

LEARNING ALLIANCE ON HORIZONTAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Strengthening oversight and transparency for better governance in Africa and Latin America

How do states hold themselves accountable? How effective are they in this task? In this Learning Alliance we will explore how formal institutions, the capacities of these formal institutions, and informal institutions shape horizontal accountability. The Alliance will compare and contrast the experiences in Latin America and Africa, to identify ways to address shortfalls in accountability.

An ELLA Learning Alliance:

- “ Brings together professional peers from Latin America, Africa, and other regions, to engage in a programme of exchange and learning
- “ Promotes networking between individuals and organisations facing common development challenges, encouraging the initiation of collaborative efforts
- “ Works through an interactive platform, email updates, meetings in several countries and , rst-hand visits for a small group of participants (from Africa to Latin America)

Learning goal

The overall goal is to learn and discuss actions directed at strengthening the capacity of legislative and executive bodies to make them more effective in exercising their horizontal accountability mandates . based on a comparison of Latin American and African experiences. Comparative analysis of the situation in the two regions is designed to support inter-regional lesson learning.

This Learning Alliance is designed for:

- Professionals who work on issues of accountability and who are interested in sharing experiences and practices from different countries in Latin America and Africa on transparency, good governance and development
- People who are interested in learning and networking with peer experts, policy actors and practitioners on horizontal accountability
- Participants particularly from African and Latin American countries
- We are especially looking for people in the following sectors:
 - Members as well as advisors of the legislative assemblies and executive branches, at different levels of government
 - Political analysts
 - Academics in political systems, governance and accountability
 - Members of civil society organisations
 - Journalists from the specialised media.



Content of the Learning Alliance

The learning alliance promotes experiential learning starting with a conceptual definition of accountability and a discussion of the main mechanisms currently in place in Africa and Latin America. Based on the architecture in selected countries of Africa and Latin America, it focuses on factors that promote or constrain horizontal accountability reviewing the various mechanisms used by executive bodies to respond to issues raised by legislative bodies on the performance of their executive functions.

The discussion will seek to compare good practices and to identify lessons from success stories and remedial actions that can be taken to bridge gaps where performance is constrained. Emphasis will be put on the implications of formal institutions (policies, laws and practices) for the enforcement of mechanisms and accountability outcomes; on the incentives and sanctions that are in place to support good performance; and on the impact of informal institutions (ethnic cleavages, kinships, business groups, regionalism, civil society, media) on accountability..

The research on which this framework is based investigates the case studies of Kenya and Argentina which will be referred to in the analysis of horizontal accountability in general, and in examining the two countries in particular.

Topic 1: Understanding horizontal accountability: definitions and examples

This topic introduces the concept of accountability. Vertical accountability and horizontal accountability will be discussed, along with the two basic connotations of accountability (i) Answerability, the obligation of public officials to inform about what they are doing, and (ii) Enforcement, the capacity of accounting agencies to impose sanctions on power-holders who have violated their duties (Schedler, 1999).

During this topic, participants can expect to:

- Be introduced to the current debates on the topic of accountability and
- Share views on why accountability is an important part of contemporary democracies

Topic 2: Shaping horizontal accountability institutions: which factors determine their effectiveness?

The implementation of horizontal accountability mechanisms is a cornerstone of contemporary democracies. However, there is usually a gap between their intended aim and their actual performance . as the performance of horizontal accountability mechanisms is shaped by several factors. This topic will look at how formal institutions, capacities and informal institutions shape incentives and, therefore, horizontal accountability and its separate components of answerability, enforceability and responsibility, based on examples from Latin America and Africa.

In this topic, participants can expect to:

- Engage in a debate about how formal institutions may affect the performance of horizontal accountability mechanisms: including the structure of the political party system and the roles assigned to the Head of Cabinet, Parliamentary Committees, and General audit offices
- Engage in a discussion about the capacities that shape the performance of horizontal accountability institutions: including planning, monitoring and evaluation, and research capacities within the legislative and executive branches
- Reflect on the ways in which ethnic cleavages, kinships, business groups, regionalism, civil society, media or other informal institutions shape horizontal accountability mechanisms and the ways in which formal and informal rules interact



Topic 3: A menu for Horizontal Accountability mechanisms: what are the contrasting mechanisms in place in Africa and Latin America?

In this topic we contrast the political context and systems in the two regions, focusing on the two case study countries of Argentina and Kenya. While the political contexts are different in several important respects, Kenya and Argentina have both introduced parliamentary reforms to their presidential systems. Some of these reforms were aimed at limiting the power of the President, seeking to strengthen horizontal accountability mechanisms.

This topic will allow participants to:

- Discuss the evolution during the last two decades of the presidential systems of Kenya and Argentina, comparing the parliamentary reforms that were introduced in each case
- Debate the characteristics of the parliamentary reforms to the presidential systems, comparing the two cases, to identify the advantages and disadvantages of each reform
- Gain an overview of the contrasting Horizontal Accountability mechanisms in place in Africa and Latin America with a special focus on Kenya and Argentina

Topic 4: Analysing Answerability: how do horizontal accountability mechanisms work within the Executive branch?

This topic will review horizontal accountability from the perspective of the Executive branch. We will review Latin American and African experiences with a particular focus on the content, utility and impact of contrasting mechanisms in place in Kenya and Argentina.

For this purpose, in this topic we will take as examples and contrast the depth and, impact of, and legislators' responses to, the presidential addresses to Parliament in Kenya and Argentina; alongside the reports by the Chief of Staff to Congress in Argentina. Moreover, we will explore the presidential appointments of Cabinet Officials and senior executives of special commissions and state owned organisations in Kenya.

Topic 5: Analysing Enforceability: how do horizontal accountability mechanisms work within the Legislative branch?

This topic opens up a discussion on the ability of legislative branches to hold the executive accountable for its actions, contrasting experiences from Latin America and Africa. The analysis will focus on comparing two sets of mechanisms: questions by notice in the case of Kenya and Congressional information requests to the executive in the case of Argentina; and the capacity and capability of parliamentary accounts commissions/committees in the oversight of public accounts in both countries.

This topic will allow participants to:

- Review the institutional architecture of both sets of mechanisms in Africa and Latin America
- Engage in a debate about how these mechanisms are shaped by formal institutions, the capacities of these formal institutions, and informal institutions
- Discuss ways to enhance the effectiveness of these mechanisms

Topic 6: Assessing the outcomes

In winding up, it is essential to take stock of what has been achieved, what was left out and what further research should address. The discussion will focus on the following questions:

- To what extent has the learning alliance contributed to better understanding of horizontal accountability generally and in your country in particular?



- What elements were not captured in the discussion, which deserve further attention?
- As regards enhancing the accountability of the executive arms of government to parliamentary bodies, what new areas of research do you suggest should be addressed?

Moderators

The moderation of the Online Learning Alliance on Horizontal Accountability will be led jointly by CIPPEC from Buenos Aires, Argentina and OSSREA from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

[CIPPEC](#) is a pluralistic, independent institution, dedicated to doing research to inform public policy by forming links with actors from both civil society and government. CIPPEC researches three main areas, the State and Government, Economic Development, and Social Development.



[OSSREA](#) (Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa) is an African think tank doing research and research capacity development in Eastern and Southern Africa. OSSREA researches the challenges and opportunities of Eastern and Southern Africa in diverse social science issues, including economic, social, political, governance, gender and environmental themes.

The Learning Alliance will be moderated by:

[Natalia Aquilino](#), Director of the Policy Influence, Monitoring & Evaluation Programme at CIPPEC. She is an MA candidate in Labour Social Sciences, Buenos Aires University, and has a BA in Political Science, and is a postgraduate in Public Policy and Local Development at the National University of Rosario. She is Professor of Evaluation at the National University of General San Martín and the National University of Entre Rios in Argentina. She was a National Officer of the UN Coordination System and a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at UNDP in Argentina.



Paschal Mihyo was the Executive Director of the Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) from 2008 to 2014. He is lawyer by profession, a Professor of Politics and Administrative Studies with LL.B., LL.M and a Ph.D. in public law from the University of Dar Es Salaam.



Five experts will work closely with the moderators and will provide the technical content and African as well as Latin American experiences covered in the Learning Alliance: **Agustina Suaya**, Coordinator at CIPPEC and specialist in public policy. **Sofía Estévez**, researcher assistant specializing on public policy, **Federico Frascheri**, consultant specializing on public policy, **Truphena Mukuna**, (Research and Publications Director who does multi-disciplinary social science research) at OSSREA and **Alemu Tesfaye**, (ICT Manager), at OSSREA.

Dates

The Learning Alliance will begin on the 23 May 2016. The learning phase is set to last three months until August. After this, the community will remain open for further networking.

Methodology

Week One

During the first week, the Moderator will welcome participants, and set the scene for the Learning Alliance, clarifying the overall goals, structure and process, and posting the ground rules for participation. Members will also be asked to share their main interests and areas of expertise with the online community. In addition, members will be able to start networking on the Learning Alliances Networking Page.

Weeks Two to Thirteen

In week two, we will begin the exchange and learning phase of the Alliance. Over the course of the three months, the Alliance will work through six topics, the draft of which is set out in previous contents section. The learning and exchange will take place on ELLA's [online platform](#) designed specifically for the programme.

Each topic will consist of two weeks of thematic discussions. After the introductory week, the Moderator will introduce a set of issues and questions to be addressed, providing supporting reference material to begin the discussion. Members of the Alliance will be asked to review and comment on these issues, and contribute with their own examples and analysis from different countries, either as posts or by attaching documents or other material. At the end of the topic Moderator will post a short analytical document reviewing some of the key issues and commonalities raised in participant contributions. Participants will also have the opportunity to discuss and comment on this analysis.

Overall, the objective will be to gain an improved understanding of good policies and practices, and how these might be relevant and applicable in members' countries. Participants will receive periodic email notifications of the discussions, but will need to sign in weekly to the ELLA site to make their contributions.

Weeks Fourteen onwards

After the exchange and learning phase, the focus of the Learning Alliance will shift to support for continued networking among members of the Alliance. The Moderator will continue to oversee the Learning Alliance interactive space, and support networking between participants. The site will house a members' directory and technology for easy communication between members. Decisions will be taken on sustaining the Learning Alliance into the longer term, in the light of the degree to which members are continuing to benefit from the networking.



*Study Tour to Latin America*¹. In addition to the support for continued networking, a small group of (African) Learning Alliance members will be selected to participate in a study tour to Latin America to witness, first-hand, some good practices from the region and gain a deeper understanding of the contextual and enabling factors. This experience will enable participants to engage in direct exchange with their counterparts from Latin America and other regions. Participants will be chosen on a competitive basis.

Benefits for participants

- “ **Learning** . the expectation is that all participants will gain practical knowledge from Latin American, African and other countries and be able to think about how this knowledge could be transformed and applied in their own countries
- “ **Networking** . participants will be connected to individuals and organisations across Latin America, Africa and elsewhere who face similar challenges, providing an opportunity to exchange ideas and even initiate collaborative efforts
- “ Access to (and sharing of) **research findings**, reports and publications on their countries and topics of interest
- “ Membership of the online Learning Alliance is **free of charge**
- “ Access to **comparative research** results from the two continents, Africa and Latin America
- “ **CertiUcate** . a certificate will be awarded to those who contribute to each of the Learning Alliance exchange and learning modules
- “ **Study Tour**- Visit to Latin America . an opportunity for learning through interaction and observation, for selected active members of the Alliance who are based in (and are from) Africa.

Commitments from participants

- “ Participants should be active members of the online Learning Alliance. This is a peer platform and the greater the participation, the richer the experience will be for all members
- “ Participants should plan on committing an average of two to three hours per week. The greater the participation, the richer the experience will be for all members.

Language

The online Learning Alliance will be mainly held in English meaning that discussions will be started in English and that materials will be in English too. However all the moderator and participants posts will be translated into Spanish, or from Spanish to English, so that the discussions can be read either in Spanish or in English. When available, Spanish versions of English materials will also be shared.

Registration

Applications to join the Learning Alliance are now open until the 16 May 2016. We will seek to accommodate all applicants who meet the profile for the Alliance. The Learning Alliance will start on 23 May 2016. [To join, fill out the online application form here.](#)

¹ Only open to African-based participants



This online Learning Alliance is part of the [ELLA Programme](#). ELLA, which stands for Evidence and Lessons from Latin America, is a south-south knowledge and exchange programme that mixes research, exchange and learning to inspire development policies and practices that are grounded in evidence about what works in varied country contexts. The programme has been designed and is coordinated by [Practical Action Consulting \(PAC\) Latin America](#), in line with the objectives agreed with the funder, the [UK Department for International Development \(DFID\)](#), [UK Aid](#). The [Institute for Development Studies \(IDS\)](#), [Sussex University, UK](#), supports on research design, methods and outputs. For other ELLA publications and knowledge products go to ella.practicalaction.org/

