



What's in it for us? Should CSOs get involved?

**Presentation at the AMP Scoping Workshop
Johannesburg, 12-13 October 2010**

Steven Gruzd

Head: SAIIA's Governance and APRM Programme
steven.gruzd@wits.ac.za 011 339-2021 ext 160

Outline

- Key Questions
- Public Participation in the APRM
 - Extracts from APRM documents
- Ways of reacting to the APRM
- Areas of civil society engagement
- CSOs and the NPoA
- Areas of CSO success
- Reflections on APRM implementation in SA
- So ... what's in it for us?
- Recommendations

Key Questions

- Why did you attend this workshop?
- What did you expect to learn and get out of it?
- Why should the APRM matter?
- What motivates action?
- What incentives fuel change?

Public Participation in APRM

- Consultation seen as important principle, mentioned in key documents, encouraged by Panel & country structures
- Meaningful civil society engagement meant to set APRM apart from other policy-making ... “Nothing about us without us”
- Flexible and not prescriptive - allows for national variations. Power dynamics, contested terrain
- Hard to gauge level of involvement & effectiveness from CSARs and CRRs empirically – need to hear stories of CSOs themselves, secondary research, experience sharing
- CSOs struggle – information, time, money, resources, skills, stamina, networking, strategy. Adopt a passive attitude.
- NPoA an area of low involvement - conceptualising, developing, implementing, monitoring, reporting, holding accountable ...

Country Guidelines (Nov '03) ... on Public Participation

- 35. It is recommended that the participating countries:
 - a. Define, in collaboration with key stakeholders, a roadmap on participation in the APRM, which should be widely publicized and provide information about the national coordinating structures, the stages of the APRM and the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders from government, nongovernmental organizations, private sector and international development partners.
 - b. Establish and publicize feedback mechanism between different levels of government and with non-governmental stakeholders.
 - c. Ensure participation by relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the Programme of Action.
- 36. The organisation of public participation in the APRM process is by itself a central aspect of enhancing the state of governance and socioeconomic development in the participating country. Such interactions can build trust, establish and clarify mechanisms for ongoing engagement and empowerment of stakeholders. These processes will be most effective if they build on existing structures, rather than duplicating or creating parallel processes such that learning becomes cumulative.

APRM Questionnaire, MOU on Public Participation

- **Cover letter by Marie-Angelique Savane (2004)**

“The questionnaire is also intended to promote national dialogue on development issues and to facilitate the evaluation of countries on the basis of the realities expressed by all stakeholders. It is therefore important that there be broad based representation at the National structure coordinating the APR Process as well as wide dissemination of the questionnaire and active participation of all stakeholders in providing responses to the questionnaire.” (p. 5)
- **APRM Questionnaire (April 2004)**

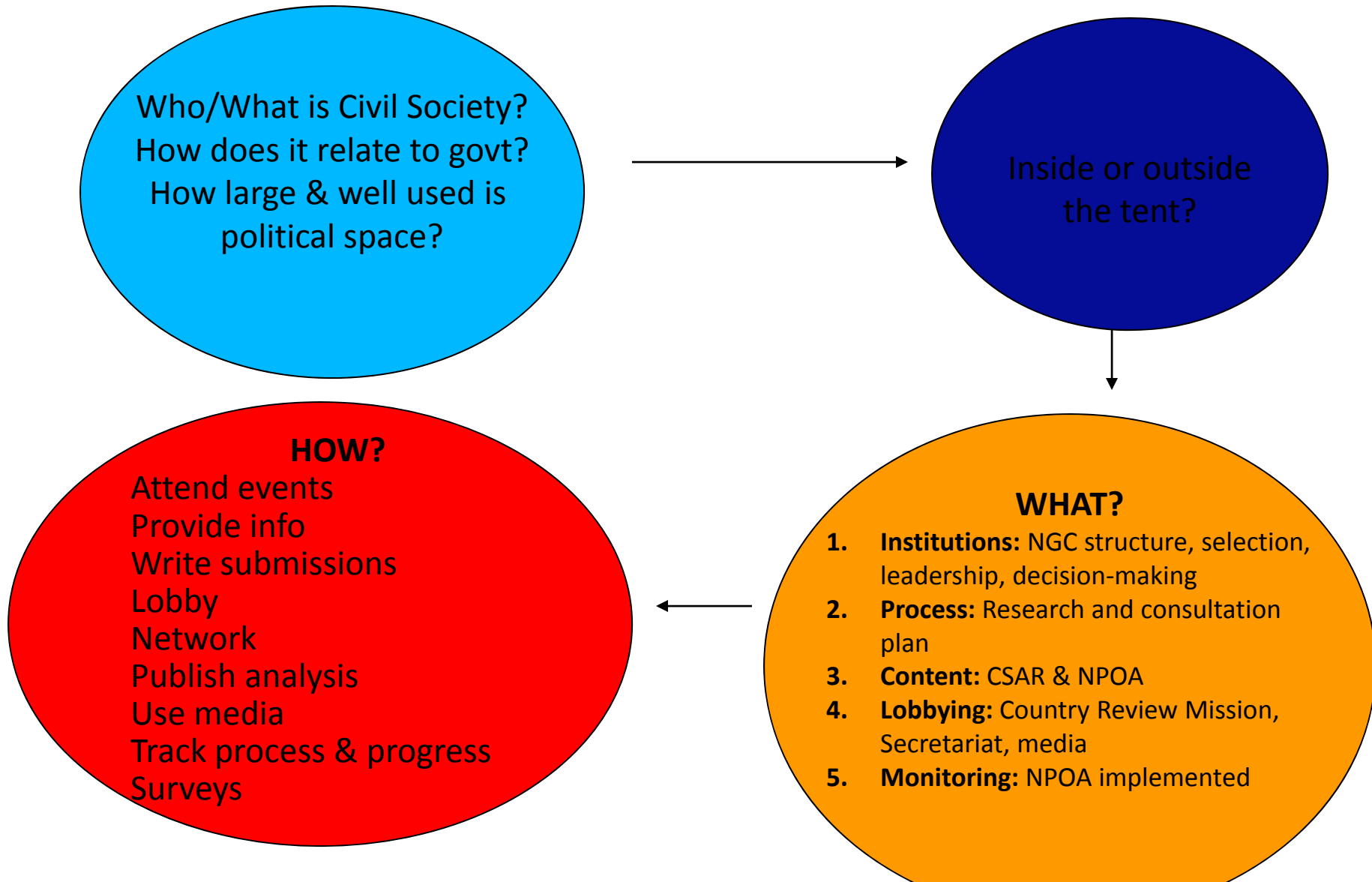
[The APRM] “requires that each country carefully assess its own situation through a broad participatory process led by government.” (p. 6)
- **The Memorandum of Understanding**

Participating countries agree to “ensure the participation of all stakeholders in the development of the national programme of action including trade unions, women, youth, civil society, private sector, rural communities and professional associations [and to] take such steps as may be necessary for the implementation of the recommendations adopted at the completion of the review process within the specified time frame and integrate them into our respective national programmes of action.”

Ways of reacting ...

- Ignoring
- Commenting
- Criticising
- Protesting
- Objecting
- Complaining
- Embarrassing
- Pressurising
- Arguing
- Co-opting
- Informing
- Mobilising
- Networking
- Writing
- Debating
- Assisting
- Implementing
- Reporting
- Monitoring

Areas of Civil Society Engagement



Civil Society and the NPOA

- NPOAs developed late, poorly in CSAR process. Diagnosis easier than remedies.
- Weaknesses – wish lists, not prioritised, many recommendations ignored, government says “we’re already doing that”, vague costings, not measurable
- CS makes suggestions at meetings, on NGC, in written submissions, but APRM usually reverts to “government process” at NPOA planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting stages
- APRM NPOA gets lost – marginalised, lacks funding or political support, competes with existing programmes, line ministries, development plans
- NGCs disbanded, atrophy, recreated. Progress reports not always published. Becomes external compliance exercise. CSOs, government, donors losing interest?
- CS lose energy and focus. Why? Ignorance, lack of info, exclusion, overall momentum loss, funding, not in media
- Little evidence of countries being held accountable for NPOA commitments & slippage
- Somewhat more traction when APRM housed in planning ministry
- Need to know more about Ghana’s District Oversight Committees, SA’s provincial consultations

Where CSOs have had success ...

- Used APRM as a platform to air views, propose solutions on issues already passionate about
- Focused
- Determined
- Strategic
- Networked
- Built trust
- Demonstrated leadership
- Made constructive criticism

Reflections on APRM implementation in SA

- SA acceded 2004, CSAR done 2005-2006; CRR & peer reviewed 2007
- SAIIA TSA in 2006, report for ECA '10 – interviews & analysis
- Good tradition of consultation in SA: Who? When? Where? Did it matter?
- NPOA omits many recommendations, not specific, new initiatives not clear – relation to GPOA, costing method
- Political & bureaucratic flux – new president, minister, DPSA staff - Insufficiently institutionalized, NGC dormant
- APRM seldom mention in speeches, policy documents, except as FP issue (African agenda), reforms not branded as APRM. Fading from view?
- Little new funding for NPOA, not explicit in new planning ministry, not taken up by CSOs, media
- Reporting for external compliance – 1st report flawed, 2nd one delayed, more consultative (but does it get back to NPOA commitments)?
- Hard to demonstrate concrete achievements
- Who holds government accountable? And how? When?

So ... what's in it for us?

- APRM invites & encourages CSO involvement
- APRM dovetails with your issues - you can provide insight and expertise
- Strength in numbers & networks
- APRM is an opportunity to engage in reflection, dialogue, accountability
- Governments have committed to NPoAs – what about follow-through?
- Potential work and funding stream??

Recommendations

- Don't reinvent the wheel
- Don't do it for the money, but because it matters
- Use and build networks, within & across states
- Involve oversight bodies – ombudsman, auditor-general, CSOs, parliament
- Prove your worth to government
- Use the media better
- Teach yourself M&E – PETS, People's Budget, and teach others
- Stay in touch and ask the tough questions
- Practice what you preach

Contact

Steven Gruzd

Head: Governance and APRM Programme

South African Institute of International Affairs

+27-11-339-2021

steven.gruzd@wits.ac.za

www.saiia.org.za