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Accountability

Some concepts & definitions

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Direction du développement et de la coopération DDC

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

Dipartimento federale degli affari esteri DFAE
Direzione dello sviluppo e della cooperazione DSC

Departamento Federal de Asuntos Exteriores DFAE
Agencia Suiza para el Desarrollo y la Cooperación COSUDE





Accountability

- Relation between State institutions with assigned public duties and people affected by their decisions & actions
- The obligation to inform, act transparently, to explain and justify decisions/actions.
- The right to get information and explanations, to check, and to render judgements on the conduct of those assigned with public responsibilities responsible
- Enforcement mechanisms



Key pillars of Accountability

- Information, transparency
- Answerability (explanations, justifications)
- Responsiveness & Enforceability (sanction, corrective measures, compensation)

Dimensions of Accountability

- Vertical and Horizontal
- External and Internal
- Formal and informal



Where do we come from: Long experience in social accountability

- Emerging from actions of citizens and efforts by governments to respond to such actions (service delivery gaps)
- Actions and tools that citizens, NGOs and media use (e.g. social audits, community score cards, participatory budgeting, public hearings, PETS, etc.)

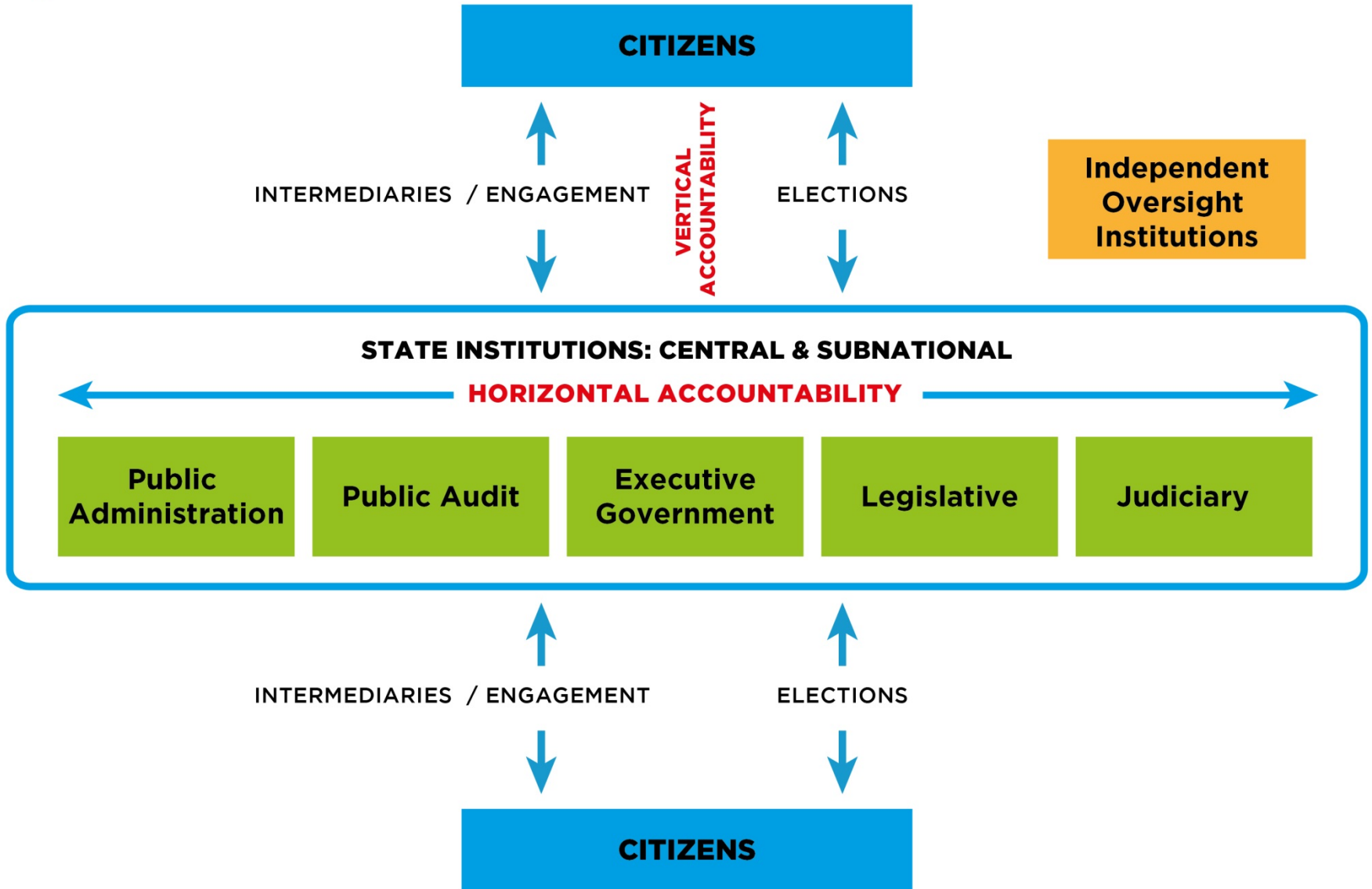


Gaps & Challenges (ddIgn learning project)

- Access to qilty information & capacities to engage
 - Exclusion, power relations (incl. cultural norms, elite capture)
 - Enforcement (sanctions)
 - Alignment with broad range of relevant actors & institutions
 - Linking the local to the national level
- **This requires for a more systemic perspective to have greater impact & leverage**
- ***see also OECD/DAC orientations & principles, 2013 (blog)***



ACCOUNTABILITY FROM A SYSTEMIC PERSPECTIVE





Systemic approach

- **Open up perspective for multiple actors and institutions**
 - Balanced & targeted support (avoiding capacity imbalances),
 - Inclusive: Marginalized, overlooked actors,
- **Facilitate alliance building:** comprehensive approach which supports linkages and connections among accountability actors (e.g. CSO budget monitoring & parliamentary investigations)
- Link to **processes** in managing public affairs, provision of services, (including judicial services) and support respective **accountability functions**



And being aware: it's fundamentally about politics & power

- Understanding the **context**
 - design politically informed interventions, starting from political reality and be realistic about reform space and timeframes
 - for greater risk assessment
- Awareness about **limitations** of external support: facilitation of enabling conditions, but authentic, **locally owned** initiatives for change
- DPs are an actor in the system! (we can distort)



What is SDC's possible role

- Helping to assess accountability gaps
- Empowering those responsible to account for and those claiming for accountability to assume their mutual accountability functions
- Facilitate inclusive spaces & processes for dialogue and deliberation
- Electoral assistance for strengthening legitimacy & representativity of political institutions
- Facilitate alliance building among those demanding for accountability to be more powerful in their claims
- Help linking to policy reforms: Enabling rules & regulations (e.g. clear definition of responsibilities)