



FOR CIRCULATION

## Strong Institutions

A key component to helping people rise

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### Introduction

This position paper seeks to interrogate the institutional democracy experience in Botswana and provide recommendations to enhance their effectiveness and impact. BCPI facilitated a conversation with the intention of highlighting how the country can attain strong and effective institutions. The conversation was based on the Chandler Good Governance Index 2021<sup>1</sup>, of which “Strong Institutions” is the third pillar required to attain the sixth pillar of “Helping People Rise,” that is ensuring prosperity of the people.

Under the collaborative efforts BCPI seeks to achieve with different key players in the governance arena, the overall intention is for this paper to be received by the policy and decision makers to make active steps towards enhancing the effectiveness of the existing governance institutions in the country.

### Background

Overtime, civilisations have established institutions to govern their human interactions. In the case of Botswana, the institutions started in the family, with set ups like extended family meetings led by the senior male member of the family, then at the level of the ward was the Kgosana (Headman) and at the village level the Kgosi (Chief). With the democratic dispensation, new forms of institutions have been created by the constitution, Acts of Parliament, or government policies, to govern the lives of the citizens.

With the passing of time, ongoing social transformations and technological innovation have challenged the modern democratic institutions and their established forms of governance and regulations. Notably these changes offer vast opportunities to enhance, strengthen and expand the existing democratic framework to reflect a more complex and interdependent world<sup>2</sup>

This process has already begun in many democratic societies, but further progress is needed.

#### The four key indicators of Strong Institutions under the **Chandler Good Government Index (CGGI) Report of 2021:**

- ❖ **Coordination:** The ability to balance interests and objectives, and to ensure that multiple government agencies act coherently and in a collaborative manner.
- ❖ **Data Capability:** The ability to gather and use data, and to provide quality digital and online services.
- ❖ **Implementation:** The degree to which a government can execute its own policies and meet its policy objectives.
- ❖ **Quality of Bureaucracy:** The capability and performance of the civil service, regardless of political and policy changes.

<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup> A comprehensive index of governance quality and outcomes, set on the belief that good national governance and national prosperity are deeply connected.

<sup>2</sup> European Parliamentary Research Service brief on to the European Parliament on Democratic institutions and prosperity- The benefits of an open society.



## Key Takeaways

- Humans as interactive beings manage their relations through institutions. It is therefore imperative to have social institutions and the stronger they are, the more stable the society becomes. The interrelation of people has to be managed to ensure a peaceful co-existence and fair distribution of the public resources and opportunities.
- A successful democracy needs strong institutions that effectively ensures that checks and balances are attained.
- It is paramount that laws and policies not only speak to the needs of the people but are sufficiently implemented and monitored to ensure benefit for the intended beneficiaries.
- All the institutions should have adequate financial, technical, and human resources. The institutions have to be competent to carry out their work, ensuring that the staff of the institutions maintain high professional standards and high integrity in carrying out their duties.
- There should also be a cohesive co-existence of institutions that have interrelated mandates, such institutions must establish good relations collaborating in achieving their mandates.
- By displaying a track record of professional competency, fairness, and keeping promises, strong institutions ultimately build public trust.
- Strong institutions have concrete and clear mandates of their purpose, and collectively they support larger national goals, by executing their missions and delivering public goods and services valued by the beneficiaries.

## Policy Recommendations

- Botswana's institutions should maintain coordination, data capability, implementation, and quality of bureaucracy.
- It is paramount that cross-government institutions coordination is maintained to maintain strong institutions. Coordination is only achievable when governments invest in both physical and intangible assets – national

infrastructure, people's skills, and the operational capabilities of their institutions.

- It is also essential to recognise that human resources are the most important resource, therefore ensuring that people are capacitated and equipped with the necessary skills and tools required to perform well should be a priority. It is critical to facilitate trainings and policies to support the professional growth and development of civil servants. Customer service is paramount, as government services play an important role in citizen's lives.
- The statistical capacity of a country plays great role in acquiring good governance. The ability to collect, analyse and understand the data, capacitates the government to use data which is more relevant, accurate, timely, accessible, and free from intentional bias or distortion, to make better informed decisions. Hence the decisions made by leaders are evidence and fact based.
- Botswana's institutions should maintain foresight for any potential challenges and put in place mechanisms to monitor progress of their initiatives or on-going projects improving accountability and keeping implementation teams on track and on target.
- Institutions must maintain an open and transparent model to the public. It should be noted when Institutions communicate data and information openly and in an unbiased way, they are investing in a more educated, informed, and discerning public.
- Accountability to the public should not only be provided for, but it should also be intensively encouraged. By ensuring the access to information and creating channels to facilitate the public auditing, this inevitably creates institutions that are dedicated to serving the people and attaining its mandate. This establishes trust between the public and the institutions.
- Thus, institutions are supposed to be supportive and liberating of the interactions of people rather than limiting in nature. The danger of institutions not being facilitative but rather oppressive is that



it might lead to loss in faith of the institutions and public not being responsive to the institutions.

- Emphasis should be made on the importance for institutions to be all inclusive and address the economic disparities that exist. There must be a balance amongst the treatment of different marginalised groups and minority groups. Institutions are expected to ensure that the inequality gaps that exist are closed to attain equal opportunities of all regardless of age, gender, ethnicity etc.
- The leadership of Botswana's institutions has to establish a culture of good governance in the institutions they lead. The leadership influences the priorities of an institution, it is therefore paramount that they spearhead the call for transparency, accountability, integrity, anti-corruption and all-round good governance.
- Institutions should establish intensive evaluation mechanisms that are both internal and external to ensure alignment with its mission. It is paramount for an institution to evaluate its initiatives, assessing their effectiveness and ensuring correct standards of procedure were followed. Furthermore, it is through these assessments that areas that need re-structuring or adjustments can be identified resulting in a more effective initiative and a strong institution.
- An intensive strategic planning, review of policies and legislation on a regular basis is required to attain strong institution, it would seem some of them are outdated and not reflective or effective in the times we are in. The National Strategy Office (NSO) is mandated to coordinate the development and implementation of national strategies through research, management, monitoring and evaluation of sectoral strategies, it should therefore intensify its efforts in that regard.

"The introduction of a series of promising new tools could offer a potential way to support democratic decision-makers in regulating complexity and tackling ongoing and future challenges.

The first of these tools is to use **strategic foresight to anticipate and control future events**.

The second is **collective intelligence**, following the idea that citizens are collectively capable of providing better solutions to regulatory problems than are public administrations;

The third and fourth are concerned with **design-thinking** and **algorithmic regulation** respectively. Design-based approaches are credited with opening up innovative options for policy-makers, while algorithms hold the promise of enabling decision-making to handle complex issues while remaining participatory"

(Jerôme Saulnier, Feb 2021)

## References

- Governance, C. I. (2021). *The Chandler Good Governance Index 2021 Report*. Chandler Institute of Good Governance.
- Jerôme Saulnier, G. S. (Feb 2021). *Democratic institutions and prosperity- The benefits of an open society*. European Parliamentary Research Service.

## Notes Consulted

1. European Parliamentary Research Service brief on to the European Parliament on Democratic institutions and prosperity- The benefits of an open society.