



Strengthening Cabinet Operations in Sub-Saharan Africa: Role of the Africa Cabinet Government Network

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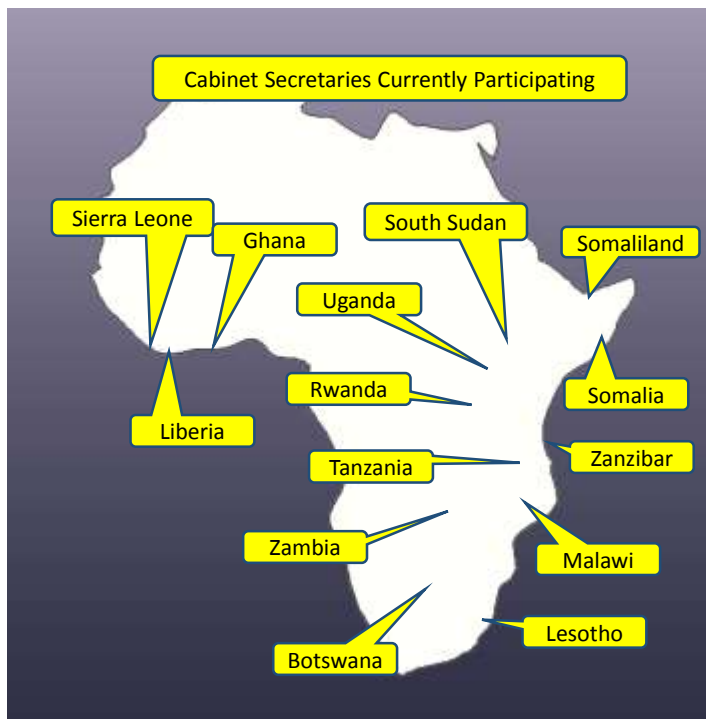
Outline

1. Description of ACGN
2. Drivers
3. Activities
4. Achievements
5. Success factors
6. Challenges

ACGN

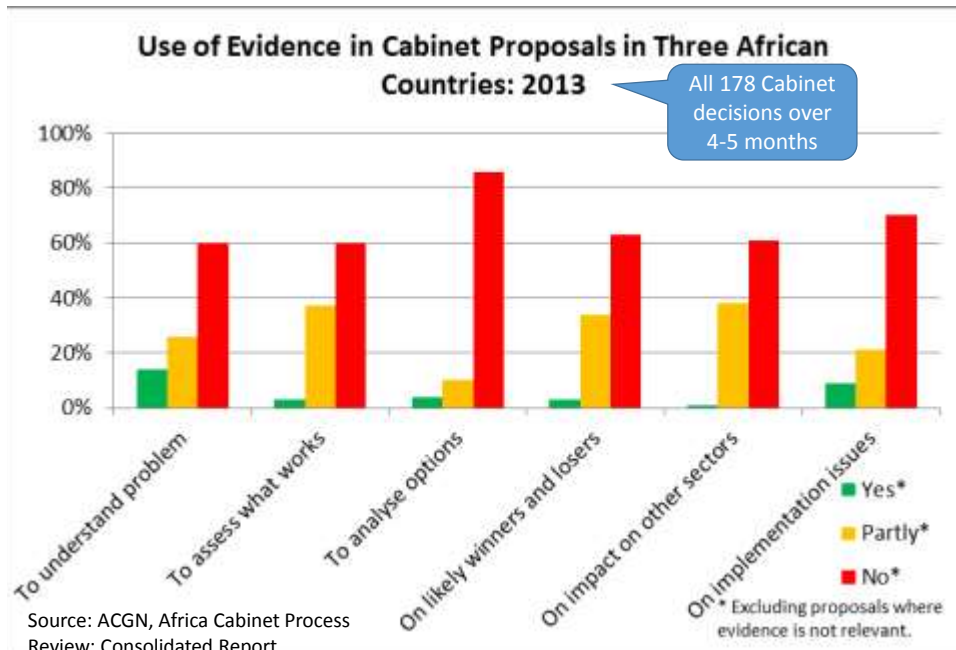
1. Voluntary organisation of Cabinet Secretariats
2. Purpose: to provide formal and informal opportunities for mutual support and sharing practical experience, as well as technical assistance
3. Support and advice on government decision-making processes – not on the content of specific policies
4. Governed by Council of African **Cabinet Secretaries**
5. Registered in Sierra Leone as an International Non-Government Organisation.

“Supporting inclusive, evidence-informed decisions by African Governments”



Drivers

1. Decisions not implemented – often < 50%
 - Desire to improve quality of proposals to Cabinet
2. Complex problems requiring coordinated coherent policies – often whole of government
 - Building broad government ownership
3. Analysis of Cabinet process data
 - Assessment Tool on use of evidence.



Activities

Supported by:



1. Annual Roundtable Meetings of Cabinet Secretaries

- Addis 2014; Accra 2015; Lilongwe 2016; ??? 2017
- Issues: relationships with Presidents/Ministers; transitions; decision-making in crises; effective Cabinet Committees; processes for draft laws



Activities (cont)

2. Technical support for new Cabinet procedures

- Standard formats for proposals; Cabinet liaison networks; Standing Committees; Policy Review Units

3. International training workshops for policy analysts

- Kigali 2014; Accra and Entebbe 2015; Zanzibar 2016
- Exercises; African case studies; statistics; policy levers; behavioural responses; thinking fast and slow; formative and summative testing

4. Work experience

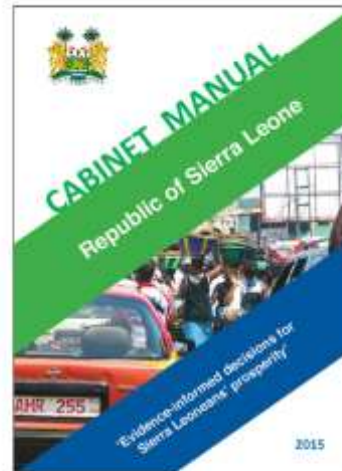
5. On-line policy toolkit

6. Guide on stakeholder engagement.



Achievements

- New evidence-focused procedures
 - Cabinet Manual developed and implemented in Sierra Leone
 - Also in Liberia and South Sudan



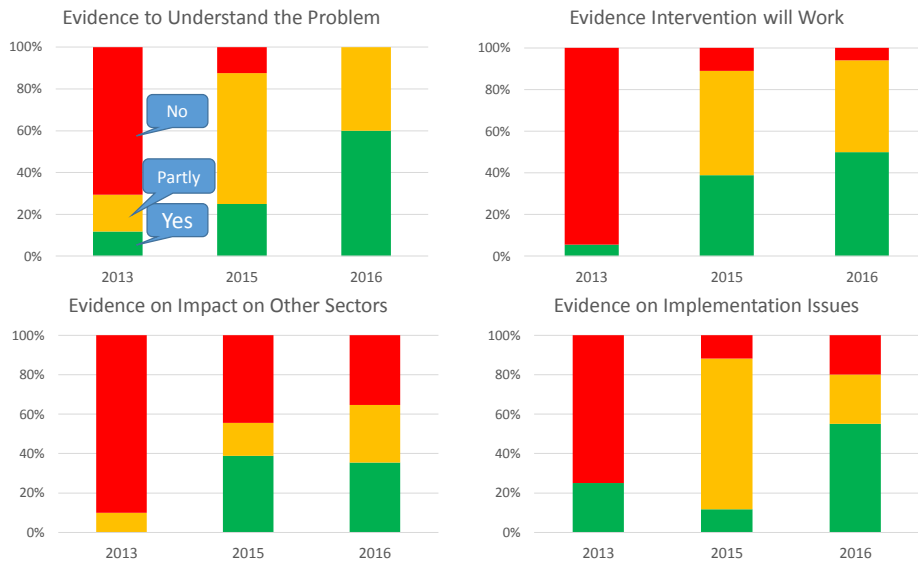
“..... the biggest change in Cabinet decision-making procedures since independence in 1961”

Dr Ernest Surrur, Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, Sierra Leone.

Achievements (cont)

- 100% compliance with new SL evidence-focused format; regular meetings of standing committees
- Successful training programs for line Ministry staff in SL & Liberia – demonstrated through testing
- Effective Cabinet Focal Person Networks: SL; Lib: S.Sudan
- Substantial access to policy toolkit
 - 1175 new users from 44 African countries; 253 accessed toolkit
- Increased demand for evidence, especially in SL
- ***“we have had a paradigm shift in how Cabinet makes decisions. There really is now an ‘evidence culture’ in Cabinet.”*** (SL Cabinet Secretary)
- Evidence-informed decisions – eg National Lands Policy; Tourism Policy; Shipping Register; Medical training
- Measurable increase in evidence in SL Cabinet proposals.

Increased use of evidence in strategic Cabinet proposals: Sierra Leone: 2013-2016



Success factors

1. Research into Cabinet processes
 - To motivate, focus and track reforms
2. International support from practitioners and peers
 - Experienced and trusted advisers; strict confidentiality
 - African experience; driven by peers
3. Focus on institutional processes, not just training
 - Creating top-down demand for evidence
4. Working through Cabinet Secretariats – eg training
5. Mainstream institutions to maximize sustainability
 - Last SL Cabinet Manual lasted >50 years; civil service exams.

Challenges – past and present

1. Getting Presidents to focus on processes
2. Policy capacity in line Ministries
3. International advisers
4. Personnel turnover
5. Expanding membership to Francophone Africa
6. Attracting funding for international activities.

Further information:

www.CabinetGovernment.net

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