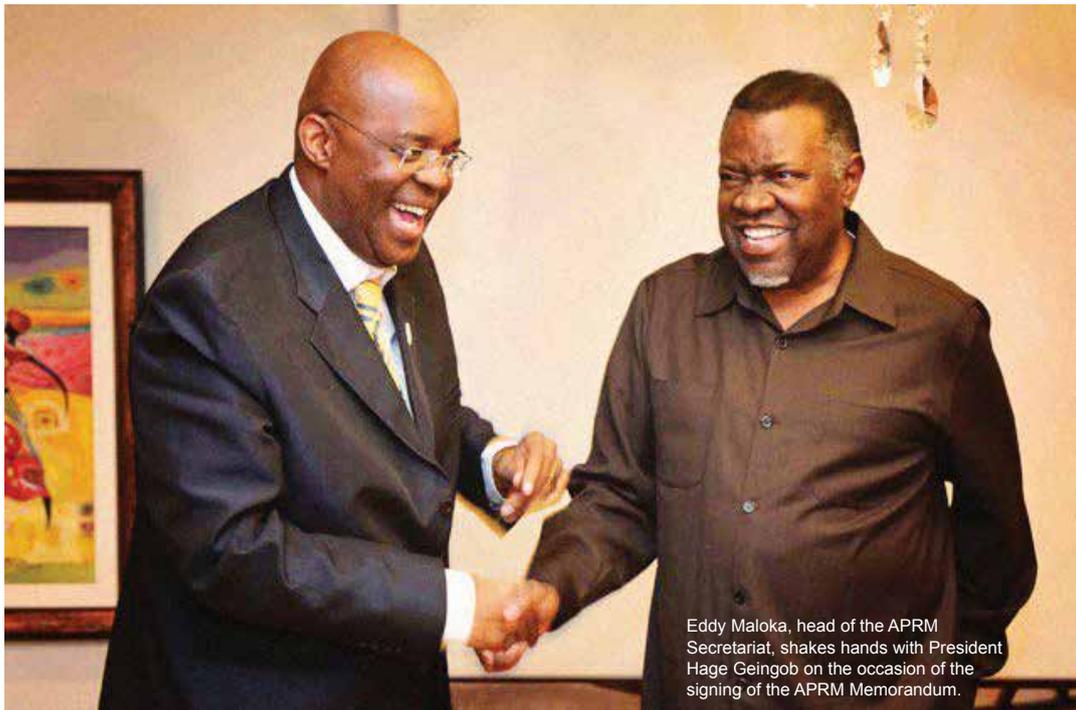




NAMIBIA AND THE AFRICAN PEER REVIEW MECHANISM: COMMITTING TO IMPROVED GOVERNANCE



Introduction: Namibia becomes number 36

On Saturday 28 January 2017 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, President Hage Geingob signed his name on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), committing the Republic of Namibia to Africa's premier governance assessment and promotion process.

In his speech to the APRM Forum of Participating Heads of State and Government, the President said "Namibia is honoured to have acceded to the African Peer Review Mechanism," remarking that the APRM would "play a pivotal role in enabling Africa to achieve the noble aspirations and developmental goals of Agenda 2063 and its First-Ten Year Implementation Plan."¹

¹ Statement by HE Dr Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia at the African Peer Review Mechanism Forum of Heads of State and Government, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 28 January 2017, https://au.int/web/sites/default/files/speeches/31976-sp-aprm_acceptance_speech_by_h.e.pdf, accessed 14 February 2017.

He continued: "Mechanisms such as the APRM provide us with an opportunity to introspectively interrogate our processes, systems and institutions in order to identify shortcomings, while at the same time identifying our strengths. With many of our Governments having adopted a number of policies and ratified countless instruments, it is only through the implementation of the APRM that we will achieve tangible far-reaching results. The voluntary nature of the APRM allows Member States to openly and realistically evaluate and monitor developmental progress in a friendly Peer-Peer atmosphere."²

He claimed that although Namibia had long supported the APRM, it had declined to join until now, along with Botswana, "because the two countries were considered worldwide as good examples of democracy in Africa and did not want to be used as points of reference against other African countries."³

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

The President also said that personally “there is a sense of delight for joining the APRM” given his direct involvement with APRM founders President Thabo Mbeki and Professors Wiseman Nkuhlu and Adebayo Adedeji in the APRM’s formative years. “It is therefore a pleasure for me to announce that the Republic of Namibia has voluntarily decided to unconditionally accede to the APRM.”⁴

His was the 36th signature on the MoU document, as Namibia became the 36th out of Africa’s 55 states to voluntarily accede to the APRM process.⁵ His signature committed Namibia to voluntarily undergo a process that will thoroughly review all aspects of governance in the country in an inclusive and participatory manner, diagnose deficiencies, and propose remedial actions to address them.⁶ It will also present an opportunity for Namibia to highlight what it is doing well in the governance realm, explaining its best practices to its peers.

This short guide is aimed at Namibian civil society, parliament and policymakers, to explain how the APRM arose and was conceptualised, what it is and what it entails for the country. It will outline what Namibia can expect from the APRM process, and what is required to undertake a successful, inclusive and meaningful review. It also suggests further reading material to learn more about the APRM.

What are the origins of the APRM?⁷

By the mid-1990s, there was a recognition by Africa’s leaders that peace, stability and governance were critical for true economic development to occur. The largely moribund Organisation of African Unity needed fundamental reform to face the challenges of the 21st century, and the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals were agreed in 2000. Against this backdrop, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) – of which the APRM is a direct descendent – was

developed to chart a sustainable economic and political path for Africa. NEPAD went through various names and iterations before it was finalised in an October 2001 document. Improving governance in Africa was a thread running through NEPAD – its objective being “to consolidate democracy and sound economic development on the continent. Through the [NEPAD] Programme, African leaders are making a commitment to the African people and the world to work together in rebuilding the continent. It is a pledge to promote peace and stability, democracy, sound economic management and people-centred development, and to hold each other accountable.”⁸

The NEPAD document also reiterated that “[D]evelopment is impossible in the absence of true democracy, respect for human rights, peace and good governance. With the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, Africa undertakes to respect the global standards of democracy, the core components of which include political pluralism, allowing for the existence of several political parties and workers’ unions, and fair, open and democratic elections periodically organised to enable people to choose their leaders freely.”⁹

The NEPAD document outlines a “Democracy and Political Governance Initiative” consisting of “a series of commitments by participating countries to create or consolidate basic governance processes and practices” and these states would commit to “meeting basic standards of good governance and democratic behaviour while, at the same time, giving support to each other.”¹⁰ Heads of State would monitor progress towards reform, and allow countries to share experiences and best practices.

The APRM emerged from these ideas in 2002–2003. In July 2002, at the first African Union (AU) Summit in Durban, the “Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance” fleshed out these concepts and a document called the “NEPAD African Peer Review Mechanism” (commonly known as the “APRM Base Document”) was released. The APRM was formally adopted on 9 March 2003 (now celebrated annually as “APRM Day”) in Abuja, Nigeria, where the first handful of countries voluntarily acceded.

How does the APRM process work?¹¹

The first step is the one that Namibia has just taken, namely the head of state and government signing the MoU with the APRM Forum, underscoring its commitment and willingness to undergo review.

The government then designates an APRM Focal Point, usually at ministerial level, to be the key governmental contact person in relation to the local APRM Process. Although some countries have chosen the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Minister of Justice as their APRM Focal Point, experience suggests that the APRM has more impact and impetus when situated in the Planning Ministry or the Presidency. It is easier to

4 Ibid.

5 The 36 APRM Member Countries are Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Republic of Congo, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Mali, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, São Tome & Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia.

6 Some of the key issues the APRM covers are as follows (these are not exhaustive and countries can add their own issues): Under the Democracy and Political Governance thematic area: managing conflict; constitution/ rule of law; electoral systems and practices; parliament; judiciary and criminal justice (including crime, police, prosecution and detention services); human and political rights (including rights of children and vulnerable groups); gender (rights, fairness, socio-economic dimensions); media freedoms; decentralisation; and may also include issues of traditional rule, service delivery, land and environmental issues. Under the Economic Governance thematic area, issues include: economic and development strategy; sound administration; corruption; money laundering and regional integration and trade. The Corporate Governance thematic area includes: business environment; corporate behaviour and corporate accountability. Finally, the Socio-Economic Development thematic area covers issues including self-reliance; environment; education; health (including HIV/AIDS); water and sanitation; housing/shelter; land; agriculture (including access to markets, inputs, support, food security); transport and energy.

7 This section draws on Gruzds S, ‘The African Peer Review Mechanism: Development Lessons from Africa’s Remarkable Governance Assessment System’, Research Report 15, South African Institute of International Affairs, January 2014, <http://www.saiia.org.za/research-reports/the-african-peer-review-mechanism-development-lessons-from-africas-remarkable-governance-assessment-system>, accessed 14 February 2017.

8 NEPAD (The New Partnership for Africa’s Development), October 2001, paragraph 202, p. 67.

9 Ibid., paragraph 79, p. 19.

10 Ibid., paragraphs 80–85, pp. 19–21.

11 Ibid.

align it with national development plans, visions, and of course budgets. It also helps in getting commitment and cooperation from other line ministries. Kenya and Uganda are two states that have had greater traction for the APRM than other countries, due to its institutional home in their planning institutions.

A key task of the Focal Point is the establishment of a representative and respected multi-stakeholder body – including civil society, business, labour, faith groups, academia, government and other relevant organisations – known as the National Governing Council (or usually a National Commission in Francophone countries). The NGC should be able to reflect the views and voices of the entire nation, including women, youth, people with disabilities, religious representatives, farmers, traders and the like. Some countries have included parliamentarians and opposition parties on the NGC. The NGC should be chaired by a non-state actor, to prevent the public perception that government might seek to control the process. South Africa's peer review process invited controversy in that a minister was the Focal Point, the NGC chairman and the national Secretariat was in her department. This led to suspicions that the report would be heavily dominated by government views. Public trust in the process is greater when a respected civil society representative drives the NGC.

The Focal Point should mobilise sufficient resources for the APRM process, from the fiscus, development partners or a combination of both. He or she should also ensure that the minimum annual subscription to the APRM Secretariat of USD 200,000 is paid on time. It should be noted that these funds cannot be used for the national APRM process. Typically, USD 1m to USD 2m is required for a country of Namibia's size and population.

Once the NGC is convened, it should establish a National APRM Secretariat for the many administrative and logistical tasks that the process entails. This is often housed in a ministry, although Ghana's Secretariat was established completely independently of government, again to build public trust and prevent perceptions of state manipulation and interference. The NGC then advertises for and contracts Technical Research Institutions (TRIs), who are responsible for helping the NGC compile the Country Self-Assessment Report (CSAR). Most countries have used the services of four independent TRIs, one for each of the APRM's four thematic areas (Democracy and Political Governance, Economic Governance and Management, Corporate Governance, and Socio-Economic Development). Smaller countries have used fewer TRIs where expertise was not readily available. The NGC also develops a plan for consulting citizens throughout the country for their views on governance, a media strategy, and a realistic roadmap for the rollout of the APRM process in their country.

During this period, the country will be visited by a small team led by a member of the APRM Panel of Eminent Persons, a group of up to nine respected, experienced African personalities.¹²

12 The current members are Prof. Mahamoud Youssouf Khayal (Chad) chairman, Minister Brigitte Sylvia Mabandla, (South Africa) vice chairman, Bishop Don Dinis Salomão Sengelane (Mozambique), Prof. Ibrahim Agboola Gambari (Nigeria), Ambassador Ombeni Yohana Sefue (Tanzania), Augustin Loada (Burkina Faso), Ambassador Mona Omar Attia (Egypt), and Fatima Zohra Karadja (Algeria). Note that the last six are new members (appointed in January 2017). Ambassador Ombeni Yohana Sefue has been assigned to Namibia. The Namibian contact point at the APRM Secretariat in Midrand is Mr Dalmar Jama, dalmar.jama@aprm-au.org

This could be an Advance Mission (if early in the process) or a Country Support Mission (once the above steps have been completed). These missions serve to inform the Focal Point, NGC and other stakeholders about the APRM process, answer questions, and guide the participating country to have an inclusive, participatory and technically sound APRM process.

In developing its CSAR, the TRIs, NGC and Focal Point are guided by the 105-page Self-Assessment Questionnaire from the continental APRM Secretariat.¹³ Researchers will need to gather extensive information and documentation on the performance of the government and other stakeholders in key governance and development areas. All sectors of society – including civil society organisations (CSOs), religious institutions, labour unions and business groups, as well as the executive and parliament – should contribute to answering questions on a wide range of issues that aim for a comprehensive assessment of governance systems and practice. Key areas assessed by the questionnaire include elections, conflict management, human rights, health care provision, the state of the economy, the role of parliament and the judiciary, climate change mitigation, extractive industries transparency and the behaviour of corporations. The questionnaire also interrogates the level of compliance with various African and international codes and standards.

Most countries have taken a year or longer to produce their CSAR (despite the Secretariat's suggested timeline of six to nine months, which has not proven feasible). TRIs have used a mixed research method, including desk research, expert interviews, focus group discussions and a household opinion survey (often administered in conjunction with the national statistical body). CSOs and the public are also able to make written submissions to the NGC on key issues that interest them – they should not try to tackle every issue in the Questionnaire. In some cases (like South Africa), parliament has held public hearings based on the APRM Questionnaire which then fed into the CSAR. The NGC and government also need to develop a draft National Programme of Action (NPOA) that identifies solutions to the governance deficiencies identified in the CSAR.

The CSAR must be publicly validated by a wide group of national stakeholders in one or more validation conferences. It usually requires Cabinet approval. The CSAR is then submitted to the continental APRM Secretariat, based in Midrand, South Africa.

In parallel, the Secretariat compiles an issues paper, highlighting what it sees as the critical governance issues in that particular country, to guide the upcoming Country Review Mission (CRM). The CRM is a temporary body, led by one of the Panel of Eminent Persons and staffed by African experts in the four thematic areas, which then visits the country for a period of two to three weeks. During this time, the CRM conducts an independent assessment of governance and endeavours to speak to as many groups as possible, all around the country, to hear their views on governance issues, and to supplement their research. The CRM should be free to determine its own agenda, but frequently they are guided by the Focal Point and NGC. This is also a prime opportunity for CSOs to raise any issues about the research and consultation process with the

13 See http://aprm-au.org/admin/pdfFiles/aprm_questionnaire.pdf

CRM, and to provide the CRM team with any information they might need.

After the CRM, the Panel and Secretariat combine the CSAR, the issues paper and the findings of the CRM into a draft Country Review Report (CRR), complete with the Panel's recommendations. The draft CRR is then sent to the government for comment, and the country is expected to update its NPoA to reflect the recommendations. The rules state that the government may append its comments to the draft, but may not amend the main text in any way.

A final CRR is then produced – with the government's comments appended – and is presented to the Forum of Participating Heads of State and Government (the APR Forum) for discussion and peer review. The APR Forum usually convenes immediately before the twice-yearly AU Summits. The lead Panellist presents, the head of state responds, and the other APR Forum members interrogate the report.

Six months later, the CRR is published in electronic and hard copy form, and contains a summary of the peer review discussions.¹⁴ It is then meant to be tabled at the Pan-African Parliament, the relevant Regional Economic Community and other

appropriate platforms.¹⁵

The NGC should oversee an official launch of the CRR and promote media coverage of its contents. Some countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho and South Africa have also published a shorter, popular version, and/or translated the report into vernacular languages and serialised it in national newspapers. The CRR, running to hundreds of pages, is hard to digest, so this approach is advisable to popularise the findings to the citizenry and help create national ownership of the process and its outcomes.

The government is then meant to secure resources for implementing the NPoA, again through the national budget and development partners, and report regularly on the NPoA's implementation to the APR Forum. The NGC tends to be disbanded soon after the CSAR process, or plays a much smaller role in implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Countries are meant to then be reviewed again a few years later. The APRM has struggled to finalise second reviews, however. In January 2017, Kenya became only the first country to complete its second review, a decade after its first.

¹⁴ The 17 CRRs published to date (in order of peer review) are: Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, Algeria, South Africa, Benin, Uganda, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mozambique, Lesotho, Mauritius, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Zambia. Djibouti, Chad and Senegal were reviewed in January 2017 and their reports are expected to be published in the course of the year.

¹⁵ In practice, there was a backlog of 14 reports not tabled at PAP that has only recently been cleared in October 2016. Discussion of APRM is most advanced in ECOWAS and the EAC, with RECs like SADC lagging behind.

APRM institutions

Continental level

APR Forum of Participating Heads of State and Government (APR Forum): The highest decision-making body of the APRM. It consists of all 36 heads of state and government from the participating countries – these are the main “peers” envisaged in the peer review. The Forum meets at least twice a year, on the margins of the AU Summit, unless an extraordinary meeting is called. The chairmanship rotates; the current chairman is President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya.

APR Panel of Eminent Persons (APR Panel): Consisting of up to nine members, the Panel is responsible for ensuring that APRM reviews happen in member countries, and that the process is inclusive, credible and free of political manipulation. The Panel members are drawn from Africa's five regions and are respected Africans from all spheres of professional life. The Panel meets at least four times a year. The new chairman as of January 2017 is Professor Mahamoud Youssouf Khayal from Chad, with former Minister Brigitte Mabandla from South Africa as vice-chairman. One member of the Panel will be assigned to oversee the Namibian review. At the time of writing, this had not yet been decided.

The Committee of Focal Points: This is the newest official APRM institution, having been formally promulgated in 2011. It consists of the Focal Points of the 36 participating countries, who are usually at ministerial or equivalent level. They meet at least twice a year, and oversee the functioning of the APRM Secretariat, decide on senior staffing, and provide the link between national concerns and the continental process.

The (Continental) APRM Secretariat: Based in Midrand, South Africa, the Secretariat carries out administrative and logistical functions for the APRM system, including strategic planning, arranging missions, advising member countries, compiling CRRs (guided by the Panel), convening CFP, Panel and Forum meetings managing finances, and so on. The current Chief Executive Officer is Professor Eddy Maloka from South Africa., appointed in January 2016.

The Strategic Partners: Since its inception, the APRM has had three institutional strategic partners in the form of the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the United

Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). They have provided advice, material support and experts for country missions, and helped the APRM with its strategic positioning. Recently, two more Strategic Partners have been appointed, namely the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and the Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

National level

The APRM Focal Point: This is usually a minister or equivalent level government official, who forms the key link between the continental and the national process. One of his or her main tasks is to help establish the National Governing Council. He or she is also chiefly responsible for securing the buy-in and cooperation of cabinet colleagues, ministries, department and agencies.

The National Governing Council: This is a multi-stakeholder body, with members of government, civil society and organised business working together to oversee the national APRM process in all its facets. It should be non-partisan and represent all sectors of the society, including women, youth, people with disabilities, labour,

faith groups, business, academia and so on. In order for the APRM to be seen as a national process as opposed to a government process, the NGC should not be chaired by government. A smaller NGC is easier to convene and manage.

The (National) APRM Secretariat: The Secretariat handles all the administrative and logistical arrangements for the national process, and should not be confused with the body of the same name at continental level. It is responsible for assisting the NGC to conduct consultations, organise events and gather governance-related material.

The Technical Research Institutes: Due to the complex and technical requirements for completing a CSAR, and to ensure the objectivity of this report, NGCs recruit (usually four) TRIs, to develop reports that will form the basis of the CSAR. One of the four thematic areas is usually assigned to each TRI, and they use a mix of methods, including desk work, expert interviews, household surveys and calls for public submissions to draft the CSAR and preliminary NPoA.

What are the Benefits of the APRM for Namibia?

By joining the APRM, the government of Namibia is committing itself to transparent, accountable and participatory governance. The peer review experience presents an opportunity for the government to open up the policy-making process to non-state actors and ordinary Namibian citizens who are required by the rules of the APRM to be consulted, especially during the process of compiling the CSAR.

The APRM also offers the country the chance to take stock of where it is in terms of adopting, ratifying, implementing and reporting on a wide range of African and international codes and standards, across a wide range of political and economic subjects. The APRM also encourages the participating country to sign, ratify and implement these instruments. The revised Questionnaire, for example, explicitly urges African countries to join and adhere to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). Another important instrument in the realm of corruption-fighting is the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), which would be in line with the APRM's principles and objectives. Increasing numbers African countries are joining the Open Government Partnership (OGP), which is another voluntary governance promotion system.¹⁶ In the course of the review, the APRM encourages synergies with these and other instruments, and has the added advantage of being a home-grown African process.

The African-owned and African-driven nature of the APRM

¹⁶ Of the 12 African countries in the OGP (Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania and Tunisia), only Cabo Verde is not an APRM member. See <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/countries>

seeks to promote "African solutions to African problems." It is a unique environment for African states to share experiences, raise concerns and assist one another in providing a better life for their people. Namibia potentially has much to share on these platforms. It is a prime opportunity to showcase Namibia's best practices in this realm, so that other African countries can learn from its successful policies and programmes.

In a non-punitive environment, the APRM allows the participating country to frankly and candidly explore, assess and discuss its governance and developmental successes and shortcomings, and in a consultative manner, come up with the most appropriate solutions for remedying these deficiencies.

By developing a practical, well-thought-out and realistically costed NPoA – that is both integrated with national development and budget processes, yet still focuses on specific and ambitious new governance reforms – Namibia can strategically begin to tackle significant obstacles to better governance and development.

If well managed, the APRM can contribute to social cohesion and a sense of a shared national vision, provided all groups feel that they have a say and that their views are fairly and adequately represented.

In some instances, development partners and potential investors might examine the CRR in making funding decisions, so an honest and fair appraisal and acknowledgement of problems with a commitment to address them could contribute to increased development assistance and investment. The APRM can shore up a country's good governance credentials.

What can Namibia expect from its APRM journey?

After the formal accession by the president, there is usually a long period of quiet in the country. In some cases, this can take many months or even years. The APRM Focal Point needs to be appointed, and he or she will begin preparing a plan for implementing the APRM process in the country. It is in the interest of Namibian stakeholders to understand the APRM, be prepared for it, and for civil society to apply pressure to government, if required. Notoriously slow implementation of policy in Namibia need not be a hindrance to the APRM process, and it is important to use this time lag to understand what the APRM entails, to gain and maintain momentum.

One of the first major decisions will be on the composition of the National Governing Council. If civil society is organised and alert, it can influence the shape and form of the NGC. In Zambia, for example, a coalition of CSOs wrote to the Focal Point outlining the sorts of people it would wish to see on the NCG, suggesting organisations and CSO leaders. They also made known the principles that they wanted to see the NGC uphold, including impartiality, integrity, openness, approachability and trustworthiness.

Not every CSO will have a seat on the NGC, but CSOs interested in governance, democracy and development should be interested in their national APRM process, and find ways to contribute to it and strengthen it. It is another platform for them to put forward their concerns and issues, and it meant to be inclusive and consultative. Virtually all issues that CSOs work on, including climate change, elections, accountability, health-care, education, corruption, human rights and open budgeting, are covered by the APRM. A workshop to familiarise key CSOs working on these issues with the APRM, how it works, and how they can be involved, early on in the APRM timeline is recommended.¹⁷

Parliament is potentially a key player in the APRM, although historically it has been mainly a passive stakeholder. Parliament may be visited by country missions, or members of parliament may attend consultations, but these roles are superficial and ceremonial. The exception here is the South African parliament. It formed four ad hoc committees on the APRM (for the four thematic areas) and publicised widely for concerned stakeholders to make written submissions and presentations to the ad hoc committees. These submissions proved to be indispensable material for the research teams compiling the CSAR.¹⁸ Namibia's National Assembly could set up a similar process. Namibia could also break new ground by having the draft CSAR debated in parliament, as well as the CRR, NPoA and APRM implementation reports.

It is also important to recognise that while the APRM is an extremely technical exercise – especially when responding to the demanding Self-Assessment Questionnaire to compile the CSAR – at its heart, it is also a highly political and politicised

process. Government stakeholders will want to present the best possible image of the country internationally, and ruling parties fiercely defend their policies and record. Non-state actors tend to want the reports to be more reflective of the reality on the ground, which often differs from even the best policies. They tend to be more critical of government efforts. This tension runs right through the APRM process, and therefore needs to be managed. Trust must be built and maintained, and the consultations must be as inclusive as possible, including with opposition parties. Recognising the political nature of the APRM upfront can help the process progress more smoothly. The more impartial the NGC in particular demonstrates itself to be, the more confidence Namibians will have in it to produce a competent, accurate and candid reflection of the governance situation in the country. If the APRM looks too much like the government patting itself on the back, it will quickly lose credibility and civil society is likely to put pressure on the government to open up the process. In a democracy, this robust engagement can be healthy and improve the overall APRM experience and the honesty and quality of the reports produced.

Namibia also has the advantage of being able to read the published CRRs of other countries – 17 of them are currently available.¹⁹ It is helpful to study a few of these to get an idea of the final report. Some countries – like Uganda – also published their CSARs.

It is also important to recognise that the APRM is a long-term process. It can take a year, or several, until an NGC is selected and a roadmap for the process is published. The CSAR development phase also usually takes a year or more. It is important that stakeholders are prepared and committed for the long haul. The process can also be stop-start, with public events and then long stretches of seeming inactivity. CSOs may need to raise funds to ensure that they have the ability to keep up with the process, attend meetings, make submissions and engage in the media.

Often, APRM activities tend to be clustered in the capital or other large cities. Every effort should be made to involve all parts of the country in the process, by holding APRM consultations in different regions. South Africa created Provincial Governing Councils, and used Community Development Workers to create awareness, popularise the APRM and administer questionnaires.

A strong media strategy for introducing the country to the APRM is essential, as well as for later stages when the public's inputs are sought for the CSAR. Ghana stands out as having had a particularly good media strategy. It made good use of print and electronic media, particularly radio.²⁰

17 SAIIA has run similar training workshops in almost 20 APRM countries.

18 In South Africa, they were called Technical Support Agencies. In most other APRM countries they are known as Technical Research Institutes.

19 Available on SAIIA's APRM Toolkit: <http://www.aprmtoolkit.saiia.org.za/>

20 In South Africa, they were called Technical Support Agencies. In most other APRM countries they are known as Technical Research Institutes.

Conclusion

Namibia is joining the APRM 14 years after the first countries signed up in 2003, and therefore has the benefit of learning from the “pioneer countries” – the first group to undergo review, including Ghana and Kenya – as well as the many others that have been through all the stages of the process. In the SADC region, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia have all been reviewed once, and if approached, would be available to share their experiences and tips with Namibia.²¹ Windhoek does not need to reinvent the wheel!

But it also provides the opportunity for Namibia to innovate. As mentioned, having greater involvement by all parties in parliament, right from the start, can significantly strengthen the APRM process in the country, and provide an example for other countries.

It is crucial that the process is something that all Namibians will be proud of. It is useful to remember the acronym “COPPER” – Namibia’s APRM should be candid, open, planned, participatory, exemplary and robust. If all stakeholders treat the APRM as a genuine exercise in diagnosing problems, celebrating successes and devising solutions, where all voices are heard and respected, then the APRM can be an engine for meaningful reform. Namibia’s citizens and government should expect nothing less.

Further Reading

- SAIIA’s online APRM Toolkit, for everything on the APRM: <http://www.aprmtoolkit.saiia.org.za/>
- The official APRM website: <http://aprm-au.org/>
- Ross Herbert and Steven Gruzd, the African Peer Review Mechanism: Lessons from the Pioneers, Johannesburg: The South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), 2008. <http://www.saiia.org.za/books/the-african-peer-review-mechanism-lessons-from-the-pioneers>
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- Yarik Turianskyi, ‘Monitoring APRM Implementation: A Civil Society How-To Guide,’ SAIIA, August 2014, http://www.saiia.org.za/doc_download/572-monitoring-implementation-of-the-african-peer-review-mechanism
- Steven Gruzd, ‘The African Peer Review Mechanism: Development Lessons from Africa’s Remarkable Governance Assessment Mechanism,’ SAIIA, Research Report 15, January 2014, , <http://www.saiia.org.za/research-reports/the-african-peer-review-mechanism-development-lessons-from-africas-remarkable-governance-assessment-system>
- The Africa Governance Monitoring and Advocacy Project (AfriMAP) conducted case studies of early APRM countries: <http://www.osisa.org/general/global/africa-governance-monitoring-and-advocacy-project-afri-map>
- The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa: <http://www.uneca.org/aprm>, in particular on the role of parliament in the APRM: <http://www.uneca.org/publications/role-parliament-aprm>

²¹ Angola and Malawi have also acceded, but the process has barely progressed in these states.

About the Author

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About Democracy Report

Democracy Report is a project of the IPPR which analyses and disseminates information relating to the legislative agenda of Namibia's Parliament. The project aims to promote public participation in debates concerning the work of Parliament by publishing regular analyses of legislation and other issues before the National Assembly and the National Council. The project is funded by the Embassy of Finland.

About IPPR

The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) is a not-for-profit organisation with a mission to deliver independent, analytical, critical yet constructive research into social, political and economic issues that affect development in Namibia. The IPPR was established in the belief that free and critical debate informed by quality research promotes development.



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