

# Critique of Governance Assessment Applications

## Description

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GRDC Helpdesk Research Report by Sumedh Rao, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, July 2010. 16 pages. [Available as pdf](#)

Query: Identify the key literature that critiques the use and application of governance assessments.  
Enquirer: DFID

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1. Overview
2. General critiques
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5. African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)
6. Other assessments
7. Donor Guidance
8. Initiatives for improving assessments

Including a bibliography of 39 annotated references

### 1. Overview

Governance assessments are based on subjective indicators (or measures), objective indicators or a combination of the two, known as composite indicators. Composite indicators are the most popular and are used by international organisations, donors, investors and the media (Arndt, 2008). Of these the most popular seems to be the World Bank's World Governance Indicators (WGIs). Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) and the World Bank/International Finance Corporation's Doing Business Indicators are also in common use but less so by international organisations and donors. These indicators face several limitations but general reliance on a small set of indicators has led to greater international acceptance and further reliance on these indicators. Many critics cite the numerous failings of indicators and the way such failings or inaccuracies are routinely ignored by those who use them.

The main use of the indicators by international organisation and donors is to incentivise developing nations to improve their governance and to improve the allocation of aid. There will thus continue to be a demand for summary measurements which can be used across space and time. At the same time there is a growing resistance by developing countries to indicators that are developed and used by 'outsiders'. New forms of assessments are increasingly country-led, and in some cases continent-led such as the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

## Category

1. Uncategorized

**Tags**

1. governance
2. indicators

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