisations engaged in democratisation and freedom of expression;
- Media;
- Relevant experts in National Statistical Offices focusing on governance-related data; and
- Specialist governance researchers that actively use Afrobarometer or similar data.

Although it is difficult to find direct comparators to Afrobarometer, through a combination of document review and selected interviews, the Evaluation Team has selectively reviewed the experience from the [Global Barometer](#), a loose network of regional governance-related barometers that includes Afrobarometer, and that may have informed aspects of the design and implementation of Afrobarometer over time. These include the [Latino Barometer](#), a public opinion survey first initiated in 1995 that spans 18 countries and 600 million citizens in Latin America; the [Asian Barometer](#), a survey covering 13 East Asian countries; the [Arab Barometer](#), established in 2005; the [Arab Democracy Index](#), established in 2008; and the [Eurasia Barometer](#), first established in 1989 to monitor political, social and economic transformations in countries of Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Russian Federation, Caucasus and Central Asia. Another regional barometer reviewed was the [Latin America Public Opinion Project](#)

([LAPOP](#)). Though not technically part of the Global Barometer network, LAPOP implements the AmericasBarometer survey, a comparative survey that covers 34 nations including all of North, Central, and South America, as well as a significant number of countries in the Caribbean.

Additionally, the Evaluation Team has interviewed a number of the actors in the Africa regional knowledge ecosystem, on the basis of which it has teased out potential success factors in influencing policy and the public discourse, particularly as related to engagement with important potential users as well as champions of Afrobarometer survey findings. Important African regional frameworks – such as the African Peace & Security Architecture and African Governance Architecture (including norms and standards such as the African Charter on Democracy, Governance and Elections, and initiatives such as the African Peer Review Mechanism) – have emerged as significant users, of the Afrobarometer survey.

For different reasons, a number of think tanks and other institutes – public and private, inside and outside Africa – have been analysed as potential models or comparators for Afrobarometer to consider as it seeks to sharpen the uptake and use of its survey data. These include the [Institute for Security Studies](#) in Pretoria and the [South African Institute of International Affairs](#), based in Johannesburg, South Africa; the Washington, D.C.-based [Pew Research Center](#), cited by many as the ‘gold standard’ of public opinion survey ‘fact-tanks’; and [Sauti za Wananchi](#) (Voices of Citizens), a publicly-funded survey of citizens voices in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda that gathers data using mobile phones. In addition to considering these organisations and initiatives, the Evaluation Team has sought views from commercial polling firms, notably in countries such as Kenya – where the market for governance-related public opinion has become more and more sophisticated, and crowded, in recent years.

While it was not possible to produce detailed case studies of the institutions concerned, we have drawn lessons from their approaches to generating evidence, translation of research findings, and strategies for stimulating uptake and use, which inform the ‘Conclusions and Lessons Learnt’ section of this report.

1.4 Limitations

Limiting factors encountered in this evaluation were four-fold.

First, the evaluation fieldwork began shortly before the Christmas holidays and continued into mid-January. This constrained access to a large number of potential stakeholders, who were absent from their offices. Within the overall window allotted to the evaluation, the short time allocated to preparation and finalisation of the report post-fieldwork limited the amount of time the Evaluation Team could spend doing follow-up with respondents returning to their desks.

Second, as noted above, we recognise the challenge in identifying appropriate benchmarks upon which to assess relative efficiency. We have striven to address this in a transparent manner by recognising the implicit differences in the organisations we compare with and describing Afrobarometer’s structure in full recognition of its unique characteristics.

Third, particularly with regard to current organisational development processes, but also more

broadly in adapting to the dynamically changing funding environment, evidence from past years may not be appropriate to inform recommendations for future processes. The methods applied have included questions selected to stimulate critical reflection with the Afrobarometer team and among its stakeholders about how adaptation will be required to ensure future results and adapt visions of sustainable to plausible trajectories.

Furthermore, the design of a future continental organisation will require assessment of options for legal structures and registration, aspects that are beyond the scope of the evaluation. The evaluation has focused on lessons learned that can inform and provide a scope for deciding on the options that should be considered in the future, but was not able to delve into the full legal implications of these respective options. The legal and financial control implications of the current structure have been analysed in the aforementioned internal control review, and are not duplicated in this evaluation.

1.5 Report Structure

The ‘Findings’ chapter in this report begins with a section on the ‘Theory of Change’, followed by a presentation of ‘Programmatic Results’ that addresses ‘Surveys’, ‘Communications’ and ‘Capacity Development’ in separate sub-sections.

These are followed by sections on ‘Costs versus Quality’, ‘Organisational Structure’ and ‘Financial Sustainability’.

The next chapter documents ‘Conclusions and Lessons Learnt’ as related to the three lines of inquiry mandated in the evaluation ToRs (namely ‘Effectiveness’, ‘Efficiency’ and ‘Sustainability’), while ‘Recommendations’ – for Sida as well as Afrobarometer – account for the final chapter.

2 Findings

2.1 Theory of Change

EQ3: Is Afrobarometer's theory of change (currently expressed in Afrobarometer's Strategic Vision, 2017-2022) fit for purpose and how could it be developed to reflect a five to ten-year time frame for the programme?

From vision to theory of change

In studying available documentation⁸ as part of the desk review phase of the evaluation, the team sought to identify an explicitly-articulated Afrobarometer theory of change.

In the spirit of applying a theory-based approach, the team took as its starting-point Afrobarometer's foundational vision – namely making citizens' voices heard on issues of democracy, governance and development at a time when those voices were largely absent. In October 2012, this vision was codified into an explicit theory of change consisting of a narrative and accompanied by a visualisation and detailed log frame, prepared by the Afrobarometer team at the start of a United Kingdom Department for International Development-funded Africa Regional Empowerment and Accountability programme, which supported collaboration between Afrobarometer and two other Pan-African governance-related initiatives from February 2011 to July 2016.

The Afrobarometer theory of change as at 2012 is informed by the following key arguments:

- Access to high quality, reliable data and indicators is of increasing importance to different actors in the policy arena, who can use it to make evidence-informed decisions;
- High quality data has historically been in short supply. Producers have mainly been Governments, with output of variable quality and reliability and limited coverage;
- Afrobarometer fills a critical gap by producing independent, reliable, high-quality data that, because it presents the views of ordinary Africans who are the ultimate end-users of government services – provides an essential counterpoint or benchmark for comparison with official statistics; and

⁸ These include the Afrobarometer Strategic Vision 2017-2022, referenced above; a large number of annual and mid-year narrative reports covering the period under review; and concept notes for Rounds 5 & 6 and Rounds 7 & 8. All are included under Annex 5.3, 'Documents reviewed'.

- In addition to producing the data, Afrobarometer “feeds its results directly into policy processes through dissemination to diverse audiences, including governments, politicians, journalists, NGOs and civil society, academics, development partners, advocacy groups and others interested in improving the political, economic and social conditions of Africans”.

The theory of change is summarised as follows:

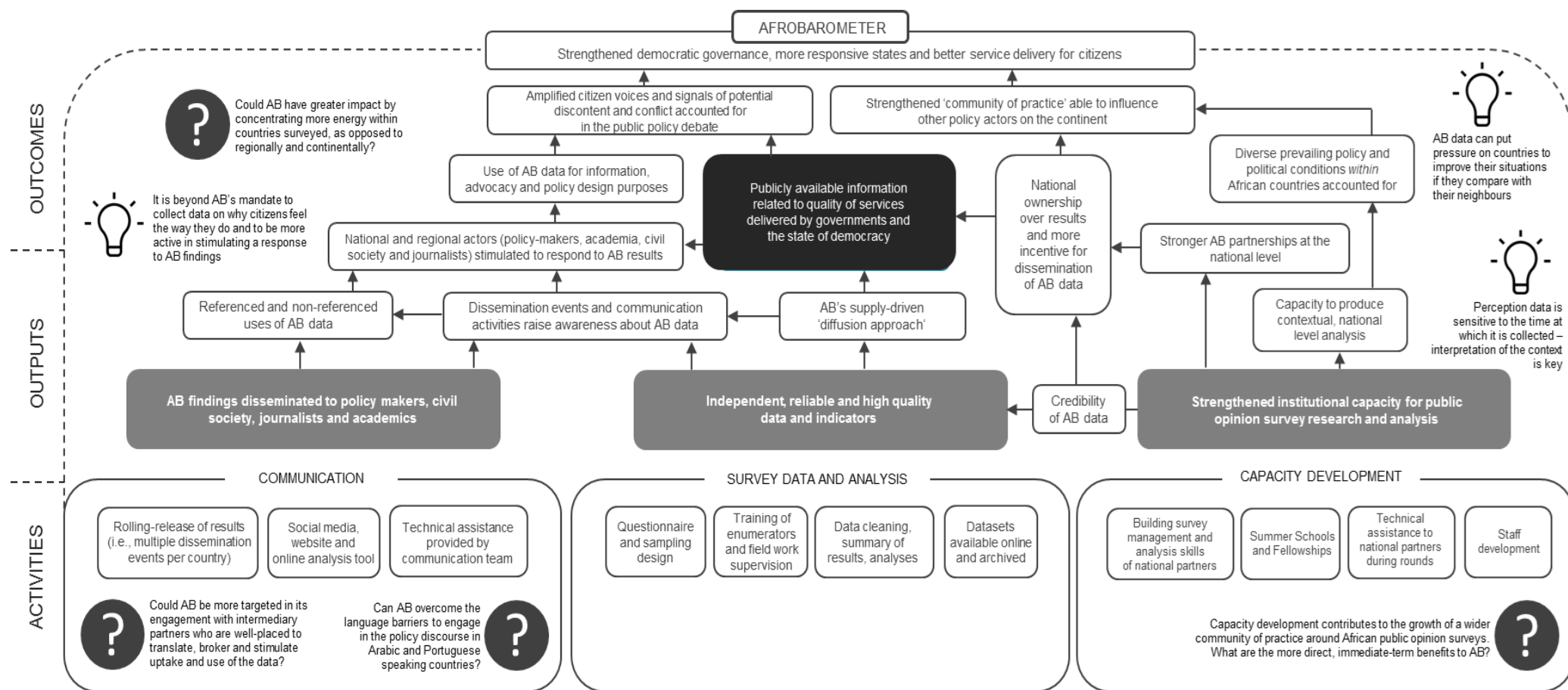
“In short, our theory of change is that, armed with reliable data on popular attitudes and evaluations, policy advocates and policy makers will be better equipped to design, lobby for, implement and monitor more effective policies that aim to eradicate poverty and improve the quality of democracy and governance on the continent.”⁹

The Evaluation Team found that this articulation of the Afrobarometer theory of change remained by and large consistent with the understanding of most of the Afrobarometer Core Partners interviewed, who were clear about why they were in the business of producing public opinion surveys. It was also clear that, to the extent possible, the Afrobarometer team had been guided by the theory of change in designing and implementing its operations between 2011 and 2017.

However, and in the spirit of responding to the evaluation question on whether the current theory of change is fit or purpose as a basis for crafting a five- or ten-year programme of work, the Evaluation Team identified a number of areas where this earlier theory of change did not sufficiently articulate the desired programmatic impacts – mainly as related to communications and capacity development. The team found that although there was a shared corporate understanding of the ‘global’ Afrobarometer theory of change, there was need for added clarity on how the theory of change translates into strategies, activities and tactics.

To surface some of these areas for improvement and gaps, the Evaluation Team prepared the below visualisation, which builds on the 2012 Afrobarometer theory of change and reflects findings from the team’s document reviews and interviews.

⁹ From Afrobarometer theory of change, excerpted from Inception Report, Africa Regional Empowerment and Accountability programme, Draft 2, 9 October 2012 (document provided by Afrobarometer PMU during desk review phase of this evaluation).



An important reason for interrogating the theory of change is that we found that citizens' experience of governance has evolved in many ways since the establishment of Afrobarometer, throwing new obstacles as well as new opportunities to amplify citizen voices and make them count. One strongly-held view from respondents is that, although there are an increasing number of actors engaged in the space, this actually accentuates the importance and uniqueness of Afrobarometer's role, as well as the distinctness of its offering. For example, representatives of both government and opposition in Cape Verde described in detail the unique role of Afrobarometer and the importance they place on hearing the citizen's voices via a respected organisation and using this for critical self-reflection. Others in Tunisia argued that the politicisation of and lack of trust in local surveys means that a non-partisan survey with a solid methodology, like Afrobarometer, could help rebuild the credibility of surveys.

Credibility versus responding to the 'so what' question

In other contexts, various accounts were presented describing how Afrobarometer data is so widespread in the public domain that governments feel that they must take notice of the data in the views of their citizens. In many cases, we were told that governments actively use its survey data, without necessarily acknowledging they are doing so. While this makes attribution of impact on uptake and use challenging, it also speaks to the power of Afrobarometer's 'diffusion' approach. As one respondent who has been involved from the outset put it:

"The data is a public good, but it's also an intervention, Governments will take it seriously when they know that other people also know about the results. They would then have to prepare a position and engage with the public opinion. We have a lot of evidence that governments engage with our results. They can't just ignore us".
Afrobarometer adviser

And yet the central challenge, pointed out by many observers in different ways, is that Afrobarometer limits its role to generating the data and disseminating it to the best of its ability – without purposively and explicitly addressing the 'so what' question of how to respond to the knowledge generated. There is a sense, especially among external stakeholders, that Afrobarometer is not doing enough to galvanise response to the concerns raised by citizens in its surveys – including as related to the quality of services delivered by governments, the state of democracy, and in addressing corruption. What has emerged clearly is that Afrobarometer can highlight what citizens perceive to be the problems, and it can amplify these voices to a degree. But it is beyond Afrobarometer's capability to consistently collect data on factors influencing why citizens feel the way they do, and it is not well-positioned to be more active in stimulating a response to the concerns raised. Attempting to do so, according to Afrobarometer senior management, would risk compromising its core mission. There are strongly-held views that the value of Afrobarometer lies in the methodologically rigorous way it collects citizens' perceptions on the states of governance, and the dispassionate, non-partisan way these voices are presented. The consensus is that the risks are too great if Afrobarometer was to engage in advocacy.

Regional versus national discourses

An additional aspect of Afrobarometer's theory of change where there is room for further clarity is whether Afrobarometer can have greater impact by concentrating more energy on issues within the countries surveyed, as opposed to regionally and continentally. The official Afrobarometer position¹⁰ is that both the cross-country/continental and national levels are considered essential to the initiative's delivery against its theory of change. The Afrobarometer questionnaire and the presentation of its global releases at the end of each round are designed to enable comparisons from one African country context with another.

However, and as the Afrobarometer management had pointed out, the global release is preceded by the release of significant numbers of country-level reports and findings, which are reflected in the volume of the social media feed communicating such nationally-relevant results. If Afrobarometer was to devote more of its resources and energy to domestic issues this would please many users, but would involve significant trade-offs regarding comparability. Afrobarometer currently does not compromise on cross-country comparison as a key attribute. However, the Evaluation's country analyses have shown that this comes at a cost regarding ability to reflect diverse prevailing policy and political conditions within African countries. We found that Afrobarometer's dissemination and communication efforts, although markedly improved from before Round 5, were still often perceived as being too 'one-size-fits-all', resulting in less-than-optimal uptake and use of the survey findings. A large proportion of respondents suggested, and as the following view exemplifies, while it is important to build partnerships and relationships to stimulate uptake and use at the continental level, Afrobarometer should invest more time and energy in-country:

"My message to Afrobarometer is: if you want to gain traction, if you want to be relevant over the next 15 years, if you want to be that authority.... stay at the national level." Afrobarometer user

The Afrobarometer leadership notes that NPs have considerable discretion in deciding which nationally-relevant questions to include in the survey, but concedes that doing more dissemination at the local level would depend on the interest and technical capacity of the NP. Additionally, giving more visibility to and engaging more on topical issues at the respective country levels would require far more financial and human resources than the team currently has at its disposal¹¹.

¹⁰ Comment received from Dr. Carol Logan on 15 February 2018 in response to draft report.

¹¹ Comment received from Prof. E. Gyimah-Boadi on 15 February 2018 in response to draft report.

Determinants of utility

Concerns about the utility of Afrobarometer outputs relate to them being insufficiently granular in terms of detail of findings provided, relevance to particular country contexts and as related to themes covered.

Regarding **themes**, as elaborated on below, the communications strategy is largely supply driven. While this ‘diffusion’ approach is in line with the theory of change and dictated by scarce resources which inevitably call for trade-offs between reach and depth, it does not necessarily allow for more targeted engagement with the diverse stakeholder groups and actors that need certain forms of data on particular themes to inform specific policy processes and policy-makers.

Perception data is also very sensitive to the **time** at which it is collected. While a number of Afrobarometer indicators capture more stable views and have a longer shelf-life¹², there are concerns that in the case of some specific indicators, it is not always possible to harness survey data to inform emerging political and policy processes - particularly on volatile questions such as the electoral disputes in Kenya in 2017, for which there was an urgent demand for more timely citizen perception data.

As such, interviewees within and outside of Afrobarometer presented mixed views regarding the appropriateness of the survey interval, with some recognising that the costs involved and Afrobarometer’s ‘niche’ justified a two-year interval to the studies. Others felt a need for greater flexibility, with some brief surveys to keep the discussion going between the main surveys, keep NPs engaged, and to better link the main data to rapidly developing public concerns. Some NPs suggested the need for ‘*ad hoc*’ contract arrangements for additional communications activities and short surveys. Afrobarometer offers NPs incentives, including financial, to do additional dissemination and communication in-country between the rounds. However, there is variable capacity and interest among NPs to make use of these opportunities.

With regard to **geographic** factors, the relevance of the Afrobarometer surveys to the Arab World may be, for example, less than that of the Arab Barometer in addressing issues related to the link between religion and several issues (political, economic, social) that are not well reflected in Afrobarometer’s work. The survey is largely designed based on realities in Sub-Saharan Africa, but North Africa has regional specificities that are insufficiently reflected in the choice of themes. This is the sub-region with the strongest divergence from the main focus of the survey, but there are subtler differences elsewhere. NPs generally note that there is a need for more consultation with local partners to gauge the temperature of the local context while striking the balance with a continental standard. Observers also noted that this is not insurmount-

¹² Such as the data on the quality and ease of access to government health care services, or attitudes toward neighbors of different backgrounds (examples provided by Carol Logan, 15 February 2018).

able, as creative solutions could be found to reflect the regional specificity (e.g. a complementary module covering North Africa).

Missing links in the theory of change?

Afrobarometer's theory of change can be interpreted as demanding a proactive engagement, i.e., a 'brokerage' role in national, sub-regional and regional public policy discourses. In reality, Afrobarometer's capacity to intermediate between supply of and demand for its survey data is at best limited. Furthermore, Afrobarometer does not exert any degree of control since the data, once in the public domain, is open and free to use by all. That said, and as we reflect in our conclusions and recommendations, Afrobarometer has been insufficiently engaged in shaping a more evidence-based public discourse together with intermediary partners who are better placed to translate, broker and stimulate uptake and use of the data.

A similar gap between the theory of change and operations exists with regard to capacity development, which has three main attributes. First, it is considered as essential to ensuring and sustaining the rigour, high quality and therefore credibility of the Afrobarometer survey and its results. Second, NPs find the training – notably the immersive Summer School – of great value for their personal and organisational development more generally. Third, it is a 'public good' that contributes to the growth of a wider community of practice around African public opinion surveys. What is not so clear is to what extent, particularly given resource scarcity, the Afrobarometer team is able to prioritise between these three attributes and invest scarce resources accordingly.

Finally, there is a question as to whether the Afrobarometer monitoring and evaluation system, which has recently attracted additional investment, including a new online system, is being effectively harnessed as a tool for learning and innovation within Afrobarometer in general, much less for actively interrogating the theory of change over time. We find that it is still largely perceived as a one-dimensional reporting tool, rather than a vehicle for critical reflection in the organisation.

2.2 Programmatic Results

EQ1: What are the programmatic results relative to plans and targets during the current grant period (2011-2017) with respect to surveys, communications, and capacity building?

2.2.1 Surveys

EQ 1.1 To what extent has Afrobarometer been able to meet the survey-related targets laid down in the proposal of March 2011 in relation to Rounds 5 and 6, as well as the concept note of April 2015 in relation to Round 7?

Scaling up

By the end of Round 6, surveys had been conducted in a total of 37 countries. Many evaluation respondents interviewed have attested to the exceptional nature of this achievement, and both CP and NP respondents have reported with pride having ex-

ceeded contractual obligations – both in the speed of delivery of the survey results, and in the manner of their dissemination.

The partnership with the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, which provides US\$ 500,000 per year of funding to Afrobarometer on the condition that it conducts the survey in at least 33 countries per round, is credited as a major factor behind the increased Afrobarometer country coverage – due to stipulations that the funding ceases to be available if for any reason Afrobarometer is unable to meet the quota.

Due to resource shortages in 2016, the Afrobarometer Executive Committee decided to begin Round 7 with 12 countries, and scaled up as additional funding became available. Round 7 surveys have now been completed in more than 21 countries, and findings have been made public in a number of countries, including Nigeria, Ghana, Cote D'Ivoire, Tanzania, Botswana, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Kenya. It is expected that Round 7 will be completed in 35 countries by mid-2018.

Financial crisis averted, but underlying challenges remain

Some CPs raised attention to how, even if they ultimately achieved their goals, the financial uncertainties obstructed ability to plan effectively and created pressures on NPs to undertake surveys quickly to facilitate fundraising for the following round. In South Africa, for example, survey planning for Round 7 was delayed due to funding uncertainty. For Round 7 overall, the effect of the financial crisis was to force the teams to prioritise survey countries in clusters, leading to delays. The evaluation took note of considerable financial, contextual, and political challenges, despite which Afrobarometer was able to deliver impressive survey results and meet its targets.

Financial challenges overcome include numerous examples of ability to stay on course with producing survey results (and to a large extent communications), even during periods when ability to foresee funding flows has been constrained.

“Problems due to funding were mitigated quite well. At some point we thought about reducing sample sizes and the number of countries. In this case, we tend to prioritise countries for which we have a lot of data already. The longitudinal dimension is privileged.”

Director of a Core Partner

Contextual challenges overcome include numerous examples of strong dedication to delivering the survey according to the strict stipulations of the Afrobarometer protocol, which is seen as exemplary because it among other things reflects a commitment to ensuring representative, randomised samples. There is ample evidence of this commitment even in the most demanding of conditions – such as use of mules to reach remote respondents in Ethiopia, coverage of four islands in Cape Verde, and administration of the questionnaire in several local languages. Other contextual challenges have included disease outbreaks (Madagascar).

Political challenges have at times been acute. Examples of these include Afrobarometer representatives being forced into exile (Burundi), imprisoned (Egypt), the inability to conduct Rounds 5, 6 or 7 of the survey due to armed conflict (South Sudan), and a range of instances of political pressures to suppress release of data. These have to

some extent been addressed by using central release to get the data into the public sphere where local release has been difficult. Even in countries generally perceived to have comparatively low levels of political oppression, such as Kenya and Tanzania, it has at times been a convoluted process obtaining permission for data collection.

“We also have some countries where the national partner did not want to have a dissemination event because the results were deemed too sensitive and they were worried that the government would go after them. Togo and Mali for instance. The focus that time was on the justice system, and when the data came out online, journalists seized the story and attacked the government using the data. That puts the national partner in a difficult position. We had a similar situation in Benin with Round 7. We wanted to have a dissemination event around the changes to the constitution but we could not. Many people had said they were against the changes and against the president, but we knew this was not specific to the very changes in the constitution. People were simply unhappy with the government because informal workers had been banned from vending on the streets in Cotonou. Their shops had been destroyed. For us who are in the country, we know a bit more what is behind the data, what people think and why they think it. But that is not what Afrobarometer is about – we just produce data, not analyses, and we don’t provide causes. The issue is that as much as we try to be independent and non-partisan, it cannot always be the case. For instance, when you have a question asking what people think about the president, of course whatever results you publish on this question are going to be interpreted in a subjective way. And [...] we don’t want the government to close us down. We have to be careful what data we publicise.” Afrobarometer officer

In terms of actual results achieved, the largest setback experienced in the period of the surveys under review was the non-release of the Round 5 Ethiopia findings, due to anomalous results, as the following interview excerpt elaborates:

“According to the findings from R5, more than 80% of respondents rated Ethiopia ‘democratic’ – this could be because of the D-Word or other factors. The 2010 elections were heavily disputed but respondents still said the country was democratic. [The analysis is that this happened] because Ethiopia has been under totalitarian rule for so many years, the media is dominated by the state, and there are very few venues for alternative opinion. People only had the version of democracy as expounded by the media, or by the

Government machinery which reaches right down to the lowest local unit. Propaganda is tight. People's views are conditioned by fear, misunderstanding, ignorance, high illiteracy in rural areas¹³.

“The Afrobarometer Board was not happy with the results from the enumeration, and stopped the dissemination. I understand the Afrobarometer Board decision. There's no point of having a public opinion survey if the public thinks the way the government thinks. If there's no distinction, then it's more or less the same as asking the Government. The political environment is completely suffocated. Even if people have something to say, they may not share it”.
Afrobarometer researcher

Enablers for effective surveys in Southern Africa

Interviews in Southern Africa drew attention to five main factors that enabled Afrobarometer to overcome the challenges faced.

- Very strong project management skills, and a plan of action that is developed for the region and for each NP. It is developed at a regional partner workshop. Implementation is staggered so that the Project Manager can give enough attention to each national survey.
- Continuity with NPs as the CP tries to work with the same NP over time.
- The Afrobarometer brand is strong and this encourages NPs to do their best to remain associated with it and to maintain its good reputation *“People and organisations associated with Afrobarometer are seen as being credible research partners by others.”*
- Limiting logistical challenges by planning to avoid the rainy season.
- NPs are developing stronger relationships with National Statistical Officers.

Delays were inevitable in both data collection and – probably more frequently – in subsequent dissemination. Interview findings regarding the latter consistently indicate factors such as lack of capacity (and perhaps self-confidence) among NPs as a major constraint, together with the political factors noted above.

The Evaluation Team noted that the gender dimension was also incorporated in the conduct of surveys as well as the production of publications. NPs and CPs were required to ensure a 50% female representativity in the survey samples, which was sustained throughout the survey rounds. The number of female fieldworkers equally reached an average ratio of 44% in Round 5 and 47% in Round 6, against a target of

¹³ See Afrobarometer Working Paper WP 164: Ethiopians' views of democratic government: fear, ignorance or unique understanding of democracy? Accessible at <http://afrobarometer.org/publications/wp164-ethiopians-views-of-democratic-government>

40%. Afrobarometer's Monitoring & Evaluation system also recorded a jump in the number of female authors of Afrobarometer publications¹⁴. However, gender indicators are judged by the Evaluation Team to be insufficiently mainstreamed into the reporting system to provide a clear picture on the number of women reached through Afrobarometer activities (i.e. among users).

2.2.2 Communications

EQ1.2: To what extent has Afrobarometer delivered against the targets for communications (internal as well as external) laid down in the March 2011 proposal, the April 2015 Round 7 proposal, and the R5 and 6 log frames (specifically indicators in Output 3 and Output 4)?

EQ2: What are the results of the various elements and activities of the Afrobarometer communications program in reaching new audiences, engaging new stakeholders, increasing visibility and use of the data?

Impressive growth in communications

A key overall finding of the evaluation is that Afrobarometer has ramped up the quality, scope and volume of its communications outputs during the period under review, and has delivered against – and in some cases exceeded – targets laid down in the March 2011 proposal. It has engaged new stakeholders, increased visibility, and made good headway in improving the tracking of the survey's footprint. This constitutes a vast improvement in an area where Afrobarometer had been noticeably weak in the past. Investment in improving communications was an explicit goal of the 2011-2017 Strategic Vision, and this progress has been achieved despite major financial and (at times) human resource challenges.

At aggregate level, Afrobarometer informants consistently proudly refer to the growth in quality and quantity of outputs. This includes the rebranding, an increased number of publications of different types, niched to specific audiences. Use of the Twitter account, infographics and enhanced general exposure on the internet have improved. Branding and visualisation skills have also improved, enabling CPs and NPs to better promote both the findings and the Afrobarometer identity. Much of effort has been put into producing user friendly materials, that make the data accessible.

"I have noticed that the visibility of Afrobarometer over the years has increased. What I like about Afrobarometer communications in the media over the past 3 - 4 years is an increase in emphasis on what is topical at the moment and how their findings speak to that. If they build on that it will enhance their potential contribution of public and private interventions in the field. People do not relate to

¹⁴ According to feedback provided by Carol Logan (15 February 2017), for basic publications – briefing papers (old), dispatches and policy papers (new), Afrobarometer has "increased the numbers of papers authored or co-authored by African women up from around 20% in the past to around 35% now".

statistics, but if you are able to apply them to something that is happening in the real world at the time it improves the use of evidence in decision making and Afrobarometer can play a role there.” Afrobarometer user

Human resources

There has been a significant investment in communications human resources. Afrobarometer started recruiting communications staff during Round 5, and has increased from one person only to having a communications expert in each CP, and a network-wide digital manager based at the CP in Kenya. The acting Operations Manager for Communications is the publications manager who oversees network-wide communications from the US, supported by an officer based at the CP in Cape Town. The elevation of this officer to Assistant Operations Manager for Communications, then responsible for managing Southern African communications as well as part of the portfolio in East Africa (in the absence of an officer in the Kenya CP), and now assisting the Acting Communications/Publications manager on network-wide communications activities, including partnership building, stakeholder mapping and other activities, reflects the continued priority being afforded to communications, and is a sign that investment has resumed in earnest post-financial crisis. While the recruitment lag in replacing communications staff slowed down the rebuilding effort, there is now a renewed emphasis on building and re-building communications capacity, and there are signs that even the NPs are actively taking their own initiatives in this domain.

The primacy of national factors

Despite this tangible investment in building Afrobarometer’s communications capacity, there remain areas for improvement – some of which have been alluded to in the earlier discussion on the theory of change. While Afrobarometer’s visibility and brand has gone up a notch, it is not as adept at targeting its engagement to stimulate uptake and use of the data. It has not as yet developed the full capacity or toolkit to enable it to systematically partner with a growing community of organisations, researchers and journalists who are using or brokering Afrobarometer data. The emphasis on supply of data has not been matched by effective engagement in the deeper analytical discourse on the implications of Afrobarometer findings. This is evident particularly at national level.

The extent to which communications strategies, plans and activities were contextually relevant for demand and in relation to the respective roles and capacities of NPs varies in different countries. For example, in Cape Verde, the demand for Afrobarometer data within the government and among parliamentarians has been very strong, and Afrobarometer has been able to easily respond to that demand¹⁵. In other countries, notably Kenya and Tunisia, securing the attention and engagement of parliamentari-

¹⁵ This reflects the very high level of transparency in Cape Verdean governance, The Economist Intelligence Unit’s Democracy Index 2016 ranked Cape Verde at 23 globally, the highest in Africa.

ans has been reported to be far more difficult. An overall finding here is that, although practical communications skills remain a significant limitation, there are also structural issues that inhibit some NPs from playing a more effective role in communications.

Part of the challenge relates to variable capacities and incentives. Communications staff have trained NPs in audience targeting and more specialised outreach, and previous one-size-fits-all releases of survey results have given way to more tailored in-country engagement. Each NP produces a three-month dissemination plan to be implemented once the data is available. However, the experience has been mixed. Some NPs continue to actively undertake dissemination efforts beyond their initial dissemination plan. Others do not have the time or incentive to do so, and dedicated resources from Afrobarometer to encourage further writing have not been sufficient to encourage some NPs to produce more outputs.

The question arises as to whether NPs have sufficient capacity to meet such expectations, and whether they are contractually obliged to do so. The evaluation found that while research centres and academic institutions are generally proactive, private consultancy and survey firms tend to either lack the capacity to engage in communications, even if interested in doing so; or are uninterested in exceeding the stipulations of their contract with Afrobarometer.

These concerns about NP capacity and appetite to engage in value-added communication and data analysis contrasts with the high esteem in which they are held as producers of the Afrobarometer survey itself. NPs are consistently positively compared with other producers of household and facility-level surveys, and Afrobarometer is widely viewed as a ‘kite mark’ for credibility, as in Ethiopia where the local partner, a consulting firm, reports winning bids to produce other surveys primarily because of the association with Afrobarometer.

Mining the data – together with users

There is an unmet demand for further Afrobarometer mining and analysis of its datasets, as only a fraction of the evidence generated by the survey finds its way into the national and global releases. A number of Afrobarometer users noted that the survey releases were too generalised and did not provide an exact match to their data needs. It is expected that a proposed new Data Analysis Unit will address some of the perceived analysis deficit reported by a number of evaluation respondents.

Above the national level, a handful of respondents – particularly in African regional organisations – said they would like to enter into formal partnerships with Afrobarometer in order to make better use of existing Afrobarometer data as well as to be able to commission new data specific to their needs. Some of these respondents expressed frustration that it was difficult to engage the Afrobarometer team to advance such partnerships. In response, Afrobarometer management noted that outreach to key African regional organisations in 2015 had yielded poor results, due to the lack of commitment and poor capacity to follow-up among partners.

The Afrobarometer management team has tentative plans to establish a Data Analysis Unit, which would among other things build on the successful work during the period

under review in visualising and sharing particular findings (such as related to Education and Gender in 2015). This reflects a heightened awareness by the Afrobarometer team of the need to consolidate gains registered in communications by generating tailored, more analytical content. If such a Unit is established, we expect that Afrobarometer will have stronger capacity to engage with users and institutional partners to build on the success of such strategic alliances among civil society organisations.

The Evaluation observed that there is a growing community of researchers, within countries but also working regionally, making sustained and sophisticated use of Afrobarometer data. More often than not, this body of usage is not picked up by Afrobarometer monitoring – largely because much of the literature is grey in nature and is presented in meetings and often not yet published in academic journals. What is more, Afrobarometer has as yet been unable to capitalise on these ripe opportunities for outreach, to learn from these use cases and feed them back into its next-generation communications strategy.

Additionally, Afrobarometer already works closely with National Statistical Offices (NSOs) from the very inception of its survey rounds. The survey protocol stipulates that NSOs must be consulted on important methodological questions such as selection of enumeration areas drawing on NSO-supplied geo-information. In some cases, national statisticians have accompanied Afrobarometer teams to the field. However, the Evaluation Team has noted concerns expressed by the Afrobarometer team that in order to maintain its credibility, it must ensure independence from governments. This limits the extent to which Afrobarometer NPs and CPs can consider NSOs as partners in analysis and dissemination.

Escaping from a supply-driven approach

The Evaluation Team judges that the communications strategy¹⁶ is heavily focused on what products Afrobarometer should ‘supply’, while providing insufficient guidance on how to analyse and respond to the ‘demand’ from researchers, journalists and other actors in the evidence ecosystem who actually do the majority of Afrobarometer’s communications, and a degree of data analysis. While Afrobarometer does its best to track and monitor how its data is being used, and by whom, it is not always possible to capture the full range of usage or brokerage. One stand-out example is a governance researcher and self-appointed Afrobarometer communicator who was interviewed during fieldwork and shared the following:

“One of the things I sometimes wonder about is how best those of us who are end users can even independently or in partnership with

¹⁶ See for instance the 2015 Afrobarometer draft communication strategy (3 December 2015), which reflects the preoccupation with supply but also spells out how Afrobarometer communications in Rounds 7 and 8 will be further prioritized, targeted and nuanced in response to the lessons learnt from Rounds 5 and 6.

Afrobarometer help disseminate the information very well and make sure it really permeates the governance space. When the first Round 7 release came out from Ghana, I got hold of the Power-Point presentation and shared 3 or 4 graphs on my social media feed every day for several weeks. That helps the communication and dissemination efforts a lot. The question is how those of us as end users can do a lot more in partnership with Afrobarometer to disseminate its findings even further. The potential is so great that if we can keep ensuring that it can permeate the public space, we would have helped". Afrobarometer researcher/user/broker

A strategy that has worked well (though has only been exploited to a limited extent) is to partner with civil society organisations interested in specific themes. Afrobarometer has an institutional partnership with Transparency International to gather data that feeds into its Corruption Perceptions Index. In South Africa the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation has partnered with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung to host dissemination events, which the foundation funds.

Others mention that where Afrobarometer has mined its data to generate findings on highly topical issues, such as natural resource conflicts or climate change, a broader engagement with users may be more forthcoming. There is a recognition within Afrobarometer and other interviewees that civil society organisations dealing with these issues are often weak at backing up their advocacy with evidence, and that Afrobarometer may have a role in filling that gap.

"Some of the data from the Afrobarometer survey has informed projects we are undertaking. The law we just passed on the Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP). This has come up in the various rounds of Afrobarometer and the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index. Citizens have strong perceptions of the lack of Government action to deal with corruption. Afrobarometer data has helped us get funding to address things like levels of corruption. Afrobarometer says levels of corruption are persistently high, and yet levels of commitment to fight corruption are low. Both parties put it in their manifestos that they would set up an OSP. We took that up and the Afrobarometer survey data informed our engagement in the process. Centre for Democratic Governance-Ghana, Ghana Integrity Initiative and the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition were instrumental in the advocacy effort – they sent memos to Parliament, Government, etc. As a result of the work we did we have had a very good law passed." Afrobarometer partner

Tracking use

Afrobarometer is making excellent use of innovative new techniques to track digital as well as traditional media references to Afrobarometer survey material, and the R5-R6 Communications Impact Report prepared for Sida catalogues in impressive detail just how far Afrobarometer has progressed in the period under review, not only in increasing its communications output exponentially, but in collecting evidence of

pick-up of its material. This evidence resonates with, and is triangulated by, testimonies of Afrobarometer team members, some of whom cite communications as the biggest success of the 2011-2017 period.

We also note the laudable effort by Afrobarometer to introduce a portfolio of policy visibility impact, whose stated aim is “to capture the stories about the use and impact of Afrobarometer data that cannot be effectively captured by log frame indicators”. The first edition (April 2017) features numerous examples of how government agencies, media organisations, civil society organisations and others are using Afrobarometer data. It is a strong attempt to ‘go beyond the numbers’ to bring stories of Afrobarometer data uptake and use to life. In October 2015 Afrobarometer also conducted an online poll to gather user perceptions of its surveys. Although the poll was unscientific, and despite the difficulty of implementing policy community surveys that will yield meaningful results, the feedback received was positive.

That said, the challenge to tracking progress noted in relation to the overall Afrobarometer monitoring and evaluation function extends to the relationship with NPs, who often lack an explicit mandate to feed into the monitoring and evaluation system by reporting all relevant examples that they find to CPs. While the Afrobarometer management reports engaging the NPs on this issue and urging them to report to the extent possible, some clearly perceive this task to be a secondary priority within their contractual obligations. This is part of a wider structural challenge related to the formal relationship between the Programme Management Unit, Core Partners and National Partners, a concern we expect to be addressed as part of the organisational effectiveness review. We also recognise that not all NPs can be painted with the same brush – it is inevitable that some are more proactive and engaged than others in this domain.

Remaining challenges

Evidence is mixed regarding the effects of the financial crisis on communications. At PMU level it is claimed that the reductions in funding for communications had minimal effect as many NPs were having great difficulty in even spending the resources that they had been allocated. Indeed, the official Afrobarometer position is as follows:

“We did not cut dissemination budgets in R7 relative to what they were in R6, despite the financial crisis. This was a fundamental decision to us – that even though there might have to be cuts elsewhere in the communications program, that we would only do surveys if we could also maintain country disseminations. Budgets changed slightly due to changes in the protocols for R7, but we

*were able to provide budgets for dissemination at the same general rates per events, etc. as in the past”.*¹⁷

Other interviewees noted that even though Afrobarometer was able to largely adjust its use of human resources to ensure that communications functions were maintained, the turbulence in staffing meant that the personal relations that are essential for media contacts were in some instances lost and had to be gradually re-established.

A ‘structural factor’ related to the Afrobarometer theory of change, noted above, is that the two-year cycles of Afrobarometer surveys are not well aligned with media demand for ‘fresh’ information and may even include data that is no longer relevant due to, e.g., political and policy changes in the interim. Even if Afrobarometer data is very relevant to an emerging issue in a given country, several interviewees noted that it is sometimes hard to draw to the attention of the media. The general perception among national level interviewees was that this issue is not insurmountable, but requires on-the-ground, media savvy Afrobarometer actors, and that NPs selected for their survey capacities do not always have those skills and CPs may be too far away.

Although Afrobarometer is meticulous about administering its questionnaire in relevant local languages, Afrobarometer work with translations on the dissemination side is judged by the Evaluation Team to be another area for improvement. Systems are in place for English-French translation. The Evaluation Team notes that investment in Portuguese and Arabic translation has been less systematic, due to apparent resource prioritisations.

Factors affecting uptake of Afrobarometer data

Thematic focus: Afrobarometer has succeeded in many cases in distilling issues relevant to national discourses; weaker engagement with regional institutions has been attributed by several respondents to failure to focus on and collect data on specific topics relevant to the needs of regional institutions.

Timeframe: There is general awareness and respect among researchers and policy-makers that the two-year timeframe is largely appropriate (despite some hopes for smaller surveys in the interim), but less satisfaction among journalists and civil society advocates who demand ‘fresher’ news; A number of respondents have noted that they are less interested in comparing across countries than in receiving more frequent and topical releases about what is happening in-country.

Level of disaggregation: Selection of variables to disaggregate by CPs and PMU are sometimes not aligned with national and regional users demands (e.g., in-country geographical variances, areas facing specific conflict or climate hazards, etc.); some strategically important variables differ from country to country.

Regional versus national focus: Clear and overwhelmingly stronger interest

¹⁷ Annotation to draft report from Carol Logan, Deputy Director (15 February 2018).

among most national stakeholders in the national dataset and less on regional comparisons; but with regional actors obviously having different priorities; some demand (in Tunisia and the rest of North Africa) for more sub-regionally relevant outputs; but weak ability to tailor products/ dissemination events/ other communications engagements accordingly.

Type of product: Concern that Afrobarometer releases present headline findings without delving deep enough into analysing what the numbers mean. Some feel that Afrobarometer should do more to tease out stories from the data, visualise the stories and make them more useable to particular stakeholders.

2.2.3 Capacity Development

EQ 1.3 To what extent has Afrobarometer been able to build the survey and communications capacity of its teams, in core countries as well as among national partners?

Unstable commitments due to the financial crisis

Afrobarometer started out the period under review with clear objectives for capacity development, and spelled these out in detailed annual reports to its funders¹⁸. These reports provide a detailed account of the extent to which capacity development began as a significant priority for Afrobarometer, only to be effectively suspended in 2016 as the financial crisis hit hard.

In 2012, the Year 2, Rounds 5-6 narrative reports indicates that Afrobarometer programmed and implemented a sizeable set of capacity development activities. These included individual mentoring of the NPs by the Afrobarometer communications officer in the PMU; mentoring of Center for Democratic Development-Ghana staff by the Afrobarometer Executive Director in developing Ghana data briefing papers; and a training workshop for new NPs run by the CP in Kenya in July 2012. The Anglophone and Francophone Summer Schools did not happen as scheduled in December 2012 but eventually took place in 2013.

By 2014, capacity development activities had grown exponentially and a full set was reported in the Round 6 Year 4 technical narrative report. Afrobarometer's practice is to present the menu of planned activities to funders in the year prior to implementation, and to report on progress the following year. These included developing and implementing a plan to synchronise the Anglophone and Francophone Summer Schools; conduct two technical training workshops including one dedicated to communications; hold data management workshops for regional data managers; award and facilitate Afrobarometer fellowships for statistical courses and writing; imple-

¹⁸ See the detailed technical narrative reports prepared for funders on an annual basis from 2011 to date. In some cases, mid-year reports are also prepared. All are referenced in Annex 5.3 which lists 'Documents reviewed'.

ment a mentoring exchange programme; and provide hands-on technical assistance to NPs to produce Afrobarometer publications.

The volume and level of ambition of Afrobarometer capacity development continued to grow in 2015, with a similar menu of activities implemented as in the previous year. A significant glitch was the departure of the Afrobarometer Operations Manager for Capacity Building in February 2015. Given the short funding horizon for Round 6, it was decided the position would remain vacant until funding for Round 7 and 8 was confirmed. As a result of the departure of the staff member, 2015 capacity development activities were partially disrupted – although the Summer Schools and other priority activities proceeded as planned.

In July 2016, the Executive Committee met in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, assessed the funding situation and its implications for network operations, and took a number of drastic decisions to cut costs. One was to effectively put the network's capacity development programme on hold. Planning meetings, training workshops and the Afrobarometer Summer Schools were suspended. The University of Cape Town did mobilise internal funds to hold a Summer School in November-December 2016, but student protests as part of the 'Fees Must Fall' campaign at the University of Cape Town, including an attack on the building housing the Afrobarometer office, led to the plan being abandoned.

Some signs of a resurgent commitment and high hopes for the Summer Schools Nonetheless, *ad hoc* capacity development activities did continue in different ways. One stream was continued technical assistance to NPs implementing surveys in 2016, particularly in the transition in Round 7 to EDC. Partners were helped to master and manage the new EDC software, adapt to new data management protocols, develop protocols for real-time quality benefits of EDC, and other aspects. Communications mentoring to NPs also continued, in-person and virtually, in support of dissemination events and documents. According to the narrative report for 2016, this led to NPs meeting publishing targets for Afrobarometer output.

Although the hope was that capacity development would pick up again in 2017, the Round 7 mid-term narrative report indicates that the programme is still operating in minimalist mode, with an expectation that more activities will pick up steam in 2018. The indications the Evaluation Team was able to glean from fieldwork point to a unanimous appreciation for the Summer Schools as well as other forms of specialised training, such as statistical and data fellowships; clear value to the network training prior to roll-out of survey rounds; and significant value derived from hands-on mentoring and learning-by-doing among network members – particularly in the NPs.

Feedback on the Summer Schools in particular has been consistently very positive, with interviewees noting a good mix of support to addressing both concrete survey and communications skills, with broader, more conceptual understanding. The Summer School was described as particularly important to ensure that partners understood the underlying reasoning behind why and how the survey was designed and how it fed into social research intended on impacting on the policy discourse. For the latter, the report-writing sessions were emphasised as important for enhancing practical skills.

The evidence clearly shows, then, that of the three pillars of the Afrobarometer network's operations, capacity development has been most severely affected by the financial crisis. It has also been the lowest hanging fruit for cost-cutting. Despite the sudden reduction in activities, it is clear that the Afrobarometer Executive Committee and management continue to consider capacity development as an important means of delivering on its vision and mission. However, the aftermath of the crisis does provide a timely opportunity to further clarify the value added of the various capacity development activities, impressive as they were at the peak.

In terms of ensuring the future organisational effectiveness and financial sustainability of Afrobarometer, there are clear choices to be made about where the investment is likely to yield the strongest gains in terms of value for money. The Team's view is that capacity development as currently conceived of in the annual plans is well-calibrated to address both Afrobarometer's proximate and immediate needs as related to delivering and effectively communicating the survey. The wider 'public good' dimension is of critical importance to entrenching the value of citizen perception survey and in building a community of practice in Africa, but the niche of Afrobarometer (amid a range of organisations, e.g. specialising in media training) remains unclear.

2.3 Costs versus Quality

EQ4: How do the costs for Afrobarometer surveys compare to the costs of surveys managed by other organizations (including other cost estimates available)? What about the cost versus quality of Afrobarometer surveys?

Comparable costs –but worth the investment

The Afrobarometer survey costs are comparable to those of other Barometers. The table¹² below provides an average cost comparison between surveys conducted by Afrobarometer, Arabarometer and the Arab Democracy Index in Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt in the period 2015-2017 covering a sample size of up to 1200¹⁹.

Barometer	Budgeted cost (US\$)	Average estimated unit cost (US\$)
Afrobarometer	372 398	77.5
Arabarometer	310 000	64.5
Arab Democracy Index	419 500	87.4

An analysis of the protocols of the three barometers helps explain the costs. Rigour in methodology, continuity and outreach account for most of these differences in costs.

¹⁹ For the countries covered in this comparison, although the sample size was 1200, the *effective* sample size of Arabarometer varied, therefore effecting the margin of error. The variations are as follows: Algeria (470), Egypt (959), Morocco (1124) and Tunisia (1076).

For instance, the Arabarometer is conducted less frequently than Afrobarometer; has an error margin of up to 4.5% compared to Afrobarometer's maximum of 2.8%; the budget does not cover communications; and training of surveyors is limited to three days, as opposed to seven days by Afrobarometer. The Arab Democracy Index is also conducted every two years and follows a protocol largely similar to Afrobarometer's. While its costs do not include communication, like Afrobarometer they include insurance costs for field surveyors in politically-volatile contexts and additional requirements on the local partners resulting from the uneven use of EDC tools in all countries in the other Barometers.

In general, Afrobarometer takes a position that providing better conditions for enumerators, through provision of insurance and better overnight allowances than other organisations, leads to a positive impact on the quality of the data produced. Another area where Afrobarometer has given priority to quality versus savings is by having face-to-face surveys rather than cheaper telephone surveys, as used by other organisations. Afrobarometer judges (and the Evaluation Team concurs) that use of telephones would bias the sample and also would not be viable with a long questionnaire such as that used by Afrobarometer.

Afrobarometer has been very consistent in demanding exceptionally high standards of representativity in the sample, even where this involves considerable costs. Examples include travel to remote parts of Madagascar, using mules to reach selected communities in Ethiopia, confronting problems with travels during the rainy season in Zambia and coverage of four distant islands in Cape Verde. NPs express pride that they have been able to meet these standards, but some partners have left Afrobarometer or not had their contracts renewed due to the arduous demands amid financial constraints.

But quality reduces flexibility – a surmountable obstacle?

Some informants acknowledge their ignorance of comparative costs, but many external stakeholders assume that the Afrobarometer survey costs are high, but also that their credibility when 'sticking out their necks' relies on high levels of quality that others are not capable of attaining or striving towards. Some express concerns that the sample size is too small for sub-national disaggregation, whereas others see it as impressive. These judgements naturally relate to the uses for which these different users intend to apply the data (and the size of the country being surveyed), but the Evaluation Team judges that Afrobarometer has achieved a 'happy medium' in this regard given available funding and in relation to current balance between regional and (sub-) national analyses. If there was to be more granular sub-national analysis in the future the criteria for this 'happy medium' could shift.

However, the lower standards also mean that other survey organisations are more agile. Afrobarometer's strict and standardised survey model and methods are designed to achieve a level of quality that is higher and unique compared to others, and therefore more credible, but at times less timely –and therefore less relevant for responding to rapidly emerging concerns. Most other survey organisations also tend to work locally rather than nationally or regionally, which may provide the flexibility to provide greater salience for localised concerns, but little opportunity for a comparative perspective.

It should be noted that in some cases NPs are themselves conducting such smaller and more flexible surveys outside of their engagements with Afrobarometer. This ability to access support from other sources is indicative of additional value being derived from the capacity development and reputational enhancement provided by Afrobarometer. The Evaluation Team's impressions are that the NPs are aware of the importance of sending clear messages differentiating between Afrobarometer and other assignments to avoid any reputational risk to Afrobarometer. However, there was no evidence found of these partners exploring opportunities for synergies, triangulating the different data sets that they are producing for their different partners.

Areas to introduce greater efficiencies

A recurrent aspect of the internal discussions within Afrobarometer and among outside stakeholders is the efficiency of using such a long questionnaire (averaging over 100 questions in each round). Some feel that the length of the questionnaire increases time/cost and also reduces quality as respondents grow weary. However, the fact that many interviewees had ambitious suggestions about what could be added, with few about what could be removed, illustrates this conundrum.

EDC consist of a shift to the use of tablets rather than pen a paper for data collection and with that much more rapid transfer of data and verification. EDC has better linked enumerators to their organisations and central levels. It is seen to be crucial to reduce costs and improve survey efficiency, and a number of respondents question why it took so long. Afrobarometer leadership notes the diversity of NPs, some of whom are conservative regarding the embrace of new technologies and that an 'upgrade' in 36 countries with different conditions (electricity, telecommunications, access to IT support, access to technical training) is a complex process.

Positive aspects of the shift to EDC

- *Sampling quality* has improved, there is less room for discretion in the field about who to interview
- *Data quality*, more accurate data collection at source
- *Greater efficiency in producing the questionnaire*, no printing costs
- *Questionnaire can be quickly updated* and respond to feedback from training and piloting without incurring printing costs
- *Reduced time* for data capture
- *Data cleaning and verification* is much easier

Overall, informants stressed the reduced time for collecting and cleaning the data as the most important advantages in the new system. No regrets were recorded regarding the shift to EDC.

2.4 Organisational Structure

This evaluation was undertaken concurrently with an Internal Control Review²⁰ and just before an organisational development review and analysis of fundraising opportunities were about to commence. Therefore, the findings, conclusions and recommendations regarding organisational sustainability have been framed as an input into a rapidly evolving dialogue. The Evaluation Team has benefited from dialogue with the internal control review team. The findings of that review focus primarily on immediate issues and needed adjustments, whereas the analysis in this Evaluation emphasises the broader impending transition to a more formal structure.

EQ5: Are the current management structures fit for purpose? How can these structures be improved to ensure the sustainability of Afrobarometer?

Implications of a ‘loose’ network

The Internal Control Review and the Evaluation concur that Afrobarometer is a rather unusual ‘loose’ network as opposed to a unitary organisation, wherein ‘membership’ is based on memoranda of understanding. Most responsibilities are defined in the “Afrobarometer Survey Manual” and the “Afrobarometer Financial Management Manual”, rather than in a document describing governance and relations within the organisation. The roles of the PMU, CPs and NPs have evolved organically over time, but can still be seen as being anchored in structures that resemble a ‘pilot project’ managed by CDD Ghana, rather than an organisation. Whereas this has had clear advantages in the past, some structures (or lack thereof) are now proving problematic, as described in detail in the Internal Control Review. Nonetheless, the diversity of the capacities, roles and structures of the NPs in particular suggests the continued need for a significant degree of flexibility and a somewhat ‘hybrid’ organisational structure.

The evaluation found numerous examples of how the PMU, CPs and NPs have adapted their mutual relationships to the different conditions in each country while also maintaining the integrity and comparability of the survey. These relationships have also fostered a strong Afrobarometer identity and what some interviewees have referred to as a ‘work ethic’. The Evaluation has found that this has been due to a judicious (but somewhat ‘odd’) combination of acting as a ‘network’ with attention to shared learning and fostering of value-driven commitments, with also strict ‘top-down’ contractual stipulations. The balance between treating NPs (and to some extent even CPs) as ‘partners’ versus ‘sub-contractors’ has been adapted to the need and types of ‘partners’ and also to the demands of a given task. CP roles described to the Evaluation Team appear to indicate adaptation to the proclivities, capacities and rela-

²⁰ Ernst and Young (2018) Report on the review of internal management and control of Afrobarometer, January 2018.

tionships of respective institutions. Whereas this has been pragmatic, it contributes to the insufficient articulation of the overall theory of change noted in section 2.1 above (as they may be operating under slightly different theories of change).

Gaps and siloes in the ‘organisation’

Interviews with Afrobarometer staff and partners at CP and NP levels, and the findings of the internal control review, indicate that there are problems with internal communications and clarity regarding respective roles. The flexibility that has enabled the Afrobarometer PMU to respond to the financial crisis, for example, has also generated frustrations among members of the broader team who did not feel empowered to contribute fully to the search for solutions, and enabled to find ways to deal with the resulting volatility within their own organisations. Other tensions have emerged with regard to harmonising employment conditions. The lack of a specialised CP for North Africa is another area where ambiguities have emerged as to the expected role of the NP.

In general, the Evaluation Team judges that the challenges in working in Arabic and Portuguese speaking countries have been addressed in a rather *ad hoc* manner, which has resulted in a lack of clarity regarding how (and how much) their unique perspectives are to be reflected in overall Afrobarometer plans. Other feedback has indicated the existence of siloes between e.g., surveys and communications and between the different sub-regions, which has affected efficiency and joint perspectives on the theory of change. Some interviewees also pointed to “pressure points” resulting from a mismatch between the ambition of Afrobarometer and its focus on quality with the human resources capacity at its disposal. Reference was made, for instance, to the availability of only one sampling expert per region to oversee the quality control.

It is difficult for the Evaluation Team to accurately judge the trade-offs between centralised versus decentralised management within individual functions, which will presumably be addressed in the organisational development review, but we note that tensions exist that appear to be related to what are in some instances (but far from all) insufficiently open discussion and insufficiently clear lines of responsibility.

In line with its relative informality and the distributed nature of its network, Afrobarometer’s highest level of governance resides in the Executive Committee, which consists of senior staff from the PMU and CPs, NP representatives and the three original founders. As such, it consists of management and *de facto* sub-contractors, rather than individuals who would be expected to exercise an independent oversight, advisory and support function, as would often be considered the norm in governance for a network/organisation such as this. On average, the Executive Committee meets physically once a year and holds regular teleconferences/virtual meetings every few months. The all-encompassing nature of its mandate highlights two challenges. First is the lack of clear separation between the function of a properly-constituted governance structure and day-to-day management, raising fundamental questions about coherence of activities with the overall vision and theory of change. Second is the concern about an orderly succession plan, given that the founders are in the process of transitioning. Although there is an awareness of the need to think beyond the current leadership by the pioneers, and although the Operations Managers are envisaged as the next-generation leaders of Afrobarometer, further thought is needed on how best

to optimise governance and improve succession planning as part of the organisational development process.

The Internal Control Review recommends adapting the current survey and financial manuals to provide a greater degree of clarity regarding Afrobarometer governance. The Evaluation Team recognises that whereas this may be ‘a step in the right direction’, an organisation of the size and importance of Afrobarometer will need to soon undertake more comprehensive changes and move beyond its structure as a ‘pilot project’.

2.5 Financial Sustainability

EQ6: Can Afrobarometer’s fundraising efforts and the network’s fundraising strategy be strengthened? What is the feasibility and requirements (if applicable) for establishing an endowment for Afrobarometer?

The financial crisis as a critical juncture

There is general acknowledgement within senior and mid-level management that the financial crisis, described above, constituted a serious threat to Afrobarometer’s existence, but at the same time provided an opportunity to reflect on how best to insulate the initiative from such future shocks and address questions of future sustainability.

Currently Afrobarometer fundraising is managed entirely by the PMU, particularly the founders and senior staff. It is not handled in a structured manner. Responsibilities for fundraising functions and strategic foresight (on donor priorities) are not clear within the organisation, neither centrally nor with encouraging partners to take initiatives. Fundraising is not sufficiently linked to the five-year strategy, but is reported by some interviewees in senior management to be largely pursued on an *ad hoc*, round-by-round basis. Afrobarometer is aware of this and intends to take advantage of an offer of support from the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund for assistance in developing a clearer and more appropriate approach. Apart from ongoing, *ad hoc* fundraising for rounds 8 and 9, this issue of taking a more structured and strategic approach appears to have been ‘parked’ while awaiting the support from the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund to develop plans further.

Risks and opportunities with decentralised fundraising

The reasons for maintaining a centralised fundraising structure primarily relate to the need to avoid centrifugal tendencies if funds raised in countries or sub-regions were to be conditional on changing the survey in ways that would obstruct comparability. This is judged by the Evaluation Team to be a valid fear.

“Here in Benin we had discussions with the EU and GIZ. But to date, no luck. But interests are divergent. Because other actors’ interests are on certain districts in Benin and Afrobarometer data is not at that level. And to get contributions from such organisations, they need to launch a call for proposal, so it would have to be something separate from Afrobarometer”. Afrobarometer project director

Other centrifugal risks relate to the varied and highly ambitious hopes expressed by many external stakeholders regarding how Afrobarometer ‘should’ raise additional resources to expand its scope – for instance by producing more tailored surveys, generating mini-surveys on topical issues, producing more perception data on behalf of specific strategic partners, or investing in better data analytics and visualisation. It is likely that some of these suggestions could prove fundable. Some of these ideas could fall within the Afrobarometer theory of change, and others that would lead outside of Afrobarometer’s basic niche could be more of a diversion and distraction. This highlights the importance of linking a discussion of the future Afrobarometer business model to its theory of change.

Adapting to a changing donor landscape

Related to this, currently there is an awareness within Afrobarometer that the promotion of democratic governance as a global good is no longer as much of a donor priority as it was in the past. Nonetheless, there is no clear consensus regarding if and how much Afrobarometer may need to adapt its focus to respond to the changing landscape of funding opportunities.

The financial crisis also created an awareness of the need to find a way to set aside reserves, but discussions are at an initial stage regarding how. As far as endowments are concerned, there is no unanimity within Afrobarometer of what is understood by ‘endowments’. The general understanding appears to be that funds should be ring-fenced to guarantee a longer-term financing horizon. This builds on the success of the Afrobarometer Basket Fund, created in 2008 when funders agreed to pool their contributions²¹. The Fund was central to Afrobarometer’s ability to manage the transition from MSU to CDD-Ghana, to deliver Round 4 and to manage new donor funding streams²². What is now being considered is intended to build on the Basket Fund’s success, with the added objective of insulating Afrobarometer against funding shocks.

²¹ The rationale for the ‘Basket Fund’ was to (a) smooth project operations and minimise disruptions; enable the PMU to produce a common financial report, and to commission a single annual financial audit.

²² For more details, see the background note on the Afrobarometer Basket Fund (undated, provided by the PMU).

3 Conclusions and Lessons Learnt

3.1 Effectiveness and relevance of the theory of change

Afrobarometer's vision has generated demands and expectations beyond what Afrobarometer can actually meet, despite a significant contribution to achieving this vision of making citizens' voices heard. Afrobarometer's vision has not changed much over time. However, despite a clear direction, the scope and ways the different activities contribute to the vision are insufficiently clear. Even though Afrobarometer staff and partners are well aware of the overall vision, there is considerably less awareness of how to live up to the vision and its implications for day-to-day decisions.

The factors underpinning what is often a 'supply-driven' approach to achieving the Afrobarometer vision are largely achieved by deploying a one-size-fits-all approach, which is in turn anchored in the need for comparable cross-country and longitudinal data. While recognising the validity of these concerns, there is a need for a theory of change that more explicitly recognises that ensuring national-level relevance may require a higher degree of flexibility in responding to national demands. This is particularly true with regard to communications, where what might constitute a plausible theory of change for influencing the public discourse will vary enormously in relation to political and even cultural factors in each sub-region, country and to some extent linguistic area.

There has been an impressive expansion of communications outputs, which has somewhat reflected the demands of various audiences. There are some notable gaps with regard to regional institutions in particular, which may not be possible to address as their demands are often beyond Afrobarometer's core business. A significant investment in communications capacity has been made, which has expanded the roles of the CPs and NPs. There are still challenges with uptake by policy makers and the media in many countries. There is a need to rethink the speed and frequency with which Afrobarometer data is released to retain interest and engagement. More can be done to increase the awareness of the Afrobarometer data set amongst researchers, both within universities and think tanks.

During the current grant period Afrobarometer has maintained a very positive trajectory in achieving overall results despite the financial crisis. This has been due to the agility of the organisation and its solid reputation. Experience has demonstrated a reactive and a 'two steps forward, one step back' process in confronting grave challenges, which has been managed fairly well, but has also demonstrated the problems inherent in 'too much adaptive management' due to factors in the unclear decision-making structure.

Lessons learnt

- Routes to impact need to be further thought through, with clear attention to a manageable input in terms of capacity development.
- Afrobarometer should not strive to ‘be a think tank’, as it is likely to retain its primary role in providing data rather than synthesis and analysis of data for policy analysis. But it needs to better situate itself in the landscape of national and regional think tanks and academic institutions that analyse Afrobarometer data.
- Another aspect of becoming better positioned nationally that would be appropriate to explore is the relationship to other survey organisations, including national statistical offices. This could serve to better bridge between (a) data on perceptions with data on the factors that generate these perceptions, and (b) surveys conducted biannually by Afrobarometer and smaller, thematic surveys on related issues conducted in the interim.
- There has been insufficient Afrobarometer responsiveness in engaging key potential users, which indicates a need for more active joint ‘brokering’ of uptake and use of data.
- There is a need for reflection over what constitutes ‘strategic visibility’ (where modest inputs can trigger a broader debate), with particular guidance regarding adaptation to different country contexts.
- Greater NP incentives, ownership and mandate are needed to engage creatively with users (which may include revisiting the relative roles of NPs and CPs), while recognising inherent limits to NP roles due to their basic capacities and organisational priorities.
- Afrobarometer should encourage more leeway at a national level to do things differently, e.g., to capitalise on what is happening with some NPs who have capacity to create outputs such as videos and podcasts.

3.2 Efficiency

Investment in a well-enumerated survey is essential in order to guarantee and sustain the perception of credibility and value among Afrobarometer stakeholders. There are no real comparators to Afrobarometer given the unique quality and scale of the organisation. The Evaluation Team’s overall conclusion is that the investment in the integrity of the survey represents value for money. Appropriate ambitions for some of the key variables that impinge on efficiency, most notably the size of the sample and of the questionnaire, are inevitably related to the different uses of the data— but the Evaluation generally judges that Afrobarometer has found a ‘happy medium’.

An underlying issue in determining where a significant level of value for money can be achieved in capacity development efforts is to ensure that the support on offer is relevant for the NPs, i.e. their interests as organisations, their pre-existing skills, and the national level institutional engagements that they have and intend to pursue. This implies the need, particularly in a resource-constrained environment, to ensure that investments in capacity building are further refined to better serve the core Afrobarometer objectives.

There is a notable demand for more modest, focused thematic surveys to be conducted between the main Afrobarometer rounds and this could provide added values in terms of keeping NPs active, responding better to national demands and follow-up issues arising from the main survey (mobilising national fundraising as well). However, it is clear that in order to be considered credible, any new products would have to live up to Afrobarometer standards of rigour and high quality as applied to the main surveys.

The roll-out of EDC is a worthwhile investment that will undoubtedly yield quality and efficiency gains.

Lessons learnt

- Choices regarding levels of investment in the survey need to reflect the demands and expectations of different users. Afrobarometer has made judicious decisions thus far, but this will require continued dialogue to ensure credibility over time.
- A review of the capacity development activities and their contribution to the theory of change could guide a reflection on priorities.
- The high return on investment in EDC indicates that Afrobarometer needs to closely monitor technological developments, while keeping partners ‘in the loop’ to ensure faster buy-in and uptake.

3.3 Sustainability

Decentralisation, agility and flexibility have served Afrobarometer well, so reforms should ensure that these benefits are not lost, partly due to the need to adapt to the diversity of capacities, roles and structures of NPs. Despite being an ‘odd’ and somewhat ‘messy’ organisational structure, the overall system works, even though the partner/sub-contractor contradiction carries with it risks of misunderstandings.

The current level of decentralisation generally works well. The various teams are functioning and have developed infrastructure and systems that have improved in recent years. However, Afrobarometer lacks a formal institutional structure, registered in Africa, with a permanent management team and explicit separation of management and governance. The founders may in the future still play a role as trustees or advisors, or even as lead investigators or researchers, but the strategic decision making should be led by a board (perhaps of trustees) with a clearly defined relationship with the management team.

There is a need for greater transparency within the overall Afrobarometer structure. This includes empowerment of the CPs in general, and where appropriate the NPs, though the extent to which this can be done with the latter will vary according to the capacities and proclivities of a given partner. The focus of reforms needs to be on retaining the benefits of the sub-contracting structure while identifying greater incentives for NPs and CPs to act creatively and take initiatives in a way that reflects shared values.

There is a shared aspiration for more predictability and continuity. This demonstrates the importance of a more articulated, long-run fundraising strategy. Wellspring Philanthropic Fund support is very timely to better structure approaches to fundraising and avoid reliance on crisis management; but clear sequencing is needed in relation to the organisational development reform process. Fundraising should be related to the development of an overall business model that is ‘fit for purpose’ in relation to the theory of change.

Lessons learnt

- The Afrobarometer organisational development experience demonstrates the largely positive, and occasionally negative aspects of building and adapting an organisation to changing circumstances. It is, however, at a critical juncture that necessitates transitioning beyond being ‘Africa’s oldest and largest pilot project’ to becoming a more formal institution.
- Donor priorities are changing, which will continue to affect commitments to democracy and governance. Afrobarometer may need to make some difficult choices regarding if/how to adapt the survey focus and timing to correspond with donor priorities.

4 Recommendations

The Evaluation presents below two sets of recommendations; for Sida and for the Afrobarometer.

Recommendations to Sida

1. The Evaluation recommends that Sida proceeds with support to Afrobarometer largely as planned for the coming phase.
2. Sida should encourage the organisational formalisation process and adapt support to the outcomes of the organisational development initiative that is about to start. The recommendations of the Internal Control Review for adapting existing ‘manuals’ should be seen as a short-term measure that could nonetheless synchronise well with the more structural changes expected as part of the organisational strengthening initiative.
3. Sida should use dialogue to engage with other donors to encourage continued recognition of how awareness of the views of the public, as supported by Afrobarometer, constitutes a critically important aspect of mitigating risks of conflict and predicting political instability, i.e., to current policy priorities, even if democratisation and governance are no longer as central as they were in the past.

Recommendations to Afrobarometer

The recommendations are structured along the lines of the three focus areas of the evaluation. The order of the recommendations largely reflects the Evaluation Team’s judgement on prioritisation, but it is recognised that implementation will need to be adapted to the processes that will soon be initiated to reform the organisational structure and develop a resource mobilisation strategy.

- 1. Survey**
 - a) The Evaluation Team encourages Afrobarometer to sustain its focus on quality and on ensuring the protocol is implemented to guarantee the integrity and credibility of the survey.
 - b) Afrobarometer should further improve the sampling capacities and process.
 - c) Further attention should be given to building bridges with national statistical offices, other (credible) survey organisations and even the work done by NPs outside of their Afrobarometer engagements to identify ways to link perception data with other relevant variables.
 - d) Afrobarometer should retain its basic structure of surveys at two-year intervals while exploring opportunities to better engage with ‘fresh’ data emerging in the interim from other sources.

2. Communications

- a) Afrobarometer should reformulate communications plans and targets to be less ‘supply-driven’ and better reflect progress in relation to strengthened institutional relations and engagements (more of what Afrobarometer *contributes* to rather than just what it *does*).
- b) Investment is needed in conducting a more systematic stakeholder mapping, updated on an ongoing basis and harnessed for communications planning and strategising, including reassessing roles and capacity needs for different engagements. This may be less urgent for small countries where it is relatively easy to cover every relevant stakeholder without such an analysis, but even in such cases the stakeholder analysis could help to better draw attention to the local researchers who can prove valuable for analysing and driving the local discourse on the implications of Afrobarometer data.
- c) In expanding the mandate of the monitoring and evaluation function in the PMU, Afrobarometer should further develop and refine its toolkit for tracking its reach, influence and impact, and use insights gleaned to more creatively engage users and to enhance and build upon the monitoring and evaluation function.
- d) The creation of an analysis unit would be a positive step, but the Evaluation Team recommends that Afrobarometer takes this a step further and undertakes collaborative analysis with think tanks with thematic expertise and selected sub-sets of NPs and CPs.
- e) Afrobarometer should continue to ensure that survey results are released within three months of finalising the survey by NPs, which we note is being facilitated by the introduction of the EDC system.
- f) We encourage Afrobarometer to explore opportunities to maintain visibility between survey releases through partnerships (e.g., academics, think tanks) in order to complement efforts by NPs.
- g) Afrobarometer should encourage more writers to publish using Afrobarometer data, including both academic and other types of papers (e.g. working papers). This may include establishing a writing coordination team with a budget for outside researchers in Africa, particularly doctoral students and other young researchers, to write for Afrobarometer, and also to help other writers (e.g. from think tanks or from the NPs) with the statistical aspects of their papers.

3. Capacity development

- a) The variety of capacity challenges and priorities among different CPs and NPs suggests the need for a more tailored approach to setting capacity targets reflecting different contexts and demands, as well as the varying capacities and levels of potential engagement of individual NPs.
- b) A more explicit and transparent system for decisions on capacity development prioritisation should be created, including justifications linked to the strategic vision (ideally drawing on data gathered in the monitoring and evaluation system); details may need to be adapted to the governance and management structures created in the upcoming organisational development process.
- c) Priority should be given to developing the capacity amongst the network for communications at both NP and CP levels.

4. Efficiency, organisational reform and sustainability

- a) In elaborating a five-year programme it is essential that Afrobarometer, with strong participation from NPs, reflects further on its theory of change, updates it and ensures it is linked more directly to the pillars of its work and a business plan. It is very important that these initiatives are joined up.
- b) The new structure for Afrobarometer should have clear governance and management structures, and a transparent differentiation between the two, and should give initial attention to succession issues.
- c) Organisational restructuring plans need to ensure that breaking down siloes between different departments and sub-regions is anchored in a functional analysis of how all should jointly contribute to achieving outcomes within the overall theory of change.
- d) As part of the upcoming organisational development review the Evaluation Team highlights the need to formalise and provide a more transparent structure, while retaining the current benefits of a significant measure of decentralisation.
- e) The current overall structure with a PMU, CPs and NPs remains appropriate, but greater clarity of roles and better internal communications should be paramount concerns.
- f) Fundraising expertise input should be selected to include experience and up-to-date understanding of trends and priorities of a range of categories of different potential financiers.
- g) Governance should be restructured in such a way as to leverage fundraising expertise and influence.
- h) Afrobarometer should document the cost, quality and overall efficiency gains registered as a result of the transition from paper-based to electronic data capture, while continuing to explore additional technological means to enhance survey efficiency and quality.

5 Annexes

5.1 Terms of Reference



Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of Afrobarometer's regional program 2011-2017

Date: 2017-08-15

1. Evaluation purpose: Intended use and intended users

The purpose or intended use of the evaluation is to provide the regional team at the Embassy of Sweden in Addis Ababa and Afrobarometer with a solid input for the preparation and design of the next phase (2018-2021) of Swedish support to the organisation.

The primary intended users of the evaluation are the regional team at the Embassy of Sweden in Addis Ababa and Afrobarometer. The evaluation is to be designed, conducted and reported to meet the needs of the intended users and tenderers shall elaborate on how this will be ensured during the evaluation process.

Other stakeholders that should be kept informed about the evaluation include other core donors to Afrobarometer. Communication with them on the findings and recommendations will be managed by Sida and Afrobarometer.

2. Evaluation object and scope

The evaluation object is Afrobarometer. When Afrobarometer was established in 1999, it emerged from a collaboration among three institutions (Michigan State University (MSU),

Center for Democratic Development in Ghana (CDD), and Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa)), each of which had launched its own survey research project. Since its inception, Afrobarometer has existed as a relatively informal network of partners, including both these original three core partners,²³ and national partners in each of the dozen countries that were included in Round 1 (1999-2001). Afrobarometer had no legal status or permanent institutional home, but rather existed as a collaborative informal network including roughly a dozen partner institutions.

Since the organisation was launched Afrobarometer has built a pan-African network of social science researchers and civic activists. It has accumulated more than 240,000 survey interviews with African citizens in 37 countries, which together represent more than three-quarters of the continent's population. The results of this research have been widely disseminated to policy actors and the mass media through a variety of communication platforms, including more than 400 Afrobarometer publications, a busy website, and an active social media presence.

The impact of Afrobarometer data in shaping popular political and policy debates has been built on a number of core programmatic achievements, especially during the most recent implementation period for Rounds 5 and 6 (2011-2015) and the early stages of Round 7 (2016-2018). Most significantly, Afrobarometer nearly doubled its country coverage, while achieving an increase in its visibility.

As the scope of Afrobarometer's work has grown, however, the need to transform its structure has become increasingly evident, as both the technical and managerial demands have grown, requiring increasing functional specialization. Therefore, during 2017, Afrobarometer will launch an organizational development/institutional restructuring effort, with the anticipated support of the Open Societies Foundation. Over the next 18-24 months, the network will engage professional guidance in undertaking an organizational development process with the goals of:

- Further defining Afrobarometer's vision and strategy and extending it to a five- to ten-year time frame.
- Establishing Afrobarometer as a formal legal entity and protecting the Afrobarometer brand by obtaining formal trademark rights.
- Identifying a permanent location and institutional home.
- Building a functional advisory board that can play an active role both in guiding project management and fundraising.
- Developing management structures that ensure management sustainability through generational change within the network.

²³ IDASA ceased to exist in 2013.

The scope of the present evaluation is:

1. Results in relation to agreed plans during the period 2011-2017 with respect to surveys, communications, and capacity building.
2. Review of Afrobarometer as a structure, providing guidance and recommendations as regards legal status, permanent institutional home, advisory board, management structures etc., in relation to how best to develop AB's business model and sustain future operations.²⁴
3. A forward-looking analysis on key changes in the surrounding landscape which could affect AB and identify adjustments which hence would be relevant for AB to undertake in order to ensure efficiency and sustainability.

For further information, Afrobarometer's Draft Strategic Vision 2017-2022 is attached as Annex D. The scope of the evaluation shall be further elaborated by the evaluator in the inception report.

3. Evaluation objective and questions

The objective of this evaluation is to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of activities carried out by Afrobarometer and assess the sustainability of the organisation. The evaluation shall formulate recommendations as an input to developing a new phase of the programme.

The specific evaluation questions are:

Effectiveness

- What are the programmatic results relative to plans and targets during the current grant period (2011-2017) with respect to surveys, communications, and capacity building? The evaluation shall identify any shortcomings and explain the causes of such shortcomings, where applicable.
- What are the results of the various elements and activities of the Afrobarometer communications program in reaching new audiences, engaging new stakeholders, increasing visibility and use of the data? The evaluation shall specifically provide feedback on which investments in communications were most/least effective, identify remaining gaps and opportunities, and recommend realistic, cost-effective means for achieving further gains and driving further use of the data, especially within African governments.

²⁴ As an input to this task, the evaluators are to receive findings and comments from a Review on Internal Control at the Afrobarometer, which already is underway, also commissioned by Sida. The Responsible PO at the Swedish Embassy in Addis Ababa will facilitate communication between the two teams. An excerpt from the ToR for the Internal Control Review is enclosed as Annex C to the present document.

The evaluation shall assess Afrobarometer's theory of change (currently expressed in Afrobarometer's Strategic Vision, 2017-2022 (annex D)) and make recommendations regarding on how the theory of change could be developed into a five to ten-year time frame programme. An aspect of this assignment is to review Afrobarometer's monitoring and evaluation system, including the new online monitoring and evaluation system recently introduced by Afrobarometer, and provide recommendations on how Afrobarometer's monitoring and evaluation system may be improved.

Efficiency

The Evaluation Team shall review the costs for Afrobarometer surveys, and compare to costs of surveys managed by other organizations (including other cost estimates available to Afrobarometer), and provide conclusions regarding the cost versus quality of Afrobarometer surveys. The evaluators shall formulate recommendations regarding the approach to survey budgeting, cross-country comparability/balance of budgets, and on how to achieve greater efficiency in the survey budgets to reduce costs.

Sustainability

As mentioned in section 2 Afrobarometer anticipates undertaking an organizational development process during 2017-2018. In anticipation of this process, the evaluation should evaluate the current management structures and formulate recommendations for how these structures may be improved to ensure the sustainability of Afrobarometer. This task includes that roles and responsibilities within the organisation are analysed and that skills and capacity gaps are identified. The evaluation shall also formulate recommendations regarding the benefits, and potential role and composition of an advisory board, as well as reviewing options and making recommendations regarding establishing a permanent location and institutional home for Afrobarometer.

Further, the Evaluation Team shall evaluate Afrobarometer's fundraising efforts and provide recommendations regarding how the network's fundraising strategy may be strengthened and provide guidance regarding the feasibility and requirements (if applicable) for establishing an endowment for Afrobarometer.

The evaluation shall dedicate considerable energy to a forward-looking analysis on key changes in the surrounding landscape which could affect Afrobarometer and identify adjustments which hence would be relevant for Afrobarometer to undertake in order to ensure sustainability.

Questions are expected to be developed in the tender by the tenderer and further developed during the inception phase of the evaluation.

4. Methodology and methods for data collection and analysis

It is expected that the evaluator describes and justifies an appropriate methodology and methods for data collection in the tender. The evaluation design, methodology and methods for data collection and analysis are expected to be fully presented in the inception report.

Sida's approach to evaluation is utilization-focused which means the evaluator should facilitate the entire evaluation process with careful consideration of how everything that is done will affect the use of the evaluation. It is therefore expected that the evaluators, in their tender, present i) how intended users are to participate in and contribute to the evaluation process and ii) methodology and methods for data collection that create space for reflection, discussion and learning between the intended users of the evaluation.

Evaluators should take into consideration appropriate measures for collecting data in cases where sensitive or confidential issues are addressed, and avoid presenting information that may be harmful to some stakeholder groups.

5. Organisation of evaluation management

This evaluation is commissioned by the regional team at the Embassy of Sweden in Addis Ababa. The intended user(s) are the regional team at the Embassy of Sweden in Addis Ababa and Afrobarometer. The intended users of the evaluation form a steering group which has contributed to and agreed on the ToRs for this evaluation. Responsibility for the evaluation of the tenders will rest with the Embassy of Sweden in Addis Ababa in consultation with Afrobarometer. The steering group will approve the inception report and the final report of the evaluation. Due to the "geographic factor" and deficiencies in telephone/video communications, separate start-up meetings will be required. Concerning the debriefing workshop/s where preliminary findings and conclusions are to be discussed, the aim is to have the full steering group participate at one and the same event.

6. Evaluation quality

All Sida's evaluations shall conform to OECD/DAC's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation²⁵. The evaluators shall use the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation²⁶. The evaluators shall specify how quality assurance will be handled by them during the evaluation process.

7. Time schedule and deliverables

It is expected that a time and work plan is presented in the tender and further detailed in the inception report. The evaluation and the reporting shall be finalized by the end of January, 2018. The timing of any field visits, surveys and interviews need to be settled by the evaluator in dialogue with the main stakeholders during the inception phase. The table below lists

²⁵ DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, OECD, 2010.

²⁶ Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, Sida in cooperation with OECD/DAC, 2014.

key deliverables for the evaluation process (assuming that tenders have been delivered by October 12th, 2017).

Deliverables	Participants	Desired timeline
1. Start-up meeting (Addis Ababa; probably virtual)	Sida and the consultant	Thursday, Nov 2 nd
2. Draft inception report		Wednesday, Nov 8 th
3. Inception meeting (Addis Ababa and if possible Accra; virtual or presence)	Sida, Afrobarometer and the consultant	Monday, Nov 13 th
4. Final inception report		Thursday, Nov 16 th
5. Start field work		
6. Debriefing (location to be defined)	Sida, Afrobarometer and the consultant	Thursday, Dec 14 th
7. Draft evaluation report		Thursday, Dec 21 st
8. Comments from intended users to evaluators		Thursday, Jan 11 th , 2018
9. Final evaluation report		Thursday, Jan 18 th , 2018
10. Evaluation brief	Sida, Afrobarometer and the consultant	Monday, Jan 22 nd , 2018
11. Finalization and submission of Report		Monday, Jan 29 th , 2018

The inception report will form the basis for the continued evaluation process and shall be approved by Sida before the evaluation proceeds to implementation. The inception report should be written in English and cover evaluability issues and interpretations of evaluation questions, present the methodology, methods for data collection and analysis as well as the full evaluation design. A specific time and work plan for the remainder of the evaluation should be presented which also cater for the need to create space for reflection and learning between the intended users of the evaluation.

The final report shall be written in English and be professionally proof read. The final report should have clear structure and follow the report format in the Sida Decentralised Evaluation Report Template for decentralised evaluations (see Annex C). The methodology used shall be described and explained, and all limitations shall be made explicit and the consequences of these limitations discussed. Findings shall flow logically from the data, showing a clear line of evidence to support the conclusions. Conclusions should be substantiated by findings and analysis. Recommendations and lessons learned should flow logically from conclusions. Recommendations should be specific, directed to relevant stakeholders and categorised as a

short-term, medium-term and long-term. The report should be no more than 35 pages, excluding annexes. It should also include an Executive Summary of maximum 5 pages. The evaluator shall adhere to the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation²⁷.

The evaluator shall, upon approval of the final report, insert the report into the Sida Decentralised Evaluation Report for decentralised evaluations and submit it to Citrus (in pdf-format) for publication and release in the Sida publication data base. The order is placed by sending the approved report to sida@citrus.com, always with a copy to the Sida Programme Officer as well as Sida's evaluation unit (evaluation@sida.se). Write "Sida decentralised evaluations" in the email subject field and include the name of the consulting company as well as the full evaluation title in the email. For invoicing purposes, the evaluator needs to include the invoice reference "ZZ610601S," type of allocation "sakanslag" and type of order "digital publicering/publikationsdatabas.

8. Evaluation Team Qualification

In addition to the qualifications already stated in the framework agreement for evaluation services, the Evaluation Team shall include the following competencies:

- Extensive knowledge and experience of communications and outreach
- Extensive knowledge from the public survey field with direct experience from Africa
- Expertise in organisational development
- Excellent written and spoken English and proficiency in French.

For team members that are not core team members, or a quality assurance team member, a CV shall be included in the call-off response and contain full description of the evaluators' qualifications and professional work experience. It is important that the competencies of the individual team members are complementary. The evaluators must be independent from the evaluation object and evaluated activities, and have no stake in the outcome of the evaluation.

9. Resources

The maximum budget amount available for the evaluation is SEK 1 000 000 (one million). The evaluator will be required to arrange all the relevant logistics. The contact person at the Swedish Embassy in Addis Ababa is Pierre Frühling, Counsellor. The contact person should be consulted if any problems arise during the evaluation process. [pierre.fruhling@gov.se]

²⁷ Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, Sida in cooperation with OECD/DAC, 2014.

5.2 Persons interviewed

AB Leadership and Governance (including Founders, Senior Management and Advisers)

1. Prof. E. Gyimah-Boadi, AB Executive Director, co-Founder
2. Prof. Carolyn Logan, AB Deputy Director
3. Prof. Mike Bratton, AB Senior Advisor and co-Founder
4. Prof. Robert Mattes-, AB Senior Advisor and co-Founder
5. Prof. Winnie Mitullah, AB Project Director, East Africa Regional Team & Kenya Team, Director, Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi, Kenya
6. Mr. Jan Hofmeyr, AB Project Director, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation South Africa

AB Secretariat (Survey, M&E, Communication and Capacity Building specialists)

7. Ms. Aba Kittoe, AB Operations Manager for Project Management, Ghana
8. Dr. Edem Selormey, AB Operations Manager for Fieldwork, East and West Africa (Anglophone), Ghana
9. Mr. Boniface Dulani, AB Operations Manager for Fieldwork, Southern and Francophone Africa, Malawi
10. Mr. Abel Oyuke, AB Project Manager, East Africa Regional Team & Kenya Team, Kenya
11. Mr. Samuel Baaye, AB M&E Assistant, Ghana
12. Mr. Daniel Armah-Attoh, AB Project Manager, Ghana
13. Mr. Kakra Adu, AB Assistant Project Manager/ Data Manager, Ghana
14. Ms. Josephine Appiah-Nyamekye, AB Communications Officer, Ghana
15. Mr. Brian H. Howard, AB Operations Manager for Communications (acting) and AB Publications Manager, United States
16. Dr. Markus Olapade, AB Project Director, Benin
17. Mr. Victor Emmanuel Ekwa, AB Communications Officer, Benin
18. Mr. Houessou Richard, AB Project Manager, Benin
19. Anyway Chingwete, AB Project Manager, South Africa
20. Mr. Sibusiso Nkomo, AB Assistant Operations Manager for Communications, South Africa
21. Ms. Carmen Alpin, AB Data Manager, South Africa
22. Ms. Jamy Felton, AB Data Quality Officer, South Africa
23. Thomas Isbell, AB Data Clerk, South Africa
24. Ms. Wairimu Macharia-Mututu, AB Website & Social Media Manager, Kenya
25. Mr. Samuel Balongo, AB Assistant Project Manager & Data Specialist, Kenya
26. Ms. Elizabeth Laryea, AB Project Accountant / CDD Accounting & Finance, Ghana

Partner Country Teams

27. Ms. Renee Choto, IJR Finance Manager, South Africa
28. Mr. Youssef Meddeb, Director, 121Polling, Tunisia
29. Ms. Imen Mezlini, Deputy Director, One to One Polling, Tunisia
30. Prof. Mogopodi Lekorwe, University of Botswana, Botswana

31. Prof. Massaoly Coulibaly, GREAT, Mali
32. Mr. José Semedo, Executive Director, Afrosondagem, Cape Verde
33. Ms. Deolinda Reis, Consultant, Afrosondagem, Cape Verde
34. Mr. Aguido Cabral, Owner/Consultant, Afrosondagem, Cape Verde
35. Mr. Mulu Teka, Executive Director, ABCON PLC Consulting House, Ethiopia
36. Ms. Dorothy A. Tetteh Anum-Larsey, Executive Assistant, CDD-Ghana
37. Ms. Libuseng Malephane, Advision Lesotho

Regional & International Organisations/Initiatives (including the AU Commission/AGA, UNECA, APRM)

38. Ms. Mireille Hounsa, Conseillère Technique en Suivi-Evaluation & Management de la Qualité; Point Focal Genre & VIH-SIDA; Unité d'Appui au Pilotage, PDDC/GIZ,
39. Ms. Wafa Belhaj Amor, Project coordinator, Heinrich Boell Stiftung,
40. Mr. Nicolas Kaczorowski, Director, IFES
41. Mr. Boniface Habana, Pan African Parliament, South Africa
42. Mr. Idrissa Kamara, Political/Election Officer, Department of Political Affairs, African Union Commission, Ethiopia
43. Amb. Fred Ngoga Gatseretse Ag, Head, Conflict Prevention & Early Warning Division, AU Commission, Ethiopia
44. Dr. Taye Abdikader, Information Systems Officer, Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), Conflict Prevention & Early Warning Division, AU Commission, Ethiopia
45. Mr. Jalal Abdel-Latif, Head, Governance & Human Security Cluster, Capacity Development Division, UNECA, Ethiopia
46. Dr. Simon Ridley, Programme Specialist – Justice and Human Rights, UNDP Regional Service Centre, Governance and Peacebuilding in Africa, Ethiopia
47. Dr. Njoya Tikum, Anti-Corruption Adviser, UNDP Regional Service Centre, Governance and Peacebuilding in Africa, Ethiopia
48. Dr. Degol Hailu Senior Adviser, Extractives Industries, Inclusive & Sustainable Growth & Development Team, UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa, Ethiopia
49. Mr. Yves Niyigirira, Executive Director, FAHAMU-Networks for Social Justice, Kenya

Intermediaries (Media, CSOs, Think Tanks)

50. Mr. Ralmeg Gandaho, Président de l'Observatoire du Changement Social (OCS), Benin
51. Dr. Cyrille Honagbode, Economiste, Benin
52. Mr. Landry Ganye, Chargé de programme Alerte précoce, Wanep Bénin, Benin
53. Mr. Abdul Wahab Ado, Journaliste, L'économiste, Benin
54. Mr. Marcus Koudjenoume, Journaliste, Océan Fm, Benin
55. Mr. Haithem Zgolli, Journalist, Le Maghreb, Tunisia
56. Mr. Hashem Badra, Anti-corruption activist, INLUCC, Tunisia
57. Prof. Dhafer Malouche, Professor, Université of Michigan (visiting professor) and University of Carthage, Tunisia
58. Mr. Tarek Chaabouni, Politician, Tounes Awalan, Tunisia
59. Mr. Selim Ben Hassen, independent activist, Tunisia

60. Ms. Nesrine Rebai, Director, Mourakiboun, Tunisia
61. Mr. Olivier Lechien, Head of Unit (EU-funded programme to support the training of journalists and development of national media-related regulations), Centre Africain de perfectionnement des Journalistes et Communicateurs (CAPJC), Tunisia
62. Ms. Najla Chaa, Communications Advisor/ Consultant, Tunisia
63. Ms. Marianne Merten, Daily Maverick, South Africa
64. Ms. Isabel Schmidt, Stats SA, South Africa
65. Leão de Pina, Instituto Superior de Ciências Jurídicas e Sociais, Cape Verde
66. Mr. Daniel dos Santos, Instituto Superior de Ciências Jurídicas e Sociais, Cape Verde
67. Mr. Crisanto Barros, Crisanto Barros, Cape Verde
68. Mr. Carlos Santos, Nucleo Operacional da Sociedade de Informacao, Cape Verde
69. Mr. Jacinto Santos, Jacinto Santos, Cape Verde
70. Hon. Fernando Elisio, Minister, Cape Verde
71. Hon. Julio Correia, Opposition Politician, former VP of Parliament, PAIGCV, Cape Verde
72. Dr. Mehari Taddele Maru, Independent Peace, Security & Democracy, Ethiopia Scholar/ Chief Strategist, IGAD
73. Ms. Michelle Ndiaye, Director, Africa Peace & Security Programme (APSP) / Head of Secretariat, Tana Forum, Institute for Peace & Security Studies (IPSS), Addis Ababa University
74. Dr. John Osae-Kwapong, Findlay University, US, Ghana
75. Dr. K.Y. Amoako, President, CEO & Founder, African Centre for Economic Transformation (ACET) , Ghana
76. Ms. Nana Yaa Ofori-Atta, Communications, Culture & Governance Expert, Ghana
77. Ms. Jean Mensa, Executive Director, Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA-Ghana) , Ghana
78. Ms. Abena Nyamekye, GH1 TV, Excellence in Broadcasting (EIB) Network, Ghana
79. Ms. Mary A. Addah Programmes Manager, Ghana, Ghana Integrity Initiative
80. Dr. Emmanuel Akwetey, Executive Director, Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG) , Ghana
81. Dr. Michael Ofori-Mensah, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Economic Affairs, Accra, Ghana
82. Mr. Anthony Wafula Nyongesa, Regional Program Manager, HIVOS East Africa
83. Ms. Achieng Maureen Akena, Executive Director, Pan African Citizens Network (PACIN)
84. Mr. Benji Ndolo, Founder, Organization for National Empowerment (ONE)
85. Mr. Victor Rateng, Senior Program Officer, Twaweza East Africa
86. Dr. Tom Wolf, Lead Researcher, IPSOS, Kenya
87. Ms. Angela Ambitho, Founder & CEO, Infotrak
88. Ms. Elys C. Sainna, Deputy ED, International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) Kenya
89. Ms. Aisha Said, Senior Research Executive, Dalberg Research, Kenya
90. Ms. Pauline Wambua, Doctoral Candidate, Michigan State University, USA

- 91. Dr. George Mukundi, CEO, Maendeleo Group, South Africa
- 92. Mr. Seth Ouma, Doctoral Candidate, University of Oxford, UK

Other Regional Barometers

- 93. Prof. Liz Zechmeister, Cornelius Vanderbilt Professor of Political Science, Director of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), Vanderbilt University
- 94. Ms. Min Hua Huang, Programme Manager, Asian Barometer, Taiwan

Embassy/Evaluation Client/Funder

- 95. Mr. Pierre Frühling, Counsellor, Deputy Head of Section, Regional Development Cooperation, Embassy of Sweden, Ethiopia
- 96. Ms. Ory Okolloh, Director of Investments, Omidyar Network, Kenya

5.3 Documents reviewed

1. Afrobarometer theory of change, excerpted from Inception Report, Africa Regional Empowerment and Accountability programme, Draft 2, 9 October 2012
2. Afrobarometer Accra Release 6 Sept on Kenya Crisis Oct 2016 Data
3. Afrobarometer Communications Impact Report R5-R6 for SIDA
4. Afrobarometer Strategic Vision, 2017-2022
5. Afrobarometer Programme Document Rounds 5 & 6
6. Afrobarometer LogFrame for Rounds 5 & 6
7. Afrobarometer Program Document Rounds 7 & 8 (2016-2020): Consolidating expansion, deepening analysis, extending impact (revised 30 April 2016)
8. Afrobarometer Expansion Phase: 5-year plan for Rounds 5 and 6 (2011-2015) (30 March 2011)
9. Afrobarometer Proposal for Rounds 7 & 8
10. Afrobarometer 2017 Bridging Program – Consolidating Round 5 and 6 Expansion (31 October 2016)
11. Afrobarometer Narrative Reports for year 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016
12. Afrobarometer Narrative Half-Year Report for 2017
13. Afrobarometer Draft Strategic Vision for 2018 and Beyond
14. Afrobarometer Overview Slides
15. Afrobarometer Organisational Chart
16. Afrobarometer Round 6 - Highlights from 36 countries, 2017
17. Afrobarometer Release: Highlights of Round 6 Surveys from 36 African countries (21 March 2017)
18. Afrobarometer Updates (Sept 2016 – Sept 2017)
19. Afrobarometer Newsletters (March 2008 – Sept 2017)
20. Afrobarometer Draft Communications strategy framework 2015
21. Afrobarometer Draft Communications Strategy 2017-2021 (26 January 2017)

22. Afrobarometer Working Paper No. 164, Ethiopians' views of democratic government: Fear, ignorance or, unique understanding of democracy? By Robert Mattes & Mulu Teka (May 2016)
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Evaluation of Afrobarometer's Regional Programme 2011–2017

This evaluation of Afrobarometer was commissioned by the Embassy of Sweden in Addis Ababa and undertaken by NIRAS during the period from November 2017 to February 2018. In addition to informing the design of the next phase of Swedish support to Afrobarometer (2018–2022), the evaluation also serves a broader learning process aimed at bolstering Afrobarometer's future sustainability. The evaluation recommends that Sida proceeds with support to Afrobarometer largely as planned for the coming phase. Decentralisation, agility and flexibility have served Afrobarometer well, so reforms should ensure that these benefits are not lost, due to the need to adapt to the diversity of capacities, roles and structures of national partners.

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Address: SE-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden. Office: Valhallavägen 199, Stockholm

Telephone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64

E-mail: info@sida.se. Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>

