

Findings

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Infobrief



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Institutional Environment Assessment in Sao Tome and Principe

Objectives: The Institutional Environment Assessment (IEA) carried out in Sao Tome e Principe in October-November 1996, sought to assist the government in identifying the root causes of the country's poor economic performance and in formulating strategies to address them. It was a self-diagnostic exercise based on the active participation of local stakeholders so as to foster ownership of the follow-up reforms. It entailed comprehensive data collection and analysis through field reviews (by three working groups focusing on technical, administrative, and structural problems respectively); desk reviews of relevant consultant reports and Economic and Sector Work; and a survey of governance and indigenous institutions impacting on economic management. A 4-day Assessment Workshop was held to synthesize, analyze and prioritize the information gathered, and to map out future strategy. Follow-up workshops are being held to formulate an implementation plan and apportion responsibilities between implementing agencies

Impact on the ground

- All the key stakeholder groups participated in one or more activities of the IEA exercise, including civil society organizations, members of the parliamentary opposition, donor organizations, NGOs, the private sector, and the media.
- The exercise received wide coverage in the press and on national radio and television.
- The Assessment Workshop provided a forum for a thorough analysis of the major causes of poor economic management.
- Workshop participants, through debate and dialogue, were able to reach agreement on the causes of poor economic management as well as on the obstacles that had hitherto hampered efforts to address them.
- Through a weighting process, the relative importance of the different impediments to sound economic policy was determined. This facilitated the prioritization of next steps.
- The workshop culminated in draft strategic action plans targeting the various problems identified, which were disseminated to a larger cross-section of civil society for

comments/validation. This ensured wider participation in reform and government accountability.

- The IEA will feed into Country Assistance Strategy and Public Expenditure

Review discussions, as well as into the upcoming National Long-term Perspective Study and Public Administration reform efforts.

Lessons Learned:

- The IEA is an appropriate instrument for identifying the major institutional causes of economic underperformance.
- The involvement of all the key stakeholders was a positive and strategic move. In many cases, it would be these stakeholders who would ensure follow-up on measures agreed, thus making government more accountable.
- The participatory IEA exercise also succeeded in uniting feuding factions and made them set economic and public administration reform above party differences.

Indicative List of Key Documents:

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