

EUROPEAN
**PARTNERSHIP FOR
DEMOCRACY**



**Who owns the EDF?
Ensuring domestic accountability in ACP-EU
development cooperation**

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Executive Summary

Development aid is spent in a variety of different ways and comes in different forms. It is also known by several different names: official development assistance, overseas aid, technical assistance and development cooperation to name a few. The EU tends to use the term 'development cooperation', partly as a result of the French roots of the word *cooperation* but also due to the desire to present aid as a cooperative two-way relationship. In the case of the EU and the African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States (ACP), this relationship is in principle based on equal partnership through the Cotonou Agreement. It aims to support national development priorities and to enhance developing country ownership. On paper therefore, the word *cooperation* for the EU means more than just aid, as partner governments have a say in establishing the priorities of financial support. In reality, this relationship is highly complex and framing development aid as development cooperation is easier said than done.

The issue of ownership is vital in terms of accountability and aid effectiveness. But who should 'own' development aid? The answer has changed over time, to arrive at a point where there is wide agreement that it must extend beyond governments. If *cooperation* is truly cooperative it should engage a wide range of social actors within a given country from governments to citizens themselves. At the same time, the likelihood of aid being effective is higher in regimes with greater accountability to citizens. Indeed, democratic and accountable governments are far more likely to deliver better public services as well as stable and peaceful conditions for development.

This paper has been prepared by the European Partnership for Democracy to examine the extent to which domestic accountability in recipient countries is currently addressed in the European Development Fund (EDF), the largest European financial instrument for development aid in ACP countries. Specifically, the paper addresses the following questions: what priority does the strengthening of domestic accountability take in the EDF? How is this reflected in the amount and type of funding for development? What degree of influence do domestic accountability actors have on the development agenda in their countries and how are they engaged across the EDF programming cycle?

By offering answers to these questions, this paper aims to contribute to the ongoing review of the EDF's 11th cycle (2014-2020) and to the larger discussion of how ACP-EU development cooperation should be structured after 2020, when the Cotonou Agreement is set to expire.

Based on an analysis of EDF programming documents, evaluations of EU development aid, country case studies and recent interviews with local development practitioners as well as EU officials, the paper arrives at five key findings:

1. *The negative impact of a technical approach to development on accountability.* Accountability is mostly constricted to the 'governance' sector and targets the administrative capacity of the state, leaving other elements of accountability – namely 'answerability' (states having to

justify) and 'enforceability' (states being subject to sanctions) – underemphasised.

2. *An inflated focus on the state in implementation.* The state should be the central focus of development aid but this is often exaggerated under the EDF, particularly in authoritarian contexts.
3. *An incomplete categorisation of domestic accountability actors.* By focusing its non-governmental engagement and support overwhelmingly on civil society organisations, the EU misses key domestic accountability actors such as political parties, parliaments and the media.
4. *The importance of political awareness for programming purposes.* The link between analysis and programming remains weak in EU programming although EU analyses exist in different forms.
5. *The underutilisation of methods of oversight in civil society support.* The use of oversight mechanisms is not uniform and is a potential avenue for greater accountability that is currently underutilised.

These five key findings are tackled through a set of 8 recommendations, which are designed to be practical steps for improving domestic accountability, ownership and aid effectiveness in ACP countries. Only if governments are accountable to their citizens and all segments of society contribute to the development of their countries can development aid truly move towards being accurately labelled as development cooperation.

1. Introduction

In February of 1994, representatives of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and the European Community came together in Strasbourg to commence their joint review of the Lomé IV convention, the existing agreement over trade and aid relations between the different regions. They did so at a time when the oft-cited ‘governance turn’ in the field of development aid had already gathered momentum, fuelled by democratisation and development in many regions of the world. When European envoys proposed to have these global trends reflected in the revised agreement – first and foremost by expanding the existing human rights provision in Article 5 of Lomé IV and attaching to it some form of conditionality – it was not met with serious resistance.

And indeed, when the revised text of Lomé IV was formally adopted in late 1995, the ‘respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law’ had become an ‘essential element’ of the convention. It was also the first time that the term ‘good governance’ appeared in a cooperation agreement of the European Community.¹

Democracy for development

Since then, the crucial significance of democracy and good governance for achieving development results has been upheld in numerous policy documents of the European Union (EU). This includes the Cotonou Agreement of 2000 (last revised in 2010 and structuring ACP-EU relations today), the European Consensus on Development of 2005, and the Agenda for Change of 2011. The concept of democracy has undeniably become firmly engrained in the public discourse of development.

The case for democracy is frequently and justifiably made in reference to its intrinsic values, but there are additional arguments to be brought forward for development: in comparison with authoritarian states, democratic states witness fewer famines, have lower child mortality rates, tend to be better public service providers, are more peaceful and more resilient to internal or external shocks. In authoritarian states, the wellbeing of the larger population does not function as an incentive to the degree that it does in democratic states.² These governments can often afford to sideline their electorate by capitalising on alternative sources of power (control over resources, a co-opted elite, external rents, etc.). Consequently, among academics and policy-makers there is now a robust recognition of the fact that the objective of sustainably eradicating poverty is inherently intertwined with questions of democracy and good governance. The adoption of Goal 16 in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its widespread perception as an ‘enabling goal’ is a recent acknowledgement of these links.

¹ Arts, Karin (2000): Integrating Human Rights into Development Cooperation: The Case of the Lomé Convention, p. 190.

² Hudson, Alan / GOVNET Secretariat (2009): [Background Paper for the Launch of the Workstream on Aid and Domestic Accountability](#), p. 1.

‘Democratic ownership’ and domestic accountability

But what do these insights imply for the provision of development aid? Put simply, answers range from those that favour a ‘do no harm’ principle (i.e. not negatively affecting democracy), to those that propose a direct pursuit of democratic gains. Yet, both sides have seen disappointment: development aid does not always convincingly protect democracy, and it does not seem to be delivering democratic gains, especially in comparatively authoritarian settings, where it would be most needed.³ Worse still, the overall impact of aid specifically foreseen for that purpose (traditionally implemented in large-scale governance aid programmes) is often called into question.⁴ In other words, the questions around democracy within the development agenda are closely related to the effectiveness of aid and deserve further analysis.

The aid effectiveness agenda has addressed these concerns primarily through the principle of ownership – one of its most pertinent building blocks. Since its inclusion in the Paris Declaration of 2005, the understanding of ownership has seen some crucial refinement – most recently documented in the context of the Global Partnership’s second High-Level Meeting in Nairobi in late 2016.⁵ Ownership is now conceptualised as inclusive, participatory, and extending across the entire societal spectrum, as ‘democratic ownership’.⁶ This means that ownership of aid can no longer be easily assumed if a recipient government has agreed with donors on certain development priorities and signed off on programming documents. Instead, development agendas are to be generated through the engagement of citizens, who should have a say in the identification, formulation and implementation of those reforms that aim at improving their living conditions.

As aid is primarily channelled through recipient governments, avenues should be in place through which citizens can question the executive branch of government, demand information and ultimately decide over the consequences of mismanagement of aid resources. These dynamics, which describe core elements of any democracy, can be captured in the concept of domestic accountability.

Box 1: The concept of domestic accountability

Domestic accountability

The international aid community has taken an increased interest in domestic accountability since the late 2000s. The concept fundamentally concerns the relations between a state and its citizens. In short, it entails the following three elements:

³ Bräutigam, Deborah A. / Knack, Stephan (2004): [Foreign Aid, Institutions, and Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa](#).

⁴ Andrews, Matt (2013): The Limits of Institutional Reform in Development: Changing Rules for Realistic Solutions; Booth, David (2013): Governance for Development in Africa: Solving Collective Action Problems; Mungiu-Pippidi, Alina (2015): The Quest for Good Governance: How Societies Develop Control of Corruption.

⁵ Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (2016): [Nairobi Outcome Document](#), p. 9ff.

⁶ Meyer, Stefan / Schulz, Nils-Sjard (2008): [Ownership with Adjectives. Donor Harmonisation: Between Effectiveness and Democratisation. Synthesis Report](#).

- (1) Citizens having access to information about state actions (transparency);
- (2) Citizens being able to demand justification (answerability);
- (3) Citizens being in a position to sanction the state and its officials for poor performance (enforceability).⁷

Domestic accountability actors

The way in which domestic accountability systems function in a society is highly complex and can involve a multitude of actors. Domestic accountability actors act on behalf of citizens and can claim fundamental functions in holding governments accountable. They include primarily: parliaments, political parties, supreme audit institutions, civil society organisations, and the media. While being able to contribute to all three dimensions of domestic accountability, they have a special significance for the second and third – ‘answerability’ and ‘enforceability’.

Parliaments, for example, have a central role of overseeing the spending of public resources by executive governments. Political parties, especially if their members have been elected into public office, can represent the interests of parts of society that are neglected by dominant executives. Civil society organisations can rally around specific issues and provide concrete expertise on particular societal problems. Media actors are central for keeping the public informed and report on potential mismanagement on the side of the government

The importance of political contexts

There is growing awareness of the fact that attaining domestic accountability is ultimately dependent on the political arrangements in a recipient country, or simply put, on the relations between government and its constituents. Consequently, it is deemed more and more essential to understand political realities and inner power structures to be able to strengthen domestic accountability. Donors have traditionally followed a technical approach in order to avoid interference in national politics.⁸ However, many cases have shown that disregarding political realities can be accompanied with far-reaching consequences, foremost the (unintended) consolidation of authoritarian structures.⁹

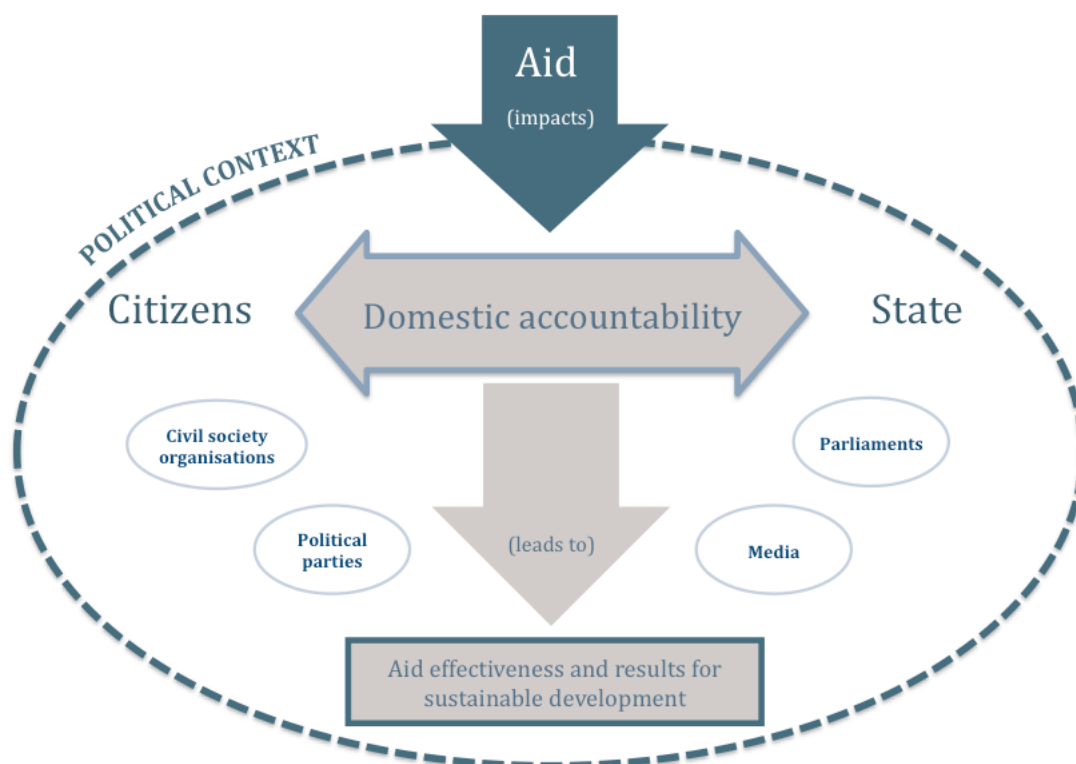
Moreover, this approach neglects that the provision of development aid is inescapably attached to political decisions and could either subvert or stabilise power relations.¹⁰ In the end, the aim of remaining an apolitical actor is unachievable as all aid and influence ultimately has political impact. Although relations between a recipient state and its citizens are largely determined by internal factors, development aid can often have a significant impact on domestic accountability, be it positive or negative. This is especially true in countries where the amount allocated to development aid represents a significant portion of the domestic budget, as is the case in several ACP countries.

⁷ Hudson, Alan / GOVNET Secretariat (2009): [Background Paper for the Launch of the Workstream on Aid and Domestic Accountability](#), p. 6.

⁸ European Partnership for Democracy (2015): [Inspiring Democracy: Operating Model for Inclusive and Participatory Policy Dialogue and Integrated Democracy Support](#), p. 9ff.

⁹ Hagmann, Tobias / Reyntjens, Filip (2016): *Aid and Authoritarianism in Africa: Development without Democracy*.

¹⁰ Carothers, Thomas / de Gramont, Diane (2013): *Development Aid Confronts Politics: The Almost Revolution*, p. 10ff.

Figure 1: Aid and domestic accountability¹¹

2. Policy priorities in the 11th EDF: What space for domestic accountability?

EU support to domestic accountability can be most easily identified in the funding that it directs to governance processes. This is hardly a surprise, as there is a clear overlap between aspects of domestic accountability and governance challenges as understood by the EU (shown in more detail below; see Figure 3). In fact, a significant part of EDF funding is reserved for governance support measures (see Figure 2). This becomes evident from an analysis of National Indicative Programmes (NIPs), which are national envelopes that define different focal sectors and fix corresponding aid ceilings for all ACP countries.¹² They form the largest part of EDF funding.

¹¹ Adopted from: Hudson, Alan / GOVNET Secretariat (2009): [Background Paper for the Launch of the Workstream on Aid and Domestic Accountability](#), p. 20.

¹² NIPs are finalised between recipient governments and the EU, i.e. DG DEVCO, the EEAS, and EU delegations. The process of how policy priorities are identified and agreed upon is examined in subsection 3.1. of this paper.

Of all 73 available NIPs, 43 set governance as a focal sector.¹³ This translates into EUR 4.3 billion – roughly 29.2% of total funds available in all analysed NIPs – that has been budgeted for governance support. This is a significant amount and shows that governance remains one of the EU's priorities in development. However, when looking at EU funding for governance, it is important to keep in mind that funding for general budget support is also included in these figures. Since the early 2000s, budget support has become one of DG DEVCO's preferred ways of providing development aid. This is well reflected in recent EDFs, which have provided a large share of funds through different forms of budget support. The previous 10th EDF allocated almost half of its resources available for NIPs to both general and sector budget support.¹⁴ For the 11th EDF, the exact amounts set aside for budget support are not yet identifiable, but will become available in the context of its on-going review process.

Box 2: About the EDF

The EDF was established in 1957 by the Treaty of Rome to provide assistance to ACP countries and overseas countries and territories (OCTs) of the EU. It is currently in its 11th cycle, covering the period between 2014 and 2020, and amounts to EUR 30.5 billion. The EDF is the largest EU funding instrument for external assistance.

Of its total amount, almost 80% (roughly EUR 24.4 billion) are allocated to both National Indicative Programmes (NIPs) and Regional Indicative Programmes (RIPs). Other envelopes under the EDF include: 'Intra-ACP cooperation' (EUR 3.6 billion), 'Investment Facility' (EUR 1.1 billion); 'Overseas Countries and Territories' (EUR 0.4 billion), and 'support expenditures' (EUR 1.1 billion).

While there are a number of reasons why the provision of budget support remains a distinctive characteristic of EU development aid¹⁵, the EU has also increasingly conceived of budget support as a means to strengthen governance in the recipient country. This latter fact is exemplified by the rebranding that the EU put in effect in 2012, which effectively changed the official designation for general budget support to 'Good Governance & Development Contracts'.¹⁶ As a consequence, the prevalence of budget support also contributes to a sustained focus on technical assistance to the administrative capacity of the recipient state. Efficient and reliable budgetary systems are seen as essential prerequisites for the provision of budget support.

Indeed, public finance management (budget planning, formulation and execution, revenue management, auditing, etc.) is the overall preferred area of governance support (outside budget support) and mentioned in 81.4% of NIPs that set governance as a focal sector (followed by strong showings of support to the rule of law and the justice sector). This has implications for domestic accountability as it is approached mostly from a technical and state-centred

¹³ At the time of writing, the NIP for the Central African Republic had not yet been finalised.

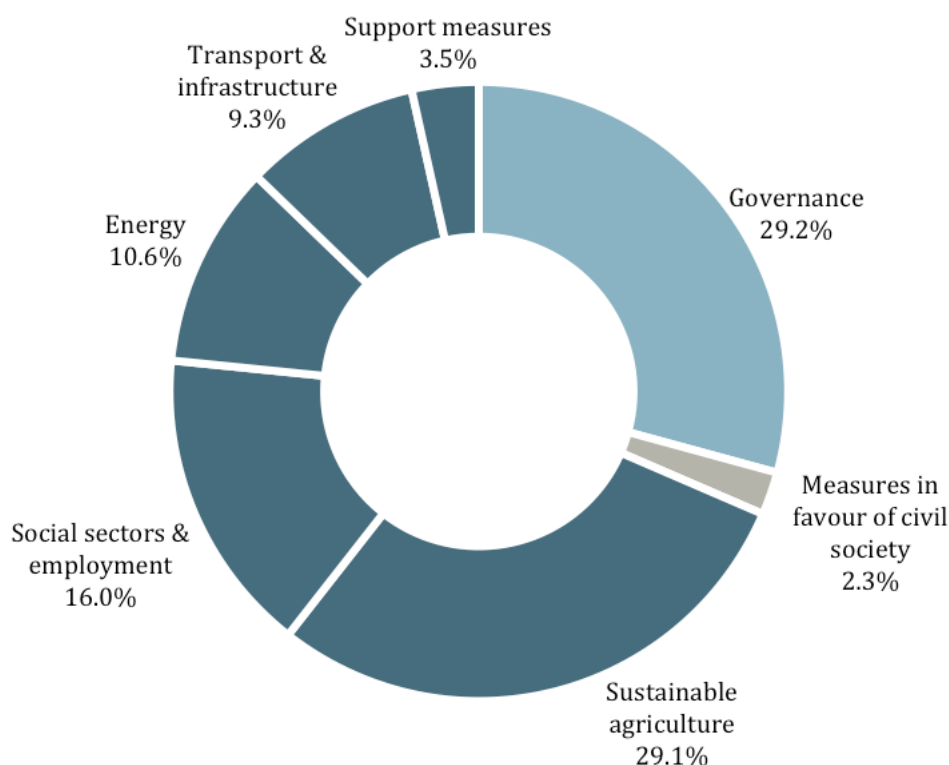
¹⁴ European Commission (2011): [Commission Staff Working Paper. 10th EDF Performance Review](#), p. 16.

¹⁵ The use of budget support reduces the administrative burden on already overstretched EU resources. In addition, budget support is often presented as a panacea to increase aid effectiveness, to ensure predictability of funding, and to increase harmonisation among donors.

¹⁶ European Commission (2012): [Budget Support Guidelines: Programming, Design and Management. A modern approach to Budget support](#).

perspective under the EDF. Or put differently, by focusing on the state's capacity to manage budgets and in the best case provide better public access to financial information, the EU puts a higher emphasis on the 'transparency' dimension of domestic accountability rather than on 'answerability' or 'enforceability' (see the domestic accountability box on p. 5).

Figure 2: Indicative allocation of funds in 11th EDF¹⁷



Source: 73 signed National Indicative Programmes (NIPs); for a total amount of EUR 14.8 billion

The importance of an effective functioning of the state for domestic accountability (and development aid in general) is undeniable. An increase in state capacity can contribute to a higher availability of public information and ultimately correlates with more efficient management of resources, improved service delivery, better regulation, etc. All of these factors can increase the probability for development results. Yet, this approach underemphasises the other two dimensions of domestic accountability – 'answerability' and 'enforceability'. Broadly speaking, these are much more dependent on actors outside the executive arm of the government (see Figure 3).

EDF funding towards non-governmental actors that could contribute to these components of domestic accountability is most visible in the "support measures to civil society". As foreseen by programming guidelines, most national funding envelopes include a separate budget line for this purpose. However, in terms of

¹⁷ For the categorisation of focal sectors we followed the approach taken in a paper published by ECDPM (Herrero, Alisa / Knoll, Anna / Gregersen, Cecilia (2015): [Implementing the Agenda for Change. An independent analysis of the 11th EDF programming](#); p. 28). The paper is a recommended read for an in-depth analysis of the indicative programming of the 11th EDF.

the overall budget available, this funding is relatively small (2.3%, see Figure 2).¹⁸ Moreover, in almost a fifth of countries a separate and quantified budget line for support to civil society is not included.¹⁹ In these cases it is either claimed that support is already streamlined across focal sectors or that such measures are to be financed by other financial instruments of EU external assistance.²⁰ Funding for other actors like parliaments and especially the political party spectrum is minimal.

Figure 3: Support dimensions for domestic accountability (simplified)

<i>Transparency</i> “Access to information”	<i>Answerability</i> “Demanding justification”	<i>Enforceability</i> “Sanctioning the state”
Public finance management	Support to parliaments and parliamentary committees	
Prevention of corruption	Non-partisan political party support	
...	Rule of law and judiciary reform	
	Support to civil society organisations	
	Support to media actors	
	Support of supreme audit institutions	Support of electoral processes (e.g. to electoral management bodies or regulations)

Note: This diagram aims to depict general trends. In reality, almost all types of support can have an effect on all three dimensions of domestic accountability.

It is also important to note that outside of the governance focal sectors, domestic accountability is essentially not mentioned. This is worrying, because it suggests that in aid sectors such as agriculture, energy, or infrastructure, domestic accountability is not sufficiently taken into account.

The strong focus on the technical side of governance and the emphasis on state capacity have a larger effect on the ability of the EDF to support democracy (rather than only governance). The lack of both clarity and uniformity with which the support for all dimensions of domestic accountability (a core element of democracy) is addressed in programming documents contributes to the often recognised problem of ‘dilution’ – the decreasing importance given to democracy as aid moves from policy to programming to implementation. This has been a frequent finding in the evaluations of EU development aid with regards to human rights and democracy mainstreaming.²¹ As a consequence, the degree to which

¹⁸ This presents a minor increase from the allocation for civil society and non-state actors of 1.9% in the 10th EDF (European Commission (2011): [Commission Staff Working Paper. 10th EDF Performance Review](#), p. 11.).

¹⁹ This is the case in Cameroon, the Comoros, the Dominican Republic, Eritrea, Fiji, Guinea, Kenya, Mauritania, the Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, Togo, and Zambia.

²⁰ For instance, the NIP for Eritrea states that the “Government of the State of Eritrea is supportive of allocating funds for civil society organisations from the EC budget, such as the thematic instruments, rather than from the EDF” (European Commission (2016): [Eritrea – EU Cooperation. 11th European Development Fund. National Indicative Programme 2014-2020](#), p. 28).

²¹ European Court of Auditors (2015): [Review of the risks related to a results-oriented approach for EU development and cooperation action](#), p. 26

democracy support will be a major objective of EDF funding is either unclear or not recognisable in many ACP countries. While in the introductory remarks of NIPs the support for democracy may be present, it is not reflected to the same degree in the prioritisation and distribution of funding within the governance focal sector.

Key observations

- **Support to domestic accountability follows a technical approach to development** and focuses on public finance management and the increase of state capacity. Thus, the ‘transparency’ dimension of domestic accountability receives disproportionate support.
- **Support of domestic accountability actors is comparatively weak**, financially as well as conceptually. As a consequence, two essential elements of domestic accountability – ‘answerability’ (states having to justify) and ‘enforceability’ (states being subject to sanctions) – remain comparatively underemphasised in EU funding.
- In EDF programming, **domestic accountability is usually only referenced with regard to governance**; it does not permeate across other sectors of development.

3. Domestic accountability across the EDF programming cycle

As indicated at the beginning of this paper, aid is likely to have effects on domestic accountability, positive or negative, and regardless of the sector that funding is directed to. One central danger that is often identified in this regard is the dynamic between ‘upward accountability’ (from recipient governments to donors) and ‘downward accountability’ (from recipient governments to citizens). When considerable parts of public resources are not generated domestically but provided by international donors, it may weaken the responsiveness of governments to their own citizens.

A way to counterbalance this intrinsic ‘flaw’ of development aid is the increased engagement of a wide variety of actors other than the executive arm of government. Ideally this will increase the capacity of these actors and thereby contribute to their ability to hold governments accountable, e.g. by overseeing the use of public funds. This logic has become widely supported within the international development community.²² In the following three subsections, loosely structured around the EDF programming cycle, these dynamics are explored more closely.

3.1. Identification

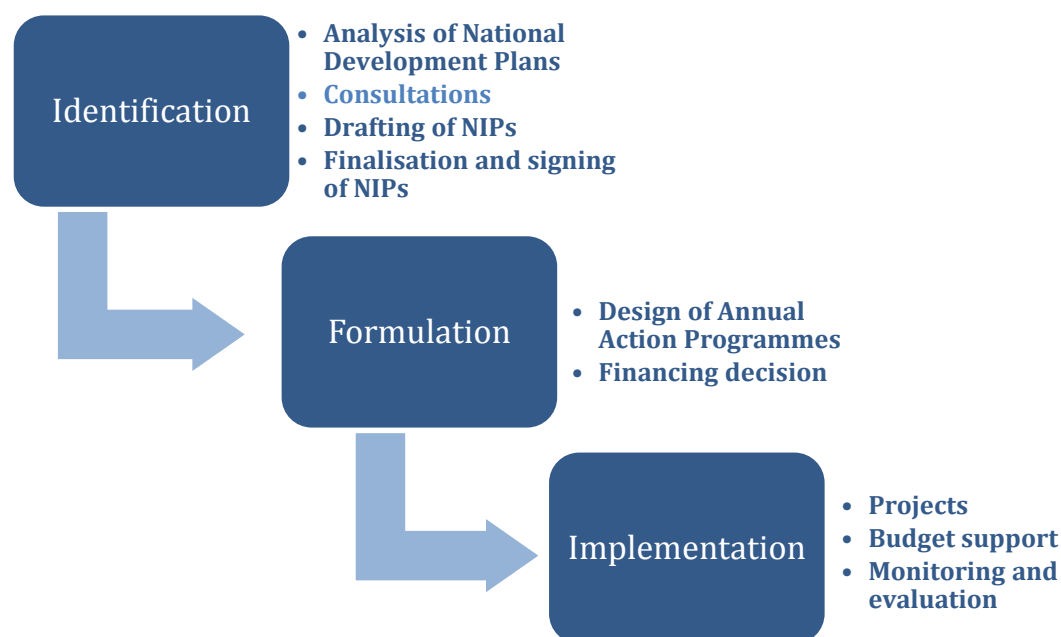
After policy priorities have been identified, they are included in the NIPs and then signed by both the EU and the recipient government. For the 11th EDF this was done under the challenge of integrating a multiplicity of actors and policies.

²² With regard to the EDF, it was the Cotonou Agreement of 2000 that introduced important provisions on the inclusion of non-governmental local actors. In line with EU preferences and considerations, this mainly concerns civil society organisations.

For instance, the programming procedures had to account for the then recent institutional restructuring within the EU that followed the Treaty of Lisbon, especially in light of the division of labour between the newly created EEAS and DG DEVCO. In addition, the principles and policy priorities set out in the Agenda for Change, adopted in 2011, had to be incorporated.

While in previous EDFs specific Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) were drafted by EU delegations to serve as a basis for NIPs, this step was largely avoided in the 11th EDF. Instead EU delegations were instructed to use National Development Plans (NDPs) as a starting point (if available) and identify priority areas on that basis.²³ Only then consultations with a variety of actors, including government officials, parliamentarians, civil society, the private sector, EU member states and other donors were to follow (see Figure 4). These were to inform the actual drafting process, which up until the signature of NIPs with partner governments, was to involve mainly EU delegations, the EEAS and DG DEVCO.

Figure 4: EDF programming process (simplified)



In practice, the way in which consultations were carried out differed from country to country, but some general trends can be identified. The overwhelming majority of those invited to consultations were civil society organisations, although in some cases other actors, specifically representatives from the line ministries, the private sector, local authorities, and media took part.²⁴ Political party representatives or parliamentarians were not involved in any meaningful way. With regard to civil society, local and grassroots organisations were less frequently invited than international civil society organisations or national

²³ European Commission (2012): [Instructions for the programming of the 11th European Development Fund \(EDF\) and the Development Cooperation Instrument \(DCI\) - 2014-2020](#).

²⁴ Ibid, p. 19.

umbrella organisations. Moreover, the quality and intensity of pre-existing relationships with EU delegations had an impact on who was invited and attended consultations.²⁵

In several cases, participants of consultations did not feel confident that their input would have an effect on the decisions taken by the EU delegation on policy priorities (see Box 3). This indicates that although consultations were carried out, the contributions of non-governmental actors were seen as marginal in the process. By and large, their input did not have an effect on programming decisions. In retrospect, consultation in the earlier phases of programming seemed to have been more a case of “‘box-ticking’ rather than a reflection of any commitment to democratic ownership and inclusive development.”²⁷ Even the preferences of partner governments fared poorly in a process that was tilted heavily towards the EU, which was keen to enforce policy priorities set out in the Agenda for Change. The fact that, compared to the preceding 10th EDF, funding for sustainable agriculture and energy sector was significantly increased to the detriment of the transport sector, which had been traditionally strong in development aid towards ACP countries, supports this finding.²⁸

Box 3: Feedback from civil society representatives given in CONCORD survey²⁶

Positive feedback from Kenya:

“The consultation was a one day round table meeting organised by the EU delegation to Kenya in Nairobi. The participants were drawn from government, INGOs, NGOs, private sector and trade unions/alliances. After the introductory sessions, there were break-away group sessions according to thematic areas [...]. There was a plenary session after this, and debriefing. The areas identified were shared with participants through email about two weeks after the session.”

Negative feedback from undisclosed country:

“It wasn’t really a consultation it was more two information meetings which gave participants no opportunity to question either the programming framework or the choice of priority sectors, which were felt to have been imposed by the EU. Very few organisations (representing vital sectors) took part in these meetings, and most of them were ones that had an affinity with the EU delegation. We had to really beg for the invitation to be extended to other organisations that had serious analyses of EU cooperation. Judging by the papers and presentations prepared afterwards, the organisations’ comments and recommendations made during this exercise were not really taken into account.”

3.2. Formulation

Engagement with a variety of actors other than government throughout the formulation phase of the programming cycle can facilitate the generation of country-specific knowledge on domestic context and political power structures. The value of a sound understanding of the political context has in principle been recognised by the EU. This is evident, for example, by the decision of DG DEVCO

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ CONCORD (2015): [Mutual Engagement between EU Delegations and Civil Society Organisations. Lessons from the Field](#), p. 18.

²⁷ Herrero, Alisa / Knoll, Anna / Gregersen, Cecilia (2015): [Implementing the Agenda for Change. An independent analysis of the 11th EDF programming](#), p. 51.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 29ff.

to trial the use of political economy analysis in 2010. This initiative, however, has not been effectively mainstreamed in formulation (see Box 4). The EU has not given up on political economy analysis entirely, but the way in which it should affect programme formulation is not uniform.²⁹

Direct exchange with a wide variety of domestic actors is not usually an option for EU delegations in many countries, because it is deemed too sensitive in political terms. The lack of resources within many EU delegations is also a reason why long-term relations with domestic actors cannot be sustained and do not effectively factor into decisions on the formulation of programmes.

To that effect, the incorporation of knowledge on domestic political dynamics and distribution of power seems to play a very limited role in the formulation phase. This has been lamented in several assessments that have identified the need for systematic analysis of political contexts to be considered to a greater extent in EDF programming.³¹ If political economy analyses are not available, the formulation of programmes could in theory draw from Human Rights and Democracy Country Strategy Papers, conflict sensitivity mappings, Democracy Profiles, and Democracy Action Plans (prepared by EU delegations in the context of the Democracy Support Pilot Exercise). To date, these documents remain detached from EDF programming.³² In many cases formulation of programmes still tend to follow blueprints, with a reliance on programme designs that have traditionally been a part of the aid portfolio in that country.

Some positive impact has been identified in the utilisation of the 'EU Country Roadmaps for Engagement with Civil Society', specifically for programme formulation. In several cases under the 11th EDF these documents have informed the formulation of civil society support programmes (see Section 4 for examples). Consequently, the engagement of civil society in policy-making is expected to play a bigger role in support programmes under the 11th EDF than previously. While no further conclusions can be drawn at this time, it does show that analysis can feed into programming in a semi-structured manner.

Box 4: Political economy analysis in Senegal

In 2010, DG DEVCO chose several pilot countries to conduct political economy analyses in. These exercises were to be led by an external consultant in close cooperation with staff of EU delegations.³⁰

One of these countries was Senegal, where the process began in spring 2012, lasted one year and included the consultation of a large number of different stakeholders in government, civil society, parliament, academia, etc. The aim was to identify key drivers or impediments of political change, in order to assess implications for the provision of EU governance aid. Ideally this was to ensure the effectiveness of EU programming. The final report was widely publicised in Senegalese media. However, the high visibility of the exercise led decision makers at DG DEVCO to halt the wider implementation of political economy analysis.

²⁹ In 2016 DG DEVCO decided to review its engagement with political economy analysis.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 49f.

³¹ Hackensch, Christine (2016): [Good Governance in EU External Relations: What role for development policy in a changing international context?](#), p. 16.

³² Ibid., p. 21.

3.3. Implementation

The EDF is either implemented through budget support or projects (grants, services, programmes, etc.). Both types of funding have differing possibilities of engaging domestic accountability actors, be it through increased financial sustainability, capacity-development, or oversight mechanisms.

One of the most frequent arguments put forward in favour of budget support, is its ability to guarantee ownership over development aid as it enables the recipient government to finance its national development agenda through the state budget. Unfortunately, due to corruption cases, misuse of funds and unwillingness to respect human rights and democracy on the sides of several recipient governments, budget support has increasingly become a controversial matter over the last decade. If the agenda of the government is clearly serving a governing party rather than its constituents, then there is no meaningful accountability to citizens and other actors.

DG DEVCO has responded to the growing criticism of how budget support was implemented in the 2000s and subsequently published a revision of its approach in 2012.

The guidelines emphasise several key components: higher conditionality, increased performance assessment, and the targeted provision of ‘accompanying measures’. All these elements are foreseen to mitigate risks and make budget support more effective. While ‘accompanying measures’ put a clear focus on the strengthening of public finance management, DG DEVCO has also outlined several ways through which it aims to support domestic accountability (see Box 5). These reforms concur with recent evaluations that highlight the need for a more holistic approach under budget support, i.e. by increasing the involvement of “civil society, parliament, and the media.”³⁵ At this stage, it is unclear to which degree these changes are being implemented and what success they augur in

Box 5: EU suggestions to strengthen domestic accountability in budget support

In the 2012 revision of its approach towards budget support³³, DG DEVCO outlines four ways in which domestic accountability is to be strengthened:

- *Strengthening the openness, transparency and accountability of the budget process;*
- *Supporting a participatory budget support approach;*
- *Supporting national legislative and oversight bodies, internal audit and control institutions as well as sub-national authorities and civil society organisations;*
- *Increasing transparency by publishing relevant information on budget support Financing Agreements and performance reviews.*

More recently, DG DEVCO has also put forth some specific recommendations on the involvement of civil society organisations in public finance management reform, e.g. through the monitoring of public procurement or the monitoring of transparency and accountability standards.³⁴

³³ European Commission (2012): [Budget Support Guidelines. Programming, Design and Management](#), p. 49f.

³⁴ European Commission (2014): [Promoting civil society participation in policy and budget processes](#).

³⁵ German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval) (2015): [Accompanying Measures to General Budget Support in Sub-Saharan Africa](#), p. 22.

contexts where non-state actors lack the space to effectively make use of increased transparency.

With regard to projects, a clear focus on the recipient government can sometimes hinder the involvement of other domestic actors. Except for the cases in which actions are indirectly managed by international organisations, they are generally implemented by the government of the recipient state. For this purpose, the government designates within one of its line ministries a National Authorising Officer (NAO), who is in charge of contracting procedures and management of the action. For non-state actors, and especially those in the opposition, the central position of the NAOs can be problematic. As NAOs are direct representatives of the ruling government, the decisions taken in the implementation of the EDF can be heavily motivated by politics and have in many cases disadvantaged domestic actors.³⁶ Many NAOs have repeatedly failed to sufficiently exchange information with non-governmental actors and, as mentioned above, EU delegations are often not best equipped to fill this gap.³⁷

Programme Steering Committees and Programme Management Units offer a chance to correct a possible state bias in project funding. These bodies are usually part of the organisational set-up of actions under the EDF (and other EU development instruments) and are, in theory, to include all relevant stakeholders, such as relevant ministries, the EU delegation, and the NAO. Sometimes civil society organisations are specifically stated as possible participants in these committees. However, civil society representatives do not generally partake in committees unless they are directly involved in the implementation of the respective programmes.

4. Cases

The following subsections give a brief insight into the political contexts of four ACP countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. They illustrate more clearly the type of political realities that development initiatives face under the EDF. These subsections also look at recent funding decisions that concern the support of non-state actors.

4.1. Mozambique

Since the end of the Mozambican Civil War that lasted from 1977 to 1992, the political system in Mozambique has been under the dominance of the ruling party FRELIMO, which has won all parliamentary and presidential elections against former belligerent RENAMO. The inclusion of opposition parties and civil society organisations in the decision-making process has been weak. Although

³⁶ German Development Institute (2013): [ACP-EU Relations beyond 2020: Exploring European Perceptions](#), p. 3.

³⁷ Herrero, Alisa / Knoll, Anna / Gregersen, Cecilia (2015): [Implementing the Agenda for Change. An independent analysis of the 11th EDF programming](#), p. 16.

the government has formally introduced channels for participation – e.g. the creation of a Council of State ('Conselho de Estado') to advise the presidency – these have not led to a true opening of democratic space. Recent elections have been characterised by electoral violence and violations of political rights. State institutions and the public administration are under the control of the ruling party. The political climate further deteriorated over the course of the presidency of Armando Guebuza (2005-2014) until a peace agreement was signed on the eve of the 2014 elections. In 2015, as a result of conflict in the post-election period, fighting erupted between both parties. RENAMO now demands administrative and political control over those provinces in which they had strong electoral showings (central and northern Mozambique).

Mozambique is a major recipient of international development aid, which since the early 2000s has been largely delivered in the form of budget support. In recent years support by international donors accounted for nearly half of the state budget in Mozambique. EU development aid to Mozambique formed part of this trend. In the period from 2008 to 2013, the 10th EDF allocated up to EUR 311 million to general budget support. The current NIP under the 11th EDF includes EUR 200 million in general budget support (plus additional funding in the form of sector budget support). On the one hand, evaluations have noted that budget support in Mozambique has been “fundamentally successful” in increasing development spending and also in the realms of government performance and public finance management.³⁸ On the other hand, several international donors (other than the EU) have not been satisfied with the results of budget support and moved on to other forms of support in recent years.

Indeed, specifically in view of the political setting in Mozambique the overall success of budget support and its contribution to domestic accountability is less than clear-cut. Many observers contend that the constraints for civil society and opposition parties (whether due to a lack of capacity or a lack of space) have effectively hindered their ability to oversee budget processes in Mozambique.³⁹ The prevalence of budget support and the related focus on public finance administration have effectively relegated “[o]ther areas, such as support to the media and civil society, political parties and elections, or the national assembly [...] to the margin.”⁴⁰

Most recently, in April 2016, EU-Mozambican relations were put under stress by the discovery of undisclosed government debt of over EUR 1 billion, which was used to fund contracts with mostly state-owned companies working in maritime security and the defence sector. The EU and other international donors have since suspended budget support.⁴¹

³⁸ European Commission (2014): [Independent Evaluation of Budget Support in Mozambique. Executive Summary.](#)

³⁹ The Informal Governance Group and Alliance 2015 (2010): [Aid and Budget Transparency in Mozambique. Constraints for Civil Society, the Parliament and the Government.](#)

⁴⁰ Manning, Carrie / Malbrough, Monica (2012): [The Changing Dynamics of Foreign Aid and Democracy in Mozambique.](#) p. 21.

⁴¹ See: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-36158118>

4.2. Uganda

Over the course of the 1990s, Uganda had become an important partner to many Western states. President Yoweri Museveni had proven to be a willing reformer by introducing market-oriented economic changes and was also increasingly perceived as an important regional security ally. On the basis of concurring objectives in development and regional politics, Uganda subsequently became one of the first recipients of general budget support. This enabled the Ugandan government to assume a central role in aid implementation.

By the mid-2000s, donors' views increasingly diverted from those of the Ugandan government. The lack of democratic progress, blatantly evident in the controversial election of 2006, as well as structural mismanagement in the public sector, led international donors to grow wary of continuing general budget support. At the same time, the leverage of donors had waned to the degree that introducing governance issues into the political dialogue with the Ugandan government was not feasible.⁴²

Despite the deteriorating political conditions, the EU continued to provide budget support. The NIP of the 10th EDF, indicated that 40% of funds were reserved for general budget support and another 15% for sector budget support (for a total amount of over EUR 200 million). Accompanying measures were to emphasise public service delivery as well as public finance management. About 3% of the total was allocated to support 'democratic governance and civil society'. When in 2012 it was discovered that funds intended to support development in Northern Uganda had been diverted to the Office of the Prime Minister, international donors, including the EU, suspended budget support.

Consequently, general budget support is not foreseen under the current NIP. The provision of sector budget support will be considered though, if the EU finds that respective conditions are fulfilled. In light of recent worrying domestic developments in Uganda, negotiations of the EU on how to proceed with the annual programming under the current NIP proved rather difficult – both internally as well as with the Government of Uganda. The general elections in February 2016, which as the EU EOM final report contends “fell short of international standards” and saw the police using “excessive force against opposition, media and the general public”⁴³, led several EU member states to favour a more confrontational approach. Yet, not least because of the strategic importance of the Government of Uganda in regard to security and migration, the EU decided to continue the provision of development aid to Uganda as planned and finalised the most recent Annual Action Programme (AAP) in late November 2016.

A few actions under the new AAP 2016 include provisions for capacity-development and engagement in policy-making on EDF focal sectors for civil society organisations. A relatively large programme in absolute financial terms

⁴² Overseas Development Institute (2016): [Budget support to Uganda 1998-2012. A review.](#)

⁴³ European Union Election Observation Mission (2016): [Final Report. Ugandan Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Council Elections.](#)

(EUR 25 million), closely aligned with the 'EU Country Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society' for Uganda, foresees several measures that engage civil society in the policy areas of EDF implementation (see Box 6). Another action foresees measures of oversight for civil society organisations vis-à-vis local authorities in Northern Uganda (see Box 7). These actions target civil society organisations, leaving aside other domestic accountability actors.⁴⁴

Box 6: "Civil Society in Uganda Support Programme (CUSP)"⁴⁵

Aid modality: Project modality; indirect management with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
Amount: EUR 25 million

The action seeks to strengthen the recently established 'Non-Governmental-Organisations Bureau', to increase capacity of civil society organisation platforms, and to enhance the contribution of civil society organisations to national development processes.

Its third component is most relevant for oversight. It follows the approach of capacity development and aims to enhance the ability of civil society organisations to engage in the policy areas to which the EU directs funding in the current NIP. It does not, however, open up institutionalised avenues for oversight of the EDF.

Box 7: "Development Initiative for Northern Uganda (DINU)"⁴⁶

Aid modality: Project modality; indirect management with the Government of Uganda and several international organisations
Amount: EUR 132.8 million

The governance component of the Development Initiative for Northern Uganda (DINU) focuses on good governance and the rule of law at the local level as well as community participation in service delivery. In that context, an element exists that seeks to strengthen the downward accountability of local authorities. One activity specifically (activity 3.3.3.) targets the enhancement of the oversight role of local civil society organisations "by strengthening their collaboration with local governments to undertake local governments' performance assessments and coordinated approaches to monitoring of service delivery and implementation of local government plans or national programmes."⁴⁷

4.3. Namibia

The political setting in Namibia, an upper middle-income country since 2009, is dominated by the SWAPO party, which led the country into independence in 1990. In the uncontested parliamentary and presidential elections of 2014, the party was able to win 80% of the vote, while the presidential candidate and now President Hage Geingob won 87% of the popular vote. The government largely

⁴⁴ However, some activities that include political parties are financed through the EDF by the EU contribution to the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF), a joint programme of European donors of which the EU is a contributor.

⁴⁵ European Commission (2016): [Action Document for the Civil Society in Uganda Support Programme \(CUSP\)](#).

⁴⁶ European Commission (2016): [Action Document for the Development Initiative for Northern Uganda](#).

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 19.

respects democratic procedures, but its overwhelming power has increasingly led to an authoritarian political culture.

SWAPO's strength limits the way in which parliament and opposition parties can perform their function of overseeing and controlling the executive government. In fact, because ministers of the comparatively large cabinet also serve as members of parliament there is a considerable overlap between the executive and legislative branches of government. Moreover, opposition parties lack capacity as well as cross-party coordination, which further inhibits their ability to hold the government accountable. While some hopes were directed towards the Congress of Democrats (CoD) and the Rally Democracy and Progress (RDP) some years ago, this did not materialise in any substantial electoral success for these parties. In view of the lack of strength in the political opposition, considerable responsibility falls upon civil society organisations and media actors. Yet, these actors too are seldom in a position from which they could effectively block a political decision by the ruling government.

The majority of funding through the 11th EDF is directed towards the two focal sectors of 'Education and Skills' (EUR 36 million) and 'Agriculture' (EUR 20 million).⁴⁸ Non-state actors are targeted in the civil society support measure – the action "Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia" (EPDN) adopted under the AAP 2016 by the European Commission in November 2016 (see Box 8). It is the successor of two programmes under the 10th EDF, one directing support to two large civil society umbrella organisations, the other to the parliament. Both of these programmes ended in 2016.

Box 8: "Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN)"⁴⁹

Aid modality: Project modality; indirect management with the Government of Namibia; grants and services
Amount: EUR 6 million

The action aims to increase the effective interaction between civil society, parliament and government, in order to support the implementation and monitoring of public policies related to the two focal sectors in the NIP. To that purpose the capacity of civil society organisations to interact and cooperate with the parliament is to be increased and their involvement in policy-making processes strengthened. It also aims to involve parliamentary standing committees that are directly concerned with an oversight function. The indirect management with the Government of Namibia could hinder the inclusiveness of the action.

4.4. Zimbabwe

Direct development aid to the Government of Zimbabwe was halted through a decision of the Council of the EU in 2002 in light of serious human rights violations and attempts to prevent free and fair elections. Under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, the EU applied sanctions over the violation of 'essential

⁴⁸ European Commission (2015): [European Union – Republic of Namibia. National Indicative Programme 2014-2020.](#)

⁴⁹ European Commission (2016): [Action Document for "Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia" \(EPDN\).](#)

elements' regarding human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law (specified in Article 9). In addition, several military and political figures, including President Robert Mugabe, were hit with sanctions.

After development aid had been rechannelled to 'directly support the population' for a decade, restrictive measures were progressively reduced from 2012 onwards. The subsequent preparation and signing of a NIP for the 11th EDF by both the EU and the Government of Zimbabwe presented a key component of the revived partnership. Especially after the 2013 elections the EU committed to this process of rapprochement with the government. The passing of a new constitution in March 2013 formed an integral part of the EU's public rationale to re-establish relations. The NIP finalised in 2015 describes the constitution as a "new framework for engagement with a large number of Zimbabwean stakeholders, including the State and its institutions and civil society"⁵⁰.

It is true that the constitution expands on liberal values and shows various other improvements. However, civil and political rights have de facto remained inaccessible as national legislation curtailing these constitutional rights remains in force. Most importantly, the constitution has left the overarching executive power of the presidency untouched. By regaining sole governmental control through the elections of 2013, President Mugabe has been able to further entrench authoritarian rule in Zimbabwe. To that effect, the reestablishment of full cooperation between the EU and Zimbabwe comes at a time of persisting authoritarianism in the country. Though there had been a brief opening of channels between civil society and the government in the post 2013 election period, e.g. by consulting civil society organisations on the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZimAsset), this was of short duration. Civic space in Zimbabwe has followed the same pattern for a number of years, ebbing and waning in line with the electoral cycle. As the 2018 elections approach, civic space is likely to shrink further.

It is against this background that EU development aid was programmed for the current EDF cycle. For a total amount of EUR 234 million the NIP for Zimbabwe identifies 'health', 'agriculture-based economic development', and 'governance and institution building' as its three focal sectors. Funds allocated to the governance focal sector are to target public finance management, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and the democratic process. Action documents under both the Annual Action Programme of 2015 and that of 2016 foresee only project funding (and no budget support). Only a small part is being indirectly managed with the Government of Zimbabwe.

In light of the timing of the EU's re-engagement with the Zimbabwean Government and the tense political climate, non-state actors have been seriously concerned about a possible lack of inclusion in implementation and/or engagement in oversight. However, recent action documents have shown some consideration of the need to include domestic accountability actors in oversight

⁵⁰ European Commission (2015): [11th European Development Fund. National Indicative Programme \(2014-2020\). For co-operation between the European Union and the Republic of Zimbabwe](#), p. 11.

activities. Most notable in this regard is the action entitled “Support to Civil Society in Zimbabwe”, forming part of the AAP 2016 and recently approved by the European Commission in November 2016 (Box 9). The design of the action document is closely related to the structure and the finding of the ‘EU Country Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society’ for Zimbabwe. The benefits of basing the design of the action on the roadmap are clearly visible, especially in the context of the dire need for oversight over EDF implementation by non-state actors. Another measure that foresees the enhanced inclusion of civil society (and the private sector) in dialogue on EDF implementation with government officials is included in the action to support the NAO and the Technical Cooperation Facility (TCF). This action forms part of the AAP 2015 (Box 10).

Political parties are largely absent from EDF funding to Zimbabwe. The action “Support to the consolidation of the democratic process in Zimbabwe”⁵¹ foresees the promotion of dialogue among political parties and other electoral stakeholders, but financial implications are minimal: the activity is one of several in a EUR 2 million project to strengthen the electoral process (to be implemented by a civil society organisation).

Box 9: “Support to Civil Society in Zimbabwe”⁵²

Aid modality: Project modality; direct management by the EU; grants to civil society organisations (call for proposals)
Amount: EUR 6 million

The second specific objective aims to strengthen the watchdog role of civil society organisations, specifically “in the implementation of the NIP focal sectors”.⁵³ The corresponding result is that “NIP implementation [is] monitored and documented and used for holding government and EU accountable”.⁵⁴ Activities to be financed include (1) impact oriented research and monitoring, (2) consultative forums between civil society organisations, the government, local authorities and the EU Delegation, and (3) consultative forums between civil society organisations and communities.

Box 10: “Support to National Authorising Office (NAO) and the Technical Cooperation Facility (TCF)”⁵⁵

Aid modality: Project modality; indirect management with the Government of Zimbabwe; direct management by the EU
Amount: EUR 6 million

One of the expected results is the enhancement of the participation of non-state actors and civil society groups in the implementation of EDF programmes. To that purpose, the action foresees the establishment of a platform for exchange and seminars between government, civil society and the private sector “to ensure participatory impact monitoring of EDF programmes.” The procurement of services is managed by the EU.

⁵¹ European Commission (2016): [Action Document for Support to the consolidation of the democratic process in Zimbabwe](#).

⁵² European Commission (2016): [Action Document for Support to Civil Society in Zimbabwe](#).

⁵³ Ibid., p. 9.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 10.

⁵⁵ European Commission (2015): [Action Document for Support to National Authorising Office \(NAO\) and the Technical Cooperation Facility \(TCF\) – Zimbabwe](#).

5. Key findings

The analysis of EDF programming documents, evaluations of EU development aid and recent interviews with local development practitioners as well as EU officials in the EEAS and DG DEVCO, have led EPD to identify the following five key findings for ownership and domestic accountability under the EDF.

1. The negative impact of a technical approach to development on accountability

The EU's technical approach to development impacts the way in which domestic accountability is supported. First of all, domestic accountability is essentially only approached with regard to governance; it does not permeate across other sectors of development. This has meant that the lion's share of funding for domestic accountability under the EDF targets the administrative capacity of the state, especially in the area of public finance management.

Support to actors that could hold executive governments accountable is comparatively weak, conceptually as well as financially. Thus, two essential elements of domestic accountability – 'answerability' (states having to justify) and 'enforceability' (states being subject to sanctions) – remain comparatively underemphasised in EU funding. These circumstances can have significant consequences for the societies in which the EDF is implemented. The failure to address all three dimensions of accountability can lead to the consolidation of authoritarian rule and represents a missed opportunity for enabling citizens to hold their government accountable.

2. An inflated focus on the state in implementation

Unless restrictions under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement apply, the EU directs the majority of funds under the EDF to the state. This is natural as the state should normally be the main recipient of aid, but the emphasis the EDF puts on actors beyond the state is insufficient. For example, in countries with powerful executives and little space for opposition parties or civil society, funding directed at state capacity is likely to be detrimental to accountable governance, if it is not accompanied with effective measures of strengthening actors other than the executive government. In many cases, domestic accountability actors still lack the necessary capacity to effectively engage with the state and present effective constraints against corruption and mismanagement.

The case of delivering budget support to Uganda demonstrates that a strong focus on state capacity can backfire in a political setting of a powerful executive and weakened opposition parties and civil society organisations. The EU seemed to have been overly convinced of the benefits of budget support as an aid modality in Uganda, so that there was little attempt to substantially upgrade funding directed at a wide range of non-state actors threatened under the authoritarian system. Although improvements in public finance management were made over the years, domestic accountability could still be curtailed by the government. In the end, the focus on state capacity and budget support did not

contribute to opening a space for opposition actors. Mozambique provides a similar example in a different political setting.

3. An incomplete categorisation of domestic accountability actors

Only a narrow range of domestic accountability actors receive support through the EDF. The comparatively small amount that is reserved for support to actors other than the executive arm of governments in the EDF (2.3% of funding reserved under national envelopes) goes almost exclusively to civil society organisations.

The same applies for the inclusion in implementation. Recent efforts to increase oversight avenues will mainly target civil society organisations. Parliamentary committees are only involved in a few cases (and, as is the case of Namibia, these are often controlled by the governing party). In addition, meaningful support to the political party system is non-existent under the EDF. Naturally, not all non-state actors are agents of development or contribute to domestic accountability. Nevertheless they should not be excluded as possible partners in implementation of the EDF from the outset.

4. The importance of political awareness for programming purposes

The presence and development of accountable government is heavily dependent on context-specific factors. Such factors can be identified in thorough political economy analyses before funding decisions are taken. Indeed, in cases where a government is clearly authoritarian or executive power is not sufficiently checked, there are clear benefits to altering the way in which aid is delivered. A systematic attention to how funding should be influenced by existing domestic political structures still seems to be missing in the EDF.

The examined cases have demonstrated the potential benefit of drawing upon the respective 'EU Country Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society'. Recent programming decisions indicate that those measures to support civil society organisations are increasingly aligned with findings from those documents that identify capacity gaps, windows of opportunity, and avenues for policy engagement of civil society organisations.

5. The underutilisation of methods of oversight in civil society support

In those cases where measures for oversight for civil society organisations are foreseen under the EDF, the approach is not uniform. Recent action documents in Uganda, Namibia, and Zimbabwe show differing degrees and methods for ensuring oversight. These range from actions focusing on a) capacity-development, b) increased engagement in policy-making related to targeted development sectors in a specific country, c) increased cooperation with the parliament, to d) focusing specifically on the watchdog role of civil society organisations through a combination of evidence-based monitoring and multi-stakeholder dialogue.

The fact that a mechanism focusing on the watchdog role was recently planned for in Zimbabwe, where the political environment is as challenging as it is for non-state actors, poses the question as to why such actions are not foreseen in

many more recipient countries and points to an underutilisation of available tools.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the fact that accountable governance is vital for achieving the type of sustainable development that can contribute to eradicating poverty. The recommendations are designed to tackle the aforementioned risk of ‘dilution’ - where key priorities such as human rights, democracy and the rule of law, lose emphasis as aid moves from policy to programming to implementation. As such, they build on the key findings of this paper in order to provide practical suggestions for improving the outcome of programming under the EDF.

Recommendation 1: Include specific provisions on how domestic accountability is supported in all focal sectors

Domestic accountability is not merely a ‘governance issue’, but should be strengthened in all sectors of development aid (health, energy, transport, etc.). This means that strengthening domestic accountability should be tackled even if governance is not one of the focal sectors under the EDF in a particular country.

Both sector-specific provisions as well as a separate, crosscutting section on “*Support to accountability*” should therefore be mandatory in National Indicative Programmes (NIPs). The specific ways in which different domestic accountability actors are to be included in development initiatives (both in budget support and project support) should be detailed in these sections.

Recommendation 2: Increase attention given to ‘answerability’ (states having to justify) through support to oversight

The EU should increase the attention given to dimensions of domestic accountability that surpass the effective functioning of state administrations. Focusing on ways in which citizens can hold executive governments accountable through oversight mechanisms should therefore be a staple component of civil society support programmes under the EDF.

Systematically foreseeing effective oversight mechanisms for civil society (and ideally other domestic accountability actors) throughout the implementation of a development initiative can not only increase the transparency of aid and contribute to downward accountability, but also increase leverage vis-à-vis overbearing executives.

Recommendation 3: Focus more on long-term support for domestic accountability actors

Support that is directed to domestic accountability actors should move from being delivered on an ‘ad hoc’ basis to sustained support that enables them to influence the whole aid delivery cycle. The EU should be adamant in expanding this type of support (financially and conceptually), even if faced with reluctance on the side of recipient governments.

In countries where no significant funds under the 11th EDF have been allocated to domestic actors beyond the executive arm of government, efforts should be made to ensure support in the remaining implementation phase.

Recommendation 4: Increase engagement with a wider range of domestic accountability actors

Support to domestic accountability actors should go beyond civil society support. While civil society support should be encouraged, it should also be noted that civil society is not always representative of society in general. After all, people elect politicians and parties, not civil society to represent them. Support to the political party spectrum, media actors and to parliaments should be strengthened, in financial and conceptual terms.

Recommendation 5: Engage in in-depth consultations with domestic accountability actors at the start of programming exercises

Domestic accountability actors should be able to contribute effectively to the identification of programming priorities through meaningful multi-stakeholder dialogue. Institutionalised avenues for multi-stakeholder dialogue (ensuring the participation of national government and the private sector, but especially domestic accountability actors, like parliamentarians, political party representatives, civil society, judicial bodies, etc.) should be created to contribute to the identification of policy priorities before using National Development Plans.

Recommendation 6: Commit to strengthening the links between analysis and programming

The EU should recommit to the effective use of political economy analysis and enable a greater influence of political context on programming decisions. Political economy analysis is essential for deciding which domestic accountability actors should and can be supported. It also contributes to the systematic assessment of which types of funding are appropriate in which political context.

Political economy analysis is not a perfect tool (especially as it should be updated regularly as context changes), but it can serve to inform those engaged in programming of relevant power structures and identify key entry points for EU aid. In line with this, programming should pay more attention to existing analyses such as conflict sensitivity mappings or Democracy Action Plans, where available and maintain the use of 'EU Country Roadmaps for Engagement with Civil Society' for programme formulation.

Recommendation 7. Increase involvement of domestic accountability actors in Programme Steering Committees and Programme Management Units

The inconsistent engagement of domestic accountability actors in Programme Steering Committees and Programme Management Units represents a missed chance of including a broader base of actors in all forms of project support. Domestic accountability actors should be invited to these bodies even if they are

not directly involved in implementation of the action. This applies to all sectors of development.

Recommendation 8: Replace National Authorising Officers (NAOs) with National Development Platforms

NAOs often act as impediments to ‘democratic ownership’ over aid. In a post-Cotonou context, NAOs should be replaced by National Development Platforms that are spearheaded by relevant line ministries but include representatives from a wider spectrum of society as well as a wide range of domestic accountability actors. This would increase chances that domestic accountability is integrated across all stages of development aid delivery. By institutionalising channels for different perspectives from society it would also contribute to aid effectiveness and achieving development results for those most in need.