

Social Accountability

Accountability can be defined as the obligation of power-holders to account for or take responsibility for their actions. Social Accountability is an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, in which ordinary citizens, communities, civil society organizations and/or the media participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability.

SA mechanisms are hence demand-driven, and operate from the bottom-up. They are also sometimes referred to as "external" or "vertical" mechanisms of accountability, in contrast to more conventional "horizontal" mechanisms of accountability that are internal to the state. One important "vertical" mechanism of accountability in democratic states is elections. SA is here used to refer to the broad range of actions and mechanisms (beyond voting) that citizens, communities, civil society organizations (CSOs) and independent media can use to hold government officials and bureaucrats accountable.

Social Accountability Building Blocks

A broad range of actions are available to these actors to hold government officials and bureaucrats accountable. These include, for example, citizen participation in public policy-making, participatory budgeting, public expenditure tracking, citizen monitoring of public service delivery, citizen advisory boards, lobbying and advocacy campaigns.

Source;

<http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/66ByDocName/SocialAccountability>