



REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
GOVERNANCE COMMISSION

SECTORAL
GOVERNANCE
ASSESSMENT
LIBERIA

THE LIBERIAN ASSESSMENT MODEL

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Government Performance Assessment

The Liberian Model

Introduction

Like most governments, Liberia is determined to develop and establish systems that would improve the delivery of basic services, the management of its resources (financial and human) and improve the administration of justice, provision of public safety and the promotion and adherence to the rule of law. Well designed and managed systems should demonstrate improved living conditions and beneficiaries of development should experience improvement in their daily lives. This would require in the beginning a paradigm shift, i.e. departure from a culture of dependency to one of self reliance, love of country and high productivity. An assessment system that is user friendly and promotes learning and performance measurement is an essential component of this shift.

The model designed for this operation uses a master framework for information coordination that facilitates examination of the conceptual links between sector programs and national goals to guarantee alignment, find gaps, and understand potential contributions. The aim is the identification of specific program rationales, indicate the readiness of each sector to undertake the programs, articulate the capacity and sustainability issues of the systems to continue the programs and identify useful strategic levers to address capacity issues. Within this framework, three components of M&E are clearly presented: Implementation Monitoring (component I), Development Outcomes (DO) monitoring (component II), and Impact Assessment and Policy Analysis (component III), ensuring that data collection complies with the need for governance.

There is no simple formula to good governance. The sectors are likely to differ considerably, good and reliable information will be difficult to find, and capacity issues will be vast across all the sectors. The model facilitates the collection of information (monitoring), and measuring outcomes, inputs, and effectiveness (evaluation), and lessons learned in the process.

The value of the exercise is not that the information is available. It is how the information is used to improve program efficiency, effectiveness and impact.

Background

Governance comprises of the actions and related mechanisms involved in governing. It relates to our expectations of public service organizations, the leadership and management of those institutions, the assignment of responsibility and authority, and the verification of their effectiveness.¹ The Liberian

¹ The World Bank has indicated that good governance is: “Typically ... defined in terms of the *mechanisms* thought to be needed to promote it. For example, in various places, good governance has been associated with democracy and good civil rights, with transparency, with the rule of law, and with efficient public services.”

National Public Sector Reform Policy² Statement specifies the elements of Governance reform and sets the action goals for this model:

- Developing a framework which will lead to, in a **participatory manner, a holistic, comprehensive governance reform in Liberia**, to address in particular the challenges of the unwholesome political culture of patronage, corruption, impunity, exclusiveness, and a highly centralized governance structure;
- Designing and institutionalizing constitutional/legal regimes that consist of a **uniform legal system, an independent and competent Judiciary, and a Legislature that is democratically elected, representative, competent** and co-equal and coordinated with the Executive branch of Government; and in so doing to recommit to the founding ideals of Liberia and to avoid further experiences of political violence and conflicts;
- Rationalizing public institutions' mandates, functions and organization structures; aligning these with authorities and responsibilities; and creating a transparent, accountable policy process that **prioritizes national goals**;
- Proposing measures to create a **competent, efficient, and effective bureaucracy** comprising a merit-based civil service conducive to critical analysis, and therefore generating data indispensable to policy formulation and analysis, sustainable capacity development and continuous improvement in the performance of Government;
- Ensuring the creation of a **participatory and inclusive process** of public sector reform that would be able to assist capacity development to sustain the reform outcomes of the reform agenda; building capacity in the public sector, promoting the development of national entrepreneurs, empowering civil society and community based organizations, especially women, youth and physically challenged groups, to stimulate Liberia's development; and
- Creating a **stable and enabling environment** (legal, institutional, political and economic) which will allow especially Liberian-owned businesses – small, medium and large enterprises – to thrive at the national and local levels and forging a public-private partnership for improvement of public goods and service delivery, as well as promoting efficient and effective governance and sustainable development.

In order to enable the consolidation of information and evidence about governance across the public sector, a master framework is required that ensures the compatibility, aggregation, and comparability of information is possible. The development of a common frame of reference for the various sectors and vigilance in the various reform interventions within and across sectors is important to more efficiently sort through the complexity of transformation. By providing a common framework, the information can be cumulated across the sectors for assessment of national strategies and their relationships to national outcomes. By publishing the Annual Governance Report, the public, private and donor community get to know what works, what doesn't, and why, and the crucial role access to good and credible information play in the effectiveness and enhancement of good governance.

Context

Individual sector ministries are responsible for their own policy analyses, activities impact assessment, and projects/programs evaluation. The Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs monitors performance of sector ministries in terms of input, output and outcome against predefined plans and

² Released Sept 2010

targets as formulated in mandates of the ministries, the PRS 2 and their annual plans and budgets. The AG assesses whether the expenditures and performance meet the minimum legal and regulatory accounting requirements. All of the ministries are connected under the law by frameworks, standards and strategic alignment of policies and strategies intended to provide guides for coordinated accomplishments and or attainment of the national goals. These must be monitored and evaluated to mitigate the possibility of local agendas or crises dominating actions and finance rather than coordinated agents with a common purpose, the attainment of good governance.

The mandate of the GC to assess the quality of governance is based on two facts: Firstly, the quality of governance has a direct impact on resource management, the efficacy and efficiency of service delivery, and the provision of security, safety and justice; and, secondly, good governance is an integral part of consolidating democracy in Liberia, strengthening the legitimacy of the state and its bodies as democratic institutions. The Governance Commission therefore assesses whether the ministries operate within their mandate areas in accordance with accepted standards of good governance. The assessment looks at the management of resources; the delivery of services; and security, and justice issues within the context of what is defined as the core characteristics or elements of good government. It also assesses the overall architecture of governance which has to do with (a) relationship within and among branches of government and (b) the relationship among government, private sector and civil society (the Liberian people) within the context of Liberia's constitution and acceptable standards of democratic governance.

An understanding of what constitute good governance would be the logical point of departure to assessing a country's state of governance. This does present a major challenge as there is hardly any universally agreed definition of "good governance". The phrase means different things to different groups and organizations and each definition touches on one aspect of governance or the other.

Below are definitions of Governance by five different Institutions:

'the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations, and mediate their differences'. UNDP (1997)

'governance' is 'epitomized by predictable, open and enlightened policy making (that is transparent in processes), bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos, an executive arm accountable for its actions, a strong civil society participating in public affairs and all behaving under the rule of law' . The World Bank

the use of political authority and exercise of control in a society in relation to the management of its resources for social and economic development.' OECD

"Governance is the *Interactions among institutions, processes and traditions that determine how power is exercised, how decisions are taken on issues of public and often private concern, and how citizens or other stakeholders have their say"* Parks Canada and TILCEPA

'governance' can be defined by how well a population, its representatives and agents, identify and deal with major social, economic and environmental issues that stand in the way of improved quality of life for all citizens'. UN HABITAT (2000)

While there may be some clear definitional distinctions above, each definition is based upon certain core principles also referred to as core characteristics of good governance. The table below presents some core characteristics of good governance provided by different actors:

#	UNDP (1997)	UN-HABITAT	OECD	Mo-Ibrahim
1	PARTICIPATION	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	ACCOUNTABILITY	SAFETY AND RULE OF LAW
2	RULE OF LAW	EFFICIENCY	COMPETENCE	PARTICIPATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS
3	TRANSPARENCY	EQUITY	LEGITIMACY	SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
4	RESPONSIVENESS	SECURITY	RESPECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS	HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
5	CONSENSUS ORIENTATION	SUBSIDIARITY		
6	EQUITY	SUSTAINABILITY		
7	EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY	TRANSPARENCY		
8	ACCOUNTABILITY			
9	STRATEGIC VISION			
Sources:	<i>Governance for Sustainable Development, UNDP 1997</i>	Falade, 2010	Falade, 2010	<i>2011 Ibrahim Index of African Governance</i>

The Governance Commission was setup to conceptualize, design and articulate principles of Good Governance. For the purposes of this model, good governance is defined as management of Liberia’s resources, service delivery infrastructure, the justice system, rule of law and public safety in a manner that is participatory, accountable, equitable, transparent and responsive to the needs of the citizens.

The Liberian Model:

A careful analysis of the different definitions and the above core characteristics reveal that governance should be a people-centered activity that ultimately aspires to fostering sustainable economic and social development. The core characteristics thus have a strong degree of inter-relatedness. Based upon these interrelatedness four modified core characteristics from the different development actors plus one additional element from the Ibrahim index also modified, amounting to a total of five core characteristics were selected for inclusion in what constitutes the **Liberian Model** for governance assessment and performance monitoring.

Figure1 ELEMENTS FOR MEASURING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN LIBERIA

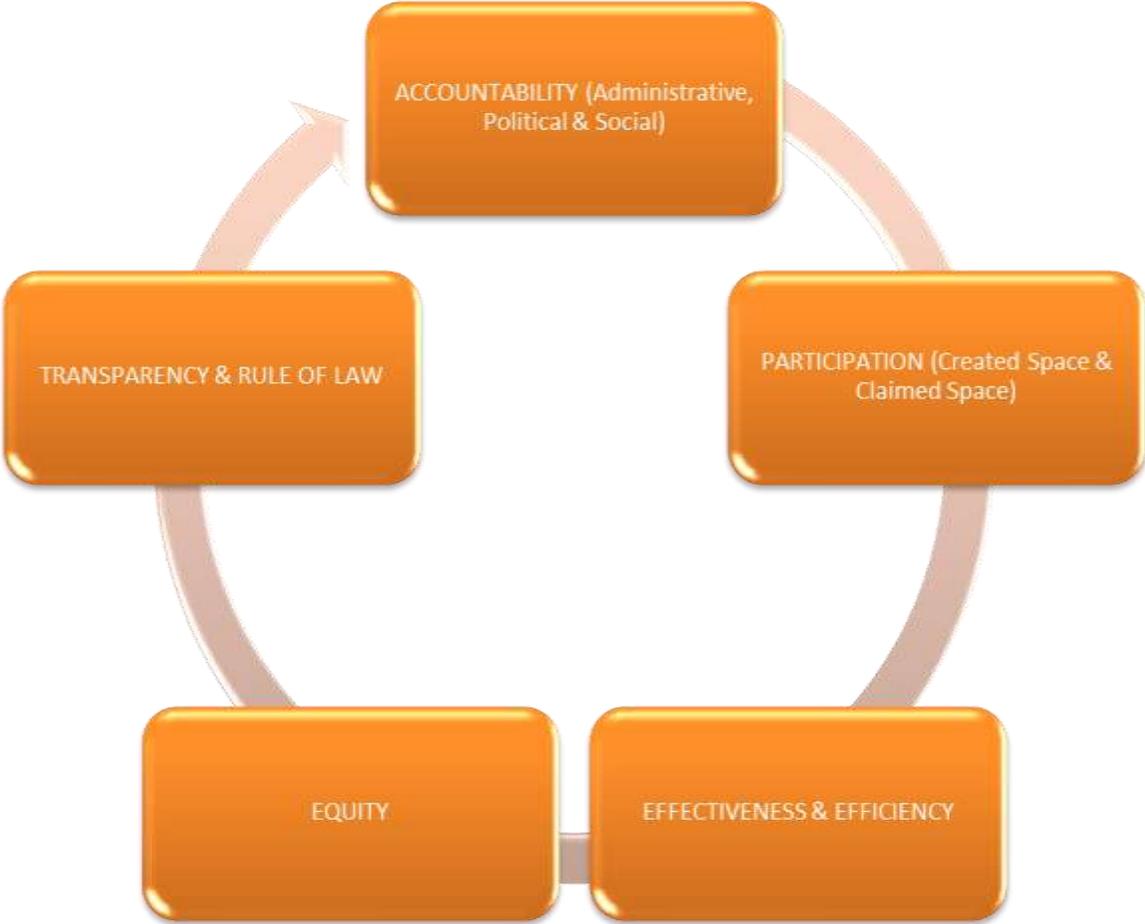
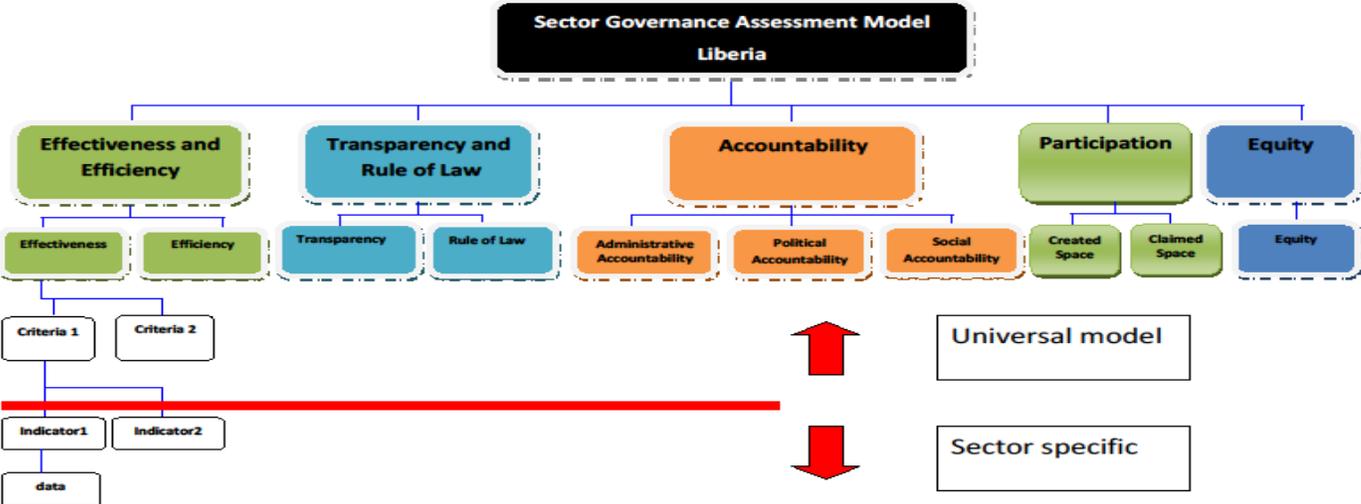


Figure 2 Model



Consistent with the Liberian specific context and purposes, the model presents the below definition and parameters of measurement for ease of reference. For governance principles that are compounded (like effectiveness and efficiency or transparency and the rule of law), the model defines each principle in the order in which they are presented. The reader thus, when reading the first part of the definition, should remember that that part corresponds to the first principle and the latter part corresponds to the second principle. A third part will be supplied in the definition where there is a principle that lends itself to be sub-divided into three relevant criteria (example accountability where there is an administrative, political and social dimension of the principle).

Effectiveness and Efficiency – these on the one hand, relate to measuring the extent to which Government or units of government produce the desired or intended result in keeping with enabling laws, policies and regulations; in effect, by mentioning effectiveness in the Liberian public sector, we are attempting to determine whether our Government as a unit or its auxiliaries are achieving specific objectives it set. If, for example, we set out to improve the qualifications of all primary and secondary teachers in a particular content area (I.e. math and Science), did we succeed? These on the second hand relate to how the public sector ensures high-level productivity with minimum inputs and wastages. The inputs could be measured in terms of time, staff and finance. To measure effectiveness and efficiency the model utilizes a number of variables including the existence of clear strategic objectives that are formulated to guide planning and budgeting, implementation and realization of planned activities and their contribution to improving the government or unit of government, the existence of performance monitoring system, existence of all required structures (enablers) and their degree of functionality, existence and quality of training outfits, existence of implementable budget, existence of human resource management policy and the extent of coordination and cooperation between key actors.

Transparency and Rule of Law – these refer to how our Government and its different units intentionally institute measures that allow their actions, decisions and decision-making processes to be opened to an appropriate level of scrutiny by other parts of the same government, civil society and, in some instances, outside institutions and governments. By including this principle, the model seeks to ascertain the availability of and feasibility for actors both internal and external to state operations to access and disseminate information relevant to evaluating institutions, both in terms of rules, operations as well as outcomes. This definition emphasizes that information should be provided in a way that facilitates and fosters local understanding from one part of the country to another; it champions efforts to use local languages and local communication structures and stresses that the communication content should be freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by government’s policies and practices, as well as the attending outcomes; and that any decisions taken and their enforcement are in compliance with established rules and regulations. The second part of the definition is dedicated to measuring the extent to which government enforces equally transparent laws, regulations and codes in an impartial manner that guarantees that no one, including government, is above the law, where laws protect fundamental rights and where justice is accessible to all. The definition is premised on the assumption that the rule of law is the foundational framework of rules and rights that will ensure that Liberia a just, equitable, prosperous and fair society.

To measure transparency and the rule of law the model utilizes a number of variables including the existence of institutional structures that ensures information is widely and freely accessible to all actors, CSOs and the citizenry, the extent to which actors are opened in the decision-making and

proactive in the information sharing processes, the nature of collaboration between the Government or its units with the media. The model also endeavors to measure incidences of corruption and fraud, the existence of adequate legal framework/law to regulate activities, the extent to which laws regulating the entity are enforced and the corresponding level of compliance/adherence to the regulations by those who manage the entity, the extent to which resource allocation decisions are made in compliance with existing laws and regulations and evidence of leadership's commitment to fight corruption.

Accountability – this principle advances measures that obligate government or its units to justify its actions and decisions to the population; it refers to the ability and willingness of government to show the extent to which its actions and decisions are consistent with clearly-defined and agreed-upon objectives. The Liberian model for Governance Assessment approaches accountability from three different angles identified in the model as criteria. The three accountability criteria and their corresponding context specific definitions are as follows:

Political Accountability - here relates to the fact that government must be held accountable to the citizens of Liberia, and that it must not abuse its power. Political accountability is the accountability of the government, civil servants and politicians to the public and to the national legislature. The Legislature and the judiciary act as horizontal constitutional checks on the power of the executive. Together, they provide ongoing oversight in order to keep the government accountable throughout its term in office. The Government aids the attainment of political accountability through the establishment of the existing accountability/integrity institutions including the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission, the General Auditing Commission, the Independent National Human Rights Commission and the Governance Commission among others. The model attempts to measure political accountability by assessing the extent to which units of the Government (i.e. sector ministries and agencies) are opened to legislative oversight, the extent and seriousness of legislative oversight over the executive, and the legislators to their constituencies.

Social Accountability – by this accountability criterion reference is being made to the responsiveness of the government to civic engagement; the criterion is grounded in ascertaining the extent to which the state allows ordinary Liberians and/or civil society organizations to participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability from the Government; it attempts to gauge the disposition of the Government to allow mechanisms of social accountability to be initiated and supported by citizens or by Government itself. The model probes for the existence of any of the variety of social accountability initiatives in the public sector including, but not limited to participatory budgeting, administrative procedures acts, social audits, and citizen report cards which all involve citizens in the oversight and control of government. The model attempts to measure social accountability by ascertaining the existence of regimes at the central level that make the government and its specialized units adequately accountable to the public/citizenry, existence of administrative record capturing the specialized outfits of the Government through frontline service providers fulfilling social responsibility towards communities and citizens and the existence of adequate response mechanisms that allow frontline service providers in Government to respond to expressions of dissatisfaction by citizens.

Administrative Accountability – here relates to the existence of performance measuring and evaluation systems for administrative structures and standards concerned with governance; this criterion is devoted to establishing not just the existence of a performance measuring system in Government, but also measuring the frequency at which such system is utilized. The goal here is to

ensure that professional codes of conduct and professional standards are adhered to by those who are within the employ of or work for the Government.

The model attempts to measure administrative accountability by establishing the existence of internal control mechanisms and gauging the effectiveness of these controls at every level, ascertaining the existence of a culture of regular independent audits and the extent to which audit findings are acted upon by senior management, the existence of effective internal technical controls and the existence of established publicized code of conduct that regulate the behavior of public sector employees and contractors.

Participation – this principle speaks to the existence of mechanisms within the work of the Government that guarantees the involvement of those who are affected by the decision of the state (citizens) in the decision making process. The principle seeks to measure the extent of public participation through public meetings, surveys, open house, workshops, polling, citizen advisory committee, and other forms of direct involvement with the public. The model measures participation from two different angles. These include created space and claimed space. By created space reference is being made to Government of its own volition creating and maximizing a satisfactory medium through which civic society and other citizen's groups become active partners with Government or its specialized units in the decision making process. This forum creates the environment for citizens to make inputs and influence outcomes in decision that affect them directly or indirectly. Claimed space refers to the ability of citizens and citizens group to organize themselves and demand a seat at the decision making table without necessarily be invited by the Government to do so. Claimed space emphasizes the capacity and power of the average citizen or citizens' group to articulate and represent the interests of targeted group. The model measure participation from the created space perspective by establishing the existence of structures and strategies that make citizens participation in public policy and other public discourses effective, the extent of citizens involvement in the decision-making process that affect them directly, while from the claimed space point of view the model measures the extent to which CSOs are active and effective in civic education regarding citizens' rights and responsibilities, the capacity level of CSOs and other citizen's groups to represent the interests of citizens (targeted/vulnerable groups) and the existence of adequate capacity within the media to raise awareness on the quality of services for all.

Equity – refers to the existence of measures instituted by the Liberian Government to ensure that all Liberians feel that they have a stake in their government and do not feel excluded from the mainstream of society especially in relation to accessing social services, gaining employment and paying taxes. The model tests for equity in the Liberian public sphere by placing particular emphasis on the existence of opportunities for the most vulnerable to improve or maintain their well-being; it probes whether there exists a tendency on the part of the state/Government to, for instance, indulge in the practice of possible exclusion of people, through the budgetary process, from the use of social or private goods through such means as income limits or geographical barriers. The model attempts to measure equity through the lens of equal access to services for all, irrespective of age gender, disability and geography.

The model utilizes a two-track approach. The approach involves ministerial/sectorial self-assessments at the central level on the one hand and citizens, frontline service providers and other clienteles on the other hand. The first track focuses on the policy and administrative level, while the second focuses on service satisfaction review from a user's/citizen's/client's perspective. Findings from these two

extremes will be triangulated to paint a realistic picture of the state of governance and service provision in each sector.

The Governance Self-Assessment will make use of a scoring and indexing mechanism that enables us to compare the quality of governance across different stakeholder groups (figure 2), across principles (figure 3) across ministries (on principles and criteria) (figure 4) and over time to measure progress.

Figure 2 Example of a comparison of governance scores per stakeholder group using fictional figures.

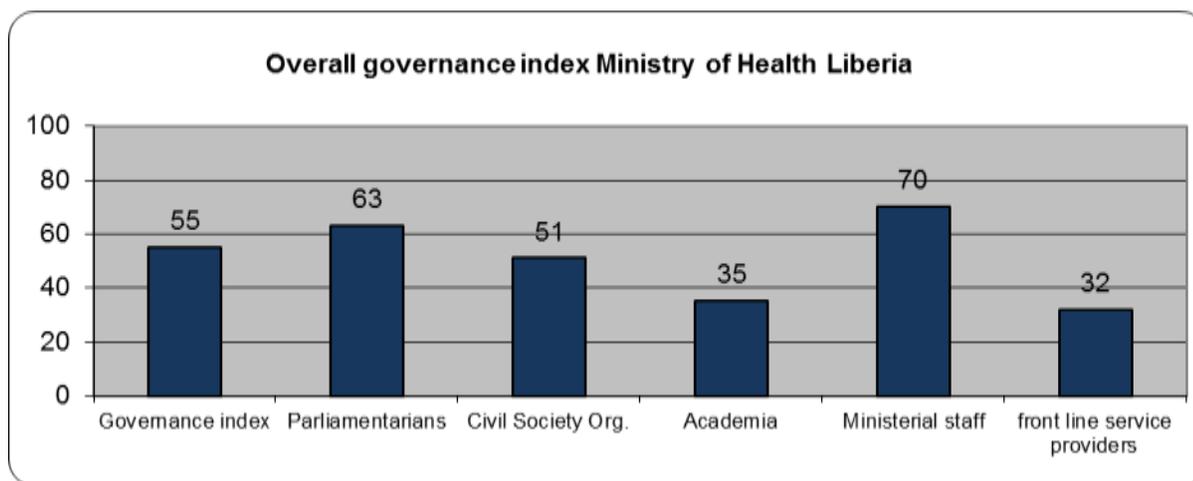


Figure 3 Example of a comparison of governance scores per principle using fictional figures

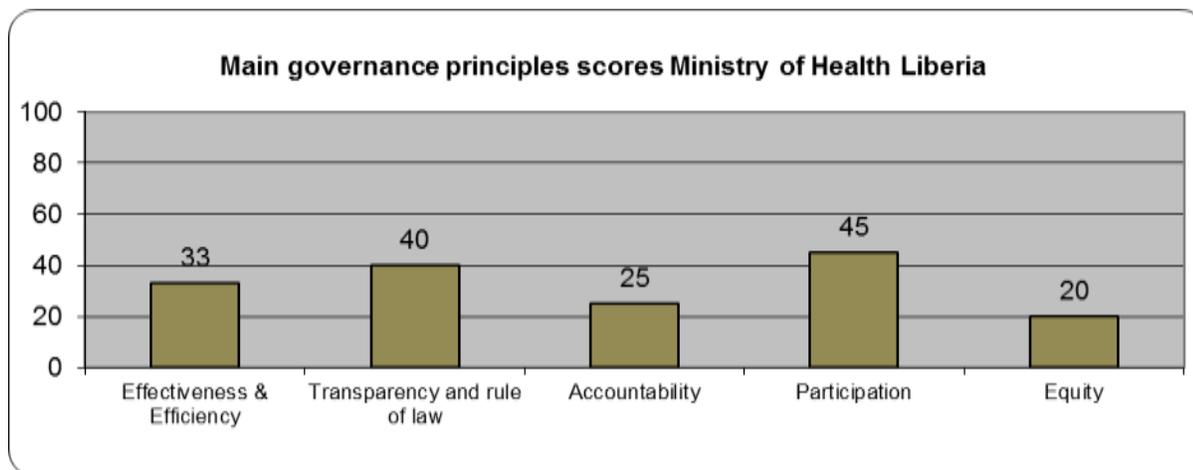
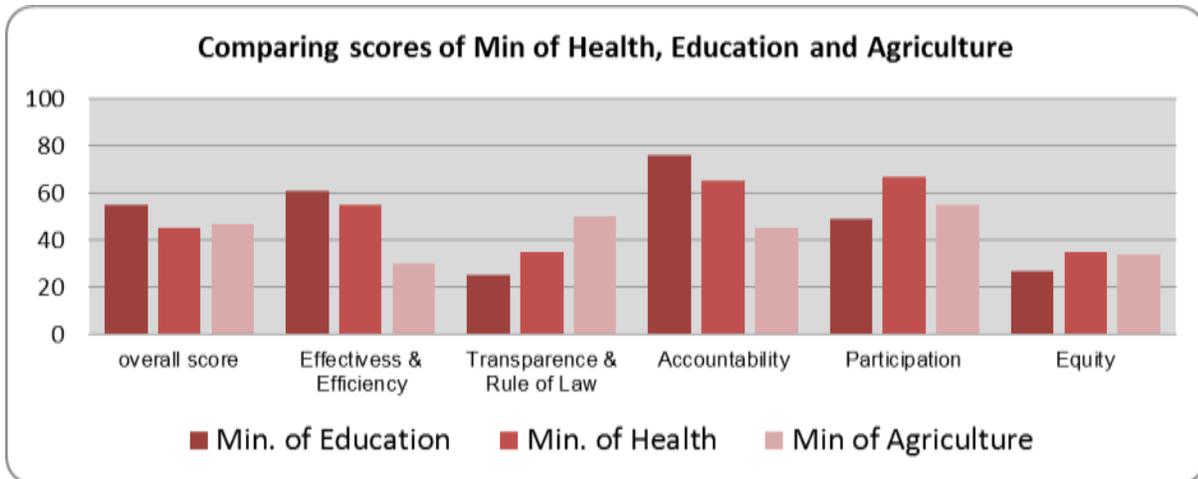


Figure 4 Example of a comparison of governance scores of different Ministries using fictional figures



The results of the Community Score Card and the Sector Governance Assessment will be presented and discussed at a Ministerial Governance Forum to be mutually planned by the GC and participating MAC (one forum for each participating MAC). This will result into the distillation of preliminary recommendations from the Governance Commission that can be integrated in subsequent annual plans of each MAC. A draft detailed report will be presented to the Minister to check the report on factual mistakes and the final report will constitute the Annual Governance Report that will be presented to the President of Liberia.