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The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

Thinking and Working Politically Through Applied Political Economy Analysis

Feed the Future Enabling Environment for Food Security Project

April 8, 2019

Cape Town, South Africa



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AGENDA

1. Self introductions: Why are you interested in PEA?
2. Group exercise: The Disabling Environment
3. What is PEA, TWP, DDD?
4. Unpacking USAID's applied PEA framework
5. Lunch break
6. PEA baseline study process
7. Iterative TWP/PEA processes
8. Video of applied PEA case study
9. Group discussion: TWP/PEA and market systems





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EXERCISE: DISABLING ENVIRONMENT

Introduction (10 minutes)

Meet with Committee (20 minutes)

Present to Plenary (15 minutes)

Vote (5 minutes)

Debrief (10 minutes)



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GROUP EXERCISE

	1	2	3	4
Region	Rural	Urban	Rural	Rural
Primary Sector	Agriculture (competitive)	Services	Agriculture (uncompetitive)	Agriculture (uncompetitive)
Reelection Cost	Low	High	High	High
Political Risk	Low	Low	High	High





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WHAT IS DDD, TWP, PEA ?



DOING DEVELOPMENT DIFFERENTLY

The Doing Development Differently (DDD) Manifesto identifies six principles:

1. Focus on solving local problems that are debated, defined, and refined by local people in an ongoing process
2. Legitimize reform at all levels (political, managerial, social), building ownership and momentum throughout the process
3. Work through local conveners who mobilize all those with a stake in progress
4. Blend design and implementation through rapid cycles of planning, action, reflection, and revision
5. Manage risks by making small bets, pursuing activities with promise and dropping others
6. Foster real results – real solutions to real problems that have real impact





THINKING AND WORKING POLITICALLY



Thinking

Thinking Politically | Moving from 'best practice' to 'best fit' by deliberately building space into your program cycle think deeply about the political, economic, and social processes and power dynamics that impact a given context



Working

Working Politically | Adapting your programming to this understanding, through iterative learning and more flexible, 'risky/trial and error' approaches to programming





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THINKING AND WORKING POLITICALLY AND INCLUSIVELY



Photo credit: LWR / Daniel Ruth



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APPLIED POLITICAL ECONOMY ANALYSIS

Political economy analysis (PEA) is an analytical framework that helps to unpack the underlying reasons of why things work the way they do by identifying the incentives and constraints impacting the behavior of actors in a particular system.

The applied part helps to analyze why things are the way they are in a given place and time, and what we might be able to do influence behavior change over time.



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PEA HELPS TO ANSWER:

- Who has an interest in preserving the status quo? (Spoiler)
- Who has an interest in change, reform, etc.? (Champion)
- Who is indifferent to an issue and could be convinced (Swinger/fence sitter)
- WHY? (Key/core question)
- How might change occur? (Small bets/iterative process)





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PEA HELPS US TO UNDERSTAND:

- *Explicit incentives* — Formal rules, policies, law, economic incentives
- *Implicit incentives* — Informal interests, values, and norms that influence the decisions of key actors
- Interests and incentives facing different groups
- How these interests and incentives generate policy outcomes that may or may not be developmental



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“I want you to find a bold and innovative way to do everything exactly the same way it’s been done for 25 years.”



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A COMPLEMENT TO TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

Technical Analysis

What are the technical and capacity constraints of reforming X?

Design and implement technical interventions

New X is institutionalized, delivers benefits

+

=

Technically Sound, politically savvy programming

Political Economy Analysis

Who wins and loses from the current system and WHY?

Situate proposed reform within broader institutional context

Explicitly map risks and assumptions

Design and implement politically savvy interventions





APPROACHES

	More Traditional Approaches	More Politically Aware Approaches
Problem Definition and Identification	Technical problems due to lack of resources or technical capacity. Problems are identified through an orderly top-down process.	Institutions, power dynamics and incentives that are not aligned with reform efforts; Problems are identified, debated, and refined by domestic actors in an ongoing process of reflection and learning.
Vision of change	More normative as, based on what ought to be.	More strategic and pragmatic, based on what exists.
Changes Sought	“Best practice” based on a pre-established understandings or blueprints, top-down diffusion of innovation.	“Best fit” grounded in contextual realities, more organic change and “good enough” reforms based on what is politically feasible well as technically sound.
Implementation Approach	Linear, rational sequencing in fixed annual work plans and results frameworks defined ex ante; fidelity to plan, with more limited attention to risk, uncertainty and the potential of failure.	Iterative cycles of planning, action, reflection, revision (drawing on local knowledge). Explicit attention to risks, which are managed by making “small bets.” Incrementalism based on trial and error

Courtesy of USAID DRG/CSP, *Thinking and Working Politically Through Applied Political Economy Analysis: A Guide for Practitioners*, June 2018.





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ELEMENTS

Ways of working	Provision of expert technical assistance and capacity development within limited timeframes.	Facilitating, convening and brokering partnerships and spaces for collective action based on long-term engagement, with focus on local ownership.
Ways of Learning	Periodic formal evaluation.	Rapid cycles of learning and reflection throughout program implementation.
Key partners	Traditional donor stakeholders including government institutions at different levels, regulators, service delivery civil society organizations, etc.	Greater attention to stakeholders outside the traditional comfort zone of donors, including 'development entrepreneurs', local chiefs and power brokers, religious leaders, etc.
Indicators of success	Easily quantifiable (and usually short-term) outputs aimed at higher-level outcomes.	Process-based indicators, with focus on fostering relationships and building trust, as a measure of gradual progress toward higher-level outcomes.

Courtesy of USAID DRG/CSP, *Thinking and Working Politically Through Applied Political Economy Analysis: A Guide for Practitioners*, June 2018.



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PEA VALUE PROPOSITION

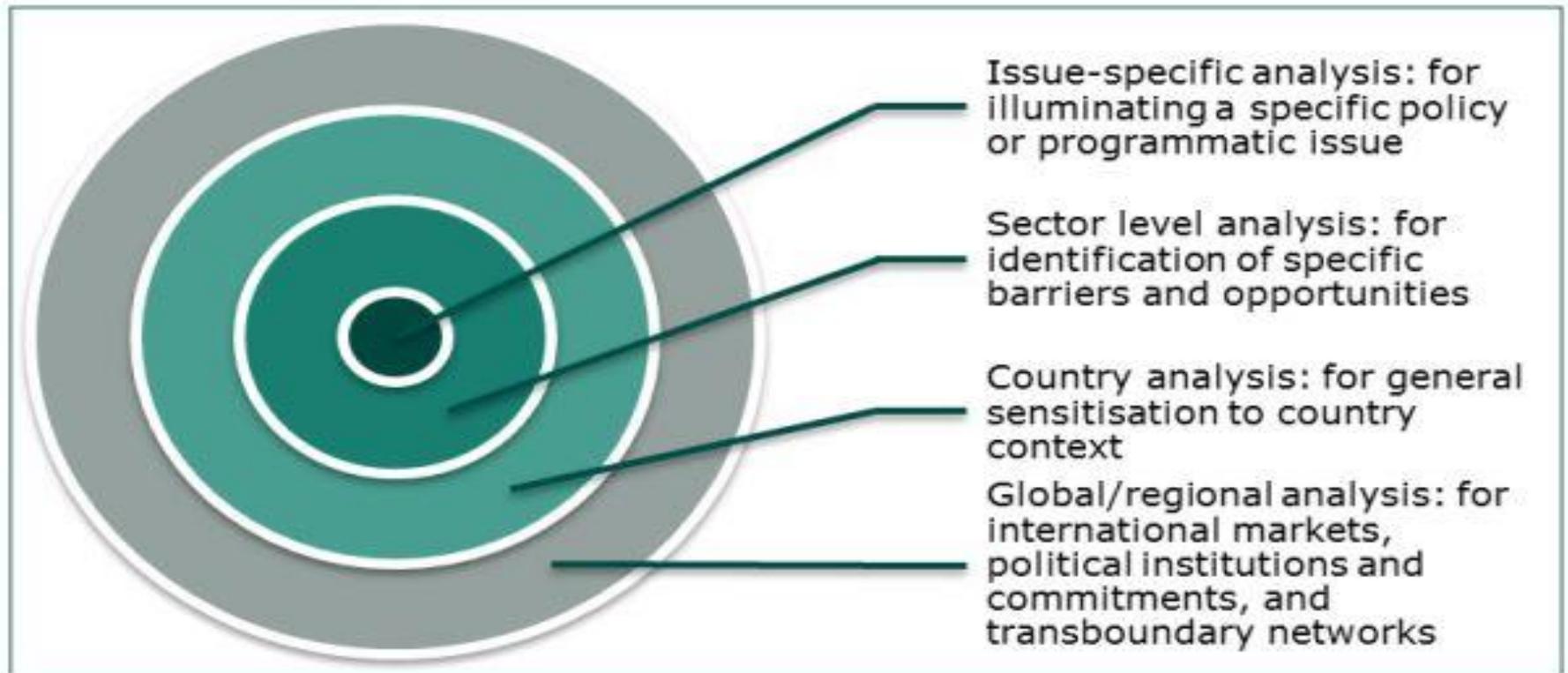
Applying PEA helps:

- Better understanding of context and local systems
- Focus on sustainability
- Articulation of political economy factors that can make or break projects/programs
- Strategic identification of “good enough” approaches to inform programming
- Tests a project’s assumptions
- Continuous learning/knowledge sharing
- Supports program design and implementation





DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PE ANALYSIS



Courtesy of USAID.





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WHEN TO USE PEA

- Business development/scoping
- Program/project design
- Project start-up
- Changes in operating environment
- Throughout the project period (iteratively)



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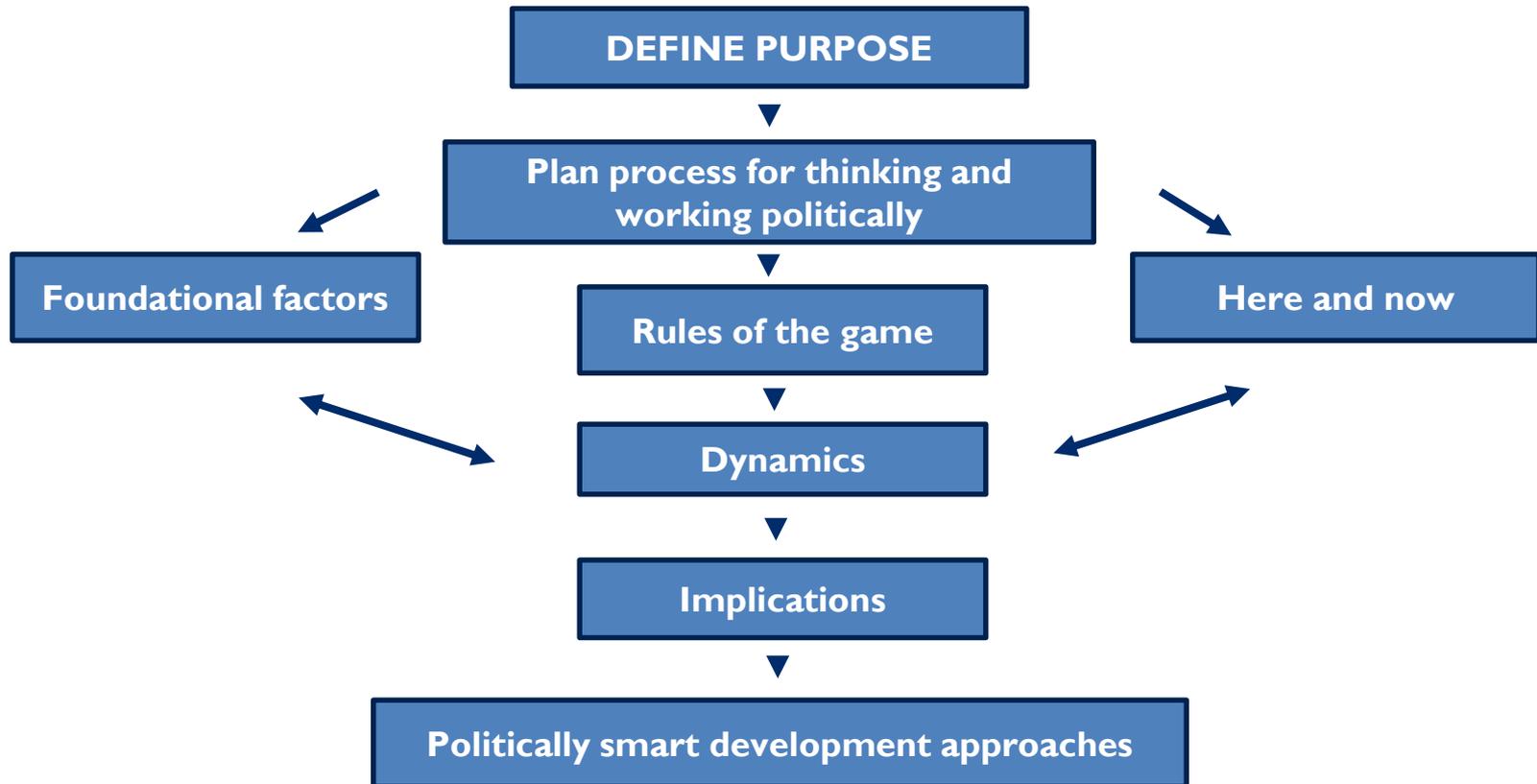
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USAID'S APPLIED PEA FRAMEWORK



USAID APPLIED PEA FRAMEWORK





DEFINING THE PURPOSE

The purpose of the PEA and its scope will shape its methodology, questions, the report, the findings and their uses.

Key Questions:

- For which purpose will the PEA findings be used?
- Are there issues in existing programming that the PEA is meant to explore?
- Who will the PEA will target to unlock their role as potential champions/spoilers
- Are there national structures / changes that the PEA is meant to also analyze? Key Ministries to target?





FOUNDATIONAL FACTORS

Deeply embedded structures that fundamentally shape the broad character of the state and political system. Many have long-term origins, and may be slow to change.

Types of issue/analytical tools

- Territorial control
- Geostrategic position
- Geography
- Historical influences
- Social and economic structures, class analysis
- Sources of revenue





RULES OF THE GAME

Formal and informal institutions, norms and values that influence the behaviour and capacities of different actors and the relationships between them. May be “sticky”, but can also change over the medium term.

Types of issue/analytical tools

- Distribution of power between key actors
- Rules-based or personalised institutions?
- Competition for political power
- The functioning of markets, and the creation of economic rents
- Social institutions
- Gender analysis





HERE AND NOW

Current or recent behavior of individuals and groups and their response to events (“games within the rules”) that provide opportunities for, or impediments to change

Types of issue/analytical tools

- Elections; Corruption Scandals, natural disasters; war;
- Media monitoring
- Network Analysis





DYNAMICS

Drawing on systemic factors, decision-logics and the uncertainties in change processes, consider how the political economy dynamics at work in the particular country context create possibilities for change.

Time-scales may range from short to long.

Types of issue/analytical tools

- Synthesis of previous sections: how factors interact dynamically
- How PE processes affect development outcomes: state-society bargaining; collective action...
- What local incentives/pressures for positive change related to governance already exist?
- Scope to promote developmental change?
- Where is the country on the spectrum of reform space?





IMPLICATIONS

Beyond the analysis, it is also critical to consider what implications emerge from the analysis for the project's:

- Focus and approach
- Theory of Change
- Embedded assumptions
- How to monitor and evaluate
- Modalities budgets and procedures, partners, or personnel involved)





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LUNCH BREAK



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THE APPLIED PEA BASELINE ASSESSMENT PROCESS



USAID APPLIED PEA BASELINE PROCESS





PEA BASELINE PROCESS

PEA 12-STEP PROCESS	TIME REQUIRED
1) Secure donor buy-in to the PEA process	3 months ahead of time
2) Identify purpose and prepare a detailed Scope of Work for the baseline study.	At least two months prior
3) Recruit PEA Team: Project staff, local/International experts, logistical and support staff.	6 - 8 weeks prior
4) Conduct a literature review with initial analysis.	2- 4 weeks prior
5) Develop draft workshop agenda and proposed research questions/interview guide/ develop initial interview list	1- 2 weeks prior
6) Hold an Applied PEA Workshop in country resulting in finalized research agenda and questions.	1-3 days before field research
7) Conduct the primary research/fieldwork.	2-4 weeks
8) Analyze and synthesize data; brief project leadership	1-3 days
9) Brief donor on preliminary findings and discuss implications	At the conclusion of field research, and prior to departure of international team members
10) Report on preliminary baseline findings	1-3 weeks following
11) Final report	1-3 weeks following
12) Consider implications and further learning	Ongoing





PEA CHECKLIST (BASELINE STUDY)

- What is the purpose of exercise, and what are the questions which need to be asked?
- Who is the primary audience? Are there tensions between different audiences, and, if so, how can these be managed?
- Are the expectations of the Mission aligned with those of your HQ and field office?
- Is the timing right to feed into strategy, planning, reviews, or other decisions?
- Is there a collective agreement for taking forward implications and well-placed champions with responsibility to help doing so?
- What mix of skills and expertise is required to undertake the work?
- Are the right partners (project staff, local experts, HQ, country partners, consultants) involved in the analysis to ensure it is robust and rigorous?
- What mechanisms are necessary to help broaden participation in the process?
- Has it been agreed how the analysis will be shared and disseminated and with whom?
- Is there an agreed process for follow-up once the analysis is complete?
- What results are expected from incorporating PEA?





APPLIED PEA RESEARCH TEAM COMPOSITION

- Experience with applied PEA
- Strong network of key stakeholder in the sector (e.g., former politician, journalists, activities, entrepreneur)
- Local subject matter expertise (e.g., from a local researcher)
- Expert in the particular technical sector
- Logistical support
- Writing capacity appropriate to desired deliverables





PEA RESEARCH TOOLS AND METHODS

- Desk/literature review
- Key informant interviews
- Focus group discussion
- Power mapping
- Stakeholder analysis
- Network analysis
- Systems thinking
- Game theory





DATA COLLECTION PLANS

Effective data collection plans:

- Provide a preliminary map of data sources, both primary and secondary sources
- Tie directly to the overarching SOW and research questions
- Indicate data collection methods to be used (i.e., key informant interviews, focus group discussions, ONA, etc.)
- Outline why particular information sources will be used
- Serve as a starting point and are continuously updated over the course of a study
- Decide whether data will be coded for analysis or visualization





ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

APEA is fundamentally about asking the right questions. The right questions are...

...of direct operational relevance to the project being designed/implemented;

...they should not be academic questions

...often difficult to answer – over the course of an APEA activity we may only develop partial answers

...lead us toward digging into the *why*, *how*, and *who* of key contextual factors.





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CORE OR KEY QUESTION

We typically frame an APEA activity around a core question.

Effective core questions:

- Provide adequate focus to an APEA study
- Meet the Goldilocks criteria: broad enough to encapsulate the purpose of the study but narrow enough to provide sufficient focus



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WHICH IS THE BEST CORE QUESTION?

1. What capacity constraints does the Ministry of Mines face?
2. What laws serve to inhibit or facilitate the formalization of artisanal small-scale (ASM) gold mining activities?
3. Why is artisanal gold mining illegal in Zimbabwe?
4. What are the explicit and implicit incentives that inhibit the entry of ASM operators in the gold sector from operating within the formal economy?



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WHICH ARE BETTER SUPPORTING QUESTIONS?

- What capacity constraints does the Ministry of Mines face?
- What laws serve to inhibit or facilitate the formalization of ASM/gold activities?
- Why is artisanal gold mining illegal in Zimbabwe?
- Who are the key actors and institutions involved in gold mining?





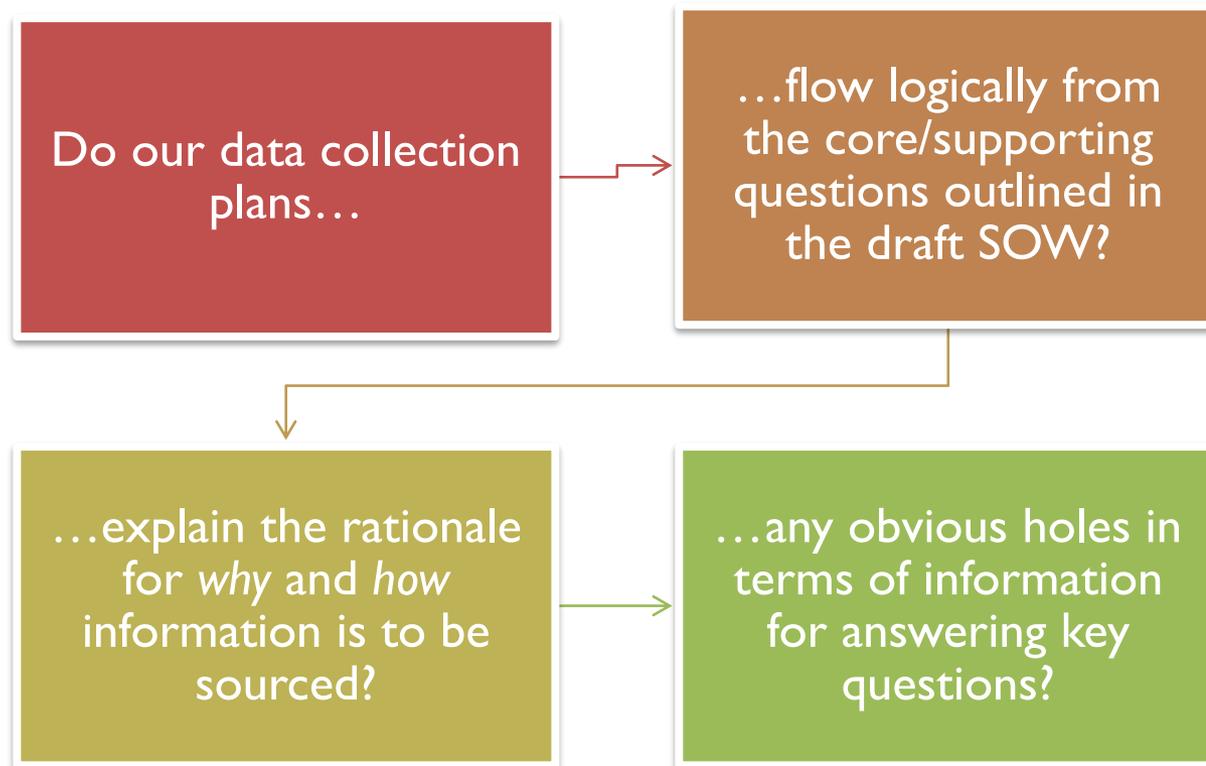
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- **Effective questions:**
 - Open discussion
 - Go beyond existing knowledge
- **Avoid:**
 - Leading or prescriptive questions
 - Yes/no questions
 - Multiple or complex questions





CRITIQUING A DATA COLLECTION PLAN





STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	KII	FGD	WEIGHT
Regional Governors (24)			

Key for Weighting:

1.5 = Key influencer (holds decision making significant decision-making power, resources, influence)

1.0 = Influencer (holds some decision-making power, resources, and power)

0.5 = Low influence (holds little decision-making power, resources, power)

Courtesy of WCRAS LLC.





INTERVIEW GUIDE

- Take the time to decide whom you must interview and whom you should interview
- Look for the unusual suspects, such as people who might not have an obvious connection to the core question
- Continue to snowball throughout the research period
- Consider the meeting venue
- Consider the interview style: formal, semi-formal, informal
- Consider whether/how to take notes





DATA ANALYSIS

- Triangulate with research team everyday to corroborate information — must be systematic
- Analysis should directly relate to core and supporting questions
- On technical sector PEAs, link findings to large PE aspects in country
- Look for patterns and trends in data
- Look for deviations from patterns — highlights how info is viewed differently





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WORKING POLITICALLY-ITERATIVE PEA PROCESSES



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COLLABORATING, LEARNING AND ADAPTING (CLA)

Enabling Conditions

- Resources
- Process
- Culture

Program Cycle

- Collaboration
- Theories of Change
- Adaptation





EVERY DAY POLITICAL ANALYSIS

Everyday political analysis helps address a gap in the work of frontline staff:

- How to understand the changing political context and make politically informed decisions on a day-to-day basis. The average program staff member is faced with having to make multiple politically informed judgments every day, often quickly.
- The EPA framework provides a condensed checklist to help conduct quick political analysis and make this an accessible part of ordinary business practice.





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ONE-HOUR (“CONVERSATION”) POLITICAL ANALYSIS

“A frequent mistake in PEA frameworks is analytical maximalism: partly because of the need to demonstrate rigour, and partly out of ‘economics envy’, PEA proponents tend to be as comprehensive and technical as possible. However, the beauty of politics is that everyone has enough folk knowledge to be able to understand complex phenomena, as long as they are expressed in familiar terms.”

Making political analysis useful: Adjusting and Scaling, ESID, 2015.



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HUMAN RESOURCE SYSTEM

- Ensuring staff are skilled in political analysis
- Job descriptions reflect this skill set
- Incentives/disincentives to TWP related to job retention/promotion
- Understand and agree with the DDD and TWP principles
- M&E system modified to capture PEA/context indicators
- Applied learning culture in place in project office





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EXAMPLE OF TWP/PEA IN ACTION: LAND TITLING IN THE PHILIPPINES



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TWP/PEA AND MARKET SYSTEMS

Group Discussion

What the similarities and differences between TWP and market systems analysis?



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