



Ethiopia Social Accountability Program (ESAP)
Proposed Strategy 2021-2023
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MANAGEMENT AGENCY
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Part I: ESAP's Operational Context and International Experiences

1.1 Background

A number of factors make it necessary to reflect on the current Ethiopia Social Accountability Program (ESAP) strategy. In no particular order, these are:

- The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect also Ethiopia, and no end to it is yet in sight. Although the recent state of emergency (SoE) regulations by the government expired early September 2020 and are not being extended, general infection prevention measures should still apply. The current ESAP strategy, which is largely based on small and larger in-person gatherings, is hard to implement in compliance with these measures.
- Ethnic tensions continue to interfere with ESAP implementation in various parts of the country and the situation can change rapidly. ESAP activities are generally ill suited for implementation within this context.
- ESAP3 did not secure the level of funding that was anticipated during its design. Yet, some stakeholders believe that ESAP's work needs to expand to include additional woredas and kebeles in spite of the limited funding. Irrespective of calls for expansion, ESAP is exploring more cost-effective and efficient implementation approaches, such as peer-to-peer scaling which already started under ESAP2, make progress toward institutionalization and sustainability.
- Technology and the media and other communication methodologies have not been used to their present full potential. This applies both to their strategic use, as well as to the operational utilization of technology to support monitoring, data processing and analysis, and information sharing.

The management agency (MA) established an internal taskforce to map out the contextual changes as presented above, and to draft a first strategy document that describes:

- The Ethiopian political, security and COVID-19 context;
- Global social accountability (SA) and similar initiatives under the current COVID-19 context to draw lessons that could fit into ESAP's future SA operations; and
- A proposed operation strategy that takes current context and lessons from elsewhere into consideration.

This strategy paper was prepared following a consultative process that involved discussions with each member of the MA's management team and a review of the current ESAP SA process in consultation with SAIPs and ESAP's (inter)national consultants. In addition, the MA scanned global experiences within the COVID 19 context with regard to SA and the potential use of media. The task force also reviewed experiences from other sectors as they relate to adaptation to the reality of operating during the pandemic; for practical reasons, these are limited.

1.2 Country Context

1.2.1. Political context

Ethiopia is undergoing political, social and economic reforms since Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came to power in April 2018. Key political reforms introduced include:

- An expanded civil society through legislative reform that resulted in the replacement of Charities and Societies Proclamation No. 621/2009 with Civil Societies Proclamation No. 1113-2019. The new CSO law provides significantly more room for CSOs to engage government in policy dialogue, including advocacy for rights-based issues.
- The reform of legislation used previously to arrest and prosecute government critics. It made possible the release of political prisoners and the return of previously exiled

opposition groups, including opposition groups that were operating in neighboring countries.

- A diplomatic initiative in the East African region, particularly with Eritrea that led to ending the stalemate that had lasted for two decades following the war of 1998-2000 between the two countries. This led to the winning of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019 by the Ethiopian PM.
- The establishment of a new electoral board that started work on holding free and fair elections in 2020. Note: The COVID-19 outbreak forced elections to be postponed.

1.2.2 Peace and security

Before the introduction of the political reforms, Ethiopia experienced a number of violent uprisings, particularly in Oromiya, the environs of Addis Ababa city and parts of the Amhara region. Among the measures taken by the new PM to address this issue was the establishment of the Ministry of Peace, the first of its kind in the country. After the new government came to power, ethnic tension and clashes continued to flare up in different parts of the country, specifically the West Guji Zone of Oromia State and along the Oromia-Somali, Oromia-Benishangul-Gumuz, and Amhara-Tigray state borders. This led to 3.19 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), the highest number of IDPs worldwide at the time.¹ It was followed by a large-scale government-led IDP return operation in 2019 that reduced the number to an estimated 1.78 million IDPs in 2020.²

1.2.3 COVID-19 and government response

On March 13, 2020, MoH confirmed the first COVID-19 case in Addis Ababa. In response to the outbreak, the federal government declared on April 8 a state of emergency (SoE). The SoE is in force until September 2020 and puts restrictions on the assembly and movement of people in order to prevent the spreading and mitigate the risks of the pandemic. Other measures include mandatory quarantine periods for in-coming travelers, school closures, reduction of passengers on commuter vehicles to half of their regular capacity, and the mandatory provision of handwashing facilities by public and private entities to their customers. Early September, the SoE expired and, at the time of writing of this paper, no restrictions on the gathering and movement of people are in force.

A month-long mass-testing campaign was launched on the 8th of August, and the daily testing capacity in the country had increased to 20,000 by the end of August; this has resulted in a significant increase in the recording of COVID-19 positive cases. Most infections are, not surprisingly, detected in Addis Ababa. According to reports by WHO, the COVID-19 cases in Ethiopia are classified as ‘community transmission’, i.e., health authorities are unable to trace confirmed cases through chains of transmission. Without knowing for sure how the pandemic will evolve, we believe that it is prudent to assume that COVID-19 will affect society for the foreseeable future.

It seems clear that the GoE is determined to keep the key economy sectors (agriculture, industry, trade, construction and parts of the service industry) running, as also signified by the ten-year (2020/21 – 2030/31) growth and development plan of the government which is currently discussed in different stakeholder consultative meetings. Based on the dependence of the population on daily wages and the widespread poverty even under ‘normal’ conditions, the government appears to aim for a balanced approach between managing public health risks and the economic hardships. The latter would rapidly deteriorate were approaches such as strict lockdowns being applied. Nevertheless, the economy at large will suffer, as everywhere around

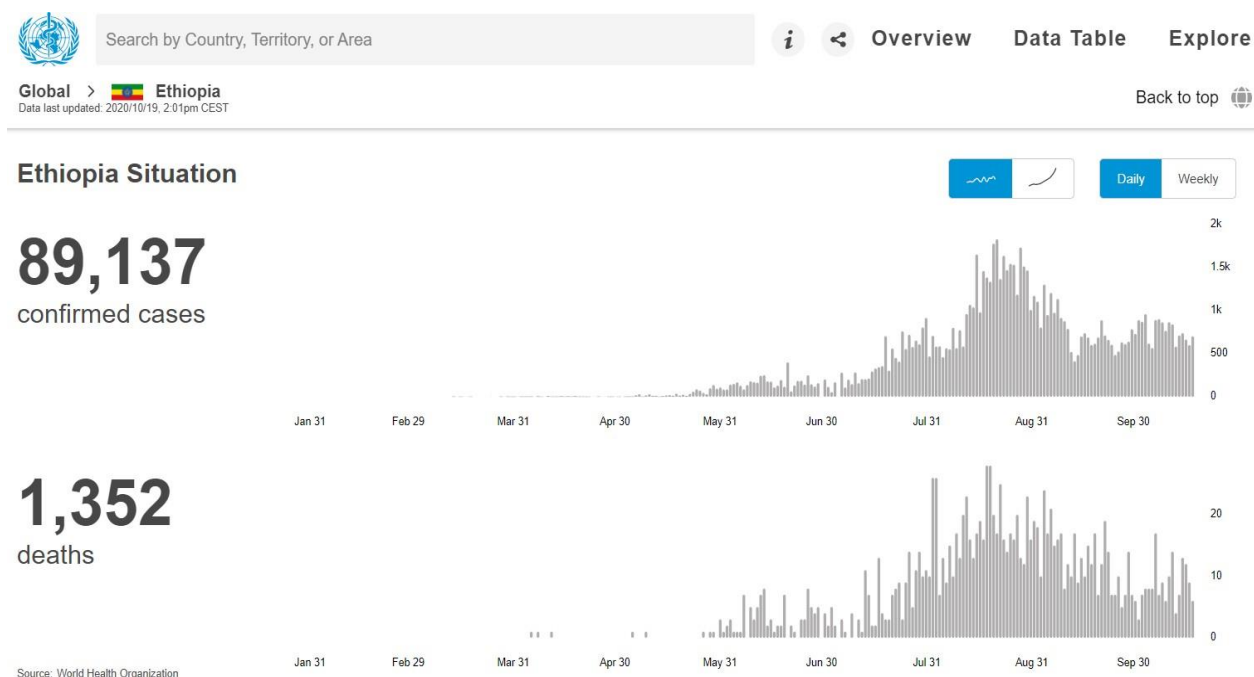
¹ Source: IOM, Ethiopia - National Displacement Report Round 18: July – August 2019

² Source: UNHCR Bi-weekly Operational Update: 1-15 February 2020

the world, with the most vulnerable groups among the population, such as PLWDs, the elderly, PLWHA, women and the extreme poor, first and most severely affected, socially and economically.

Heavily hit sectors of the economy include the service sector, such as the education and hospitality industry. The government is considering a possible reopening of schools as well as the travel and tourism industry, depending on the results of the testing campaign currently underway. A recent decision by the Ministry of Education calls for both public and private schools to start registering students for the next academic year, starting in September.

Figure 1: COVID-19 infection trend in Ethiopia



1.3 Experiences from other Countries and Ethiopia: A Selection of Initiatives

Many social accountability efforts rely on face-to-face contact, and community monitoring usually requires people to leave their homes. Citizens who would normally be using feedback to demand accountability of the institutions that serve them are restricted in what they can do: they are staying at home, practicing social distancing and, even in places where restrictions are not so stringent, people may not feel safe to continue monitoring. Restrictions also affect the service sectors (supply-side) where civil servants may face challenges in addressing the issues raised by citizens, or not receive any feedback altogether. The following initiatives are presented with a view to provide insight into how technology solutions and the use of media could add value to our SA work in the Ethiopian context.

1.3.1 Citizens claiming entitlements

Some government and non-government organizations publish what citizens are entitled to in terms of COVID-19-related response. An organization in the Philippines, G-Watch, released the [COVID-19 Citizen Entitlement Map](#) which lists entitlements during COVID-19.

The UNICEF-supported platform U-Report uses a tool that asks its subscribers to respond to SMS-based surveys. These are then analyzed and published online. This long-lasting project has more than 10 million subscribers in 66 countries. Normally, the platform is used to shed light on local challenges. In some countries, an automated chatbot is added to U-Report which allows youth to ask questions about the virus that are then answered by the automated chatbot using the most popular platforms (Facebook, Viber, WhatsApp).

Integrity Watch's Community Based Monitoring (CBM) proved a success after it was launched in nine provinces of Afghanistan. Under the program, volunteers are trained by Integrity Watch to monitor services such as education and justice, and infrastructure projects such as roads, public libraries, schools, and clinics. In order to enhance the preparedness of health facilities to deal with the virus, information is monitored through a new mobile app which is uploaded to www.covid19.af.

1.3.2 Citizens role in budget processes

The Brazilian Transparency Portal publishes the budget on COVID-19 related activities online. Citizens are invited to consultations and to comment.

A number of initiatives in Africa support participatory budgeting. For instance, the World Bank has supported participatory budgeting in 5 counties in Kenya. So far little is published on the methodological responses to COVID-19 in these initiatives.

Other initiatives specifically track expenditure of COVID-19 related budgets, such as G-Watch in the Philippines.

1.3.3 Use of technology, media, innovations, awareness raising

Surveys - In Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, Twaweza is using its mobile phone panel survey *Sauti za Wananchi* of 2000 citizens per country to carry out frequent surveys with a focus on COVID-19. Among other, it collects data on citizen knowledge (men and women) about the virus, whether they know how to prevent its spread, and to what extent they are able to follow advice. This data is published as briefs and shared with government officials, enabling them to shape their local responses.

Other organizations also run mobile phone surveys, such as the World Bank in Ethiopia, CDG in Senegal and IPA in Bangladesh.

Media and fake news - A number of websites and games combat fake news, such as in Canada's 'Get Bad news' and Break the Fake with tips on how to find out whether news is fake, and in the UK with the 'Don't feed the beast' campaign using the SHARE checklist

In line with ESAP's COTL, radio stations are frequently engaged in projects where community awareness is important. Community and local radio programs are broadcast in local languages, which helps to ensure the wider spread of information.

To disseminate information more widely, the use of local and national television channels and printed media can be considered. In Nigeria, Nollywood movie stars and musicians are fronting campaigns to address misconceptions of the effects and handling of the pandemic.

BBC Media Action is widely popular in Africa; they run a popular radio drama "soap" in Ethiopia with valuable information for communities on indoor air pollution through its depiction of everyday life. Storytelling and radio theatre are proven ways to address serious topics; the spoken word, poetry and music are very popular in Ethiopia's culture.

Sheger FM has some widely popular programs - *Andande negeroch* ('A few things') and *Men enteyekelewo* ('What would you like us to ask?') that present citizens requests to the local

government. Citizens' questions that are pre-recorded (usually limited to only one question) are presented live to local governments for their response. (Note: The ESAP Citizen on the Line program is very similar in concept)

Water Aid Ethiopia had a weekly 20-minute radio program, Tenawo bejowo (*Your health is in your hands*), on Fana Broadcasting Corporate, which was also broadcast through the station's regional affiliates. Local governments were invited on the show. The organization conducted a baseline survey prior to launching the radio program, which included identifying issues in service delivery. Water Aid believes that the show had an impact on building knowledge of citizens in terms of government policies on water services and on making government responsive.

1.4. Lessons from ESAP's COVID-19 Response

On March 10th, i.e. prior to the declaration of the SoE that restricted public gatherings, ESAP advised its SAIPs to cease SA operations. Following the declaration of the SoE, and recognizing that the government response to the pandemic could not effectively reach all communities, the MA decided to develop a program that uses media to ensure that communities could be actively engaged and provide feedback on COVID-related matters while adhering to SoE measures.

ESAP introduced COVID-19 measures using community and commercial radios stations through its 'Citizens on the Line' (COTL) radio shows. In addition, two SAIPs used roadside messaging through speakers mounted on vans in places without radio coverage.

By September 30th, 489 COTL shows were broadcast by 12 CRs and 11 FBC affiliates, potentially reaching an estimated audience of 63.8m. Shows covered 729 (72%) out of 1,010 woredas in Ethiopia, including 247 (78%) of the 317 ESAP woredas.

The ESAP intervention contributes to the national effort against COVID-19 by providing reliable, timely and accurate information on COVID-19 regulations to citizens. More importantly, it provides space to citizens to voice their concerns, problems and issues on the SoE regulations that directly affect their daily lives. It also creates opportunities for government (especially local COVID-19 taskforces) to respond to citizens' concerns.

SAIPs were mobilized to plan and engage with the media. They continue to maintain their rapport with local stakeholders and participate in local problem-solving during the pandemic. SACs are being mobilized to participate and engage in dialogue with local governments. The MA actively manages the relations with radio stations, as SAIPs generally do not have the expertise and capacity to deal with the media.

Some ESAP woredas cannot be reached by existing CRs and/or FBC stations. The larger stations cover more woredas with one broadcast, but this leads to some generalizing of topics discussed, and a loss of relevance for listeners from specific woredas. Journalists (and editors) require re-orientation and training on the use of media for SA. Neutrality of radio stations needs to be monitored for potential political influencing.

Despite some challenges, the COVID-19 activities implemented by ESAP demonstrate strong potential for the media to function as an alternative platform where citizen and government can engage in dialogue when face-to-face meetings may not be possible or are perhaps more resource-demanding.

Part II: Proposed Adjusted Strategy for ESAP

There is general consensus among MA staff and SAIPs that the SA program by ESAP remains relevant, perhaps even more so now than prior to the pandemic. This section describes how ESAP, responding to the changed context as described in section 1.1, intends to adjust its strategy while staying truthful to the overall objectives of the program.

Note that the ESAP MA introduced initial strategic shifts in its Annual Work Plan 2020 by:

- Working with sustainable structures such as CBOs and service user groups (e.g. PTSAs) and representatives of different associations of vulnerable communities. This is in line with the Civil Societies Proclamation and will replace ad hoc focus groups at kebele and facility levels, which is more sustainable as well as cost effective.
- Using woreda SACs as main entry points for promoting SA. Kebele councils and community structures mentioned above replace kebele SACs to play a lead role in promoting citizen participation in SA mechanisms.
- Developing Joint Action Plans (JAPs) at the woreda level to be aligned with and integrated in the woreda planning and budgeting cycle.

2.1. Additional Strategy Revisions

The following additional revisions to ESAP's implementation strategy are proposed to address the rationale described in Part I of this document. In addition, the MA believes that these strategy changes will allow ESAP to expand in 2021 by an additional woredas to reach a total of 417 woredas as the project design calls for:

- a) **Increased use of media:** A number of SA processes can be managed more efficiently and, often, more effectively better by using media as it increases reach, reduces cost and avoids risks associated with political unrest and disease. Local media such as community radios (CRs) are preferred where available, as these are usually managed by and for the community. It can include SA activities such as:
- Creating public awareness and sensitization on SA mechanisms.
 - Providing citizens with access to information on rights, entitlements and service standards.
 - Disclosure of JAPs agreed between woreda SACs and sector offices.
 - Creating space for citizens or their representatives to express their opinions and provide feedback to government at any moment in the SA process.
 - Providing space for government representatives and elected councilors to share their views and experiences with the wider public and respond to their questions.

CRs typically broadcast in one or a few woredas in which cases SAIPs would manage the relationship with a CR directly. Where a CR station is part of a larger organization that could implement a broader range of SA activities, a direct grantee role within ESAP could be considered for the CR. Also, where a CSO partner (i.e. SAIP) lacks the capacity to manage the relationship with a subgrantee, the MA could decide to contract a CR directly. It is important to note that CRs do not, in principle, replace CSOs as ESAP partners; however, under the new strategy CRs complement the work by CSO on tasks for which CSOs do not typically have the capacity.

In cases where no viable CRs are available, ESAP may continue to use other types of radio stations, such as those operated by government or commercial FM stations, or other such as the printed media, the use of van-mounted speakers, aka Montarbo, or other innovative media uses. The MA would manage relationships with commercial stations directly for reasons that relate to finance and control, coordination of work over large geographic areas, and avoidance of duplication.

Thus, by reaching the wider citizenry, the use of media will support and complement, rather than entirely replace, the role that local CSOs play in the social accountability process, especially those that represent marginalized groups.

b) Increased use of Information Communication Technology: In response to the risks of face-to-face meetings with staff and key stakeholders and building on experience elsewhere, ICT will be used for:

- Capacity development activities such as training and coaching of SAIPs using e-learning platforms such as Massive Online Open Courses (MOOC) and video conferencing. If successful, this can be expanded to SA related courses for journalists, councilors, CBO's and others.
- Internal MA staff training.
- Monitoring and reporting activities of SAIPs using smart phones.
- Conducting service assessment surveys using mobile platforms.
- Managing meetings using web-based conferencing platforms. (see experiences discussed under Part I)

ICT is the future. It holds great potential to enhance communication in an effective, efficient and interactive manner and ESAP will utilize this potential where possible. However, access to ICT and the capability to make use of it is clearly not evenly distributed in Ethiopia geographically, by gender, by income, by age. Care will be taken to not leave disadvantaged sections of the population behind and find alternative means to have their voices heard and have their issues taken on board.

c) Citizens Report Card (CRC) methodology: The CRC replaces the Community Score Card (CSC) which involves organizing multiple public gatherings could not be applicable. and is no longer a safe option due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The CRC is a survey tool that is used globally to systematically engage citizens in assessing the quality of public services. The survey captures specific attributes of services such as access, availability, quality and reliability, as well as responsiveness and transparency of service providers. To make CRC feasible at scale, ESAP's CRC shall have the following features:

- SAIPs are the responsible party to conduct at least one service assessment survey covering their operational woredas.
- Surveys focus on the sectors and problems within those sectors as prioritized by grassroots CBOs, kebele councils and WSACs.
- The survey questions are basic, easy to manage and limited to 10 – 15 questions.
- The surveys are designed in a manner that allows comparative assessments within and across sectors that allows to generate data used for informed decision making by planning and budgeting authorities.
- While SAIPs are responsible, WSACs are co-owners and active participants. The MA provides technical expertise for data collection, analysis and reporting of findings, including the use of appropriate technology.
- The survey results are presented to the community, preferably by community radios, and used by WSACs to engage with woreda sector offices and woreda councils for budget alignment.

d) Take COVID-19 protection and prevention measures in all ESAP operations:

The strategy changes lead to fewer face-to-face interactions. The MA will develop a protocol which will serve as a guide for implementing partners, similar to what was done during the COTL project. Where such direct interaction cannot be avoided, COVID-19 prevention and risk mitigation measures are strictly applied and monitored:

- Using face masks at the workplace and in field operations.
- Using sanitizers and hand washing facilities.
- Keeping proper physical distance at the workplace and while working with communities.
- Making provisions for working from home where possible.

- Ensuring that ESAP staff strictly adhere to set-COVID-19 safety measures at all times.

2.2 Woreda Expansion and Exit

2.2.1 Expansion

The ESAP3 design calls for an expansion of MDTF-supported woredas to 400 in total by the end of 2021. This was based on a expected funding level of USD 33 million over the life of the project. By 2020, it became clear that funding for the MA is USD 25.6 million (- 22.4%) of a total funding envelope of USD 26.5 million (-19.7%).

Despite the significant reduction in funding, the MA has made provisions – most notably by way of this strategy - to still meet the expansion requirements as expected by the ministry of finance. In fact, the MoF expect ESAP to expand by 100 woredas, bringing the total number of woredas to 417. The 17 woredas over and above require a budget of roughly USD 510,000/yr for the first two years, based on an average annual implementation cost of USD 30,000 per woreda. However, the MA will make every effort to further streamline SA implementation to realize this expansion as required.

2.2.2 Woreda exit and transition

Due to delays in implementation for reasons related to start up, security concerns and COVID-19, many woredas experience a decline in SA status. A transition of old woredas away from the ESAP MDTF project to ESAP IDA20 is, therefore, anticipated to be gradual and based on the following assumptions:

- The transition process will be phased and guided by procedures to be developed by the MA;
- Coordinated capacity development support by both the MDTF and IDA components enhances the absorption capacity of local governments to assume responsibility for ESAP MDTF woredas;
- ESAP MDTF funding is stable and predictable and allows for strengthening SA systems in existing ESAP woredas;
- Circumstances allow the proposed implementation and transition plans to be realised within the current end date of the program.
- Stability and security in ESAP operational areas remains to achieve timely transition.

We included a transition timeline as annex 2.

2.3 Revised Results Framework

The proposed strategy involves a review and rearrangement of project outcomes, without affecting the overall project objectives.

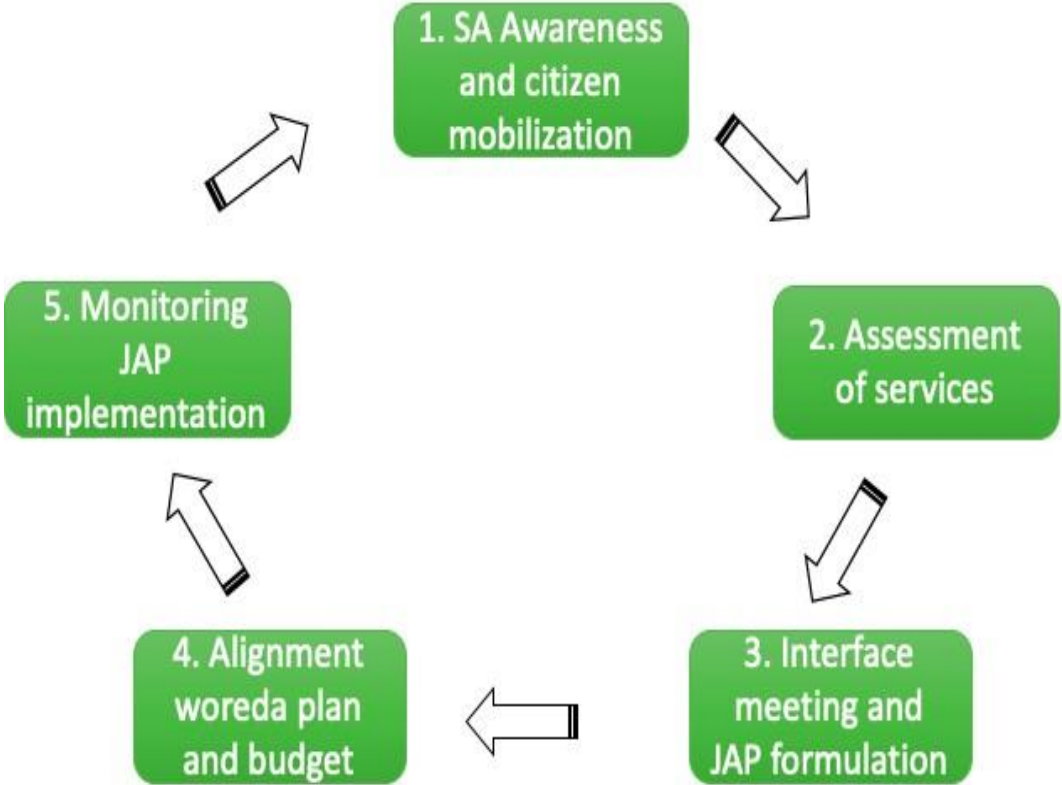
2.3.1 The ESAP development objective

Support strengthening the SA system and mechanisms for enhanced service delivery in Ethiopia.

2.3.2 ESAP outcomes

The outcomes presented below align logically with the five steps in the Social Accountability diagram.

Diagram 1. Social Accountability cycle



The following table presents the changes in the social accountability cycle:

Step	Inception report	Revised Strategy	Comments/most significant changes
1.	Access to information	SA awareness raising and citizen mobilization	<p>Media and CSOs both involved to reach broad citizenry.</p> <p>SAIPs in collaboration with FTA and GRM deliver training (online and, where on-line is not possible, face to face) to: 1. selected members of kebele and woreda standing committees on SA and role of councils; 2.WSAC on aligning JAPs with woreda budgeting and planning processes.</p> <p>Citizen mobilization involves representatives of community associations (such as Idders, women, vulnerable groups, etc).</p>
2.	Assessment SA tools	Assessment of services	<p>Using Citizen Report Card process (instead of CSC and focus group discussions) to assess quality of services in kebeles and set priorities.</p> <p>Triangulating CRC results with any secondary data that may be available in the woreda.</p> <p>WSAC meeting to consolidate and prioritize citizen demands from kebeles.</p>
3.	Interface meetings	Interface meeting and JAP formulation	<p>Interface meetings organized at woreda level to design JAPs.</p> <p>CSOs/local institutions and media transmit (relevant parts of) the process and the JAPs.</p>
4.	Joint Action Plan implementation	JAP alignment with woreda planning and budgeting process	<p>WSAC lobby LG sectors to include JAP priorities in their sector plans prior to the woreda budgeting and planning meetings.</p> <p>WSAC participates in pre-budget discussions to lobby for citizen priorities.</p> <p>CSOs/local groups and media transmit pre-budget processes insofar no restrictions apply.</p>
5.	Monitoring	Monitoring JAP implementation	<p>WSAC consults its network of citizens involved in the CRC on implementation of JAP.</p> <p>WSAC participates in council quarterly review meetings.</p> <p>SAIPs provide space for citizen-council-provider dialogue to provide feedback to citizens on the status of JAP implementation. Where possible local media will be involved to transmit results of this dialogue.</p>

Outcome 1. SA awareness raising and citizen mobilization

Intermediate outcome 1.1: Representatives of citizens and marginalized groups organized to participate in SA processes.

Making use of the civic space created by the Civil Societies Proclamation No. 1113-2019, outcome 1.1 deals with identifying and working with representatives of different sections of the community (men, women, youth, and vulnerable sections of society, including the disabled, the elderly and PLWHAs). Contrary to the earlier practice of working with numerous community focus groups at facility and kebele levels, which was difficult to manage and not cost effective, the main strategy under this outcome is working with representatives of community-based organizations (CBOs), associations of disadvantaged groups and service user groups (such as PTSAs) to ensure the participation and continued engagement of citizens in the SA process.

Intermediate outcome 1.2: Citizens are aware of service standards, entitlements and SA processes

This outcome requires key interventions such as creating access to information on service standards, entitlements and SA processes, as well as social mobilization, i.e. getting the organized community representatives into collective problem-solving action. The use of media is the main mode to inform the wider citizenry on service standards and entitlements. Training of selected representatives of CBOs, vulnerable groups and service user groups on gender & social inclusion is being delivered through SAIPs by using delivery modes that avoid the need for physical contact, where this is not feasible, ensuring COVID-19 safety measures are complied with. These representatives subsequently transmit their newly acquired SA skills and knowledge to their larger membership. The MA works with selected partners to develop appropriate online and offline learning materials so that knowledge about SA is sustained within their respective organizations. Selected members of standing committees of woreda and kebele councils are trained on SA processes and the role of councils in promoting SA as a citizen engagement mechanism. The MA, together with FTA, explores possibilities to develop and promote 'massive online open courses' (MOOCs) to support this process, so that motivated councilors can update their knowledge and skills at their own convenience.

The MA engages federal and regional government actors to familiarize citizens in their communities with existing service standards. It requires working with MoF/BoFEDs and through them with sector ministries/regional bureaus to ensure the accuracy of the information. SAIPs disseminate these standards using print outs and the media among woreda SACs, kebele councilors, CBO service user representatives and citizens at large.

While the default mode of operation is the avoidance of face-to-face meetings, discussions with ESAP SAIPs revealed that meetings in the community do take place, reportedly observing physical distancing, wearing of facemasks and washing hands. Where face-to-face meetings are the only option, ESAP conducts these with limited and clearly defined numbers of participants, as much as is possible outdoors, or in rooms that are spacious enough to accommodate the participants while adhering to distancing standards.

Intermediate outcome 1.3: CSOs and other relevant actors (such as media) play a mobilization role between citizens and service providers to implement SA projects

The MA builds the capacity of SAIPs and media to discharge their roles and responsibilities at all stages of the SA process i.e. from awareness creation to monitoring of JAP implementation.

This is done through MA's capacity development support to SAIPs through online training and coaching as well as program review meetings. From the survey results with program coordinators (PCs), which was part of the strategy development process, it was observed that SAIPs are

currently using online platforms for their communications. The MA builds on its COTL experience of organizing and running Moodle courses to SAIP staff to maintain and further strengthen capacity of its partners.

Outcome 2. Assessment of services

Intermediate outcome 2.1: Citizens set their priorities through SA processes

Making use of the local community structures and user groups as mentioned under outcome 1.1. the CRC) serves as the main service assessment tool at this stage of the SA process. CRC is a less interactive tool that, if used appropriately, requires less contact between people when compared with assessments done in focus groups using CSCs; the latter involves a series of discussions and meetings for consolidating service assessment scores.

We found from international experience that ‘claiming entitlements’ may be more challenging when face-to-face meetings are not possible. However, monitoring of services by citizens and supported by ICT is successfully done in some developing countries. ESAP, with its network of SAIPs and WSAEs, works on the ground to design and test similar initiatives.

Service assessments using CRC involve the following steps:

- a) **Assessment of local conditions:** SAIPs assess local conditions and service delivery gaps that demand attention by government including issues that constrain poor and marginalized communities from accessing and using public services. It includes consultations with sector offices (observing COVID-19 safety procedures), as well as looking into previously conducted surveys.
- b) **Pre-survey preparation:** SAIPs engage the stakeholders identified in intermediate outcome 1.1. and local government sector offices and agree on the objectives of the service assessment survey, the scope of the survey, including selection of the sectors, the survey questionnaire to be used, and on the sampling method. SAIPs also select and train enumerators. In addition, a pre-testing of the survey questionnaire is done to check for errors or clarity concerns. A sense of ownership by key actors (SAIP, SAC and local government) in survey design and sampling is important to minimize the limitations of the CRC, as it is sometimes seen as ‘technically driven and controlled by survey experts’.
- c) **Conducting the Survey:** The CRC is technology friendly. The MA explores the use of its mobile phones/smart phones to conduct service assessment surveys. In geographically hard to reach areas and among groups that have no access to technology, enumerators administer a conventional CRC survey, adhering to safe distancing rules.
- d) **Post Survey Data Analysis:** Data are analyzed by SAIPs into formats that are user-friendly for a variety of audiences such as WSACs, citizens, service providers and woreda councils.
- e) **Triangulate secondary data:** Where available and reliable, ESAP uses local data produced by third parties that present priorities set by citizens or marginalized groups to validate the CRC findings.

The CRC involves formulation of joint action plans (JAPs) so that citizens feedback is not shelved but finds its way into woreda council’s plans (see outcome 3).

Outcome 3. Citizens and service providers agree on a joint action plan for service improvements

Intermediate outcome 3.1: Interface meeting and JAP formulation

While using the CRC as the main assessment tool, the JAP remains a key deliverable. The JAP presents the main issues that service providers and users agree on as service improvement priorities that, subsequently, are used as input into the woreda budgeting process. Under the new strategy, the formulation of woreda JAPs undergoes the following process:

- a) CRC survey results are analyzed by the SAIP (in intermediate outcome 2.1 above) and made available to the WSAC for identification of service priorities at woreda level.
- b) WSACs, with support from SAIPs, discuss the findings of the CRC survey, validate the CRC results as a true representation of the opinions of citizens in the woreda in consultation with CBOs/other service user groups, and advocate with the kebele council to adopt the results as representative for citizen concerns, prior to engaging woreda sector offices.
- c) SAIPs organize interface meetings, either virtually where possible, or in person with adhering to safety measures, between selected woreda sector offices (service providers), members of WSAC and relevant citizen user groups/CBO representatives (including representatives of vulnerable groups), woreda administration and woreda council standing committee representatives (eventual decision makers on the woreda budget).

Note: The MA is in the process of developing guidelines for use by all its implementing partners to be applied to meetings and gatherings of any kind.

- d) Interface meetings result in formulation of a woreda JAP, specifying the service improvement actions to be taken and responsibilities.
- e) SAIPs invite local media to document and broadcast the dialogue (process), where deemed of interest to the audiences, and results (JAP) of the interface meetings to foster local ownership and follow-through by responsible actors.

Interface meetings are conducted involving few (1-2) selected representatives from the concerned citizen and government groups in open air or in large rooms with proper ventilation, with the total number of participants not exceeding 25.

Outcome 4. JAP alignment with woreda planning and budgeting processes

Intermediate outcome 4.1: Citizens' role in budget planning and implementation reinforced

A participatory budgeting process with multiple gatherings of large citizen groups at woreda level, where ESAP focuses its interventions, is not possible as we move forward. Citizen priorities identified through the assessment surveys and agreed upon by key stakeholders as presented in woreda JAPs serve as input into the woreda planning and budgeting process. JAP content and commitment by the government (sector offices) is aired on local media for transparency and for wider community engagement. In addition, local institutions (CSOs/NGOs/CBOs/other will be engaged to transmit the results of this process to their constituency. The MA works closely with the FTA program and GRM to promote local councils and local governments' active participation and, ultimately, ownership of this process.

Intermediate outcome 4.2: CSOs and regional government work together (under the FTA-SA-GRM partnership) to resolve prioritized systemic woreda level issues

The MA enables SAIPs to work with woreda as well as regional level CSOs representing citizens (including those representing marginalized groups) to strengthen their understanding of the budget process and to improve their engagement with councils. This includes supporting local governments to align and, where possible, merge FTA and SA structures on the ground (such as WSACs and FTA need identification committees) to effectively participate in the alignment of JAPs with woreda budget. This is done online and/or face-to-face (in localities where working online is not feasible) taking all COVID-19 precautionary measures. Building on the lessons drawn from its COTL intervention, the MA organizes online training for regional stakeholders participating in the FTA-SA-GRM process. It may outsource such online training to providers experienced in designing e-learning courses, while retaining its course content development, coordination and quality assurance roles.

Outcome 5. Monitoring of JAP implementation and learning

In the past, because of the sheer volume of SACs and JAPs at woreda, kebele and even facility levels, the MA had problems monitoring and evaluating the impact of its work. To address the problem, the MA introduced a phone-based data entry platform used by SAIP woreda SA experts (WSAEs) and M&E officers to transmit data in real time. The system is promising and technically functional and the data volume is adapted to the absorptive capacity of the MA. The system could also be further developed to share data with woredas and other levels of government, depending on available resources and the potential for this to be sustained in the long term.

The collection of data at facility level, as previously performed, has been discontinued for two main reasons: (i) data on changes in service delivery quality and access are a poor proxy for the success of SA, as such changes can not exclusively be attributed to SA interventions; and (ii) the overwhelming volume of data pertaining to service delivery is simply unmanageable, leading to an abundance of poor quality, unverifiable data with limited value, yet demanding significant resources.

A streamlined M&E system will focus on SA performance data at woreda level: SAC functionality and JAP status (the inclusion of *consolidated* citizen priorities, whether they are updated regularly, to which extent citizen priorities have been addressed, and the degree to which JAPs are being used as input to the woreda level planning and budgeting cycle) will be the main areas for measuring the outcomes of SA interventions. Other data may be collected, but always based on a determination of the need and cost (what, who, why, and collection and processing costs).

Intermediate outcome 5.1: Citizens monitor implementation of joint action plans

WSACs actively participate in the monitoring of JAP implementation at all levels by participating in quarterly review meetings of woreda council standing committees.

Building on the experience from COTL, WSACs use local media to express their opinions and provide feedback on the state of JAP implementation in their respective localities. SAIPs provide space for citizen-council-provider dialogue to provide feedback to citizens on the implementation status of woreda JAPs (what was implemented and not, and why?). This is aired on local media that provide space for citizens to call in and express their opinions, concerns and satisfaction on the process and results of the SA process, thus completing the citizen engagement feedback loop.

Intermediate outcome 5.2: Evidence-based collaborative SA interventions and action research feeds into national policy making and practice

The main focus of action research within the new context is finding and testing innovative media and technology solutions that allow citizens to provide local governments with real time feedback

on the state of services and help improve government planning, implementation and monitoring of basic service delivery. Some possible examples are storytelling and radio theatre as a way to disseminate the findings from JAP formulation, implementation and monitoring processes; weaving SA topics into an existing popular radio (or TV) drama series; setting up an ICT platform where citizens use SMS to air their opinion on specific topics.

Intermediate outcome 5.3: National practice dissemination media channels and knowledgemanagement portal established and functional

In addition to re-designing ESAP's website with strong functionalities and attractive content that can be easily navigated by a variety of user groups, the MA makes use of MOOC to inform and engage key government, CSO and media stakeholders and further disseminate SA knowledge and experience through media channels. ESAP resorts to using more conventional methods only in cases where technology- and/or media-based approaches are not feasible or are proven to lead to inferior outcomes.

Annex 1: Outcomes AWP 2020 vs. Outcomes Revised Strategy

Outcomes AWP 2020	Revised Outcomes Strategy Revision October 2020 (replacing the Outcomes AWP 2020)	Remarks
	Outcome 1. SA awareness raising and citizen mobilization	
Outcome 1.1: Local community structures and service user groups organized in order to use SA to improve public services	Intermediate outcome 1.1: Representatives of citizens and marginalized groups organized to participate in SA processes.	Changed
Outcome 1.2: Citizens claiming their entitlements through the SA process	Intermediate outcome 1.2: Citizens are aware of service standards, entitlements and SA process	Changed, with specific focus on awareness and excluding service assessment and JAP formulation
Outcome 2.a.1: CSOs and other relevant actors play a mobilization role between citizens and service providers to implement SA projects and innovation grants	Intermediate outcome 1.3: CSOs and other relevant actors (such as media) play a mobilization role between citizens and service providers to implement SA projects	Slightly modified capturing the new role of media and doing away with innovation grants which is now channelled to use of technology solutions (subject to discussion)
	Outcome 2. Assessment of services	
Outcome 1.2: Citizens claiming their entitlements through the SA process	Intermediate outcome.2.1: Citizens set their priorities through SA processes	Changed, where the adopted use of CRC is the main tool for assessment of services
	Outcome 3. Citizens and service providers agree on a joint action plan for service improvements	
Outcome 1.2: Citizens claiming their entitlements through the SA process	Intermediate outcome 3.1: Interface meeting and JAP formulation	Changed
	Outcome 4. JAP alignment with woreda planning and budgeting process	
Outcome 1.3: Citizens' role in budget planning, implementation and monitoring reinforced	Intermediate outcome 4.1: Citizens' role in budget planning, implementation and monitoring reinforced	Same as former outcome 1.3

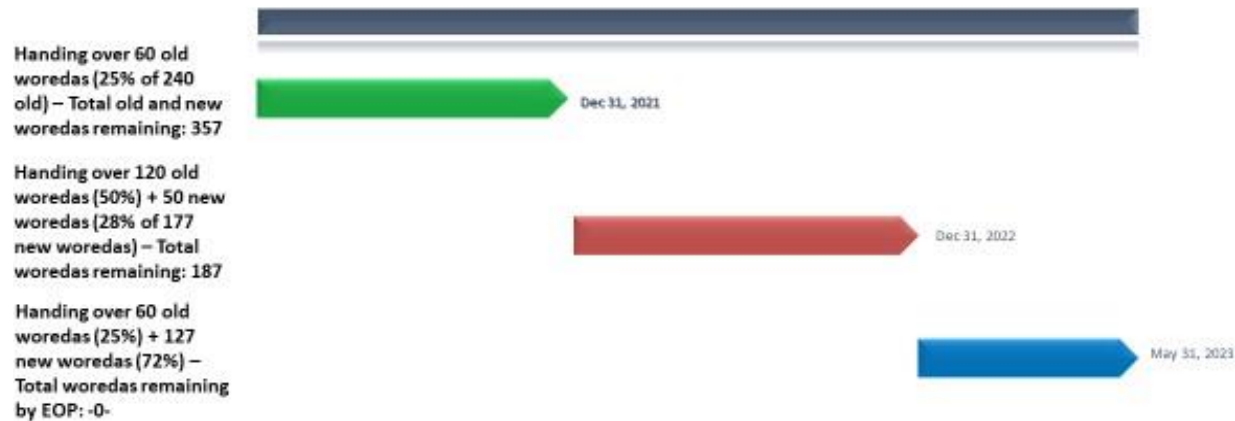
Outcomes AWP 2020	Revised Outcomes Strategy Revision October 2020 (replacing the Outcomes AWP 2020)	Remarks
Outcome 2b.1: CSOs and regional government work together (under the FTA-SA-GRM partnership) to resolve prioritized systemic woreda level issues	Intermediate outcome 4.2: CSOs and regional government work together (under the FTA-SA-GRM partnership) to resolve prioritized systemic woreda level issues	Same as former outcome 2b.1
	Outcome 5. Monitoring of JAP implementation and Learning	
-	Intermediate outcome 5.1: Citizens monitor implementation of joint action plans	New
Outcome 2b.2: Evidence-based collaborative SA interventions and action research feeds into national policy making and practice	Intermediate outcome 5.2: Evidence-based collaborative SA interventions and action research feeds into national policy making and practice	Same as former outcome 2b.2
Outcome 2c.: National SA practice dissemination media channels and knowledge management portal established and functional	Intermediate outcome 5.3: National SA practice dissemination media channels and knowledge management portal established and functional	Same as former outcome 2.c
	Eliminated Outcomes	
Outcome 1.4: Frontline service providers are responsive to prioritized needs of citizens through the SA process	Partially removed and included to intermediate outcome 1.2.	This is not an ESAP MA outcome, but fits under the supply side.
Outcome 1.5: Structures/ procedures to ensure SA processes are established within the service provider institutions (and/or sector bureaus)	Removed	Supply side outcome. MA may contribute technical capacity building support
Outcome 1.6: Government accountability and oversight structures (kebele, woreda council) strengthened to embed and sustain SA initiatives in their mandated roles and functions	Removed	Supply side outcome. MA may contribute to the activity under supply side responsibility.

Annex 2: Woreda Exit Strategy Timeline³



Implementation Schedule Woreda Transition (Provisional)

Timeline January 1, 2021
– May 31, 2023 (EOP)



³ This Gantt chart presents the provisional timeline for the transition of woredas from the ESAP MDTF component to ESAP IDA20. Funding for ESAP MDTF is secured until May 31, 2023, the closing date of the project. Depending on various conditions (COVID, security, funding, burn-rate) in the coming years, the proposed implementation and transition plan may not be fully realized within the current timeframe of the program. ESAP stakeholders, i.e. the MoF, DPs, the World Bank and the MA, may need to agree on adjusting this timeline for the program’s phase out (and handover) taking into consideration these conditions as they evolve.