



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Parliamentary oversight of development cooperation: Case study of the Parliament of Rwanda

Contents

1. Executive summary	2
2. Situation analysis	3
3. Budget cycle and the national aid architecture	13
4. Actionable recommendations.....	15
5. List of acronyms and abbreviations	17

Prepared by Alexander O’Riordan, Consultant, with input from Alessandro Motter, Senior Advisor for Economic and Social Affairs (IPU), and Norah Babic, Manager, Technical Cooperation Programme (IPU). Based on research and interviews conducted from April 2021 to January 2022.

1. Executive summary

After recovering from the 1994 genocide Rwanda's leadership has delivered stability, strong and sustained economic growth, and expansion of public services. The parliamentary system comprises two houses in which the proportion of women (61% in the lower house) and youth are amongst the best in the world. Rwanda's lower house also mandates representatives of the youth and persons with disabilities. The upper house includes two representatives of local universities.

Rwanda scores well on the World Bank's governance indicators, improving all six indicators since 2010. The government has also put in place all five components considered necessary for mutual accountability. Citizen participation in public budgeting is exemplary, transparency in public financial management systems and use of gender-based budgeting is widely recognized.

However, the international community has not rewarded Rwanda: international development partners make less use of government systems than the average for least developed countries (LDCs). The Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation¹ (GPEDC) noted in 2018 that the proportion of international development cooperation on budget is sliding: use of Rwanda's Public Financial Management (PFM) systems has been slashed from 80% in 2016 to 37% in 2018. These significant changes were not discussed with the legislature, implying a gap in accountability to Rwanda's elected leaders.

Through establishing the Public Accounts Committee, the legislature deepened its relationship with the Office of the Auditor General (OAG), enabling greater oversight of public finances. However, this does not apply for aid spent off budget. Going forward, the legislature's capacity to analyse and oversee public finances will be improved with the establishment of the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO).

International development partners are organized and in dialogue with government through a national aid architecture. The aid architecture, though, does not designate an explicit role for the legislature. There are signs of development partner fragmentation and resistance to government oversight such as in the establishment of sector working groups categorized by international development partner priorities rather than the authority of line ministries. Rwanda's national aid policy dates to 2006: it does not include the latest development effectiveness commitments most notable of which are the commitments to oversight by the legislature as encapsulated in the 2016 Nairobi Outcome.

Politically feasible and cost-effective ways to improve oversight by the legislature are listed in section 4 on actionable recommendations. These recommendations are within the stated interests of both international development partners and Rwanda. Most notable of these include updating the national aid policy; taking advantage of the legislatures' mandated representation of youth, disabled and academia as low-hanging fruit in improving country ownership; evidence and analysis in policy making; making development partner programming aware of parliamentary priorities; and creating space for the legislature to engage development partners on setting country programming priorities.

¹ <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2020-06/Rwanda-online.pdf>

2. Situation analysis

Rwanda and its legislature

Rwanda is a landlocked country in East Africa. Its neighbours are Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, and Uganda. Rwanda is independent since 1962 but adopted its current constitution in 2003 in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide. Almost 13 million people live in Rwanda. Paul Kagame is the current president, having held office since 2000. His government has ensured stability and sustained growth² ranging between 4% and almost 10% through the last decade (although the COVID-19 pandemic pushed the country into recession in 2020). Whilst still classified as a low income and least developed country, GDP is circa. US\$ 800 per capita, having trebled since 2003.³ Rwanda has a bicameral Parliament consisting of two chambers: the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.⁴ Parliament was formally instituted (2003 Constitution) as a replacement to the unicameral National Transitional Assembly that played a legislative role in the aftermath of the 1994 Genocide.

The Chamber of Deputies (lower chamber) comprises 80 elected officials (deputies) of which 53 are elected for a five-year term by proportional representation. Twenty-four are elected by the provincial councils, two are elected by the National Youth Council and one by the Federation of the Associations of the Disabled.

Rwanda's Senate (upper chamber) comprises 26 senators all of which are elected or appointed for an eight-year term. Twelve are elected by the provincial councils and eight appointed by the President. Four senators are elected by the National Consultative Forum of Political Organizations. One senator is elected by staff of public universities and the one by staff of private universities.

The Chamber of Deputies has nine standing committees whilst the Senate has four.⁵

At least 30%⁶ of seats in each chamber are reserved for women. Rwanda is recognized for having the highest proportion of female legislators (61% of the lower house).⁷ The Senate also has a higher proportion (35%) of female representatives than the constitutional requirement.⁸ Youth as well appear to be well represented with just under half of deputies 45 or younger.⁹

² <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?end=2020&locations=RW&start=2009>

³ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=RW>

⁴ <https://www.parliament.gov.rw/about-1>

⁵ <https://www.parliament.gov.rw/>

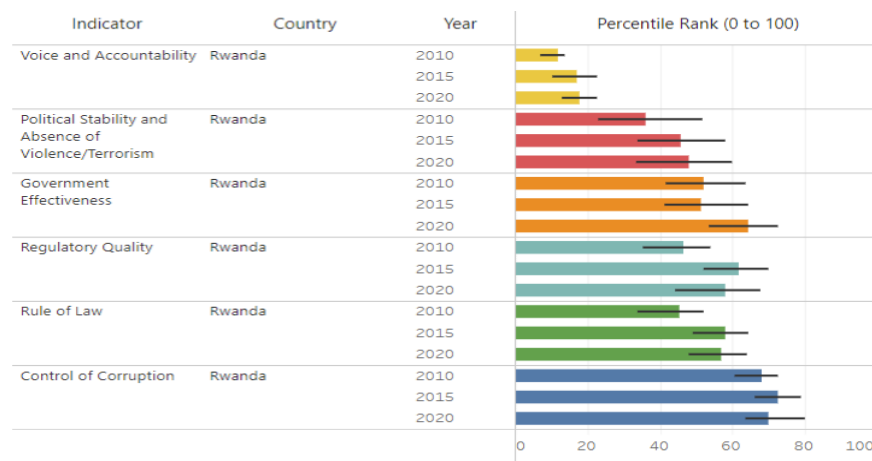
⁶ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/rwanda/freedom-world/2020>

⁷ https://data.ipu.org/node/142/data-on-women?chamber_id=13513

⁸ https://data.ipu.org/node/142/data-on-women?chamber_id=13514

⁹ https://data.ipu.org/node/142/data-on-youth?chamber_id=13513

Governance and representation



Rwanda scores well on the World Bank’s governance indicators¹⁰ (see graphic to left). These scores aggregate indicators from multiple recognized sources and demonstrate that Rwanda has improved its scoring in all six indicators in the decade since 2010. However, on regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption

Rwanda’s ranking has slipped since 2015. On voice and accountability progress is positive but scoring is low. This trend is corroborated in the 2021 reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDG 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions in Rwanda has “major challenges remain.”¹¹

Public finances and development effectiveness

Mr. R. Tusabe, Rwanda’s Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, reported to Parliament in May 2021¹² projecting that Rwanda would collect RWF (Rwanda Franc) 1,717.2 billion (US\$ 1.7 billion) from tax revenue and RWF 1,263.7 billion (US\$ 1.2 billion) from external resources (51% is loans, the remainder from grants) for the 2021-2022 financial year, meaning that Rwanda is still highly dependent on aid for non-recurrent costs/investment. As the GPEDC¹³ reporting shows (see graphic below), the government is recognized for putting in place all five components for mutual accountability mechanisms:

Mutual accountability mechanisms

Mutual accountability underpins the efforts of development actors to meet joint commitments, improve how they work together and increase their development effectiveness. Mutual accountability mechanisms are made up of multiple, reinforcing components that can help enhance transparency and accountability at country level. Global Partnership monitoring defines and assesses mutual accountability against five components. Rwanda has **five out of five** components in place.



However, Rwanda’s successes in strengthening national systems are not proportionally rewarded by international development partners. According to reporting (2018 monitoring round) by the GPEDC,¹⁴

¹⁰ <https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/Home/Reports>

¹¹ <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/rwanda>

¹² <https://www.minecofin.gov.rw/news-detail/default-f4d7602305>

¹³ <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2020-06/Rwanda-online.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2020-06/Rwanda-online.pdf>

72% of development cooperation is recorded on budget subject to parliamentary scrutiny (lower than the 85% target agreed by Rwanda’s international development partners in a “statement of intent”¹⁵ in 2006). Whilst comparatively high this is a decrease from 76% two years earlier in 2016. A more visible change is that international development partners have slashed their use of partner country PFM systems from 80% in 2016 to 37% in 2018. The drop in use of partner country systems impedes line ministries (other than the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning) reporting on development partner spending to the legislature. It also makes it harder for the government to measure the impact of development cooperation spending where it matters most, namely on service delivery and public investment. This indirectly also erodes accountability because the Office of the Auditor General does not regularly audit development partner activities off budget.

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning have instituted clear and transparent approaches to communicating and consulting on the budget. A citizens’ guide to the budget is available on the internet¹⁶ and has been published annually for over a decade; the guide is even reprinted by international development partners, such as the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF),¹⁷ on their web-pages. The Open Budget Survey¹⁸ accords Rwanda relatively good scores on budget oversight although recommending that the legislature could do more to debate and report on debates on public budgets. However, Rwanda has challenges with implementation: the Open Budget Survey scores Rwanda poorly on public participation and on transparency below regional peers like Uganda and Kenya (although above the global average). Key impediments needing redress include the need to improve predictability by publishing on time and online. In terms of participation, as echoed in the recommendations, more can be done to consult the public and civil society.

The government guide clearly explains the budget cycle¹⁹ and how citizens can participate through “Umushyikirano council [and] in the Parliamentary budget discussions with sectors [and] in Parliament [monitoring] implementation of programs and projects”. The guide, notably, includes a section on mainstreaming gender in the budget and examples of how gender budgeting works at ministry levels: the GPEDC (2018) notes that “Rwanda has all of the elements of a system in place to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women’s empowerment”.²⁰ The government has institutionalized gender-responsive budgeting with all government budgets requiring a gender budget statement to be submitted annually to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and Parliament.²¹ Whilst in no way a negative reflection, though the National Youth Council (40% of Rwanda is under 14

¹⁵

http://www.devpartners.gov.rw/fileadmin/templates/docs/Frameworks/Local/Aid%20Policy/Donors_Statement_of_Intent.pdf

¹⁶

https://www.minecofin.gov.rw/1/publications/reports?tx_filelist_filelist%5Baction%5D=list&tx_filelist_filelist%5Bcontroller%5D=File&tx_filelist_filelist%5Bpath%5D=%2Fuser_upload%2Fminecofin%2Fpublications%2FREPORTS%2FNational_Budget%2FBudget_Citizen_Guide%2F&cHash=65389ec201619022de4fbf194158e83b

¹⁷ <https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/7291/file/UNICEF-Rwanda-Understanding-2020-2021-National-Budget.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://www.internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey/country-results/2019/rwanda>

¹⁹

https://www.minecofin.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/Minecofin/Publications/REPORTS/National_Budget/Budget_Citizen_Guide/2021-2022/Citizen_Guide_202122_Eng_Final.pdf

²⁰ <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2020-06/Rwanda-online.pdf>

²¹ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23432Rwanda_VNR_Document_Final.pdf

years old)²² and Federation of the Associations of the Disabled elect two deputies to the legislature, the opportunity to highlight the budget's allocations to youth and the disabled is not fully capitalized on.

Regarding international development partners and reporting on Official Development Assistance (ODA), ODA features at the macro-level but there is no reference to specific oversight of these sources of spending. Before reporting on budget or announcing funding for a sector or a modality to be used, decisions are made by development partners ultimately in their respective headquarters. Development partner decisions about what sectors to spend on are 71% the size of Rwanda's own resources. Despite the dominance of development partner decision making on what sector will receive funding in Rwanda, there is no comparable information on how citizens or elected leaders can participate in or hold to account development partner decision makers who decide on externally financed activities in Rwanda. Even in Minister Ndagijimana's 36-page budget speech to Parliament in June 2021,²³ external loans and grants are mentioned only once and, in this case, only to summarize the proportion of expected resources to be mobilized. On the other hand, when relevant, external financing is listed in the 685-line budget call circular available online.²⁴

In terms of long-term planning, the Government of Rwanda, does not foresee a major role for international development partners: the Vision 2050²⁵ (as well as the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) 2017-2024)²⁶ makes almost no reference to international partners. The implication is an aversion to aid dependency and a recognition of the risk associated to trusting in international actors as long-term development partners.

International development partners and accountability to the legislature

²² <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.0014.TO.ZS?locations=RW>

²³

https://www.minecofin.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/Minecofin/Publications/REPORTS/National_Budget/Budget_Speech/Budget_Speech_2021-22/2021-22_Budget_Speech_-English_Version.pdf

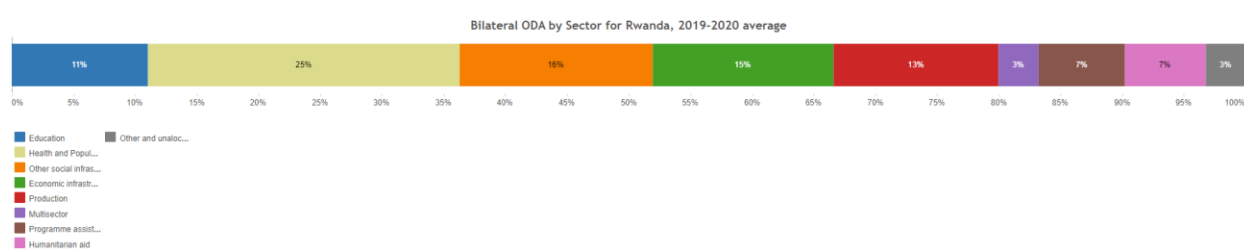
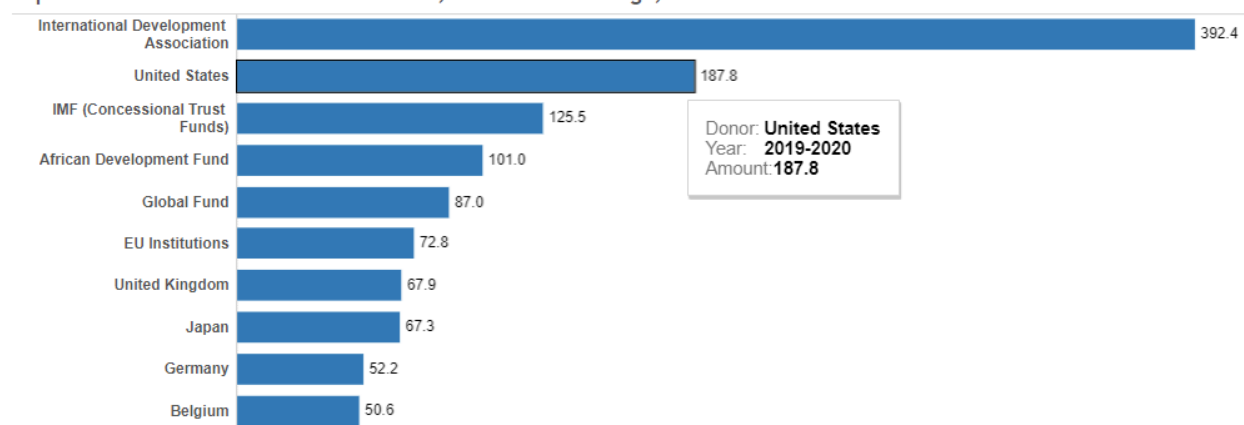
²⁴

https://www.minecofin.gov.rw/1/publications/reports?tx_filelist_filelist%5Baction%5D=list&tx_filelist_filelist%5Bcontroller%5D=File&tx_filelist_filelist%5Bpath%5D=%2Fuser_upload%2FMinecofin%2FPublications%2FREPORTS%2FNational_Budget%2FBudget_Call_Circular%2F2021-2022_Second_Budget_Call_Circular%2FCentral_Government%2F&cHash=2d1368c927f9ff74b2de446439271c7c

²⁵ https://www.nirda.gov.rw/uploads/tx_dce/Vision_English_Version_2050_-31_Dec_2020.pdf

²⁶ https://www.nirda.gov.rw/uploads/tx_dce/National_Strategy_For_Transformation_-NST1-min.pdf

Top Ten Donors of Gross ODA for Rwanda, 2019-2020 average, USD million



The above Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) graphic ranks disbursements by development partner to Rwanda for 2019-2020.²⁷ Rwanda’s biggest sources of ODA is the World Bank. Yet the World Bank’s 98-page country diagnostic²⁸ for Rwandan makes no mention of Parliament’s role in oversight of development financing. Similarly, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) 2020-2025 Country Development Cooperation Strategy for Rwanda²⁹ opts not to emphasize measures to improve parliamentary oversight of aid. The European Union (EU) opted to focus on accountable governance as one of its three priority sectors for 2014-2020 in Rwanda, acknowledged the critical “need to strengthen the role of the Parliament” and committed to supporting parliamentary strengthening as part of their programming priorities. Another space in which there is a clearer prioritization by international development partners of the need for stronger parliamentary oversight relates to climate change: Rwanda’s 2019 Voluntary National Review³⁰ of progress on the SDGs, for example, puts Parliament’s role front and centre in combatting climate change. The United Nations system appears to have a closer relationship to the legislature but more pronounced in communicating its success on gender issues: the 2019-2020 UN Country Annual Results Report for Rwanda, for example, makes no significant mention of parliamentary oversight³¹ nor of

²⁷

https://public.tableau.com/views/OECDACAidataglacebyrecipient_new/Recipients?:embed=y&:display_count=y&:showTabs=y&:toolbar=no?&:showVizHome=no

²⁸ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/32113/Rwanda-Systematic-Country-Diagnostic.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

²⁹ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/CDCS_Rwanda_February_2025_2.pdf

³⁰ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23432Rwanda_VNR_Document_Final.pdf

³¹ https://rwanda.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/Country%20Annual%20Results%20Report%202019-2020%20interactive%20overion_.pdf

monitoring implementation of the 2016 Nairobi Outcome. However, Parliament did not formally respond to the IPU invitation for inputs on reporting in 2019.

The Office of the Auditor General

The Office of the Auditor General of State Finances (OAG) is an independent institution but functions as a technical arm of the legislature. There is a strong working relationship between the OAG and Parliament: article 166 of the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda (revised 2015) requires annual reporting to both houses on the “manner in which the budget was executed, unnecessary or unlawful expenditures, and whether there [was] embezzlement or squandering of public funds”. Further, the same article states that “[t]he Parliament may request the Office of the Auditor General to conduct a financial audit of State institutions or the use of funds allocated by the State.”³²

In 2011, Parliament consolidated the number of standing committees and formed the Public Accounts Committee. By design the Public Accounts Committee is tasked with “analysis of the report of the Auditor General of State Finance with respect to the use of State finance and property for the preceding year and preparation of draft recommendations... [and] follow-up on the implementation of recommendations.”³³

³² Rwanda's Constitution of 2003 with Amendments through 2015:
https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Rwanda_2015.pdf?lang=en

³³ <https://www.parliament.gov.rw/public-accounts-committee>

The OAG uses a risk model based on four criteria to determine which activities to audit:

1. Perceived stakeholder interest in the auditee
2. Expenditure by the entity (actual amount compared to overall budget)
3. Prior auditor reports (previously identified audit queries will raise the risk profile of the entity)
4. Risk of fraud or adverse publicity (such as reported through whistle-blowers, the media, and other channels).

The OAG prides itself on going beyond compliance audits. Since 2011 the OAG's audit practice is to review impact as well as compliance with administrative procedures. Officials interviewed in the OAG reported that development partners have been positive about the added level of detail provided in OAG reports. Specifically, activities funded through the government, such as from the World Bank, African Development Bank and The Global Fund, have benefited from OAG oversight.

However, article 165 of the Constitution only grants OAG authority to audit "state finances and assets": at best this extends to development partner allocations stipulated in financing agreements signed with the government. Accordingly, proportional allocations to Rwanda disbursed in development partner headquarters, through agreements not countersigned by the government and/or through other international organizations, private sector, or non-governmental organizations,³⁴ are not the mandate of OAG's oversight. In this regard, the reduction of development partner financing using country Public Financial Management (PFM) systems from 80% in 2016 to 37% in 2018³⁵ implies that less than half of development partner financing in Rwanda is potentially subject to OAG's oversight.

This is a loss for development partners' financed activities in Rwanda. The OAG does not bill the donors for proportional audit cost, meaning these services are a partner country contribution. More importantly OAG oversight delivers added legitimacy in that Parliament has a strong working relationship with it: in 2020 the OAG audited 87.8% of the national budget but the OAG also facilitates constituency engagement with the legislature through joint field visits to verify delivery and impact. These field visits thus demonstrate democratic accountability whilst also focusing on identifying "idle assets", an activity that is critical to ensuring government attention to sustaining recurrent costs of development partner investments.

Ironically, whilst not using government systems means development partners forgo government contributions to audit and oversee costs, the EU is financing support to the audit office and Parliament. Specifically, the EU finances parliamentarians visiting health centres and activities on gender-based violence.³⁶

³⁴ The OAG reported in a key informant interview that when it came to international financing to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), "NGOs are normally required to work with the government to implement the 2030 government programme. In the coordination of these action plans the NGOs [can be] involved [in audit and oversight activities]."

³⁵ Key informants interviewed in Rwanda were either unaware or could not explain why that had occurred. However, this trend is in line with a waning appetite for budget support by European development partners which dominated the headlines prominently in Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique and Uganda although not so much in Rwanda.

³⁶ Despite repeated communications with the EU Delegation in Kigali and the project staff responsible for the managing of EU resources, all interview requests were ignored thus making it impossible to corroborate the EU's perspective on these activities.

All nine parliamentary standing committees are responsible for: “follow-up on loan and grant agreements falling within its responsibilities concluded between Rwanda and foreign countries or international organisations”.³⁷

National aid policy

In August 2006, the government approved a national aid policy³⁸ that international development partners responded to with an unsigned statement of intent in November 2006.³⁹ Neither the 2006 aid policy nor the statement of intent make any explicit reference to parliamentary oversight despite the government’s aid policy complaining of ongoing [development partner] “politicisation of aid...in Rwanda”.⁴⁰ Dialogue and accountability are almost exclusively conceived in the national aid policy as the responsibility of the executive (and specifically the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning) and that of representatives of international development partners in country. The government has been well recognized for its success in improving its influence on development financing and, as noted in the 2012 civil society led study on aid effectiveness in Rwanda, for “skilfully taking up [donor] rhetoric to exert leverage and bring its negotiating capital into play”.⁴¹

However, the role of both Rwandan and international development partner elected officials is not prescribed. Even the 2021 civil society study calls for greater accountability to domestic actors but makes no call for a greater role for Rwanda’s elected leaders. The international development partners also make mutual accountability almost exclusively the responsibility of the executive⁴² but do little tangible to invite oversight from elected representatives of Rwandan beneficiaries and stakeholders. International development partners did commit in the statement of intent to increase the proportion of aid on budget (available to parliamentary oversight) to 85% by 2010, a target still not met in the 2018 monitoring round (see above).

Three of the four principles of development effectiveness⁴³ call for international development partners to adopt the same sector definitions and lines of oversight as used by the partner government. This is essential to enabling democratically elected governments to monitor and engage with development partners according to the specific organ of government’s mandated responsibilities. Country ownership, the first principle of development effectiveness, is significantly impeded if development partners adopt sector definitions that require a negotiation between line ministries on mandate simply to provide input to and/or oversight of a specific project. Similarly, the second principle of development effectiveness “focus on results” requires a delineation of indicators and line ministries mandated to monitor and

³⁷ <https://www.parliament.gov.rw/chamber-of-deputies-2/organs/standing-committees>

³⁸ http://www.devpartners.gov.rw/fileadmin/templates/docs/Frameworks/Local/Aid%20Policy/Aid_Policy.pdf

³⁹

http://www.devpartners.gov.rw/fileadmin/templates/docs/Frameworks/Local/Aid%20Policy/Donors_Statement_of_Intent.pdf

⁴⁰ Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, *Rwanda Aid Policy* (Kigali, 2006), para. 1.6.

⁴¹ <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Aid%20effectiveness%20in%20Rwanda%202012.pdf>

⁴² *Statement of intent*, Section 4, p. 4: “we must underline the preconditions needed in order for the GoR [Government of Rwanda] to be able to absorb effectively an increased volume of ODA. These comprise further improvement of PFM systems, including procurement, further progress on governance and strengthened capacities for service delivery. We should also emphasise the importance of effective monitoring and evaluation, and of a high quality national statistics system.”

⁴³ <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/landing-page/effectiveness-principles>

deliver on targets. Equally, transparency is largely meaningless if development partners create sector definitions and project descriptions that are impenetrable by the average partner government elected or appointed official. Mutual accountability, of course, is even harder when development partners and elected officials are unable to detect if they are talking about different concepts or not because they use different sector definitions.

The table below lists out the 16 development partner sector working groups as of 2020 and compares them to their counterpart line ministry and the parliamentary standing committees. Whilst the sector work groups are clustered under the three broad pillars⁴⁴ of Rwanda's National Strategy for Transformation (NST) 2017-2024, the table demonstrates significant impediments to parliamentary and government oversight.

For a start, it is notable that despite international development partners apparent commitment to gender, there is no sector working group that can act as a partner to the legislature's Standing Committee on Political Affairs and Gender. Similarly, despite the international community's commitment to human rights, there are no human rights group partners with the Standing Committee on Unity, Human Rights, and Fight against Genocide. Good alignment is apparent in education, agriculture, and public financial management. Health, transport, information, energy, information and communication technology, justice and environment are aligned between international development partners and line ministries although not clearly with the parliamentary standing committees. But in other key areas there are significant problems such as in the development partners' group on private sector and youth that is working with the Ministry of Commerce but runs across oversight by the Standing Committee on Education, Technology, Culture and Youth and the Standing Committee on Economy and Trade. Lumping water and sanitation together resonates more with the division of labour used in humanitarian contexts to allocate funding between UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP). "Water and sanitation" do not appear aligned with the differing mandates of Rwanda's Ministry of Infrastructure and Ministry of Health. Decentralization may be a development partner priority, but the government defines this as "local government", whether it means decentralizing further or not.

⁴⁴ The three pillars of the NST are economic transformation, social transformation and transformational governance.

More problematically, development partners have elevated the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning to be the chief interlocutor on capacity development, a policy priority that clearly belongs in parliament and individual line ministries as much as with one ministry.

Table highlighting in green shows sector definitions aligned between development partners' sector working groups, GoR Ministry stated mandates and focus of parliamentary standing committees.

2020 Development partners' sector working groups ⁴⁵	Line ministry	Parliament Standing Committees ⁴⁶
		Political Affairs and Gender
		Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Security
		Unity, Human Rights and Fight against Genocide
Education	MINEDUC	Education, Technology, Culture and Youth
Agriculture	MINAGRI	Land, Agriculture, Livestock and Environment
Health (incl. HIV and NCDs)	MINISANTE	
Transport (including aerospace)	MININFRA	
Water and sanitation	MININFRA	
Energy	MININFRA	
Private sector development & youth employment	MINICOM	Economy and Trade; Education, Technology, Culture and Youth
Social protection (incl. disaster management)	MINALOC	Social Affairs
Information and communications technology (ICT)	MYICT	
Justice, reconciliation, law and order	MINIJUST	
Environment, climate change and natural resources	MINIRENA	
Urbanization & rural settlements	MININFRA	
Decentralization and governance	MINALOC	
Economic governance /Public financial management	MINECOFIN	National Budget and Patrimony Committee; Public Accounts Committee
Financial sector development	MINECOFIN	National Budget and Patrimony Committee; Public Accounts Committee
Capacity development	MINECOFIN	
Sports and culture (incl. media and entertainment)	MINISPORTS MINIYOUTH	

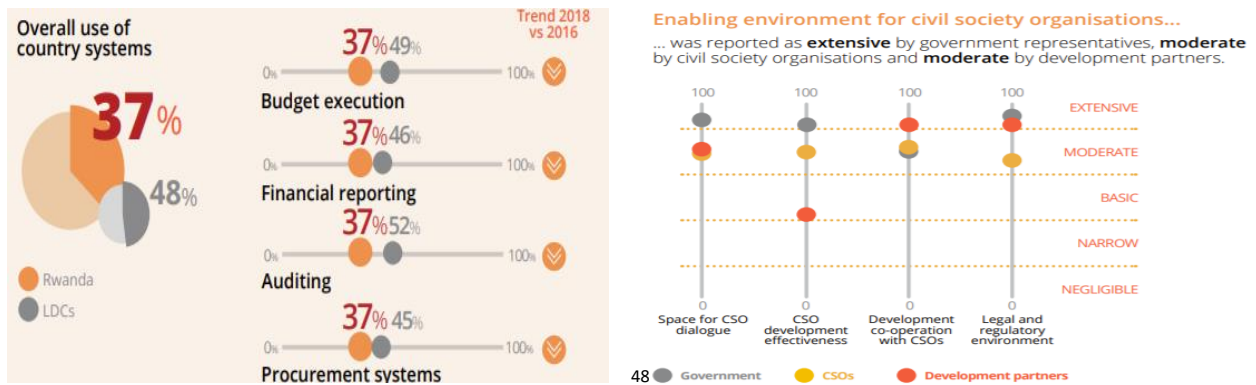
⁴⁵ 2020 Division of Labour for NST1, MINECOFIN.

⁴⁶ <https://www.parliament.gov.rw/chamber-of-deputies-2/organs/standing-committees>

3. Budget cycle and the national aid architecture

The government budget cycle is easily identifiable:⁴⁷ the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning has invested resources in translating budgeting into easy to consume and understandable language (public budgeting). The government has made commendable and demonstrable progress in inviting citizen inputs to public budgeting both at ministry level and through the legislature. A review of the international development partner Rwanda country pages showed that no comparable effort to ensure transparency and invite input is available in a comparable manner with any of Rwanda’s international development partners.

Problematically, the graphic (below right) from the 2018 GPEDC reporting on development effectiveness, suggests that Rwanda’s strong governance systems have not been rewarded by international development partners who markedly make lower use of the country systems than the average for LDCs.



49

A review of meetings (that happen predictably) between senior government officials and international development partners (in the Development Partners Consultative Group) shows that one possible contributor to this dynamic appears to be a thin pushing on mutual accountability from international development partners in meeting their commitments to expand use of government systems.⁵⁰ Another contributor is that, in interviews with the legislature, there did not appear to be a significant awareness of this dynamic. And yet another contributor (see graph top right), is that in the eyes of international development partners, there is only a basic enabling environment for civil society to work on development effectiveness.

The legislature is mandated by the organic law to ensure oversight of government management of public finances. The legislature is complemented by the OAG that also has the authority to supervise

47

https://www.minecofin.gov.rw/1/publications/reports?tx_filelist_filelist%5Baction%5D=list&tx_filelist_filelist%5Bcontoller%5D=File&tx_filelist_filelist%5Bpath%5D=%2Fuser_upload%2Fminecofin%2Fpublications%2FREPORTS%2FNational_Budget%2F&cHash=1374d0a77bfb51b83ec423064c61ff81

48 <https://www.effectivecooperation.org/system/files/2020-06/Rwanda-online.pdf>

49 Ibid.

50

http://www.devpartners.gov.rw/fileadmin/templates/docs/DPCG_Minutes/75th_DPCG_Minutes_Sept_2020.pdf

international financing channelled through government systems. However, there is no legal mandate for any of these institutions over financing that does not flow through government systems.

The legislature (particularly the Public Accounts Committee) and the OAG focus on value for money and the extent to which expenditure is mandated within the government's policy frameworks. This extends to loans and public-private partnerships as well as grants provided these are negotiated and managed by the government.

The National Budget and Patrimony Committee and ultimately the Plenary approve the government budget. This includes reporting of donor allocations included in the government budget. Each chamber has a clerk that acts as the chief budget manager. The Auditor General has power to audit funds whether from donors or from internal resources so long as they are managed through or authorized by the government. At present, each committee has a committee clerk. In the lower chamber there is also a pool of researchers available. By contrast, in the Senate each committee has a committee clerk, a legal expert and an expert in the field of the committee. Nonetheless, there are signs that the legislature does not have sufficient capacity to research and analyse decision making and expenditure to the extent required. Budget analysis capacity is increasing with the establishment of the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO).

In the national aid architecture dialogue with international development partners is chiefly done by the executive.⁵¹ A national aid architecture is a constellation of sector working groups (see alignment table above) in which development partners structure dialogue and coordination with the partner country. Ideally these working groups are chaired or co-chaired by the partner government at a senior level to ensure government ownership. In well-functioning national aid architectures, the sector groups report to a high-level group that identifies system-wide challenges for dialogue and resolution with the partner government. In Rwanda, meetings of this sort happen regularly: for example, in late 2020, the government led the 75th Development Partners Coordination Group Meeting (DPCG) with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Solicitor General in attendance.⁵² A review of the minutes of these meetings found no reference to the legislature. Whilst the national aid architecture could be a valuable resource to the legislature it does not avail itself to public scrutiny and informants in the legislature were not aware of it as a resource for analysis, oversight and dialogue.

Where the national aid architecture could do more is in enabling the legislature to influence international development partner priority setting processes (through which decisions are made on what activities to finance in which sectors). International development partner country strategy and programming cycles are easily identifiable by searching development partner sites. However, there is no one-stop shop where this data can be identified. Further, there is a notable dearth of information on how civil society or elected officials could influence international development partner priority settings. Take for example, the EU: the EU's latest country strategy concluded in 2020 and the EU has now drafted a new seven-year strategy that has already been tacitly approved by headquarters including the size of the financial envelope and the sectors to be financed. However, civil society, government and the private sector are consulted on an invitation only basis. There is no evidence that the legislature has been invited to provide inputs before the EU's programming priorities are approved. Similar dynamics

⁵¹ <http://www.devpartners.gov.rw/>

⁵² See link in fn. 50 for meeting minutes.

are noted by other international development partners even amongst international actors that count the Government of Rwanda as a shareholder.

4. Actionable recommendations

Appoint and resource an organizer/champion/body tasked with improving oversight and transparency. The organizer would ideally report to the relevant committees in the Senate and Chamber of Deputies on a regular basis on the state of oversight. This organizer would also participate in the development partners' consultative group meetings whilst also acting as a liaison to the PBO, OAG and MINECOFIN.

The actionable recommendations would improve oversight in Rwanda and could be monitored by the organizer.

Improve the legislature's oversight of development partner programming through the Parliamentary Budget Office that is being established by Rwanda's Parliament in 2022:

The PBO could be supported to develop a calendar based on development partner country programming strategies to better enable parliamentary oversight of and participation in development partner priority setting and choice of modalities (i.e. whether to use government systems or not). This could be complemented with the Parliament working with the government to make better use of Parliament's open sessions to enable direct dialogue with international development partners and elected officials. Equally, the government could be asked to initiate dialogue with international development partners on how best to enable oversight by the OAG on the increasing proportion of development partner financed activities that are programmed off-budget in Rwanda

This could notably include the PBO working with clerks and members of the standing committees on health, education, agriculture, and transport/infrastructure to improve oversight and dialogue on development partner financing in these sectors and choice of modalities/use of government systems. Development partners and committees could also improve dialogue through developing a common evidence base by participating in joint monitoring mission/field visits (deputies have two days a month⁵³ to visit constituencies).

Additionally, it is recommended to strengthen partnership with parliamentary organizations and other parliaments to seek comparative support and information sharing of good practices in establishing PBOs.

Strengthen the national aid architecture

Parliament is encouraged to better show-case how the legislature is open and transparent through inviting civil society, academia, and development partners to participate in and monitor parliamentary committee meetings that are open to the public.

⁵³ Article 150 of Organic Law No. 006/2018.OL determining the functioning of the Chamber of Deputies.

Parliament could request the government to launch an alignment exercise rationalizing the sector working groups with line ministry mandates. Parliament could encourage the government to update the 2006 national aid policy (including considerations for graduating from aid and strengthening domestic resource mobilization) based on the outcomes of the above-mentioned alignment exercise and to include monitoring of the 2016 Nairobi Outcome commitments to parliamentary oversight.

In line with mutual commitments to inclusivity, Parliament could also call on development partners to work with the mandated parliamentary representatives of youth and the disabled (people with disabilities) to advocate for development partner and government oversight to be more attuned to the needs of these constituencies. Likewise, Parliament could call on development partners to work with the two mandated senators representing the universities to strengthen academic contribution to evidence-based policy making.

In line with international development partner's GPEDC 2018 concerns on civil societies' capacity in development effectiveness, Parliament could invite international development partners to explicitly finance and strengthen civil society capacity to contribute to development effectiveness.

5. List of acronyms and abbreviations

DPCG	Development Partners Coordination Group
EU	European Union
GoR	Government of Rwanda
GPEDC	Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation
ICT	Information and communications technology
LDCs	Least Developing Countries
Ministries of the Government of Rwanda (GoR):	
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MINICOM	Ministry of Trade and Industry
MINIJUST	Ministry of Justice
MININFRA	Ministry of Infrastructure
MINIRENA	Ministry of Environment
MINISANTE	Ministry of Health
MINISPORTS	Ministry of Sports
MINIYOUTH	Ministry of Youth and Culture
MYICT	Ministry of Youth and ICT

NCD	Non-communicable disease
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NST	National Strategy for Transformation
OAG	Office of the Auditor General of State Finances
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PBO	Parliamentary Budget Office
PFM	Public Financial Management
RWF	Rwanda Franc
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme