STAR Ghana
Technical Approach:
Political Eocnomy Analysis

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AR	Annual Report
CS	Civil society
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFID	Department for International Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MP	Member of Parliament
MTR	Mid-term Review
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PEA	Political Economy Analysis
PMT	Programme management team
RCC	Regional Coordinating councils
SAVI	State Accountability and Voice Programme
SC	Steering Committee
STAR	Strengthening transparency Accountability and Responsiveness
TAP	Technical Approach Paper
TOC	Theory of change
TU	Trade Unions

Table of Contents

1   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this technical approach paper (TAP) is to set out, in concrete terms, how STAR-Ghana plans to ensure that political economy knowledge is embedded within its programming activities in strategic ways. The TAP draws on a review of Political Economy Analysis (PEA) work undertaken by STAR-Ghana phase 1 carried out by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in January 2016, and the emerging evidence base on adaptive programming to outline how embedding political economy knowledge within flexible and adaptive ways of working will improve the programme's capacity to contribute to its stated outcomes and impact.[1]

2   STAR GHANA PEA APPROACH

The STAR Ghana theory of change, as described in the DFID Business Case and refined in the Christian Aid tender, underlines the importance of high quality political economy analysis as a critical element which will enable STAR and its partners to work in the sorts of politically informed, strategic and adaptive ways which are critical to their success (see annex 1 for STAR Ghana ToC).

As described in Box 1 below, in the context of development programmes, political economy analysis is about understanding the context in which change happens and the incentives that determine how relevant actors behave and interact but critically it is also about using that analysis to formulate ideas about realistic pathways of change. If STAR Ghana is to achieve its programme objectives it is essential that the programme be informed by a thorough understanding of the political economy context in which ways can feed into operational activities in practical ways.

Box 1: Political economy analysis (PEA)

Political economy analysis draws from both political science and economics to better understand relationships between actors, their incentives and relevant power. In the context of development programming:

- **Political economy analysis is** a set of tools for getting a realistic understanding of the contexts − regional, national, sectoral and local − in which development happens.

- **PEA deals with** the incentives that shape the way the relevant actors interact with each other. This involves appreciating power structures, the formal and informal rules that govern behaviour, and the room for manoeuvre within complex processes of change.

- **PEA can help** in formulating and interrogating ideas about realistic pathways of change in a country or sector. This in turn can provide the basis for programming that is well grounded in an understanding of country realities.

Source: ©ODI/Policy practise

In line with recent evidence of the use of political economy analysis in development programmes the STAR Consortium believes that in order to better deliver on its outcome and impact objectives, political economy analysis needs to be embedded within local implementation teams (Booth et al, 2016). Rather than distinct pieces of analysis which are often divorced from operational realities, knowledge of the political economy needs to feed systematically into STAR's design, programme management, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation processes in locally led and iterative ways. It is also understood that, having the capacity to 'think' politically will not be sufficient in itself and that STAR-Ghana administrative and programme management structures will also need to adopt iterative and adaptive ways of working to support STAR-Ghana SC, staff and partners to 'act' politically, that is to use this political economy knowledge to systematically inform programme decision-making and feed into learning and reflection processes throughout the lifecycle of the programme.

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1 Booth, D., Unsworth, S.: Politically Smart, Locally Led Development, ODI Discussion paper, pages 8 – 11, September 2014

3   ADAPTIVE PROGRAMMING

Development programmes operate in dynamic, complex and unpredictable environments in which there are high levels of uncertainty about what interventions might work to achieve a given objective. This is because development problems involve complex systems of interdependent factors, which cannot be known in advance and political contexts (not just national level but at other levels of governance including informal) which are often volatile and changing rapidly and in unpredictable ways.

Adaptive development is a response to this recognition. It draws on an emerging base on what works in development programming which indicates that those programmes (including voice and accountability programmes) which are more 'successful' at achieving better development outcomes are those which are politically smart and locally-led – in the sense that there is a strong element of change-leadership by nationals of the country who have the a) knowledge (tacit political economy knowledge), b) strategic relationships and alliances and c) motivation to find solutions that work. [2] It posits that when dealing with a high degree of complexity and uncertainty, purposeful experimentation or 'learning by doing' is the only realistic approach and therefore needs to be placed at the heart of programme design.

In summary, adaptive development encompasses a set of ideas which stress the importance of more localised, flexible, and learning driven methods for supporting institutional change as a means of supporting development processes which are:

- Locally led – where the programme works on issues that are locally owned, negotiated and delivered – in which problems and solutions are identified by national stakeholders, and adapted to context
- Politically smart – where the programme interventions are designed and delivered on the basis of various types of political economy knowledge, through politically astute delivery teams who can operate within or around formal and informal political and policy processes.
- Flexible and iterative – where the programme can frequently modify its approach based on evidence gathering and lesson learning.

Within development communities (donors and service providers) these ideas are finding widening acceptance as a better means of achieving development results, however the deeper challenge has been in implementing them in practice.

Adaptive programming is typically used to refer to the various concepts, approaches, methods and tools which have been developed in an attempt to apply these ideas in practise within the context of development programmes. Some prominent approaches include Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA), Thinking and Working Politically, Development Entrepreneurship, Politically Smart, Locally-Led development, Rapid-cycle evaluation etc. (Andrews et al 2013; Booth and Unsworth, 2014; Wild et al., 2015; Faustino and Booth, 2014).

In recent years the use of flexible and adaptive programming approaches has become a key priority for DFID as a means of improving the impact and value for money of development programmes. The 'End to End Review' of the programme management cycle and DFID's Improvement Plan (2013) emphasised the need for DFID to be able to learn and adapt during project implementation, the ICAI review of DFID's Approach to Delivering Impact (ICAI, 2015) found that "DFID programming often lacks the flexibility to learn and adapt" and the ICAI report on 'How DFID learns' (ICAI, 2014) praised DFID's investment in research and evidence but found that DFID is less good at turning that learning into action – using evidence to actually inform decisions and improve the potential for achieving impact within a programme cycle. The commitment to adaptive programming has been subsequently picked

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[2]This case is made in the DDD Manifesto Community *'Doing Development Differently'*; http://doingdevelopmentdifferently.com/

up in the work of the DFID Better Delivery Department and has been reflected in the DFID Smart Rules (2016) for better delivery of aid programmes and associated guidance. The smart rules state that 'continuous learning and adapting is essential for UK aid to achieve maximum impact and value for money'. In addition, the recent politics review, led by governance advisers, also finds that programmes which best take into account their political economy context are those that are adaptive and agile. The BAR process, and Operational Planning processes, are also emphasising these approaches for the future.

Recent research has also indicated that adaptive development principles can be important to the effectiveness of gender-related assistance and strategies too (O'Neil, 2016). While gender equality is a key priority for many aid agencies there is a risk that increased funding will be spent on palliative approaches that focus on the symptoms of gender inequality, rather than the underlying causes. O'Neil (2016) suggests that adaptive development principles and approaches, such as problem-driven iterative adaptation and a greater focus of understanding power and institutions (through political economy analyses) can be potentially powerful for improving gender equality. This could include supporting women's rights and gender equality through: change led by local stakeholders, not external funders; by starting with problems or issues, not with ready-made solutions; being politically informed and using smart tactics; and building learning and adaptation into GESI strategy. There is clearly the potential to extend these arguments to social inclusion.

The emerging agenda around adaptive programming is therefore relevant for STAR Ghana and this was explicitly recognised by DFID Ghana in the tender documents and in the negotiation process for the award of the STAR Ghana phase II contract. The Christian aid consortium proposal explicitly recognised this by placing adaptive ways of working and learning by doing, promoted by prominent approaches such as politically smart, locally led[3], thinking and working politically, and PDIA, at the heart of STAR's programme design.

Practically for STAR Ghana adaptive programming means that:

- The theory of change will be reviewed regularly to test assumptions and inform programme interventions going forward (Barr, 2005)
- While the goals (outcomes/impact level) will not change, as knowledge of how to achieve those outcomes is accumulated and integrated over the lifetime of the programme, the mix of inputs and outputs (activities) will change.
- Indicators and log frames will need to evolve to keep pace of modification in programme intervention activities
- The GESI strategy will be regularly refined to ensure that adaptive development principles are integrated into its gender mainstreaming approach and applied to broader issues of social inclusion.

4   STAR GHANA'S STRATEGIC APPROACH

Despite the presence of a vibrant and active Ghanaian civil society, the experience of previous governance programmes in the country shows that external support to civil society has not contributed to a transformational national development for all Ghanaian citizens (DFID 2015). A core strategic lesson was that while a better funded civil society is necessary, it is insufficient on its own, to drive societal change. CSOs, largely NGOs, experienced in working with the donor community and previously as sub-contractors for government services, have never really sought to address the systemic factors underlying the country's developmental challenges, particularly actions that will bring them into conflict with authorities.

A review of STAR I indicated that civil society efforts are constrained by challenges of credibility, legitimacy, funding and effectiveness in engaging with critical national issues. STAR II focus will be on

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[3] The concept of politically smart goes further than that of being politically informed and refers to actors that have knowledge of, but can also work within the political context in astute ways. The concept of locally-led goes further than ideas of participation and representativeness and refers to where there is a strong element of change-leadership by nationals of the country who have tacit political economy knowledge but also the necessary relationships (including having power to negotiate with elites and those with vested interests) and the motivation to find solutions that work (i.e. they tap into issues of 'real' interest to local people).

trying to overcoming these constraints in order to increase the effectiveness of civil society in influencing the delivery of public goods and services as a means of bringing about the change required. However how this can be achieved is unknown and uncertain. There is a critical need to better understand *what sorts of support to civil society* in Ghana are likely to enable it to drive societal change to improve development outcomes in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

Drawing on in-depth knowledge of the context and critical reflection of the lessons learnt from STAR I, the steering committee strategic paper, which formed the basis for the DFID business case, identified a number of constraints to explain why STAR I did not achieve transformational change and develop a set of hypotheses about how this change could be achieved. The assessment was that rather than continue to fund civil society 'projects' through conventional funding mechanisms, STAR Ghana should play a more strategic, analytical, convenor, coordinator and catalyst role (STAR 2015). This recognises that processes of change are likely to be complex and unpredictable and entail the redistribution of power and resources among different groups. Problems and realistic solutions will need to emerge from the programme activities of STAR Ghana's partners, as they examine the space for reform (opportunities and resistance) and identify the types of configurations of support (i.e. coalitions of reformers) which will facilitate working within and around the political realities in ways which are locally-led. This highlights the need for a strong process of learning about what works and what does not work within STAR, and the need to connect these lessons to influence the national debate and key stakeholders on how to improve development outcomes in Ghana.

Box 2: STAR Ghana II – Three Cs & L strategic approach

The programme will provide a comprehensive, coordinated and strategic push to enable citizens to hold leaders to account by:

- **Convening** a broad range of stakeholders for dialogue and to support the identification of opportunities and critical entry points for action and engagement.
- Catalysing change through joint working with new and innovative strategic partners.
- Coordinating with a broad cross section of actors, promoting joint influencing and actions amongst partners, to ensure effective use of limited resources available.
- Learning from past and present experiences and effective application throughout the process of implementation.

Source: ©ODI/Policy practise

It is this analysis that forms the basis of the strategic approach for STAR Ghana II – known as the 3Cs+L approach (see Box 2) – and the preliminary theory of change (see annex 1). It focuses on the need for STAR Ghana to support the creation, utilisation and institutionalisation of spaces for collective civil society engagement as a means of increasing the accountability and responsiveness of the executive and key state institutions at both local and national levels. The central role given to strong learning and iteration in this strategic approach and in the preliminary STAR Ghana theory of change also implicitly recognises that governance reform in Ghana depends on complex systems where cause-effect relationships are not known in advance and are only likely to be understood through trial and error experimentation.

This strategic approach represents a series of hypotheses which form the basis for STAR Ghana's theory of change. These hypotheses are based on contextual knowledge and available evidence while making a number of assumptions.[4] The programme will need to test and revise these assumptions and hypotheses in an on-going way, in order to demonstrate the links between the envisaged pathways of

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4 For example: around the reactions of broader CS, political class and other powerful actors to STAR Ghana; the capacity of collaborative working to overcome governance constraints and broader CS involvement; and collective action risks and bargains

change and the desired outcome/impact of the programme (i.e. how the 3Cs + L will lead to a more transformational civil society).

5   EMBEDDING PEA WITHIN STAR GHANA

STAR-Ghana's strategic approach clearly outlines that its success in tangibly improving inclusive development outcomes will be linked to its ability to learn and adapt during project implementation. Below we outline how STAR Ghana intends to use an embedded political economy analysis approach to support STAR Ghana in this pursuit and proposes some concrete tools and techniques that will be employed to facilitate this in practise.

Political economy analysis was an integral part of the phase 1 STAR-Ghana programme[5] with PEA used during the inception phase of the programme to identify thematic areas for the programme to work on. However, while these thematic areas were meant to be indicative, in practise they became fixed. Whilst there was a mid-term review of the PEA and additional scoping studies undertaken these did not necessarily lead to substantial modification in the programme approach. Sector level PEA was undertaken to identify key issues and dynamics at the global level (e.g. a description of actors and interests in Ghana and their impact on accountability and voice); however, operational level PEA or problem-driven PEA, that could deepen the analysis and identify specific constraints within those thematic areas to inform intervention strategies and grant design/selection was not done to guide programming.

STAR Ghana will take an applied approach to political economy analysis as a means to enable it to use contextual knowledge dynamically to analyse the power relations which shape the changes required to achieve the programme's objectives. The aim will be to encourage and facilitate a culture of continuous learning and reflection by the PMT, the SC, and other key stakeholders of key contextual issues and the implicit and explicit assumptions about how change happens in the Ghanaian context and the potential pathways for change that exist within the programme. The vision is for political economy to become a way of thinking and working in STAR-Ghana II.

Key principles for embedding political economy within STAR Ghana's phase II include:

- Using different types of political economy analysis in distinct ways for a variety of purposes including to: identify entry points (areas or issues), support problem identification to identify specific bottlenecks; and undertake problem-driven analysis of these specific constraints to inclusive delivery which focus on the underlying causes of the blockages (rather than the symptoms).
- Ensuring that PEA inputs are used strategically to feed into key core functions of STAR Ghana programming (including the programme theory of change, results framework, GESI strategy, learning framework, grants and partnerships strategies etc.)
- Embedding appropriate understanding of political economy analysis at various levels within country level planning and implementation processes in dynamic ways to feed into an iterative learning process that are timely and relevant for decision making.
- Creating a culture in which political economy knowledge and use is seen as a central part of STAR and its partners everyday work and analysis. Placing value on and developing the implicit knowledge and informal political intelligence of frontline staff and partners as well as improving technical skills where required and appropriate.

Table 1 below highlight the key ways in which the STAR Ghana phase II approach to PEA will differ to the STAR I PEA work.

Table 1: Political economy analysis (PEA) in STAR I and STAR II

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[5] An externally commissioned study of Ghana's political economy was undertaken during the programme's inception phase in 2011 and a review of the inception phase PEA was subsequently carried out at the end of 2012. In addition, three sector level political economy analyses were subsequently undertaken in 2013 (Civil society, Health and Education).

	STAR Ghana – Phase 1	**STAR Ghana – Phase 2**
Type of analysis	Macro, national-level and sector level political economy analysis	Focus on selection of entry points; problem identification and problem-driven political economy analysis (to include focus on GESI)
Output	Stand-alone analysis	On-going, dynamic and systematic analysis
Use of analysis?	Upfront analysis used to select issues. Subsqeunt analysis undertaken but delinked from operational programming	Strategic use of analysis to inform programme design, planning, decision-making, monitoring and evaluation in operationally relevant ways

The purpose of phase 2 of STAR Ghana's PEA work is to:

- Systematically inform programming decision-making (e.g. strategies and activities, entry points etc.);
- Feed into learning and reflection processes throughout the lifecycle of the programme in particular to inform the programme's understanding of how change happens in practice and how this evidence can be incorporated into subsequent programme strategy (programme theory of change and intervention logics)
- Integrate PEA into the programme's broader strategies (learning framework, monitoring and evaluation processes (including baseline indicators), GESI strategy, as well as programme management)

6   EMBEDDING PEA IN PRACTISE

Political economy analysis will support STAR Ghana to better achieve its programme output, outcome and impact objectives. It is anticipated that the use of strategic and participatory political economy analysis will inform programme interventions and be used iteratively throughout the programme cycle to make changes based on the evolving context. Below we describe the various purposes for which PEA will be used in STAR Ghana and propose some concrete tools and techniques that will be employed to facilitate this in practise.

6.1   Produce a variety of high-quality PEA

PEA can take different forms and be used for multiple purposes, at various levels. STAR Ghana will make use of different types of political economy analysis for different purposes. Five types of political economy analysis are envisaged (as described in table 2).

Table 2: Types of political economy for use in STAR Ghana

Type of analysis	**Focus**	**Purpose**
Political economy scoping review	Generating insights from STAR PEA work	Identify key political economy challenges facing STAR Ghana II, and inform the techncial approach to politial economy analysis in phase 2, on a regular basis.
Political economy context for reform	Providing an overview of the current political economy context for STAR Ghana's work	Inform the design and revision of STAR strategies to ensure that they respond to political economy realities and take advantage of reform opportunities.
Entry points selection	Assessment of potential entry points for engagement which meet a set of pre-agreed criteria	Inform the selection of entry points of relevance to STAR
Problem-driven political economy analysis	Identifyication and analysis of particular governance problems (within the broad entry points identified) affecting the delivery of public goods and services	Support the testing of pathways of change and the development and adaptation of intervention strategies to tackle specific problems and bottlenecks.
Sector or thematic policital economy	A broader political economy analysis of specific sectors or	Where there is a specfic requirement of a particular sector or thematic area prior to a

analysis	thematic areas (i.e. civils society, or gender	problem-driven analysis

6.1.1   Political economy review and scoping

During inception a political economy review and scoping generated key insights from the political economy work undertaken during STAR-Ghana phase 1, with respect to both the political economy of engaged citizenry in Ghana and how political economy was used in STAR I. The analysis highlighted how political economy was used in STAR-Ghana phase I and drew attention to emerging issues and challenges of potential interest to STAR-Ghana phase II, considering what this means in the context of the strategic shift in focus of STAR-Ghana Phase II.[6]

It is anticipated that a similar review and scoping will be undertaken on a regular basis at appropriate moments so that it can inform operational programming decision making processes (e.g. strategies and activities; identification of entry points; highlight capacity building needs in PEA).

6.1.2   Political economy of reform

An overview of the political economy context for reform will aim to develop an understanding of the key underlying and contextual challenges that shape the arena in which STAR-Ghana works. The purpose of this section is to draw attention to particular characteristics of the current political economy context that are of relevance to STAR Ghana and provide opportunities for it to support civil society to catalyse, convene, coordinate and learn as a means to bring about transformational change.

The objective of this analysis will be to identify current key challenges and issues affecting the country through a political economy lens, and to assess how these are likely to impact on STAR Ghana's objectives. The emphasis of the analysis will be on generating understanding of the political economy (the structural and formal-informal institutional context in which change happens and the power dynamics, motivations and incentive structures that determine how relevant actors behave and interact and that shape decisions about power and resources) as they relate to current critical events, leadership, political and financial resources in Ghana.

The analysis will be used to formulate ideas about realistic pathways of change to achieving STAR Ghana's objectives. It is important to remember here that STAR Ghana's objective is not to improve development outcomes itself but rather to facilitate processes through which civil society (broadly defined) can be better enabled to do this in ways which will bring about transformative change.

During the inception and early implementation phase a preliminary analysis will focus on key events and issues of particular relevance in the current context and outline the opportunities and constraints that this presents for STAR- Ghana, given an analysis of how these may influence the objectives and behaviour of key actors and stakeholders. Particular attention will be given to linkages between the analysis of current events, opportunities and constraints and the challenges raised in the inception phase PEA scoping review.

STAR Ghana will aim to undertake similar reviews during the first year of implementation. However, there will an explicit attempt to develop alternative approaches and systems which would enable implicit knowledge of political economy to be used to inform programme activities in a more dynamic manner (at various levels) and on a more on-going basis. STAR Ghana PMT, consortium partners and the SC will work together with STAR partners (at various levels) to facilitate local development and ownership of these approaches and systems.

6.1.3   Selection of relevant entry points (issues, sectors, themes)

The entry point selection will provide a list of key entry points on which STAR Ghana can focus its engagement to advance achievement of the programme's objectives. These entry points could be specific sectors or sub-sectors, themes, or institutions and will be based on a set of pre-defined criteria. Entry points should not be confused with problem-identification or problem-problem analysis – these

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[6] Notably this represents a shift towards facilitating, supporting and influencing (civil society/citizen) processes and interventions aimed at bringing about transformative change in socio-economic and political institutions.

are very distinct processes. The purpose of the entry selection is to ensure that the programme is working on things that are locally salient, politically feasible and can contribute to STAR's objectives.

During the inception phase of the programme a foundational PEA was undertaken to identify some initial entry points on which STAR Ghana can focus its programme activities during the first year of implementation. For the purposes of selection, entry points were required to meet the following criteria:

- Be able to contribute to building an evidence base on the priority themes identified in the inception phase PEA review and scoping
- Enable the programme to test its 3C+L approach (Convening, Catalysing, Coordinating and Learning)
- Provide opportunities to work on issues and themes that can lead to transformative change for socially excluded groups[7]
- Build on lessons and results from STAR—Ghana I[8]
- Actively promote civil society- media collaborations

During the first year of implementation a framework will be developed by the PMT to give further direction to, and refine the criteria for assessing and selecting entry points for STAR Ghana. This will be driven by the evidence that reform efforts have a greater chance of success when they connect with political, technical and/or citizen interest i.e. when they 'matter' to Ghanaians. In addition to the criteria defined above the refinement of criteria is likely to include a more detailed assessment of:

- what constitutes opportunities to work on issues and themes which if addressed would represent a tangible change towards inclusive development in Ghana as characterised by one or more of the following features[9]
- whether entry points are locally salient i.e. whether there is potential interest and drivers of political feasibility
- the extent to which the entry points are technically feasible to address given the broad context, capacity for change and stakeholder interests

In the remaining years of implementation, it is anticipated that the framework for selection of entry points will be revised to ensure that it draws on learning from programme implementation and the theory of change.

6.1.4   Problem driven political economy analysis

Once entry points for the programme have been identified STAR Ghana will make use of a problem-driven political economy analysis approach to undertake deeper analysis of specific problems (or bottlenecks) with the purpose of informing operational programming decisions (e.g. strategies and activities, entry points etc.).

It is assumed that a problem-driven PEA approach will be able to produce analysis which is more operationally relevant for STAR Ghana (i.e. applied PEA) because it can a) identify 'real, tangible, bottlenecks' to inclusive development outcomes and b) allow a broader stakeholder mapping which is more likely to identify 'unusual suspects'.

The applied political economy approach will involve several steps.

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[7] The programme's gender equality and social inclusion strategy (**Annex 2**) seeks to '…imprint gender equality and social inclusion into STAR-Ghana's 'DNA' and into its role as a convenor, coordinator and catalyst of civil society. It furthermore sets out to generate specific GESI.   This means that GESI is a central focus for the programme in all activities, strategies and outcomes.

[8] Building on the results, relationships and lessons from the preceding phase in some way. So that entry points factor in experience and knowledge from STAR I and build on the momentum generated, where relevant, but also is mindful of the challenges and critical lessons.

9 This could include the following: Broad-based productive employment which reduces poverty and income inequality; Broad-based improvements in health, education, or security which narrow the gap between vulnerable and marginalised groups and better off sections of the population; or Participatory approaches that pay special attention to the involvement of vulnerable and marginalised groups.

- **Problem-identification**: a process of problem identification[10] in which a specific problem (or set of problems) is identified relating to a particular entry point.
- **Analysis of structure and agency:** an examination of:
  - Institutions and context - key systemic features which are relevant to the *specific* problem identified (structural features – including culture and social structure - and formal and information institutions -including informal social, political and cultural norms and relating power structures)
  - Power and incentives that influence how people behave (key features of agency identifying key actors' motivations and type of relationships and balance of power between them).
- **Consideration of programme options:** an examination of:
  - potential pathways of change - an analysis how might change happen is reality given the analysis undertaken
  - an assessment of programming implications – appropriate interventions, activities and modalities; identification of partners; and decisions of timing, sequencing etc.

The problem-driven analysis will therefore be used to drill down into the specific problems to gain understanding of causal factors and processes reflecting stakeholder interests and incentives, power relations and institutional structures. This will include an analysis of why previous attempts at reform have failed and an examination of the power dynamics, motivations and incentives of key stakeholders who have interest to block or support specific reform processes in an attempt to identify potential windows of opportunities to manage challenges, and where to get traction and interest to support a course of action. This will in all likelihood involve a cross-section of stakeholders from civil society, the private sector and government.

The problem-driven analyses will be used to assess the potential for change and to develop STAR intervention strategies. In particular it will inform core STAR strategies through:

- A better understanding of underlying governance constraints (national, sector, problem-driven) which act as bottlenecks to specific reform processes
- Identifying motivations and incentives of key stakeholders who have interest to block or support specific reform processes in an attempt to identify potential windows of opportunities which can overcome the constraints
- Supporting deeper understanding of power (de jure and de facto) and formal and informal institutional socio-economic and political structures (including gender, age, disability) more broadly and how this affects different groups (including excluded groups)

Problem-driven PEA will be undertaken as required to support the development of intervention strategies and could be reviewed to generate learning around pathways of change; test the effectiveness of strategies and support adaptation of STAR strategies.

6.1.5 Sector level or thematic political economy analysis

STAR Ghana will also consider commissioning specific sector or cross-cutting thematic political economy analysis where is it considered necessary i.e. where there to a lack of political economy knowledge or where it can add clear value to specific stream of work.

One potential candidate for such cross-cutting thematic analysis is that of gender equality and social inclusion. The objective of the analysis in this case would be to develop: a more nuanced understanding of gender power relations, intersectionality and the recognition of different priorities and needs.

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10 Problem-identification is a function of the process and participation involved, and the identification of a problem will depend on who is asked to define the problem. In order to build engagement and potentially traction around a problem, as well as beginning to identify potential solutions, the STAR approach will be to widen participation around problem-definition, and seek shared understandings of problems among diverse actors.

The key principles underlying this analysis would be to promote a vision of women as active participants rather than beneficiaries; ensure there is a focus on the underlying causes of gender inequality and social inclusion rather than the symptoms; the recognition of the need to start with problems or issues, not ready made solutions (with explicit examination of the impact of poor development outcomes on vulnerable groups) and the importance of working not only with powerful stakeholders but the powerless (i.e. women's organisations).

This analysis could feed into other types of political economy analysis as well as broader STAR Ghana strategies and central functions, to help ensure that GESI is at the heart of STAR Ghana's work.

6.2 Develop STAR Ghana's applied political economy skills

During the first year of implementation STAR Ghana will put in place a programme to improve the capacity of a wide variety of audience to both analyse and use/apply political economy analysis knowledge in ways which improve the programme's objectives.

Support will be provided to a wide range of audiences including:

- The STAR programme management team
- The STAR Steering Committee
- STAR consortium partners
- STAR partners

During the first year of implementation it is anticipated that a series of participatory workshops will be organised to held to develop a broader understanding within STAR of the use of political economy analysis, how it can support operational programming and the tools and techniques which can be used to embed it within programming. To promote follow-up of and feedback from participants, so that training is focused on operational needs individuals attending will be expected to attend a four 3-day workshops over the first year of implementation.

During implementation the types of support provided will vary depending on the specific needs of the programme and on the specific audiences targeted (technical, operational etc.). Although appropriate on-going training and support for STAR partners is likely to be required.

A specific focus during this period will be on developing systems and mechanisms for embedding appropriate understanding of political economy analysis at various levels within country level planning and implementation processes in dynamic ways to feed into an iterative learning process that are timely and relevant for decision making.

6.3 Support development of the theory of change: review and testing

It is anticipated that the various type of PEA detailed above will contribute in concrete ways to STAR Ghana's understanding of how change happens in practice and how this evidence can be incorporated into subsequent programme strategy.

Principally this will support the following STAR:

- Development of the programme theory of change at various levels (programme, national and partner level) (through)
- Review and revisions of pathways of change (which describe how activities and outputs will lead to the expected outcomes). In particular, the roles of convening, catalysing, coordinating and learning might be broken out to specifically address what those functions aim to achieve? This means identifying realistic assumptions about what change the programme wants to see happen and can realistically contribute to
- Testing of assumptions and hypotheses which underpin the theories and pathways of change (the PEA scoping review has already highlighted some key hypotheses and assumptions to be challenged).

In practice, this means the theory of change will be further refined as STAR learns from what the programme implementation and results tells us about the assumptions and relationships represented in the theory of change. The political economy analysis will feed into this process alongside the PMT development of the theory of change and associated modifications to the monitoring and evaluation

framework. In addition, STAR will undertake regular strategy testing of the theory of change to test assumptions and update planned strategies and activities as a result.

6.3.1 Strategy testing

Six-monthly strategy testing will be undertaken by the PMT (and partners) to test and review the assumptions underpinning the programme and partner theories of change, drawing on the different types of political economy analysis and learning which has taken place within the programme.

The strategy testing will include:

- An overview of what has happened since the theory of change/pathways of change was drafted: drawing on research, evidence, analysis, experience and learning from programme implementation
- A review and revision of the theory of change in light of new information and team reflections i.e. asking whether they are still valid and realistic
- A clearly documented account of how and why the theory of change/pathway of change has been revised
- The identification of the implications of the theory of change/pathway of change revisions:
  - Programmatic – updated strategies and activities
  - Operational and budgetary - changes in resource requirements)
- Validate assumptions and 'new' ToC

6.4 Inform STAR strategies and processes

In addition to the above, STAR will ensure that learning from the different political economy analyses is integrated into STAR-Ghana's core strategies and supports adaptation and innovative thinking about programme instruments to address specific objectives to bring about change.

6.4.1 Intervention strategies

Developing STAR processes for drawing on political economy knowledge for different interventions when required and supporting STAR partners to make use of political economy knowledge, and to learn from activities in systematic ways which enable them to adapt their strategies accordingly.

6.4.2 Monitoring and evaluation processes

Contributing to the development and revision of the STAR results framework and M&E, in particular how these can:

- promote experiential learning to support adaptive programming
- find ways of capturing and valuing tacit political knowledge and politically informed and locally-led ways of working etc.

6.4.3 Learning framework

Facilitating the development and implementation of an internal STAR strategy for generating evidence, learning and adaptation in support of the achievement of STAR's output and outcome objectives. This could include:

- Supporting the development of internal processes and systems which are designed to facilitate an enabling environment for STAR staff and partners to learn by doing and work in locally led, politically smart, problem-driven, iterative and adaptive ways.

6.4.4 Grants and partnership strategy

Using PEA to:

- Facilitate strategic partnership and grant-making
- Reflect on, and support the development of appropriate programme instruments (i.e. funding mechanisms and capacity building)

6.4.5 General programme management

This will include:

- Encouraging alignment between administrative management processes and strategic management functions which improve STAR's capabilities and capacity to achieve their outcome and impact objectives by learning and adapting approaches.
- Creating a culture in which political economy knowledge and use is seen as a central part of STAR and its partners everyday work and analysis. Placing value on and developing the implicit knowledge and informal political intelligence of frontline staff and partners as well as improving technical skills where required and appropriate.

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ANNEX 1 – STAR GHANA THEORY OF CHANGE

STAR-GHANA-Ghana Theory of Change

STAR-Ghana Technical Approach

- Understand the political economy
- Understand civil society and key stakeholders (analysis)
- Engage civil society
- Engage Parliament
- Engage duty bearers
- Apply a mix of approaches
- Learning by doing, action research
- Adaptive programming
- Thinking politically
- Continual Review
- Interconnectivity
- Working in partnership
- Knowledge management M&E
- Building for sustainability
- Actor led

STAR-Ghana Approach to Change

3Cs – Convener, Catalyst, Coordinator

L – Learning

GESI – Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Supply and Demand focus

Assumptions: political, context, CS, enabling environment, STAR-Ghana

Civil Society and Citizen Collective Action on Issues

Duty Bearers and Parliament focus on issues

Engaged spaces and participation of CS, Citizens with Duty Bearers

Citizen increased effectiveness and influencing policy and practice

MDA, Ministries, Parliament take on roles and responsibilities to deliver

Active citizenry contribute to change on poverty, inequality and inclusion

Duty bearer accountability and responsiveness

Service delivery and institutional reform

GESI, RESEARCH, LEARNING

STAR-GHANA Entity