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Dear Phil

I hope that this letter finds you and your colleagues at SAHRIT well.

The purpose of this rather formal correspondence is to provide feedback and some hopefully useful comment on the way forward on the SAHRIT 'concept note' to the African Human Security Initiative (AHSI) project.

Let me start off by thanking you for this first iteration of the SAHRIT document that we received at the end of September. You will recall that the purpose is to update the presentation that SAHRIT provided during our September meeting, based on the feedback and subsequent discussion, and thereby:

- Present a theoretical framework that would justify the choice of a set of key commitments of African Heads of State within the ambit of the SAHRIT theme, namely anti-corruption measures. These commitments would also be unpacked in a table that covers, for each commitment, key indicators of compliance, methodology of how the partner would go about measuring compliance and any associated problems (if any, and measures to overcome these problems). In summary this input would motivate, define, document (and subsequently comply) with a solid methodology; and
- Provide a schedule of activities in the form of a work plan. This would include a time schedule, activities and output, providing a clear description of the research process over time, including country visits, etc.

You will recall that it is up to the ISS to work on a draft conceptual paper, to be circulated to other project partners by the end of October. One of our tasks is to provide some type of definition and framework for our discussion of 'human security' since it represents the core concept that binds the various research clusters together, and include within that framework a motivation for the 'choice' of clusters. This is therefore still a bit of a lacuna in providing conceptual coherence to the work of the various partners.

The SAHRIT document begins with the background to the project and reference to the OAU and AU commitments of Heads of State to combat corruption. It states which countries will be reviewed in terms of their implementation of anti-corruption commitments, then mentions benchmarks, methodology and finally, a work plan. Overall this first draft provides a good anchor point for the comments that follow.

The first section needs to be developed further into what will eventually be the theoretical framework and introduction to your monograph. As such, it should define corruption, set the parameters of the review (i.e. public sector corruption and corporate governance) and explain the link between corruption and insecurity. In other words, you could explain how corruption weakens already weak states in Africa, how it undermines development, possibly with some examples in the countries under review (e.g. Kenya, Nigeria).

A note on page 2, where you say that “their commitments will be tested by conducting consultations with the AU Secretariat and other established mechanisms of the intergovernmental process” – we would disagree with this approach. Consultations and research is to be focused on the national level, finding out what each of the 8 selected governments has done to implement anti-corruption commitments. So most of your interviews would be with government officials and researchers in each country, rather than with the AU Secretariat and intergovernmental organisations.

On page 4, the statement of the research focus should be more specific, so as to avoid overlapping with the democracy theme (SAIIA). In other words, replace “the research will focus on examining the basic standards of good governance and democratic behaviour by state parties” with something like: “the research will focus on examining anti-corruption measures taken by the eight governments under review”.

The checklist of anti-corruption measures is a good starting point for developing the indicators. We would suggest that you now identify and include the indicators for measuring each of these items on the checklist. Then elaborate a bit more in your workplan on where and when research on each of the eight countries will be conducted. We have asked each partner to do this, to help co-ordinate the research and share contacts. At the risk of being accused of a South African bias we attach an example of the approach that could be useful, namely the conceptual framework for the democracy and political governance cluster by Dr Anne Hammerstad of SAIIA and the work plan prepared by ISS Cape Town.

Hope this helps and look forward to receipt of a revised and updated version of the SAHRIT document at your earliest convenience.

Warm regards,

Jakkie Cilliers & Kathryn Sturman  
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Attached: SAIIA methodology