



CERFE and Consultations on Global Partnership for Social Accountability

Between January 1, 2012 and March 15, 2012 over 1,300 stakeholders from all over the world provided inputs on the World Bank's proposal for the Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA). Feedback summaries and further information can be found here http://siteresources.worldbank.org/CSO/Resources/GPSA_Consultations1_Overall_Feedback_Summary_EN.pdf

An excerpt of CERFE feedback, formulated by the Director Gabriele Quinti, is presented below.

What are the key challenges or issues faced by civil society, which the Partnership should try to address?

Many. One among other (very often forgotten) is related to the notion of scientific citizenship, i.e. the definition of rights, duties and responsibilities of all the actors in society towards Science and Technology (ST). These rights, duties and responsibilities may concern aspects ranging from the stakeholders' involvement in defining policy agendas on ST up to the participation of beneficiaries in technology transfer, the protection of intellectual property (including the traditional and indigenous one) and above all a set of rights, duties and responsibilities concerning the generality of citizens. ST play (and should have to play) a core role for supporting development and the fight against poverty (in health, nutrition, environment, etc.). ST is today fundamental to improve development effectiveness. And if one, as suggested above, considers knowledge linked to the dimension of rights and a common good to be preserved, enhanced and exploited to the benefit of all, then the distinction between scientists and lay people, experts and non experts, no longer makes much sense. It seems more meaningful to speak of scientific citizenship as a dimension of common citizenship built around knowledge, explicated through the exercise of joint responsibility, although at different levels, by the various types of actors. Civil society, today (at least in part) should play a role for facilitating the active involvement of common citizens (in less developed countries too) in this joint responsibility exercise. In this regard, it is to take into account 1) some mutual mistrust that sometimes exists between ST researchers and civil society organizations (CSOs); 2) the limited (often) skills/capacities of CSOs at this regard (but do not overdo it: there is also a gap in recognizing civil society experiences in the field of ST).

What type of support should the proposed Partnership offer in order to help civil society address these issues?

1) To overcome the climate of mutual mistrust that sometimes exists between researchers and CSOs, meetings and exchanges of views should be promoted, such as workshops and working

groups on specific issues. Some such initiatives are already practiced. For example: collaboration between researchers and NGOs to disseminate Methods of Non-Pesticidal Pest Management (NPM) in India; the joint submission of projects for sustainable post-tsunami reconstruction in Tamil Nadu (India), involving experts and local NGOs; cooperation between research institutions and local NGOs in the fight against food plant pests in Kenya; cooperation between a Kenyan university and grassroots organizations in local sanitation projects in urban areas.

2) The proposed Partnership should support the empowering of CSOs so that they can have more say in the governance of ST at local level. This empowerment can be supported by interventions such as offering guidance, advice and training and, of course, through CSOs deep involvement in ST projects and initiatives at the local level (for instance, in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, the NGO GUIDE supported a number of citizens' self-organization initiatives for the management of water resources in the river Palar basin and the selection of appropriate technologies. These included the "Resource Protection Committees" and "Water Parliaments". In particular, the Water Parliaments are made up of students, members of other NGOs, villagers, panchayat presidents, leaders of farmers and others who use this open platform to join together in the name of protecting local water resources).

What should be the Bank's role in providing this support?

1) The World Bank (in general) should take more into account that Science and Technology (ST) is today fundamental to improve development effectiveness and to fight poverty. Therefore, it should fund, via Bank operation, ST projects (or valorizing, where appropriate, ST);

2) The World Bank (more specifically) should provide a support through capacity-building, networking, exchange of experiences, the empowerment of CSOs in ST

3) The World Bank should support more ST projects (operations with a ST component) both at a central and a local level adopting (or supporting the adoption of), also in these projects, a multi-stakeholders approach involving ST researchers, enterprises (SMEs), public bodies (also local authorities if appropriate), CSOs and common citizens (adopting an approach based on "scientific citizenship").

4) The World Bank should fund through the Development Grant Facility and Trust Funds for various purposes (e.g., research, community mobilization) experimental/pilot projects at this regard.

5) Finally, the World Bank should support "networks of ST researchers for development".

What kind of development results should the Partnership seek to achieve? By what metrics or indicator should the success of the Partnership be measured?

I agree with all the results already specified (greater voice and participation - also through social accountability first of all third-party monitoring of infrastructure projects involving civil society), especially of the poor; better overall budget formulation and utilization (also thanks a beneficiary involvement in local budget formulation); improved quality and availability of basic services (also thanks citizens' feedback on service delivery); and increased and informed beneficiary feedback and participation in evidence-based policy dialogue (also in ST, as specified above).

A specific monitoring system of the Partnership should be elaborated taking into account also "simple" indicators such as the increase (or decrease!) in a given period of time of WB funded infrastructure projects adopting a third-party monitoring involving civil society; the increase (or decrease) of WB funded projects in a given period of time dealing (also) with ST and adopting a "scientific citizenship" approach; etc.