

Comments on Ivanyna and Shah, "Citizen-centric governance indicators: Measuring and monitoring governance by listening to the people and not the interest groups".

This paper argues that available governance indicators do not conceptualize governance and fail to capture how citizens perceive the governance environment and outcomes, consequently they are not suitable to be used as tools for conducting development dialogue, allocating external assistance and influencing foreign direct investment. This paper attempts to conceptualize governance and implement a uniform and consistent framework for measuring governance quality across countries and over time based upon citizens' evaluations.

Current indicators focus on the processes/institutions in general. The assumption behind is that a best process/institution can work perfectly all over the world, and the longer distance from the best one, the worse the process/institution as well as the governance. However, the assumption may have serious weaknesses. The fact is that there is no process/institution that fits all countries, and even no one fits different time periods of a country. In addition, as stressed in this paper, "there can be little disagreement that same processes and institutions can lead to divergent governance outcomes just as dissimilar processes could yield similar outcomes in two different countries". Therefore current indicators in general may provide biased comparative review of quality of governance across countries or even of one country over time. In fact, more reasonable indicators are in high demand from various aspects.

The paper provides an encouraging alternative to overcome the weakness of current indicators. The main contributions of this paper are: first, it presents a more trustful citizen-centric governance approach by relaxing the best process/institution assumption. By focusing on outcome, this approach has the advantage to recognize the value of different processes/institutions, which were chosen by different countries to fit their own particular economic and social conditions in particular time period. Second, this paper also provides a more interesting and simple framework capturing most aspects of governance outcomes including responsive governance, fair (equitable) governance, responsible governance, and accountable governance. Third, not surprisingly, the rankings significantly differ from those provided by available indicators. However, the rankings present less bias across countries and capture the natural of changing over time.

In summary, this paper provides a conceptual framework for measuring governance quality using citizens' evaluations consistently across countries and over time. It not only provides less biased rankings of governance, but it also can serve as a useful starting point for a consensus framework. I recommend that it should be accepted for publishing.